

April 3, 2020

Dear Parents and Guardians,

We know that you and your families are being impacted in many different ways by the COVID-19 pandemic and school closures. These are extraordinarily difficult times for many and we are trying to do our part in being part of a community of caring. We are doing our best to re-route nutrition funding to families with the greatest needs and technology to families without access. In addition, last week, [learning resources](#) and [well-being resources](#) were provided to our school communities.

As we move forward, please know that we are here to support you and your family during this unprecedented time. We will support each other to get through this crisis together.

I have heard from many families that they are anxious and worried about supporting their child's learning at home and we recognize the reality many families are facing and their ability to support both online and offline learning. I also know that there are other families who would prefer for school to be replicated online. As we head into the continuation of learning on Monday for more than 240,000 TDSB students, I wanted to help give you a sense of what is ahead for learning.

Remote Learning in the TDSB

In a system of our size and diversity, this is no small task and I want to thank you for your patience and support as we have worked tirelessly behind the scenes to plan and implement remote learning in the Toronto District School Board. We hope that every student or family has received at least one communication from your child's teacher and principal.

Every classroom in the TDSB approaches learning differently and is designed in a way to meet the varied needs of the students in a particular classroom. Remote learning will be no different as every educator approaches their classroom in a way that is thoughtful and unique to their own students' learning needs, abilities and experiences. Learning will take on a variety of forms and may include online learning, phone connections, assignments submitted by email, online classrooms, off-line tasks and more. Our hope is that the learning is relevant for your child and that it supports their routine at home. It is important to note though, that it cannot follow the timetable of a normal school day for students.

As we do every day, we are relying on the expertise of our educators to use the strategies that best meet the interests and needs of their students and learning online under these

circumstances. Over the coming weeks, they will be trying to find the right balance of approaches to promote student engagement in both online and offline learning. We appreciate your patience as we navigate this new learning model.

In addition to the expectations of teacher-led learning by grade, as outlined by the Ministry, our expectations of educators in the TDSB include consideration of:

- Equity – creating accessible, relevant and respectful learning experiences for all students
- Communication – using a variety of communication channels and having regular ongoing and open contact with students and families
- Well-Being – investing in developing students’ learning skills and resilience during this unusual time and paying attention to well-being and mental health needs
- Technology and Learning Platforms – how the needs of all students are being met

Assessment

For **elementary students**, teachers will use approaches to gather evidence of student learning and will provide meaningful feedback to students on their progress. Evidence of significant improvement in learning, during the closure period, may be taken into consideration by the teacher when assigning a final grade in a subject area. Otherwise, students, in Grades 1 to 8, will be assigned the grades earned based on their learning of the expectations in the curriculum up until schools closed on March 13, 2020. All students, Kindergarten to Grade 8, will receive a June report card.

Mid-term marks will be entered only for **Grade 12 students** by April 23, 2020, to meet the deadline to report grades to the Ontario Universities’ Application Centre ([OUAC](#)) and the Ontario College Application Service ([OCAS](#)). Marks will reflect work done up until March 13, 2020. However, formative assessments done post April 6 can be used to improve a student’s mark should students demonstrate further achievement of expectations.

For **students in secondary school**, teachers will assign learning tasks, projects and culminating activities. Teachers will communicate results and feedback to students about these marked assignments and results will inform students’ final course marks. Only demonstrated improvements in learning will be taken into consideration when assigning a final mark. Final marks will be entered in June, and will be based on work done until March 13, 2020, as well as after April 6, 2020. Summative and culminating tasks can be used for these final marks. All subjects a student is taking will be reported on in a June report card.

Supporting our Families

We know that part of maintaining positive relationships and staying healthy during the pandemic means paying attention to your well-being and mental health. TDSB will be posting simple, strategies for students and parents each week online. [Check the website regularly.](#)

We are partners in your child's education and we are here to do everything we can to ensure a seamless transition and support you and your child in this new environment. Please reach out to your teacher directly as necessary. Supporting the continued learning and well-being of our students – your children – during this pandemic is our priority. We are continually providing information updates to parents and students on a number of platforms such as the [website](#), and TDSB social media channels — [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#) and [Facebook](#). Recently, we have been using social media as a tool to better engage our students and hear how we can support them, their ideas and more. Follow along on TDSB's channels as we hear from our students directly.

We have heard your concerns and your questions and have put together a Q&A below that aims to address the common themes we are hearing. Thank you for your ongoing support and commitment to your child's learning.

Sincerely,



John Malloy
Director of Education

Questions and Answers

What is remote learning?

Remote learning is students are currently learning at home because of Covid-19. Learning will take on a variety of forms and may include online learning, phone connections, assignments submitted by email, online classrooms, off-line tasks and more. Our hope is that the learning is relevant for your child and that it provides some valuable structure to their day at home. It is not a replication of the instructional day.

