

Director's Department Memo

Upper Grand District School Board Elementary and Secondary School Draft Reopening Plans



To: The Board Chair and Trustees
From: Martha C. Rogers, Director of Education
Date: August 4, 2020
Report Type: INFORMATION

Background

On June 19, 2020, the Ontario Ministry of Education released a memo entitled, Approach to Reopening Schools for the 2020-2021 School Year. Boards were required to produce plans for the following 3 models of education, any one of which could be selected by the Minister for implementation in September 2020:

- a) Remote (distance education)
- b) Conventional (return to school full time with enhanced safety and cleaning protocols)
- c) Adapted (students attend in person for part time and engage in learning remotely part time).

The return to school “in person” by students in the fall of 2020-2021 is voluntary and based on parent choice. School boards must offer remote education to students choosing not to return to school.

Subsequently, boards were directed to complete a Board Self-Assessment and to share this Self-Assessment, as well as their plans for elementary and secondary school programs under each of the 3 models. All of the information was reviewed by UGDSB senior staff, with senior Ministry officials on Monday, July 27, 2020.

On Thursday, July 30, 2020, Minister of Education, Stephen Lecce, released the following information related to the Reopening of Schools in Ontario effective September 8, 2020:

This document is available in alternative formats upon request.

Elementary

Elementary schools will reopen with conventional in-person delivery of teaching and instruction, with enhanced health and safety protocols, provincewide.

Elementary school students in Kindergarten through Grade 8 will attend school five days per week, with 300 minutes of instruction per day, remaining in one cohort for the full day, including recess and lunch. Cohorted classes will stay together and with one teacher, where possible. Students can expect to see changes in the timing of recesses, lunches, and bathroom breaks as they are staggered to support cohorting. Specialized teachers, like French teachers, will still be able to go into classrooms to provide the full breadth of programming for students. Students will also be able to leave their classrooms to receive additional supports but direct and indirect contacts in schools for students should be limited to approximately 50.

Secondary

Designation Status for Secondary Delivery

Secondary schools will open in September with conventional or adapted in-person teaching and instruction, depending upon the designation of the school board. The designation of these school boards is based on several factors that take into account the size of the school board, the number and size of the board's secondary schools, the size of secondary grade cohorts and whether the board is predominantly urban. Co-terminus boards have also been designated wherever these criteria are met.

The Upper Grand District School Board and the Wellington Catholic District School Board will both open in September with the conventional model of teaching.

Issue

To share draft plans for elementary and secondary schools reopening on September 8, 2020.

Recommendations

1. That the report entitled, Upper Grand District School Board Elementary and Secondary Draft Reopening Plans dated August 4, 2020 be received.

Rationale

The draft plans for reopening the elementary and secondary schools using the conventional model are outlined in Appendix A. The draft plans will be submitted to Ministry and Public Health officials for approval in accordance with Ministry direction.

MCR:av
Attachment

Upper Grand District School Board

Appendix A:

School Reopening Plans for September 2020

August 4, 2020

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Boards were asked to prepare three possible scenarios for reopening schools:

- Conventional - Normal school day routine with enhanced health and safety protocols
- Adaptive or Adapted - Modified school day routine based on smaller class sizes, cohorting and alternative day or week delivery
- Remote Learning - Learning at home with opportunities for students to engage with teachers in both synchronous and asynchronous learning.

UGDSB has been directed to open in a Conventional Model for both elementary and secondary students. However, plans will also be finalized to transition to either an adapted/adaptive or fully remote model as directed by the Ministry based on advice from the Chief Medical Officer of Health or the local Medical Officer of Health.

Highlights from Ministry

- Additional Funding - will be discussed as part of the Budget Presentation
- All elementary schools in the province will open in the Conventional Model
- Parents have the option to opt their children out of in-person delivery
- Secondary schools in the province were broken down into 'Designated' and 'Non-Designated' boards based on:
 - the size of the school board,
 - the number and size of the board's secondary schools,
 - the size of secondary grade cohorts
 - if board is predominantly urban
- Timetabling will emphasize cohorting of students as much as possible
- Students in Grades 4 to 12 will be required to wear masks indoors
- Students may wear their own non-medical masks or non-medical masks will also be provided for students.
- Students in Kindergarten to Grade 3 will be encouraged but not required to wear masks
- School-based staff will be provided with all appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE).
- The Ontario government will provide PPE and cleaning products to school boards.

