



RETURNING TO SCHOOL

A GUIDE TO THE SAFE REOPENING OF THE TDSB



August 2020

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Message from Interim Director of Education

We are planning ahead for a school year like none other. COVID-19 has significantly impacted how we operate and we have been busy thinking about how to navigate these circumstances as we prepare to welcome students and staff back to the TDSB in September.

Much of our direction is based on guidelines from the Ministry of Education and Toronto Public Health. In developing our local plans for the Toronto District School Board, their insight and approval was critical to ensuring a consistent approach to education and prioritizing the health and safety of students and staff was invaluable.

We look forward to welcoming students back to our schools and classrooms in September but will continue to remain flexible and recognize that circumstances may change depending on the evolution of COVID-19. Regardless of the format school takes at the elementary and secondary level, we are committed to providing students with regular and meaningful learning opportunities as well as connectivity to staff while also maintaining a safe environment for the entire school community.

We do not know what this year has in store and we will need to be responsive to ensure the safety of our community. This may mean changes to the model throughout the year, and while we cannot avoid it, we can be prepared for it. I recognize and appreciate the challenges and anxiety that this uncertainty can bring but one of the principles that has guided our planning and will continue to guide us as we move forward is the needs of staff, students and families.

This guide was developed by TDSB experts from areas including health and safety, facilities, teaching and learning, special education, communications, business and operations, employee services and more. In addition, the guide was informed by consultations with union and federation partners, students, staff, parents/guardians, Toronto Public Health and the Ministry of Education. The conversations we had to develop this plan were challenging and not what any of us expected for this year. To be effective though, we must continue to work together.

Thank you for your support and continued patience as we navigate through this critical work.

Carlene Jackson

Introduction

The health and safety of our students and staff is top priority as we plan for the reopening of schools and administrative buildings. As we continue efforts to slow the spread of COVID-19, returning to school and work will look different, but every effort is being made to support students and staff in this transition.

As school starts in the fall, it is critical that we do everything possible to ensure the health and safety of all school community members, while also providing the best academic experience possible for students, supporting mental health and well-being and considering the needs of families and staff.

Although confirmation of the learning models was only received on July 30 from the Ministry of Education, this *Returning to School: A Guide to the Safe Reopening of the TDSB* provides significant details in a number of important areas. In the days and weeks ahead, a more complete and comprehensive guide will be developed that will be shared with staff, students, parents, education partners and the community so that everyone knows what to expect and how to prepare for back to school. Additionally, documents and resources for staff will be created to accompany this guide and provide the necessary information for implementation.

Our decisions and work will be supported by our guiding principles:



Prioritize health and safety



Support well-being



Provide predictable learning opportunities with high quality instruction



Foster connections to staff and peers



Ensure equity of access



Consider needs of staff, students and families



Be adaptable and flexible



Be financially feasible and sustainable

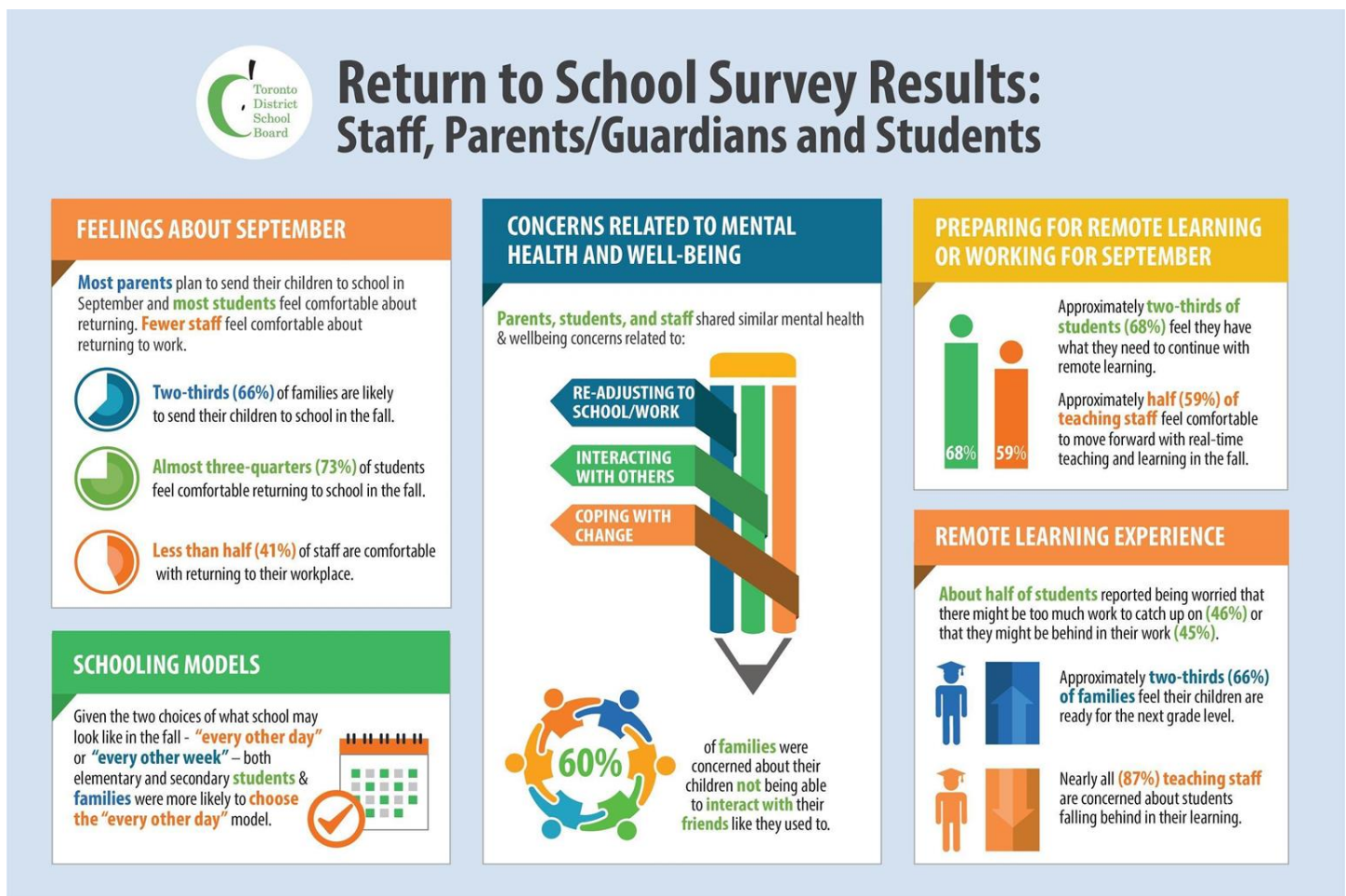
Timeline



We Heard You

An Integrated Reopening Committee that includes a multidisciplinary team of staff from across the Board have worked together to make plans for the year ahead. In addition to taking direction and guidance from both the Ministry of Education and Toronto Public Health, we listened to our communities, including parents/guardians, students and staff, as well as union and federation partners.

We conducted surveys with our parents/guardians, students and staff who provided valuable information and insight that helped guide discussions and planning. At a high level, here's a summary of what we heard:



Models for Learning

For the last three months of the 2019-20 school year, most students were engaged in remote learning when all publicly-funded schools in Ontario closed as part of ongoing efforts to limit the spread of COVID-19.

As we looked ahead to September, recognizing the fluidity of the current environment, the Ministry of Education required us to plan for three possible learning models: Regular School Day with Enhanced Public Health Protocols, Adapted School Day, and Fully Remote Learning.

On July 30, the Ministry of Education confirmed the following models for return to school in September:

Elementary (Kindergarten to Grade 8)

Students (including those in Special Education and French Immersion & Extended French programs) will attend school 5 days per week, with one cohort for the full day, including recess and lunch. Enhanced health and safety protocols will be in place.

Secondary (Grades 9 to 12)

Adapted model: Students attend school every day, in smaller class sizes of approx 15 students, in either the morning or afternoon, with learning continuing at home the other half of the day. Schools will operate on a quadmester schedule.

