



REPORT TO

REGULAR 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

December 3, 2020

First Tabling

December 10, 2020

Review

[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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 Development, and
 Chief Financial Officer

A. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The last update to the Reopening Action Plan was submitted to the November 19, 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.

Human Resources continue to address and plan for staffing shortages experienced due to COVID related absences, sick leave and disability as well as monitoring staff under quarantine parameters. 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 Ministry of Education has recently released funding announcements to provide stabilization to Boards for declining enrolment funding losses as well as additional funding for technology initiatives.

Further updates concerning final submissions for CVRIS funding, installation of bicycle racks, outdoor classrooms and the ongoing indoor air quality study are provided in this 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 20 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 continues to proactively plan for staffing shortages given the incidence of covid cases in our schools. We are capitalizing on recent rules changes that expand the use of retired teachers and administrators. In particular, we are using retired administrators to bolster school-based administrative and supervision needs and we will utilize experienced retired administrators to support our virtual teachers as they manage their new and evolving virtual environments.***
3. ***HR staff continues to enhance each school's allocation of Lunch Time Supervisors as well as 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 continues to diligently manage its extensive active sick leave cases. HR staff is closely monitoring absence and sick leave metrics for all employee groups and carefully reviewing requests made by our most vulnerable employees during this pandemic. Significant caseloads are being reviewed daily and granting employees the ability to work virtually, where feasible, is being considered. Enhancing employee awareness of our employer-sponsored Employee Family Assistance Plan remains a priority.***
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 effectively serve our special needs and English As A Second Language students currently attending St. Anne Catholic Academy.***
6. ***HR and Curriculum Department staff have consulted with our union partners and we have finalized an agreement with an external provider (SMASH Education), which will provide St. Anne students (Grades 1 – 8)***

with a virtual experiential Core French program. The program is aligned with MOE curriculum expectations and will act as a suitable supplemental French resource. We anticipate that this program will be launched in the virtual school on Monday, December 7, 2020. Details regarding the launch will be communicated to parents this week and staff continue to work on identifying and allocating direct Core French teacher support for grades 6, 7, and 8 at St. Anne Academy in the new year.

7. *HR staff is monitoring all quarantined staff to ensure that proper parameters are maintained. We continue to communicate with all employees regarding travel plans, quarantine requirements that may apply, and the need to commit to the employer to ensure continuity of program delivery and service.*

Communications

8. *Inclement weather protocols are being discussed with our coterminous Board and once finalized will be communicated with families.*

Grants for Student Needs Stabilization Funding

9. On November 26, 2020, *the Ministry of Education released Memo 2020:B22 regarding 2020-21 Grants for Student Needs Stabilization.*
10. *This Memo provides an update to the 2020-21 Revised Budget Estimates' Grants for Student Needs (GSN) calculations that address the unforeseen enrolment declines due to the Covid-19 Pandemic. In addition, District School Boards possess limited means to respond to changes of this magnitude mid-year. This GSN update and the subsequent funding stabilization amount is a one-time adjustment for the 2020-21 fiscal year.*
11. *Key Messages from the memo are summarized as follows:*
 - The funding stabilization *change establishes a funding floor* based on the lower of the 2020-21 Budget Estimates, Ministry of Education Grey Paper GSN Projections or the Local District School Board 2020-21 Revised Budget Estimates.
 - *The aggregate GSN comparison is exclusive of any impact upon Capital and Debt related GSN components.*
 - *Adjustments will be applied by the Ministry of Education for Special Education GSN allocations.*
 - A Ministry of Education Memorandum will be issued in the forthcoming days/weeks providing further clarification.

12. *The estimated impact upon the TCDSB* is demonstrated in the table below. These high-level calculations are subject to change pending Ministry of Education verification.

