

Board Meeting, August 25, 2021

COVID-19 Update #9: Family Learning Choice Survey, Operational Guidance 2021-2022, and Ventilation Update

Strategic Alignment:

This report reflects PDSB's responsibilities to ensure adherence to Ministry document entitled [COVID-19: Health, Safety and Operational Guidance for Schools 2021-22](#) .

Decision(s) Required:

It is recommended that this report be received.

Prepared by: Claudine Scuccato, Superintendent of Student Reengagement & Pandemic Response

Submitted by: Rashmi Swarup, Director of Education

Content

Purpose:

This purpose of this report is to share Peel District School Board's (PDSB) School Reopening guidelines.

Context:

Family Learning Choice Survey

The Peel Family Learning Choice Survey was launched on July 15th and was scheduled to close on July 29th. These dates were selected to allow families the time to understand the local context of the pandemic and to allow the Ministry to release their Operational Guidance for Schools. To allow families time to review the Ministry guidance released on August 3rd, and to respond to community feedback, the survey deadline was extended to August 5th for regular calendar schools. The Balanced Calendar schools completed their survey in late June to allow time to make operational decisions for their start on August 3rd, 2021.

The chart summarizes the number of students who opted for in-person and on-line learning, along with the variance, for the 2020-2021 and 2021-2022 school years. In the communication to families, it was made clear that any students who wished to change learning models would be able to do so at the end of term 1 and semester 1 in late January. Families received several communications telling them that those who did not have a selection/response recorded, the default choice would be for in-person learning. It is important to take this into consideration when reading the response rate listed in the chart.

The chart below includes data for all PDSB schools and shares an over 30% increase from Online to In Person learning in Elementary and almost 7% increase in Secondary between the 2020-2021 and 2021-2020 school years. Please note that the 2020-21 data is based on October 30th OnSIS reporting.

Grade	# In Person			# Online			% In Person		% Online	
	2020-21	2021-22	Variance	2020-21	2021-22	Variance	2020-21	2021-22	2020-21	2021-22
JK	4376	6612	2236	5160	998	-4162	45.9%	86.9%	54.1%	13.1%
SK	4527	8516	3989	5966	1648	-4318	43.1%	83.8%	56.9%	16.2%
1	4902	8991	4089	5754	1890	-3864	46.0%	82.6%	54.0%	17.4%
2	5316	8677	3361	5941	2147	-3794	47.2%	80.2%	52.8%	19.8%
3	5467	8999	3532	5990	2376	-3614	47.7%	79.1%	52.3%	20.9%
4	5773	9274	3501	5705	2304	-3401	50.3%	80.1%	49.7%	19.9%
5	5895	9227	3332	5610	2301	-3309	51.2%	80.0%	48.8%	20.0%
6	6529	9505	2976	5046	2136	-2910	56.4%	81.7%	43.6%	18.3%
7	6851	9599	2748	5307	2044	-3263	56.3%	82.4%	43.7%	17.6%
8	7152	12079	4927	4829	1891	-2938	59.7%	86.5%	40.3%	13.5%
Elementary	56788	91479	34691	55308	19735	-35573	50.7%	82.3%	49.3%	17.7%
9	7815	9275	1460	2554	1246	-1308	75.4%	88.2%	24.6%	11.8%
10	7192	8339	1147	3140	2116	-1024	69.6%	79.8%	30.4%	20.2%
11	7392	8050	658	2720	2324	-396	73.1%	77.6%	26.9%	22.4%
12	9251	9440	189	2901	3027	126	76.1%	75.7%	23.9%	24.3%
Secondary	31650	35104	3454	11315	8713	-2602	73.7%	80.1%	26.3%	19.9%

Operational Guidance – 2021-2022

As a part of our ongoing commitment to student, staff, and community safety, PDSB will continue to implement our updated Enhanced Safety Measures, and Operating Procedures. The Staff Operating Procedure 2021-2022 Reopening Plans was created in alignment with the [COVID-19: Health, Safety and Operational Guidance for Schools 2021-22](#) released on August, 3, 2021 and updated on August 13th, 2021. PDSB's Operating Procedure (OP) has been updated following the guidance of Peel Public Health whose recommendations are developed to increase the levels of safety for students, staff, and our greater community.

Collaboration occurred between Peel Public Health, PDSB Central Covid Response Team, the Director's Office, and all employees to gain a deeper understanding of the local context and, in some areas, the Operating Procedure reflects a more vigilant approach to enhanced safety protocols.

The chart below serves as a summary of some of the key enhanced safety measures for the 2021-2022 school year. A more fulsome outline will be found in the pending Operating Procedure.

Summary of Selected COVID-19 Protective Measures for 2021-2022

Topic	Update
Screening	Elementary: daily on-site confirmation of passed self-assessment (signed by family/caregiver). Secondary: daily on-site confirmation of passed self-assessment. Staff: daily on-site confirmation of passed self-assessment. Visitors: on-site confirmation of passed self-assessment and completion of sign-in log.
Masking	Students: The Peel Board continues to follow Peel Public Health's recommendation that all students in Grades K to 12 be required to wear a non-medical or cloth mask/face covering while indoors on school property, except when eating and drinking. Staff: As per Ministry direction, all school-based staff are required to wear medical masks indoors that are provided by the Ministry/Board.