What can I expect from remote learning?

- **Communication** from your child's teacher
- **Instruction** to facilitate both online and offline learning in key subject areas, aligned with Ministry of Education curriculum
- **Connection** to teachers and peers
- **Feedback** from your child's teacher on their work and participation

What are the guidelines for learning by grade?

As outlined by the [Ministry of Education](#), educators are to re-establish teacher-led learning by grade groupings as follows:

- Kindergarten-Grade 3: five hours of work per student/week (focus on literacy and math)
- Grades 4-6: five hours of work per student/week (focus on literacy, math, science and social studies)
- Grades 7-8: 10 hours of work per student/week (focus on math, literacy, science and social studies)
- Grades 9-12: three hours of work per course per week for semestered students; 1.5 hours of work per course per week for non-semestered students (focus on achieving credits/completion/graduation)

Hours refer to the approximate amount of time students would spend on the work assigned by teachers. Teacher work would include preparation of assigned work and providing feedback or assessment. Teacher engagement with students is expected but would vary depending on circumstances and could include a range of ways that teachers would connect with their students.

What will online learning look like?

Online learning may take different forms. Some classrooms that were already set up with a Google classroom may be able to pick up where they left off. Other classrooms may use a different tool that works for their students.

My family and work situation does not allow for me to provide designated support or time to help my child learn. What should I do?

We recognize that every family is in a different situation and has different time and ability to support their child. Educators will be considering all these scenarios and will strive to be thoughtful in how and when learning is delivered. Please work with your child's teacher to help them understand what's feasible, right now, in your home.

Will there be set hours for when my child has to participate in learning?

We recognize that timed learning may be difficult for a lot of families. One option for educators is to record live instruction and have it available during other times or have resources available any time. We hope students will be able to build connections with their teacher and classmates through some classroom-style online learning though, but we realize that may not be possible for everyone.

How do I help set my child up for success?

Encouraging at home learning is a great start. Developing a schedule will assist with balancing activities during the day. If feasible, use one or two apps or online sites recommended by the teacher to continue your child's learning. Connecting with your child's teacher and sharing with them any challenges your child is experiencing and also identifying opportunities your child may want, will help.

What do I do if I don't have a computer or access to the internet?

Staff have been working tirelessly to develop and execute a plan to provide a Wi-Fi enabled device to every TDSB student that requires one, in order to ensure continuity of learning.

We are now at the point in the process where staff will begin recovering devices from our schools (taking all necessary precautions) beginning with secondary and middle schools where the largest number of devices are available so that they can be redistributed immediately to those in need.

Families expecting a device will receive an email or call from Purolator providing them with a delivery window. Start date for delivery of devices is Monday, April 6. Estimated date of final delivery is Tuesday, April 14. We will provide regular updates.

Parents can still complete the [online submission form](#).

I only have one device at home and multiple children. How do I support their learning?

Setting an at-home schedule for each child may be helpful and helping their teachers understand the limitations will help ensure that non-digital options are also available to support learning.

I do not have a printer at home. What options are there for worksheets or offline learning?

Sharing with your child's teacher the at-home limitations your child may experience is helpful so they understand the needs of each student.

My child is in French Immersion. What supports are there for parents to help continue learning?

All French as a Second Language programs (FSL) are designed for families who do not speak French at home. Families may support their children in French Immersion/Extended French in much the same way they would in the English program. It is not necessary that families speak French for a child to continue learning at home. A family may create an account on IDELLO <https://www.idello.org/en> by selecting "Parent" or students can create an account using their TDSB email account. This would allow them to explore the resources on their own (parent or student). For additional French resources, families may explore the TDSB Virtual Library www.tdsb.on.ca/library.

I haven't heard from my child's teacher yet. What should I do?

Teachers have been asked to reach out to students and/or caregivers by April 3. If you have not heard from your child's teacher please email the Principal or Vice Principal for your child's school.

Are students being assessed on this learning?

For **elementary students**, teachers will use approaches to gather evidence of student learning and will provide meaningful feedback to students on their progress. Evidence of significant improvement in learning, during the closure period, may be taken into consideration by the teacher when assigning a final grade in a subject area. Otherwise, students, in Grades 1 to 8, will be assigned the grades earned based on their learning of the expectations in the curriculum up until schools closed on March 13, 2020. All students, Kindergarten to Grade 8, will receive a June report card.

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Will students be at risk of not graduating?

The Government of Ontario has made very clear that no student will have their graduation compromised by COVID-19 and the Ministry of Education continues to work with the Ministry of Colleges and Universities to ensure that there will be no barriers to accessing post-secondary education.