

School board ready for virtual learning if needed - Lindsay Advocate

By Kirk Winter



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Trillium Lakelands District School Board's director of education, Wes Hahn, spent considerable time updating trustees on COVID in the community and schools and the potential impact that rising numbers of illness might have on the board's back to school plans in January.

"COVID is on everyone's mind right now," Hahn said. "There are lots of discussions going on locally and provincially between directors of education and the ministry."

Hahn said the most up-to-date statistics for COVID cases in the community with trustees pointing out that there were 45 cases in Muskoka, two cases in Haliburton and 33 in Kawartha Lakes. The Kawartha Lakes number was particularly worrying as two weeks ago there were only three cases in the city.

"We have no active cases in the secondary schools which have allowed us to support the movement back to semestering and the continuation of extra-curricular programming," Hahn said at the recent board meeting.

Unfortunately, the numbers in the elementary panel are not as rosy. Hahn said that public health is monitoring the number of community and school based cases carefully. Hahn told trustees that he hopes that vaccines for 5-11 year-olds will help

keep infection rates in the elementary panel low.

Hahn said that on Dec. 14 that kits would not be available for staff, but on Dec. 17 the board softened their original position and sent rapid testing kits home with all school staff.

“We want people to have a safe and enjoyable break,” Hahn added. “If there are going to be any changes for Jan. 3 they will be communicated to parents and students with lots of lead time. We want to take a measured approach. There will be no panic. We hope we will be back at school after the break, but if not we are ready to go (to virtual learning). We are ready to move if we need too.”