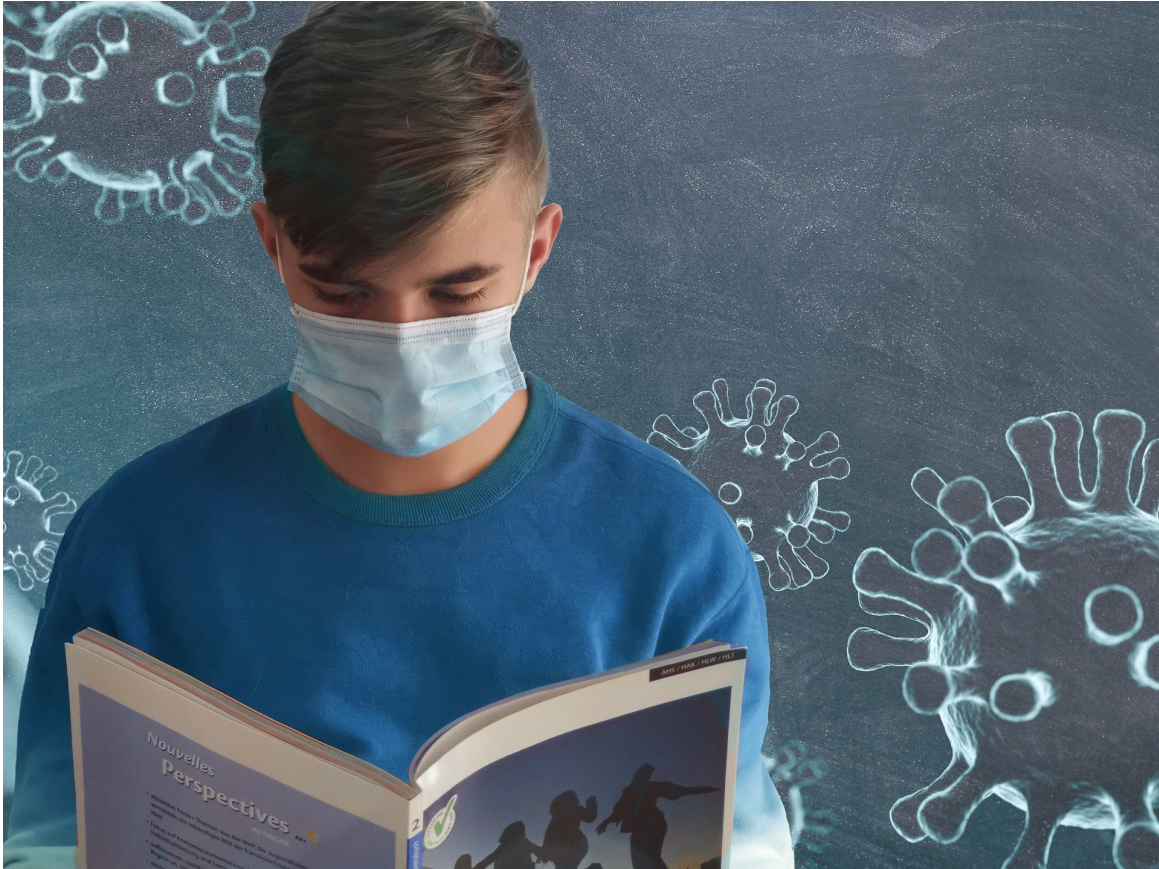


THE LINDSAY ADVOCATE

KAWARTHA LAKES' FINEST MAGAZINE

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TLDSB wants parent feedback on future planning, says octomesters working well

Published on January 28, 2021 — in Education — by Kirk Winter

At a recent Trillium Lakelands District School Board meeting, Director of Education Wes Hahn said the board will soon be looking for feedback to determine its next five-year plan.

This is the last year of their 2015-2020

strategic plan, which has focused on student success and achievement. The next five year plan is already being developed and the director wants as many different shareholder groups involved in its planning as possible.

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Hahn said the document will focus on student achievement, well-being, and the pending Equity Inclusion Plan that the board and trustees will soon be rolling out.

“We have had to use every skill at our disposal, worked hard and with passion to deal with the year that has been,” Hahn said, “We spent a lot of time on our back-to-school plan and while it wasn’t perfect and made some mistakes, those mistakes were made with good intentions to support staff, student and parents.”

“Learning at home was a monumental task,” Hahn stated, “and it continues to take a lot of time and a lot of effort. We are very pleased with the positive parental feedback we are getting about the virtual environment.”

The director said octomesters “have been a big success,” with solid credit accumulation counts to back that up.

“(Internet) connectivity is still a huge issue. There are families still caught without infrastructure available and we are doing everything to help those families. We want to remain positive and hopeful about what we are doing because it is too easy to focus on the negativity and spend time in dark places because of negativity.”

Update on enrollment numbers

In September, the board reported total elementary and secondary enrollment at 16,713 students. January’s enrollment has grown to 16,919 students.

From September to January in the elementary panel there was a significant shift from learn-at-home to bricks-and-mortar schooling. At secondary, the numbers indicated a slight shift to learning-at-home.

Homeschooling

The board reported a significant increase in the number of students who have de-registered and are homeschooling under parental supervision.

Hahn said, “The number has normally been around 250 students who for various reasons are not enrolled. This year that number has grown to over 400.”

Trustee John Byrne questioned Hahn on the increase in homeschooled students wondering why more parents are choosing to leave the board entirely.

“Is it poor work packages,” Byrne wondered, “or is it lousy internet? Have we asked these parents why they are making these choices?”

“We respect the parents decisions,” Hahn answered, “but we can certainly survey them again.”

Board chairperson congratulates staff

Bruce Reain, chair of the trustees told Hahn, “to congratulate all the staff on the year so far. All staff...teachers, educational assistants and cleaning staff. With over 16,000 students it is phenomenal that we have only had two or three cases of COVID reported in schools right across the board.”

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