



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
October 26, 2020	November 4, 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 October 15, 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.

Families have recently been given an opportunity to switch between virtual and in person learning models. Central staff are in the process of reorganization of classes and teaching allocations to accommodate requested changes.

Feedback from the tent initiative pilot program Phase 1 locations has been summarized for the information of the Board. The pilot has been well received for the most part and schools continue to utilize the additional space provided by these installations.

On October 28, 2020, the Ministry released *“Memo 2020:B20 COVID-19 Resilience Infrastructure Stream: Education Related (CVRIS-EDU) Projects”*. A new, time limited COVID-19 Resilience Infrastructure Stream (CVRIS) is being introduced under the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program (ICIP) to provide up to \$700 million in combined federal-provincial funding for education-related infrastructure projects. Details of the process required to request funding through this stream are provided in the body of the report.

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

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.

D. EVIDENCE/RESEARCH/ANALYSIS

Staffing and Recruitment

2. *The Human Resources (HR) Department has onboarded and placed employees in various employee groups to support school-based needs. In conjunction with the Superintendent of Special Services, HR has identified Quintile 5/high COVID incidence area schools requiring Educational Assistant & Child & Youth Worker support. These staffing supports (25 Educational Assistants and 5 Child & Youth Workers) will be deployed starting early next week.* These enhanced recruitment efforts respond to attrition and operational needs.
3. *HR staff has extended each elementary school's ability to utilize their valued Lunch Time Supervisors for an additional 1.5 hours per day to June 2021.*
4. *The Sick Leave & Disability Department is managing close to 300 additional short-term sick leave cases compared to this time last year. The department continues to liaise closely with both Academic & Support Service departments to determine how to best manage these cases involving personal and family status leaves for all employee groups.* Significant caseloads are being reviewed daily and granting employees the ability to work virtually, where feasible, is being considered.
5. *Senior TCDSB staff members maintain regular contact with our union partners (TECT, TSU, and CUPE) to collaboratively address issues. Recent discussions have focused on the best program delivery models to enhance student engagement and retain enrolment.* The fluid and unique parameters impacting our virtual school have required HR staff to dedicate a significant amount of time in considering ways to efficiently deploy staff. Re-organization needs are being addressed at both the elementary and secondary panels.

6. ***Additional administrative support (18 part-time Vice Principals) has been allocated to St. Anne Catholic Academy to enhance administrative oversight and communication. HR has also deployed 67 retired administrators (including Superintendents, Principals, and Vice Principals) to our schools to assist with administrative duties and supervision, 120 BList retired elementary teachers to assist with daily teacher coverage requirements, and retired elementary teachers and secretaries to assist with long term occasional assignments.***
7. ***Staff remains committed to maintaining lower class caps in higher risk school communities within high COVID incidence areas.*** Staff is also reviewing our Employee Family Assistance Plan utilization metrics to identify issues affecting our employees and possible supports that we can implement as the system deals with increased cases of COVID.
8. ***HR and Curriculum Department staff are finalizing an agreement with an external provider, which will provide St. Anne students with a virtual experiential Core French program.*** The program is aligned with MOE curriculum expectations and will act as a suitable supplemental French resource.
9. ***In addition to the previously noted infusion of additional transitional staff, the Senior team continues to review and seek legal input into the roles of specific employee groups and how these 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).***

Communications – Learning Models

10. ***Families were provided with an opportunity to switch learning modes.*** In our elementary schools, families could choose to switch from in-person to distance learning or from distance learning back to in-person learning. In our secondary schools, families could switch from in-person/adaptive (partial online) to distance learning (fully online) or from distance learning to in-person/adaptive learning.
11. ***Approximately 2300 elementary students opted for the virtual school and 1000 students switched back from virtual to the in-person home school.*** The reorganization resulted in approximately 100 surplus teachers that will be

placed at St. Anne Academy. Approximately 78 schools were affected and this resulted in the home school teachers being assigned to the virtual school. Of these 78 schools, 60 are only surplussing 1 teacher and 18 schools are surplussing 2 teachers. The placement of these teachers at St. Anne will alleviate the open positions that have been occurring and result in having all students placed in the virtual school.

