



## COVID-19 and School Reopening

Director of Education, John Cameron, welcomed Dr. Paul Roumeliotis, Medical Officer of Health with the Eastern Ontario Health Unit, and Dr. Paula Stewart, Medical Officer of Health with the Leeds, Grenville and Lanark District Health Unit, to present information to the Board regarding school reopening for the 2021-2022 school year. Both Medical Officers of Health have been instrumental in guiding the Board through the creation of the re-entry plan, as well as in providing regular consultation on the return to school.

Dr. Stewart and Dr. Roumeliotis provided an overview of the local COVID-19 case status for their respective areas.

"Looking at the data, Leeds, Grenville and Lanark currently has 23 active cases, and our case rate is currently settling down," noted Dr. Stewart. "After the long weekend, we had quite a significant surge in cases, significant for us in our region, with social gatherings where people were infected and spread to others. But that has now settled down."

"The first week of school we had four or five schools that had one case where a child or staff member who brought it in from the family and then came into school," she continued. "But there was only one school where we had a tiny bit of transmission, so we are really pleased that the precautions that are in place in the schools are making a difference."

Dr. Roumeliotis noted that within the EOHU region, the picture is not as good as Leeds, Grenville and Lanark.

"Currently, we have 170 active cases, and have had multiple cases within schools, the majority, however, were isolated cases, except for one unfortunate situation where there was spread in the school," explained Dr. Roumeliotis.

In August, 30 per cent of all EOHU cases were in children between four and 18 years of age, while in September, this number has jumped to 40 per cent. From these cases, most are close contact from home, and 92 per cent are in unvaccinated individuals, with six patients currently in hospital, all of whom are unvaccinated.

"Over the weekend we added 49 cases, 30 were in Cornwall alone, which has one of the highest rates in Ontario, driven mostly by unvaccinated individuals spreading it to the family."

Dr. Stewart discussed how the Delta variant has increased transmission rates but stressed that two-dose vaccination offers good coverage against symptomatic and severe disease.

"We are very pleased with our vaccination rates," added Dr. Stewart. "Currently we have 94.1 per cent of those age 12 and over have their first dose, and 88.5 per cent have second doses."

Dr. Roumeliotis noted that within the EOHU numbers were also positive with 86.8 per cent of those over 12 having received their first dose, and 81 per cent with two doses.



Both health units indicated a goal of attaining 90 per cent over age 12 with second doses in the coming weeks. COVID-19 response remains a high priority for public health this fall, and school board liaisons will continue to provide consultation and support to schools, in addition to the public health nurse assigned to each school, who will also provide support. COVID-19 vaccine clinics will continue based on need, and once approved, public health will begin to offer vaccines for the five- to eleven-year-old age group.

Dr. Roumeliotis and Dr. Stewart thanked the board for ongoing collaboration and support.

"We thank you both for joining us virtually this evening to present this very important information," concluded Chair Lalonde. "We also would like to thank you both for the support and knowledge you have provided to our leadership team, and the leadership you bring to our region. We can certainly appreciate how your expertise is recognized at the provincial level."

## Alternative & Continuing Education Summer Programs

The CDSBEO School of Alternative and Continuing Education has been offering summer eLearning programs for 11 years. Summer school courses are offered for secondary students and adults, which offer reach-ahead opportunities, mark upgrading and interest courses. This year, the board offered a new French course option, Personal Fitness, at the grade 11 level. In addition, an online summer learning program was offered to students in grades 7-8 through the literacy/numeracy school.

Jennifer Lentz, Principal of the CDSBEO School of Alternative and Continuing Education, and Samantha Vidoni, Vice-Principal, presented details to the board on the three programs offered, including the summer Connections program, summer online credit courses, as well as support to the grade 7/8 summer learning program.

"This year, we had 730 students registered in 55 courses, and we granted a total of 745 credits. Due to the hard work of our teachers and dedication of our students, we had a success rate of 97 per cent of students achieving a summer credit," began Principal Lentz.

Reach-ahead courses continue to be popular with students going into grade 9. This year, there were 79 students enrolled in reach-ahead opportunities to earn an extra credit. Reach ahead opportunities for incoming grade nine students were focused on courses that may not be available during the school term including, Information and Communication Technology in Business (Open), Leadership through Literacy (Open), Learning Strategies (Open), Learning Strategies (Open - French Immersion), Spanish (Academic) and Personal Fitness.

Experiential learning through co-operative education provides additional options for credit accumulation in the board's summer programming. As in the past, the Board has partnered with RNJ Youth Services, the Children's Aid Society, Brockville City Police, and Employment and



Education Counselling to offer a summer Connections program for at-risk students, who are low in credit accumulation. Through this innovative program, students were able to acquire up to two academic credits over the summer break.

French courses continue to be an area of interest for summer students and this year, the CDSBEO Summer School focused on providing additional courses in French to help support those who are looking at earning their French certificates.

"This year, we partnered with Unearth Education and our Mental Health department to offer our summer students the opportunity to take a three-hour course on Mastering Mental Health and Stress Management," noted Principal Lentz. "The Mental Health Certification is one of the approved certifications that was offered to our SHSM students as an online certification. The goal of this certificate is to increase students' knowledge on the topics of basic mental health and stress management strategies. This certification covers basic signs of poor or worsening mental health, active communication skills that can be used to open safe conversations and combat stigma, as well as intentional self-care strategies that can be used to maintain positive mental health and well-being in everyday life."

Students learned how to identify signs of stress within their own lives as well as recognize the signs in others and gained an understanding of the importance of stress management as well as a variety of techniques that can be used to deal with short-term and long-term stress.

"A total of 103 students in grades 7 through 9 participated in the summer learning program virtually," explained Vice-Principal Vidoni. "The program focused on gap closing in numeracy and literacy, with daily programming including physical activity, art programming, virtual field trips, Indigenous perspectives, and many other rich learning opportunities for students. The students participated in two hours of synchronous learning as well as asynchronous learning which could be a combination of whole group, small group instruction or one on one learning opportunities."

The CDSBEO Summer School continues to work with our schools and students to offer innovative, unique, and important programming to support students in reaching their learning goals.

"We look forward to seeing where our summer programming takes us next year and how we will support our students, either through mental health initiatives, credit programming or experiential learning," concluded Principal Lentz.

Chair Lalonde thanked Principal Lentz and Vice-Principal Vidoni for their presentation.

"It is always appreciated when we can receive such a detailed update with regards to the successful programs offered within the board. Thank you so much for your presentation this evening."