



# AGENDA – SPECIAL BOARD MEETING

Wednesday, August 18, 2021 – 6:00 PM

Limestone Education Centre

220 Portsmouth Avenue, Kingston, ON

Virtual Link: <https://bit.ly/LDSBSpecialBoardAug18>

## PUBLIC MEETING – 6:00 PM

Acknowledgement of Territory: “The Limestone District School Board is situated on the traditional territories of the Anishinaabe and Haudenosaunee. We acknowledge their enduring presence on this land, as well as the presence of Métis, Inuit and other First Nations from across Turtle Island. We honour their cultures and celebrate their commitment to this land.”

1. **CALL TO ORDER**
2. **DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

## SECTION A – Matters Requiring Action at the Meeting

### 3. **NOTICE OF MOTION**

#### 3.1 **The following motion is being brought forward by Trustee Elliott:**

*“That LDSB educators and education staff be allowed to provide their own Health Canada approved respirator, if desired, when that respirator is listed on the Health Canada [website](#). They must put on and take off all respirators as described by the CCOHS ([see figure 2](#)). Any educator or education staff who wishes to wear the Ministry-provided medical masks will continue to have masks provided to them.”*

- 3.2 The following motion is being brought forward by Trustee French:**  
*“That the Limestone District School Board write a letter endorsing the Ontario Public School Boards letter of [August 13, 2021](#), that the government act as quickly as possible to implement a policy addressing vaccination in schools.”*

## **SECTION B – INFORMATION**

### **4. REPORT FOR INFORMATION**

- 4.1 September 2021 School Re-entry and Pandemic Protocols - LDSB**  
Senior Staff (Pages 3-9)

### **5. ADJOURNMENT**



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## **ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT: SEPTEMBER 2021 SCHOOL REENTRY & PANDEMIC PROTOCOLS SPECIAL MEETING OF THE BOARD**

August 18, 2021

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### **Purpose**

To update the Board of Trustees regarding updated, provincial guidance for September 2021 reentry and Limestone preparations for the new school year.

### **Background**

The global COVID-19 pandemic has dramatically impacted the provision of schooling in Limestone for the past 18 months. Throughout the pandemic, the most significant, protective factor for the delivery of in-person schooling has been the health of the local community. Preventing and limiting the spread of COVID-19 continues to be the best strategy for keeping schools functioning. Given the significant value, impact, and importance of schooling for children and youth, keeping schools open and healthy is crucial.

In May 2021, school boards in Ontario received preliminary, operational guidance for preparing for the 2021-2022 school year. Updated operational guidance was shared by the province on August 3, 2021. Further updates related to ventilation, COVID absence reporting, and school COVID case contact, and outbreak management were received between August 4 and 12. Some of the guidance requires close partnership with KFL&A Public Health to ensure local context is considered, and effective practices are implemented. It should also be noted that we are expecting additional updates in the coming days and weeks.

### **Current Status**

As noted, we continue to anticipate further provincial updates in the coming days and weeks. In addition, as the last 18 months have demonstrated, the provincial and local context will continue to evolve with the pandemic. Consequently, we must continue to be agile and adapt as circumstances change. Below are updates based on guidance received as of August 16, 2021.

## Protective Strategies

Many of the protective strategies that were applied and utilized in the 2020-2021 school year continue to be in place for 2021-2022. This is a summary of the guidance received to date.

