



Director's Monthly Report

September 2021

For everyone in education, September is the most exciting month of the year. Though this year continues to proceed with anxiety, trepidation, and concern about our way forward in this pandemic, it also ushers in a new beginning in education. We are blessed by the dedication and commitment of all TCDSB staff who have been doing everything within their scope of practice and influence to support students and welcome them back to another school year in the Toronto Catholic District School Board.

As we begin a new school year, we do so more cognizant than ever of vaccination rates, on-going testing, processes, protocols, and preventative measures intended to make our schools and communities as safe as possible as students return to school. We continue to commit to working closely with our partners in public health, community agencies and partners to make our return to school as welcoming as possible for students both in-person and virtually.

I have enjoyed the opportunity to be in our schools visiting with students, staff, and parents during the first few days back, and recognize how important our role is in education to serve and support students and families. While I look forward to my opportunity to connect with our student virtually, my time with students in person at schools revealed enormous smiles behind masks in the playground and throughout the school. Students, staff, parents, and caregivers may be nervous and anxious about this return to school, but there is universal appreciation and acknowledgement of the importance of being engaged in school, connecting with peers, and community.

Our staff continue to serve in ways that manifest their professionalism, their expertise, and their commitment to modeling Christ to others in every role and responsibility throughout the system. I thank each and every staff member for their on-going service on behalf of all TCDSB students and families.

We move forward with eyes of faith and hope, hearts of kindness and love, and minds of justice and peace recognizing that whatever we accomplish, we do so best in partnership and community.

Highlights from the past month include:

- **Director's Annual General Meeting (Virtual)** - This annual event brings leaders from across the organization together as we embark on a new school year. While being limited by Covid protocols, this event recognizing 2020 and 2021 New Administrators and Business Leaders, along with the Celebration of the Eucharist, was hosted virtually.
- Celebrating September as **Hospitality as the Virtue of the Month** for September and recognizing important observances such **Ukrainian Canadian Heritage Month** and **Bike to School/Work Month**

- **Back to School Week** – celebrating the return to school and student success – had the pleasure to visit schools and engage with students, school staff, parents, and the school community:
 - First Day of School celebrations at **St. Paul and St. Margaret** Catholic Schools
 - **St. Clare** Elementary Catholic School on Bike to work Month
 - Welcoming newcomers at **St. Lawrence** Elementary Catholic School
 - School visits to **St. Bonaventure, St. Augustine of Canterbury, and James Cardinal McGuigan** Secondary School
 - Celebrating **Ukrainian Heritage Month** at **St. Demetrius**

- Attended a first day of school visit with Minister Lecce and MPP Martin with the Chair of the Board at **St. Margaret Catholic School** to engage in an outdoor Gr. 3 class.

- Engaged with staff at **Chaminade College Secondary** School to celebrate the start of the new school year.

- Had the pleasure to connect with our **Elementary School Secretaries** at the Opening Day In-Service event.

- **Engaging with media** on behalf of the TCSDB and education in Ontario on City TV, CTV, and the Toronto Star.

- Engaging with **Toronto Public Health** with vaccination and testing strategies in Toronto, and public health recommendations from TPH that impact and influence TCDSB staff and students.

- Continuing **important connections throughout the 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.