

# HWDSB

---

## Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board

**RETURN TO SCHOOL**  
September 2020

---

Resource Document for Our HWDSB Community

curiosity

creativity

possibility



## Table of Contents

---

Background ..... 3

**Adjusted Plans for HWDSB Re-Opening of Schools for the 2020-21 School Year**

1. Enhanced Public Health Measures ..... 4

2. Support for Students ..... 7

3. Support for Staff ..... 8

4. Engagement and Communications..... 9

5. Elementary Schools ..... 9

6. Secondary Schools ..... 10

7. Students Requiring Special Education Supports and Services..... 11

8. Transportation ..... 12

9. Technology ..... 13

10. Financial Implications ..... 13

11. Other ..... 14

## Background

The first update (July 13) provided an outline of the Ministry of Education's initial guidelines on school re-opening (June 19) as well as various models and supports being planned by HWDSB in response. The second update (July 27) built on the previous plans providing an overview of the enhanced public health measures being undertaken; supports for student mental health and wellness along with support for staff; engagement and communications with employee groups, parents, guardians and caregivers; plans for service delivery scenarios (Conventional-A, Adaptive-B and Remote-C) for elementary and secondary schools as well as for students requiring special education supports and services; transportation and technology updates and financial implications.

On July 30 the Minister of Education announced the direction that boards would take for re-opening and a revised [Guide for Re-Opening Ontario Schools](#) was issued. Staff have adjusted the plans put forth in the July 27, 2020 report to the board based on the Guide for Re-Opening Schools (July 30, 2020) and a follow-up meeting with Ministry of Education representatives on August 4, 2020.

The adjusted plans for HWDSB have been reviewed by the Ministry of Education and include the ongoing advice from Hamilton Public Health. The HWDSB Plan for Re-Opening Schools for the 2020-21 school year have been guided by the principles of: safety for all, minimizing the disruption to regular school day routines as much as possible, ease of transition between the three potential scenarios, honouring collective agreements and employee terms and conditions and fiscal responsibility.

### **Revised Guide for Re-Opening Ontario Schools (Ministry of Education, July 30, 2020)**

Elementary Schools (Kindergarten to Grade 8) across Ontario will open in conventional mode (Scenario A). Secondary Schools in designated boards (including HWDSB and twenty-three other district school boards) will open in adaptive mode (Scenario B). In addition to the enhanced public health measures outlined in previous reports, the Ministry of Education has indicated that face coverings (non-medical masks) will be mandatory (with some reasonable exceptions) while indoors at school for students in Grades 4 to 12 (optional for students in Kindergarten to Grade 3). All staff will be required to wear medical grade masks (with some reasonable exceptions) and face shields and certain designated staff will be required to wear additional personal protective equipment (PPE) when working in close proximity with students.

## Adjusted Plans for HWDSB Re-Opening of Schools for the 2020-21 School Year



### 1. Enhanced Public Health Measures

The following provides a summary of the additional measures being added or adjusted to the overall strategy outlined in the previous report (July 27, see Appendix-A) in order to reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19. It is worth noting again that in an effort to maximize safety, HWDSB is using a “layered” approach with multiple measures to reduce the risk of COVID-19 spread.

#### A. Cleaning

The draft enhanced cleaning procedure is attached as Appendix-B. Enhanced cleaning will require additional caretakers to be present during the day. The Board will do this by using a combination of shifting the hours of existing caretaking staff and by hiring additional caretakers using the funding provided by the Ministry.

#### B. Physical Adaptations

Elementary schools will commence in a conventional mode (Scenario A). Available physical space within classrooms has been increased this spring and summer through the removal of staff personal belongings and overall decluttering. Should the need arise due to space constraints, other areas of the school, such as the learning commons and gymnasium(s) may be re-purposed as classroom space.

As secondary schools will commence in an adaptive mode (Scenario B) classrooms and common areas such as gymnasiums, cafeterias and learning commons will be set in a manner that will accommodate cohorts of approximately 15 students spaced about 2 metres apart. Sample layouts were previously provided in the first update report (July 13, see Appendix-C). Should the public health circumstance change and the board is directed to transition to a conventional mode (Scenario A), classrooms and other areas will be adjusted to accommodate the additional students while still being mindful of maximizing physical space.

