



REPORT TO

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT AND WELL BEING, CATHOLIC EDUCATION AND HUMAN RESOURCES 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 23, 2020	October 1, 2020	Click here to enter a date.
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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.



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A. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The last update to the Reopening Action Plan was submitted to the September 17, 2020 Board meeting for information and consideration. The Plan is updated as necessary and is available on the TCDSB website. Key updates and strategies are provided for consideration.

We are in the process of undertaking the analysis of the operating budget for additional funding opportunities. We are also developing the resource allocation summary on a school by school basis. Both of these topics are targeted for the Return to School Update for the Corporate Services meeting.

TCDSB schools continue to adjust to in person routines and safety measures following guidance from Toronto Public Health.

St. Anne virtual school learning began September 21, 2020.

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, 10 and 17, 2020 Board Meetings. The following items that affect the TCDSB Reopening Action Plan have occurred in the past week:

Sept. 21, 2020	Virtual School (St. Anne) begins
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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. *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 a complete school reopening.

2. ***On September 21, 2020, TCDSB began welcoming most students and families to St. Anne Academy Virtual Learning school.*** Through a staggered approach in elementary and an adaptive secondary model, school began for a large portion of TCDSB families at the beginning of this week. Students and staff have spent time adjusting to new routines and environments over the past week. All secondary students have been assigned teachers, while there remains some unfilled positions in elementary. Staff continue to work to fill these positions. As a contingency for these elementary students who have not been assigned a teacher, real-time on-line learning will continue to be facilitated by our central team. This approach ensures continuity of teaching and learning in real-time for all students while the remaining unfilled teaching positions are filled.

D. EVIDENCE/RESEARCH/ANALYSIS

Admissions and Registration

3. ***A temporary hold has been imposed on transfer of students from in person to virtual learning*** to allow St. Anne to be staffed effectively and for online classes to begin, given the staffing challenges noted above. Students will be allowed to transfer between streams at pre-determined entry points going forward.
4. ***Schools continue to manage registration of students in person and virtual.*** Schools have been instructed to consider their entire enrolment when addressing waitlisted students to ensure spaces are held in school facilities for students who wish to return to in person learning from a virtual environment. Area Superintendents supported by Admissions staff continue to work with school administrative staff to address remaining waitlists.

Special Services:

5. ***The Special Services staff is working in collaboration with both the in-person and virtual school staff to address student learning and mental health needs.***
6. ***Social Workers, Psychologists, Speech and Language Pathologists, Assessment and Programming Teachers, Programming and Assessment Teachers, and Autism Support Teachers are actively supporting students and staff. Staff are engaged in school team meetings and individual meetings with students.***

7. ***Collaboration on Individual Education Plans (IEP) has begun. Parents will be receiving letters inviting input.***
8. ***Identification, Placement and Review Committee meeting schedules have been created for the month of October.*** Parents will be receiving notification of their child's meeting from the school principal as the team works through the pending list. Additional staff have been hired to support the process.
9. ***Speech and Language and Psychology assessment teams have been confirmed.*** Assessment protocols consistent with TCDSB Health and Safety guidelines are in place enabling assessments to resume. Speech and Language Pathologists and Psychologists are connecting with administrators to begin assessments.
10. ***The Special Services Assistive Technology team, the Central Academic Resource team, and the 21C team have worked in collaboration to support the implementation of the virtual school.***

EarlyON Centres

11. ***City of Toronto Children's Services provided a further update, September 24, 2020, on the Safe Restart Agreement between the federal and provincial governments to help the child care sector adapt to the COVID-19 environment.*** The Safe Restart Funding will be available for EarlyON Service Providers until December 31, 2020.
12. ***This commitment provides stability for EarlyON centres operating in TCDSB schools.*** EarlyON centres have continued to operate virtually given the community access drop in nature of their programming. Confirmation of funding will continue to provide needed support for these programs.

Staffing and Recruitment

13. ***The Human Resources Department is deploying strategic additional staffing resources to both the face-to-face and virtual school models.***
14. ***HR staff continues to review and manage the significant number of employees requesting accommodation during this pandemic.*** The Sick Leave & Disability department is managing a greater incidence of cases for all employee groups.

