



September 14, 2020

Dear Virtual School Parents/Guardians,

As you know, we recently delayed the first day of the Virtual School until Thursday, September 17 given the time needed to assign teachers and timetable our secondary classes. Since that decision was made, the number of families choosing the Virtual School has continued to grow — largely from families switching from in-person learning. Between Tuesday of last week and today, we have gone from approximately 66,000 students to more than 72,000 students in the Virtual School resulting in the addition of more than 200 virtual classrooms — all requiring a teacher.

With this number expected to grow, we have made the difficult decision to once again postpone the first day of Virtual School to Tuesday, September 22 to allow time to finish the staffing and timetabling process. This will also provide time for students and their families to set up BrightSpace accounts and familiarize themselves with the online learning platform that will be the main hub for the TDSB Virtual School. Please note that this delay will also apply to students in Special Education ISP classrooms.

We had hoped that our first communication with Virtual School parents/guardians would have been under different circumstances, however it became clear over the weekend, especially with increasing numbers, staffing a Virtual School of this size — larger than the total enrolment of most school boards in Ontario — was not going to be possible in time for Thursday and we wanted to inform you right way. Other large school boards in the Greater Toronto Area have come to similar conclusions and have recently announced a delayed start to virtual classes.

In the days ahead, we will be sharing additional information with families about the TDSB Virtual School as we prepare to welcome back students. I want to thank you for your patience as we move through this process. I know the waiting is not easy, but this additional time will allow us to better prepare for your children's return to school.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Carlene Jackson'.

Carlene Jackson
Interim Director of Education

