

HWDSB

Special Board Meeting

Monday, August 24, 2020

Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board
20 Education Court, P.O. Box 2558
Hamilton, ON L8N 3L1

Virtual Meeting Norms:

- All callers are to place themselves on mute
- Roll call is in place for attendance and for questions

AGENDA: 5:00 pm

1. Call to Order
2. O Canada

[A: Delegation – Written Submission received C. Elson & A. Nielsen-Jones re: School Re-Opening](#)

Reports Staff:

3. [Financial Update related to COVID-19 \(Reserve Funding\)](#)
4. [School Start-Up Update \(Staggered Entry & Update on Elementary and Secondary Models\)](#)
5. Adjournment

curiosity • creativity • possibility

Heather Miller
Officer of Trustee Services, HWDSB
By email: hmiller@hwdsb.on.ca

Christine Bingham
School Board Trustee, Wards 1 and 2
By email: cbingham@hwdsb.on.ca

Sue Dunlop
Superintendent of School Achievement, HWDSB
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Manny Figueiredo
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David Thorne
Principal, Earl Kitchener Elementary School
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Andrea Horwath
MPP, Hamilton Centre
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cc: Cindy Stranak, Chair, Earl Kitchener Parent Council, By email: cindy@stranak.ca
Doug Ford, Premier, Government of Ontario, By email: premier@ontario.ca
Stephen Lecce, Minister of Education, Government of Ontario, By email:
stephen.lecce@pc.ola.org

August 23, 2020

Dear Officer of Trustee Services Miller, Trustee Bingham, Superintendent Dunlop, HWDSB
Director of Education Figueiredo, Principal Thorne and MPP Horwath:

Ms. Miller: We request that this letter be provided to all HWDSB Trustees as soon as possible, so that they may have a chance to review this communication in advance of the meeting on Monday, August 24, 2020.

Hello again! We are writing as concerned parents, guardians, and caregivers of children at Earl Kitchener School and – more broadly – as concerned members of the HWDSB community, to continue to express our grave concerns regarding the Ministry of Education's directives for school reopening and the anticipated forthcoming HWDSB guidelines.

Our top priority is the health and safety of our children, and the children at other schools within the HWDSB, as well as that of teachers, staff, all of their families, and the community-at-large. We are committed to working with you to implement measures that will increase safety at all schools across the board, while ensuring our children's learning experience and socio-emotional well-being are not compromised.

We have previously contacted you and proposed ten (10) requested actions. These can be found in the letter delivered at the August 10, 2020 meeting. You asked two (2) follow-up questions, which we answered on August 14, 2020.

It is not our intent to reiterate those requests, which are still standing. Rather, we urge you to consider the following, in addition to the earlier requests:

Requested Actions

- 1. Provide greater communication and transparency regarding the HWDSB decision making process, options being considered, and options being made available to students and families.**

Communication has been sparse regarding the HWDSB's School Reopening plan, particularly in the context of a continually updating and shifting playing field (such as Ministry of Education announcements regarding the 'unlocking' of funding, the possibility of staggering the school start by two (2) weeks, etc.). Families have been asked to make decisions regarding their children's educational futures (via the Parent Portal) without full communication regarding what that education will look like. Greater communication and transparency is crucial to enable parents and guardians to make the best decisions for their child(ren), families, and the community.

- 2. Utilize the vast network of resources available to brainstorm and problem solve, primarily the human capital of the community and the intellect and energy that it offers.**

We started a group called "EK Families Concerned about COVID & School Reopening" just two (2) weeks ago, and there are currently 190 members. A simple call to this group has unearthed a wealth of resources and committed individuals that are eager to participate in the safe reopening of our schools. This group includes experts in the fields of project management, architecture, and university-level instruction, all willing and eager to volunteer energy and time. Other thoughtful offers have included access to kitchen and washroom facilities within private homes that are adjacent to local parks. We implore you to accept our offers of assistance. We are stronger together!

