

## **Bethany Schock - Planning for Return to School – 9 July 2020**

To the OCDSB Trustees,

My daughter starts JK this year amid the pandemic. My main concern is that school be available on a full-time basis for students. Both the doctors at SickKids, the head of CHEO, and the Canadian Academy of Pediatrics have all recommended a safe return to full-time school for children (<http://www.sickkids.ca/PDFs/About-SickKids/81407-COVID19-Recommendations-for-School-Reopening-SickKids.pdf>, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/ottawa/return-school-september-pandemic-cheo-1.5641613>, <https://www.cps.ca/uploads/advocacy/Supporting a Safe Return to School.pdf>). They point out that routine is essential for children's mental health and for learning. We have seen this first-hand in our daughter's behaviour, as she had difficulties managing her emotions and stress with not seeing her friends and her routine being completely altered during the lockdown. She is now is having a difficult time transitioning back to her preschool daycare, as the routine has changed once again.

Full-time school is also essential for parents. Managing a modified school schedule of 2 days in school and 3 days virtual learning is extremely difficult. Parents must serve in the roles of parent, teacher, and employee. For those who need childcare on the virtual days, the kids are then exposed to the childcare provider and expose the provider to all of their classmates and contacts. This is also an extra financial burden when families' budgets are already stretched thin after months of lockdown. It also impacts primarily women and their ability to return to the workforce.

I am also concerned that my daughter will not receive the same exposure to French in the 50/50 immersion in JK. We are an English speaking family and hope for her to learn French in school. It is not effective to teach 4 year olds French virtually, especially as many children will not sit still for virtual meetings. They are deprived of the best way they learn - through play in class with their peers and teachers. I urge the Board to seriously consider and find ways to ensure that all children can return to school full-time in September.

Thank you,

Bethany Schock