

HWDSB

April 2, 2020

Dear Families,

As part of our commitment to keeping you informed, we are writing today to share our plans for learning continuity, or in other words, how we will continue to deliver education to your children, our students.

This week, the Minister of Education extended the order to close schools until May 4, 2020, based on the best advice of Ontario's public health authorities. This means that we will implement plans for Virtual Delivery of Learning phase 2 detailed in the [March 26 letter to families](#). Like all COVID-19 resources from HWDSB, this information is on our [COVID-19 Updates web page](#).

Working and learning in a fully digital environment has presented opportunities for staff to work differently. Our educators are committed and are at varied levels of remote readiness. They have also been involved in remote training over the past weeks and will continue in the upcoming weeks. Staff have begun, or are in the process of, reaching out to families and students as we shift to the next phase of teacher-led learning.

Learning from home may look different for each class, in each school, as many of our educators will seek to build upon existing online learning platforms their students already use. Engagement in learning with your child may be through email, phone, or video. Some educators may be ready to host online video sessions using MS Teams or work through our student-learning platform, The Hub. These programs are on our [home page for students](#).

We also recognize that access to technology, devices and internet is a barrier for some students and families. Our educators are connecting with families to understand family circumstance and to resolve any challenges. A system committee is currently in place looking to support equity and access.

If you have yet to hear from your child's teacher and wish to communicate your family's needs related to access to technology, please reach out in one of the following ways:

- the contact form on your school website (see [elementary and secondary school listings](#))
- email HWDSB at info@hwdsb.on.ca
- call us at 905-527-5092 and leave your contact information on the voicemail

The Ministry and HWDSB have set expectations for the next phase of learning. We want to assure you that the school year is certainly not lost. Your child will advance to the next grade level.

For our senior students, our priority is to see them through to graduation. The Ministry of Education is working with the Ministry of Colleges and Universities to coordinate admissions for students entering

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post-secondary education. Community involvement hours and the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (OSSLT) requirement for the 2019-20 graduating class are waived.

Cooperative Education is a highly immersive form of experiential learning and plays a key role in programs such as Specialist High Skills Majors (SHSM) and the Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program (OYAP). Community placements are suspended. Co-op teachers will work with students to modify their co-op Learning Plans so that they may work through the curriculum expectations.

Parents can expect their child to do a certain number of hours of school work per week, as outlined by the Ministry of Education for learning from home. Hours refer to a minimum amount of time students would spend on the work assigned by teachers. Contact your child's educator if you have any questions or concerns.

Kindergarten-Grade 3	<i>5 hours of work per student per week with a focus on Literacy and math</i>
Grades 4-6	<i>5 hours of work per student per week with a focus on literacy, math, science and social studies</i>
Grades 7-8	<i>10 hours of work per student per week with a focus on core math, literacy, science and social studies (history and geography)</i>
Grades 9-12	<i>3 hours of work per course per week for semestered students; 1.5 hours of work per course per week for non-semestered students with a focus on achieving credits, completion and graduation</i>

Students with special education needs should receive appropriate accommodations where necessary and be provided with assigned work by teachers, as well as feedback or assessment. Modifications to reflect a student's Individualized Education Plan are encouraged and expected. HWDSB's Specialized Services team is preparing to launch additional learning supports, named Learning4Success, which are tailored for students with Autism or a Developmental Delay on a modified or alternative program. These materials are supplemental, with the understanding that they may not be a perfect fit for each learner.

The Ministry of Education has provided direction on assessment and evaluation that includes:

- Elementary teachers will assess students by gathering evidence of how they are progressing in their learning. Teachers will also provide feedback to their students on their progress.
- Secondary students will be assigned learning tasks, projects and culminating activities that will be marked by their teachers. Teachers will communicate results of these marked assignments to students. Results will be used by teachers to inform students' final course marks.

HWDSB will issue final report cards, including the Kindergarten Communication of Learning, for all students. The requirement to issue mid-year report cards for non-graduating secondary students is suspended for this school year.

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Many of our students and families will have questions and we ask for your patience as we work to provide you with information. Families can also access our [Frequently Asked Questions](#) from our website. In addition, stay connected with HWDSB on social media.

Our COVID-19 response is in a crucial period. It is vital that we respect the direction of municipal, provincial and federal public health agencies: stay home as much as possible, remain at least two metres away from others, do not attend gatherings of five or more people, and wash your hands often. Please continue to seek reliable information from the public health agencies below:

- [City of Hamilton](#)
- [Province of Ontario](#)
- [Government of Canada](#)

This is an extremely challenging time for families. As an HWDSB community, we will be with you every step of the way. Our caring adults are here to support you.

We are navigating a new standard of service for our students and families. Our commitment is to continue to check in with you, respond to your feedback, and address the broader themes we learn.

We are going to work through this together.

Be safe and stay well,



Alex Johnstone
Chair of the Board



Manny Figueiredo
Director of Education