



June 22nd, 2020

Dear Waterloo Catholic Community –

We hope that you found ways to enjoy the beautiful Father's Day Weekend, even if perhaps it looked a little different than years past. It has been approximately 13 weeks since we left our school buildings and so much has changed and evolved since then. I think it would be fair to say that it has been a remarkable journey for everyone involved – staff, students, parents and everyone in the broader community. I don't believe there has been anyone who has not been impacted in one form or another. I want to begin by applauding our Waterloo Catholic community. It has been my sincere impression that we have put our best foot forward and people have risen to the occasion in admirable ways. I have been so impressed by the many efforts to keep children and families connected to their schools and to find ways to mark milestone events, such as graduation.

With that said – we know there are still disappointments. The many spring celebrations that are typical could not *all* be replicated remotely. Learning was challenging for some of our students and some of our families. We all have unique family circumstances that may have made this time easier or harder to navigate, and we want to acknowledge that. We have missed our students as much as they have missed coming to school.

On Friday June 19th, the Premier and Minister of Education released Ontario's plan for re-opening schools. While a very long and detailed document, at a high level it communicates that there are still three possible scenarios for next year – a decision that they will make provincially, later in the summer (likely early August). Briefly –

Scenario 1 is a return to conventional, regular classroom instruction, with enhanced health and safety requirements;

Scenario 2 is a continuation of enhanced remote learning, with some live and synchronous online instruction; and

Scenario 3 is an adapted return that limits the number of students in a given classroom to 15 students at any given time, and includes some blended virtual learning.

Again – the decision will be made by the province, and will be informed by the advice of Chief Medical Officer of Health, medical professionals, and regional public health. In all cases, the health, safety and well-being of staff and students will be central to the decision made.

As a board, we will plan for all three scenarios. It is also fair to say, that we will also be preparing for the fact that we may have to pivot from one scenario to another, as the year unfolds. It should be mentioned that if the province (and/or our region) is approved for scenario 1 or 3 – which involves a return to face to face learning, a parent can voluntarily keep their child at home. However, while there will be instruction, under that case, it is unlikely to be at the same level or to same degree as those who take up the invitation to return to school. If there is a return to school, we will have new, strict health and safety protocols which will be implemented and followed.



As mentioned – it has been approximately 13 weeks since we left face to face learning, and there are another 12 weeks before we return in September. We have made a great deal of progress in defeating the threat of COVID in that time, and hopefully that progress continues. In order to plan for the fall, we are asking you to complete the attached survey. The purpose of the survey is to help us have insight as to your thinking and to assist our preparations. We know it may feel a bit too early to make a commitment, but please use your best judgement. The survey is not fully binding but rather helpful to our planning.

Finally – as we have said before, we do encourage you to closely follow any and all directives from our governments and Waterloo Region Public Health. This has been a year unlike any other – and one we will all remember for some time to come. We join in wishing you a restful and rejuvenating summer. May our faith that grounds us as people of love and people of hope give you strength in these times. Our pastoral theme this year is *“Called to Belong”* and it is our aspiration that you always feel that strong connection to our Waterloo Catholic community. We are grateful for your trust in us to provide quality, faith-based, inclusive education.

Please reach out to us if you need help or guidance, and remain confident that we are here to support you, as we walk together as a hope-filled community. #WCDSBTogether.

Sincerely,



Loretta Notten
Director of Education

