

HWDSB

May 19, 2020

Dear families,

Staff continue to support students in distance learning that is meaningful and engaging. This remains a difficult time for families who may be facing changes in their work or finances. We appreciate your support as your child learns at home.

Ministerial Extension

Today the Ontario government announced that it will keep schools closed for the rest of this school year, based on input from health experts. The government is planning for the reopening of schools for the 2020-21 school year. You can find the announcement [here](#).

Our Board continues to work through our contingency committee who have already directed a team to create a plan for the reopening of school as it awaits the Ministry plan. The health and safety of our students and staff, as well as providing continued supports for achievement and well-being, is our primary concern when we return.

New School Construction Projects

Staff continue to work with all our general contractors of school construction to determine what impacts, if any, the shutdown has caused to our construction timelines. We will communicate directly with the impacted school communities once we have more information.

The Nora Frances Henderson community was informed that their secondary school will have its September opening delayed due to the impact of COVID-19. Details can be found [here](#).

***Thoughtexchange* Preliminary Results**

Thank you to the parents/guardians who participated in the recent *Thoughtexchange* conversation. This “check in” will help us learn and respond to your views and experiences related to distance learning at HWDSB during COVID-19. The results will be shared with you on Friday, May 22, but you can find the preliminary results [here](#).

A *Thoughtexchange* experience for students is planned for this week. Parents/guardians will be asked to provide consent for their child to participate in this feedback. Stay tuned for more information.

Ontario Parent Survey

A research group at McMaster University and the Offord Centre for Child Studies invite parents and caregivers of children under age 17 years to complete an online survey about raising children during the COVID-19 pandemic. This will help the team understand how COVID-19 is affecting families and what

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resources may be needed to support families and children. You can find the survey at www.OntarioParentSurvey.ca.

Kindergarten Orientation Nights

We want all children to be comfortable and supported as they prepare to start school. Even without kindergarten orientation events, our new digital resources can help families prepare our youngest learners for kindergarten. On the [Kindergarten Orientation web page](#), you will find:

- A new [Kindergarten at HWDSB](#) video orienting families to our kindergarten program.
- A new [Welcome to Kindergarten Orientation](#) presentation similar to what our schools would show at an orientation event.
- A [Countdown to Kindergarten](#) social story to help families explore the school experience.
- A [first day of school sign](#), in case families want to print and use it for first-day photos.

This is a very exciting time for children and their families. Watch for communication from your school about your kindergarten student's start date. Staff will also work with families so that children requiring more support will have a plan for their successful start to school.

School Clinic Immunizations

The City of Hamilton Public Health Services provides several vaccine clinics in our schools. We have received some calls related to immunization for students for the remainder of the 2019-20 school year. Examples of school clinic immunization includes Hepatitis B school clinics for Grade 7 students, HPV for grades 7 and 8 classes and Meningococcal A, C, Y, W-135 vaccine for Grade 7 students. High school clinics are complete for the 2019-20 school year.

We have contacted Hamilton Public Health Services who have shared the importance of ensuring students receive their vaccines. They will share plans with us as soon as they are available. There is no action required by parents at this time.

Stay well and be safe,



Alex Johnstone
Chair of the Board



Manny Figueiredo
Director of Education