Additional Details from Ministry Guidelines:

- Parents/guardians will continue to have the option to opt their children out of in-person delivery and participate in remote learning.
- Cohorting, which is the practice of keeping students together in self-contained groups through the school day, should be used to limit exposure to a wide variety of people.
- Direct and indirect contacts in schools for elementary students should be limited to approximately 50 and for secondary students should be limited to approximately 100.
- School-based staff who are regularly in close contact with students will be provided with all appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE).
- Students in Kindergarten to Grade 3 will be encouraged but not required to wear masks.
- Students in Grades 4 to 12 will be required to wear non-medical or cloth masks/face coverings indoors on school property, including in hallways and in classrooms. Outdoor times like recess can be used as

Models for Learning

opportunities to provide students with breaks from wearing masks within their cohorts.

- Students may wear their own non-medical masks, and non-medical masks will also be made available for students. Reasonable exceptions on the requirement to wear masks will apply.

We will continue to be flexible and responsive to the public health data and recognize that we may need to adjust plans and practices based on current health information. This will be an ongoing process throughout the year. We have planned for all possible learning models in the event that we need to change how we operate.

While all school procedures and practices will align with system-wide plans, the implementation may look different from school to school, based on the local school environment and unique school circumstances.

Cohort/Class Sizes – Elementary and Secondary

- We will work to ensure that we don't have overly large class sizes to minimize risk
- Once we receive information from the pre-registration survey to families, we will have a better idea as to what class sizes will be (some students will opt for remote learning)
- In the event that class sizes need to be adjusted, staff will explore strategies such as reorganizing classes or adding additional resources to the extent that the budget will allow
- Given current class size caps in the Secondary collective agreement, we do not anticipate significant cohort size issues in most secondary classes

Return to School Pre-Registration Survey

As we look ahead to September, we know that school will look different as a result of continued efforts to slow the spread of COVID-19. We have been planning for our return and considering all possibilities to ensure that student and staff well-being and safety is the priority.

Now that we know the confirmed models for September, we will be undertaking pre-registration of elementary, secondary and adult students asking for families to indicate their intentions regarding attending in-person or learning remotely in order to plan for September. The process will begin with an automated phone survey of parents and adult students and translations will be available on the [TDSB website](#) in 20 languages. An online survey will also be completed by all international students and their families.

A follow up online survey will be sent to parents and adult students who do not respond to the phone survey.

The pre-registration process will be open for one week and will be launched on **Monday August 10, 2020** and close on **Monday, August 17, 2020**.

Prior to the launch of the pre-registration process, parents and adult students will be informed of the upcoming pre-registration process and directed to the TDSB's website for information about September and materials to support the completion of the phone survey (e.g., translations, explanations of the elementary and secondary school day, public health protocols etc.). Follow up with families who have not responded to either the phone survey or online survey will be through the local school when school administrative staff return in late August.

We are asking for parents/families to let us know what model they plan to have their children participate in for September. As per direction from the Ministry of Education, students may not necessarily be able to move between remote and in-person learning, and families should anticipate the possibility to be wait-listed if they change their mind.

The opportunity to switch between remote and in-person learning will depend on the availability of an appropriate class placement. This may be at the end of an instructional period (i.e. each term at the elementary level and each quadmester at the secondary level). Exceptions may be made under special circumstances on a case by case basis.

The Critical Role of Families

Families play a critical role in supporting health and safety in our school communities.

The most important thing families can do to help mitigate the transmission of COVID-19, is to screen their children daily for any COVID-19 symptoms and keep them home from school if they are sick or have had close contact with anyone diagnosed with COVID-19.

Parents/guardians should also encourage their child to adhere to the health and safety measures put in place by their school including following physical distancing, practicing good hygiene habits, including hand washing, and wearing a mask as appropriate. Please also follow your school's local protocols for pick up and drop off at school and any other local health and safety measures in place.

Families will ultimately make the decision as to whether their children will attend in-school, face to face instruction or if they will continue with at-home remote learning. Return to School models will be based on direction from the Ministry of Education and guidance from Toronto Public Health. Both models of face to face and fully remote learning consider the guiding principles and include many factors including student engagement, well-being, learning, staffing, timetabling, space considerations, and above all student and staff health and safety.

We will keep you informed on a regular basis on what is happening at the school and system level, how we continue to address the challenges posed by COVID-19, and measures being taken to limit its spread in our school communities. The Principal at your child's school also plays an important role in providing ongoing information about your school community and will be a valuable resource.

Supporting Staff and Educators

Understanding and Meeting the Needs of Staff

TDSB staff and educators are critical to our ability to prepare for and implement a safe and successful reopening in September and beyond. We recognize that staff are concerned about their own health and safety as we prepare to return to school and work. In order to provide staff and educators with the support they need, important information will be gathered through a staff survey in August regarding ability to return to work, potential accommodation needs, and other pertinent information.

Discussions about approaches to meeting various needs will take place and will consider medical accommodations (e.g. disability, illness, etc.), self-isolation, accommodation for family status needs (e.g., child care, elder care, vulnerable family member at home, etc.), and mental health and well-being needs and support. Employee Services staff will work directly with Principals and Managers to respond to the employee needs on a case by case basis.

We also recognize that educators are concerned for the safety and well-being of their students and are eager to connect with and teach students in person again. As we work towards returning to school, we are committed to supporting all staff with guidance and training. Planning for September and adapting to a new way of operating will not be easy and the implementation of these critical plans will be challenging.

To have a successful school year, we must work together to solve problems, be flexible and responsive to new information and health data, and be willing to adapt where necessary.

Professional Learning and Capacity Building

Professional learning and capacity building opportunities will be provided to educators to help them to support all students. Learning will focus on:

- Developing high levels of digital competencies (Google Classroom & Brightspace learning platforms)
- Continuing our focus on equity and anti-oppression
- Supporting the closure of learning gaps through Early Literacy intervention, resources and training
- Supporting the use of digital resources in mathematics and STEM (implementation of the new Ontario math curriculum)
- Providing support for students with Special Education Needs
- Providing support for students' mental health and well-being
- Health and Safety

Learning opportunities include:

- Summer Institutes (July and August)
- Continuum of Learning developed locally by Principals for their staff (identified needs and supports)
- In-school supports of Digital Lead Learners (DLL) and Digital Lead Administrators (DLA)
- Coaching
- Synchronous office hours

Supporting Staff and Educators

- Ongoing Key to Learn webinars (live and archived)
- Google+ Communities
- P. A. Day professional learning and training (September 1, 2, and 3)

Respecting the Collective Agreements with Employee Groups

Discussions are occurring centrally regarding potential variances that may be needed to support the restart of schools in September in light of the pandemic. Some of which are important to help ensure the health and safety of students and staff. Examples include:

- Preparation time
- Supervision
- Sick leave administration
- Coverage for absent teachers/staff
- Health and Safety

Occasional Teacher Roster

In order to ensure continuity of learning for students in the event that staff absenteeism is higher, work has been done through remote interviewing in the Spring and Summer to create a robust pool of teachers to be included in the Occasional Teacher Roster if such needs emerge. This will position us to be able to respond quickly to such circumstances.

Supporting Students with Special Education Needs

The TDSB will continue to focus on the support of students with special education needs as schools reopen. Summer transition plans are already in place to ensure a seamless transition back to school. Additional staffing will be provided to support students in special education based on system needs.

All students with special education needs will have attendance options including daily in school attendance or remote learning and will have access to a Resource Teacher as per their IEP.

Students with complex medical needs will also have the option to attend daily and staff will be provided with appropriate PPE. Remote learning where return to school is not possible will be available. Schools will collaborate with families and health care providers to ensure support to meet the needs of the student.

All students with special education needs who will engage in remote learning will have live contact with a teacher and expectations for synchronous learning including a timetable will be provided.

Secondary students with special education needs following an adapted model will attend daily; during asynchronous periods, resource support will be available.

