



Director's Monthly Report January – February 2021

January 25 to February 19

Despite the lockdown that has closed our schools for the majority of students, staff, and families, we have found ways to connect, collaborate, and celebrate together as a community of faith. I continue to marvel at the ways in which staff deepen their authentic connections to students in every role they serve within our system, in partnership, service, and solidarity with parents and families. The examples of system events and individual outreach are so numerous, so appreciated, and so needed during this difficult time.

As I submit this report a week in advance of each meeting, I do so eagerly anticipating the return to school for students in in-person learning on Monday February 16th. As an educator and a parent, I recognize how excited our community is to welcome students back to our schools throughout the system, and how students are looking forward to being back in school. It has been a long winter, and it is our hope that this return to school contributes to the academic, physical, and mental well-being of all students, staff, and parents.

What has become abundantly clear is the strength of our Catholic community as empathy, compassion, and conviction has revealed how much stronger we are together in partnership between home, school, and parish. I continue to encourage this commitment to supportive, collaborative relationships throughout the system as we navigate through this pandemic toward a light at the end of the tunnel that we are hoping grows brighter each day.

Highlights from the past month include:

- Recognizing important observances such as: Virtue of the Month for January being Love, “African Canadian Heritage Month” in recognition of Black History Month, Psychology Month, Energy Conservation Month, and the launch of the ICFF – Youth Film Festival, Indigenous Film Series from February 16th-March 12th
- Delivering greetings to the African Canadian Heritage Month honouring the legacy, accomplishments and contributions of Black Canadians and people of African Diaspora. African Canadian Heritage Month is also a time to recognize the role we can all play in addressing anti-Black racism.
- Workshops, events, spoken word performances, and critical conversations throughout African Canadian History Month including Kathy Grant, Maestro Fresh Wes, Nadine Williams, Lydia Gill, Natasha Henry, and Fr. Stan Chu Iio.
- Engaging in the second “Connections and Conversations Series” evening focused on conversations about issues facing Indigenous community. The Equity, Diversity, Indigenous Education, and Community Relations Department hosts a safe space to share, listen, and learning about equity, diversity, and culture. (Tuesday, January 26, 2021)
- Celebrating Family Literacy Day by connecting and engaging with preschoolers, parents and the Early On Group virtually and celebrated the annual Family Literacy Day event, virtually, which took place at St. Helen’s Catholic Elementary School (January 27)

- Engaging with over 6000 students and 200 teachers at the **iLITE Conference** – focusing on Equity in Education panel workshops, powerful conversations, and discussions (January 28 and January 29)
- Connecting with Directors from across the province through the Council of Ontario Directors of Education at the **CODE 2021 Annual Business Meeting** (January 28)
- On-going dialogue with His Eminence Cardinal Collins in support of partnership between home, school, and parishes throughout Toronto, and shared faith leadership.
- Welcoming students and families to their first day at the new school facilitates at **St. Joseph Morrow Park Catholic Secondary School** (February 16)
- Participating in the TCDSB Board-Wide **Ash Wednesday Liturgy of the Eucharist Livestream** (February 17)
- Connecting with our TCDSB community through our monthly **“Lunch with the Director”** series live streamed on Facebook and YouTube. This monthly live stream provides the opportunity for me to speak to matters of importance to our community through a live Q&A. 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, February 26, 2021.
- Preparing to welcome students who are in in-person learning back to school safely on Tuesday February 16th with principals, teachers, and support staff throughout the system.
- 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 TCSDB 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.