



REPORT TO

REGULAR BOARD

## THE TORONTO CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD'S RESPONSE TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC CRISIS – MAY 21, 2020 UPDATE

*"... take courage! Do not let your hands be weak, for your work shall be rewarded."*

*2 Chronicles 15:7*

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May 14, 2020	May 21, 2020	<a href="#">Click here to enter a date.</a>

Rory McGuckin, Director of Education

Dan Koenig, Associate Director of Academic Affairs

Nick D'Avella – Superintendent of Equity, Diversity, Indigenous Education, and Community Relations

### INFORMATION REPORT

**Vision:**

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

**Mission:**

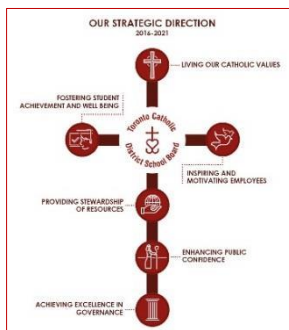
*The Toronto Catholic District School Board is an inclusive learning community uniting home, parish and school and rooted in the love of Christ.*

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

Rory McGuckin  
Director of Education

D. Koenig  
Associate Director  
of Academic Affairs

L. Noronha  
Associate Director of Facilities,  
Business and Community  
Development, and  
Chief Financial Officer



## **A. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This is the third in a series of updates on the Toronto Catholic District School Board's (TCDSB) Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic Crisis. Two previous comprehensive reports, tabled on April 23 and May 7, outlined the work of Phase One (March 13 to April 5) and Phase Two (April 6 and on-going). This work focused on the TCDSB's system-wide "check and connect" strategy, the development of the TCDSB's Business Continuity Plan, and on the creation and evolution of its plan for teacher-led distance learning culminating with *A Faith Community of Believers: TCDSB's Distance Learning implementation Plan (Version 2.0)*.

The TCDSB's response to the COVID-19 crisis continues to be informed by new Ministry directions and on-going formal and informal feedback from students, parents, teachers, principals, vice-principals, and union and non-union employee groups.

As the TCDSB enters the seventh week of teacher-led distance learning, a number of points of interest to parents, students and other stakeholders has emerged. These include:

- Distance Learning,
- Staff Engagement for Community Support in the Pandemic Crisis,
- Graduation Ceremonies,
- Return to School Protocols, and
- The Status of Capital and Renewal Projects.

Recognizing the importance of these topics to its stakeholders, this brief report provides high-level information on the TCDSB's response in these areas.

*The cumulative staff time required to prepare this report was 20 hours.*

## **B. PURPOSE**

Focusing on the following emerging areas of interest to stakeholders, this report provides a high-level summary update on:

<b>Report Component</b>
Distance Learning,
Staff Engagement for Community Support in the Pandemic Crisis
Graduation Ceremonies,
Return to School Protocols,
The Status of Capital and Renewal Projects

## **C. BACKGROUND**

The COVID-19 pandemic crisis presents unprecedented challenges for Ontario’s Education System and for the TCDSB. With a commitment to sustaining faith development and an adherence to the principles of simplicity, flexibility, compassion, and equity the TCDSB has worked diligently to create and implement a distance learning plan that will ensure continuity of learning for its 90,000 students. The overarching challenge has been transitioning from a face-to-face education system to a virtual, teacher-led distance learning mode of curriculum delivery and assessment.

In the new distance learning environment, the TCDSB is committed to adopting a system-wide learning stance for continuous improvement of its practices and procedures.

## **D. EVIDENCE/RESEARCH/ANALYSIS**

### **Distance Learning Update**

The TCDSB continues to support teachers, principals, and support staff in enhancing their efficacy in a broad range of Distance Learning modalities.

### **Support for Staff**

- a. Multiple Staff professional learning sessions continue to be offered daily.
- b. Over 120 sessions have been offered by Central Resource Teachers since April 2<sup>nd</sup>, to support staff in distance learning. Topics have included: using distance learning tools effectively (Google Classroom, Brightspace, G Suite, Google Meet, Screencastify for prerecorded video, etc.) and various

curriculum, grade or divisional topics (i.e., and numeracy by division, grade specific learning series, etc.)

- c. TCDSB DRAFT Video Guidelines continue to be reviewed. Minor updates were made with feedback from staff.
- d. Video Guidelines were updated to include: Staff video tutorials on the use of Google Meet for video conferencing, template letters and slide decks for teachers to use to put proper participation protocols in place related to online behaviour during video conferences for those staff and students choosing to participate.

### **Support for Parents**

- e. Parent webinars on TCDSB DRAFT Video Guidelines and Use of Google Meet have been provided. These virtual sessions have been attended by 704 and 446 parents over the two days.

### **Staff Engagement for Community Support in the Pandemic Crisis**

An outstanding example of staff engagement for community support during pandemic crisis is the *Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) Project*.