Pre-Registration

School boards are encouraged to undertake pre-registration given the controlled conditions for reopening schools that will be required.

School boards:

- May waitlist for families who do not pre-register by a cut-off day/time
- Pre-registration deadlines will be publicly available

- Can offer these students and families remote learning until an appropriate class placement can be provided
- May set restrictions on the ability of students to transfer between remote learning and in-class learning

Guiding Principles for our Return to School

- Keep staff and students safe and healthy.
- Provide for the continuity of learning: through either conventional, adapted or remote learning.
- Focus on staff and student well-being and mental health.
- Address issues of equity and access for our students and families.
- Keep stakeholders informed through regular communication.

Reopening Model – Elementary

Students Who Elect to Come to School:

- All students will attend school every day - 300 minutes of instruction
- Student's class is considered their 'cohort'
- Morning/Afternoon bell times may change
- Recess/Lunch may be staggered
- Teachers will rotate between classes for planning time and rotary
 - Classes will not move
 - Students are able to leave their classrooms to receive additional supports
 - Direct and indirect contacts in schools for students should be limited to approximately 50 contacts
- Exploring a 'contactless' attendance system
- Further Health and Safety changes will be discussed later in the presentation

Students Who Elect for Online Learning:

- Students will be registered at their home school
- Students will be assigned to "central" classrooms
 - Classes may be composed of students from different schools, depending on numbers
 - Central class sizes will adhere to ministry requirements
- Staff who are unable to attend work at school sites will be assigned to remote classes.
 - Remote teachers may not be the same as if the student were in the school
 - Supports such as IEPs and other resources will continue to be provided

Reopening Model – Secondary

Students will attend every day for approximately 5 hours. In order to reduce risk of transmission and to support contact tracing, school boards are to develop timetables over a 1 to 2 week period that:

- Limit indirect and direct student contacts to approximately 100 students in the school; and
- Are encouraged to keep secondary school students in a maximum of two in-person class cohorts
- Students will attend school full time per Ministry direction

Two options are currently being considered:

a) Quadmester:

- In this model, the four courses a student traditionally takes over a semester will be divided into two terms and each student will only focus on two courses at a time.
- All students will take 2 courses at the same time for a period of 10 weeks. They then repeat for the next two courses for the following 10 weeks to complete the full semester.
- Students will receive 150 minutes per day each with both their Period 1 and Period 2 teachers.

b) Octomester:

- In this model, the four courses a student traditionally takes over a semester will be divided into four terms and each student will only focus on one course at a time.
- All students will take one course at the same time for a period of 5 weeks. They then repeat for the next three courses for the following 15 weeks to complete the full semester.
- Students will receive approximately 300 minutes per day on one subject.

“Cohort C”

Two models are being considered for teaching students who do not return to in person classes in this model (referred to as ‘Cohort C’)

Option A:

- Students who are exclusively doing online learning will remain part of their cohort. Those students will connect daily with their classroom teachers during the regular scheduled time of day.

Option B:

- Students who are exclusively doing online learning will be enrolled in online courses. These courses will be taught by teachers who cannot participate in face to face teaching. Students will connect daily with their e-learning teachers during the regular scheduled time of day. In this model, students will need to stay enrolled in the online model for the duration of the quadmester.
- There will be no exams in the quadmester. Teachers will use culminating tasks for the final evaluation of each course.

- **Common Lunch for staff and transition time for students.** Students will eat in their period 1 class or can choose to leave the school for lunch.

Mental Health and Well-Being

Students with Health Conditions

- Some students will not be able to take part in the in-person component of returning to school due to health conditions or other reasons. For this group of students, remote learning options will be provided.

Racism, Discrimination and Bullying

- Racism and bullying related to COVID-19 myths and misinformation will not be tolerated and will be specifically addressed early in the fall.

Student Well-Being

- All staff will be made aware of the potential impact of trauma on student learning, behaviour and relationships.
- Supports and daily wellness focused tasks will be embedded into all grades in both virtual and in-person formats (as possible and necessary).

Parent Well-Being

- Parent webinars and learning/support opportunities are being developed to provide information, resources and strategies for parents.