- 3. Utilize the abundance of local parks, community centres, and other community spaces, such as churches and synagogues, to achieve social distancing goals.**

There is precedent of outdoor schooling in Hamilton, as indicated in [this article](#), and throughout North America, as indicated in [this article](#). We urge you to consider outdoor learning as a serious option for the health and safety of our children. Hamilton has an enviable number of parks and outdoor spaces which can be used. For example, within a walkable radius of Earl Kitchener School, the following parks exist: Hill Street Park,

Jackson Playground, Hamilton Amateur Athletic Association Park, Beulah Park, Highland Garden's Park, Chedoke Tot Lot, not to mention the Chedoke Golf Club. Please follow the lead of other large urban school boards, such as the Toronto District School Board (TDSB), which has been considering this option and was recently granted permission by the City of Toronto to use city parks for outdoor learning (as indicated in [this article](#)).

Delayed School Reopening and Creative Problem-Solving

As we requested in our letter of August 10, 2020, we are requesting that the **HWDSB explore the option of a delayed school reopening by two (2) to three (3) weeks**. Other school boards, such as the TDSB (as indicated in [this article](#)), are considering this option (in addition to some of the above and previously-requested measures).

We reiterate our sincere offer of our collective volunteer assistance to creatively help forge a safe new path for our children, school staff, and our community.

As concerned parents, guardians, and caregivers, we are advocating for more agency within our children's most important "agency," the school. Now more than ever, children and adolescents are being asked to graduate into an environment which requires nimbleness, flexibility, and the ability to pivot. We ask that the HWDSB also embodies these attributes.

We anticipate that this creative approach to problem-solving will benefit our children and their school, and we also hope and anticipate that this approach will benefit the wider HWDSB school community.

As our elected representative, it is important that Trustee Bingham relays our concerns and requests to the HWDSB and we ask that she moves a motion to ensure our requests be met.

Again, we thank you for your hard work and dedication during this extremely stressful and unprecedented time, and we welcome any further questions and requests for involvement in this process.

Sincerely,

Christine Elson
Parent [REDACTED], Earl Kitchener Elementary School

Alison Nielsen-Jones
Parent [REDACTED] Earl Kitchener Elementary School

On behalf of EK Families Concerned about COVID-19 and School Reopening



EXECUTIVE REPORT TO BOARD

TO: BOARD OF TRUSTEES

FROM: Manny Figueiredo, Director of Education

DATE: August 24, 2020

PREPARED BY: Stacey Zucker, Associate Director, Support Services

RE: Financial Update Related to COVID-19

ACTION MONITORING X

The following report provides a financial update on the HWDSB planning for the re-opening of schools for the 2020-21 school year.

Background

On June 22, 2020, the Board passed a balanced budget for 2020-21 based on staff's best estimates at the time because of the late release of the GSN. The motion stated that once the GSN was received and the revenue was recalculated, any amount less than \$1 million would be added to the existing to support equity/delivery expenditures related to COVID-19, special education, secondary pathways and bullying panel recommendations.

On August 4, 2020, the Ministry released B Memo 2020:B11 "Investment to Support School Reopening in Response to the COVID-19 Outbreak". This B Memo provided additional funding to Boards to support:

- Additional staff
- Health and safety training
- Masks and PPE
- Cleaning supplies
- Student transportation
- Special education
- Mental health

In addition, Appendix G of the "School Reopening (COVID-19 Pandemic) Update #2" report presented to Trustees on July 27, 2020 provided an estimate of the costs related to COVID-19 of approximately \$2.1 million. As stated to Trustees, the funding for these costs will be one of 3 sources:

- Many of the costs will be incurred in 2019-20. Any costs incurred in 2019-20 will be included as an expense in 2019-20 and will be funded by operating savings in 2019-20 as a result of schools being closed from March 13, 2020 until the end of the school year.
- Some of the costs incurred will be directly funded by the additional funding announced in 2020:B11 memo.
- If there are additional costs that are not funded by the above 2 sources, they will be funded from the 2020-21 contingency.

