



Director's Monthly Report December 2020 – January 2021

December 11 – January 22

As we transitioned into the Christmas break, recognizing the increasing COVID numbers throughout the city, we asked staff and students to bring home with them anything they would need to continue to teach and learn remotely. On December 21st, the decision was made to transition to fully remote learning.

Staff worked diligently to prepare to serve students remotely, while others prepared to continue to serve some of our most vulnerable students in-person during this provincial lockdown. What was apparent throughout the system, in every role and function our staff serve, is the tremendous optimism, resilience, and commitment to serving students and families. Parents' collaboration and support has made a tremendous impact as we continue to navigate this new reality together as a Catholic community.

The Christmas season was both different and difficult as our ability to gather in our parishes in communities of faith, and in our homes surrounded by family, was not possible. It is at these times when prayer, service, and sacrifice are most required as we are thoughtful about loved ones, neighbours, friends and classmates for health, safety, and well-being.

While we are in a provincial lockdown, we still have schools open serving students with special needs, and providing access to day care for essential workers serving our community. We are proud of our staff and the ways in which everyone has stepped up to give of themselves during this difficult time in the spirit of Catholic service. While we continue learning remotely and respecting the province's encouragement to stay home, we do so as a community of faith, connected to one another in prayer, looking forward to the opportunity to gather together again. Until then, we remain spiritually and socially united while physically apart.

Highlights from the past month include:

- Recognizing important observances such as: Virtue of the Month for January being **Courage**, **Tamil Heritage Month**, **Feast of the Epiphany** January 6, & **Martin Luther King Jr. Day** January 18
- Welcoming our soon-to-be newest TCDSB students through the **Kindergarten Registration Process** which began on January 20
- Celebrating **ShareLife's 13th Annual Poster Contest winners** from St. Gerald Catholic Elementary School
- The introduction of our **revised Land Acknowledgement**
- Celebrating the Eucharist through the TCDSB **Board-Wide Live Advent/Christmas Mass** and our weekly Christ at Christmas liturgies
- Celebrating an **Advent Reflection and Christmas send off with the Teaching & Learning Collaborative (TLC) Group** - connecting in prayer, joyful celebration and Christmas messages
- Welcoming 2021 through the TCDSB Board-Wide **New Year's Liturgy Livestream**
- Connecting with teachers as they begin their career in the TCDSB through the **New Teacher Induction Program (NTIP) Orientation webinar**

- Sharing TCDSB perspectives on leadership and education in the pandemic on **“Ontario Today”** provincial call in show on **CBC Radio**.
- Meeting amazing staff, teachers and principals during **weekly school visits to schools hosting in-person ISP classes** for our most vulnerable students. So grateful to staff who continue to support our students and for going above and beyond and transforming the ***world through witness, faith, innovation and action*** during this time of tremendous challenge for students and families.
- Joining our Trustees for the annual **OCSTA January Catholic Trustee Conference** where we were able learn, engage and participate in professional development and faith formation with other Trustees from across the province.
- **Engaging with His Eminence Cardinal Collins** in partnership, collaboration, and mentorship in support of the faithful throughout our schools and parishes in Toronto.
- Representing the TCDSB with Chair Martino at the **Annual Meeting of the Chair and Directors of Education of the Catholic School Boards** through the Archdiocese of Toronto, led by His Eminence Cardinal Collins, discussing Catholic leadership in education.
- Connecting with **OPACE Executive** to discuss Parent Engagement, Partnerships, and planning during this unique school year.
- Speaking to **aspiring Catholic leaders** as they discern formal leadership positions within the TCDSB through the **Foundation’s Winter 2021** program in support of leadership development.
- Participating with over 4000 TCDSB students in conversation with **Elly Gotz, Holocaust survivor**, retired engineer, businessperson, pilot and author in the lead up to Holocaust Remembrance Day
- Continuing **weekly meetings with the Deputy Minister of Education, Toronto Public Health, and the Ministry of Health** in support of provincial and local initiatives to keep students, staff, and families safe and healthy during this current COVID pandemic to support schools during this time of remote learning and in consideration of return to school.
- Participating on and contributing to **provincial leadership committees** with **Directors of Education and Health officials** from across the province in support of TCDSB staff, students, and families, and to influence public policy decisions in support of education and health care.
- **Meeting weekly with Catholic Directors** from across the province in support of best practices, shared issues, solutions, and advocacy throughout Catholic education in Ontario.
- Continuing to meet with **Trustees, Senior Staff, Union Leadership partners, Principal and Vice Principal Associations, and Parent Groups** individually and at planned meetings to discuss our partnership and collective commitments for the immediate and the year ahead.
- Partnering with **Toronto Public Health** weekly to discuss school health and pandemic related support and initiatives to promote public health, and respond to COVID-related issues in on-going ways.
- Continuing our commitment to connecting with our TCDSB community through our monthly **“Lunch with the Director”** Facebook and YouTube live stream Q&A for parents and community members. Answering questions that are timely, relevant, and important to students and families in real-time. The next **“Lunch with the Director” is coming up on Friday January 29th**.