We are working on the following to ensure students with Special Education Needs receive seamless support:

Enhanced Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and PR 699: Ongoing support and training will be provided in Non-Violent Crisis Intervention (NVCPI) and personal protective equipment (PPE) will be provided; Safety Plans will also continue on a needs basis.

Individual Education Plan (IEP): Schools will follow the requirements to provide students with their IEPs in collaboration with the IEP team and parents/guardians. Changes in the school environments and/or remote learning needs will be considered when creating and updating the IEPs.

In School Team (IST) Meetings, School Support Team (SST), IPRC and SEPRC meetings will continue either face to face and/or remotely using an AODA platform. Professional Support Services and other members of the team will be included as usual (e.g., SW, psych, special education inclusion consultant) to be in attendance.

Itinerant Staff: Regional Support Services (e.g. Autism Services (ASD) Team Referrals, Behaviour Regional Services (BRS) Team Referrals, Itinerant Blind & Low Vision (BLV) and Deaf & Hard of Hearing (DHH) will continue to support both remotely and in person following physical distancing guidelines and a Tiered Approach based on a student's IEP.

Special Equipment Amount (SEA): Students will continue to access SEA equipment/assistive technology and staff will continue to be supported with SEA equipment training to enhance student access to learning.

Transportation, scheduling, staff needs, OTs, training, etc. for ISPs (DD, Autism, etc.) in Congregated Sites and in regular schools.



Health and Safety

Ensuring the health and safety of students and staff is a priority. Following guidance from Toronto Public Health, a number of key measures will be put into place – including physical distancing, hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette, and screening for symptoms – in the TDSB to help stop the spread of COVID-19.

Entering, Moving Through and Exiting School

Before coming to school, all staff and students are expected to conduct a self-assessment for COVID-19 symptoms. Once they arrive at school, a second screening will be conducted to ensure no one exhibiting any symptoms comes into the school. This is the most important defence against transmission of COVID-19.

Students and staff will practice physical distancing and remain 2 Metres apart to the maximum extent possible. Classrooms will be organized to encourage the maximum space between students. Floors will be marked with stickers to designate a one-way traffic flow and identifying 2 Metre distances. Signage will be placed throughout the building to reinforce safety protocols. Where physical distancing is not possible in school offices and public reception areas, we will review alternative methods of separation such as plexiglass barriers.

Our goal is to maintain physical distancing whenever possible. In order to reduce the potential for larger gatherings of students, we will be limiting occupancy levels in common areas such as hallways, stairwells and libraries. Lockers will not be used by students at this time.

Schools will determine local protocols including identifying entry/exit doors and parent pick up/drop off protocols.





Health and Safety

Hygiene Practices

According to Toronto Public Health, hand washing is one of the most effective ways to minimize the risk of transmission of COVID-19. Signage about hand washing and proper respiratory etiquette will be prominent in schools/administration centres. For schools, hand washing time will also be built into daily routines, including after washroom use, recess and lunch breaks. Alcohol-based sanitizers will also be available throughout the school and at designated entry and exit points. When physical distancing is not possible, face masks will be provided and used.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

All staff members will be provided with the appropriate PPE (medical masks and face shields) to safely interact with each other and with students. Additional PPE will be provided to staff who require it during their normal day to day responsibilities. Students in Grade 4 and above will be required to wear a face mask or reusable cloth masks, which will be provided. Reasonable exceptions regarding the requirement to wear masks/face coverings will be made. Students in JK to Grade 3 are not required to wear masks/face coverings, although it is recommended that they do so, if possible.

Training

All staff will be provided with a full day of Health and Safety training prior to the start of the school year. This will include training on Covid 19 Awareness, Screening/Signs/Symptoms, donning/doffing PPE, and other safety protocols related to the return to work. We will consult with our Union/Federation partners and the Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee on the training. Training will be delivered using a combination of webinars and videos. Training on Covid awareness, masks/face coverings and safety protocols will also be made available to parents/students.

Cleaning and Other Additional Measures

Caretaking staff will perform routine cleaning of general facilities through the day and will conduct enhanced cleaning of high touch surfaces such as light switches, handrails, door handles, etc. twice daily. Shared items will be used minimally and will be cleaned between users.

Mechanical HVAC systems have been checked during the summer months to ensure they are operating as designed and we will increase the frequency of filter changes. In addition, the intake settings will be adjusted to increase the amount of fresh air and reduce recirculation. Where possible, windows will be opened to increase natural ventilation.

Health Screening for COVID-19 Symptoms

Before entering a school, students, staff and visitors (limited to only those necessary) must first do a self-assessment for COVID-19 symptoms. If staff or students feel unwell or have symptoms of COVID-19, they should not attend school and should go to a primary care provider or assessment centre for testing.

Each school will have a designated entrance for staff, students and visitors with a screening station that has:



Health and Safety

- Signage requiring all people entering to conduct a COVID self-assessment.
- Signage and visual cues to remind people to practise to physical distancing while in the school.
- Exterior markings to reinforce physical distancing when entering the school.
- Alcohol-based sanitizer to disinfect hands prior to further entry into the building.
- A log book or alternative method of recording any visitors/itinerant staff for the purpose of contact tracing.
- A process for recording staff attendance for the purpose of contact tracing.

Suspected Cases of COVID-19

If a staff member or student has COVID-19 symptoms, they are to go to an assessment center and get tested.

As per Toronto Public Health, if the test is negative, individuals can return to work/school 24 hours after symptoms go away, as long as they are not self-isolating for other reasons. Individuals with a confirmed case of COVID-19, can return to work 14 days after their symptoms first appear, as long as symptoms are mostly gone. No tests or clearance letter is required for return to work or school.

If a student develops COVID-19 symptoms while in school, they should immediately be separated from others in a separate room until picked up. The student will be accompanied to the room by a staff member who will remain with them until they are picked up by family members. Both the staff member and the student will be required to wear a mask and other required PPE. To assist with this requirement, the room will be equipped with a PPE kit that includes masks, gloves, gown, face shield and tissues. The room will be disinfected once the individual leaves.

If a staff member becomes ill while they are at school, they are to go home, get tested for COVID-19 and self-isolate pending results. If they are unable to get home safely, they will be directed to wait in the isolation room until such time as a family member can pick them up. They will be required to follow all of the steps laid out for sick students in the isolation room.

Confirmed Case of COVID-19

The TDSB will track student and staff attendance and alert Toronto Public Health about large increases in absenteeism due to illness. Confirmed cases of COVID-19 are reported by the testing laboratory to Toronto Public Health who will help the school community through contact tracing.

Confirmed Case of COVID-19: Process

The following steps must be taken when there is a confirmed case of COVID-19 (student or staff):

- Supervisor/Principal to notify Manager/Superintendent, Health and Safety department and Communications
- Supervisor/Principal to determine if employee/student was in the building 48 hours prior to and including the day of onset of symptoms OR 48 hours prior to positive specimen collection if



Health and Safety

asymptomatic at the time of specimen collection.

- If yes, Supervisor/Principal to verbally inform all employees who have been in the building on those days of a confirmed case of COVID-19 (do not share personal information/name of employee).
- Supervisor/Principal records this information including attendance, contact information and visitor sign-in logs for possible Toronto Public Health contact tracing purposes.
- Senior Manager, Occupational Health & Safety reports name of employee/student to TPH. Also, the appropriate Union/Federation member of JHSC will be notified.
- Students and employees who test positive for COVID-19 will self-isolate for 14 days in accordance with TPH protocol.
- TPH will contact positive cases directly and provide a letter directly to the other staff/students identified to have a high risk of exposure. Communications Department to work with TPH on letters to school or community, as determined by TPH.
- TPH will collaborate with the Supervisor/Principal to obtain contact information for those individuals with a high risk of exposure.
- TPH will follow up with the Employer through the Senior Manager, Occupational Health & Safety, if needed.
- Supervisor/Principal to discuss any enhanced cleaning protocols that may need to be performed with the Facility Team Leader. These area(s) will be closed until this enhanced cleaning is completed.
- Additional direction will be taken from TPH and is based on Ministry of Education and Ministry of Health guidance in the workplace.