Staff Well-Being

- Our Wellness Department will be overseeing supports for staff in the coming weeks and into the school year.

School and System Level Mental Health Supports - Pathways to Care

- While all classrooms will embed well-being into their daily activities, there will be some students who require a higher level of support and some who require more direct intervention and/or clinical support. Supports at all these levels will continue to be available to students and families whether virtually or in person.

Special Education

- The Upper Grand District School Board is committed to supporting our students who require special education and/or mental health supports in order to successfully engage in learning.
- Students with special education needs will continue to be supported, regardless of the modality of learning.
- Student IEPs will be developed so that they will be appropriate for the in-school setting as well as distance learning

- IPRCs will continue to be scheduled using a virtual format.
- Students Safety plans/Behaviour support plans will be refined for in-school instruction reflecting the PPE required to support each student where social distancing will prove to be challenging.
- Board Special Education staff, in collaboration with the boards H&S department will determine when enhanced PPE would be used by staff, through a Risk Assessment & Needs Analysis for students with complex needs, where social distancing with staff will not be able to be maintained.

Access to School Sites

Parent and Visitor Access

- Only **essential visitors** are permitted inside the school (e.g., maintenance personnel) except in the case of emergency. Meetings with teachers and principals will take place virtually in the initial stages of reopening.
- Essential visitors will complete a self-assessment screen for COVID-19 symptoms BEFORE arriving/entering school. If any signs or symptoms are exhibited, essential visitors must not enter the school.

Child Care Centres and Before/After School Programs

- All Child Care Centres connected to schools, as well as Before & After School programs (BASPs), are run by third party Operators who are permitted to fully open in September at regular licensing ratios. We are currently working with Operators to confirm space requirements and anticipate more operational guidelines to be received shortly. [Before and/or After School Program](#)

Community Use of Schools

- Indoor permits through Community Use of Schools will continue to be on hold until further notice.

Parent/Guardian Responsibilities

Parent Pre-registration Survey

- Parents will be surveyed regarding whether their child will attend on-site schooling in September, or if their child will fully participate remotely.

Pick-up and Drop-off

- Schools will establish pick-up and drop-off procedures and will communicate these procedures to families. At entry and dismissal times, parents are to remain outside the school and adhere to physical distancing protocols.

Personal Student Belongings

- Students will be asked to bring a minimal amount of personal belongings to school as they will not have access to lockers or cubbies during COVID-19.

Water Bottles

- Students will be encouraged to bring their own labelled water bottle to school each day. All water fountains can be used to refill water bottles. Drinking directly from water fountains during COVID-19 will not be permitted.

Screening of Students

Parents/guardians will be asked to perform a **daily** screening of their child(ren) for COVID-19 symptoms BEFORE leaving for school using a self-assessment checklist:

- Check their child's temperature (fever > 37.8oC)
- Monitor for signs and symptoms (including atypical symptoms) of COVID-19
- If a child shows any signs or symptoms, they must stay home and the school must be contacted.

Safety Protocols for School Sites

Safety Inspections

- Before students return to school, a Joint Health and Safety Committee inspection will be completed at each site.

Physical Distancing

- Signage on walls and floors in common spaces will help students maintain physical distance from one another, where possible.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

- Students in grade 4-12 will be required to wear non-medical or cloth masks indoors, including in hallways and during classes. Students in Kindergarten to Grade 3 will be encouraged but not required to wear masks in indoor spaces.
- Reasonable exceptions on the requirement to wear masks will apply

Hand Hygiene

- Schools will ensure that hand hygiene products and wipes are available in all rooms where possible and at school entrances (e.g. hand wash sink with soap dispenser or hand sanitizer).
- There are a number of resources related to hygiene available through Public Health and will be used in schools. (e.g., [How to wash your hands \(child focused\)](#))

Respiratory etiquette

- Will be reviewed with both staff and students
- Includes covering the nose and mouth during coughing and sneezing with a tissue or sneezing or coughing into your sleeve or elbow, disposing of used tissues into the garbage

immediately after use and practicing proper hand hygiene immediately after coughing or sneezing or touching one's face.

Hygiene and Cleaning

Cleaning Products

- Asthma-safe, hospital-grade, green-based cleaning products used where available.
- Board caretakers are responsible for: cleaning, sanitizing, and disinfecting.

