



REPORT TO

## CORPORATE SERVICES, STRATEGIC PLANNING AND PROPERTY COMMITTEE

### 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
September 8, 2020	September 10, 2020	<a href="#">Click here to enter a date.</a>
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<b>RECOMMENDATION REPORT</b>		

**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.*



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## A. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The last update to the Reopening Action Plan was submitted to the September 3, 2020 Student Achievement meeting for information and consideration. The Plan is updated as necessary and is available on the TCDSB website. School based planning continues in anticipation of a September 14, 2020 start.

Class lists and school models have been revised based on families choices for in-person or virtual learning. Classrooms are being set up and organized and meetings with school-based staff continue as we approach the new school year.

Updates to approved initiatives are provided in this report.

Several key events and communications have occurred since the shutdown of schools in March 2020 and were referenced in the Return to School Updates at the August 14, 20 & Sept. 3, 2020 Board Meetings. The following items that affect the TCDSB Reopening Action Plan have occurred in the past week:

<b>Sept. 9, 2020</b>	Families received School by School Registration responses
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*The cumulative staff time required to prepare this report was 40 hours*

## B. PURPOSE

To provide the Board with updates as they pertain to the TCDSB Reopening Action Plan.

## C. BACKGROUND

1. *At the September 3, 2020 Student Achievement Committee meeting, the Board approved some additional motions pertaining to the Return to School plan.* Approved motions included exploring options for opening of additional windows, acquiring outdoor play space elements such as tents and wood for benches.

2. *The TCDSB Reopening Action Plan continues to be updated to reflect recent changes.* Items from Board motions and Ministry updates that are confirmed have been included for parents to reference. The plan will continue to be updated as information changes moving toward school reopening.
3. *On September 9, 2020, families received school-by-school registration responses.* The data shared includes the name of the school, ward, responses for in-class learning, responses for virtual learning and those who did not provide a response. Overall response rate is 95%. Response rate for in-person learning is 78% and 24% for virtual learning.

## **D. EVIDENCE/RESEARCH/ANALYSIS**

### **Cohorting and Distancing**

4. *A regional approach to the allocation of additional resources will continue to be addressed with the following considerations:*
  - First priority to address schools within high COVID-19 incidence areas as identified by Toronto Public Health (*There are 36 schools in these areas*)
  - Next priority given to kindergarten classes and then Grade 7 and 8 classes thereafter to achieve distancing where facilities or TCDSB resources allow, and will then explore options for space outside of TCDSB resources.
  - Staff have been in contact with City staff to identify community centre, public library and park spaces that could assist with distancing.
  - Additionally, staff continue to engage other community partners for use of spaces that can provide recreation/physical education space for schools in close proximity.
5. *Should available funding remain following the above implementation strategy, staff will proceed to address remaining schools with capacity concerns* starting with kindergarten classes using the same methodology as above.
6. *An analysis of French Immersion schools is underway as they draw students from a larger attendance area.*

### **Admissions and Registration**

7. ***TCDSB issued a registration questionnaire to confirm the intent of families to have students engage in learning in person or remotely. The questionnaire also collected data concerning transportation needs and closed on August 26, 2020.***
8. ***Principals continue to communicate with families who did not or could not complete the questionnaire to determine their intent. This outreach by the principal was extended to September 11, 2020 to provide families the opportunity to make a decision that best suits their needs.***

### **Staffing and Recruitment**

9. ***Normal Human Resources Department activities associated with September re-entry are underway and targeted for September 14, 2020 completion. These activities include recruitment of all staff to address attrition and operational needs, filling Long-Term Occasional teaching assignments, and oversight of all employee group return-to-work meetings. The return to work meeting process is experiencing delays because of the current re-organization of in-class and virtual learning environments.***
10. ***Elementary and secondary school Principals are diligently building new staffing models in response to revised enrolment figures (target completion date – Friday, September 11, 2020). These revised enrolment figures reflect the transition of a significant number of students out of face-to-face models and into the TCDSB Virtual School. All teacher accommodation requests have been received, documented, and they will continue to be reviewed. All school-specific teacher accommodation requests and appropriate parameters have been applied to determine teachers who are surplus to school models. These surplus teachers and additional Long-Term Assignments (LTOs) will be deployed within the TCDSB Virtual School once its scheduling needs are finalized. Plenary Principal meetings have been scheduled at the end of the school day throughout this week to address concerns, ensure consistency, and assess exigent needs.***
11. ***Staff has reviewed data that identifies higher risk school communities within high COVID incidence areas and applied special staffing parameters to add staff and thus decrease the size of cohorts. We have attempted to staff all of these schools as close as possible for JK-3 at 15 and all other grades at 20. Some schools that have spacing issues have been increased to 20 and we are currently trying to address those issues. This will involve utilization of all***

available space in the school and/or use of other resources such as available City space or outdoor classrooms.