Attendance and Absenteeism Reporting

TDSB will track student and staff attendance and alert Toronto Public Health about large increases in absenteeism due to illness. Confirmed cases of COVID-19 are reported by the lab to Toronto Public Health who will help the school community through contact tracing.

School Visitors

Schools will significantly limit visitors, including parents/guardians. Any visitors to a school will be required to conduct a COVID-19 health screening at the designated school entrance/screening station and will be required to wear a medical mask while on school property.



Well-Being and Supports for Students

Returning to school after many months away will require time to address the social and emotional needs of students as well as continue to provide ongoing support to students who need it.

Mental Health and Well-Being

From our student survey, we know that about half of students were concerned about getting used to school routines again. About one-third of students were concerned about getting used to in-person interactions with teachers and peers, not being able to interact with friends like they used to (35%), and coping with their fears or anxiety.

Also, one-quarter to one-third of students noted that the following would help them feel more comfortable at school:

- having a relaxing and calming space to go to in the school if feeling overwhelmed
- support for re-developing school routines
- support with social emotional learning skills
- additional information to support their mental health and well-being and the support of a Social Worker, Psychologist, Guidance Counselor, or Child and Youth Worker

All staff have a role to play in supporting students' mental health and well-being. Building relationships and connections, offering support and building capacity of school-based staff will help ease the transition back to school and help meet the needs of students. Professional learning will be provided to staff to help identify students' specific needs and appropriate tier 1 and 2 strategies during the return to school.

For students, we will provide a blended model of support with both in-person and virtual supports, including:

- Office hours, wellness clubs and social community circles
- Crisis support
- Clinical Counselling, as appropriate

There will also be support for students at transition points (returning to school, attending a new school, entering Grade 9, participating in e-learning) with re-engagement support and opportunities to be welcomed by and connected to other students.

Professional Support Services

Students will continue to be able to receive support from the TDSB's occupational and physiotherapists, psychologists, social workers and speech and language pathologists. Consideration has been given to each area to determine how to support students and families in ways that meet health and safety measures if meeting physically, and also how to support students in a virtual environment.



Well-Being and Supports for Students

Reopening Principles for Working with Itinerant Staff

A number of staff roles, including Professional Support Services and Community Support Workers rely on staff visiting students in various schools. These staff are critical to support the transition of students and staff returning to school and specific principles guide their return:

- Efficiently allocate staff to specific schools & plan services in blocks of time at a school
- Prioritize the needs of students, once known, in consultation and collaboration with school staff
- Maintain physical distance when working with students, staff or families where possible and use PPE as directed or when physical distancing is not possible
- Carefully track interactions with different cohorts of children and staff
- Eliminate or reduce the sharing of student and staff resources where feasible.
- Continue to offer services synchronously, where feasible and appropriate, while maintaining our commitments to equity (e.g., online assessments, participation in meetings and professional learning)
 - Synchronous Supports for students
 - Office Hours
 - Check In & Connect Sessions
 - Planned Groups & Small Groups
 - Individual Support
 - Opportunities to work with peers in small groups
 - Participation in Remote Meetings (e.g., School Support Team, Staff Meetings & Professional Learning)
 - Online consultations & service delivery
 - Resource development and sharing



Learning and Instruction

Elementary Learning and Instruction

The goal of all learning and instruction, even in this time of COVID-19 school disruption, is to ensure each student learns grade-level content from the Ontario Curriculum and is able to demonstrate their learning in a variety of ways in order to progress to the next grade. Achieving this goal requires each teacher to understand what is the essential knowledge from the current and prior grades and designing learning tasks to best meet the needs of their students. Determining how students will learn this content in the different instructional delivery models—in-person and remote—is critical. Our planning for learning and instruction includes:

- Building relationships and classroom communities are foundational to all learning.
- Kindergarten educators will follow the [Ontario Kindergarten Program, 2016](#)
 - The program should continue to be play- and inquiry-based as per the curriculum/program document
 - The educator team of DECE and teacher (OCT) should continue to plan independent, small and large group learning experiences for children to play and inquire whilst maintaining health protocols
 - Planning and Assessment will continue to be based on the Four Frames of the Kindergarten Program and Growing Success: Kindergarten Addendum, 2016
 - All learning opportunities begin from a place of creating belonging for the children, along with building a community of learners
 - classroom cleaning protocols will need to be in place for shared learning materials
- Ministry Curriculum Content (Gr. 1 - 8): What are the big ideas and overall expectations of the curriculum that each student should know and be able to demonstrate for their grade?
 - Instruction: How will each student learn the curriculum content, skills and processes in a developmentally and pedagogically appropriate way, whether in-person or remotely?
 - Assessment: How will each student demonstrate their learning of the curriculum expectations? Assessment will be based on Growing Success, 2010
- Professional Learning & Supports: How will educators be prepared to flexibly move between in-person and remote learning, teach the curriculum effectively, assess in real time, and meet the needs of each student?

There are lessons we learned from the COVID school closure period from April to June that will guide school and system planning:

- We need to acknowledge the impact the COVID pandemic has had on our underserved communities and ensure equity informs all aspects of our learning and instructional practices.
- Student learning environments need to be flexible and adaptable to be able to shift between in-person and remote settings, at different points in the year.



Learning and Instruction

- Teams of educators need to work collaboratively to support cohorts of students across learning environments
- Learning experiences in which the learning/teaching of the curriculum builds logically and learning experiences are built on students' assets—their identity, cultural background, ideas, interests, and aspirations—will make the learning relevant and engaging across learning settings.
- High-quality instructional resources support student learning as students move between remote and in-person learning scenarios and is critical to student engagement and wellness. Structure for in-school as well as remote learning is essential for coherence and reliability.

Regular School Day - Elementary

Elementary school students in Kindergarten through Grade 8 will attend school five days per week, with 300 minutes of instruction per day, remaining in one cohort for the full day, including recess and lunch. Enhanced health and safety protocols will be in place. Students in Kindergarten to Grade 3 will be encouraged but not required to wear masks. Students in Grades 4 to 12 will be required to wear non-medical or cloth masks indoors on school property, including in hallways and in classrooms.

Cohorted classes will stay together and with one teacher (one teacher and one DECE in kindergarten), where possible. Students can expect to see changes in the timing of recesses, lunches, and washroom breaks as they are staggered to support cohorting. Specialized teachers, like French teachers, will still be able to go into classrooms to provide the full breadth of programming for students. Students will also be able to leave their classrooms to receive additional support and maintain limited groupings ([Ministry of Education Guide to Reopening Ontario's Schools, p3](#)).

Schools have their teacher allocations and will create tentative timetables and class placements. Classroom teachers will be responsible for covering the Ontario curriculum with the exception of prep delivery and rotary which will involve subject-specialist teachers going into the classroom.

Prep Delivery:

Teacher prep will be delivered throughout the day by Subject-Specialist teachers. Specialized teachers (e.g. Core French teachers) will be able to go into classrooms to provide the full breadth of programming for students.

Educators will maintain an online platform (Google or Brightspace) for all students in the class and ensure that students are able to log in and know how to navigate the space. Professional learning and support will be provided to all staff to build capacity in using online learning resources.

Students will also be able to leave their classrooms to receive additional support and maintain limited groupings (Ministry of Education Guide to Reopening Ontario's Schools, p3).



Learning and Instruction

Itinerant educators will have a schedule assigned to them to minimize moving from school to school, and will support both remotely and in person following physical distancing and cohorting guidelines i.e., ESL Itinerants/Itinerant Music Instructors (IMI) may be assigned to one of their schools as a home base and support additional schools remotely.

Fully Remote Learning - Elementary

While students will begin the school year on a daily, in-class schedule, we need to be prepared to pivot if public health guidance requires a change in operation. Some students may also opt to not return to school and continue their learning at home. The guidelines below outline Remote Learning in the TDSB for elementary students.