12. ***Human Resources staff will be providing ZOOM sessions for principals to help finalize the organization of classes and complete the staffing adjustments required by the transfer of students between the virtual and home schools.***
13. ***The 36 high risk schools were maintained at the lower class caps as motioned by the Board of Trustees. Classes were organized at a maximum number for primary at 15 students and for junior and intermediate classes at 20 students.*** There were very few situations in which these caps were exceeded due to the lack of available space in the school.
14. ***Please note that for elementary students, the switch to a new learning environment means the child will be assigned a new teacher and begin in the new learning model on Monday, November 23.*** This allows for the completion of parent teacher interviews that will be completed by November 20th. Progress reports for students go home the week of November 16th. The next opportunity to switch learning models will be in February.
15. ***At the secondary level we are allowing students that wish to move to a virtual environment to stay in their home school to complete their second quadmester courses. We are using this time to pilot a hybrid model of teaching at secondary.*** Teachers will deliver a program to their cohort of students both virtually and face to face for the second quadmester. The total number of students in each cohort will still not exceed 15 students. Of these 15 students there will be some that attend classes face to face and others that attend virtually. The teacher will provide a program that will instruct students using a dual mode of delivery.
16. ***The rationale for the pilot hybrid model at secondary is due to a number of different factors. St. Anne's would have had an increase to their student population of 25%. This significant increase would result in a dramatic reduction in the number of sections available to offer at the in-person school.*** Every teacher that leaves the in-person school takes with them 6 courses that they teach. The home schools struggled to provide specialty type courses and

elective courses during the first quadmester due to the large number of surplus teachers that then were moved to St. Anne. A further reduction of teaching staff would result in limited course offerings for students left at the in-person school. This further reduction in staff would also create more pressure at the in-person school to provide screening, supervision and on-call coverage.

17. ***The pilot of a hybrid model will allow staff to bring stability to the system at the secondary level.*** Timetabling for students at the in-person school has already been completed for the second quadmester. If students were to move to St. Anne's it would result in both schools having to retimetable their entire student population for the second quadmester. This process usually takes weeks to complete and would be a significant challenge for guidance staff at St. Anne's and the in-person school to complete in time for the start of the second quadmester on November 19th.
18. ***Parents that requested to switch from St. Anne's back to their home school will be allowed to return.*** There are approximately 200 students that requested to move from St. Anne's back to their home school. These requests will be accommodated and the guidance staff will timetable for these students for the second quadmester.
19. ***Parents that requested a move to virtual learning at St. Anne's will be informed that their child will remain in their home school to receive a virtual mode of learning. For those parents that refuse this hybrid model of learning, we will work with those families to determine if there are open spaces within the courses at St. Anne's to accommodate their request.***
20. ***Secondary Principals have requested that we move to this hybrid model to support student selection of courses and maintain a strong sense of community at the home school.*** Principals and central staff will address the technology concerns and the professional learning required to deliver a hybrid model of teaching within their school. Principals feel that by implementing the hybrid model that they can maintain a proper selection of courses that students need in order to graduate and address the course pathway requirements that students desire. A committee of secondary principals and central staff will be formed to analyze the issues presented during the implementation of the pilot. This committee is to address the concerns of stakeholders and develop a manual of best practices related to the delivery of a hybrid teaching model to be shared with all secondary schools.

CVRIS Funding

21. On October 28, 2020, the Ministry released “*Memo 2020:B20 COVID-19 Resilience Infrastructure Stream: Education Related (CVRIS-EDU) Projects*”. School boards are invited to put forward proposals for consideration that will protect the health and wellbeing of students, staff and children in schools and co-located child care facilities.

22. *The CVRIS-EDU aims to support retrofits, repairs and upgrades to school board facilities to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic by supporting health and safety.* Eligible facilities include:

- Elementary and secondary schools
- Continuing Education Facilities
- Child care centres co-located with school board facilities

23. *Eligible projects will include modification, repair and/or reconfiguration of a facility to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic and provide a public benefit.*

Projects should focus on one of the following themes:

- promoting occupant health and safety;
- improving facility condition (e.g., air quality, water refilling stations);
- enhancing physical distancing; and
- facilitating distance learning.