12. ***The Virtual School has been assigned teacher allocations for a diverse range of classes including Special Education and French Immersion allocations.*** Staff is considering the allocation of support staff positions to the Virtual School based on Special Education enrolment. Specialty programs will be determined by the number of students attending the virtual school and having the appropriate teacher qualifications to staff the program needs.
13. ***French Immersion staffing remains a concern within the face-to-face and virtual settings.*** This is the result of ongoing provincial demand exceeding supply and compounded by attrition and apprehensiveness of retired and uncertified teachers to accept assignments during the COVID pandemic. Staff continues to review regional program needs as well as Virtual School French Immersion student enrolment to equitably inform staffing.
14. ***Strategic recruitment of various school-based positions is ongoing to assist in meeting the demands of physical distancing and enhanced cleaning.*** Targets for recruitment have been established based on need and approved funding. These recruitment efforts include the hiring of 125 caretakers to support enhanced cleaning requirements, the use of 45 retired Principals for additional administrative support, 20 additional Child & Youth Workers, and 100 Occasional Teachers (OTs) for direct and virtual school support. It is important to note that new teacher recruitment efforts will likely place additional pressure on the TCDSB OT Roster as a significant number of teachers currently on the OT Roster have expressed reservations about accepting daily assignments during this pandemic.
15. ***In preparation for the new school year and to provide additional support, assistance, and enhanced safety measures for our students, elementary school principals have the approval to hire additional Lunchtime Supervisors in elementary schools.*** Elementary school Principals can allocate all Lunch Supervisors an additional 1.5 hours per day and Secondary school Principals have allocated all Secondary Student Supervisors an additional 20 days for the academic year to assist with supervision/screening requirements.

**PPE**

16. ***Schools have received PPE provided by the Ministry of Government and Consumers Services (MGCS).*** The Warehouse has additional quantities of PPE that were also received from MGCS that can be provided upon request. Medical grade masks have been provided to schools in the MGCS orders delivered to schools.

#### **Plexiglass**

17. ***The Board motioned staff to implement the purchase of Plexiglass desk barriers for classes of over 15 students.*** Principals have received revised staffing models and are reviewing and finalizing class lists. The bid for student plexiglass barriers closes on September 10 with award expected shortly thereafter. We will distribute barriers across the system in order of risk priority within the available funding amounts.

18. ***Plexiglass barriers for office and administrative areas is currently on order and will be delivered by the Warehouse Courier service.*** Plastic dividers for administrative areas are to be delivered to the Board Warehouse on September 10 and will be distributed on the next courier delivery day to schools. Installation is relatively simple. Operations staff will have dividers installed before start of school on Monday Sept. 14, 2020.

#### **HEPA Filters**

19. ***HEPA Purifiers are being jointly tendered with another Board for a large quantity of units.*** Staff have received bids and are evaluating proposed models. Distribution will focus on the highest incidence areas as identified by TPH. Schools without any type of mechanical systems (36) are being considered in the first round of implementation. Rooms with no windows will be considered for room purifiers. The list of schools is being finalized and Principals will be contacted over the next few business days. It is expected that air purifiers will be delivered to these locations within 1-2 weeks.

#### **Portable Handwashing Stations**

20. ***Staff have been able to secure portable handwashing stations for all floors without washrooms in schools across the system.*** Delivery of 84 portable handwashing stations to 80 schools identified as having floors without washrooms is scheduled to be completed by the September 10.

#### **Tents/Outdoor Classrooms**

21. ***A pilot program to initiate the use of tents for outdoor classrooms has been launched.*** Placement of tents will depend on site specific concerns, principal

approval and program need. Site investigations are currently underway. Affected Principals will be contacted in the next couple days for further consultation regarding placement.

22. *A letter has been sent from the Chair of the Board to the Ministry of Defence to request to borrow tents for outdoor classrooms at additional school locations.* If tents become available from this source, staff will focus on providing these resources to schools identified with greatest needs for space for distancing.

23. *Staff have contacted the City of Toronto and Toronto Hydro regarding the availability of logs for benches and have also approached local tree removal services.*

#### **CSPC Fundraising Guidelines**

24. *Staff are working on providing CSPCs fundraising guidelines, specific to COVID-19 safety issues.* Pursuant to the Trustee's motion regarding CSPC fundraising, staff have been working on Operational Guidelines for fundraising during pandemic times. The document will take some guidance from the Ministry Fundraising Guidelines, but will attempt to be responsive to needs within the system. It is expected that the draft guidelines will be included with the September 17<sup>th</sup> Board meeting Return to School update.

#### **Updated Specialized Curriculum Areas**

##### **25. Music**

- Where possible, expectations for programs involving music are to be met without the use of instruments in both the elementary and secondary levels.
- There can be no signing or playing of wind instruments (individually or ensemble) in person at the school. Further details on outdoor allowances are currently being explored.
- In secondary, playing of instruments and signing can occur in synchronous learning phase of the program.
- String programs can continue. Further details regarding ensemble playing is forthcoming.

