



March 20, 2020

Dear Students, Parents/Guardians, Families and Staff:

Subject: HPEDSB Contingency Planning for Students and Staff, Post-March Break

Like many of you, we at the senior level of the Hastings and Prince Edward District School Board have continued to watch the evolving events around the world as they pertain to *COVID-19 (Novel Coronavirus)*, and the responding actions being taken by countries, governments and even school boards. I think it is probably a safe assumption that there has been, at times, a surreal feeling about the reality that faces us all. In saying this, however, the Senior Administration and Board of Trustees have continued to work throughout this past week, attempting to mitigate every challenge that we face as a school board, and that face our students and families, and our staff.

As you know, the Minister of Education has directed all school boards in Ontario to close schools and general on-site operations until April 5, 2020. Today, the Premier of Ontario and the Minister indicated that should the Ontario Chief Medical Officer of Health advise the closures to go beyond April 5, they are prepared to take such action. At this time, we have not received that message or direction.

We, at the HPEDSB, realize that these closures present numerous challenges for learning, access to technology, graduation and the student school experience in general. To support students during this incredibly challenging time, the province has announced that as of Monday, March 23, 2020, TV Ontario will be used to provide a home learning platform called "[Learn at Home](#)."

We have been told that there will be an emphasis on literacy and numeracy activities, and that more resources will be launched to support students in the days and weeks ahead. I also want to let you know that our staff are compiling and building an additional repository of credible online learning resources that can be used at home, and these, too, will be available on March 23 on our website www.HPEschools.ca.

I also want to inform you that the Minister of Education has announced EQAO assessments for Grades 3, 6 and 9, and the Grade 10 Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (OSSLT), will not occur this school year. For Grade 12 students set to graduate in June, the Ministry of Education has waived the OSSLT as a graduation requirement. Further, the Minister has provided assurance to every potential graduate and their families that graduation will not be compromised.

My staff and I are committed to maintaining communication, timely updates, and clear and supportive actions under these incredibly challenging times. Earlier today I communicated to the entire HPEDSB system and shared that as staff and families we need to safeguard the following priorities in this order of importance:

1. our health, and the health of our families and loved ones;
2. our safety and the basic necessities we are fortunate to have, and that others may not have;
3. our responsibility to each other, especially our most vulnerable; and
4. our children's education and their academic needs.

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Hastings and Prince Edward
District School Board

Possibilities
TODAY & TOMORROW

Lucille Kyle, Chair of the Board
Sean Monteith, Director of Education

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With your support and the support of my team, we will approach a very uncertain future together, but one that we will overcome together, buoyed by resiliency and the strength of our families and communities.

I ask that you take all the necessary precautions and safety measures, and I wish you to take very good care of yourself and each other.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sean Monteith".

Sean Monteith
Director of Education
Hastings and Prince Edward District School