#### C. Masks

As per the revised Ministry of Education guidelines, students in Grades 4 to 12 will be required to wear masks indoors and on the school bus. Students may wear their own non-medical masks, and non-medical masks will also be made available for students. Reasonable exceptions on the requirement to wear masks will apply. These requests will follow the existing accommodation process and requests should be made to the principal. Staff are currently developing the exception criteria. Students in Kindergarten to Grade 3 will be encouraged but not required to wear masks in indoor spaces and on the school bus where physical distancing is not possible. Families are encouraged to work with their child(ren) before the beginning of school to help them become comfortable with masks. Information on wearing masks can be found on the [City of Hamilton website](#), [Sick Kids website](#) and the [Caring During COVID Video](#) from McMaster Children’s Hospital on masks. Medical masks and eye protection (i.e. face shield) will be provided for all staff. All school-based staff will be required to wear masks and eye protection throughout the day, with reasonable exceptions for medical conditions.

Masks and other PPE have been sourced by the Ontario government. The ministry will work closely with school boards to confirm demand and facilitate timely delivery and supply.

While access to schools by non-students/staff will be extremely limited (e.g. itinerant staff and service providers, board staff) will also be required to wear a medical mask. In the event that a visitor (e.g. parent) must access the school, a disposable mask will be provided (upon successful completion of the screening process – see Section I).

## **D. Hand Hygiene**

Effective hand hygiene continues to be an important factor in minimizing the spread of COVID-19. Everyone is expected to wash or sanitize their hands upon entry to the school. Students and staff will also sanitize or wash their hands before lunch and/or nutrition breaks. In addition, there will be scheduled hand hygiene breaks throughout the day.

Staff are working with the Hamilton Fire Services to have hand sanitizer available at entry doors to the school and to ensure that this approach is consistent with the Fire Code. In addition, while students and staff are adjusting to hand washing/sanitizing throughout the day, hand sanitizer will be available in all classrooms (including those with sinks). Staff will monitor whether sinks in classrooms will be sufficient to meet the classroom needs. Students are welcome to bring personal hand sanitizer however the bottle must be 60 ml or less (in keeping with the Fire Code regulation to restrict the amount of flammable substances in a confined space such as a classroom).

## **E. Cohorting**

As noted in previous reports, cohorting is the process of grouping students to minimize the number of students and staff any individual comes in contact with and to maintain consistency in those contacts as much as possible. Based on the advice of Hamilton Public Health, students should be grouped (cohorting) and should remain with that cohort as much as possible. Reducing the number of individuals one interacts with over a prolonged period of time is another key approach to reducing the risk of COVID-19 transmission as well as facilitating contact tracing and cleaning should a confirmed infection occur.

For elementary schools, a conventional delivery approach (Scenario A) will be applied and students will be grouped within their assigned classes based on the grade-level/course class size ratios (e.g. 20-23 students in regular grades 1 to 3 classes).

Secondary schools will be using an adaptive delivery (Scenario B) and as such students will be further subdivided into smaller cohorts so as to achieve the recommended physical distancing within the classroom (e.g. 15 students spaced approximately 2 metres apart) and reduce the overall number of students in the school on any given day. Each student will be assigned to either Cohort A or Cohort B and will only attend in-person on alternate days (with the exception of some students requiring significant special education supports and services). Where possible students from the same household will be assigned to the same cohort (i.e. cohort A or B) regardless of grade or school so as to facilitate family planning and transportation.

## **F. Ventilation (HVAC)**

The Board is using third party consultants to perform reviews of the Board's HVAC systems. These reviews are currently taking place and the Ministry guidelines will be used to determine any issues that need to be addressed by the Board so that staff can follow up.

## **G. Signage**

Signage is an important part of reinforcing the enhanced health measures that will minimize the spread of COVID-19. The following signage has been developed with age appropriate language. Examples are included in Appendix-D. The graphics include students with and without masks. The signs have been developed with attention to destigmatizing COVID-19 (or feeling unwell) as well as demonstrating that some students will be wearing masks while others are not.

- External door signage – expectations on screening and masking
- Don't touch your eyes, nose or mouth
- Cough and sneeze into your elbow
- Feeling sick, tell someone
- Hand washing and hand sanitizing
- Keep to Right When Walking Through the School
- Please wear a face covering if you are able
- Physical distancing
- Copy Room spacing
- Elevator spacing
- Washroom maximum occupancy
- Mental Health and Well-Being – WeHelp poster series

## **H. Access to School Sites**

As per the revised Ministry of Education guidelines, for 2020-21 school year, schools are asked to significantly limit or even prohibit visitors, including parents. Visits to ensure school safety, such as inspections by the Fire Marshal's office or by Hamilton Public Health, should continue to take place. Any visitor to a school will be required to self-screen and to wear a medical-grade mask while on school premises.

