

BREA CORBET
TRUSTEE - MISSISSAUGA, WARDS 9 AND 10



“For the promise is for you, for your children and for all who are far away, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to him.” – Acts 2:39

Our DPCDSB **Mission**: Disciples of Christ, nurturing mind, body and soul to the fullness of life.
Our DPCDSB **Vision**: Changing the world through Catholic education.

March 2021

This month, the virtue of **KINDNESS** is a reminder that it costs us nothing to give kindness to others. Your smile can be seen in your eyes, even if wearing a mask hides it. Every act of kindness, regardless of how small, matters. 😊

The season of Lent - As we continue our Lenten journey of the 40 days leading up to the feast and joy of Easter, may we turn to God in prayer, remembering the gift of His mercy and forgiveness. We are grateful for the continued partnership of our parish priests who support our students in Catholic education. Consider the 40 days of Lent. What are you giving up? What will you gain?

School Reopening - In light of the province-wide return to in-person learning, we remain committed to ensuring the safety of children, families and staff in our schools. We are pleased students have returned to classrooms and we welcome them back. A reminder that all students must continue to self-screen every day for symptoms of COVID-19 before attending school or taking bus transportation. If a student or staff member is experiencing any symptoms, they must stay home from school and follow our local public health guidance regarding when they can return to school. Parents/guardians and students must avoid congregating before and after school bell times and ensure physical distancing to reduce community virus transmission. The province has enhanced the masking requirement for Grades 1-12 while outdoors, where physical distancing cannot be maintained. Our local Medical Officers of Health have advised mandating the wearing of masks in Kindergarten and DPCDSB has followed that advisement.

March Break – The Ministry of Education, based on advice from the Chief Medical Officer of Health, has directed that the March (Mid-Winter) Break be postponed until the week of April 12, 2021 for the 2020-2021 school year. [A Community Information Bulletin](#) from the DPCDSB was sent to families this past week regarding the [Revised 2020-2021 School Year Calendar](#), highlighting the change to the Break. This can also be found on the [DPCDSB website](#).

Ministry of Education Funding – On February 1, the Ministry of Education announced the second half of Federal funding under the *Safe Return to Class Fund*. The \$381 million is allocated to:

- Continue to support mental health and well-being of all students and staff.
- Support learning gaps among students and improve math and reading programs.
- Provide electronic devices and improve internet access to support remote learning.
- Optimize air quality and ventilation.
- Enhance the implementation of health and safety protocols in schools.
- Support improved online learning, including digital course content.
- Expand COVID-19 testing in schools, including asymptomatic testing.
- Support safe and secure transportation services for students and enhance health and safety protocols on buses

DPCDSB has been allocated \$7.3 million from this Federal funding to-date to support the learning, technology needs and health and safety of students and staff, for the remainder of the 2020-2021 school year. As a member of the Board of Trustees, I will continue to urge the provincial government for support and resources to address these concerns, especially with regard to student mental health and closing learning gaps, challenges we know have been significantly exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Targeted testing - Targeted asymptomatic testing has helped to identify cases of COVID-19 early, inform public health action and manage outbreaks in schools. DPCDSB, in conjunction with our public health units, has been focusing asymptomatic testing in schools where an outbreak has occurred.

On February 16, the Ministry of Education announced a strategy to expand access to targeted asymptomatic testing. Both rapid testing and traditional lab-processed polymerase chain reaction (PCR) testing will be used.

As part of the local efforts, Peel Public Health has partnered with the DPCDSB and LifeLabs to offer COVID-19 testing opportunities at a minimum of 5% of our schools each week. The clinics are voluntary and are open to asymptomatic students, their families and staff from the weekly designated secondary school and the designated elementary feeder schools. Anyone experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 should not attend the school sites and instead seek testing at an assessment centre.

Ventilation – DPCDSB is operating with a ventilation management plan that consists of more than one layer. All ventilation systems in our schools have been checked by our maintenance staff and are operating as designed. The current air filters have been upgraded from MERV 10 to superior commercial grade MERV 13. The interval of filter changes has been reduced from every 16 weeks to 12 weeks, and we are in the process to further reduce to 10 weeks to continue ensuring maximum airflow. All buildings have been placed on an operating cycle (ventilation on two hours prior to occupancy, on throughout occupancy and on two hours after occupancy) to ensure continuous fresh air intake.

Portable Air Scrubbers (HEPA Filter Units) – DPCDSB has ordered over 600 portable air scrubbers (HEPA filter units) using the ventilation funding provided by the Ministry of Education in August 2020. Under Phase 1, facilities staff are prioritizing the 15 DPCDSB schools with either no, or minimal, air conditioning inside the building. To date, approximately 200 units have been deployed, with the additional units scheduled to arrive over the next few weeks. On February 1, the Ministry of Education announced additional air quality and ventilation funding. DPCDSB intends to use a portion of this new funding to order and deploy additional portable air scrubbers in self-contained classrooms and existing portable classrooms.

