

Dear CDSBEO families,

We want to provide an update of our current progress regarding the COVID-19 Order on school closures and some next steps on a plan for supporting student learning moving forward.

- **School Closure Period** - Schools were originally scheduled to be closed until April 5th. Premier Ford announced during a public address that the closure would extend beyond that date. We anticipate hearing more information around the length of the closure over the next week. We will share that information when it becomes available.
- **Continuity of Learning Moving Forward** - The Ministry of Education has developed a formal working group comprised of Directors of Education, Ministry of Education staff, and various education Union partners to aid in the development of a more formal Continuous Learning Plan for Ontario's students as part of Phase 2, which will begin April 6. We know that it's not possible to replicate the school day online, but it is possible to identify key curricular concepts, best practices for online/remote learning, ensure online learning platforms and resources are in place, and establish new ways for teacher collaboration, instruction and assessment. We recognize that families have many questions about how learning will continue, and we expect to bring clarity to this soon.
- **Learning Resources** - We are committed to sharing resources to help engage students, parents and families. On Monday, as part of Phase 1, we shared the Ministry of Education Learn At Home resources. This information is available at: <https://bit.ly/CDSBEOdistancelearning>. We know that finding time to access these resources can be challenging for some families and other families may be looking for additional and more specific resources. These resources are not a substitute for in-class instruction, but rather a first step in promoting student learning, and will be updated as we move forward.
- **Staying Connected** – During Phase 1, March 23 to April 3, 2020, our focus is reconnecting, establishing work from home spaces and identifying technology capacity. Some schools have begun to reach out to students and families through their social media and collaboration platforms, in many cases this is through the school social media account. We expect a more concrete direction regarding teacher/student interaction to come as part of the second phase of the Continuity of Learning Plan. We encourage parents/students to reach out to teachers via the school social media and collaboration platforms when questions arise.
- **Students with Special Education Needs** - Our Special Education Department staff is working to ensure that continuity of learning plans include strategies to support students with specialized learning needs. The school district cannot provide in person support during this period of social/physical distancing. We are exploring options for connecting with students with special education needs.



- **Graduating Students** - The Minister of Education was very clear in his letter that *"no graduating student will have their ability to graduate impacted by the two-week closure and the COVID-19 developments."* We share this commitment and will prioritize this in our planning for continuity of learning.
- **Access to Schools and Playgrounds** - Access to all school buildings is completely restricted at this time. We know that school yards are important green spaces in many communities and therefore school yards are open. However, play structures are not being cleaned and as a result are not a safe place for children to play. Signs are being posted on play structures this week.
- **Mental Health and Well-being** - During this challenging time of balancing work with taking care of children we have included mental health resources that provide information and tips to support students, staff and parents during the COVID-19 pandemic. Many mental health resources are available to students and parents at School Mental Health Ontario at: www.smho-smsso.ca.

We know there are more questions and we remain committed to sharing information as soon as it becomes available. Regular updates are posted to our social media accounts and website including regularly updated "frequently asked questions". Visit: <https://www.cdsbeo.on.ca/novel-coronavirus/>

Please continue to pray for the CDSBEO community and practice safe social/physical distancing.