Staff are working with community partners to develop local protocols for school access by regulated health professionals, regulated social service professionals and paraprofessionals for the purpose of delivering school-based supports and services.

## **I. Screening**

The procedure outlining student and staff COVID-19 screening expectations has been developed in consultation with Hamilton Public Health (see Appendix-E). Screening for students and staff will have two components: (a) an HWDSB document outlining the screening criteria and symptoms that would require a student or staff member to remain at home and/or be required to leave the school along with the necessary steps needed prior to return and (b) an individual responsibility to perform the screening on a daily basis and to take the appropriate actions including a notification process.

Parents/guardian/caregivers will be provided with the documentation (with translation available) prior to the start of the school year starting August 17, for their attestation that they have read, understood and will abide by the expectations until such time as the requirement is revoked by the board. The attestation will be collected and stored in the HWDSB student information system for each student in accordance with legislative regulations. Students will not be permitted to attend school until the attestation is completed. A comprehensive communication campaign will be launched starting the week of August 10 to ensure that this information is received by all families and opportunities for questions and follow-up are provided.

All staff will be expected to complete a COVID-19 screening attestation process facilitated through Human Resource Services. Screening for visitors to schools will be conducted in accordance with Hamilton Public Health guidance and will require individuals to wear a medical-grade mask and answer screening questions prior to entry for each visit.

## **J. Outbreak Protocol**

Hamilton Public Health Services coordinated a meeting with the four local school boards to discuss a common approach to responding to a potential outbreak of COVID-19. The Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Education are currently drafting a document that boards and Public Health Units are expected to implement.

With that in mind, there was agreement to collaborate on an approach to communications if there is an individual who tests positive for COVID-19.

Elements of the Outbreak Protocol will include:

- Case Management including Contact Tracing
- Exclusion Criteria
- Declaring an Outbreak and Implementing Control Measures
- Communication between the school/board and Public Health

A Communications Strategy related to the Outbreak Protocol will also be developed to ensure families and staff are aware of the process.

## **K. Supplies**

There are a number of additional supplies needed as a result of the enhanced safety measures required. They include hand soap and sanitizer, additional disinfectants and cloths, medical grade masks and shields for school based staff and face coverings for students in Grades 4 to 12.

All supplies needed for the first month of operation have been ordered. The Board continues to accept delivery of these supplies and is working on a process to allocate the supplies to all schools. Supplies are now required to be purchased through the Ministry of Government and Community Services (MGCS). The MGCS has the quantity necessary to service all school boards and the pricing is still being determined but the costs will be lower than originally projected.

## **L. Public Health/CJHSC engagement**

Staff continue to work with Hamilton Public Health Services around the development of procedures which support enhanced public health measures. In addition, a meeting was held with McMaster Children's Hospital to explore ways in which the two organizations can work more closely in support of children and families.



## **2. Support for Students**

---

### **A. Public Health Nurses**

The Ministry of Education has committed funds to phase in the hiring of Public Health Nurses to support schools and boards with local health protocols. Additional information regarding this additional resource is expected soon.

### **B. Student Mental Health and Well-Being**

The Ministry of Education has committed to additional funding to support student mental health and well-being. Staff are currently exploring various options for the use of these funds (see Section 10 - Financial Implications for additional information).

### **C. Summer Learning and Supports**

HWDSB has provided a wide-range of summer learning programs and supports for students and families to: bridge potential gaps in learning since the closure; readiness and reach-ahead prior to re-opening; programming for racialized and Indigenous children and youth; specific supports for students requiring special education services and mental health and well-being supports for students and their families. Appendix-F provides a summary of the various programs and supports reaching over 6,000 HWDSB students in July and August, 2020.



