



Director's Monthly Report

June 2021

As we approach the end of the 2020/21 academic year, we do so with a sense of hope and optimism that we can see the light at the end of this pandemic tunnel we are in. The rollout of vaccinations continue throughout the province, and here in Toronto, we are partnering with public health to provide opportunities and access to vaccinations through hosting and promoting sites throughout the city. With the age of eligibility down to age 12, and a commitment to complete all eligible student and staff second doses before September, we are looking into the new school year expecting to be back in person, gathered in community, and ready to learn. Not only are we excited to welcome students and staff back in-person in our schools, but we also recognize the importance of doing so in our parishes as we gather as a faith community.

The news of the past week involving the discovery of a mass grave including 215 children at a former residential school in Kamloops continues to be difficult to process, particularly for students. This reveals what many have known and is a horrific reminder of the systemic violence and oppression faced by Indigenous people in Canada. We have much to reconcile as a nation and as educators, we do so with such heavy hearts of sadness and outrage. We affirm our commitment to reconciliation with Indigenous people in Canada by continuing to educate students about the history of residential schools, and strengthen our supports pertaining to Indigenous education, history, and ways of knowing. It is important that we continue to affirm the identities of Indigenous students in our schools, and that we continue to incorporate Indigenous history, culture, and truths in our daily practice in classrooms.

We recognize June as the Month of the Sacred Heart of Jesus this year as we are reminded of the compassion of Jesus and the ways he opens his heart with boundless love for all. Outward facing and open to all, the Sacred Heart of Jesus calls us to be compassionate, inclusive, and connected to the marginalized and oppressed.

We recognized Pride Month in the TCSDB for the first time this year and do so as Catholics focused inclusion, compassion, love and mercy for those who feel vulnerable and marginalized, the God-given dignity of all human life, and that every child is a child of God. The flags at each school and at the CEC intended to represent the ways in which we create safe, welcoming, and loving spaces for all in our schools and communities.

We are proud to continue to recognize Filipino Canadian Heritage Month, Portuguese Canadian Heritage Month, Italian Canadian Heritage Month, National Deaf Blind Month in June.

The month of June also brings with it important milestones for students and staff. We recognize the importance of marking these milestones and celebrating the significant accomplishments of our students. While virtual graduations are planned throughout the TCSDB, we await further clarification on ways which might allow for some small gathering to mark the end of the year. Whether on-line or in-person in measured ways under provincial guidelines, we know that our staff and students will connect, congratulate, and support one another for having walked through such a difficult year together.

We are entering the summer with much planning ahead of us. We have made the decision to delay such important decisions for families regarding on-line learning until mid-summer in the hopes that vaccination rates continue to climb and Covid cases continue to decline. It is our sincere hope that all of our students who are able will return in person in September. We look forward to the excited buzz in our hallways, gyms, classrooms, and fields, and to putting the realities of this pandemic and its impact on education in the rear view mirror. Thank you to all TCSDB community members for your contributions, support, compassion, and understanding as we navigate through such uncertainty together, united in faith, hope, and optimism.

Highlights from the last month include:

- Celebrating **Faithfulness** as the **Virtue of the Month for June** and recognizing important observances such: Pride Month, Month of Dedication to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, Indigenous Education Month, Filipino Canadian Heritage Month, Portuguese Canadian Heritage Month, Italian Canadian Heritage Month, National Deaf Blind Month
- Joining our Nurturing our Catholic Community Team participated in the **Celebration of the Eucharist for Pentecost** TCDSB Mass Livestream – celebrating the birthday of the Church
- Connecting with our TCDSB community through our monthly **“Lunch with the Director”** series live streamed on Facebook and YouTube **on May 28, 2021**. Answering questions that are timely, relevant, and important to students and families in real-time.
- Filming a special daily **mass at Loretto Abbey with Cardinal Collins** for the 2021 graduating classes of our Catholic Schools.
- Participating in the “Whole Hearted Teaching” Podcast series
- Representing TCSDB on local and national news through City TV, CTV, and The National o CBC
- Attending and addressing the **2021 TCDSB graduates** - Chaminade College and Monsignor Fraser College at their Virtual Graduation Ceremonies
- Attending and speaking at the **Equity Career Fair** for Grade 10 Students –a new initiative from the Equity, Diversity, Indigenous Education, and Community Relationship department aimed at increasing student interest in diverse careers and showcase champions from racialized and marginalized groups.
- Participating in the virtual **Year End Liturgical Celebrations**
- Participating in the launch of the **New TCDSB 3-Year Pastoral Plan**
- Engaging with our outstanding **school principals** at regional meetings
- On-going dialogue with **His Eminence Cardinal Collins** on matters of shared interest and partnership between home, school, and parishes throughout Toronto, and shared faith leadership.
- 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.
- Partnering with **Toronto Public Health** to discuss school health and pandemic related support and initiatives to promote public health and respond to COVID-related issues in on-going ways.
- And looking forward to end of the year virtual celebrations, graduations, and concerts in the final weeks of June!