| Protective Strategy                       | 2020-2021 Status  | 2021-2022 Status   |
|---|---|--|
| Screening                                 | All staff and students were expected to screen daily prior to attending school. Active screening was required for secondary students and all staff during part of the school year.  | Daily screening continues. On-site screening may be required if directed by local public health authorities based on the context of the pandemic.  |
| Masking                                   | Masking, with some exceptions due to medical or special needs, was required for all students from Grades 4-12, and all staff. In LDSB, based on a motion in August 2020, masking was encouraged and expected of students from Kindergarten to Grade 3. Masking was required indoors and on student transportation at all times. As the year proceeded, KFLAPH requested outdoor masking.  | Mandatory masking, with some exceptions due to medical or special needs, is required for all staff and students in Grades 1-12 indoors and on school transportation. The August 2020 motion continues to be in place to include the encouragement and expectation of masking for Kindergarten students. Students and staff are not required to wear masks outdoors, but distancing should be encouraged between cohorts.   |
| Staff Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) | School boards provided board/school staff and school bus staff with required PPE based on the individual's role.  | Same as 2020-2021.   |
| Hand Hygiene and Respiratory Etiquette    | Direction was provided to staff and students related to effective hand hygiene practices and respiratory etiquette. Supplies were provided to allow for frequent hand cleansing.  | Same as 2020-2021. However, there is less emphasis on the cleaning of shared materials. Instead, the focus is on maintaining good hand hygiene before/after use of shared materials.   |
| Distancing and Congregating               | As much distancing as possible between students, students and staff, and between staff continues to be promoted, particularly when indoors. Reduction of direct/indirect contacts was a point of emphasis. This had implications related to school schedules, controlled movement in a building, and managing entry/exit. To the maximum extent possible, during recess and breaks distancing between cohorts was an objective. | Continued emphasis on distancing where possible. Elementary students (K-8) are to remain within their cohort (class) while indoors. Updated guidance indicates students do not need to stay within their cohort during recess and breaks outdoors, but distancing should be encouraged between cohorts. As a precaution, elementary schools in LDSB will continue to cohort students outdoors to start the year. For secondary students, more flexibility has been provided in the number of |

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|   |  | direct/indirect contacts students may have over the course of a week. Consequently, the operational guidance in May and August both recommended the utilization of a quadmester model (two courses per day) for at least September to the end of January.  |
| Cleaning and Disinfection Standards and Protocols | Increased supports were provided to ensure regular cleaning, and particularly high-touch surfaces like door handles and light switches.                          | Additional cleaning of high-touch surfaces will be continued in the same manner as 2020-2021 although there is a reduction in the total number of hours distributed throughout the board with those hours only guaranteed for 6 months.  |
| Shared Spaces                                     | Emphasis was placed on having students remain within their cohort to the maximum extent possible and not utilizing shared spaces. Assemblies were not permitted. | Shared spaces like libraries and cafeterias may be used. Masks must be worn indoors and an emphasis placed on spacing between cohorts sharing a specific space. This includes the ability to hold assemblies. As a precaution, to start the year, schools will not be organizing larger gatherings in the school.  |
| Visitors  | Visitors were generally not permitted, outside of limited exceptions.  | Visitors are permitted; however, they must self-screen prior to entry, and wear a mask while on the premises. Public Health may restrict this access based on local health circumstances.  |
| Meetings  | To the maximum extent possible, virtual meetings were scheduled and in-person meetings had to ensure spacing and masking between participants.                   | Virtual meetings are still preferred where possible, but in-person meetings can occur when attendance is confirmed in advance to ensure adequate spacing in the meeting space. All meetings/gatherings must comply with current public health requirements. Where possible, meetings should occur outdoors. For indoor meetings, if numbers exceed spacing limitations, the in-person meeting cannot occur. Screening in advance of the meeting and attendance tracking for contact tracing are required for any in-person meeting(s). |
| International Students                            | If school boards could ensure compliance with a range of   | Same as 2020-2021.   |

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|  | parameters, international students were permitted to attend. |  |
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#### Student Transportation:

Transportation will continue to operate much the same as last year. Bus operators will continue with the additional cleaning of the buses. High-touch areas will be addressed twice daily, and handrails will be disinfected after every run. Seating plans will be organized and retained for the required contact tracing in accordance with last year's protocol. An empty seat will continue to be required behind the driver. Changes for this year will include mandatory masking of all students from Grade 1 to 12 and the expectation that Kindergarten students will also be masked.

#### Ventilation:

Limestone DSB will continue with the additional measures that were implemented for the 2020-2021 school year to ensure the optimal air quality of all the occupied spaces within our schools. The additional measures include the following:

- Increased filter changes for improved air flow and air quality in all of the filtered HVAC units.
- The building automation will be reprogrammed with extended run times to ensure additional flushing of the air within the building before and after school occupied hours.
- Where possible, the fresh air damper supply to the facility will be maximized on the HVAC units.
- HVAC contractors are performing an operational audit of the HVAC systems in every school building during the summer of 2021. This audit and inspection will ensure that any deficiencies that are found will be corrected in a timely manner for school startup.

