



REPORT TO

REGULAR BOARD

IMPLICATIONS OF FEBRUARY TRANSFER DATE BETWEEN VIRTUAL AND IN-PERSON SCHOOLS

And these two lots came to the hour and moment and day of decision before God and among all nations. Esther 10:11

Created, Draft	First Tabling	Review
December 8, 2020	December 10, 2020	Click here to enter a date.

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INFORMATION REPORT

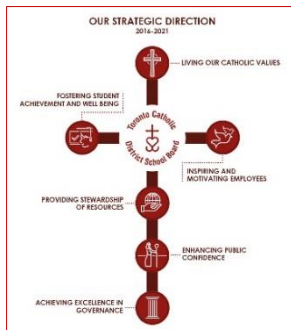
Vision:

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

This report provides information on the implications of another system-wide reorganization required to honour transfer requests between St. Anne Catholic Academy School of Virtual Learning and the bricks and mortar schools at the February 1st transition point.

The Board is considering a motion to rescind the February 1st transition point and limit transfers between virtual and bricks and mortar schools to approved extenuating circumstance requests only.

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

B. PURPOSE

At the December 3, 2020 meeting of the Student Achievement and Well-Being, Catholic Education and Human Resources Committee, the following motion was deferred to the December 10, 2020 Board Meeting:

BE IT RESOLVED THAT: *Stability being our priority*, that the TCDSB staff will refrain from further re-organization due to the request to move from face to face to virtual learning at St. Anne's Academy or from St. Anne's Academy back to face to face schooling for the remaining of 2020-21 school year except for medical, family exceptional circumstances or compassionate grounds.

C. BACKGROUND

1. At the end of the summer 2020, the TCDSB offered parents choice:
 - to attend in-person or virtual school
 - to transition between virtual and in-person schools in November and again in February

2. In September 2020, after considering parent responses, approximately 18 200 elementary students and 5 900 secondary students transferred to the virtual school. As such:
 - Teaching staff who were unable to attend work in-person applied for and were granted accommodations to work from home through the virtual school (286 elementary, 172 secondary).

- In-person school staffing models had to be re-organized to allow for the transition to virtual school, as such many teachers were declared surplus. (433 elementary, 320 secondary – note some of these teachers had also been granted accommodations or were on leaves/secondments)
- Staffing considerations at schools in hot spot areas were made to allow for additional staffing and smaller class sizes.
- St. Anne staffing and scheduling could not be completed until all in-person schools had been staffed appropriately based on the motions approved at Board.
- Classes at St. Anne were filled using the class maximum numbers as per the collective agreements.
- After assigning all of the surplus teachers and those on accommodations, St. Anne still required additional staff (206 elementary teachers, 7 secondary teachers). These positions were advertised and filled using long term occasional teachers.

After assigning all of the long term occasional teachers, a shortfall of teachers remained; centrally assigned teachers were redeployed to fill these vacancies.

3. From September 2020 until the beginning of November 2020 some of the realities facing our schools were the following:
 - in-person schools had to adopt the new health and safety protocols as informed by Toronto Public Health.
 - the model of synchronous and asynchronous teaching and learning in the virtual school was new to most of our students and teaching staff, but especially to our newest teachers.
 - centrally assigned staff were not available for most of the first three months of this school year to offer professional learning to teachers.
 - due to instances of positive Covid-19 tests, in-person schools began to pivot to remote learning as necessary.
 - schools had to nurture a sense of community, and develop relationships, based on the new pandemic realities and protocols.
 - where open classroom space permitted, requests for transfers between virtual and in-person schools (and vice versa) were accommodated without breaking classroom caps.
4. In October 2020, we surveyed families regarding choice for the November transition point, resulting in the following:
 - elementary students requiring transfers: 2310 to St. Anne, 981 to return to in-person schools.

- it was determined that secondary students requesting transfers to virtual would remain at their in-person school and participate remotely. 202 students requested to return to in-person school from St. Anne.
- to address the staffing needs of the system, a second re-organization process began, 85 elementary teachers and 6 secondary teachers were declared surplus and transferred to St. Anne.
- much frustration was experienced by families who had to endure classroom or teacher changes.
- in-person schools had to move teachers and students between classes causing further disruption and interruption to learning.
- existing St. Anne classes that had space were filled with new students due to the required reorganization and new classes were created and many teacher changes occurred.
- many classes once again had to spend time nurturing new relationships and building community.

5. Since the November transfer date:

- students and teachers have adjusted to their new classes/schools.
- staffing concerns still exist but are considerably reduced.
- supports and professional learning are being offered on a regular basis since centrally assigned teachers have returned to their roles.
- a feeling of stability regarding classes and teachers has emerged.
- requests for moves between virtual and in-person schools (or vice versa) have been accommodated in response to requests for consideration in extenuating circumstances, family situations, compassionate reasons, etc. (elementary: 577 moved to virtual, 388 moved back to in-person; secondary: 6 moved to virtual, 57 moved back to in-person).

