



## Director's Monthly Report March – April 2021

As a faith community, Easter provides the cornerstone of our faith. On Good Friday we remember the tremendous sacrifice that Jesus made on the cross for our salvation, and on Easter Sunday the foundation of our faith – the resurrection – is our celebration as Catholics of Christ's triumph over death, and our new covenant with God. We celebrate new life and a rebirth during the Easter season. While this past Easter was yet another like no other in terms of being able to gather as a faith community and as families, we draw strength from the example that the cross provides and the promise of new life ahead during these difficult times during this pandemic. I hope the Easter season has brought hope to our students, staff, and teachers throughout Toronto.

In the midst of another provincial “stay at home” order where all schools in Toronto have been moved to remote through a public health order, we are so appreciative of the ways in which staff continue to be able to “pivot” to remote learning to continue to support students during this difficult time. All staff in every role in our schools – academic, support, administrative, and clinical - contribute to this significant move and are to be commended for their dedication, creativity, flexibility, and commitment to ensure that every student is being supported.

We have advocated with the Ministry and local public health to expedite access to vaccinations for all education staff and appreciate how that advocacy has turned into action. At the time of writing this, all special education staff who work with our most vulnerable students are eligible to be vaccinated regardless of postal code. All education staff working in or living in designated “hot spot” locations in the city are also eligible for vaccination. These locations have been determined by Toronto Public health and identified based on postal code. Staff working in such hotspot schools have been provided a letter to confirm their eligibility, while staff who live in a hotspot but not work in one need only provide their identification and a pay stub to confirm address and employment in order to book. In TCSD, the number of eligible school staff is significant and represents a large proportion of our overall staff. It is our hope that all staff who are eligible take advantage of this opportunity to get vaccinated.

At the time of writing this monthly update we are still awaiting confirmation of key details that will inform planning for the 2021/22 academic year. This information is important to support decision making for the upcoming year. We look forward to communicating with families about the year ahead.

### March 26 – April 23

#### Highlights from the past month include:

- Celebrating **Justice** as the **Virtue of the Month for April** and recognizing important observances such: Volunteer Appreciation Month, Holy Week, Good Friday, Easter Sunday,

World Autism Day, World Health Day, Vimy Ridge Day, International Day of Pink, Mid-Winter Break and Earth Day

- Participating in the Board Wide **Easter Mass Livestream** on April 6
- Recognizing and celebrating **500 years of Christianity in the Philippians** in collaboration with the Filipino Consulate General through the awarding of the student winners of the art contest, and special commemorative mass broadcast marking this special day for all Catholic Christians, particularly our Filipino Catholic community.
- Engaging with stakeholders along with Senior Staff through the **2021-2022 Virtual Town Hall Budget Consultation** (March 30 & 31)
- Witnessing thoughtful & innovative staff and student–centric leadership at **James Cardinal McGuigan through their Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee** (March 30)
- Attending and speaking at the **Indigenous Education Virtual Teachers Conference – The Doctrine of Discovery** (March 6)
- Engaging & collaborating with Directors of Education from across Canada at the **ERDI (Education, Research and Development) Spring Conference** (April 7 – 9)
- Supporting “**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 (April 20)
- 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, April 30, 2021**
- Contributing to the national conversation on education in a COVID world as a featured guest on **CBC News Live**
- Advocating for the expedited vaccination of all education staff as manifested in **increase in vaccine eligibility** for identified TCSD staff.
- Speaking with aspiring **Catholic leaders in the TCDSB** through the **Principals’ Qualification Program** and the **TCDSB “Foundations” Program** in support of future TCSD leaders.

- 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 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 connect 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.