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Mississauga Wards 6 & 11, Vice-Chair of the Board*



*Trustee, Bruno Iannicca  
Mississauga, Ward 7*

## December 2021

This month's virtue is **hope**. As we begin the season of Advent, hope continues to guide our 2021-2022 school year. During this exciting time of anticipation and celebration, Advent marks a new liturgical calendar, as we prepare our hearts for the coming of Christ. Through the eyes of our children at Christmas, we are lit up by the miracle of the baby Jesus. Christ's saving message carries the reminder of hope with Jesus' presence in our schools, homes and in our hearts.

**Multi-Year Strategic Plan (MYSP)** – Our Board of Trustees' *Multi-Year Strategic Plan (MYSP)* reflects the vision of the Board of Trustees, including its overall purpose, values, priorities and strategic directions. It also informs our constituents and school communities of what our Board of Trustees intends to achieve and how we plan to achieve them. The MYSP Committee will gather to review the progress of the 2019-2023 Multi-Year Strategic Plan and a mid-point review was held in November 2021. For more information: [2019-23 MYSP Flyer FINAL.pdf \(dpcdsb.org\)](#)

**2022-2023 Education Funding** – In response to the 2022-2023 Ontario Education Funding Guide and consultation process, our DPCDSB Board of Trustees provided input to the Ontario Catholic Schools Trustees Association (OCSTA) on five identified focus areas including: Mental health supports, Reducing administrative burden and red tape, Learning Opportunities Grant (LOG), Urban and priority secondary schools and New Teacher Induction Program (NTIP).

In addition, DPCDSB provided feedback to OCSTA on the following items:

- As with the Indigenous Education funding, DPCDSB is requesting that protected funding for dismantling anti-Black racism be considered as part of the Grants for Students Needs (GSN).
- Schools were required to redirect school budget funds to invest in software and online educational learning programs to ensure uninterrupted learning for students during remote learning periods. Without future funding to reinvest or an annual provision for this expense, electronic equipment will become obsolete.
- Most school boards are experiencing increased stress and medical leaves among administrative staff, and instructional staff. There is no mechanism within the grant to support short term replacement staff.

**COVID-19 Vaccination for Children** – On November 19, Health Canada approved the use of the Pfizer/BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine for children aged 5 to 11 years-old. The Ministry of Education provided

information to school boards to support COVID-19 vaccination readiness planning. On November 23, booking availability opened through the provincial online system, for this age group. Peel Public Health (PPH) intends to expand the availability of vaccines at its existing DPCDSB school-based clinics scheduled in December to enable these age groups to get vaccinated. PPH has scheduled a webinar for parents/guardians on December 7 to provide more information about its strategy. Information on the webinar has been shared with families through SchoolMessenger.

**Rapid Antigen Testing** – Our board continues to work collaboratively with our public health units on all health and safety measures, to promote the wellness of our students, families, and staff. In regions of the province where there is a heightened risk of COVID-19 spread, local public health units can offer targeted, voluntary rapid antigen testing to unvaccinated, asymptomatic students in select schools in their communities. This screening is intended to provide an additional layer of protection in schools in areas of the province where risk of transmission is higher.

Peel Public Health (PPH) has indicated it has begun to receive rapid antigen test kits from the provincial government and they are ready to start allocating test kits to DPCDSB schools as they deem appropriate. PPH will ensure that information is provided to the school community about the use of the test kits and what to do should a test come back positive. Participation is completely voluntary and is not required for students to attend school. Also, there is no requirement for students or families to disclose their vaccination status to the school or to the DPCDSB to participate. A letter from PPH was sent to all DPCDSB parents and guardians with additional information: [Region of Peel Update on PCR and rapid antigen COVID-19 testing options for students November 5 2021.pdf \(dpcdsb.org\)](#).

**Secondary Term 2** – The DPCDSB Board of Trustees has advocated on behalf of our students and parents/guardians, elevating their feedback on the need to return to a more normal semester mode of learning. On November 18, the Ministry of Education and the province’s Chief Medical Officer of Health announced that secondary schools will be permitted to resume a regular timetabling model of four courses per day, starting in February 2022. With the support of Peel Public Health, DPCDSB secondary school will return to the traditional semester model of four courses per day as of February 3, 2022. Schools will be providing students with updated timetables in January 2022, to reflect the return to a full semester model. The final assessment for all courses will continue to be a Culminating Performance Task (CPT) until the end of the 2021-2022 school year. More information: [Ontario Enhancing COVID-19 Winter Testing | Ontario Newsroom](#)

**International Travel** – DPCDSB remains dedicated to ensuring the health, safety, and well-being of its students and employees in our schools and workplaces. DPCDSB takes direction from our local public health authorities, the Ministry of Education and the Chief Medical Officer of Health on all matters related to the management of COVID-19 in our schools and facilities. With the upcoming Christmas holidays, we understand that families may consider travelling. DPCDSB will comply with the advice and guidance of Public Health Officials and the Federal Government and will also require all employees returning from travel outside of Canada to adhere to Public Health guidelines upon their return.