## 3. Support for Staff

In addition to the support noted in previous reports work has continued throughout the summer to prepare a variety of resources and professional learning for staff. These include:

### A. HWDSB Summer Institute

The institute provides opportunities for staff to participate in one day or multi-day sessions on topics of their choosing. The focus this year included:

- Equity with sessions on Equity in Blended Learning, Human Rights 101, and Addressing Racism in Our Schools-The Role of School Leadership
- Mental Health and Well-being with sessions on Emotion Coaching, Mental Health Literacy by School Mental Health Ontario Learning Group, The Importance of Co-Regulation and Self-Regulation in Kindergarten, Tier One Environmental Strategies to Support Kindergarten Classrooms, and Building Community in a Blended Environment
- Blended Learning with sessions on Microsoft Teams & Synchronous Learning in a Language Classroom Part 1 & Part 2, Transitioning to an Online Learning Environment, Building Engaging Content in an Online Learning Environment, Differentiation and Providing Feedback in an Online Learning Environment, Introduction to eBooks and Research Tools in the Virtual Library, and Knowing our Learners in a Blended Learning Model
- Specialized Services with sessions on Combatting the Effects of Stress on Neurodiverse brains. (2-part series), ExSL Make and Take- (Classroom Visual Schedule; Incentive/Point System; Go-Bag for Alternative Learning Space), and Creating a Rich Culture of Literacy: Strategies to build engagement in grade 4-8 classrooms through the lens of inclusion and accessibility.

As a result of high demand for many of these topics, additional sessions will be offered, where possible, before the start of the school year.

### B. Self-directed Modules

For educators interested in self-directed learning, the Program Division has developed a number of self-registering, self-directed courses within The HUB (the HWDSB Learning Management System). These courses allow educators to learn at their own pace and access additional resources. Topics include: Blended Learning, Using The HUB as a virtual classroom, ESL/ELD Programming, Assessment, Evaluation and Reporting, and Subject specific topics (e.g. Math, Health and Physical Education).

### C. Teaching and Learning within the context of COVID-19

A Program Guide that outlines key strategies and resources in adapting to teaching and learning within the context of COVID-19 is being finalized. The guide will include:

- Recommendations on the first weeks of school and how to build routines, support well-being, support learning, and build culture;
- Recommendations on how to focus curriculum delivery through Overall Expectations and “big ideas” in the curriculum;
- Protocols for subject area learning (e.g. The Arts, Health and Physical Education, Science, Technological Studies, etc.);
- Direction on topics such as privacy, on-line safety, and how to safely assign practical learning at home.

A significant focus will be placed on supporting educators during the first weeks of school as they transition to varied learning environments (i.e. conventional with enhanced public health measures; adaptive with alternate day cohorts or fully remote learning).



## D. System Leaders

It is important that leaders across the organization, including principals/vice-principals, managers and supervisors receive ongoing support and resources with the re-opening. Starting the week of August 10, regular information sessions will be provided by various members of the re-opening planning teams that will include training on the enhanced public health measures.



## 4. Engagement and Communications

---

HWDSB employee groups continue to be involved in the return-to-school planning process. This has ranged from providing feedback to participation on committees. Engagement with all employee groups remains a commitment as plans are further developed and implementation begins.

The HWDSB Parent Portal will be launched in the coming weeks and will provide parents, guardians and caregivers a single point of access for applications such as Safe Arrival, attendance, student forms, School Cash Online, and report cards. This portal will be used to capture the screening attestation described in section-I under Enhanced Public Health Measures, any ongoing notifications about illness or other aspects of the screening process, and whether an elementary school student will be choosing not to attend school in-person (see Elementary Schools). The Parent Portal is linked to the board's student information system allowing authorized users access to this important, up-to-date, information.

Regular, transparent and detailed communication is vital to ensuring that all members of the HWDSB community are aware of the steps being taken for a safe and supported return-to-school. Weekly updates will be provided to leaders, staff and families starting this week.



## 5. Elementary Schools

---

All HWDSB elementary schools will start the school year in conventional model (Scenario A). This will include the enhanced public health measures described in the previous report (July 27) as well as any enhancements/adjusted noted in this report (including masks). Regular hand-hygiene breaks will be implemented throughout the day and all students will receive age-appropriate instruction and reminders about proper hand-hygiene, respiratory etiquette, mental health and wellness checks, telling an adult if they are not feeling well, physical distancing including staying to the right when travelling inside the school and masking.

