



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
January 5, 2021	January 14, 2021	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 December 10, 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.

On December 21, 2020, the Province announced schools in Ontario would be closed to in-person learning following Christmas Break. As a result, student learning pivoted to remote learning for all Elementary and Secondary students for the duration of the closure period. Demands for technology have been handled as required throughout and staff have been proactively planning for future needs. Communications continued throughout the Christmas Break to all stakeholders.

Phase 1 of the Asymptomatic Testing Pilot ended on Dec. 16, 2020. The Hospital for Sick Kids is compiling data and will submit a final report to the Ministry with recommendations for Phase 2.

The Province has informed TCDSB that it has submitted recommended projects for CVRIS funding to the Federal level for final approval.

TCDSB schools will continue to follow safety measures and guidance from Toronto Public Health when schools return to in person learning.

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, Staff Manual and Transition to Distance Learning Plan continue to reflect the process for operating schools safely.* Items from Board motions and Ministry updates that are confirmed have been included as required. Schools will continue to follow established protocols for virtual and in person learning.

D. EVIDENCE/RESEARCH/ANALYSIS

Distance Learning for all TCDSB Schools

1. *On December 21, 2020, the Province announced schools in Ontario would be closed to in-person learning following Christmas Break.* As a result, student learning pivoted to remote learning for Elementary students for the period of January 4-8 and for Secondary students for the period of January 4-22.
2. *Enhancements to student distance learning during the closure include:*
 - continuity of classes with no interruption to learning as in-person elementary classes transitioned to remote learning, as per the [TCDSB Transition to Remote Learning Plan](#)
 - in-person secondary schools moved from the hybrid model to fully remote learning to ensure course continuity and no interruption to learning
 - asynchronous and synchronous learning time requirements have been applied, as outlined by the province under [Policy/Program Memorandum \(PPM\) 164](#)
 - special consideration for in person attendance given to high needs MEDD ISP Special Education Students
 - in the fall, all teachers were required to create a Brightspace or Google classroom, in order to be ready should a transition to remote learning be required; Zoom was added in November as an option for video conferencing (previously only Google Meet was available)
 - devices for students continue to be made available, when required; safety protocols in place to ensure safe pickup of devices from the school by the parent/student
 - remote clinical intervention, by social workers and psychologists to support student mental health and well-being, continues through principal referral

- distance learning and “check and connect” monitoring for all special education students by special education staff

Staffing and Recruitment

3. ***The Human Resources (HR) Department continues to support critical school-based programs during the school lockdown period.*** We are capitalizing on recent rule 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 in cases involving family status needs. Occasional teachers are also being used temporarily to support in-person Special Education Program instruction.
4. ***HR staff is sustaining our commitment to enhancing 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.***
5. ***The Sick Leave & Disability Department continues to diligently manage its extensive active sick leave cases.*** HR staff is closely monitoring absences during the school lockdown period and has implemented a process allowing Principals to advise HR staff of instructional/support gaps. ***The careful and regular review of sick leave metrics for all employee groups remains a priority.*** 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.
6. ***Senior TCDSB staff members have maintained regular contact with our union partners (TECT, TSU, and CUPE) to collaboratively address issues.*** Recent discussions have focused on how we can sustain robust instruction and enhanced support staff monitoring/supporting students’ learning/social/emotional needs during the school lockdown period.
7. ***The SMASH Education virtual experiential Core French program has been successfully launched.*** This program provides St. Anne students (Grades 1 – 8) with a Ministry of Education aligned core French supplemental resource. Senior staff continues to work with our union partners to provide direct remote core French instruction at St. Anne Catholic Academy where possible.

8. ***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.

Child Care and Before and After School Programs

10. ***The province released “Child Care Impacts of Time Limited Public Health Actions” on December 21, 2020. During the provincial closure, all child care programs*** serving infant, toddler and preschool-age children located inside TCDSB schools ***were permitted to remain open to support families in need of childcare.***
11. ***All before and after school, authorized recreation programs were closed*** to school age children in compliance with the provincial directive.
12. ***The Ministry of Education implemented a targeted emergency child care (ECC) program*** for eligible parents (***Appendix ‘A’***) of school-aged children who may not be able to accommodate their child’s learning and/or care at home.
13. ***The following TCDSB sites are offering ECC for school age children of essential workers during the closure:*** St. Charles, St. Martin De Porres, St. Rene Goupil, Holy Trinity, Holy Child, St. Andre Catholic School, St. John the Evangelist, Our Lady of Sorrows, St. Jerome.

