

## **Mary Vincent - Planning for Return to School – 9 July 2020**

I wanted to share my feedback as a parent in advance of tonight's special Board meeting. Trustees are no doubt aware with how alarmed parents are about proposed plans for a potential two-day a week return to school this fall. While I appreciate the difficult task that lies ahead for the Board, I implore Trustees to make sound evidence-based decisions.

Children's health experts at CHEO, SickKids etc have made it clear that a return to school is imperative to kids' overall well-being. Kids have a right to an education. School is not only about learning math and language skills, it's also critical for kids' social and emotional development. The mental health toll of not being in school has been clearly noticeable for my kids. A return to school for a mere two-days a week does not support children. Follow the advice of these experts from renowned children's hospitals – there is huge risk to children if they are NOT in school.

Moreover, kids learned very little with 'virtual learning' this spring. Every teacher did their own thing, some had little technical skills to properly 'teach' students. Kids and parents were left to figure it out for themselves. Students had no opportunities for peer-to-peer learning.

I am also concerned at the idea that high school students will be left to continue with virtual learning to support elementary students return to class. I understand the need of elementary parents to have school so they can work, but high school students should not carry the sole burden of online learning. It is not an ideal learning format for them either in many cases. It is isolating and not conducive to strong learning outcomes.

Please listen to what parents are saying. Our kids need to be in school.

Mary Vincent

Earl of March High School parent