



REPORT TO

REGULAR BOARD

RETURN TO SCHOOL 2021-22

*"The Lord gives sight to the blind, the Lord lifts up those who are bowed down, the Lord loves the righteous."
Psalm 146:8*

Created, Draft	First Tabling	Review
August 9, 2021	August 19, 2021	Click here to enter a date.

Barbara Leporati, Senior Coordinator, Planning Services
 Shawna Campbell, Superintendent of Schools, Area 3 & Early Years Programs
 John Wujek, Superintendent of Schools, Area 5
 Corrado Maltese, Coordinator, Occupational Health and Safety Department
 Shazia Vlahos, Chief of Communications and Government Relations
 Martin Farrell, Superintendent, Environmental Support Services
 Michael Loberto, Superintendent, Planning and Development Services
 Adrian Della Mora, Executive Superintendent of Human Resources

INFORMATION REPORT

Vision:

At Toronto Catholic we transform the world through witness, faith, innovation, and action.

Mission:

The Toronto Catholic District School Board is an inclusive learning community uniting home, parish and school and rooted in the love of Christ.

We educate students to grow in grace and knowledge to lead lives of faith, hope and charity.



Brendan Browne, PhD
 Director of Education

D. Boyce
 Associate Director of
 Facilities, Business and
 Community Development

R. Putnam
 Chief Financial Officer

A. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

TCDSB recently completed revisions to the Reopening Action Plan to align with Ministry directives on a safe return to school for the 2021-2022 school year.

Several key events and communications have been released that have guided the revisions to the plan.

May 4, 2021	The Ministry released Memo B07, “ <i>Planning for the 2021-22 School Year</i> ”
July 16-August 6, 2021	Survey conducted to determine parent/guardian preference for in-person or remote learning for 2021-22.
July 31, 2021	The Ontario Science Table released “ <i>School Operation for the 2021-2022 Academic Year in the Context of the COVID-19 Pandemic.</i> ”
August 3, 2021	The Ministry released, “ <i>COVID-19: Health, safety and operational guidance for schools 2021-2022</i> ”
August 4, 2021	The Ministry released Memo B14, “ <i>School Ventilation</i> ” announcing additional funding to support ventilation upgrades.
August 13, 2021	The Ministry released updated (Version 2), “ <i>COVID-19: Health, safety and operational guidance for schools 2021-2022</i> ”

Additional resources were consulted to ensure the plan was inclusive and comprehensive. They are as follows:

PPM164 – Requirements for Remote Learning

TCDSB Transition to Distance Learning Plan

Reopening Ontario Act

Operational Guidance for Child Care During COVID-19 Outbreak (V. 7)

Operational Guidance for EarlyON Child and Family Centres (V. 5)

Guidelines for School Boards, Before and After School Program K-6 (V. 4)

School Mental Health Ontario

Faith and Wellness - OECTA

This report provides information regarding plans for a safe reopening of schools in accordance with Ministry and Toronto Public Health guidelines and highlights updates in key areas pertinent to the Return to School Plan.

The cumulative staff time required to prepare this report was 50 hours

B. PURPOSE

To provide the Board with information regarding the TCDSB Reopening Action Plan.

C. BACKGROUND

1. *School boards have revised plans for school reopening for the 2021-2022 school year in accordance with Ministry and public health guidelines. The TCDSB Reopening Action Plan (Appendix 'A') provides an overview of the guidelines to offer safe programming in all of its communities. Consultation and review with Toronto Public Health (TPH), various internal stakeholders, principals and other school boards has been instrumental in updates to the plan.*
2. *The Ministry released guidance in May 2021 which allowed school boards to begin planning elements of the curriculum and which also directed remote learning requirements follow the previously released PPM 164 from the last school year. PPM 164 also outlines the following: minimum requirements for engaging students during remote learning, minimum requirements for synchronous learning, process for exemption from synchronous learning, protocols for delivering remote learning, access to remote learning devices, standardized suite of synchronous learning platforms and cyber security, privacy, and online safety.*
3. *The Ministry has since released more detailed guidance for school reopening as of August 3, 2021 with an update received on August 13, 2021. "COVID-19: Health, safety and operational guidance for schools 2021-2022"(Appendix 'B') provides guidance largely based on a brief released on July 19, 2021, from the Ontario Science Table, "School Operation for the 2021-2022 Academic Year in the Context of the COVID-19 Pandemic" (Appendix 'C).*

4. ***Key points from the Ministry release include the following, some of which remain the same from the last school year and some of which require modification from the previous year's plan.*** Detail on the TCDSB approach to the Ministry direction is detailed in the evidence section of this report.

