



REPORT TO

SPECIAL BOARD

RETURN TO SCHOOL UPDATE

*"The Lord gives sight to the blind, the Lord lifts up those who are bowed down, the Lord loves the righteous."
Psalm 146:8*

Created, Draft	First Tabling	Review
August 12, 2020	August 14, 2020	Click here to enter a date.

Barbara Leporati, Senior Coordinator, Planning Services
 Shawna Campbell, Superintendent of Schools, Area 3 & Early Years Programs
 John Wujek, Superintendent of Schools, Area 5
 Corrado Maltese, Coordinator, Occupational Health and Safety Department
 Shazia Vlahos, Chief of Communications and Government Relations
 Martin Farrell, Superintendent, Environmental Support Services
 Steve Camacho, Chief Information Officer

INFORMATION REPORT

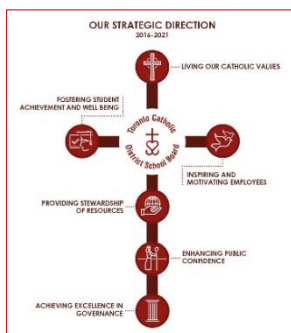
Vision:

At Toronto Catholic we transform the world through witness, faith, innovation and action.

Mission:

The Toronto Catholic District School Board is an inclusive learning community uniting home, parish and school and rooted in the love of Christ.

We educate students to grow in grace and knowledge to lead lives of faith, hope and charity.



Rory McGuckin
 Director of Education

D. Koenig
 Associate Director
 of Academic Affairs

L. Noronha
 Associate Director of Facilities,
 Business and Community
 Development, and
 Chief Financial Officer

A. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

TCDSB recently released the Reopening Action Plan to assist parents in making the difficult decision whether to choose face-to-face or remote learning for the 2020-2021 school year.

Several key events and communications have occurred since the shutdown of schools in March 2020.

June 19, 2020	The Ministry released, “ <i>Approach to Reopening Schools with guidelines for School Boards.</i> ”
June 22, 2020	Survey #1 – Parent/guardian preference on school return scenarios
July 13, 2020	Survey #2 – Parent/guardian preference on Adaptive models
July 16, 2020	Presentation to the Board regarding School reopening Models
July 23, 2020	Report to Board – School Model proposals for Ministry consideration
July 28, 2020	TCDSB staff presented models for each of the 3 scenarios to Ministry staff for consideration and feedback.
July 30, 2020	The Ministry released, “ <i>Guide to reopening Ontario Schools</i> ” https://www.ontario.ca/page/guide-reopening-ontarios-schools
August 10, 2020	Release of <i>TCDSB Reopening Action Plan</i> https://www.tcdsb.org/Board/Documents/tcdsb-reopening-action-plan-2020.pdf Survey #3 – Confirmation of registration in Face-to-face or remote learning/Transportation Needs
August 12, 2020	Ministry released PPM164 regarding requirements for remote learning
August 13, 2020	The Ministry announced new funding for HVAC and online learning, unlocking reserve funding and minimum synchronous learning requirements.
August 14, 2020	Toronto Public Health released a letter to both TDSB and TCDSB offering their perspective and including

	recommendations on School Reopening parameters. (Appendix 'A')
--	---

This report provides information regarding plans for reopening of schools in accordance with Ministry and Toronto Public Health guidelines and highlights updates in key areas pertinent to the Return to School Plan.

The information recently released from both the Ministry and Toronto Public Health requires assessment by staff in relation to the current Return to School plans. Recommendations for revision of the plan to align with recent funding and guidance will be forthcoming in the report to the August 20, 2020 Board meeting.

The cumulative staff time required to prepare this report was 30 hours

B. PURPOSE

To provide the Board with additional information regarding the TCDSB Reopening Action Plan.

C. BACKGROUND

1. *School boards have prepared plans for school reopening in accordance with Ministry and public health guidelines.* Consultation and review with Toronto Public Health (TPH), union partners, principals and other school boards has been instrumental in development of the plan. Consultations will continue as we move toward a September start date. The letter sent today to TCDSB by TPH will inform recommendations in the August 20, 2020 report to Board
2. *Ongoing communication with the Ministry regarding the secondary adapted model of delivery has resulted in a revised model presented in this report.* The Ministry is concerned with the amount of direct and indirect contacts by students while in the building. These must be capped at 100 at the secondary level.
3. *On August 10, 2020, the TCDSB released the Reopening Action Plan to inform families.* Accompanying this release, a *survey has been issued to gather much needed data* concerning families choices for face to face or

remote learning as well determining how many children will opt for school bus transportation. This data is integral for staff to begin the process for allocating staff and developing a program for remote learning.

