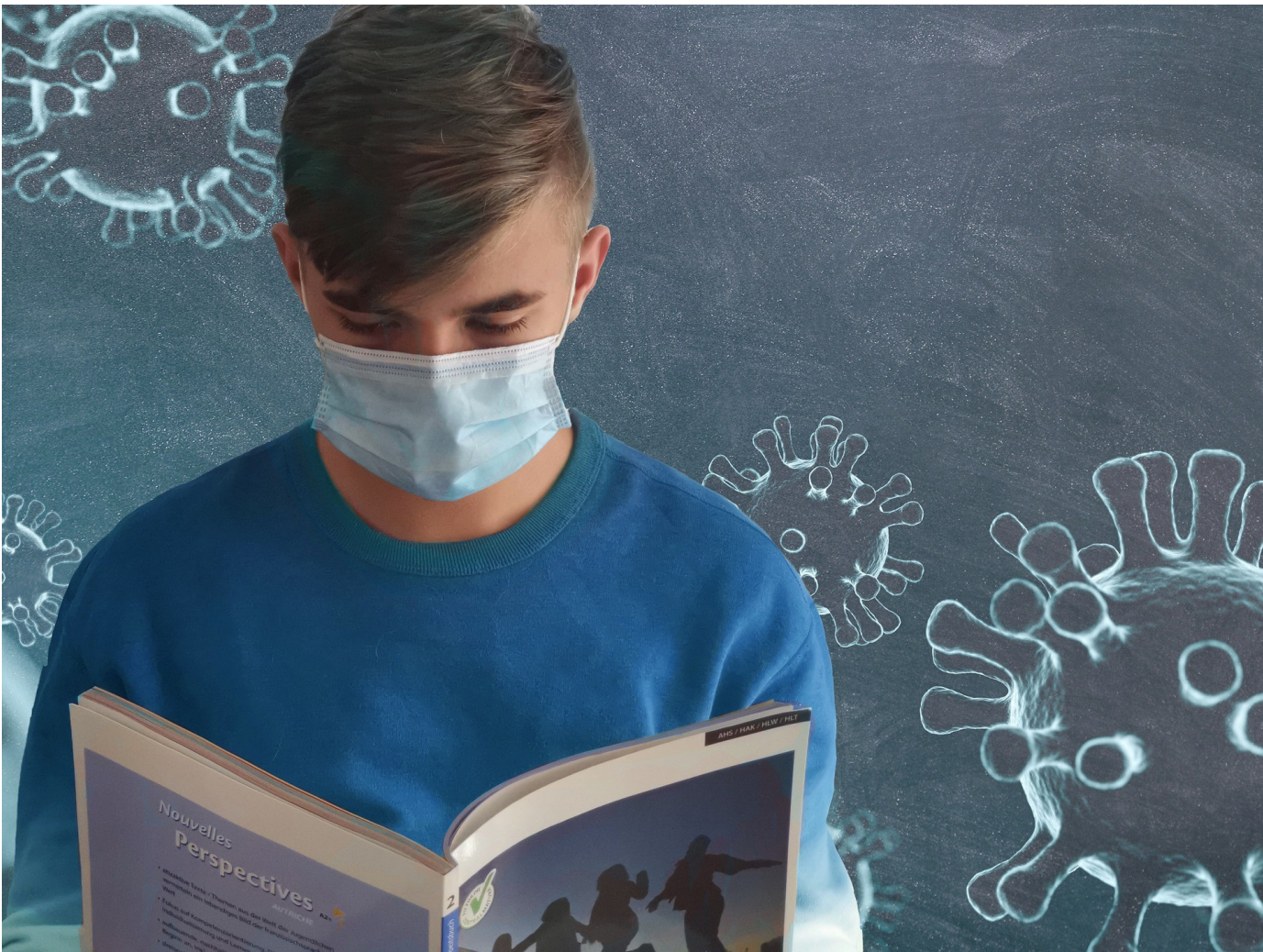


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All students must re-register for school as TLDSB gauges interest from parents

Published on July 31, 2020 — in Education — by Kirk Winter

Following closely on the heels of the provincial announcement that Trillium Lakelands District School Board buildings will be able to re-open Sept. 8 with few restrictions, the local board is trying to assess how many children will actually be returning to school in the fall.

“Next week all TLDSB families will receive an email with a link to a form asking to re-register each child for in-person and at-home learning,” a press release on the board websites shares.

“Once this information is received a program will be developed with enhanced public health protocols in place.”

Parents are warned, “Any changes from at-school or at-home learning will take some time to implement once the school year begins.”

Transportation re-registration will also be necessary.

“If a student is eligible for transportation parents/guardians will be asked to indicate if they will be using board provided busing in 2020-2021,” the release makes clear, “and students who opt out of board provided transportation will not receive transportation until February 2021.”

The board stipulates that, “students choosing not to attend school in person will participate in at-home learning.”

Once the data regarding returning students is gathered the board and Kawartha Lakes Bus Lines believe they will be better prepared to address a protocol for the fall.

The board itemizes the following public health protocols that will be in place by Sept. 8 regardless, and they include:

- Entry, exit and hand washing routines for students
- Physical distancing protocols inside the school and playground

- Expectations for all students and staff to self-assess any symptoms each day
- Hand sanitizing stations at all entrances
- Limited exposure to student and staff outside the classroom
- Instructions on what to do if a child becomes ill
- Information on what will happen if another student or staff member becomes ill
- Enhanced cleaning and hygiene practices on school buses

The board will further flesh out their back to school plan on August 4 at a special meeting of the school board with the new director of education Wes Hahn.

Kawartha Lakes Bus Lines are withholding comment about bus protocols until the board plan is presented and they have a better handle on the number of students that their 130 buses will be transporting in September.

“All bets are off now as to whether we can

keep the schools clean enough with the staff we have,” says a veteran CUPE custodian contacted for background. The Advocate granted the contact anonymity.

“We did not expect all the kids to be back. The only thing that might save us is a significant number of students choosing to stay home semester one.”

“I think there will be a number of parents who will be cautious in the fall and see if there are school-based outbreaks in the late fall-early winter,” the custodian guessed.

Response from the three teacher’s federations representing over 140,000 educational workers has been swift and angry focusing particularly on the government choosing to ignore the recommendation by Sick Kids Hospital that students return at class sizes of no more than 15 to limit exposure and make tracing easier if there is an outbreak.

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