



Windsor-Essex Catholic District School Board

MEDIA RELEASE



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Ready to Return

Planning underway for resumption of classes

(Windsor, Ontario, Friday June 19, 2020) - The teaching and support staff of the Windsor-Essex Catholic District School Board will be ready to get back to learning in September no matter what form of delivering curriculum the Ministry of Education decides upon, the Board's Director of Education said today.

"We have taken a proactive approach by meeting as a senior administrative team to strategize around every possible scenario for a return to school protocol," Terry Lyons said. "Throughout the summer we will continue to consult with parents, our local health unit, our trustees, our coterminous school boards, our principals and all of our labour groups to develop a plan so that our students will be able to get back on track when school resumes."

Lyons' statements came in reaction to [Ontario Minister of Education Stephen Lecce's announcement](#) today regarding various possible return to school scenarios and after two days of strategic planning sessions with the Board's superintendents and senior managers this week.

Anticipating that the beginning of the school year will begin with a phased-in approach and could involve a hybrid of virtual synchronous learning and in-person instruction, Lyons said the Board will establish a Back to School Transition Committee tasked with developing a comprehensive plan to ensure students meet curriculum expectations while recognizing all the necessary physical distancing measures required to prevent further spread of COVID-19.

Lyons expects a draft plan which contemplates everything from reduced class sizes, alternative scheduling and transportation, to accommodating students with special needs and mental health issues while continuing such specialized programs as academies and cooperative education will be ready by early July. That plan will be shared with parents and community stakeholders for feedback, he said.

An essential part of that plan will include an emphasis on professional development for teachers and support staff to recognize students gaps in learning that may have resulted from this year's closures, as well as establishing methods to close those gaps so students can succeed.

"Our team of curriculum consultants has already been working on methodologies to identify learning gaps and developing strategies to close those gaps," said Executive Superintendent Emelda Byrne.

"Building communities of faith, hope and service"

“Additionally, we’ve had a record number of students enroll in our summer e-learning programs which tells us that students are eager to kick start their learning, get ahead, and be ready for when school resumes,” said Executive Superintendent Dan Fister, whose portfolio includes experiential learning and pathway programming.

Board Chair Fulvio Valentinis said he was very pleased that administration is staying ahead of the curve by getting a head start on developing a thorough plan.

“Our team is really focusing on what it *can* do given the present circumstances,” he said. “We completely understand that we may have to pivot in some areas depending on how the situation evolves as we get closer to September, but this team has demonstrated they are very adept at adapting to sudden changes. As Trustees we remain confident in their ability to lead our staff as they continue to meet the needs of our students and their families.”

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