

DIRECTOR's UPDATE - PARENT INVOLVEMENT COMMITTEE

COVID-19

The number of confirmed COVID-19 cases is rising in the community and in schools. The current school case numbers are at the highest levels we have seen all year. With the number of cases increasing, there is an increase in the number of high-risk contacts who must self-isolate. This is compounding staff shortages which are regularly experienced.

Over the last week, several OCDSB schools have had to pivot to remote learning due to staff absences. We have sent messaging to parents to emphasize the importance of completing [the daily self-assessment](#) and following public health guidelines.

Managing VOC cases - Variants of Concern or VOCs as they are commonly referred to require additional public health restrictions. We know this has created some confusion for families and for schools. We are working with Ottawa Public Health to bring more clarity and consistency to our practice in this area.

COVID Testing in Schools -The OCDSB is continuing to partner with Ottawa Public Health, CHEO and the coterminous school districts to provide COVID-19 testing for school staff, students and families. The purpose of the testing clinics is to improve access to testing and identify any students, staff or family members with COVID-19 infections. People who are symptomatic, asymptomatic, or high-risk contacts with connections to the invited schools are eligible for this targeted testing. In Ottawa, the testing strategy is broader than some other areas and includes testing for asymptomatic and symptomatic individuals. The testing locations are established by community and schools in that community are invited to attend. OPH releases a report on the testing each week. You can learn more [here](#).

Winter Mid-Year Check-in Survey

We recently requested feedback from OCDSB students, parents/guardians, and staff about how things are going this year. This was the second survey of this type. Feedback was collected using a thoughtexchange survey, which had two parts:

1. Multiple choice questions about topics such as learning, engagement, well-being, safety, and access to resources; and
2. An open-ended question asking participants to tell us (in their own words) about their current experience. Participants also had the opportunity to see the thoughts of others and assign stars to thoughts they felt were important.

Between February 16-26, we had 12,365 participants share 17,052 thoughts. Survey results are available using the following links:

- [Students in OCV](#)
- [Students Learning in Person](#)
- [Parents of Students in OCV](#)

- [Parents of Students Learning in Person](#)
- [OCV and In-Person Educators](#) (teachers, P/VPs, EAs and ECEs)
- [All Other Staff](#) (Central Educators, Administrative, Professional Support Staff, and other Support Staff; including office staff, technicians, central departments, custodial, maintenance, lunch time monitors, ELAs, etc.)

Secondary Student Success Day - April 9

In the recent survey, secondary students and parents asked us to reduce workload stressors in support of student well-being. In response to those concerns, the OCDSB is establishing a Secondary Student Success Day on April 9th. This will be a dedicated asynchronous learning day for students to catch up and complete any outstanding work before the April Break (12-16). There will be no secondary in-person or remote learning classes and no new material taught on this day; secondary students will not attend school. Secondary students will be reminded to take any learning materials home with them on April 7th or 8th. Elementary students (grades 7&8) in 7-12 schools will attend school on this day.

Planning for September 2021

The OCDSB announced plans for the return to in-person learning in September 2021 with enhanced safety precautions in place. Our goal is to resume regular operations incrementally and as it is safe to do so, based on provincial direction and public health guidance.

At the elementary level, in-person learning for K - 8 will be modelled on our current practice. At the secondary level, the school year will be organized into quadesters except for the International Baccalaureate Program schools which follow octomesters. At this time, we expect that students will continue to be grouped into cohorts, A and B with only one cohort attending each day. The specific daily schedule cannot be confirmed at this time. We hope to start the year and/or move to two classes a day and a lunch break between classes as soon as possible. Once provincial and health advice supports the removal of cohorting, daily attendance, and/or a return to the regular semester format, we will look to implement those changes as quickly as possible.

The OCDSB will offer virtual elementary and secondary OCV schools for students who wish to learn in this model. With more students returning to in-person classes, and no provincial funding for virtual schools, there will be fewer OCV campuses and some limitations on program offerings.

Human Rights and Police Involvement in Schools

The OCDSB is undertaking two major policy reviews - the development of a human rights policy and a review of police involvement in schools. Starting on Monday, March 22 there are a number of opportunities for students and families to participate in the [police involvement in schools](#) consultation and the consultation to develop a [human rights policy](#) for the district. We will be holding consultations in Arabic, Somali, Nepali, Mandarin/Cantonese and English and also holding discussion groups for students and families of different social identities. More information is available on the website using these links - [police involvement in schools](#) consultation page and the [human rights consultation](#) page.

2021-2022 School Year Calendar, Additional Changes Coming

The 2021-2022 school year calendar was posted. However, as a result of some updates from the Ministry of Education and feedback received, we will be revising this calendar. An updated version will be shared shortly.

OCDSB Community Recognition Awards

Annually, the OCDSB recognizes the valuable contributions of our community members, parents, and businesses through the OCDSB Community Recognition Awards. We encourage committee members to consider nominating a volunteer who has shown outstanding commitment to supporting students. The nomination deadline is 11:00 p.m. on Friday, April 16, 2021. The categories for awards are:

- Community Award
- Community Partnership Award
- Distinguished School Council Service Award
- Excellence in Equity Community Award
- Volunteer of the Year Award

The awards presentation will be virtual this year. For more information please [Visit our website](#) :

PRO Grants Virtual Speaker Nights

As of Friday, March 26, 58 schools have secured a spot in a total of 72 Virtual Speaker Nights offered by the OCDSB. Schools still have ample opportunity to sign up with the following speakers:

- [Media Smarts Virtual Speaker Night](#)
- [Paul Davis Virtual Speaker Night: Social Networking Safety](#)
- [Rideauwood Addiction and Family Services Virtual Speaker Night: Mental Health and Addiction](#)
- [School Council Choice of a Virtual Speaker Night](#)

Each date is offered twice in order to pair schools up in a single night to accommodate more schools. Where low participation rates are anticipated, three or more schools have been grouped together. School councils hosting their own nights are not obligated to pair up with another school. Up to \$650 will be reimbursed to cover the fees of a speaker of your choice.