##### **26. Health and Phys Ed**

- Physical Education classes should occur outdoors as much as possible. If gymnasiums are used, proper social distancing must occur.

- Using no equipment provides the lowest risk of transmission. Sharing of equipment should not occur. If equipment is being used it may only be used by an individual student.
- Masks are to be worn indoors at all times.

### ***27.Science and Technological Education***

- For all of these courses, safe social distancing practices, mask wearing and continued hand washing and hygiene are paramount
- Ensure students properly sanitize hands, equipment, and/or tools between each use and at the end of class.
- Teachers are to consider small group demonstrations for some features of the curriculum if appropriate equipment is not available for the entire class.
- In the area of food preparation, food should only be prepared individually and consumed by the same student

### ***28.Drama and Dance***

- Social Distancing and mask wearing must continue. There is to be no contact between students. Consideration to outdoors and larger areas should be given when there is more movement involved.
- Larger class movement should be curtailed.
- In all of the curriculum areas mentioned, further detailed guidance will be given to staff in the coming days.

### ***TCDSB Virtual School***

***29.The TCDSB Virtual School is being set up to support over 23000 K-12 students that have chosen to engage in online learning.*** Students will begin their online learning journey with orientation from September 14th to the 18th. Various webinars and asynchronous activities are planned throughout the week. Classes will begin on September 21st with discussions regarding the learning that occurred during orientation week.

***30.There are approximately 800 TCDSB Virtual School Staff*** that will be setting up virtual classroom(s) ***using either Brightspace or Google Classroom*** as their primary tool for communicating for the purpose of teaching and learning. These staff will be engaged in professional learning as they prepare to welcome their students.



31. ***Students and families will receive ongoing communication from the TCDSB Virtual School Administration Team through the TCDSB website, email, Twitter and Instagram: @tcdsbvs.*** As well, a school website is being created and will be published soon. The school website will provide ongoing program updates and will be the main platform for sharing information with students and families.
32. ***We recognize the importance of student connections with their in-person school and are working to maintain ongoing connections between the in-person and the virtual school.*** Students with Individual Education Plans and/or with guidance needs will continue to be supported in the virtual school by their in-person school staff including guidance, special education, social work, speech and language and psychology.

**Professional Learning for Academic Staff**

33. ***Staff have been busy preparing for the beginning of the academic year. Professional development opportunities have been created and made available to all staff.***
34. ***All staff participated in sessions related to health and safety protocols for return to school.*** In addition, academic staff participated in professional learning related to faith development, mental health and wellness of students, anti-discrimination, anti-racism, anti-bullying awareness and remote learning.
35. ***All teachers will set up a Brightspace or Google Classroom regardless of whether teaching in-person or virtually.*** Teachers teaching in-person will ensure that their students are comfortable using one of the two digital platforms. This will facilitate a seamless transition to virtual learning , in the event of a full class self-isolation or school closure.
36. ***All teachers in the virtual school will also set up either a Brightspace or Google Classroom as the primary tool for communicating for purposes of teaching and learning.*** Teacher's will also use TCDSB supported supplementary tools for communication, such as G-Suite, email, phone calls and video conferencing.
37. ***From August 24 to the 31st and from September 8th to the 11th, multiple daily webinars were offered to support staff in their use of TCDSB supported learning management tools (Brightspace and Google classroom), G-Suite, and video conferencing.***

38. ***During the week of September 8th, over 45 webinars were offered per day to academic staff.*** In addition to the topics mentioned already, other learning opportunities included the new elementary math curriculum, lesson design, supporting students with special needs, equity and anti-racism, and other subject specific sessions. Attached (*Appendix 'A'*) is the schedule for September 10th, it is representative of the professional learning opportunities provided all week.

### **Kindergarten Program Considerations**

39. As we continue to prepare and plan to welcome our kindergarten students back to school next week, we have provided kindergarten resources and considerations for our kindergarten teams. Throughout this week, PD sessions have been offered for Early Years Educators (*Appendix 'B'*).

## **E. IMPLEMENTATION, STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT PLAN**

1. ***FAQs continue to be gathered from parent feedback.*** The board continues to provide updates, frequently asked questions and answers on the board website, social media channels, and shared with families via School Messenger.
2. ***Communications Department is releasing a Return to School video.*** Staff, students and families will get a sense of what to expect when they return to school in-person. Some features include signage, classroom setup, plexiglass shields, daily screening before school bus transportation is taken and before attending school, screening stations and log books for contact tracing, sanitizer, enhanced cleaning surfaces, water bottle filling station markers and discontinued water fountains, mask expectations, lunch and recess information, and more.
3. ***Local planning considerations will continue 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.