15. *HR staff is accessing teachers, DECEs, and Support Staff from our supply rosters to address approved additional staffing allocations associated with high incidence areas.*
16. *Senior TCDSB staff members maintain a collaborative dialogue with our union partners representing teachers, support staff, and other non-teaching groups to address issues.*
17. *Elementary and secondary school Principals are diligently operationalizing board protocols and they attend weekly plenary Principal meetings designed to ensure consistency and assess exigent needs.* A Principal Leader Portal will serve as a conduit to ensure alignment and a consistent flow of information.
18. *HR staff is helping complete the challenging task of staffing the TCDSB virtual school.* Recruiting qualified elementary Occasional Teachers into long-term virtual school assignments has been a priority.
19. *HR staff plays a significant role in contingency planning during these unique times both in terms of fulfilling immediate staffing needs as well as planning for a potential transition back to a full virtual model (requiring a robust on-line teacher presence).*
20. *The Virtual School has been assigned teacher allocations for a diverse range of classes including Special Education and French Immersion allocations.* 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. In light of the above, staff is exploring options on how to deliver core French within the virtual school.
21. *In addition to the previously noted infusion of additional transitional staff, the Senior team is reviewing the roles of specific employee groups and how roles will need to change given new challenges associated with operating our schools during a pandemic (i.e. assigning of additional supervision and screening tasks to ensure safety).*
22. *Senior staff is identifying centrally-based Ontario College of Teacher certified staff that can be deployed to a face-to-face or virtual school to assist with student instruction.*

St. Anne Virtual School

23. ***St. Anne Catholic Academy has been created to support approximately 25,000 K-12 students who have selected an online learning option.*** Beginning September 21st, elementary students began to connect with their teachers synchronously. During the rolling start, students waiting to hear from their teachers were able to participate in various live learning sessions to engage students and support student learning. Due to the inability to staff all of the virtual elementary classes, the online learning sessions will continue for the week of September 28th. Communications were sent to families and check and connect phone calls were also made.
24. ***There are approximately 1050 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.*** The school website will continue to provide ongoing program updates and will be the main platform for sharing information with students and families.
25. ***Students who were participating in a French Immersion or Extended French program have been provided with a similar opportunity at St. Anne.***
26. ***Intensive Support Programs will be provided for students who have special education programming in their in-person school. We continue to work closely with the Special Services department.***
27. ***We recognize the importance of student connections with their in-person school and will continue to foster these connections.*** The IT Department has created an additional application within School Messenger that will allow principals to connect all virtual school students with their home school. Instructions related to the procedures for including the virtual students within School Messenger were sent to principals this past week. 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.

September 20-25

28. ***The central academic staff and some student leaders have been offering live learning streams and connected asynchronous activities all week.*** The sessions were divided into the following categories: K, Gr 1-2, Gr 3-4, Gr 5-6, Gr 7-8 and Gr 9-12. The sessions have been getting rave reviews as they have

modeled promising practices for synchronous and asynchronous learning. Sessions included a variety of topics including religion and family life, literacy, numeracy, science, digital citizenship, student leadership, etc. Many of the streams also included special guests and interviews. *If you missed them you can view the recorded streams [by clicking here](#).*

29. *Due to the inability to staff all of the elementary virtual classrooms at this point in time, these live stream lessons will continue throughout the week of September 28th - October 2nd.*

COVID-19 Reporting

30. *The Ministry requires Boards to post an advisory on the Board website with information related to confirmed COVID cases; as such, an [Advisory page](#) has been created.*

31. *Toronto Public Health has created a highly effective, one page flowchart that guides Principals through the various COVID related scenarios involving students and staff. This flowchart starts at the beginning of the screening process and takes you through various responses and outcomes. <https://www.toronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/9858-COVID-19-Decision-Guide-for-Schools.pdf>*

32. *The TCDSB Reopening Plan created during the summer has served the School Board well in guiding the system through the first two weeks of school. However, guidance and direction from TPH is constantly evolving. As such, staff are asked to follow the TPH COVID-19 Decision Flowchart.*

33. *TPH's one page flowchart complements nicely the one page [School reporting protocol for positive cases of covid-19](#) which continues to be reinforced at Principal meetings. Staff are encouraged to reference both resources to ensure protocols are followed.*

Toronto Public Health Nurses

34. *TPH has provided a list of COVID-19 Liaison Public Health Nurses (PHN) available on their website: <https://www.toronto.ca/community-people/health-wellness-care/health-programs-advice/liaison-public-health-nurse/>*
35. *Additionally there is a tab ("liaison public health nurse tab") linking to the above page from the [Elementary & Secondary Schools](#) page. The schools are listed by name and school board. Principals can look up the name of their*

school in the search tab and then see whom the Public Health Nurse that is assigned.

