



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

September 11, 2020

Dear Parents & Guardians,

This year's return to school has taken many twists and turns as developments around the school reopening change on an almost daily basis. As we begin our new school year, we want to take this opportunity to thank you for your patience and understanding as we work toward a safe reopening and a return to quality, faith-filled teaching and learning.

This year, 15,810 elementary students will return for in-school learning while 3,436 have opted to learn at home. At the secondary level, 9,058 students will return for regular in-person learning versus 1,690 students who have enrolled in our Virtual School. The at-home learning model has created the need for significant redeployment of staff and has resulted in some delays in staffing. All teaching assignments, in both the in-school and virtual school, will be finalized and shared with parents early next week.

For students who take the bus, the HWCDSB with its co-terminus board has taken multiple steps in recent days to address the ongoing bus driver shortage which has been further compounded this year by COVID-19. An anticipated shortage of close to 80 school bus drivers last week has been reduced to 59 in the morning and 67 in the afternoon through various measures including increased driver incentives.

Hamilton-Wentworth Student Transportation Services (HWSTS) has undertaken a complete reorganization of school bus routes and runs following the removal of the 2,500 students who have declined transportation and the close to 4,000 eligible student riders who have opted to learn at home. The removal of excess students and stops has necessitated a complete reorganization to consolidate and reduce the number of routes and stops needed. These strategies are being implemented in an effort to mitigate against the bus driver shortage and to alleviate disruptions to students and families. Despite these measures, transportation delays are anticipated.

Following the reorganization, bus pick-up and drop-off times will be updated on the HWSTS transportation portal by 5:00pm on Tuesday, September 15, 2020. **Please note, busing information sent to parents/guardians last week will be your child(ren)'s pick-up/drop-off times for Monday, September 14th and Tuesday, September 15th; the new information that you will receive on Tuesday, September 15th will come into effect on Wednesday, September 16th.**

We very much regret any inconvenience this has caused you and your family and thank you for your understanding.

Patrick J. Daly
Chairperson of the Board

David Hansen
Director of Education