



Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board  
*Believing, Achieving, Serving*

September 15, 2020

Dear Parents/Guardians,

We begin this letter by extending our deep gratitude to parents and students for your patience, understanding and support during our school reopening planning and most especially now, as we proceed with the reopening of our elementary and secondary schools. As we return to quality, faith-filled teaching and learning, please know that the health, safety and well-being of our students and staff has been, and will remain our number one priority. We also want to express our deep appreciation to all of our system and school staff for their goodness, commitment to our mission and tireless work.

As you know, these are unique and unprecedented times for all associated with our Catholic school system. As hard as everyone has and continues to work, it has to be acknowledged that no plan will be perfect and issues/challenges will continue to arise. More than ever, there is need for patience and understanding on all of our parts.

We wanted to bring to your attention two particular issues that are of particular challenge at this time.

### **Student Transportation**

Despite considerable additional funds provided by our Board and the Provincial Government, as well as a complete re-routing of our transportation system (routes), we continue to experience a significant bus driver shortage. Despite measures implemented to date, including the ongoing driver incentive programs and unprecedented recruitment, we do not see this matter improving in the near future. Unlike other boards/consortia, we have not as of yet cancelled routes so as to mitigate against the bus driver shortage. Saying that, we may have no other alternative to do so if this situation does not improve. We say this to express our regret for any disruption this causes our schools, students and families. Unfortunately the level of disruption is not likely to go away soon and we will continue to keep you informed.

### **Transfer from in-class to virtual learning**

The second matter we wanted to bring to your attention is the necessary decision to close movement of elementary students from in-school to virtual and virtual to in-school other than at Thanksgiving, Christmas and the March Break. For secondary school students, a change from in-school to virtual can only happen in advance of Semester 2 on February 4, 2021. This decision is necessary as it is not possible to effectively staff both the in-school and virtual (at home)

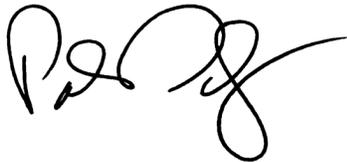
programs with large and unknown numbers of students migrating back and forth to each modality (method of learning). It would cause considerable disruption to students to reorganize schools almost on a daily or weekly basis.

For the above reason, we want to inform you that **effective Thursday, September 17, 2020 at 3:00 p.m.**, students will be unable to transfer from in-school to virtual (at home) or from virtual (at home) to in-school until Thanksgiving.

We will provide information in the coming weeks as to the timing and process for transferring from one modality to another at the Thanksgiving break.

We very much appreciate your understanding regarding these matters and assure you of our continued commitment to communicate as effectively as possible.

Through the intercession of Our Lady of Hope, we pray for the well-being of our students, staff, families and the good of publicly funded Catholic Education.



Patrick J. Daly  
Chairperson of the Board



David Hansen  
Director of Education