Ministry Guidelines – Key points

- Careful, cautious approach – with the aim overtime to be able to lift restrictions based on local health information.
- Encouraging a return to in person learning for both elementary and secondary students.
- Elementary – full return with cohorting and practices currently in place.
- Secondary – The model must allow for students to attend a full day but no more than two courses per day in order to pivot to remote when required. TCDSB will employ a Modified Semester model that satisfies the Ministry requirements.
- Masking to be required for students Gr. 1 to 12 indoors. In the 2020-21 school year, TCDSB extended the mandate for masks to Kindergarten to Gr. 12.
- No masking outdoors unless physical distancing cannot be achieved.
- Extra-curricular activities are to resume with modifications
- Robust Music programs are permitted in most cases - sports (Phys. Ed., extracurriculars) and clubs can resume.
- Daily Screening - all staff and students will continue to be screened everyday
- Cleaning (enhanced cleaning) – will continue the same as last year
- Shared Spaces - Students can use shared spaces, materials (cafeteria, gym, library) with distancing between cohorts.
- Transportation - masking on bus, assigned seating, similar to last year.
- Ventilation - School boards to continue ventilation upgrades. Schools without mechanical ventilation must have stand-alone high efficiency HEPA filters in place in each classroom. Also, all JK/SK rooms are required to have HEPA filters regardless of ventilation type.
- Testing - needs to be accessible to reduce barriers.
- Prompt testing - secondary schools will be provided with test kits to take home. Recognize need for quick turnaround time.
- Vaccinations will not be mandated/requirement. Boards are to continue education, promotion, access to vaccinations.

- Students are not to be advantaged/disadvantaged due to vaccination status.

D. EVIDENCE/RESEARCH/ANALYSIS

Remote Learning

6. ***Data collected from the parent/guardian survey issued between July 16 and August 6 is determining staffing and class arrangements to meet the needs of students participating in remote learning.*** Staff are using the data from the completion of the parent survey to determine the grade combinations and total number of teaching and support staff required for a virtual school.

Students Requiring Technology

7. ***As of July 15, 2021, there are approximately 14,400 Chromebooks and 4,800 iPads currently with students for remote learning.*** Out of the 4,800 iPads, approximately 2,000 are equipped with Internet access to support students that require connectivity for remote learning. These devices remain with students until the pandemic conditions and remote learning needs are re-assessed. There are approximately 5,500 Chromebooks and 560 iPads available for new orders going into the 2021/22 school year.

Health and Safety

8. ***Students and staff will practice proper and frequent hand washing and hand sanitizing.*** TPH continues to encourage frequent hand washing and the use of hand sanitizer where hand washing is challenging. Hand sanitizer will be located at each designated entrance, portables, classrooms and/or key locations throughout the hallways where access to a sink for hand washing is limited.
9. ***The Ministry released “COVID-19 Guidance School Case, Contact and Outbreak Management” (Appendix ‘D’) on August 11, 2021.*** This guidance document provides information for local public health units (PHUs) investigating cases, outbreaks, and suspected outbreaks associated with elementary or secondary (K-12) school settings. It is intended to supplement existing public health guidance on the Management of Cases and Contacts of COVID-19 in Ontario and COVID-19 Fully Immunized and Previously Positive Individuals: Case, Contact and Outbreak Management Interim Guidance. ***TCDSB will consider this documentation along with guidance from Toronto Public Health in the update of staff guidelines in schools.***

Professional Development

10. ***Principals have been provided with access to an information portal*** to ensure that they are properly prepared to administer and adapt to revisions in protocols and learning models for elementary and secondary schools.