Structure of Day

- Daily attendance will be taken
- 300 Minutes of learning opportunities (synchronous and asynchronous)
- Large Group Instruction 40-50% of the day (dependent on grade level)
- Guided Instruction (small group), Synchronous Check & Connect (small group or individual)
- Asynchronous independent work available in Google Classroom/Brightspace
- Instruction will be delivered by more than one educator (i.e., remote cohort homeroom teacher, DECE for Kindergarten where applicable, and prep subjects)

Focus of Curriculum

- Programming is based on the Overall Expectations of the Ontario Curriculum and Kindergarten Program
- Inquiry-based learning and units of Study should be interdisciplinary
- All learning opportunities begin from a place of creating belonging for students
- Synchronous learning, recorded and loaded on Google Classroom/Brightspace for asynchronous learning periods
- Small group learning to follow up on students demonstrating their learning through play and inquiry (Early Years), literacy and numeracy, and other curriculum areas

Prep Time

- Prep will be delivered through a prep schedule timetable
- Prep focus on Core French and The Arts (Music, Visual Arts, Drama & Dance) or Physical Education & Health



Learning and Instruction

Expectations by Grade

Kindergarten

- Whole Group Instruction: two/three sessions per day for short periods of time
- Guided Instruction (Synchronous) & Independent Play/work: two sessions per day
- Synchronous Check & Connect: three sessions per day

Grades 1 – 3

- Whole Group Instruction: four sessions per day
- Guided Instruction (Synchronous) & Independent Work: two sessions per day
- Synchronous Check & Connect: two sessions per day

Grades 4 – 6

- Whole Group Instruction: four sessions per day
- Guided Instruction (Synchronous) & Independent Work: three sessions per day
- Synchronous Check & Connect: one session per day

Grades 7 – 8

- Whole Group Instruction: four sessions per day
- Guided Instruction (Synchronous) & Independent Work: three sessions per day
- Synchronous Check & Connect: one session per day

Elementary Alternating Days

According to the Ministry of Education’s “*Guide to Reopening Ontario’s Schools*” school boards should be prepared to implement their adapted delivery models should public health conditions require them. Under this scenario, cohorts would include approximately 15 students in each class attending on alternate days, or alternate schedules that would represent in person attendance for at least 50% of instructional days.

Our proposal is as follows:

- **Cohort A & B:** Classes divided into cohorts A&B (no more than 15 students per cohort) and attend in-person on alternating days (Wednesdays alternate between cohort A&B).
- **Cohort C:** Fully remote, access to Google Classroom or Brightspace, with synchronous and asynchronous learning, and check-in & connect sessions from non-classroom educators, daily attendance will be taken
- **Cohort D:** Fully remote and do not have access to technology or unable to use technology. Units of study written and mailed by assigned staff with check-in & connect from non-classroom educators.



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- **Cohort E:** Students with Special Education Needs in ISP classes will have the option to attend in person everyday (could also be part of Cohort C or D).

Before- and After-School Programs (Extended Day Program, Authorized Recreation and Licensed Child Care)

Before- and after-school programs (BASP) provide important care for families and their children outside of instructional hours and days. The TDSB is committed to supporting the operation of these programs in schools in September, with the health and safety of children, families, and staff of utmost importance. The Ministry of Education recently announced revised [Operational Guidelines](#) for licensed child care operators to support the safe reopening of programs across the province. Updates are also being made to the *Before and After School Kindergarten to Grade 6 Policies and Guideline* to provide COVID-19-related operational guidance.

At this time, the Ministry has confirmed authorized recreation provider-operated after school programs and Extended Day Programs will be required to follow standard ratios and maximum group sizes set out in the *Before and After School Kindergarten to Grade 6 Policies and Guidelines*. Additionally, licensed child cares are required to develop infection prevention and control policies and procedures as per the [Toronto Public Health COVID-19 Guidance for Child Care Settings](#).

In September, school boards are expected to support cohorting of students to the greatest extent possible. While this can be challenging for students attending BASP, schools and BASP operators will collaborate to ensure that student lists and information are maintained and readily available to be provided to Toronto Public Health for contact tracing purposes. To support enhanced cleaning requirements in schools, TDSB staff will work with BASP operators to facilitate the required cleaning before and after BASP students access program space.

While the full return to school supports the continued implementation of BASPs in TDSB schools during the 2020-21 school year, the decision to operate and determine operating capacities for licensed BASP and authorized recreation programs will be made by organizations and individual program operators. TDSB operated Extended Day Programs will continue to operate this year, and over the coming weeks staff will be confirming enrollment with families to determine maximum operating capacities across the 18 schools, while maintaining the cost recovery mandate.



Learning and Instruction

Secondary Learning and Instruction - Adapted In-School and Remote Learning

All models in secondary use a quadmester calendar as outlined below. Each semester is 97 days:

- **Quad 1:** Sept 8 - Nov. 9 + Exams Nov. 10 and Nov. 11 = 44 days + 2 exam days
- **Quad 2:** Nov. 12 - Jan. 28 + Exams Jan. 29 and Feb. 1 = 45 days + 2 exam days
- **Quad 3:** Feb. 3 - April 16 + Exams April 19-21 = 44 days + 3 exam days
- **Quad 4:** April 22 - June 23 + Exams June 26, 27, 28 = 44 days + 3 exam days

- **PA Days:** September 1-3, November 20, February 2, February 12, June 29
- **Semester 2/Quad 3 Turnaround Day:** February 3, 2021

At the beginning of each quad, students/parents choose between Model 1 and Model 2 (below) and must indicate their choice two weeks prior to the start of quad. Most students are expected to complete two courses/quad. No switching is permitted during quads.

- **Model 1:** Adapted In-School Day Model (Cohorts)
- **Model 2:** 100% Remote Learning

Adapted In-School Day (Cohorts) - Secondary

In the Adapted In-School Day model, part time learning will take place in-person at school part time learning will take place at home. In school, there will be one teacher responsible per course and classes will be divided to achieve approx. 15:1 ratio. Students will be positioned physically distant from each other in class (some rooms may be smaller and may only allow fewer students). Departments will determine essential course learnings based on overall expectations from the Ontario Curriculum and will focus on authentic inquiry.

Course Structure

All courses will utilize Brightspace or Google Classroom as learning platforms and will be taught using a combination of in person and remote at home learning (face to face time with the teacher has been maximized in this model).

Considerations will be given to the following as part of teachers' professionally managed time:

- Support for Students with Special Needs, IEPs, ELLs, etc.
- Student Success Initiatives (RCR, caring adult meetings)
- Gap Closing -- Small Group Learning



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- School-Wide or Small Group Wellness Initiatives
- Support for IB Program Requirements (Extended Essay, ToK, Internal Assessments)
- Meetings for Leadership Groups (e.g. Student Council, Athletic Council, etc.)

Secondary Schedule

Students attend every day (half day in-school/half day asynchronous remote):

9:10 a.m. - 11:02 a.m.

- AM Period (half the class)
- Cohort A: In class learning
- Cohort B: Asynchronous learning remotely

11:02 a.m. - 11:45 a.m.

- Lunch for staff and transition for students

11:45 a.m. - 1:37 p.m.

- PM Period (half of the class)
- Cohort A: Asynchronous learning remotely
- Cohort B: In class learning

1:37 p.m. – 2:52 p.m.