2021-2022 Budget – As at December 31, 2020, the DPCDSB's actual operating expenses amounted to 30.7% of the annual budget. The result was impacted heavily by COVID-19 restrictions, which created in-year savings. However, the additional one-time COVID-19 funding from the federal and provincial governments have forced additional expenditures. It is expected that COVID-19 related expenditures will have a greater impact on the eight-month and yearend financial reports, given the timing of invoices and the hiring of additional staff that took place in the first four months.

The annual budget development process is a continuous cycle that involves stages of review, analysis, stakeholder input, consultation and calculation. The experience of the 2020-2021 budget development was unique in many ways operating under COVID-19 restrictions. It is anticipated that a similar approach will be utilized for the 2021-2022 budget development process. The *Grants for Student Needs (GSN)* for the 2021-2022 school year is expected to be announced by the end of March or early April. The final budget would be expected to be approved and filed with the Ministry of Education by the end of June.

The proposed date for the release of the public budget consultation webcast is the first week of April, as this would allow for Catholic School Councils (CSC) to view and discuss the details during April meetings. In addition, the public budget consultation process will include the *Thoughtexchange™* platform which was very successful during the public consultation phase of the 2019-2020 budget development process. Prior to the completion and approval of the proposed operating and capital budget reports, a report will be brought forward to the Board of Trustees outlining the input received.

Student Transportation of Peel Region (STOPR) – STOPR continues to work closely with bus operators and the local public health authorities to ensure that all health and safety protocols and enhanced cleaning requirements are followed. STOPR has made some minor changes to operational processes, in response to guidance from Peel Public Health (PPH). STOPR has implemented the following additional changes:

- If a student on a five-passenger vehicle tests positive, the driver will automatically be dismissed;
- Blocking off the first two seats of all vehicle sizes (except five-passenger vehicles);
- Reducing capacity on a full-size (72-passenger) bus to 20 riders - each student will sit in their own seat except for siblings. Students from the same cohort will be seated in the same area on the bus;
- Reducing capacity on all 20-passenger vehicles to six riders - each student will sit in their own seat except for siblings. Students from the same cohort will be seated in the same area on the bus;
- Reducing capacity of five-passenger vehicles to two riders.

EQAO – In June 2020, the Minister of Education announced that Grade 3 and Grade 6 EQAO assessments during the 2020-2021 school year would not be performed. Our secondary schools have been participating in the EQAO Grade 9 Assessment of Mathematics field test. EQAO has indicated to school boards that the results of this assessment are not used in determining a student's final grade, unless agreed by the teacher and student, in consultation with their parents/guardians, and in support of the student's success.

OSSLT – The Ministry of Education has waived the successful completion of the OSSLT test as a graduation requirement for 2020-2021 graduates. However, the ministry is running an on-line field test from March 23 through June 4, and this will be available to students participating in face-to-face learning. DPCDSB secondary schools will provide an opportunity for students to participate in this field test. If they are successful, students can have it count on their transcript.

Environmental Stewardship Initiative – In February 2020, the Region of Peel approved a School Organic Waste Collection Pilot Program. Under this program, the Region committed to working with a sample of schools from the DPCDSB and Peel District School Board to collect organic waste. Schools would receive green bins, weekly collection of organic waste, signage, and program information. The pilot program was previously scheduled to begin effective September 2020, however, due to the pandemic, the start date has been tentatively rescheduled for either September 2021 or January 2022. More information will be shared with our school communities once the Region finalizes its plans.

Equity Workshop – On Thursday March 25, at 6:30 pm, our Equity and Inclusive Education Department will be hosting a special Equity Workshop for Parents/Guardians - **"When the Saints Go Marching In!"** celebrating the Saints of the African Diaspora. Father Tony Ricard is a Priest for the Archdiocese of New Orleans and is the Campus Minister of St. Augustine High School in New Orleans. From the beginning of Time, People of Color have walked closely with God. From wandering in the desert to celebrating the Eucharist, People of Color have been a part of the People of God since the moment God made a Covenant with Father Abraham. Join Fr. Tony Ricard and his students from St. Augustine High School in New Orleans as they walk us through the Rich History of African and African-American People of Faith. **Registration:** <http://bit.ly/FatherTonyEquityWorkshop2021>

Distinguished Alumni - Each year, DPCDSB selects alumni from its schools and celebrates them through the Distinguished Alumni Campaign. This campaign recognizes former students of DPCDSB who are making valuable and unique contributions in their respective careers, pathways and communities. Distinguished Alumni have made a positive contribution to their communities and represent the image of the Catholic learner as described by the Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations. DPCDSB is accepting nominations for its 2020 Distinguished Alumni. If you know of a former DPCDSB student who deserves recognition, please submit a **nomination form** online. Nominations are reviewed by a committee comprised of trustees, staff and students. Nominations are due by March 12. More information and eligibility criteria is available on the [DPCDSB website](#).

Wishing you and your loved ones the blessings of Lent as we prepare for Easter. And, as always, thank you for choosing a Catholic education for your child(ren). God bless.

Yours in learning, growing and leading with Christ,

Trustee Brea Corbet

DPCDSB Trustee - Mississauga, Wards 9 and 10

Chair – Bylaw & Policies Review Committee

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