



SIMCOE MUSKOKA CATHOLIC
DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

November 8, 2020

Dear Elementary Families and Staff,

On Friday, October 30 we sent a letter to our staff and families asking for feedback about our decision to move to a hybrid model of learning for our elementary students. At that time, the senior leadership team committed to carefully reviewing all of the comments received and communicating back to you about our plans and next steps.

Over the past few weeks we have received incredible input from our school communities about the prospect of having our virtual learners continue to work from home, but join face-to-face learners in classes that are being offered at their home school - a plan that would discontinue our virtual school model. We thank you for your engagement and thoughtful responses.

There are many benefits to the hybrid model and we did hear from some people who are in favour of this approach. However, many of the people we heard from are either not in favour of the model or they have concerns they would like addressed and more information provided so that they fully understand the impacts on student learning.

What is clear is that our decision to move to this model was done too quickly and it has added to the anxiety and stress that our families and staff are already facing during this global pandemic. Please know that was never our intent and we sincerely apologize. We were focused on implementing a model that would bring much needed, long-term stability to our school communities, in order to prevent further disruptions and stress

Since schools closed on March 13th, we have been reacting to an ever-changing landscape. And for the sake of everyone - students, staff and families - we need a path forward that is not reactionary. Our focus right now is to develop a plan that will take us through to June and beyond because we simply don't know how long the effects of COVID-19 will impact teaching and learning in our board.

We have put our plans of moving to a hybrid model on hold for now and we have committed to bringing more information and options forward to our Board of Trustees on November 25th.



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The pressures of sustaining our virtual school model are very real as are the concerns raised by our families and staff. With that in mind, we know that our plan for a path forward must carefully consider the feedback that we have received, while at the same time address the sustainability issues with our current model. This will not be an easy task, but we are fully committed to exploring all options and looking at creative solutions so that we can find the best possible model for our school communities.

In the meantime, we are working on a plan to accommodate the requests for changes that we have received to date, without making any significant changes to our learning model. This transition will occur by November 23rd, which was our previously communicated target date and may result in some **minor** classroom shuffles and staffing changes.

On November 25th, our Board of Trustees will be presented with a well-researched, consultative, sustainable and proactive plan for elementary teaching and learning at the Simcoe Muskoka Catholic District School Board. Families and staff can expect updates and information as this process moves forward.

With the students at the heart of our decision making and with our faith in God, I know we will find a solution that will carry us forward in a proactive and positive way.

Yours in Faith,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Bagley". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Frances Bagley
Director of Education