



Director's Monthly Report

March 2022

The world has changed dramatically over the past two years. In March 2020, we were thrust into a world of lockdowns, anxiety, and uncertainty. As we shifted from remote to in-person learning and back again, we learned to navigate the world differently and adapt to the public health crisis that is the pandemic. The realities of the impacts continue to be felt throughout our schools and communities as we look ahead to a future beyond the pandemic. As I write this in March 2022, we are optimistic about the road ahead as a school community and society at large. The province has made significant announcements about the easing of the restrictions, processes, and policies that we have grown accustomed to, and we appreciate that this will be processed differently throughout our community. We will support and partner to help walk through this next important phase of this on-going pandemic as some are ready to move on, and some believe we are moving too quickly. When we commit to walking together as a Catholic community, we know we will be able to do so successfully.

We encourage everyone to remain connected and to reach out for support each step of the way. While we can all agree that we look forward to a time in which this pandemic is in our rearview mirrors, we understand that getting there will look different for individuals. The ways in which we are respectful, compassionate, and caring for each other is what will see us through to the end. As always, if there is any way we can support, please don't hesitate to reach out locally so we can work together.

The "March Break" is a significant milestone in every academic year, and this year more than any other, given the pandemic realities we have collectively navigated, we wish every member of our Toronto Catholic community the opportunity to rest and rejuvenate as we prepare for the final stretch of the academic year. We are looking forward to the opportunity to gather together again for celebrations and activities this spring, so we hope the rest associated with the March Break has allowed everyone to prepare for these important opportunities for school communities.

We collectively watch in horror at the events in Ukraine and continue to offer our uncompromising support for all those affected both here in Toronto and in Ukraine. We are so proud of the connection we have with our Ukrainian communities and our three Ukrainian Eastern Rite schools, and we stand with them and all Ukrainians and those impacted by war. The Toronto Catholic District School Board has mobilized in so many compassionate and service-oriented ways to support those who are displaced, impacted, and struggling during this crisis, doing so as Catholics committed to living out our call to service, sacrifice, and care. We are proud of our communities as they provide living examples of Christ through their actions.

Thank you to our incredible staff throughout the system who continue to go above and beyond to support students and families in these most difficult of times, and to our parents and caregivers who partner in support and collaboration. With the best interests of our students at the forefront at all times, we continue to influence our students in the most positive and encouraging ways.

Highlights from March include:

Celebrating **Forgiveness as the Virtue of the Month** and recognizing important observances such as: Black Mental Health Week, Celtic Canadian Heritage Month, National Engineering Month, Women's History Month, Nutrition Month, and National Social Work Week, as well as Shrove Tuesday, Ash Wednesday and the beginning of Lent, World Wildlife Day, World Day of Prayer, Education Support Staff Appreciation Day, International Women's Day, Sikh New Year, Clear Monday and the beginning of Great Lent, Purim, St. Patrick's Day, Solemnity of Saint Joseph—Spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Nawruz (Baha'i New Year), World Down Syndrome Day, International Day for Elimination of Racial Discrimination, World Water Day, Solemnity of the Annunciation of the Lord, Purple Day—Epilepsy Awareness, Earth Hour, Holi—Festival of Colours, and Pesach/Passover. March Break takes place between March 14 and 18.

- Visiting St. Jerome Catholic Elementary School to engage in their student installation of the **“Hallway of Heroes”** – celebrating and recognizing Black and Indigenous Canadians who have made significant contributions to Canadian society
- Visiting **Josyf Cardinal Slipyj, St. Demetrius and St. Josephat Catholic Elementary Schools** in solidarity with our Ukrainian staff, students, and community
- Participating in the **Day of Ashes** Celebration of the Eucharist - **Prayer and Worship for Ukraine** – Livestream
- Supporting the **St. Demetrius Catholic Elementary School** community in prayer with faith leaders from **St. Demetrius** and with **Minister Lecce**
- Delivering remarks at the **International Women’s Day Virtual** event hosted by the Religion/Family Life Department
- Participating in the **African Canadian Heritage Month Webinar**
- Participating in the **Parents of Black Children Report on Anti-Black Racism in Ontario Schools** meeting

- Attending a liturgy at **St. Teresa Catholic Church** for intentions for Lent, Peace and the coming together for spiritual support for those affected by the war in Ukraine
- Attending **Stand with Ukraine Flag Raising Ceremony** at the CEC
- Connecting with Principals at the **K-12 Principals' Meeting**
- Participating in the **library re-opening celebration at St. Elizabeth Catholic Elementary School**
- Delivering remarks at the **Pastoral Plan Virtual Event – Walking with Christ with Eyes of Faith and Hope**
- Delivering remarks at the **Virtual Indigenous Parent Engagement Evening**
- Connecting with our TCDSB Community through our monthly “**Lunch with the Director**” series live streamed on Facebook and YouTube, while looking forward to the next opportunity on **March 25th**
- Participating in monthly **Ripple Effect Circle** Meetings - Ripple Effect Circle - 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
- On-going engagement with **Toronto Public Health** with vaccination and **booster** strategies in Toronto, and public health recommendations from TPH that impact and influence TCDSB staff and students
- Continuing **important connections throughout the pandemic 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-19 pandemic
- Participating on and contributing to **provincial leadership conversations** with **Directors of Education and Health Officials** from across the province in support of TCDSB staff, students, and families, and to influence public policy decisions in support of education and health care