2020-21 EDU Grey Paper GSN Estimate A	2020-21 TCDSB GSN Estimate B	2020-21 TCDSB GSN Revised Estimate C	TCDSB GSN Funding Floor D (D = Lessor of A or B if C is less than A & B , otherwise D = C)
\$1.117B	\$1.119B	\$1.095B	\$1.117B
Funding Stabilization Amount			\$22.071M

Education and Community Partnership Funding

13. On November 26, the Ministry issued *Memo 2020:B23 COVID-19 Funding: Additional High Priority Areas and Funding for the Education and Community Partnership Program*.
14. *The areas of Durham, Halton, Hamilton and Waterloo were moved to the Red-Control level of the updated framework therefore the ministry allocated a further \$13.6 million from the Future Pandemic Response Fund to twelve school boards in these identified areas, to support the ongoing health and safety measures for students and staff. TCDSB has already received additional funding upon being moved to the Red-Control level and is not further affected by this portion of the announcement.*
15. *The ministry also introduced a one-time investment, utilizing the remaining \$1.4 million from the Future Pandemic Response Fund, for the Education and Community Partnership Program (ECPP) to fund technology and technology-related costs due to the COVID-19 pandemic in order to support continued student learning. The TCDSB will receive \$55,446 to further support technology initiatives.*

CVRIS Funding

16. ***The COVID-19 Resilience Infrastructure Stream funding request was submitted to the Ministry of Education on November 18, 2020.*** The projects submitted for CVRIS funding are listed in Appendix 'A'. As noted in the Return to School Update on November 12, projects were identified and ranked based on the eligibility criteria provided by the Federal and Provincial governments. Over 500 potential projects were identified including ventilation upgrades, window replacements, water bottle filling stations, handwashing station upgrades, outdoor shelters and WIFI cabling infrastructure. The final funding announcement is expected at the end of January 2021 and all funded projects must be completed by December 31, 2021.

Cycling to School

17. ***TCDSB staff has verified that 81 new bicycle racks are needed to achieve the goal of having bicycle parking at all TCDSB schools.*** A unit rate RFQ for the supply and installation of the bike racks has been issued and has now closed. The contract for the work will be awarded shortly. Funding for the bike racks will initially be made available from COVID Relief Funding but will subsequently be reimbursed under an existing agreement with the City of Toronto through the Ontario Municipal Commuter Cycling Fund. This funding was established by the Province to support municipalities in building infrastructure that increases bicycle commuting.

Outdoor Classrooms

18. ***The four-month outdoor classroom pilot will be completed at the end of December.*** The Principals of the 18 schools involved in the pilot are currently being canvassed for feedback on their use of the tents and for a determination of whether the school wants to retain the tent or not. As there is not currently funding available to extend the tent rentals, only those schools that express a keen need for a tent will be considered if alternate funding can be made available. Generally, use of the tents as outdoor classrooms has declined as the temperatures fall. They continue to be used for phys ed. and sheltering in bad weather. Unauthorised use overnight and on weekends remains an issue at specific school locations but instances of vandalism have been minimal. Further feedback on the pilot project will be collected and brought to the Board in January.
19. ***Logs for permanent outdoor classroom seating will still be provided regardless of the removal of the tents.*** Currently, there is interest from over 100 schools for outdoor log seating. Logs donated by the City of Toronto are available but the TCDSB will be responsible for picking up the logs, cutting

them into suitable lengths for seating, and delivering them to schools. An RFQ issued in November to retain a contractor to carry out this work did not elicit any bids. Additional contractors are now being contacted and the RFQ will be reissued.

Indoor Air Quality

20. ***Indoor air quality monitoring was done at three sample schools over the month of November.*** The month-long testing period provided for a range in weather conditions and outdoor temperatures for a more comprehensive data set. The Consultant is currently compiling the data and information on the findings will be brought to the Board in January.

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. A webpage has been created with information about ***the classroom reorganization*** including a section on frequently asked questions.

F. CONCLUDING STATEMENT

This report is for the consideration of the Board.