On August 4, 2021, the Ministry of Education released memo 2021B:14 which detailed a system investment of \$25 million for the installation and purchase of HEPA filtration units. Limestone will be provided with 820 HEPA units and \$49,000. These units will be installed in occupied spaces that currently do not have a mechanical filtered fresh air supply. These spaces may include classrooms, libraries, lunchrooms, child-care spaces, administration spaces and portables. All Kindergarten rooms, regardless of the type of HVAC units that supply the space, will be provided with a HEPA filtration unit. Staff is currently awaiting the delivery of the units from the Ministry of Education and will arrange for the distribution of these units to the schools as soon as they are received.

#### Mental Health and Special Education Supports:

The board is committed to supporting students who require special education supports and services to successfully engage in learning. Staff will continue to work with families to ensure a smooth transition back to in-person learning or virtual school learning when this option has been chosen. The board's Educational Services staff will continue to work with school staff and community partners to ensure that innovative supports and services are in place to meet a range of special education needs.

Ensuring the mental health and well-being of students and staff remains a priority for Limestone. We will continue to use a tiered approach for mental health supports by providing classroom and whole school level supports to all students and target intensive help to those who have been most affected by the COVID-19 pandemic including referrals to community mental health providers. School-based mental health supports will continue to include access to Student Support Counsellors, Adolescent Care

Workers, Attendance Counsellors and Social Workers. School Mental Health Ontario is providing school boards with comprehensive back to school resources which can be customized to address local priorities. Trustees may review. [The Mentally Healthy Back to School Support Package](#).

#### In-Person Learning:

For 2021-2022, schools will continue to maximize distancing where possible, and stagger student movement through hallways, but may allow use of school areas such as lockers, cafeterias and libraries. Schools are also permitted to have nutrition/third-party food programs and non-instructional food events, provided adequate food handling and safety practices are in place. Any visitors to schools are required to self-screen, follow sign-in and hand hygiene procedures and wear a medical mask (provided by the school if necessary) while on school premises.

The COVID-19 operational guidance document provides information for specific academic programs and requirements. Music programs are permitted indoors provided ventilation and distancing protocols are followed, including use of wind instruments and singing. Health and physical education classes may occur indoors and outdoors, using shared equipment with proper safety and distancing protocols in place. Field trips are permitted this school year following the requirements under the *Reopening Ontario Act*. Many of these activities may vary at schools depending on local circumstances.

Regular EQAO Assessments will resume for Grades 3 and 6 in the new digital format for math, reading and writing and students in Grade 9 will write the Grade 9 math digital adaptive assessment. EQAO assessments are required to be done in-person at the school. The literacy graduation requirement is waived for students graduating in 2021-2022, but will be restored for students graduating in the 2022-2023 school year. The community involvement graduation requirement has been reduced to a minimum of 20 hours of community involvement activities for students graduating in the 2021-2022 school year. The community involvement graduation requirement will be restored in 2022-2023, and students working toward their diploma (OSSD) should continue to work to meet these requirements in time for their graduating year.

Elementary school students in Kindergarten through Grade 8 will remain in one cohort for the full day. However, students may access small instructional groups with students from other cohorts when required (for example for special education supports or English-language learning). Specialized education staff (for example French teachers, special education teachers, educational assistants etc.) are permitted to go into classrooms and multiple schools to provide necessary programming and supports.

In order to encourage a successful transition back to in-person learning and emphasize the need to teach protocols to Limestone's youngest learners, a staggered entry may be used for all students in Kindergarten. Staggered entry may occur on Tuesday, September 7, Wednesday, September 8 and Thursday, September 9. By Friday, September 10 the full Kindergarten class should be attending school. Schools will determine the best staggered entry plan that meets the needs of the students in their Kindergarten class(es).

Secondary schools will open with a Quadmester model, as opposed to the Octomester model which was utilized last year. There are two "quads" during semester 1 (September to January), and students will attend two classes per day (one in the morning and one in the afternoon) during the first quad, and then change to two new classes in the second quad. This model does allow greater consolidation time

per course, but also preserves the option of reverting to more restrictive scheduling measures if required.