D. EVIDENCE/RESEARCH/ANALYSIS

1. As we approach February 2021, consideration needs to be given to continuing to give choice to parents and families or to stabilize the system.
2. The chart below shows implications for **elementary schools** if the decision is made to proceed with **no February common transfer date**, keeping things as they are, and **continuing to facilitate transfer requests due to extenuating circumstances**, health issues, family situations, compassionate reasons, etc. Since the November transfer date, the number of elementary student transfers facilitated as of December 9, 2020 are: 577 moved to virtual, and 388 moved back to in-person.

Elementary – continue as is, no February transfer date, continue to facilitate extenuating circumstances transfer requests

Implications for the Public /System considerations	Implications for In-person Schools, Students and Staff	Implications for St Anne Students and Staff
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disregards previous commitment made for another exit/re-entry point, possibly disadvantaging families that were counting on this option. • Relationships, which are so critical to student success, have already been established. A major reorg would result in another adjustment period and the need for reestablishing relationships, both teacher/student and student/student. There has already been a huge impact on instructional time in all school settings. • Another reorganization would further disrupt instructional time and could impact student learning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will be able to place students as long as there are spaces available in the class and the class cap is not exceeded by the addition of students. • Will increase class sizes in an in-person model during a pandemic and thereby reduce the physical distance for students within the class. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will be able to accommodate all students where there are empty seats available for the requested grade. • Will be unable to fulfil requests once the requested grade has met their class caps.

3. The chart below shows implications for **elementary schools** if the decision is made to proceed with the **February common transfer date**. This would require a system-wide reorganization which would lead to further teacher surplus, collapsing of classes, teacher changes and student transfers in both the in-person and virtual schools.

Elementary –proceed with February transfer date		
Implications for the Public /System considerations	Implications for In-person Schools, Students and Staff	Implications for St Anne Students and Staff
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respects details of the original plan • A major reorganization would result in another adjustment period and the need for reestablishing relationships, both teacher/student and student/student. • Continuity of curriculum could be affected as students move between schools and/or classes. • Further impact on instructional time in all school settings as new classes are established or students/staff become familiar with new students. • The Toronto Elementary Catholic Teachers are not in agreement with any reorganization after September 30th and have stated that they will take appropriate action through the grievance process. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requires reorganization of classes depending on the number of moves to/from the school • Staffing changes of teachers, DECEs and support staff will occur • Could result in a class having a 2nd or 3rd teacher change • Could result in more combined grade classes if the school enrollment decreases • Could result in changes in cohorts thus students may be with different peers initially • Could result in new classes being created if the school enrollment increases. This would necessitate additional staff and require reorganization of classes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requires reorganization of classes depending on the number of moves to/from the school • Changes of teacher likely to occur • Could result in having a 4th or 5th teacher change for a class • Could result in collapsed classes if enrollment decreases and surplus teachers would be required to return to their in-person school. • Could result in new classes being created if the school enrollment increases and results in a reorganization of in-person schools so that the appropriate number of teachers are moved to St Anne. This could result in many changes of teachers at St Anne.

4. The chart below shows implications for **secondary schools** if the decision is made to proceed with **no February common transfer date**, keeping things as they are, and **continuing to facilitate transfer requests due to extenuating circumstances**, health issues, family situations, compassionate reasons, etc. Since the November transfer date, the number of secondary student transfers facilitated as of December 9, 2020 are: 6 moved to virtual, and 57 moved back to in-person.

Secondary – continue as is, no February transfer date, continue to facilitate extenuating circumstances transfer requests		
Implications for the Public /System considerations	Implications for In-person Schools, Students and Staff	Implications for St Anne Students and Staff
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students attending in-person who wish to move to the virtual school in order to only be with students and teachers who are participating virtually will not be able to do so • Students attending in-person may opt to attend class in-person or remotely. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very little impact • Students will continue to access courses provided by in-person school as scheduled for the quadmester • Possible deployment of additional technology or devices depending on the number of students opting to go virtual at their in-person school. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very little impact • Students will continue to access courses available virtually at St. Anne as scheduled for the quadmester

5. The chart below shows implications for secondary schools if the decision is made to **extend the hybrid model pilot** to include all students in the board (with all St. Anne students returning to their in-person school):

Secondary – extend the hybrid model pilot to include all TCDSB secondary students		
Implications for the Public /System considerations	Implications for In-person Schools, Students and Staff	Implications for St Anne Students and Staff
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students who wish to participate virtually can do so • Students who wish to attend in-person can do so • Classes can be a mix of in-person cohorts and a virtual cohort • St Anne students move back to in-person school • Many secondary teachers on accommodation working at St Anne (approximately 172), who can only teach online, cannot return to in-person teaching at this time, which will mean a shortage of teachers in the schools. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete rescheduling of the school will be required for all students and staff . • Increases to the number of students participating remotely. • Possible deployment of additional technology or devices for teachers and/or students. • Significant workload for school administrators, guidance and ICT Services staff required to transfer all students, recreate new student and staff timetables. • Rescheduling is a more manual cumbersome process as no changes can be made to quadmesters 1 and 2. • Students may not be able to take necessary courses due to limited course offerings in the school. • Very short turn around time to make necessary changes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No students would be remaining • Staff would return to their in-person schools except for those that have been granted an accommodation (approximately 172). • Centrally offered day-elearning would continue for Gr 11 and Gr 12 students who cannot get specific courses at their in-person school.

E. CONCLUDING STATEMENT

This report is for the consideration of the Board.