4. ***Families and staff are showing increased concern regarding windows ventilation and HVAC systems in school buildings*** with a full return to school in September. Staff have responded to several inquiries however thought it prudent to bring further information to this special board meeting for clarity.
5. ***Toronto Student Transportation Group***, at the Governance meeting of August 13, 2020, approved ***a phased start for the provision of transportation services*** in the 2020-2021 school year.
 - a. Transportation services for student with ***special needs*** will be prioritized and provided beginning on the first day of school, ***September 8, 2020***;
 - b. Transportation services for ***all other eligible students*** would be phased in to begin on ***September 14, 2020*** pending the availability of drivers.

D. EVIDENCE/RESEARCH/ANALYSIS

Remote Learning

6. ***Senior staff have already been developing the framework for a virtual school to support remote learning for families that select remote learning for their child(ren) via the TCDSB parent survey.*** The Superintendent of Curriculum, Innovation and Academic ICT has initiated the development of a framework for implementing programming and staffing of a K-12 virtual school.
7. ***The TCDSB will receive \$634,035 in funding for principals and school administrative support, based on a formula that the Ministry has used related to school board 2020-21 projected enrolment.*** Senior staff are looking to assign a principal and vice principal using these funds as an initial step in establishing a virtual school.
8. ***Staff will be using the data from the parent survey to determine that staff that will be required to meet the needs of students participating in remote learning.*** Staff will need to use the data from the completion of the parent survey to determine the grade combinations and total number of teaching and

support staff required for a virtual school. Final numbers are required as soon as possible to complete the staffing process and provide the necessary professional development for these staff members.

9. ***The Ministry has just released PPM 164 that outlines the requirements for remote learning. The memo outlines a definition of remote, synchronous and asynchronous learning.*** PPM 164 also outlines the following: minimum requirements for engaging students during remote learning, minimum requirements for synchronous learning, process for exemption from synchronous learning, protocols for delivering remote learning, access to remote learning devices, standardized suite of synchronous learning platforms and cyber security, privacy and online safety.

Students Requiring Technology

10. ***Starting in April the TCDSB has issued approximately 10,500 devices to students which included 6,100 Chromebooks and 4,400 iPads.*** Of these devices approximately 1,250 were to students who self-identified as needing internet access at home. To support these students we have provided them LTE data enabled iPads. We plan to provide similar services to new students in September on a request basis.

Health and Safety

11. ***Students and staff are will practice proper and frequent hand washing and hand sanitizing.*** TPH guidance encourages frequent hand washing and the use of hand sanitizer where hand washing is challenging. Hand sanitizer will be located at each designated entrance, portables, classrooms and/or key locations throughout the hallways where access to a sink for hand washing is limited.
12. ***Principals will schedule washroom use*** to the greatest extent possible and signage will be posted on the wall outside the washroom limiting occupancy to 50% of normal to achieve physical distancing.
13. ***Plexiglass shields will be placed in main office*** areas to provide protection in higher traffic areas and where distancing cannot be achieved between staff through the arrangement of furniture. ***The addition of plexiglass in kindergarten rooms*** is currently being explored. This will provide an added distancing measure in classes where enrolment may approach a cap of 29 students.

Professional Development

14. ***Planning and Training for Principals has and will continue to take place over the remaining summer weeks*** to ensure that they are properly prepared to administer and adapt to the delivery models for elementary and secondary schools. Weekly engagement of principals, teacher federations and education worker unions has informed elements of the return to school plan.
15. ***Professional Development for all school based staff is being planned for the September 1, 2 and 3, 2020 PD Days.*** The Ministry has just released their memo related to topics to be addressed during these three PD days. Central staff will adapt the modules and resources to meet the needs of our school based staff. The three mandatory PA days will focus on school re-entry and will address the following topics:
- Health and safety protocols in response to COVID-19 (full day)
 - Student mental health, well-being and anti-bullying
 - Remote and online learning strategies and tools
 - An introduction to anti-racism and anti-discrimination training that will continue throughout the 2020-21 school year
 - An introduction to the new elementary math curriculum and fundamental math concepts/skills
16. ***The TCDSB Reopening Action Plan, released August 10, 2020, provides information for parents concerning*** safety protocols, outlining roles and responsibilities, day to day scheduling, flow of students and staff, staggering of recess/lunch/break times, PPE requirements and use for a safe return to school.