- Teacher Prep and Enhanced Cleaning



Learning and Instruction

9:10 a.m. - 11:02 a.m. - AM Period (Cohort of 15)

Cohort A/B: In class learning

Cohort B/A: Asynchronous learning remotely

11:45 a.m. - 1:37 p.m. - PM Period (Cohort of 15)

Cohort A/B: Asynchronous learning remotely

Cohort B/A: In class learning

**Day 1/2 schedule/Face to face time with teacher is maximized in this model*

Week 1	Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thurs.	Fri.
9:10 a.m. - 11:02 a.m.	Cohort A Class 1	Cohort A Class 2	Cohort A Class 1	Cohort A Class 2	Cohort A Class 1
11:45 a.m. - 1:37 p.m.	Cohort B Class 1	Cohort B Class 2	Cohort B Class 1	Cohort B Class 2	Cohort B Class 1

Week 2	Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thurs.	Fri.
9:10 a.m. - 11:02 a.m.	Cohort B Class 2	Cohort B Class 1	Cohort B Class 2	Cohort B Class 1	Cohort B Class 2
11:45 a.m. - 1:37 p.m.	Cohort A Class 2	Cohort A Class 1	Cohort A Class 2	Cohort A Class 1	Cohort A Class 2



Learning and Instruction

Fully Remote Learning - Secondary

Some students may opt to not return to school and continue their learning at home. We may also need to be prepared to pivot from face to face instruction if public health guidance requires a change in operation. The guidelines below outline Remote Learning in the TDSB for secondary students.

Students will have a daily schedule as outlined below. A minimum of 90 minutes/course/day must be synchronous through *BrightSpace* or *Google Classroom*.

- **Course 1:** 9 to 11:30 a.m.
- **Course 2:** 12:30 to 3 p.m.

Teachers will use *BrightSpace* or *Google Classroom* for course shells and content. Central staff (hybrids, K-12 coaches, subject-specific coaches, math coaches, teachers unable to come into school buildings) will work collaboratively with classroom teachers to co-design curriculum.

Canadian border closure is extended to August 31, 2020. International students who are abroad will not be able to enter Canada. TDSB will offer a robust Full Remote Learning program to support all students who cannot participate in face-to-face programming.

Considerations:

- Number of students who opt for the fully remote model
- Cohorts of students will be assigned to a teacher (not necessarily from their school)
- Remote Learning differs from the TDSB e-Learning Day School Program
 - Currently e-Learning Day School is for Grade 11 and 12 courses only
 - Taught by centrally hired staff
 - Course content pre-populated (mostly) by Ministry of Education

Adult and EdVance High Schools

There are five Adult High Schools (students 21 years or older) and five EdVance High Schools (18 to 20 year old students) in the TDSB that all offer quadmestered courses and share school space. At the beginning of each quadmester students may choose one of the following options (no switching during quadmasters):

A) Take up to three courses at the school (Alternative days in cohorts and on-line when at home)

B) Take up to three courses on-line at the beginning of each quadmester



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Pre-registration and registration will be done online or through telephone for quadmester one. English/Math assessment testing for new Canadians without any academic documentation will be done in-person, at the school, in small numbers and with physical distancing in place (beginning week of August 24). Devices (laptops, Chromebook) will be provided to these learners, if required.

Continuing Education

The TDSB guiding principles have focused the return to school planning of the Continuing Education Department. The plan for each program area is to begin effective online instruction in the fall. Online classes provide a safe learning environment for learners and instructors. This includes:

Adult ESL programs

- A phased in approach for in person delivery at leased sites is being developed to meet the needs of learners
- Instructor capacity to deliver online courses continues to be built through professional development opportunities

Adult General Interest and Senior's Daytime classes

- Professional development opportunities will be provided for Instructors
- Online course offerings are currently being planned

Elementary International Languages and African Heritage program

- Classes will continue to be offered weekdays and Saturdays in an online platform
- Instructors will be provided with professional development opportunities

Elementary and Secondary Literacy and Numeracy Courses

- Programs offerings are determined in collaboration with elementary and secondary schools
- Plans are being developed to provide access to these courses through an online platform

Secondary Night School and Saturday International Language Credit Courses

- First semester for Night School will be delivered online
- International Language credit courses will be delivered online on Saturday mornings



Learning and Instruction

Guidelines for Subject Delivery - Elementary and Secondary

Cooperative Education

Cooperative education is a key component of school-based experiential learning programming, Specialist High Skills Majors, the Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program and Dual Credit Programs. In order to ensure student safety and rich experiential learning opportunities, Cooperative Education Co-op placements will be offered virtually, where feasible. In-person community placements will be arranged in alignment with direction from Toronto Public Health, the Toronto District School Board, and in accordance with the safety and curriculum requirements of the Cooperative Education curriculum. The *Cooperative Education COVID-19 Guideline for Community Placement* will be made available to educators and administrators to support the implementation of the guidelines. Students attending virtual placements will be provided with tech support and resources to support student learning and achievement. Educators and administrators will be provided with opportunities for professional learning to support students attending both virtual and in-person placements. Placement site supervisors will also be provided with detailed information to support student safety and learning.

Health and Physical Education

Health and Physical Education (HPE) is an important part of the curriculum and logistics will vary based on a number of factors, including gymnasium and indoor space availability, outdoor space availability (school yard and fields, local parks and green spaces), etc. All schools will complete an inventory and make local plans to accommodate physical education for all students. Physical distance will be encouraged at all times and physical and visual guides will be used to modify spaces, as necessary (e.g. fields marked into quadrants or halves, paint on grass or chalk on sidewalks, tape on gymnasium floors, etc.).

Proper hand washing and personal hygiene routines will be incorporated and change rooms, fitness centres and areas of play will be sanitized and deep cleaned after each use. To support the effort for reduced contact and possible contamination of resources, there will be a focus on activities that do not use equipment or where possible individualized PE kits could be assembled to assign each student their own supplies.

Library

It is essential for educators and students to access print resources like books, textbooks and papers to facilitate learning. A *Use of Printed (Paper) Resources Protocol (for libraries and classrooms)* has been created to support administrators in planning local routines and procedures for safely managing the use of printed materials. The protocol is based on Ontario Public Library Leadership Group recommendations.

Mathematics

Effective math instruction must be supported by an inclusive, positive, and safe learning environment, where students feel valued and engaged. An effective environment for math instruction has many components that may be impacted by social distance and shared objects. Students should continue to have opportunities to



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work with a partner or small group and use math manipulatives. To adhere to physical distancing, during partner and small groups, students can work on large chart paper, assign a scribe or have each student document group strategies and solutions.

Manipulatives remain an important aspect of an effective environment for math instruction and should continue to be used in direct modeling of strategies and available as a tool for students to access in solving math problems. To reduce the use of shared objects, manipulative kits can be developed for individual student use or manipulatives can be sanitized between use. Allow for more transition time for cleaning, before and after lessons.

Science/STEM

Student learning experiences should remain hands-on as much as possible however limitations in individual equipment may require activities to be modeled by the teacher. Science labs are typically a partnered activity and may need to be modified to support physical distancing. Special consideration should be taken for classrooms with fixed equipment (e.g. labs or technological education classrooms). Lab equipment and shared objects (e.g., microscopes, hot plates, scales, autoclaves, etc.) should be sanitized before and after use or ensure a rest-period between use of shared materials. Allow for more transition time for cleaning, before and after lessons. [Safety protocols](#) and procedures should continue to be followed.

Tech Education

To facilitate learning and support student achievement it is essential for educators to be able to safely provide students in Tech Education courses with hands-on experiences which resemble as closely as possible industry practices. A *Tech Education Safety Guidelines for COVID-19* is being developed to compliment the current Tech Safety Document. This guideline reflects Toronto Public Health recommendations and standards, industry safety protocols and TDSB Health and Safety protocols. The document will support educators and administrators in the implementation of routines and procedures for safely managing the use of equipment and tools in Tech Education classrooms. Professional learning opportunities will also be made available to educators and administrators to support the implementation of the new guidelines.

The Arts (Dance, Drama, Music, and Visual Arts)

The Arts (dance, drama, music, visual arts) remain an important component of the curriculum that focuses on creation, artistic expression, and exploration. The Arts are highly collaborative/social subject areas and we must ensure that student learning remains focused on 'doing' and creating to support student well-being and creative expression, and to help students make sense of the world in these unprecedented times. Schools will make a plan according to the programming needs at their school. All Arts instruction can be creatively adapted to adhere to health guidelines.



