



Director's Monthly Report February – March 2021

February 22 – March 26

I write this report at the end of what would have been the March Break for staff, students, and families and recognize that the opportunity for much needed rest is still weeks away. I acknowledge the tremendous commitment to serving students and families that our staff make every day throughout the system, and the ways in which they continue to lean into their call to service. As I visit schools and connect with school leaders, staff, and students, I am humbled by the on-going optimism, perseverance, and commitment to community that our school leaders and front-line staff reveal through their actions each and every day. We are blessed by our Catholic community in the true spirit of “being there” for each other during this pandemic.

Our commitment to student and staff well-being through enhanced safety measures and processes, personal protective equipment, increased access to local testing options for families, and partnership with our local and provincial health partners has contributed to reducing the spread of COVID in our schools. However, we recognize that as community infections rise, so do cases in our schools. We are not immune to the spread of this virus and acknowledge the cohorts of students and staff who have been required to isolate, and even the temporary dismissal of an entire school through Toronto Public Health. These are difficult times, and it is during such times that our community of faith is united in our shared commitment to one another.

As we continue to ask more of each other, we do so in recognition of how much has already been given. We are thankful for and blessed by our staff, leaders, parents, and parishes as we persevere, ever hopeful for brighter days ahead in which we are able to gather as a community of faith.

Highlights from the past month include:

- Recognizing important observances in February and March such as: World Day of Social Justice, International Language Instructors Day, and Pink Shirt Day
- Celebrating **Forgiveness** as the Virtue of the Month, Celtic Canadian Heritage Month, Nutrition Month, Black Mental Health Week, National Social Work Week, Education Support Staff Appreciation Day, International Women's Day, and National Day of Observance for COVID-19
- Engaging with over 1600 secondary student leaders from across the system with remarks/greetings at the **Voices that Challenge Catholic Student Leadership Conference**. The student voice captured at this conference will help to shape the pillars of the CSLIT annual Student Trustee Report and Action Plan (March 5)
- Delivering remarks in celebration of **International Women's Day** - The theme being - ‘choose to challenge’ which highlights the importance of challenging biases and misconceptions in the interest of creating a more inclusive and gender-equal world (March 8)

- Connecting with OCSOA Executives from across the province at the virtual **OCSOA Annual AGM and Conference** (March 3 - 5)
- Meeting with parent leaders in support of strengthening opportunities for engagement throughout the system
- Celebrating the **Quincentennial Jubilee of Christianity in the Philippines** event, acknowledging 500 Years of Christianity in the Philippines
- Engaging with Black community leaders through the African Advisory Committee Meeting (March 11)
- On-going dialogue with **His Eminence Cardinal Collins** in support of partnership between home, school, and parishes throughout Toronto, and shared faith leadership.
- Supporting the “**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 (March 23)
- Connecting with the **Ladies on the Rise and Men of Distinction of Trust 15** (March 23). **Trust 15 is a charitable organization** that provides youth in the Rexdale/North Etobicoke area with programs that promote and facilitate positive behaviour, creative expression, and cooperative working skills.
- Engaging with TCDSB students at the **Stop the Stigma Mental Health and Well-Being Symposium** (March 24 and 25). This year’s theme is **We Become Compassionate**. This year’s theme aligns with our pastoral plan of We Become.
- Connecting with our TCDSB community through our monthly “**Lunch with the Director**” series live streamed on Facebook and YouTube. 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, March 26th, 2021**
- 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.
- 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.