In an effort to achieve minimal disruptions to regular school routines, school start and end times will remain the same. However, there may be a need to adjust student and teacher timetables/assignments early in the school year. The Ministry of Education has clarified the expectation that students whose parents, guardians and caregivers have chosen remote learning will receive a full instructional day of learning from a dedicated teacher(s) other than the assigned, in-person classroom teacher. This adjustment in the HWDSB plan will require a re-organization of classes prior to the start of the school year and again in late September. These will be undertaken within the funding and space allocation parameters set at the time. In addition, school-based adjustments will be required for transitions throughout the day, such as entry and exit doors, nutrition and recess breaks as well as the use of specialized spaces such as the gymnasium and outdoor areas so as to minimize the gathering of large groups. Students will remain in their assigned classrooms for the entire school day, including nutrition breaks unless they are utilizing a specialized space. Teachers will meet with students in the student assigned classroom whenever possible to reduce the need for student movement throughout the school. Students will attend school every day.

Students whose parents/guardians/caregivers choose remote attendance will be registered in the HWDSB remote learning elementary school. Many features of the remote learning school will mirror those of a regular day school, including:

- A full day of instructional time with frequent student-educator interaction;
- Grade based or combined grade homerooms with a homeroom teacher;
- Collective agreement class size caps and averages;
- Instruction and learning in all subject areas;
- French Immersion programming (pending staffing).

Primarily, staff and students will use the HWDSB standard blended learning platforms (The HUB and MS Teams) as their learning and communication environments. However, guidance will also be provided for the delivery of some aspects of remote learning using non-digital tools (e.g. kindergarten). Educators will be present and available to their classes throughout the school day.

In order to facilitate planning, parents will be directed to use the Parent Portal between August 17 to 21, 2020 to indicate if they want their child to attend school in-person or if they prefer to choose remote learning. If a parent/guardian/caregiver elects to have their child learn remotely they will no longer be assigned to a teacher from their designated school, rather they will be assigned to an HWDSB remote learning class. If a parent chooses to transition from remote to in-person, students will be welcomed back to their designated school for in-person classes, provided that adequate space is available, only on specific dates throughout the school year (October 13, January 4 and March 22). Should extraordinary circumstances arise in-between these transition point dates parents may contact the Superintendent of Student Achievement to explore alternatives. Students seeking to register with a different school or from another board will be registered with remote learning until the transition date and/or in-person class space becomes available.

Supporting our youngest learners in first year kindergarten to have the best possible initial experience with school is important. Given the nature of the start of this school year entry for first year kindergarten students will be staggered over the week of September 8-11, 2020. Families will receive additional information about the kindergarten process from their school in the coming weeks.



## 6. Secondary Schools

---

Secondary schools will begin the year in an adaptive delivery mode (Scenario B). HWDSB secondary schools will implement an alternate day rotational model that will include a combination of in-person at school instruction and remote learning. Students will attend in-person, based on their cohort designation (A or B) on either Monday/Wednesday and alternate Fridays or Tuesday/Thursday and alternate Fridays for 145 minutes and then be dismissed (those not attending in-person would continue with remote learning). Following a minimum 80-minute transitional time they will then engage in 3 x 40 minute periods of remote learning (adjusted accordingly for schools that operate on a 5 period day). The remote learning periods will be teacher directed. A rotation would be applied so that students have the opportunity to engage with each of their courses in-person throughout the semester. As noted in the previous report, students requiring high levels of special education supports and services will be provided an opportunity to attend daily (see Section 7 – Students Requiring Special Education Supports and Services).

Students that would prefer to attend remote only will have two options: (1) they may choose to enrol in available eLearning courses (note – this may require changes to the student timetable and/or course selection) or (2) students may choose to remain in their designated courses, participating with classmates during the

scheduled remote learning segments of the rotation and undertake independent remote study during the in-person portion of the rotation for their assigned cohort. Students wanting to pursue full eLearning courses should contact their school during the week of August 31 to September 4.

The rotational model has several benefits as well as some challenges. As described in previous updates, other models for the adaptive delivery mode (Scenario B) were explored by the secondary school ad hoc committee led by members of Executive Council together with representative principals/vice-principals and members of the secondary teachers' employee bargaining unit executive. In comparison to other models reviewed, the rotational model best achieves the elements of the guiding principles. The model restricts the direct and indirect contacts students have to one cohort of approximately 15 students. This is well below the limits set by the provincial guidelines and follows the advice provided by Hamilton Public Health. Should delivery shift to a conventional mode (Scenario A), the rotational model would continue to limit the direct and indirect contacts students have to a single cohort, expanded to approximately 30 students. A key difference between the rotational model and other models explored is the strict adherence to the public health advice of limiting student exposure to one cohort. In addition to the enhanced health and safety benefits, the rotational model allows students to experience in-person teaching and learning as well as direct remote instruction across all four courses within the same time frame of a regular school year semester routine. Undertaking up to 4 courses over an entire semester also mitigates against potential disruptions such as illness or school closures. The model upholds the terms of the collective agreement for teachers and maintains students' course selections and timetables.