At the August 10, 2020 Board meeting, trustees passed the following motion:

“Be it resolved that, the Chair, on behalf of the Board of Trustees, request that the Director of Education connect with Ministry of Education staff for the provision of full funding to achieve lower elementary class sizes that average 15 students for (K-3) and 20 students for (Grades 4 – 8) in the physical homeroom classes.”

On August 13, 2020, the Minister made an announcement that Boards will have the ability to access their existing reserves up to a maximum of 2% of the school boards operating revenue. This is an increase from the 1% previously allowed. The Province has specifically stated that these reserves can be accessed by Boards to assist in decreasing class size and other COVID related expenses. In addition, the Province indicated that the \$30 million in Provincially funding would no longer be application based and Boards would receive a specific allocation. HWDSB will receive \$933,505.

Staff Observations

Motion from August 10, 2020 Special Board Meeting

Board staff estimated that HWDSB would require approximately \$43 million in order to meet the class sizes indicated in the motion - an average of 15 students for K-3 and 20 students for Grades 4-8 assuming 15% of students are in full remote learning. As requested by the Chair of the Board, the Director of Education contacted the Deputy Minister of Education to request the funding to achieve these lower class sizes in elementary schools. The Deputy Minister indicated that the Ministry would be providing up to \$30 million of funding in 2020-21 to support the hiring of additional teachers, where needed. The allocation for HWDSB is \$933,505. Ministry staff indicated that no other funding will be available.

The Ministry will not be providing HWDSB with the \$43 million required as requested in the motion.

Ministry Announcement on August 13, 2020 Regarding Reserves

As indicated above, on August 13, 2020, the Ministry announced that it is giving Boards the ability to access their existing reserves up to a maximum of 2% of operating revenue. The Ministry projections indicate that HWDSB will be able to use \$11,937,277 from reserves.

What this announcement means is that HWDSB can have a deficit in 2020-21 of up to \$11,937,277 and that it would decrease the accumulated surplus of the Board by this much.

HWDSB Reserves

The HWDSB has reserves that have been set aside for specific purposes and also reserves that do not have a specific purpose. In the Board's financial statements, the Boards reserves are referred to as the Accumulated Surplus that is "Available for Compliance". An excerpt of HWDSB August 31, 2019 Audited Financial Statements is included as Appendix A which shows the details of the Accumulated Surplus in Note 11.

As seen in this note, the Board had \$34,996,000 of reserves at this time. Of this amount, \$23,961,000 is reserved for specific purposes. For example, \$1,243,000 represents school budgets being carried forward and \$15,344,000 represents funds set aside to offset the amortization expense of the Education Centre over the next 35 years.

The \$11,035,000 unappropriated amount is the total of the reserve that does not have a specific purpose. The unappropriated reserve is intended to assist the Board when it has an emergency or when the Board's actual

expenses exceed the budget. HWDSB goes through a very detailed budgeting process each year but there is always the possibility of unbudgeted and unexpected expenses. In addition, if there are big ticket emergencies like roof replacements, the reserve would be used.

It is fiscally responsible for an organization to have a reserve balance in order to be prepared for one-time emergencies. Staff does consider the one-time lowering of class sizes for 2020-21 an appropriate use of reserves but would not recommend using the entire unappropriated reserve.

The reserves that have been set aside for specific purposes must be used for these purposes. If these reserves were to be used for the one-time lowering of class sizes, they would have to be paid back. A reserve is paid back by allocating budget in future years, meaning the Board would have to decrease other expenses in future years.

Analysis of Elementary Class Sizes

Reducing Kindergarten Class Sizes

The average class size for kindergarten in 2020-21 for HWDSB is projected to be approximately 25.7 with a full return in-person. Board staff has reviewed all the projected classes and by adding 47 classes across the system and 7 additional DECEs, the average class size can be reduced to approximately 21.8. There would be very few in person classes with greater than 25 students. Once the Board receives the results of the pre-registration, the reorganization will take place and it is likely that the in-person average could decrease even more.

There are 3 things necessary in order to add these classes:

- Available staffing – HWDSB would have to hire an additional 56.4 teachers (including prep time) and 54 DECEs
- Available space – HWDSB would need an additional 47 classrooms available in the specific schools where the classes are being added
- Available funding – the cost of providing these additional classes is estimated at \$7.4 million.

