

Dear Parents and Guardians,

This afternoon, the Ministry of Education announced that they are extending the school closure period for all students until May 4, 2020. This decision has been made as a safety precaution to protect our students and help minimize the spread of COVID-19 in our community. **In light of this directive, all HCDSB schools will NOT REOPEN to students until Monday, May 4, 2020**

What Happens Next?

As you know from the letter you received from your school principal last week, we have been anticipating that the school closure would likely be extended, and we have been preparing for a transition to teacher-led instruction within a distance learning environment.

We are actively collaborating with all of our school and system leaders on a plan to connect and engage students in teacher-led distance instruction in the days and weeks ahead. We are working with all of our teaching staff to ensure they are supported in becoming more comfortable in delivering curriculum through a Board-approved online learning platform. Additional information will be flowing to parents and/or students directly from the classroom teacher as we move through this process.

By now, you and/or your child should have received an initial communication from your child's teacher. **If for some reason, you have not been able to connect with your child's teacher, please contact your school principal. If you anticipate specific challenges for your child in accessing curriculum in an online format, including access to technology (devices) or access to wi-fi, please contact your school principal.**

The Road Ahead

The next several weeks will continue to look and feel very different from the educational experience we have always provided in our schools. This is new and unfamiliar territory for all of us - students, families and staff. As with anything new, we expect there will be some growing pains and frustrations along the way.

You have my assurances that as a Board, we are absolutely committed to doing all we can to keep meeting the needs of our learners – which include our staff as well as our students.

Teachers across our district, like teachers across all school districts, have varying degrees of experience in delivering distance education. We also know that different students have different needs, and some will require alternative solutions that will allow distance learning to work for them. The transition to teacher-led distance learning will not happen overnight, and I ask for your patience and understanding during this time.

Digital Resources for Students and Families

Families may continue to access the list of [Digital Learning Resources](#) for students and families that are being updated on an ongoing basis. We have posted these resources on our [board website](#) as well as on your child's school website. These include the [Learn at Home](#) resources that have been posted by the Ministry of Education, as well as supplementary learning resources compiled by our HCDSB Program Services.

Updates and Information

We are expecting additional information from the Ministry of Education around curriculum expectations. We will follow up with parents and guardians with further details.

As always, we will share new information directly with parents by email. We have posted all of my previous updates about this school closure due to COVID-19 on our Board website at: bit.ly/COVID-19Updates-HCDSB.

The health, safety and well-being of our students and staff continues to be our priority. On our [Board website](#) you will find all the correspondence we have shared from Halton Region Public Health, as well as various [mental health resources](#) to help you support your children and your family during this time.

Thank you for your ongoing patience and support as we move through this period of unfamiliar territory. Our goal is for all of our students to successfully complete this school year, and we have every reason to believe we can and will achieve this.

We are blessed at HCDSB with some of the finest educators in the province. They are passionate, they are professional, and they are dedicated to our students. Our school and system leaders are second to none in their commitment and in the strength of their leadership.

Working together, we will all do the best we can in light of the circumstances, to create teaching and learning conditions to help us reach this goal. We know that we will not be able to provide the same type of instruction that occurs in the daily face-to-face setting of our classrooms, but as we become more comfortable in this format, it may allow us to explore new forms of teaching and learning. With your ongoing patience and support, our students will be successful in completing this school year.

Please continue to follow the recommendations and advice of our [Public Health](#) professionals. As always, I hold in my thoughts and prayers all of our students, families and staff. Stay well, as you take good care of your loved ones.

Pat Daly
Director of Education

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