- a. The PPE Drive (<https://theppedrive.com/>) was initiated by Michael Garron Hospital and Shawn Lim of Botcamp to create a 3D print file that allowed for quickly reproducible Personal Protection Equipment.
- b. Many of our schools have 3D printers, and staff were invited to produce large and small headgear, and ear savers for distribution to health care facilities. Staff were provided with the files, filament (printing material), the printers, and have been in production since mid-April 2020.
- c. Depending on the 3D printer and complexity of the file, prints require between 30 and 60 minutes each. Multiple objects per print can be done as well.

## **Graduation Ceremonies**

The TCDSB values graduation ceremonies as important milestones for our students and their families. They are the ceremonial culmination of a learning journey and a celebration of academic, athletic, personal, and spiritual growth. Just as importantly, they mark the beginning of a new phase of life-long learning filled with promise and hope.

The TCDSB encourages all schools to host ceremonies that acknowledge and celebrate the successes and accomplishments of students. These celebrations will need to occur in the virtual environment at this time. Subject to health and safety limitations and directions from public health authorities, traditional celebrations may occur at later date. Whether in the virtual or physical environment, the TCDSB will be sharing a *Special Consent Template and Guidelines* to support local decisions on the manner in which graduation celebrations may be facilitated.

## **Return to School Protocols**

On May 19, 2020, the Minister of Education announced that Ontario schools will remain closed until the end of the academic year. The minister also indicated that by the end of June, the Ministry would unveil its plan for the reopening of schools when it is deemed safe.

The TCDSB will continue to develop its plans and protocols with a focus on the unique needs of its community while aligning its approach with that of Ministry of Education.

In the May 7, 2020 update, the committee was continuing to address ongoing business continuity planning and compiling data required to assess Return to School scenarios.

- a. Academic staff have reviewed best practices from various sources (other boards and countries) in order to create a framework for learning that includes required social distancing, synchronous learning, instructional requirements, break times (recess) and transportation.
- b. Planning is dependent on Ministry directives, advice, and protocols of local public health agencies and remains fluid to adapt to the changing environment.

- c. Custodial and Maintenance staff will return to a full day schedule (7:00 am to 4:00 pm) effective May 20, 2020 to accommodate resumption of Renewal, Maintenance and Capital activities on site and to ensure facilities remain clean and ready for student occupancy when the need arises.
- d. Review of PPE supplies continues and is reported to the Ministry weekly. Environmental Services continues to stockpile PPE in anticipation of need for a Return to School.

## **Status of Capital and Renewal Projects**

In the previous report on May 7, it was noted that the City of Toronto was not accepting new Site Plan Approval or Building Permit applications and the known and potential impacts on Capital and Renewal projects were noted.

Trustees approved a motion to send a letter to the Mayor requesting that school projects be prioritized for acceptance of submissions.

In the verbal update provided at the May 7 Board meeting, it was advised that restrictions on school construction were lifted on May 4.

- a. On May 11, 2020, the City of Toronto advised that new Site Plan Approval and Building Permit applications are now being accepted.
- b. At this time, Building Permit applications submitted after March 16 are not being reviewed. The City is reviewing resources and is expected to announce timelines for review of new applications shortly.
- c. Since a backlog of applications is expected, a letter has been sent to the Mayor requesting that school projects be prioritized for review after other identified critical priorities.
- d. Construction has resumed for a number of Renewal projects that were underway before the school closure.
- e. Site investigations that were previously on hold due to the restrictions on construction are proceeding, allowing design work and tendering to move forward.

- f. A protocol for conducting safe bidders' meetings has been established and tenders are being issued for summer Renewal work.
- g. Appendices A and B provide summaries of Capital and Renewal project activity updates since May 1.

## **E. METRICS AND ACCOUNTABILITY**

1. The COVID-19 pandemic presents a constantly changing landscape requiring that the TCDSB be proactive, adaptable, and responsive.
2. With ongoing feedback from students, parents, teachers, unions and other employee groups, the TCDSB's teacher-led distance learning framework will evolve in order to meet new challenges resulting from the pandemic crisis.
3. With the creation of the Return to School Committee, the TCDSB will create a road map for a safe return school.
4. Using research-based practices, the aim of monitoring is to support, validate, mentor and nurture staff through the distance learning phase.
5. The senior team and school administrators will lead and learn in the virtual environment by:
  - a. checking and connecting with staff to provide professional supports validation, and affirmation of efforts;
  - b. continuing to listen and address issues and challenges articulated by staff;
  - c. supporting professional learning for improved efficacy;
  - d. providing support for mental health and well-being;
  - e. leading with an equity frame of reference; and
  - f. leading with calm, compassion, and empathy.

## **F. CONCLUDING STATEMENT**

This report is for the consideration of the Board.