Reducing Grade 4-8 Class Sizes

The average class size for grades 4-8 in 2020-21 for HWDSB is projected to be approximately 24.5 with a full return in-person. Board staff has reviewed all the projected class sizes and by adding 30 classes across the system, the average class size can be reduced to approximately 23.6. There would be very few in person classes with greater than 25 students. Once the Board receives the results of the pre-registration, the reorganization will take place and it is likely that the in-person average could decrease even more.

Board staff have set up some classes with 1 metre spacing between desks and it is expected that this will be possible in most classes with 25 or less students in the classrooms.

There are 3 things necessary in order to add these classes:

- Available staffing – HWDSB would have to hire an additional 36 teachers
- Available space – HWDSB would need an additional 30 classrooms available in the specific schools where the classes are being added
- Available funding – the cost of providing these additional classes is estimated at \$3.0 million.

Human Resources Services would add occasional staff in these positions during our new August staffing process and then a review of creating permanent positions would occur during the September and October school reorganization process.

Additional COVID-19 Related Costs

There are some compensation related costs as a result of COVID-19. Some examples include:

- HWDSB has asked Principals and Vice-Principals to come back a week earlier than usual and will compensate accordingly.
- Staff were asked to be on Ad Hoc Committees and writing teams over the summer to prepare for re-opening.
- Many staff have been unable to take their vacation over the summer due to the planning required for school re-opening. The Board will be increasing the number of days that can be paid out from 5 to 10.
- Additional support is required to unpack, sort, assemble and distribute PPE once it is delivered.
- Other temporary support to address time sensitive issues

The additional cost is approximately \$750,000.

Conclusion

HWDSB has many additional costs as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak and school re-opening. They include additional PPE and cleaning supplies, external review of ventilation systems and additional staffing to prepare for the return to school. These costs will be covered by 2019-20 savings, additional funding from the Ministry, the 2020-21 contingency and existing reserves.

The Ministry has given Boards the ability to access its reserves up to a maximum of 2% of operating revenue. For HWDSB, this amounts to \$11,937,277. HWDSB has \$11,035,000 of unappropriated reserves at August 31, 2019. Staff does believe that the use of reserves for a one-time reduction in kindergarten and grade 4-8 class size is an appropriate use of reserves. However, staff does not recommend using this entire reserve as it is important for the Board to maintain a small reserve balance for other emergencies.

**HAMILTON-WENTWORTH DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD
NOTES TO THE CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
AUGUST 31, 2019
(All amounts in thousands of dollars)**

11. ACCUMULATED SURPLUS

	2019	2018
Unappropriated	\$ 11,035	\$ 10,305
Amounts Restricted for Future Use of the Board		
WSIB	750	750
School Budgets	1,243	799
Computer Technology	881	881
Board Initiatives	3,634	2,742
Cafeteria Equipment Replacement	109	75
Amounts Restricted for Capital Construction		
Administrative Building	15,344	15,767
Other Capital Projects	2,000	2,000
Available for Compliance	34,996	33,319
Amounts to be Recovered		
Employee Future Benefits	(24,282)	(27,470)
Interest Accrual	(1,925)	(1,996)
Other		
School Generated Funds	3,754	4,024
Revenues Recognized for Land	53,896	48,008
Balance at August 31, 2019	\$ 66,439	\$ 55,885

12. ONTARIO SCHOOL BOARD INSURANCE EXCHANGE (OSBIE)

The Board is a member of the Ontario School Board Insurance Exchange (OSBIE), a reciprocal insurance company licensed under the Insurance Act. OSBIE insures the Board for general public liability, property damage and vehicles. The membership period is for five years, ending December 31, 2021.

13. CONTINGENT LIABILITIES

The Board has been named in personal injury and property damage claims. The amounts specified in the claims are within the Board's insurance coverage. The Board, as well as its insurers, has instructed legal counsel to act on behalf of the Board to defend against these claims. No provision has been made in the financial statements for these claims.