<p>Eye Protection</p>	<p>Staff are required to wear eye protection when they will be in close contact (within 2m for longer than 15 minutes cumulatively) with students and staff who are not wearing masks. Eye protection is not required for staff who work with students who wear masks. Eye protection is also required outdoors when staff perform yard duty/outside supervision as they will be supporting students when they are unmasked.</p>
<p>Cohorting (indoor and outdoor)</p>	<p>Elementary: Elementary students will attend school five days per week, remaining in one cohort for the full day, including recess and lunch. Cohorted classes will stay together as much as possible while learning and moving through the school. Students can leave their classrooms to receive additional support. Students are encouraged to maintain physical distancing when outside. It shall be promoted that students stay within their cohorts while outside.</p> <p>Secondary: Students may eat together indoors, maintaining distancing between cohorts - Cafeterias can have designated areas for classes to eat marked off.</p>
<p>Shared Spaces</p>	<p>Shared spaces are open for use. An emphasis shall be placed on hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette when in these spaces, with sanitizer available and used upon entry.</p>
<p>Shared Materials</p>	<p>The use of shared objects/materials is permitted. Examples include toys, books, art supplies, indoor physical education equipment, and computers. As per Ministry guidance, the risk associated with transmission with shared objects is low. Emphasis is placed on hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette when using shared objects.</p>
<p>Extra-curricular</p>	<p>Extra-curricular sports and clubs are permitted. No spectators are permitted during extra-curricular sports. We are awaiting more specific guidance from PPH as to the safety guidelines.</p>

Lockers	Personal belongings can be kept at hooks/cubbies/lockers as per normal practice. When using hooks/cubbies/lockers, physical distancing rules must be followed. Stagger students when using these areas to avoid crowding.
Isolation Room	No change in procedure from last year.
Ventilation	All Ministry requirements have been followed. Much of the work is already complete and/or underway.

Ventilation Update:

Beginning in June 2020 the Board initiated, and is continuing to undertake steps, to improve the air quality, filtration and operation of HVAC and heating and ventilation systems in PDSB schools and other facilities. Working closely with the Ministry of Education, and utilizing all available Provincial and Federal funding provided, Facilities and Maintenance staff have been implementing several effective strategies to help reduce the spread of COVID-19.

Funding included:

Ministry of Education - Optimizing Air Quality funding 20/21 (approx. \$5.9M); additional allocation in August 2021 (\$417K). Provincial and Federal Governments joint funded COVID-19 Resilience Infrastructure Stream - CVRIS (approx. \$20M approved for air quality).

Below is an outline of work completed to date or currently underway:

- Summer 2020 - thorough preventative maintenance (PM) on all heating, ventilating, and air conditioning systems (HVAC) and completion of all repairs. Review of all windows to ensure proper operation and completion of required repairs.
- Fall 2020 – reprogramming of Building Automation Systems (BAS) for HVAC and ventilation systems to improve air changes and air filtration, including recalibrating outside air dampers to maximum, and an increase to the operational day by 2 hours prior to and beyond the end of the instructional day.
- Fall 2020 August 2021 – Utilizing Optimizing Air Quality funding:
 - Upgraded quality of the filters in all systems to MERV 13.
 - Increased frequency of filter changes.
 - Install 1140 stand-alone HEPA filtration units in classrooms and portables which do not have mechanical ventilation.
 - Re-commission HVAC systems and building automation systems.
 - Cleaning of heating and air conditioning coils in mechanical ventilation systems.
 - Duct cleaning and check of all Fire Dampers in mechanical ventilation systems.

-
- Updating and replacement of several of Building Automation Systems (BAS).
 - June 2021 and on-going to Dec 2021 – Utilizing COVID-19 Resilience Infrastructure funding:
 - Installation of In-Duct Air Treatment in all heating, ventilating and HVAC systems in all PDSB schools and other Board facilities. The In-Duct air treatment, utilizing ultraviolet technology is designed to be an air purification solution, cleaning the air of COVID-19 or many other airborne contaminants as it flows through the ductwork.

In addition to the above work and funding, Maintenance staff have implemented the following over the summer months in preparation for the upcoming 2021/2022 school year:

- Summer 2021 - completed approx. \$15M in renewal funded (SCI) projects for the replacement and upgrades of HVAC systems.
- Summer 2021 – PM & Heating Technicians completed a thorough re-inspection of all heating, ventilating, and air conditioning systems (HVAC) and full repairs.
- Summer 2021– PMs completed the replacement of pre-filters and HEPA filters on the 1140 stand-alone filtration units purchased between August 2020 and Feb 2021
- Summer 2021 (and on-going) – Install an additional 1800 stand-alone HEPA filtration units in school spaces (i.e., kindergarten, and non-ventilated gymnasiums, libraries, lunchrooms, school offices, etc.) as designated by the Ministry of Education. Maintenance staff have conducted a complete inventory of all spaces within Peel schools verifying types of ventilation systems and provided summary data to Ministry for the identification of spaces that will receive additional stand-alone HEPA filtration units for re-opening in September 2021, per Ministry directive. Coordinating for the central receipt of the additional 1800 units from the Ministry, and the subsequent deployment to all schools prior to September 5th is currently underway by our Maintenance department.
- Summer 2021 (and on-going) - Standardized School Ventilation Measures Report: Utilizing the Ministry provided dashboard or template, Maintenance and LTSS staff are working to provide a school-level ventilation improvement summary. To enhance transparency for school communities and provide consistent communication, this school specific report will be posted centrally on the Board's website and available for students, parents, and staff to view.

The above outlines the extensive activities, initiatives, and improvements which have been, or continue to be, implemented across the PDSB inventory of schools. Each of the actions included are part of the work to reduce the spread of COVID-19 and to improve the Air Quality within our schools for the continued safety, health and well-being of our students and staff.

Impact Analysis

Community Impact

PDSB is hopeful that with continued enhanced safety protocols and access to vaccinations, staff and students will be welcomed back to in-person learning in September 2021. The continued partnership with the Ministry of Education and Peel Public Health will strengthen our ability to serve PDSB students, staff, and families.

Next Steps

References:

[COVID-19: Health, Safety and Operational Guidance for Schools 2021-22](#)

Appendices