



Director's Monthly Report

August 2021

As we transition out of the summer and look ahead to the new academic year, we do so with a year's worth of experience navigating through a pandemic, drawing on lessons learned from a truly unprecedented academic year. While new variants continue to cause concern, we also celebrate rising vaccination rates from 12-year-olds to adults, and the hope that we are moving closer to the end of this pandemic. We recognize how this has impacted so many of our families, and continue to commit to doing everything we can to support a safe return to school, and where required, on-going learning virtually.

We recently mourned the loss of former Premier of Ontario Bill Davis who was instrumental in extending full funding to Catholic education in 1984. Before then, families were required to pay beyond Grade 10, and many had to make the choice between continuing Catholic education and financial realities and impacts. For his work and legacy in education, Mr. Davis was a recipient of the Nelligan Award (named after the first Director of Education in TCDSB,) issued by the Ontario Catholic Superintendents of Ontario Association. He will be remembered as an advocate for publicly funded education as former Education Minister, and friend of Catholic Education as Premier.

Staff have been moving projects forward throughout the summer, many of which focused on increasing ventilation and air flow in our schools through upgrades, renovations, and installations. We communicated our models for learning in July and asked for confirmation from families in August as we plan for the year ahead. Our timing was intentional so as to allow families to make decisions about the upcoming year with the best information possible, as close to the start of the year as possible, while allowing staff the time required to staff every school. Some families have chosen to continue learning remotely, while the majority of TCDSB will be returning to in-person learning this September. Whether virtual or in-person, we remain committed to serving every student and supporting unique needs and circumstances in support of student achievement and well-being.

As we begin to transition into the start of another school year, we are appreciative of the partnership, patience, and support of our community as we work together as a Catholic community to create spaces where students, staff, and families feel safe and supported. Whatever we accomplish we do so together, unified by our faith, commitment to community, and partnership in our shared goals. We are looking forward to walking with Christ this year with eyes of faith and hope, hearts of kindness and love, minds of justice and peace.

Highlights from the summer include:

- **Engaging with media** on behalf of the TCDSB and education in Ontario on local and national news through City TV, CTV, and The National and CBC
- Leading and supporting **recruitment and hiring processes** for executive and senior leadership positions, including the Associate Director of Education, Executive Superintendent and Superintendent positions with support from the Chair of the board, trustees, and Senior Staff

- Supporting our communication and execution strategy and follow up supports for the confirmation of student placements in-person or in virtual learning modalities.
- Participating in monthly **Ripple Effect Circle** Meetings - Ripple Effect Circle is an action-oriented alliance of individuals of influence across multiple sectors (private, public, non-profit) in Canada created to take action and work towards combatting systemic racism in Black communities.
- Meeting with **His Eminence Cardinal Collins this month and continuing our dialogue** on matters of shared interest and partnership between home, school, and parishes throughout Toronto, and shared faith leadership.
- Visiting **Summer Camp programs** for students with special needs run by our outstanding administrators and CUPE staff at sites throughout the system. This summer support provided vital summer learning for students and support for families of our most vulnerable students.
- Visiting the **YAAACE Program run out of our Monsignor Fraser campus at Norfinch** for students in the Humber/Black Creek Community focused on providing academic support and athletic opportunities for local students and families.
- Continuing **important connections throughout the summer 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 conversations** 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 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.