EXECUTIVE REPORT TO BOARD

TO: BOARD

FROM: Manny Figueiredo, Director of Education

DATE: August 24, 2020

PREPARED BY: Peter Sovran, Associate Director of Education, Learning Services

RE: SCHOOL RE-OPENING (COVID-19 Pandemic) – STAGGERED START

ACTION MONITORING X

The following report provides the HWDSB plan for a staggered start to the 2020-21 school year as well as an update on the elementary and secondary school implementation models. Details regarding other elements of the plan can be found in the previous report (Special Board, August 10, 2020: <https://www.hwdsb.on.ca/wp-content/uploads/meetings/Special-Board-Agenda-1597086836.pdf>)

It is worth noting that the start of the school year for students will be dependent on HWDSB receiving and distributing all required personal, protective equipment (PPE) for staff and receiving and providing parents, students and staff with details of the provincial Outbreak Management Protocol. The staggered approach outlined here would be delayed as a result of any of these key health and safety measures not being available in time. Communication about any delay would be provided through multiple channels by the Director of Education

Background

As the start of the 2020-21 school year draws closer and the implementation of the comprehensive HWDSB plan for re-opening takes shape, it will be critical to focus and support actions in two key areas:

- The safety and well-being, of students, staff and families; and
- Establishing a renewed sense of school community, with new routines for everyone.

A staggered approach to entry would assist schools with these two priorities.

At the August 10 Special Board Meeting, staff presented the School Re-Opening (COVID-19 Pandemic) Update #3 report that outlined the HWDSB re-opening plan including scenarios and models for elementary and secondary schools.

Elementary schools will open in conventional mode (Scenario A) with a remote school option for those choosing not to attend in-person. All students will attend each day. School start and end times will remain the same and class sizes will be based on current class size caps and averages as per collective agreement requirements, taking into account any further direction by the board.

Secondary schools will open in adaptive mode (Scenario B). Students will attend on alternate days based on their cohort (maximum of 15 students) following a rotational model of a half-day in-person class followed by three shorter periods of teacher-directed remote learning classes or students may choose a full eLearning timetable. School start and end times will remain the same.

Adjustments to the models presented in this report reflect the consideration given to the feedback received from trustees, parents, students, staff, labour groups, Hamilton Public Health and Ministry of Education representatives following each of the previous planning updates.

On August 13 the Ministry of Education issued a [Policy/Program Memorandum \(PPM-164\) on remote learning](#). The direction provided has been incorporated into the adjusted models outlined in this report.

On August 18 the Ministry of Education provided further direction to school boards on allowing a staggered approach to school re-opening over the first two weeks of instructional days.

School Re-Opening (COVID-19 Pandemic) Update #4 outlining HWDSB's comprehensive plan will be presented at the August 31 Special Board Meeting.

1. Elementary Schools

The HWDSB Parent Portal was launched on August 17 allowing parents and guardians of students in elementary school (kindergarten to grade 8) to indicate if they were choosing the remote learning school option (pre-registration). Regrettably, some challenges were experienced during the initial days. In an effort to ensure that all parents and guardians have an opportunity to access the portal, the timeframe has been extended to noon, August 25 from August 21. As of August 23 nearly 3,000 students have chosen to start the school year through the remote learning school. Existing HWDSB students that do not choose the remote learning school will continue to be enrolled for in-person attendance at their current school. As indicated in the previous report, students seeking to register with a different school or from another board after August 25 will be registered with the remote learning school until one of the noted transition times (October 13, January 4, March 22).

In order to adequately staff the remote learning school and organize students into classes all HWDSB elementary schools will need to re-organize current student/teacher assignments prior to the start of the school year. This will be a very significant undertaking and while every effort will be made to complete this by September 8 there may be adjustments required within the first two weeks. Communication with families will come directly from schools.

As a result of the Ministry of Education's allowance to stagger starts over the first two weeks of schools, staff have planned for a gradual return-to-school approach that will focus on smaller groups of students, commencing with those requiring special education supports and/or additional support with transitions and mental health, becoming familiar with the routines and enhanced public health measures. The chart below illustrates the staggered approach for students attending elementary schools, including the remote learning school.