Ministry of Education Asymptomatic Testing Pilot

14. ***Phase 1 of the 4-week pilot testing program ended on December 16, 2020.*** Toronto Public Health recommended to Ontario Health that a total 18 schools in Toronto participate in the pilot testing program, 5 of the schools were TCDSB schools: Chaminade, St. Fidelis, St. John the Evangelist, St. Roch and Msgr Percy Johnson.
15. ***The Ministry has asked the Hospital for Sick Children to compile the data and provide a final report to the Ministry with recommendations for the next phase of testing.*** A copy of the report will be shared with the Trustees once the report is available.

Communications

16. *On December 10, families received information about our inclement weather protocols.*
17. *On December 11, families received information about in-class and virtual transfers.*
18. *On December 23, following the Ministry of Education announcement regarding remote learning, families received detailed information about the transition and what to expect in the new year.* Communications on the shutdown from the Ministry of Education and message from the Minister were also shared with families on *December 21 and January 5*. The Board of Trustees and TCDSB School Administrators also received information about the remote learning plan over the break.

CVRIS Funding

19. *The COVID-19 Resilience Infrastructure Stream funding request, originally submitted to the Ministry of Education on November 18, 2020, has entered the second stage of approval.* The Province has informed TCDSB that the list of recommended projects has been submitted to the Federal level for review and final approval of projects. The final funding announcement is expected at the end of January 2021.

Cycling to School

20. *Award of the contracts for supply and installation of bike racks at schools that do not currently have bicycle parking is awaiting approval of the procurement reports.* Bike racks will first be installed at schools where an existing suitable hard surface is available. New concrete pads will be required where there is not a suitable surface and will be installed once weather allows. 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.

Outdoor Classrooms

21. *The initial outdoor classroom pilot project was completed on December 31, however, the pilot project has been extended at four schools where use of the tent has been integral to programme delivery.* Tents remain at St. Michael Choir School, St. Fidelis, St. Nicholas and St. Ambrose. Tents at the other 14 schools that participated in the original pilot project were removed over the Christmas break. Generally, use of the tents as outdoor classrooms declined

as the temperatures fell. Unauthorised use overnight and on weekends was an ongoing issue at specific school locations. Further feedback on the pilot project will be collected from the school Principals and brought to the Board.

22. ***The initiative to provide permanent outdoor classroom seating is continuing beyond the end of the tent pilot project.*** Logs donated by the City of Toronto are available, but the TCDSB is 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. Staff has reached out directly to alternate vendors and is in the process of obtaining and evaluating quotations to determine feasibility within the project budget.

Indoor Air Quality

23. ***A draft report on the results of the Indoor Air Quality study has just been received and is under review by staff.*** The consultant, Pinchin Ltd., at an upcoming Corporate Services meeting, will make a presentation of the results and recommendations.

Technology

24. ***Staff have been proactively working to ensure that the supply of student need devices stay ahead of demands and emergency needs, and staff were prepared to pivot when the news of the January closure was received.*** In anticipation of device requests from in-person elementary school students and families that might be at a higher risk of not having a device for remote learning during the January school closure, approximately 2500 Chromebooks were pre-processed over the December holiday break and pre-shipped to all elementary schools between January 4 and 8. Each elementary school received a minimum of 5 Chromebooks and an increase amount using a fair and equitable distribution plan based on the number of students and socioeconomic factors. The request process remained the same for students and families (i.e. simply contacting the school to make a device request), and the device management application for Principals was updated so they could easily and quickly draw from their local pre-shipment inventory.
25. ***The closure response plan for devices was communicated to Principals before the holiday break, and they were later emailed with delivery information and instructions to assist with their planning and communication.*** Within the first few days, more than 400 of the pre-shipped Chromebooks were assigned and picked up at elementary schools.

26. *Regular orders continue to flow. There are approximately 2500 Chromebooks and 100 iPads in our supply with the vendor to continue to process and fulfil student device needs.* An additional 800 iPads will be received soon to stay ahead of requests for students that require internet.

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.

F. CONCLUDING STATEMENT

This report is for the consideration of the Board.