Installation/purchase of devices is not supported. Examples of eligible projects under each category above is provided as Appendix ‘A’.

24. *Project expenditures must also meet additional criteria to be considered eligible for CVRIS-EDU funding.* Criteria include:

- The project must not be receiving funding under another federal or provincial program.
- Individual projects cannot exceed \$10 million in total eligible costs.
- The project must not have been tendered before the federal government approves the project.
- Construction must have commenced by September 30, 2021.
- Construction must be substantially complete¹ by December 31, 2021.

25. *The ministry will assess eligible project proposals from boards, and then secure approval from the provincial and federal governments. The deadline for submission is November 18, 2020.* Funding approvals are anticipated by early spring. The timelines for assessing, ranking and submission of projects is

short. *Staff anticipate having a preliminary list of proposed projects available for the November 12, 2020 meeting of Corporate Services.*

Distribution of Resources

26. *The deployment of various resources to schools as additional health and safety measures to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 is ongoing.* A detailed listing of the distribution of resources will be updated and provided to the November Corporate Services meeting. Class reorganizations may require redistribution as students transfer to virtual learning from in person lowering class sizes in some areas.

Outdoor Classrooms

27. *Installation of tents for Phase 2 of the outdoor classroom pilot have been completed.* There are now tents installed at 18 schools. Feedback from the first 10 installations has been collected and summarized in Appendix 'B'. Feedback has been mostly positive, with the exception of one school. Most principals who responded said they would like to keep the tents as long as possible. There have been some requests for heaters, which are not recommended due to safety, liability, security, logistical, maintenance and fuel cost issues. There have also been many requests for seating (see "logs" below). Two instances of vandalism were noted in the last return to school update, but no other schools have reported incidents since. There have been cases of wall panels being closed by unauthorized users overnight and methods to secure the panels are being investigated.

28. *The City of Toronto has generously agreed to donate a large number of logs for outdoor classroom seating.* The TCDSB will be responsible for picking up the logs from various City compounds across the City, cutting them into suitable lengths for seating, and delivering them to schools. A budget of \$30,000 has been established and a Request for Quotation will be issued to retain a contractor to carry out this work for approximately 50 elementary schools at 20-25 seats each. Principals have been surveyed to ensure the log seating is provided to the schools that want it and will use it, and at least 70 school principals have responded in the affirmative. The 18 tent pilot schools and schools in COVID-19 high-risk zones will be prioritized.

Cycling to School

29. *Work continues planning for the installation of bike racks to ensure they are available at all schools.* As verified by site visits by facilities staff, there are fewer schools without bike racks than previously indicated by survey data. This

means the goal of having bicycle parking at all schools can be achieved sooner and for lower cost, and the City of Toronto funding can be used to also increase the number of bike racks at larger schools that already have them (where they are well-used) and to replace damaged or older model racks. Once locations are finalized, a unit rate RFQ for supply and installation of the bike racks, as well as concrete pads where required, will be issued.

Indoor Air Quality

30. ***Installation of CO2 sensors at three sample schools was completed during the week of October 19.*** Programming and calibration of sensors, troubleshooting of some sensor placement issues, and set up of a “dashboard” for downloading and viewing the data was to be completed by October 30. Staff will review and provide comment on preliminary data once it is available.

Technology

31. New device requests continue to come on a weekly basis. ***Based on the trends over the past few weeks the average is 200 Chromebooks and 20 iPads requests per week.*** The iPads are equipped with Internet access from Rogers for students that do not have home internet.

32. ***Devices continue to ship to schools for principals to arrange for pickup by families.*** Over 500 Chromebooks and 150 iPads are expected to ship this week and shipments continue as devices are configured and labelled. Additional orders are being placed to fulfil the needs.

E. IMPLEMENTATION, STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT PLAN

1. ***Reorganization-related communications and webpage will be created to inform families and staff.*** This includes a designated reorganization webpage which will provide all stakeholders with pertinent information about what to expect as part of the reorganization. FAQs will be posted as well as communications to staff, elementary families and secondary families from the Director. Social media will also be used as a vehicle to ensure everyone is informed about changes and what to expect.
2. ***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.

F. CONCLUDING STATEMENT

This report is for the consideration of the Board.