The rotational model does however come with some potential challenges including a period of time for each course where in-person instruction is not provided and a stronger reliance on scheduled remote learning. The HWDSB 21st Century Learning Strategy, including the provisioning of 1:1 devices for all secondary students and ongoing professional learning to support teachers with the use of the standardized digital learning environment, The Hub and MS Teams and remote learning approaches will assist with these challenges.

Appendix-G provides a more detailed outline of the rotational model for both a 4-period and a 5-period school schedule.



## **7. Students Requiring Special Education Supports and Services**

---

In order to mitigate the effects of school closure, the Ministry of Education has provided funding to expand summer learning program offerings for students who access Special Education programs and services. To bridge the transition back into school, programs have been developed to support a variety of learner profiles. Some of the summer learning opportunities are being provided in a virtual manner by teachers, psycho-educational consultants and principals/vice-principals.

Other learning opportunities will be offered in person for students requiring more intensive supports. These summer learning programs will provide students with a re-introduction to structures and routines associated with the classroom and physical school setting. In-person camps will be supported by an interdisciplinary team consisting of Principals or Vice-Principals, Classroom Teachers, Educational Assistants, Child and Youth Care Practitioners, Speech and Language Pathologists and Board Certified Behaviour Analysts. In addition, HWDSB received funding from the Ministry of Education to provide summer employment opportunities for students of the board. These student employees will act as role models for their younger peers as well as creating materials and resources for the learning camps.

As described in the previous report (July 27) a key component of the plan to support students requiring special education supports and services will be a focus on transitions. Transition Planning will include:

- Scheduling in-person school visits for students requiring moderate to significant levels of special education support will be scheduled prior to the first day of classes where possible.
- Adapting signage and process charts to ensure accessibility for learners who do not yet access print while remaining age appropriate.
- Creating social stories that can be rehearsed with the student prior to school entry.
- Developing protocols with service providers (e.g. LHIN) that will be required access to schools to support students.

In keeping with the practice of minimizing student movement and maintaining student cohorts, there will be a shift in some program delivery. Off-site programs such as the Innovation Centre, Centre for Success, EXSL Centres and the Elementary Social Communications Program, will be delivered through an itinerant approach where Specialized Services staff will meet students in their assigned schools/classrooms. There will also be a shift towards curriculum-based programming for students in self-contained special education classes as educational excursions outside of the school grounds will be restricted until further notice. Supports to assist staff with these shifts will be provided and will include, as required, system-based staff deployed to specific schools/classrooms. In general, every effort will be made to support students in their assigned classrooms. Staff working with students requiring hand-over-hand support will also be provided with the appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE).

High-intensity support programs such as Empower Reading at the elementary and secondary school levels and AIM at the elementary school level will continue. Delivery of services by itinerant staff will also continue to be provided in school settings.

Secondary school students placed in self-contained special education classes will attend school for full days. Students that have regular class placements would attend school daily as outlined in Section 6- Secondary School. Students in regular class placements that require school bus transportation to travel to and from school or have a diagnosis or disability that requires direct support to access the Remote Learning portion of the school day, will be provided with the option to remain at school for the full day. Learning Resource and other staff would provide needed supports to students for the balance of the school day. For elementary and secondary school students that have chosen voluntary remote learning, daily instruction will occur however it will be with an educator other than the in-person assigned teacher. As outlined in the previous report (July 27) the Specialized Services Division has prepared a series of resources to support staff, students and families with remote learning (see Appendix - A).



## 8. Transportation

---

Through the guiding principles of safety, minimizing disruption, ease of transition between delivery scenarios, and fiscal/human resource responsibility, routes are being planned based on existing school start/end times for all eligible riders based on HWDSB policy. At this time, courtesy transportation has been suspended until further notice.

Parents/guardians/caregivers of students eligible for transportation will be contacted by Hamilton-Wentworth Student Transportation Services (HWSTS) to indicate if they will be using the service. Students enrolled in the elementary remote learning school and secondary school students enrolled in full eLearning courses will not

be provided transportation. Consistent with the approach for voluntary remote learning there will be specific dates throughout the school year where eligible students that have chosen not to use transportation services may do so again (October 13, January 4 and March 22).