Touch Point Cleaning

- Cleaning will take place in all high contact areas including desks, tables, railings, door handles and other surfaces throughout the school.
- Cleaning will take place at the end of each day with high touchpoint surfaces cleaned throughout the day.
- In addition to routine cleaning, surfaces that have frequent contact with hands will be cleaned and disinfected at minimum twice per day
- The caretaker team at each school will focus on high touch surfaces, including door handles, railings, water fountains, faucets, and areas such as restrooms.

Classroom Hand Cleaning

- Students will be provided with opportunities for hand washing or use of hand sanitizer throughout the day.

Hand Sanitizer

- Hand sanitizer will be placed at the front entrance of every school and in every class, where possible, and refilled as needed.

Water Fountains

- Water fountains are being used for water-bottle filling only and will be cleaned on a regular basis. Drinking directly from fountains is not permitted.

Garbage

- Classroom garbage will be collected and disposed of daily. All garbage pails/bins are lined with plastic bags.

Recycling

- Students will be asked to bring home all containers and recycle in their own home rather than at school.

School Day Operations

Attendance

- Student attendance will be taken for all students who arrive at school, and a record will be maintained when students are in areas of the building other than their classroom.
- Attendance will also be taken for any remote learning that occurs.

Sharing of Resources/Materials

- Staff are to limit the sharing of supplies, equipment, and toys.
- Adequate supplies for instructional courses will be provided to each student.
- Shared equipment will be cleaned or disinfected between use.
- Staff will review specific safety precautions required for classes that traditionally involve the sharing of resources between students (e.g. construction, auto shops, hospitality, science, arts, physical education etc.).

Transportation

Safety Protocols for School Purpose Vehicles

- Safety Protocols are applicable for all School Purpose Vehicles, including large buses, special purpose buses and minivans.
- Enhanced cleaning protocol including additional cleaning for frequently touched surfaces.
- Seating arrangements will be developed to support distancing during loading and unloading – this will require cooperation from riders
- Drivers will be supplied masks and eye protection when distancing cannot be maintained, as well as gloves for cleaning
- Student riders will be required to wear face coverings as per face covering guidelines in schools
- Bus Lists will support contact tracing if required
- Consistent with school protocols, students who have COVID symptoms are not to go to the bus stop, ride the bus or attend school.
- Students who develop symptoms while on a school purpose vehicle will be referred to school staff upon arrival at the school at which time school protocols will be followed.
- Students who develop symptoms while at school will not be permitted to return home on a School Purpose Vehicle and will need to be picked up by a parent or guardian.

School Purpose Vehicle Operations

- Training sessions for drivers will be provided by Bus Operators with practices and parameters shared by WDG Health
- Routes under a conventional model will follow consistent routes
 - If circumstances require a change to an Adapted Model, then pick-up and drop-off times are likely to change due to the impact on route planning
- Disruption in service may occur if there is higher than normal driver absenteeism
- Courtesy transportation will need to be on hold

Parent/Guardian Responsibilities

- Parents/guardians of students who are eligible for transportation will be requested to confirm whether they will use transportation services
- Parents/guardians of students should self-assess their child(ren) each day for symptoms and students should stay home if presenting with symptoms
- Safe distancing practices should be observed at bus stops

- Parents/Guardians are encouraged to provide student riders with face coverings for use while in the school purpose vehicle
- Parent/Guardians are encouraged to sign up for the notification system to monitor for disruption in services and to monitor STWDSTS and school board websites for transportation updates

School Day Operations

Fire Drills

- Practice drills will continue. Classes will move throughout the building while maintaining distance between students in the classroom, hallway and at all exits.
- Each Principal will review with staff where to go in case there is a real emergency, and the school needs to be evacuated.
- Locations on the school playground or field will be identified that would allow for distancing within student cohorts.

Lockdown, Tornado and Bomb Threat Drills

- These drills will not take place during COVID-19.
- Procedures will be reviewed with students

Doors

- Classroom and office doors will be left open during the day to minimize the number of students or staff who need to touch the door

Lockers and Cubbies

- Students will not have access to lockers or cubbies during COVID-19, so that all materials will stay with them in the classroom.

School Supplies and Equipment

- Students will be given their own school supplies (e.g., pencils). Shared equipment such as a Chromebook will be wiped down before changing users.

