



SIMCOE MUSKOKA CATHOLIC
DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

November 26, 2020

Dear Elementary Families and Staff,

As was previously communicated, we made a commitment to bring a fulsome report to the Board of Trustees on November 25th regarding our plans for elementary teaching and learning in our board for the remainder of this school year. We want to sincerely thank our staff, families and stakeholders for their thoughtful feedback related to our path forward, especially related to our Virtual Elementary School (VSE). The overarching theme in what we heard is that staff and families do not want any more change - our students and educators are settled into their routines, have adjusted well and want a plan that ensures stability for the remainder of this year.

The report presented to Trustees last evening confirms that our VSE will remain intact, with its current complement of students and staff, until the completion of this school year in June.

Since the beginning of this school year, we have accommodated more than 1,000 requests to change modes of learning either from face-to-face to virtual learning or vice versa. Accommodating these change requests is an extremely complicated process and disruptive for students and staff. The reality is that it is not sustainable or realistic to continue moving students back and forth between modes of learning.

As such, we have made a decision to discontinue the planned transition dates, i.e., opportunities to change modes of learning, in February and April. Instead, we will be moving to a wait-list system where change requests will only be accommodated when there is room in classrooms (in-class or virtual). This decision was necessary in order to provide the stability that our families and staff have clearly told us they want and need right now.

We know that there will be long-lasting impacts to education related to COVID-19 and work is already beginning to plan for September 2021. Our education system has been transformed because of this pandemic and some of these changes are in fact positive. We have already learned so much and there are great opportunities that we can and will continue to explore, especially around virtual learning environments. We are establishing a working group to guide us in our research and consultation and we look forward to providing updates to our staff and families as we move forward.

As we prepare for the Advent season, I hope we can find some peace and joy for all of our blessings.

Yours in Faith,



SIMCOE MUSKOKA CATHOLIC
DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

Bagley

Frances Bagley
Director of Education