For students travelling internationally, the Government of Canada currently [requires a mandatory 14-day quarantine or self-isolation](#) for individuals who are not fully vaccinated entering Canada, even if they do not have symptoms of COVID-19, tested negative for COVID-19, or have recovered from COVID-19. The Federal government also recommends that household members of international travellers should stay home for the duration of the traveller’s 14-day self-isolation period. **Children in the household must not**

**attend group settings, such as schools, camps or daycares.** Exceptions apply for fully vaccinated household members. Fully vaccinated travellers do not need to quarantine. **Unvaccinated children under 12 years of age and dependents of fully vaccinated travellers are also currently exempt from quarantine; however, they must avoid group settings, such as schools, camps, or daycares.**

**Updated information on international travel from Peel Public Health is expected to be shared with DPCDSB families early December.**

**Enrolment Projections** – All school boards across the province experienced enrolment declines during the 2020-2021 school year, as a direct result of the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2021-2022, it was evident that Greater Toronto Area (GTA) school boards are continuing to experience this decline in enrolment. DPCDSB has advocated to the Ministry of Education that our board will require stabilization funding, like that provided in the 2020-2021 year by the Ministry. Past projections would not have anticipated the recent circumstances that have resulted in families leaving Peel Region including the sharp appreciation of real estate in the Region of Peel, the impacts of COVID-19 and flexible work arrangements. However, this enrolment decline could have serious implications for DPCDSB for years to come, as families move away from the GTA to more affordable regional areas.

**Student Transportation** – Student Transportation of Peel Region (STOPR) transportation consortia continues to work diligently with all school bus operators, school boards and local public health authorities for the 2021-2022 school year to ensure safe and secure service is provided to all our students.

Currently, our school buses for student transportation have been running on minimal ridership capacity, as per the direction from PPH. Due to concerns regarding bus delays in addition to operational issues, PPH is supportive of STOPR's request to resume full capacity on **secondary school runs**. STOPR, through collaboration with Peel Public Health, will be working to increase the loading of our secondary buses to full capacity. To that end, secondary bus routes will be condensed, and bus stops will be streamlined, based on operational need.

PPH continues to recommend a cautious approach around resuming courtesy transportation and would like to first assess the loading process for secondary school buses running at full capacity. Courtesy seating for secondary students will be reviewed in the second semester, once student learning modes and ridership decisions are finalized and an accurate assessment of COVID-19 activity, at that time can be determined.

**Therefore, at this time, it is important to note there is no guarantee that the suspension of courtesy ridership will be lifted for the 2021-2022 school year.**

School buses for elementary students will continue to operate at reduced capacity. Further review of full capacity busing for this age group may be modified based on any future changes to Ministry of Education direction and vaccination coverage within the 5 - 11-year-old age group. More information is available on [www.stopr.ca](http://www.stopr.ca)

**Educational Resource Worker (ERW) Update** – Currently, DPCDSB employs 609 full time ERWs and 213 supply ERWs. As a result of the Investment in Student Supports (ISS) funding from the Ministry, we will be adding an additional 10.0 permanent ERWs and 32.0 casual ERWs which we are actively recruiting. This is great news for supporting student achievement and success.

**Fundraising in Schools** – Having a cautious approach to re-opening schools this year has effectively provided a controlled environment for implementing health and safety protocols. As the year has progressed, many schools and Catholic School Councils have expressed interest in moving forward with fundraising activities (i.e., selling chocolates, poinsettias and other individually wrapped items). Introducing fundraising events at schools has been discussed with our Peel Public Health authorities. As a result, school fundraising events will be allowed. All health and safety protocols and physical distancing measures must be adhered to. At this time, however, no outside volunteers/parents/guardians will be permitted inside the schools to assist with organizing efforts. If a school chooses to fundraise, they will need to rely on staff volunteers. The use of School Cash Online™ and the online donations module will be encouraged for all fundraising efforts. Discussions about food day programs (i.e., pizza days) are continuing with public health and further updates will be provided.

**Athletic Teams** – Our local public health units have not advised on vaccination mandates for our students participating in high contact activities or while participating in extracurricular school activities. Our board continues to strongly recommend that students are vaccinated, however they are not required to do so for activities taking place within our school facilities.

However, the Region of Peel does require individuals to be fully vaccinated to access community facilities, and as such, DPCDSB is required to comply with municipal bylaws. Where DPCDSB's school athletic teams are required to use a public facility and proof of full vaccination for students/athletes is required upon entering, parents/guardians will be made aware of this expectation to the students/parents with the affiliated permission forms.

At this time, spectators are not permitted to attend/watch any **indoor** athletic games in our school facilities. Given any provincial announcement for public spaces removing capacity restrictions, such measures would not transfer over to schools (e.g., sporting events where parents/guardians can attend games) since schools do not have the requirement for all attendees to be fully vaccinated nor do they have infrastructure to verify vaccine certificates.

It is a season of hope, of joyful expectation and of peaceful preparation. During the season of Advent, we are called to seek the light of Christ. For Advent Resources from the Archdiocese of Toronto, please visit: <https://www.archtoronto.org/advent>. The DPCDSB Christmas Break is **December 20-31, 2021**.

From our family to yours, we wish you and your family a peaceful, hopeful, blessed, and safe Christmas and a happy and prosperous New Year. May God continue to bless you always.

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