

HWDSB

July 14, 2020

Dear families,

We hope that you are enjoying summer, even within these extraordinary times. We recognize that many of you are feeling a sense of unease without a confirmed plan to guide us back to school. Below you will find our preliminary return to school plans as we demonstrate our readiness for any situation.

Information continues to move quickly. As of yesterday, July 13, we learned that the Ontario government is moving into Stage 3 and during a press conference, the Premier of Ontario signaled interest in having all students return to the regular school day: full day, every-day learning. This is also our preferred option with the proper public health and safety precautions in place.

Trustees received an update about [School Re-opening during the COVID-19 Pandemic](#) at a recent Board meeting, summarized below.

Public Health Measures

Safety of students and staff is our top priority. Staff continue to consult regularly with Hamilton Public Health to establish protocols for enhanced safety measures.

Cohorting (remaining with the same students), physical distancing, student and staff screening, hand hygiene and protective personal equipment (PPE) requirements in public education are being prioritized in these plans to mitigate risk through added health measures.

Return to school

School boards are to create three re-opening plans for September. The Ministry will inform boards in the coming weeks which scenario is used. HWDSB is planning for three scenarios:

1. **Scenario A – Full Return:** Students are in school full day, every day. This is the Ministry's current preference; however, it is subject to change as circumstances change.
2. **Scenario B – Adaptive Return:** Students return with a blended approach to learning with both in-person learning and remote/distance learning. Each cohort will have up to 15 students per class or course, per day. Students who do not attend school in-person while public health measures remain in effect, will be offered remote/distance learning. **Students with high levels of special education needs may attend daily in the adaptive return scenario.**
3. **Scenario C – Full Remote:** Schools are closed, and students are in remote/distance learning.

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Scenario B – Elementary Examples (To be confirmed)

- **Model 1:** Cohort A attends Mondays, Wednesdays and every other Friday. Cohort B attends Tuesdays, Thursdays and every other Friday.
- **Model 2:** Cohort A attends Mondays, Tuesdays, and every other Wednesday. Cohort B attends Thursdays, Friday and every other Wednesday.

For full details, please visit Appendix D in the Board report, [Elementary Models for Scenario B](#).

Scenario B – Secondary Examples (To be confirmed)

- **The Rotation Model:** Students would attend a half day in school on alternate days for one course and then have a half day of remote learning for their other courses. For example:
 - Cohort A attends on Mondays, Wednesdays, and every other Friday
 - Cohort B attends on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and every other Friday
- **The Quadmester Model:** This model would be set at the start of the school and would remain the model for the entire school year even if we move to a full return. The semester is divided in half and students attend school for two courses at a time. Students are cohorted into Course 1 (Cohorts A and B) and then again for Course 2 (Cohorts C and D). At the halfway mark, they are granted those two credits and then start the next quadmester of two courses. For example,
 - Cohorts A and C attends on Mondays, Wednesdays, and every other Friday
 - Cohort B and D attends on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and every other Friday

For full details, please visit Appendix E in the Board report, [Secondary Models for Scenario B](#).

Child care update

Currently, HWDSB is supporting 24 child care programs operating in our schools. Public health continues to inspect sites and work closely with us and our child care partners. Learn more about the child care in HWDSB, [here](#). Further child care updates will be provided as information becomes available.

Revised school-year calendar 2020-21

Trustees approved the [2020-21 School Year-Calendars](#) with further direction from the Ministry of Education. HWDSB will now have three Professional Activity Days, instead of two, prior to the Labour Day weekend to focus on enhanced public health protocols as we prepare for the return to school. As planned, elementary and secondary students will start school on Tuesday, September 8.

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Standardized Digital Learning Platforms

Starting in September, HWDSB will standardize its online learning space to include The Hub with MS TEAMS. Professional learning and digital resources are being offered to staff to support this direction. This is based on your input from the Thoughtexchange when we asked you about the implementation of Distance Learning during the COVID-19 crisis. The need to bring consistency in how we deliver educational programming to students was rated with high importance.

School registration

We want to ensure a smooth transition for families hoping to register their children for September even as we enter continued uncertainty with the COVID-19 situation. If you have any questions, need help registering your child for school, or need assistance, please call the HWDSB Education Centre at 905-527-5092 or email info@hwdsb.on.ca.

Next Steps

Ongoing discussions will continue throughout July ahead of a review by the Ministry of Education and final scenario plans will be provided in a future report to the Board of Trustees. We look forward to communicating with you in the coming weeks for our next update.

Stay well and be safe,



Alex Johnstone
Chair of the Board



Manny Figueiredo
Director of Education