

THE LINDSAY ADVOCATE

KAWARTHA LAKES' FINEST MAGAZINE

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Kawartha Lakes students back to school Monday

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Many parents in Kawartha Lakes are overjoyed to hear that their school-aged children who were attending in-person learning before the Christmas holiday will be returning to school on Jan. 25.

The Ontario government, in consultation with the chief medical officer of health, announced that schools under jurisdiction of the Haliburton, Kawartha, Pine Ridge District Health Unit will be returning to in-person learning Jan. 25 while schools under

jurisdiction of the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit will continue remote learning until at least Feb. 10.

After an extended winter break featuring three weeks of virtual learning that began Jan. 4, many parents are frustrated with inadequate technology, intermittent internet, children who need more assistance than parents have the expertise

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or time for, and numerous poorly motivated students who in some cases have yet to log into a single virtual lesson.

TLDSB student trustees Kaylee Kelly and Ryder Lytle presented data to the last school board meeting provided by peers to indicate that for some students another three weeks of virtual learning has been extremely challenging.

Lytle told trustees and senior staff that board software packages are not capable of converting senior math and science annotations or technical terminology making it very challenging (if not impossible) to do some of the work on-line.

Kelly shared that students, particularly those responsible for the care of younger siblings while parents work, have found keeping up with their on-line work all but impossible.

Kelly continued saying, “Students are finding themselves unmotivated and overwhelmed. They are overstressed. There is too much material coming at them and too little time to do it. Many are facing five plus hours on-line with three full lessons and an evaluation every day. Three quarters of the people I speak with respond negatively (about their current educational

experiences).”

Six other health units will be returning to in-person learning next Monday. They are Grey Bruce; Hastings and Prince Edward Counties; Kingston, Frontenac and Lennox & Addington; Leeds, Grenville and Lanark; Peterborough; Renfrew County. These boards are largely rural and none are in hard hit regions where COVID numbers remain worrying.

TLDSB also announced bus transportation will resume for eligible students in Kawartha Lakes and Haliburton County starting Jan. 25.

Some within the education community were caught off guard by this announcement, pointing to Ontario reporting another 2,655 cases of COVID-19 and 89 more deaths on January 20.

Other educational workers took to social media wondering if this decision went contrary to statements made by Chief Medical Officer David Williams who told reporters earlier this week that until the new infections rate for COVID drop below a 1,000 new cases a day province wide, schools might be better shuttered.

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