MONDAY SEPTEMBER 7	TUESDAY SEPTEMBER 8	WEDNESDAY SEPTEMBER 9	THURSDAY SEPTEMBER 10	FRIDAY SEPTEMBER 11
LABOUR DAY HOLIDAY	Students that Require Special Education Supports/Supports with Transitions and Mental Health	Students that Require Special Education Supports/Supports with Transitions and Mental Health	GROUP A Last Name Alpha A to K (approximately ½ class)	GROUP B Last Name Alpha L to Z (approximately ½ class)
MONDAY SEPTEMBER 14	TUESDAY SEPTEMBER 15	WEDNESDAY SEPTEMBER 16	THURSDAY SEPTEMBER 17	FRIDAY SEPTEMBER 18
GROUP A Last Name Alpha A to K (approximately ½ class)	GROUP B Last Name Alpha L to Z (approximately ½ class)	ALL STUDENTS RETURN TO SCHOOL (Full Classes)	ALL STUDENTS (Full Classes)	ALL STUDENTS (Full Classes)

For a small number of students that require significant special education supports and/or support with transitions, including newcomers, as well as support with mental health, individual visits will be scheduled on September 8 and 9. In advance of an individual visit, resources will be posted on the HWDSB Learning4Success site the week of August 31 for parents/guardians/caregivers to rehearse with their child where relevant. These resources include a number of social stories such as *Wearing My Mask*, *What is Physical Distancing?* and *Using My Own Materials*. Also, task strips on topics such as *How to Wash My Hands* and *How to Put on My Mask* will also be added to the Learning4Success site. These resources will support students to learn the enhanced public health measures.

2. Secondary Schools

As a result of considerable feedback about the secondary school rotational model outlined in School Re-Opening (COVID-19 Pandemic) Update #3 some adjustments have been made.

a. Schools with 5 period days

All schools, including those that are regularly scheduled as 5 period days, will now operate on four (4) rotations of approximately twenty-two (22) days for the first semester. This will be accomplished by establishing a common lunch time instead of the period 3 and 4 assigned lunch periods. Some student and staff timetables may require some minor adjustments and some additional classroom space may be required at one or two secondary schools. Staff continue to work with principals to support this implementation. The chart below illustrates a typical schedule for a 5 period school for the first rotation (September 8 to October 7).

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday Week 1	Friday Week 2
Block 1: In-Person Instruction (Approximately 150 minutes)	Period 1 Cohort A	Period 1 Cohort B	Period 1 Cohort A	Period 1 Cohort B	Period 1 Cohort A	Period 1 Cohort B
LUNCH / TRANSITION TIME (80 minutes)						
Block 2 Remote Instruction (40 minutes + 10 minutes independent study)	Period 2	Period 2	Period 2	Period 2	Period 2	Period 2
Block 2 Remote Instruction (40 minutes + 10 minutes independent study)	Period 3/4*	Period 3/4	Period 3/4	Period 3/4	Period 3/4	Period 3/4
Block 2 Remote Instruction (40 minutes + 10 minutes independent study)	Period 5	Period 5	Period 5	Period 5	Period 5	Period 5

***NOTE:** Student lunch periods (period 3 or 4) have been eliminated. A common lunch for all students is now scheduled.

b. Turnaround days between rotations

Given the public health circumstance at this time, Hamilton Public Health has indicated to staff that the five turnaround days between rotations, as previously noted in the model, are not required. As such, each rotation will be approximately twenty-two (22) days for the first semester and allows for an additional nineteen (19) in-person instructional days. At the end of each rotation students will transition to their next class for in-person learning. The chart below outlines the rotation dates and the corresponding courses, based on a student's timetable, that will be delivered in-person and remotely.

