



May 1, 2020

Dear Parents/Guardians and Families,

As part of the efforts to stop the spread of COVID-19, the closure of all publicly-funded schools in Ontario has been extended until at least May 31, 2020. While this closure extension is challenging and frustrating, I want to take this opportunity to thank you and acknowledge how grateful we are to have parents and families as partners in education.

We know that it's not an easy task to support your child(ren) with remote learning on top of the additional responsibilities you are likely facing during this time. This experience is new for everyone. We are learning together one day at a time. As we do this work, I want to reinforce to parents and families that under these extraordinary circumstances, we do not expect students to participate in a full day of school or that the learning opportunities provided by teachers will replicate what is typical in a physical classroom every day.

In his [most recent letter to families](#), Minister of Education Stephen Lecce shared further information about remote learning and expectations for student work-time in a given week. Our TDSB educators are committed to meet these expectations in a variety of ways. Together with our union partners, we are looking at ways to explore how educators are using online learning platforms to maintain relationships with students, so that we can better support them.

Educators will connect with students and families to meet their needs and the needs of each student in the class. This will look different from class to class, teacher to teacher, and for individual students and families. We need to consider and appreciate the variety of circumstances and experiences of our students and families. Our students have unique home learning environments with different levels of support available to them. What is most important right now is that we continue to engage all students and focus on the health and well-being of students, staff and families, and support learning at home.

As we look forward, we would like to provide an update in a variety of areas to help you prepare and plan for the days and weeks ahead. Please continue to reach out to teachers and your school community and to connect with one another. Please be well and take care of yourself and your family. We are in this together!

- Learning Sessions for Parents/Families
- Supporting, Assessing and Reporting Student Achievement and Well-Being
- Have Your Say
- Special Education Remote IPRC/SEPRC/IEP
- Well-Being and Student Engagement
- Graduation Ceremonies, Proms, and Other Events
- Summer Learning Opportunities
- French as a Second Language (FSL) Resources for Families





## **New Learning Sessions for Parents/Families**

Online platforms for remote learning are new to some families and we are committed to support you to help navigate this new learning environment. Special learning sessions are available to provide an overview of two of the major platforms: Brightspace and Google Classroom.

### Introduction to Brightspace Learning Platform

This session will introduce the Brightspace Learning Platform and will cover: how to access, how to log in and highlight some of the key features used by teachers and students. To join a session, [visit the website](#) and click on the appropriate link.

- Monday, May 4 at 3 p.m.
- Tuesday, May 5 at 7 p.m.

### Introduction to Google Classroom

This session will introduce Google Classroom and will cover: how to access, how to log in and highlight some of the key features used by teachers and students. To join a session, [visit the website](#) and click on the appropriate link.

- Tuesday, May 5 at 3 p.m.
- Wednesday, May 6 at 7 p.m.

## **Well-Being and Student Engagement**

Our top priority is to support and enhance the [mental health and well-being](#) of all students, staff and parents/families. School staff continue to maintain relationships and focus on the mental health and well-being of students as they provide remote learning. Teachers use multiple, creative ways to connect with and engage students.

## **Supporting, Assessing and Reporting Student Achievement and Well-Being**

This is a challenging time for everyone as we collectively work toward practices to set students up for success. We recognize that there are many inequities that exist within our system that impact student learning and achievement. This includes access to technology, availability of resources, familiarity with online applications, and support for learning. Teachers will keep these challenges in mind, as they support all learners and provide meaningful learning opportunities that are connected to the Ontario curriculum, leading up to end-of-year reports in June.

It is our commitment that assessment, evaluation, and reporting will be fair, transparent and equitable for all students and will focus on growth in learning and improvement. As always, if you have any questions or concerns, please connect with your child's teacher and/or administration. Please read the [parent/family assessment newsletter](#) for more information and specific details about elementary and secondary student assessment and reporting.

## **Graduation Ceremonies, Proms, and Other Events**

As communicated in the letter on April 14, all field trips and overnight trips have been cancelled for the remainder of the school year. We had hoped that it would be possible for proms, graduation ceremonies and other events to go forward this year but with the recent news that schools will now be closed until at





least May 31, this is not possible. Sadly, we have had to cancel or postpone these events until at least the end of the school year. As there are still many unknowns, the rescheduling of postponed events will be handled at the school level, depending on local circumstances. Please note that scholarships that would normally have been awarded during graduation ceremonies may continue to be awarded, with formal recognition to take place at a later date.

### **Have Your Say**

As we come to the end of our first month of remote learning, we want to hear from you. What has worked well? What hasn't? What are your suggestions? Please take a few minutes to share your thoughts about your child's experience with remote learning. Your opinion is important as we try to better understand the needs of our students and families. Join us in this [ThoughtExchange](#) to add your voice to the conversation.

### **Summer Learning Opportunities**

A number of options are being explored to allow learning to continue throughout the summer. Please see below for additional information and more details will be provided in the coming weeks.

