

## **Toronto Catholic School Board Delegation**

### **St. Clement CSPC**

May 2021 DRAFT

As the 2021-22 school year is being planned with the continued pandemic in mind, we want to highlight important considerations for the health and well being of students in our school. Medical professionals have recently stressed how the lack of recreation options and in-person school are impacting our children's mental health.

A Sick kids study this past February indicated that there was a significant proportion of otherwise healthy school-aged children who experienced deterioration in a number of mental health domains with a strong association of stress from social isolation and the importance of in-person school, recreation, social activities and milestone events. The Canadian Paediatric Society issued a letter this month urging the government to immediately re-open outdoor recreation and mobilize a plan to get student safely back to school.

We understand that there are currently many levels of government making decisions about learning options, health and safety protocols, and budgets. Our ask is that the options are consider holistically and with student impact at the center given what children have endured over the pandemic. Specifically, we would like to advocate for the following:

1. With the Ontario government requiring the Board to offer online learning as an option in the 2021-2022 school year, there is a need to administer a concurrent in-person and online option without disrupting stability. Early last school year, we experience two reorganizations impacting several students and classrooms, forcing students to switch cohorts and adjust to new teachers.
2. Consider classroom sizes and funding allocation to promote stability, allow for flexibility if learning option changes are requested, and the enablement of reasonable health and safety parameters. Funding should be distributed such that staffing levels and staffing models at ALL schools should at minimum be preserved or improved upon from pre-COVID levels. St. Clement classroom sizes are currently near or at maximum pre-COVID capacity levels. In many years, the allocations are adjusted by the Board

and classroom assignments made prior to the start of the school year are changed weeks into the year forcing students to have to move classrooms after the start of the year.

3. With anticipated budget pressure, we urge you to ensure that decisions to save money take into consideration our medical professionals advice for our children's healthy development. Newer alternatives to learning such as hybrid models and online learning need to be carefully considered as we work our way through the pandemic and plan for post-pandemic.

To conclude - While we appreciate the complexity of balancing pandemic health and safety, budgets, and many levels of government making changes, we ask that you keep our children's short and long term health at the center and allocating funding for the 2021-22 school year accordingly.