#### Virtual School:

##### Elementary Virtual School

There are currently 204 students enrolled in Elementary Virtual School for the 2021-2022 school year. All students who confirmed their intention in June to attend virtual school for the upcoming school year have been transferred from their home school to Elementary Virtual School. Families who, since June, have decided that Elementary Virtual School is the best learning environment for their student, have the opportunity to register at Elementary Virtual School until end of the day, August 26, 2021. Following this date, registration in Elementary Virtual School will be subject to available space. Elementary Virtual School will continue to follow Program & Policy Memorandum 164 (PPM 164), as with the 2020-2021 school year. The hours of operation will be 9 a.m. to 3:20 p.m. daily. Core French will be offered in Grades 4 through 8 only. French Immersion and the Choices at 7 programs will only be offered at in-person school. The supervision of Elementary Virtual School will be determined once registration is finalized following August 26.

##### Secondary Virtual School

There are currently 140 students enrolled in Secondary Virtual School for the 2021-2022 school year, including students who receive School-to-Community services. All students who confirmed their intention in June 2021 to attend virtual school for the upcoming school year have been transferred from their home school to the Secondary Virtual School. Based on Ministry guidance, Secondary Virtual School will follow the same quadmester schedule as all other secondary schools, with classes running from 8:30 a.m. to 2:35 p.m. daily. Students will take two courses at a time (one in the morning and one in the afternoon). The Grade 9 and 10 timetables for students include a set number of 8 courses, which are primarily compulsory credits. Grade 11 and 12 students will be taking a mix of virtual courses and LDSB e-learning or e-learning consortium courses that most closely align with their course selections. Families may continue to indicate an interest in attending Secondary Virtual School up until August 26, 2021, for the start of the school year. Families who express an interest after August 26 will be put on a wait list, and if space becomes available, students will be considered for entry at the start of each of the next three quadmasters (November 15, 2021, February 3, 2022 and April 20, 2022). Supervision of the Secondary Virtual School will be determined once registration is finalized, following the registration deadline of August 26.

#### Extra-curricular Activities and Community Use:

The updated operational guidance allows for extra-curricular clubs, activities, sports teams, and bands. Students may interact outdoors with no masks and physical distancing encouraged, and cohorts may interact indoors with masking and appropriate physical distancing. The guidance does allow for high and low contact activities permitted outdoors without masking, whereas high and low contact activities are permitted indoors with masking encouraged for indoor sports where they can be worn safely based on the activity. LDSB continues to work with Public Health regarding the restarting of local extracurricular activities. Before/after school programs and community use of schools are permitted within the updated guidance. However, both require compliance with current, local public health guidance. LDSB continues to work with Public Health to ensure effective implementation. Further information will be made available in the coming weeks.



### Management of COVID-19 in Schools- Changes for 2021-2022:

Case and contact management will continue with Public Health as the lead agency. Many processes will remain the same as 2020-2021. Because vaccination is now available, some changes have been made for eligible populations. Asymptomatic contacts of confirmed or probable cases are not required to isolate if they are fully vaccinated (second dose plus 14 days). High-risk contacts who are not immunized are required to isolate for 10 days (previously 14 days) from the last exposure to the case. Testing is recommended on or after day 7 of their isolation period. Public health units may also implement additional measures that are not outlined in the guidelines at this time.

### Family Communication:

Communications is working closely with KFLAPH to align communications strategies to support the return to school. The board website will be updated to reflect important information, resources and changes for 2021-2022. Last year's information will be archived so as not to cause any confusion. The website will serve as the board's main information hub for families and will include information on the following topics: screening and school protocols, confirmed cases, frequently asked questions, wellness resources and supports, a family quick reference guide and relevant KFLAPH resources. Regular direct communication with families using the Communicate broadcast tool will be used and supplemented by school communications, social media, the board mobile app, and earned local media.

Families were first notified of the updated Ministry guideline following its release August 4. Since then, a more fulsome initial message to families was sent on August 16. This was accompanied by a link to a revised frequently asked questions section of the LDSB website. Families are invited to send unanswered questions to communications. The quick reference guide will be released in the coming weeks as plans and fact sheets are confirmed with KFLAPH.

Communications will remain dynamic, and information will be updated as required and/or circumstances change.

## **Recommendations**

That this report be received for information purposes.

**Prepared by:** LDSB Senior Staff

**Reviewed by:** Krishna Burra, Director of Education