



MEMORANDUM

Memo No. 21-092

TO: Trustees
Student Trustees

FROM: Camille Williams-Taylor, Director of Education and Secretary of the Board
Michael Carson, Chief Financial Officer

DATE: 24 August 2021

RE: **Ventilation Systems Update**

On 4 August 2021, the Ministry of Education released Memorandum 2021: B14 School Ventilation (the memo) (Attached as Appendix A) which outlines the work undertaken by school boards across the province regarding ventilation but also defines future expectations.

The memo identified the different types of spaces and provides guidance on when and where to provide additional ventilation support through the supply of high efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filtration units. HEPA filtration units are required to be supplied for the following spaces in buildings:

- All occupied learning environments in schools or parts of schools without mechanical ventilation; and
- Kindergarten classrooms in schools with mechanical ventilation.

To date, the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board (OCDSB) Facilities staff has deployed approximately 1,250 units to the following locations:

- Classrooms where increased ventilation measures were not possible due to the nature of the HVAC (Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning) equipment;
- Isolation rooms with a higher potential for airborne virus particles;
- Classrooms where the more important steps of wearing masks, hand washing and distancing may not be achievable (e.g., all specialized program classrooms); and
- All junior and senior kindergarten rooms across the District.

The memo also outlines the Ministry's \$25.0 million investment in additional standalone HEPA filtration units. As part of this investment, the OCDSB will be receiving 780 units. These units will be deployed to learning spaces across the District including libraries, learning commons, gymnasiums and portable classrooms. Staff will deploy these units as they arrive from the Ministry, which is expected to be by the first week of September 2021. In addition to the 780 units being supplied, the OCDSB is receiving \$161,000 in funding to purchase additional HEPA units which translates to approximately 200 units. Facilities staff will keep a surplus of units on hand for quick deployment in the event additional areas of a building are identified to require

additional filtration, a community outbreak of COVID-19 or a heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) system failure. HEPA units will also be deployed to those buildings where ventilation upgrade projects are currently ongoing.

The memo also introduces the Standardized School Ventilation Measures Report. For the 2021-2022 school year, Boards will be required to communicate school-level ventilation measures on their school board website. This information will be presented in the form of a dashboard which will identify items such as ventilation type, HEPA units and filtration. See attached example, Appendix B. The dashboard will be updated as required throughout the year.

In addition to the required measures report, Facilities staff are preparing a school-by-school supplementary written description of building ventilation type and measures taken or in progress. These descriptions will be accessed through the District website. An example of one school is attached, Appendix C. Staff intend to have this information available the week of August 23, 2021.

Depending on system type, all schools will be provided with upgraded filtering across the District either by augmenting existing filters to MERV-13 type or by introducing permanent ultra violet (UV) filtration systems. This work is ongoing and will continue through the fall.

Additional CO2 monitors continue to be installed across the District and by late fall 2021, all schools will have central CO2 monitoring capabilities. The intent of the CO2 monitoring is to help identify possible ventilation issues within a building so that the proper resources can be quickly dispatched to physically identify and correct any deficiencies.

Facilities staff continues to complete and implement various ventilation, filtration and COVID-19 related projects across the District. Many projects will continue through the fall 2021 and are anticipated to be completed by January 2022. These projects include:

- Portable unit ventilator replacements;
- Permanent installations (UV and MERV-13 upgrades);
- HVAC upgrades; and
- Magnetic door hold open devices.

The District prioritized work on ventilation during the summer of 2020 to ensure that schools would be ready to re-open in September 2020. This work included measures such as:

- Recommissioning HVAC equipment, including testing, inspections and cleaning
- Increasing frequency of filter changes; and
- Reprogramming ventilation systems to increase ventilation rates throughout the day and provide purge cycles as recommended by the American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE).

These measures will continue to be employed during the current year.

Through the summer months, maintenance staff has been verifying systems and equipment to ensure it is operating as intended and ready for the return of staff and students.

Should you have any questions, please contact Dan Bradley at daniel.bradley@ocdsb.ca

Attach.

Appendix A Ministry of Education Memo 2021:B14

Appendix B Dashboard example

Appendix C School written description example

cc Senior Staff

Manager of Board Services

Manager of Facilities

Manager of Business and Learning Technologies

Manager of Early Learning Department

Corporate Records