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Music

Elements of music instruction (singing, wind instruments) will require special considerations for space and follow physical distancing and masking guidelines as outlined by Toronto Public Health and the Ministry of Education. Where possible, teachers are encouraged to instruct students outside.

Special Considerations for Instruments

Wind/Brass instruments mouthpieces, reeds and recorders must not be shared between students without designated rest period and thorough cleaning. Schools may choose the option of rotating cohorts using instruments with approved rest period and cleaning in between. Schools may rent instruments to augment inventory where possible. Students should be provided with their own mouthpiece, mallet or material kit to avoid sharing of any items. Some string, percussion, keyboard, and electronic instruments may be shared, if absolutely necessary, with detailed cleaning protocols.

Students will need to be instructed on safe handling practices and teachers may consider delaying the start of wind instruments until students display readiness to follow safe handling/cleaning guidelines and physical distancing. Staff should avoid playing or handling student-assigned instruments for demonstration/tuning purposes.

Itinerant Music Instructors

Itinerant Music Instructors (IMIs) work within some of our Elementary schools to instruct instrumental music (band/strings/steel pan) and support classroom teachers in Primary/Junior general music strategies. We are making arrangements for IMIs to be assigned a school as a home base and then accommodate their other assigned schools remotely. IMIs will collaborate with the classroom teacher to contribute to an online platform (Google or Brightspace).

Drama

Drama traditionally involves physical contact, movement, and proximity. Drama takes place primarily in the imagination through creative and critical thinking. Movement can be made smaller and be done spread out in the classroom with desks moved to the side. Travelling movements will be defined by the space available. Props and costume use should be restricted.

Dance

To support the effort for reduced contact and possible contamination of resources, there will be a focus on activities that do not use equipment or involve lifts (secondary). Lessons will need to be adapted to accommodate social distancing due to the physical exertion during dance. Studios and classroom spaces will be sanitized after each use (e.g., dance barres). Where possible, teachers are encouraged to instruct outdoors.

Visual Arts

Student learning should remain experiential and 'hands on' to support student well-being and creative expression. Where possible, focusing on the creative process and integration within other subjects is recommended. If possible, provide individual students with an art kit so that materials are not shared or



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borrowed. Utilizing a sketchbook for 2-D work and maintaining a portfolio to keep artwork organized. The use of digital portfolios would alleviate space restrictions.

Special Series Courses may need to be adapted or modified (e.g. in a ceramics course, clay recycling would have to be abandoned, individuals should receive their own clay block for hand-building; accommodations will need to be made for solitary or distanced darkroom use; sculpture materials that release dust or other particulates should be avoided altogether as they can irritate respiratory systems [OAEA recommendations](#)).

Additional Learning and Instruction Considerations

Classroom Setup

In order to encourage physical distance, classrooms will be organized and set up in ways to encourage the maximum space between students.

“However, while physical distancing and its role in the prevention of infection transmission should be discussed with students of all ages, it is likely not practical to enforce strict physical distancing in elementary school children, especially during periods of play. Cohorting (discussed in Item #5) is an additional strategy that can be used to facilitate close interactions, while minimizing the number of potential exposures. Interaction, such as playing and socializing, is central to child development and should not be discouraged.”

(COVID-19: Guidance for School Reopening, p9)

Field Trips

Field trips and other activities that require group transportation will not be planned at this time.

Large Gatherings

Large in-person school gatherings such as assemblies, concerts or dances) should be avoided. Virtual options can be provided as an alternative.

Lunch & Recess

Planning and decisions about outside recess and play will be locally developed, based on Public Health direction and school context, including factors such as number of students, available space, etc. Lunch and recess will be staggered to allow for physical distancing and students will eat in classrooms and bring their own food (no sharing).

Organized Sports

There will be a pause in participation for all interscholastic sports this Fall until the board receives explicit direction from the Ontario Medical Officer of Health (MOH) with respect to the resumption of activity. Once there is some easing of restrictions that enable certain activities to open within the orders of the MOH, plans for resumption can be tabled. This is not a return to normal, but rather to a “new normal” which will require



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everyone to modify their behaviour, stay informed, apply protective measures and follow public health advice and individual sport associations' recommendations.

School Clubs and Extra-curricular

Schools can offer if physical distancing is possible and equipment and spaces are cleaned and disinfected between each use.

Technology/Allocation of Devices

Digital Learning Tools

Digital learning tools including G Suite for Education (Classroom, Drive, etc.), the Brightspace Learning Platform and TDSB's Virtual Library are available to all students and school staff. These learning tools include both those for teaching and learning (online classrooms) and digital content resources.

Allocation & Return of Student Devices / Internet Access

Based on the March 2020 survey to all TDSB families, over 57,000 requested devices and 7,400 requested internet access ready equipment were shipped to individual students in April, May and June. These devices will stay with students until further notice.

Students who have graduated from the TDSB or have left the district will be returning devices in late August and early September to the school closest to them. These returned units will be allocated to support student learning.

Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) Personal and Board Owned

Students are welcome to bring a personal device to school daily to enhance access to digital learning tools and content. This device could be personally owned or one previously loaned by the TDSB for remote learning.

Replacement of Devices Pulled Out During Covid-19

Students who were allocated a TDSB device for remote learning during the Spring of 2020 will retain this device for learning at home during the Fall of 2020 and perhaps beyond. Planning is currently underway to begin replenishing devices that were borrowed from schools and loaned to TDSB students for remote learning. Over 9,400 new devices will be allocated to schools to support student learning. Schools may also purchase additional devices for their staff and students from their current school budget balance.

Network/Bandwidth Capacity

All TDSB schools are connected to a high speed fibre optic network providing wired and wireless services. All schools have a minimum 1 Gigabyte multi-protocol label switching service, schools with more than 1,000 students have a 2 Gigabyte service. TDSB is confident in the capacity of its wide area network to support the teaching and learning needs and activities of staff and students.



Operations

Transportation

Transportation staff have been meeting regularly with bus operators over the summer to prepare for a safe return to school. To date, bus operators have indicated that they will have a full roster of drivers to start the year. However, it is important to note that approximately 20 percent of the driver pool is over sixty years of age, thus the situation is subject to change. Bus operators have been encouraged to recruit drivers as a larger than normal spare pool of drivers is expected to be needed.

The following considerations must be part of any successful and safe start up (sources include federal guidelines found at: www2.tc.gc.ca/en/services/road/federal-guidance-school-bus-operations-during-covid-19-pandemic.html and the Ontario Ministry of Education's *Guide to Reopening Ontario's Schools*).

1. **Reducing exposure:** Before every trip, bus drivers, students, parents and staff must self assess for any COVID-19 symptoms and not board a bus if any symptoms are present. All students and drivers who experience symptoms need to self-isolate and stay home. If another member of a child's or driver's household develops symptoms, it is recommended that the child or driver stay home and self-isolate.

A child who develops symptoms while at school should not be permitted to return home on a school bus and should be picked up by a parent/guardian or provided a safe alternate means of transportation.

2. **Engineering controls:** Signage will be displayed on the buses to reinforce the importance of wearing masks, staying six feet apart where possible (e.g. lining up for the bus, boarding and disembarking), using good hand hygiene and not going into the aisles or congregating near the driver.
3. **Administrative controls:** Signage will be displayed prominently on buses and enhanced cleaning will be provided for high touch surfaces (e.g. seats, inside hand railing, interior windows and walls, etc.). It is expected that the steering wheel and immediate driver area, as well as the tops of seats and hand railing will be wiped down between runs, which may result in some delay. All other enhanced cleaning will be performed either before or after the shift.

In addition to regular cleaning of school bus interiors, to the extent possible, it is recommended that operators reduce the number of drivers per vehicle and ensure that the same drivers use the same vehicle and keep the same work schedules in order to limit contacts as much as possible.

Some limits to busing may need to be imposed to start the school year such as the elimination of midday transportation as this time may be needed in order to clean and prepare buses.

Where possible, the seat directly behind the school bus driver should remain empty to maintain physical distancing. Windows should be opened when feasible to increase ventilation.