#### **Hybrid Elementary Summer School Remote Learning**

Plans are underway for remote elementary summer school to address student learning gaps and continue student engagement through July. Additional details will be available on the [elementary summer school web page](#) in the coming weeks.

*Note: This program is called "Hybrid" as it may include online and in-class learning environments in accordance with the guidance of the Ministry of Education.*

#### **Remote Summer Credit Recovery (Secondary)**

The Continuing Education Department will offer a Remote Credit Recovery Program for TDSB secondary students July 6-31. This program replaces face-to-face summer school for 2020 and will include courses in all subject areas from Grades 9 to 12, with a focus on compulsory courses. Visit the [Summer School web page](#) in the coming weeks for more information.

#### **Hybrid Remote Summer Credit Program (Secondary)**

The Continuing Education Department will offer a Remote Summer Learning Credit Program for TDSB secondary students July 6-31. This program replaces face-to-face summer school for 2020 and will include courses in all subject areas from Grades 9 to 12, with a focus on compulsory courses. Visit the [Summer School web page](#) in the coming weeks for more information.

*Note: This program is called "Hybrid" as it may include online and in-class learning environments in accordance with the guidance of the Ministry of Education.*

#### **e-Summer Program**

The e-Summer program will continue in July and August as it has in previous years and registration for courses for TDSB students began in early April. Courses are all full-credit and include Grades 11 and 12 courses as well as Grade 10 Civics and Career Studies. Non-TDSB students may register starting in June for courses that run in August. Full information about the courses and registration process is outlined on the [e-Learning website](#).





### **Special Education Remote Summer School**

Summer school for special education students will continue remotely. Secondary DHH students will be able to access their secondary credit courses. We will also provide DHH summer school for students in Grades 1-8. Secondary CTCC Summer School will also continue so that students can access summer credits.

Summer school will also be offered for students with Developmental Disabilities from Grades 1 to 12. Teachers will continue the remote learning already established and support students and families with further learning opportunities.

### **Special Education Remote IPRC/SEPRC/IEP**

The Ministry has provided further direction in support of students with special education needs in their recent [Continuity of Learning for Students with Special Education Needs and Mental Health Supports](#) memo.

Due to the current unprecedented remote circumstances, IPRCs and SEPRCs have been prioritized in order to ensure system urgent needs are met.

#### **Priority IPRCs and SEPRCs:**

- Students in Senior Kindergarten exiting Diagnostic Kindergarten (DK);
- All students exiting Kindergarten Intervention Program (KIP) for whom an ISP is being considered;
- Level 2 Annual IPRC review for students currently in a Special Education Intensive Support Program (ISP) who require a transition as they are moving from school to school;
- SEPRC consideration only for students with severe complex medical needs;
- Students returning from CTCC programs;
- Gr.3 students for whom consideration for Gr.4 Gifted ISP (TDSB registered students only; no SEPRC for this category).

IPRCs will be held remotely either through Webex or teleconference. Any email communication to parents/guardians involving documentation that has student confidential information will require consent from parents prior to the information being sent via email. To ensure the protection of information and to prevent a privacy breach, email communication containing personal student information will be encrypted and password protected. The email will include the word “CONFIDENTIAL” in the subject line and include a read receipt to ensure parents/caregivers have received the email.

### **French as a Second Language (FSL) Resources for Families**

This week, the FSL Department launched a [FSL Resources for Families Google Site](#) for parents, guardians and families of students in French as a Second Language programs. The site provides information about how to support students during remote learning, including guiding principles, considerations for remote learning in FSL programs, links to resources, how to support at home, and more.





## Ministry of Education and Toronto Public Health Updates

With this week's announcement that the school closure will extend until at least May 31, 2020, the Ministry of Education and Toronto Public Health also issued letters to parents/families this week. Please read the updates here: [Ministry of Education Letter](#) and [Toronto Public Health Letter](#).

## Closing Thoughts

Thank you again for all that you are doing to support the continuation of learning. Now more than ever a strong partnership between home and school is critical. Anything you can do to engage your child(ren) and stay connected to school and your teachers will have a significantly positive impact. We are all doing our best under the circumstances and we so appreciate your efforts.

I want to also mention our students and acknowledge their hard work and resilience through this change. The transition to remote learning has been an adjustment for everyone and a very different way of learning than what students are accustomed to. I have heard such amazing stories from our schools and teachers about students rising to the occasion and showing incredible commitment and creativity under the circumstances. It is a testament to the wonderful students and families we have across the TDSB. I am so very proud of everyone and I know that by working together we will get through this difficult time.

One final thought I wanted to share is just a simple reassurance that we are already thinking about and planning as best we can for the eventual return to school. While we do not yet know when that will be, it will be important and necessary that we work in close partnership with Toronto Public Health and the Ministry of Education to ensure that the appropriate health and safety and other measures are in place. Again, this is new and uncharted territory for everyone and we will be working through it with the necessary guidance from public health officials as well as valuable input from staff and others.

Please stay safe and healthy.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John Malloy', with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

John Malloy  
Director of Education

