

HWDSB

April 24, 2020

Dear Families,

It has been six weeks since the Ministerial Order closed schools across Ontario. Distance Learning (Phase 2) has just finished its third week. This period remains a challenge for students, staff and families, but we are also hearing stories of connection, collaboration and success.

We are still awaiting a date for the reopening of Ontario schools, but we do know that we will not return on May 4, based on comments from the Premier of Ontario.

Partnership with Public Health

Our community continues to do its part to combat COVID-19, whether by staying at home, donating funds or providing supplies. After Hamilton Public Health Services asked local institutions to contribute medical supplies, HWDSB has, to date, provided more than 85,000 gloves, 1,300 face masks, 40 face shields and 20 3D printers.

Graduations and Celebrations

Secondary: This week, we shared a letter with Grade 12 graduating students informing them that we had to cancel athletics, proms, banquets and similar events for the remainder of this school year. We have also had to cancel secondary school graduations in June, as we consider future dates after public health permits large gatherings. We apologize and share the disappointment felt by our impacted students and families, but this difficult and necessary decision was guided by public health recommendations.

Elementary: Unfortunately, we must also cancel year-end elementary school gatherings, including Grade 8 graduations. We are exploring alternative options to honour these important milestones and will share more information in the weeks ahead.

NEW Ministry of Education Updates

- **Assessment, Evaluation and Reporting:** On April 7, we communicated direction about secondary grades based on a Ministry of Education memo dated March 31, 2020. We apologize for any confusion or anxiety this may have caused our students, families and staff. The Ministry has since provided clarity to school boards. Grades and marks will not go down from what they were on March 13, 2020. This applies to elementary and secondary school students.

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- **Dropping Secondary Courses (Grades 11 and 12):** Students can withdraw from a course by **May 6, 2020** with the course not being shown on their transcript. School staff will make every effort to reach students to communicate this timeline.

School Councils

The voice of school councils is an important one for the life of a school. Although school council meetings are paused due to the closure, principals will connect with school council chairs monthly and will email any important school updates. The school council co-chairs can share with council members.

Ramadan Observations

Many families across our community are observing Ramadan. We know how difficult it is to be unable to gather with loved ones. We offer you peace, blessings and prayers in this holy month.

We thank everyone for doing their part by staying at home.

As always, please reach out to your child's school if you have questions. You can also contact HWDSB by phone at 905-527-5092, by email at info@hwdsb.on.ca or @HWDSB on Twitter, Facebook or Instagram.

Stay well and be safe,



Alex Johnstone
Chair of the Board



Manny Figueiredo
Director of Education