36. *TPH has also provided some New Parent Resources available on their website:*

- [*How to Self Monitor if Someone Tests Positive for COVID-19*](#)
- [*What to do if your child has symptoms*](#)

Handwashing Stations

37. *Additional Portable handwashing stations have been provided based on identified needs.* Following the initial delivery of 84 units to schools identified as having floors without washrooms prior to the start of school, requests from principals for additional units have been considered as they arise. Additional units have been delivered to address conditions such as boys and girls washrooms on different floors, a large number of classrooms served by one washroom and other handwashing challenges.

HEPA Purifiers

38. *The initial delivery of 1,000 HEPA purifier units has begun for schools without mechanical systems and schools in the high transmission areas (Quintile 5) as identified by Toronto Public Health (TPH).* Purifiers will then be distributed to other schools identified by quintiles in descending order (Q4-Q1). Additional HEPA purifiers will be ordered and provided to schools with interior rooms without ventilation or other unique circumstances.

Outdoor Classrooms

39. *Installation of tents for outdoor classrooms at 10 pilot schools has been scheduled from September 24 – 29.* The installation dates for each of the 10 schools is listed in *Appendix 'A'*. Authorization from the City of Toronto Building Department is required before tents are cleared for use. Guidelines have been provided to school principals regarding safe and secure use of the tents and the sites will be monitored and any security issues addressed. A form is being developed to obtain principal feedback online. Selection of schools for a second phase of the pilot program based on a wider geographical distribution is being finalized (one per ward that did not receive a tent in the first phase).

Indoor Air Quality

40. *A contract has been awarded to Pinchin Ltd. Building Science consultants to undertake an investigation of apparent ventilation rates in three sample schools.* The investigation will estimate ventilation rates by measuring carbon

dioxide concentrations in classrooms and administration areas in schools representing three window type/ventilation scenarios:

- Vertical sliding windows and no mechanical ventilation
- Vertical sliding windows with mechanical ventilation
- Double awning windows with mechanical ventilation

41. ***These three scenarios are representative of most of the schools across the Board. Carbon dioxide is an ideal indicator of ventilation in occupied buildings.*** Indoor steady state carbon dioxide concentrations rise with occupant load and respiration rates and are reduced based on the amount of outdoor air being introduced. In typical indoor air quality investigations, a steady state concentration of approximately between 1,000 ppm and 1,150 ppm is indicative of adequate ventilation for occupant comfort. With ASHRAE's current recommendation to maximize ventilation and avoid recirculation to help minimize transmission of the SARS-CoV-2 virus, indoor carbon dioxide concentrations should be considerably lower (600-800ppm).

42. ***This investigation will provide information on ventilation in classrooms and other functional spaces, so informed, data driven decisions can be made with respect to occupant loading, window operation, and HVAC function.***

Cycling to School

43. ***A process for installation of bicycle racks at all schools that do not currently have them is underway.*** A survey completed last year indicated that there are 89 schools that do not have bike racks. Implementation of Playground Reserve projects is temporarily on hold to provide the staff resources needed to visit the schools to determine locations and any site work required for the bicycle racks, and to tender and oversee a contract for installation at as many schools as possible this fall. Cost is estimated at approximately \$5,000 per school. City of Toronto funding received last year for supply of bicycle racks will cover a portion of the cost (approximately \$200K), with the remainder (approximately \$300K) being allocated from the Emerging Issues Contingency amount from the Federal government.

44. ***A cross functional staff team is investigating implementation of the remainder of the Board motion related to encouraging cycling and other alternate means of transportation to school to alleviate crowding on school busses.*** This work will continue as part of the TCDSB Active School Travel Planning.

Student Transportation

45. ***Regular transportation service began smoothly on Sept. 20, 2020.***

- Driver shortages are minimal and being well managed by bus carriers.
- Upcoming reorganization of classes by both Boards may affect existing routes.
- TSTG anticipates consideration of empty seat requests starting within the next few weeks.

Technology

46. ***To date, this fall, we have received 504 requests for students devices in virtual school and in secondary schools. Of these, 45 families also require internet services.*** Requests are being processed and should be delivered to home schools for distribution late next week.

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. ***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.