As described in Section – 1, Enhanced Public Health Measures, Part-C (Masks) non-medical masks will be required by students in Grades 4-12 while using transportation services. On the first day, students will be asked to wear their own face coverings but disposable masks will be available for those students that do not have one. Elementary school bus runs will be planned with regular seating capacity. As secondary schools are starting the school year in the adaptive mode (Scenario-B), school buses will run using an adaptive approach with one student (plus siblings) per seat. HWSTS will be working with the schools to develop seating plans so that cohorts are sitting close together where possible. In addition, extra cleaning will take place on buses between runs.



## 9. Technology

---

As a result of the 1:1 device deployment in secondary, all secondary students will have access to a device for remote learning in the adaptive model.

Elementary students that chose in-person learning will be required to return any Board devices that were being used at the end of the 2019-20 school year and a process is being developed for collection.



## 10. Financial Implications

---

The Board continues to review all of their supply needs and get updated pricing to monitor the procurement of these supplies. The previous estimate of \$2.1 million is still reasonable based on this information.

The Board has received confirmation of additional funding from the Ministry of Education through 2020:B11 “Investment to Support School Reopening in Response to the COVID-19 Outbreak”.

The memo confirmed funding (subject to Regulation approval) for:

- A. Additional staff
- B. Health and safety training
- C. Masks and PPE
- D. Cleaning supplies
- E. Student transportation
- F. Special education
- G. Mental health

### A. Additional Staff

There is funding to support the hiring of additional teachers, where needed, on an application basis. This funding will not allow the Board to significantly reduce class sizes. If the Board were to adjust elementary class sizes to 15 students per class, it would require approximately 900 additional classroom teachers and this would cost approximately \$76 million. The total funding envelope for this province is \$30 million.

In addition, the Board has received \$1.2 million for additional caretakers. This equates to approximately 22 full-time equivalent (FTE) positions.

## **B. Health and Safety Training**

There is funding provided to assist the Board in providing health and safety training to occasional teachers and casual education workers.

## **C. Masks and PPE**

Funding is to be finalized by the Ministry once the recovery model is completed.

## **D. Cleaning Supplies**

As previously announced, the Ministry is providing HWDSB \$96,000 to support the purchase of enhanced cleaning supplies.

## **E. Student Transportation**

HWDSB's funding allocation is to be determined (\$40 million provincially) to support PPE and cleaning related to transportation and drivers.

## **F. Special Education**

HWDSB is receiving \$199,000 to support local special education needs.

## **G. Mental Health**

The Board will receive \$167,000 in addition to the \$167,000 already announced in July. Therefore, the Board will have \$334,000 to support additional mental health supports.



---

## **11. Other**

---

### **A. Next Steps**

With four weeks remaining prior to the first day of class for students there is an urgency to take action in several areas:

- a. Enhanced Communication with system leaders, staff, families. Starting the week of August 10, weekly communication regarding the implementation of plans for re-opening will commence and will follow the established format used during the school closure period and prior to that, during labour action (system leaders bulletin; Director's message to staff; Chair/Director's message to families and the community).
- b. Elementary School voluntary remote learning pre-registration. Parents/guardians/caregivers will be directed to the board's Parent Portal between August 17 to 21, to pre-register for remote learning.
- c. Secondary School full eLearning option. Students should contact their school between August 31 and September 4 to explore timetable changes.
- d. Student Screening Attestation. A screening attestation must be completed for each student prior to attendance at school. Students will NOT BE PERMITTED to attend school in-person until the screening attestation is completed. The student screening will be available in the Parent Portal starting August 17.

- e. Transportation. Parents/guardians/caregivers of students eligible for transportation will be contacted by Hamilton-Wentworth Student Transportation Services (HWSTS) to indicate if they will be using the service. This will start the week of August 10.
- f. Cohorts for Secondary School Students. Schools will contact students to inform them of their cohort assignment (A or B) starting August 31 or earlier if possible.
- g. School Routines. Each school (elementary and secondary) will contact families to provide an outline of school-specific routines regarding the re-opening starting August 31 or earlier if possible.
- h. Elementary School Re-Organization. Elementary schools (including the Remote Learning School) will contact families to provide a school-specific update on class re-organization during the week of August 31.
- i. School Re-Opening (COVID-19 Pandemic) Update #4. The next update will be provided at a special board meeting on August 31.