Rotation	Start Date	End Date	Instructional Days	4 Period School		5 Period School	
				In-Person Course ⁽¹⁾	Remote Learning Courses ⁽²⁾	In-Person Course ⁽¹⁾	Remote Learning Courses ⁽²⁾
1	September 8*	October 7	22	Period 1	Periods 2,3,4	Period 1	Periods 2,3/4,5
2	October 8	November 9	22	Period 2	Periods 3,4,1	Period 2	Periods 3/4,5,1
3	November 10	December 10	22	Period 3	Periods 4,1,2	Period 3/4	Periods 5,1,2
4	December 11	January 22	21	Period 4	Periods 1,2,3	Period 5	Periods 1,2,3/4

*NOTE: There will be a staggered start over the first week of class (see section – Staggered Start, below)

(1) In-Person Course: Students will attend for approximately 150 minutes on alternate days based on their cohort. Students will engage in independent study on the days their cohort is not scheduled to attend in-person.

(2) Remote Learning Courses: Students will participate in 150 minutes of remote learning each day. They will receive 40 minutes of direct instruction for each of their three courses each day with their entire class. Students will also be expected to engage in 10 minutes of independent study per course on each day. Students may participate in remote learning at home or at school (see section – Study Hall, below).

Exam Days (5): January 25 to 29, 2021

Professional Activity Days (5): September 1, 2, and 3, 2020; November 27, 2020; and February 1, 2021

c. Study Hall

On days that students are scheduled to be at school in-person with their cohort they will have the option of remaining at school to complete their remote learning courses. A protocol is being finalized that will allow parents/guardians (and students 18 years and older) to indicate if the student will be remaining at school following the in-person portion of the day. Students that remain at school will be assigned a space in a designated 'study hall' area of the school (e.g., gymnasium, learning commons, cafeteria) and will be expected to remain in this space for the duration of the remote learning blocks. Every effort will be made to keep cohorts within the same area to minimize the number of direct and indirect contacts students have with other students. Study Halls will be supervised, however, support with course work will continue to be provided through remote instruction. Further information will be provided in Update #4.

d. Staggered Start and Cohorts

Similar to the plan for elementary schools, a gradual return-to-school approach is being planned for secondary school. The staggered start will focus on smaller groups of students, commencing with those requiring special education supports and/or additional support with transitions and mental health, becoming familiar with the routines and enhanced public health. The chart below illustrates the staggered approach for students attending secondary schools.

MONDAY SEPTEMBER 7	TUESDAY SEPTEMBER 8	WEDNESDAY SEPTEMBER 9	THURSDAY SEPTEMBER 10	FRIDAY SEPTEMBER 11
LABOUR DAY HOLIDAY	Students that Require Special Education Supports/Supports with Transitions and Mental Health*	Students that Require Special Education Supports/Supports with Transitions and Mental Health*	Grade 9 & 10 Cohort A In-Person and Remote Learning Classes Grade 11 &12 Remote Learning Classes Only	Grade 9 & 10 Cohort B In-Person and Remote Learning Classes Grade 11 &12 Remote Learning Classes Only
MONDAY SEPTEMBER 14	TUESDAY SEPTEMBER 15	WEDNESDAY SEPTEMBER 16	THURSDAY SEPTEMBER 17	FRIDAY SEPTEMBER 18
All Students Cohort A	All Students Cohort B	All Students Cohort A	All Students Cohort B	All Students Cohort A

For most students who require special education support, the secondary orientation for students in Gr. 9 and Gr. 10 noted above will provide a good transition back to school. For a small number of students in grade 9 and beyond that require significant special education supports and services, individual visits will be scheduled on September 8 and 9. In advance of an individual visit, resources will be posted on the HWDSB Learning4Success site the week of August 31 for parents/guardians/caregivers to rehearse with their child where relevant. These resources include a number of social stories such as *Wearing My Mask*, *What is Physical Distancing?* and *Using My Own Materials*. Also, task strips on topics such as *How to Wash My Hands* and *How to Put on My Mask* will also be added to the Learning4Success site. These resources will support students to learn the enhanced public health requirements.

Student cohort information will be available through the Parent Portal as of August 31. Instructions on how to access this information can be found on the HWDSB Return-to-School site (<https://www.hwdsb.on.ca/parent/>)