Secondary Adaptive Model

17. ***The updated Draft Adaptive Secondary Model (Appendix ‘B’) has similar features to earlier models.*** Staff continue to communicate with union partners to evolve on a model suitable to meet needs. The primary goal being one that ***ensures health and safety of staff and students*** within the Ministry-mandated Adaptive Model guidelines. Staff have worked with secondary principals to arrive at this current draft. Schools such as Cardinal Carter Academy and St. Michael’s Choir School will have specialized models in part due to the unique programming and other factors. As school administration prepare for re-entry of students on September 8, local planning will need to occur to ensure that this model appropriately meets scheduling requirements.

18. ***The model itself is still based on quadmestered timelines.*** All classes, (2 per quad) are divided in half to ensure appropriate class size protocols are met. There is a ***two week cycle*** to this model; where the first week sees in-class learning for Class 1 at 150 minutes in the morning for each of the two cohorts; who attend on alternating days. Still during that first week, learning occurs for Class 2 for 150 minutes daily through synchronous distance learning methods. During the second week of the cycle, Class 1 and Class 2 are flipped in their order of the day allowing for in-class learning for Class 2 in the morning and Distance Learning for Class 1 in the afternoon. Cohorting and instructional minutes remain the same as described in week 1. ***This alternate week model, further protects the health and safety of staff and students by adhering to the limit of 100 indirect contacts and allows for all students to attend face to face classes every two days***

Survey

19. ***Survey #3 has been issued to*** confirm the intent of families to have students engage in learning in person or remotely. The survey will also collect data concerning transportation needs and is scheduled ***to close on August 16, 2020.***
20. ***The results of this survey will be critical in the timely creation of class cohorts, organization of school classrooms, staffing requirements and school bus transportation planning.*** Principals will be following up with families who may not have had the opportunity to respond to the survey. For families who may have experienced technical difficulties or changed their mind based on new information, they can contact their Principal to update their response no later than August 21, 2020 at 4:00 p.m.
21. ***Following the survey deadline, families will receive communication notifying them that they have until August 21, 2020 at 4:00 p.m.*** to contact their Principal to make changes to their response(s). For families who may not have received a survey, due to incorrect contact information or technical difficulties, they will also be advised to contact their Principal to ensure response is recorded for their child(ren).
22. ***Students will only be able to move from one model to the other at pre-determined re-entry points listed below for elementary and secondary.***
Elementary – November 1, February 1

Secondary – mid November, beginning February, mid April (Quad timelines)

This direction is in line with other GTA Boards' direction and allows for adjustment of class sizes and staffing allocations in alignment with collective agreement requirements.

HVAC, Ventilation and Windows

23. Due to Health and Safety concerns, window safety latches were reinstalled on all single and double hung school windows in 2018 so that they could not open more than 100 mm (4 inches) each, using a City of Toronto By-law as guidance. Although the by-law applies to any building containing 3 or more dwelling units such as apartment units, staff adopted the bylaw as a best practice. Staff decided to install the restrictors when the windows were originally installed several years ago. These restrictors were then removed at the school level over a period of time which led to faulty windows because of the premature breakdown of the window's spring and balance mechanism. In 2018, some 18,000 safety restrictors were reinstalled after injuries to two teachers involving these windows. All new single or double hung windows sold in Canada for residential settings come with built in safety restrictors which home owners can choose to switch on to limit window opening to 100 mm (4 inches) to prevent falls by children and pets.

24. By opening the inner and outer sash 4 inches each (total of 8 inches per window), adequate fresh air is entering the classroom. The average 800 square foot classroom has between 4 to 6 windows. TCDSB has an air exchange program which combines the windows and open doors to allow for adequate ventilation. Fans are also encouraged to assist with the air exchange program. Maintenance staff are facilitating this process by servicing over 18,000 stoppers in schools to ensure that windows can be opened to provide maximum airflow. Most should be operable unless the windows are sealed due to A/C.