11. ***Professional Development for all school-based staff is being planned for the September 2, 7 and 8, 2021 PD Days.*** The Ministry has given direction on topics to be addressed during these three PD days. Central staff will adapt the modules and resources to meet the needs of our school-based staff. School boards should deliver remote learning strategies and educator training related to:
 - student and staff safety;
 - student and parent comfort levels with technology, and the levels of support that may be required;
 - effective use of digital tools;
 - effective pedagogy and assessment;
 - student and staff mental health and well-being;
 - accessibility and differentiated instruction for all students, including students with special education needs.

Elementary – Full Return

12. Elementary school students in Kindergarten through Grade 8 will attend school five days per week, with 300 minutes of instruction per day, remaining in their cohort for the full day. Enhanced health and safety protocols will remain in place in all schools.

Secondary – Full Return (Modified Semester)

13. Students will attend school all day, every day for a total of 300 instructional minutes. All regular classes will be considered a cohort. Students will be members of two cohorts daily, one in the morning and one in the afternoon for week 1 and alternate to two different courses for the second week for a total of 4 courses per semester. Since students take 2 courses daily in a modified semester, students will alternate every week between two courses on their timetable. Traditional maximum numbers of students will be in each class according to our employment agreements.

Remote Registration Survey

14. *A communication was issued to families on July 16 to receive input regarding intentions to return to in-person or remote learning. Below please find a summary of communications to date:*

Thursday, May 27, 2021: Notification of upcoming survey issued to parents.

Monday, July 12: A reminder sent re: the learning model registration beginning Friday, July 16.

Friday, July 16 (am): Families received the elementary and/or secondary communication including detailed information and a link to our Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) to inform their learning model selection.

Friday, July 16 (pm): Families received learning model registration links via direct email for each child. Email used is what families have provided the school. The child's name appeared in the message, so families knew for whom they were completing the registration.

Families were also provided a confirmation message upon completing the survey with the opportunity to change their response up to the deadline date of August 6th.

Friday, July 16 to Friday August 6: Communications staff responded to inquiries from families to support their learning model decision. Communications and Service Desk staff responded to requests from families who said they did not receive a registration link.

Sunday August 1: A communication was sent to TCDSB families to remind them that learning model registration for the 2021-2022 school year closes on August 6 at 11:59 pm.

Thursday, August 5: A communication was sent to TCDSB families to remind them that learning model registration for the 2021-2022 school year closes on August 6 at 11:59 pm. Families who did not submit a response were registered for in-person learning. Please note that families received a confirmation email upon completing registration, which included a link enabling them to change the selected learning model for their child(ren) any time before the August 6 deadline.

Friday, August 6: Learning model registration for 2021-2022 closed.

15. *In the communication to families associated with their choice for learning models, the following reminders were conveyed. Further, each family was asked to confirm these key messages during the registration process.*

Elementary - remote learning

The child will give up their spot at their home school, be placed at St. Anne's Catholic Academy and participate in remote learning for the entire 2021-22 school year.

Elementary – in-person learning

Families were asked to confirm their understanding that their child will be registered at their home school for the entire 2021-22 school year.

Secondary –remote learning

Students will be registered at their regular secondary school, St. Anne's (senior) will not be an option, learning will take place through virtual connection to in-person classes.

16. ***Preliminary results from the survey as of closing on August 6th are as follows.*** Numbers will be adjusted as necessary as schools open and process new registrations.

Elementary

In-person – 55207

Remote – 4084

Secondary

In-person- 24671

Remote - 2576

Ventilation

17. ***In the 2020-2021 school year TCDSB secured and implemented 5,449 portable HEPA air purifier to all schools (non-mechanical, partial mechanical and full mechanical),*** these were distributed to all classrooms (regular, specialty (music, arts etc. JK and SK) portables excluded as they have internal mechanical systems, as well as libraries, main office and staffroom.

