

Northern School Council Meeting

Sept 21, 2021, 6:30 - 8:00 pm (Via Zoom)

Principal's Report

Parent-submitted Questions:

What is the current protocol if a student tests positive for COVID and the impact on their classroom as far as quarantining? How do any students who may have to quarantine access their learning while in quarantine?

- Only virtual school students can join online classes. In-person students who have been asked to isolate can find their work on Brightspace or Google classrooms. However, if an entire class including the teacher is sent home to isolate, then they will go virtual. In terms of being sent home to isolate, it will be determined by Toronto Public Health (TPH) on a case by case basis. Things like timing, symptoms, testing and vaccination status may factor in on TPH's assessment of the risk to the cohort.

Report cards- If a parent was not very good at keeping track of emails with report cards for all the classes last year, is there a way to get a copy of them or a consolidated one for the year for their records?

- There is no process to produce a consolidated report card but you can contact guidance or your vice-principal and they will help you get last year's reports.

Lockers- why are students prohibited from using lockers when they are allowed to be in and around the building for lunch? Some students are finding it very unwieldy and problematic to have several bags with lunches, gym, books, then in winter, coats and boots. Can this policy be readdressed and modified?

- TPH guidelines are prohibiting locker use at this time. As soon as they give the green light, we will assign them.

Can you tell us what % of our staff have been vaccinated? Do you have any sense of the student vaccination rate?

- We don't have a school vaccination rate for teachers, just for TDSB as a whole, and vaccination data is not collected for students.

45 minute lunches - The shorter lunch is very difficult to manage for students. Many are unable to get back to school in time if they need to go out to purchase lunches. Is going back to a 60 minute lunch something that can be looked into now or in second semester?

- The TDSB schedule for high school is for 45 minute lunches. We agree it is not enough time for students or teachers but are unable to change it right now. For cold weather, students will have to use hallways and the cafeteria.

Masks for teachers - When I went to vote, I noticed volunteers had masks that were 3 ply medical grade and had clear mouths so you could see lips. Can we get all our teachers to wear these or offer them as an option?

- The masks the teachers use are mandated by the TDSB. We do have some clear ones for the DHH department but can't supply that option to the rest of the staff at this point.

Is there an option in the second semester to alternate a day one/day two schedule instead of week one/week two?

- It is up to the TDSB to move us to a 2 day or 4 day cycle. There are many issues to be sorted, such as TPH allowing more blending of cohorts, before that can happen but we would love to go back to that kind of schedule.

What about the re-introduction of extra-curricular activities and sports?

- The TDSB has approved extra-curricular activities but we still need to work out many logistics... some sports/activities can be done quicker because they require less safety requirements. For example, we are still looking for clarification on musical instruments. We also need staff sponsors, permission forms etc before things can officially start. We are excited to get these going but need to be safe and can't jeopardize the rest of the school day in the process.

What is happening with exams? How will kids be prepared for post-secondary if they are not writing exams in high school?

- No exams are planned, this is a TDSB decision and it is probably equity related. However, while we can't have big exams, teachers will be creative in getting students exposed to exam-type questions. It's unclear to us at this point how post-secondary institutions will deal with this situation but we would hope there would again be a variety of types of examinations at that level.

Other news:

Chromebook Rollout: Grade 9 students are being offered Chromebooks this year, which they will keep for as long as they remain with the TDSB. We are working on getting to the last of the students who haven't responded and will give them out next week to be taken home.

Student photos: Photos are scheduled for Sept 23 and 24 in the afternoon. If a student is in the virtual school or has a spare in the afternoon that week, they can come in if they are able to, or they can take one at home and submit it.

Morning check in: We are much more efficient at the front doors this year and all students are double checked by teachers in both the a.m. and p.m. classes.

Vandalism: We've experienced some vandalism in the soap dispensers of the male washrooms, apparently due to a TikTok challenge. Information or anonymous tips about this vandalism is welcome.

Teacher changes: We will be sending out a summary soon of the teacher changes that have taken place. We still have a few minor adjustments and are hoping for minimal disruptions to classes, but are excited to have some new faces in the building this year.