25. Staff is exploring the possibility of raising the window restrictor height from 4 inches to 12 inches for one window per classroom. The window ideally will be located across the classroom door which will assist with cross ventilation when the door is left open. Moving the restrictor to 12 inches will be conditional on a thorough inspection of the window's spring and balance mechanism and conducting any necessary repairs to ensure the window doesn't fall abruptly. Teachers would also be reminded to strictly supervise

students at all times to prevent any potential fall from the window. Further information on this possible initiative will be provided at the August 20, 2020 Board meeting.

26. ***The current Board standard for windows in new schools and for window replacements is awning type windows in which the entire operable pane swings outward***, providing additional open area around the sides, even with the 4” opening restriction. In current designs, wherever possible the operable pane is full height, or two half-height operable sections.
27. ***Staff are investigating the potential for installation of mobile HEPA-Carbon Air Filter units, sized for classrooms, in older schools without ventilation systems or classrooms without operable windows.*** The effectiveness of specific units available on the market will be confirmed by an environmental consultant and costing obtained. Staff will report back at the August 20 Board meetings on their findings with a recommendation on use of these units.
28. ***The portable classroom inventory is improved as older portables are removed from the system, new portables with air conditioning are added as replacements. Currently there are 193 portables, of the total 324, that have air conditioning.***

Additional Safety Considerations

29. ***The Ministry announcement of August 13, 2020 provided boards with the ability to stagger entry for elementary schools by grade for the first week of school.*** This could mean gradual starts for our youngest learners to allow them to adapt to new environments and safety procedures. Staff will consider implications and impacts and provide recommendations in the August 20, 2020 report to Board.
30. ***The announcement also included allowances for additional funding of school-based staff to provide assistance in distancing of students in classrooms.*** Staff will consider solutions where distancing issues exist using a regional approach with a priority focus on kindergarten classes and schools in TPH identified “hotspot” areas and provide recommendations in the August 20, 2020 report.

Transportation

31. *Arising from the August 13, 2020 meeting of the Toronto Student Transportation Group (TSTG) Governance Committee*, there are *two key* updates regarding student transportation for the return to school in September 2020:
- A phased start to student transportation services; and
 - The requirement for face coverings for all students
32. *A phased start to student transportation was approved for the 2020-2021 school year and includes:*
- Transportation services for students with special education needs will be prioritized and provided the first week of school beginning on September 8, 2020; and
 - Transportation services for all other eligible students will be phased in to begin on September 14, 2020 pending the availability of drivers or other unforeseen issues related to COVID-19.
33. *The phased approach will provide improved services to students with special education needs* as well as additional time to address potential start-up issues for student transportation. In addition, it will allow schools to adjust to the revised physical distancing protocols related to transportation arrival and dismissal.
34. Based on discussions with Toronto Public Health (TPH), *face coverings will be required for all students using transportation services, including those in kindergarten to grade 3*. Given the lack of physical distancing possible on buses and restricted ventilation options in colder weather, TPH agreed that all students wearing masks will reduce the risk. This is consistent with the mask requirement for Toronto Transit Commission users.
35. *A TSTG communication advising families of the phased in start and requirement for face coverings is being prepared jointly with TCDSB and TDSB Communications staff with the intention of distributing to families on August 14.*
36. *In addition, there is a potential impact on the ability to provide transportation services for the 2020-2021 school year under the Board's empty seat policy*. Students not eligible to receive transportation service can apply for an empty seat of an existing school bus route at the beginning of the school year, however there is no guarantee of service, as it is dependent

on the availability of space on the bus. Subject to availability, the empty seat requests are accommodated in October.

37. *In order to allow for greater physical distancing on school buses and facilitate the enhanced cleaning and disinfecting protocols, there is the potential to delay, significantly reduce or eliminate the provision of empty seat service for the 2020-2021 school year.* The Board is not required to make a decision on this matter at this time, and staff will provide additional information in the fall.

E. IMPLEMENTATION, STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT PLAN

1. *A Return to School staff guidebook will be provided.* This guide will provide clear definitions, roles and procedures associated with returning to school during the pandemic.
2. *FAQs continue to be gathered from parent feedback.* The board continues to provide updates and frequently asked questions and answers on the board website and social media channels.
3. *Local planning considerations will take place at the school level in late August in collaboration with school principals.* Input gained through continued consultation with stakeholders will be considered during this process.

F. CONCLUDING STATEMENT

This report is for the consideration of the Board.