18. ***The Ministry provided funding, Memo B14 “School Ventilation”, for additional HEPA units to enhance boards’ distribution plans for the 2021-22 school year. TCDSB received 1,766 additional units that will be distributed as follows:***

Schools ***without*** mechanical or ***partial*** mechanical ventilation will receive additional units in the following locations:

- 1 additional HEPA unit to JK/SK
- 2 HEPA units to per Childcare Room

- 4 HEPA units per Gym
- 1 additional HEPA unit to Library
- 4 HEPA units per Lunchroom (Secondary schools like Neil McNeil/Notre Dame)

Schools with mechanical ventilation:

- Provision of HEPA units to Childcare Spaces

If necessary, *numbers will be adjusted in non-mechanical ventilation locations such as gyms and libraries to ensure the number of portable HEPA units will reflect the actual need* of those spaces as outline in the Ministry Guidelines.

19. As per Ministry expectations, staff are creating *a school ventilation dashboard which will be available on the TCDSB website and will include ventilation systems for each school as well as filtration measures*. This information will be posted to the TCDSB website as soon as possible.

Additional Safety measures (implemented in 2020-21)

20. *Portable handwashing stations for all floors without washrooms in schools across the system remain in place for the 2021-22 school year*. The addition of these stations are integral to the operation of the school and encouraging good hand hygiene throughout the school year.
21. *Installation of Water Bottle Filling Stations* in order to provide at least two (2) per school is ongoing.
22. *To encourage cycling to school, installation of over 82 bicycle racks at 60 schools has been completed*. Every school will have bicycle parking available.
23. The practice of opening windows as much as practicable will continue.

Plexiglass

24. *Plexiglass shields will not be mandatory*. The use of plexiglass was an added safety measure purchased by the TCDSB over the previous year, however as the guidance around transmission of COVID-19 has changed significantly, the efficacy of plexiglass appears to be minimal. TPH has advised that they are not including recommendations for plexiglass use in classrooms. **TCDSB**

staff will continue to consult with TPH and the Ministry of Education to understand where plexiglass should be used. TCDSB has provided the schools with 40,000 plexiglass barriers which can be reallocated within the school at the Principal's discretion.

Transportation

25. *Arising from a meeting of the Toronto Student Transportation Group (TSTG) Governance Committee, a phased start to student transportation was approved for the 2021-22 school year and includes:*

Students with special education needs are prioritized and receive bus service beginning the first week of school.

- *During week 1 of the school year (September 9-14) only students with special education needs will be provided with student transportation.*
- *Beginning September 15th, all other eligible students will be provided with student transportation, unless there is a significant driver shortage or other unforeseen issues related to COVID-19.*

Students with special needs include those on mini-buses, mini-vans, taxis, and WC accessible vehicles.

26. *This information has been sent to parents/guardians through the TSTG transportation portal and has been posted on the TSTG website, TCDSB website and social media accounts. Parents will receive a phone call from TSTG the week before school starts confirming their start date (September 9th or September 15th).*

As always, [active transportation](#) is recommended when possible.

27. *A TSTG communication advising families of the phased in start was prepared jointly with TCDSB and TDSB staff and issued to families on August 3, 2021.*

28. *In addition, the TCDSB will follow the same practice as last school year in terms of accommodating non-eligible requests for empty seat and extenuating circumstances.* Students will only be placed on buses where there is room and or time and only on buses that are not shared with the TDSB. This review will take place in mid to late October. The TSTG FAQs are included (*Appendix 'E'*) for further detail relating to Transportation.

E. IMPLEMENTATION, STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT PLAN

1. *A Return to School staff resource guidebook will be provided.* This guide will provide clear definitions, roles and procedures associated with COVID-19 mitigation, reporting and isolation as communities return for the 2021-22 school year. This booklet is nearing completion
2. *FAQs continue to be gathered from parent/guardian feedback.* The board continues to provide updates and frequently asked questions and answers on the board website and social media channels.
3. *Local planning considerations will take place at the school level in late August in collaboration with school principals.* Input gained through continued consultation with stakeholders will be considered during this process.

F. CONCLUDING STATEMENT

This report is for the information of the Board.