Sports – Intramurals and Interscholastic Games

- Individual sports may continue with proper hygiene and physical distance in place. Many team sports continue to be "on hold" at this time

Field Trips

- In the initial stages of reopening, field trips will not be permitted.

Outdoor and Non-Classroom Space

- Staff will be encouraged to take advantage of outdoor space for instruction.

Outdoor Space for Recess

- Recess may be staggered based on the size of the outdoor space and the availability of supervisors.
- Principals will develop a schedule and routine that allows for students to maintain appropriate physical distancing while still having an opportunity for fresh air and physical activity.

Playgrounds

- To start the year, playground climbers will not be available for use

Learning Commons

- In the initial startup, the Learning Commons will be closed to students. A process will be put in place for book exchange.

Large Group Gatherings and Assemblies

- In the early stages of return, all large gatherings and assemblies will be cancelled.

Lunch and Cafeterias

- In the initial stages of school start up, cafeterias will be closed. Students will be allowed to eat their lunch in their classroom with their classmates.
- Students will be asked to wash their hands before and after eating. Where the timetable can be compressed to allow for students to return home for lunch, this will be allowed. A “no food sharing” policy will be expected.

Specialized Courses and Programs

- Some courses and programs will require greater modifications than others given the need to clean and disinfect any shared equipment.
- Board staff will be developing guidelines to assist staff in modifying activities such as science labs, computer and technology courses, music, physical education, hospitality courses, etc.
- Where safety cannot be addressed with in-person activities, alternative online activities will be recommended.

Symptoms, Confirmed Cases and Outbreaks

Symptomatic individuals or anyone who has come into close contact with a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19 in the past 14 days should be tested for COVID-19.

Students:

- Parents will perform an assessment on their child(ren) daily before arriving at school.
- At school, symptomatic students will be immediately separated from others and supervised in a designated room/space and parent/guardian is contacted for immediate pick up. Siblings will also be sent home as a precaution.

- Staff who provide care to a symptomatic student, staff member or visitor must wear PPE as required, maintain a safe distance (if possible), avoid contact with the symptomatic person's respiratory secretions and perform hand hygiene.
- Soiled items will not be rinsed and/or washed at school.

Staff:

- Staff will complete a self-assessment daily and staff who have any signs of illness will stay home.
- Symptomatic staff and essential visitors must go home immediately. If they cannot return home immediately, they must be isolated in the designated room/space until their departure.
- Caretaking staff will clean and disinfect the designated room/space and any items touched by the symptomatic individual.

Confirmed cases of COVID-19

The school and board will follow the directions of Public Health:

- May require one or multiple classes to close and move to a distance learning model
- May require the school to be closed to in-person instruction for a length of time
- Students or staff who test positive for COVID19 may be required to bring medical clearance before being allowed to return to in-person instruction.
- A Clorox 360 atomizer disinfectant machine will be used to disinfect any area accessed by someone reported as testing positive for COVID19.

Privacy

- Staff will follow the directions from WDGPH in terms of what medical/health information can be shared.
- Parents, staff and the community will have to understand that not all personal information can be shared.

Next Steps

- **Communication:** School principals and the Board's Communication Department will communicate regularly with students and their parents/guardians over the next several weeks.

www.ugdsb.ca/fall2020

- Pre-registration survey to Parents indicating intent to return (Week of Aug. 4 and will end on Aug. 14, 2020)
- Release of Parent/Guardian Guide on Board Website (Week of Aug. 4, 2020)
- Release of Staff Guide on Board Website (Week of Aug. 4, 2020)
- Meetings with SEAC and PIC (August meetings)

- Complete transitional plans for both Adaptive and Remote Models (e.g., cohorting, technology distribution)
- Complete Outbreak and Contact Tracing Protocols in collaboration with WDG Public Health
- Establish '**Re-entry and Exit Procedures**' for those students who will not attend in person initially or choose to leave in person for remote learning
- Staff training and planning for Professional Activity Days (Sept 1, 2, 3) which will include specific Health and Safety Training related to COVID
- Ongoing:
 - Meeting with Federations and Associations regarding reopening plans
 - Possible adjustments to the plan as directed by Ministry of Education and/or Public Health
 - Meet with Principals and Vice-Principals to discuss reopening