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- 4. Safe work and hygiene practices:** Signage and messaging will be available encouraging people to stay home if they are ill. A self-assessment will be required before entry and a list of signs of illness to look for will be prominently displayed.

A meeting will take place with bus operators to ensure that they prepare professional development, to support school bus drivers. The Student Transportation Department will also ensure safety information is provided to its own fleet of drivers related to health and safety measures and ensuring they are followed and enforced.

Children should be reminded by parents/guardians and/or teachers to wash their hands with soap and water for 20 seconds before they leave home to take the bus, when they arrive at school, when they are leaving school prior to taking the bus, and when they get home.

Bus drivers should wash their hands often, including before and after completing trips and have sanitizer available for in-trip. Sanitizer should have at least 60% alcohol and should be used after assisting a child to their seat (if applicable), touching wheelchairs or other assistive devices, or having other direct contact with children, as needed throughout a trip and where other PPE such as gloves are not able to be used. Sanitizer should be properly labeled and stored in accordance with its material safety data sheet. Sanitizer should be stored outside the reach of children.

- 5. Personal protective equipment:** Medical masks and eye protection (e.g. face shields) will be provided for school bus drivers, school bus monitors and student aides. Eye protection for drivers should not interfere with the safe operation of vehicles and is intended to protect drivers during close contact with students, not while driving. Operators will follow Ministry of Transportation requirements as well as the guidance of Transport Canada's [Personal Protective Equipment and their uses by Commercial Vehicle Drivers](#). Drivers will also use gloves when cleaning or touching surfaces and safely dispose of them.

The choice of PPE for drivers should not interfere with their ability to access vehicle controls, or hinder or distort the driver's view – directly or through mirrors - of the road, students around the bus or of passengers.

As bus rides range from 5 minutes to over 60 minutes, and physical distancing is not always possible based on bus load capacity, PPE solutions for students will need to be implemented. Masks for students who can safely wear them will be the first line of defence. To the extent that physical distancing may not be possible, the use of non-medical masks for students in Grades 4 to 12 will be required on school vehicles. It is highly recommended that students in Kindergarten to Grade 3 wear masks on student transportation given the potential for close contacts and the inability to physically distance. Exceptions should be made for students with medical conditions or special needs that



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prevent masking. For those students unable to secure their own masks, some will be made available by the Board, along with a process to receive the masks through the school.

Another administrative control will be assigned seating for students. Students should be assigned seats and a record of the seating plan should be kept to assist with contact tracing in the case of a student or driver contracting COVID-19. Students who live in the same household or are in the same classroom cohort should be seated together. This will have the benefit of reducing exposure as well as assisting in reaching out to students most at risk should an exposure occur.

6. Students With Special Education Needs

Special care and attention will be given to ensuring adequate drivers for students with special education needs. It is understood that some children may not be able to use masks or may have medical or other special circumstances that may require accommodations. It is important to make the principal and transportation department and/or bus operator aware of any accommodation requirements as soon as possible.

7. Active and Safe Travel

The Student Transportation Group, in conjunction with TDSB, provides pointers on Active and Safe Travel (AST), including safety tips and maps including stop lights, crosswalks, etc. For more information on AST, please visit the TSTG website at www.torontoschoolbus.org/activetransport.

8. Communication

The Board will reach out to parents/guardians to gauge their intention to send their children on the bus in the fall. Should there be a higher than expected reduction in drivers due to health or other reasons that require adapting to a reduced capacity on busing, some temporary adjustments or phasing of busing may be needed though it is not expected at this time.

The Student Transportation Department will send out messages through the student transportation portal, and post to the website, to provide additional information on how to ensure a safe start up, including a video to reinforce safe habits prior to leaving the house (pre-screening, hand hygiene), arriving at the bus stop (physical distancing), on the bus (remaining in the seat, wearing a mask and not touching their face or others) and disembarking the bus (physical distancing, patience and washing hands at arrival to school), along with supporting information.

Parents/guardians or staff with questions may contact the transportation office at 416-394-4BUS (416-394-4287) (starting July 27, please use the temporary start-up number at 647-790-3829) or by emailing transportation@torontoschoolbus.org.



Operations

Administrative Sites

With the City of Toronto moving to Stage 3 on July 31, we are able to begin reopening our Administrative sites. We have made the decision to re-open them to more essential work only with limited occupancy effective August 11. Full occupancy is expected for the beginning of September, which is in line with other large public sector organizations.

Site Supervisors are working with Caretaking staff to outfit sites with COVID-19 signage and floor decals to indicate direction of travel, two metre waiting points and occupancy limits for elevators and staff washrooms.

Each employee must conduct the COVID -19 self-assessment prior to entering the building, must sanitize their hands, record their entry/exit into the building and follow all physical distancing requirements.

Department Managers will work with staff in their areas to determine occupancy levels, employee schedules and tracking mechanisms for contact tracing until such time as a centralized system is developed. Managers will work with their Executive Officer to determine which employees can continue to work remotely, either full or part time, which workstations cannot be occupied in order to maintain physical distancing and locations where physical barriers may be required.

Staff from the Occupational Health and Safety Department will provide guidance and assistance on issues related to physical distancing and other safety measures.

Community Use of Schools

Summer Camps and Field permits continue to run at a number of schools this summer.

The use of school facilities for community use will be difficult to manage, as there is a requirement to perform enhanced cleaning between cohorts. This would require these spaces to be cleaned prior to and after use by the outside group(s). Many permits have multiple cohorts of students, which would require cleaning during the permit as well. We will not have sufficient caretaking resources to do this work at all locations.

Permits for the fall will be restricted to those programs that we are obligated to provide such as Before and After School Programs, programs operated by lease holders as part of their Lease, and City of Toronto community centres and swimming pools.

We will charge a cleaning surcharge depending on the number of times the space needs to be cleaned. Staff currently estimate that this charge would be an additional 15 minutes per classroom used.



Operations

Cafeterias

Until further notice, school cafeterias will be closed and food services will not be provided. This will prevent congregating in these areas particularly during the transition period between the two cohorts in the secondary schools.

Student Nutrition Programs

Staff are looking into the options to support and continue student nutrition programs in the fall. Discussions around the use of pre-packaged and served using a “grab-and-go” approach are being explored. There are ongoing discussions, which include our own teams as well as TFSS, on what the final delivery approach will look like and additional support that can be provided to students.

Budget

COVID-19 Measures - Budget Implications (first four months)

Health & Safety	Additional Staff to Ensure Health & Safety	Supports for Students	Operational Impacts
Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) \$1.5M	Caretaking and Cleaning Supplies \$4.2M Health and Safety Staff \$0.3M	Additional Technology \$4.9M Special Education Supports \$2.1M Professional Development for Staff During Pandemic \$2.6M Translation and Interpretation Supports \$0.2M	Permit Revenue Loss \$2.3M Reduced International Student Tuitions \$4.4M
TOTAL: \$1.5M	TOTAL: \$4.5M	TOTAL: \$9.8M	TOTAL: \$6.7M



Operations

COVID-19 Funding

The Ministry of Education has announced the following provincial funding:

Investment	Amount
Masks and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)	\$60.0M
Funding for Additional Staff	\$80.0M
Cleaning Supplies	\$29.0M
Health and Safety Training	\$10.0M
Transportation - Cleaning Supplies and PPE	\$40.0M
Lab Testing Capacity	\$23.7M
Additional Public Health Nurses	\$50.0M
Additional Mental Health Reports	\$20.0M
Additional Supports for Students with Special Needs	\$10.0M
Technology	\$15.0M

Communications

As we approach September and the return to school, we are committed to continuing to communicate and provide the necessary information to all staff, students and families in a timely manner. Important information and updates as well as resources will be provided through a variety of channels (email, website, social media, school communications, etc.) and will be supported by translation services.

Communications will focus on keeping everyone informed and educated so that the return to school can be as smooth as possible, with the health and safety of everyone involved as the top priority.