

March 19, 2020

Good evening everyone. I just wanted to take a moment to update you on a few key items.

First, I have tremendous empathy for what you are dealing with at home with the sudden changes we have all faced. I realize how difficult things have become.

Many of you, like me, will have parents, friends and family who are vulnerable and at risk that you are deeply worried about. In addition to financial and economic worries, you are likely dealing with your children who might be confused, disoriented, and in some cases, frustrated by the fact that classes have been cancelled.

Our students typically appreciate their share of snow days. What is particularly different now, is that they are expected to maintain social distancing and all of the activities they love to participate in have, for the most part, been postponed or cancelled. I am truly sorry for what our students have had to endure and for the profound stress that most of you as parents are feeling right now. Our Student Services Team has added helpful [information for teens](#) to our [COVID-19](#) webpage as promised in a previous message to parents.

I want you to know that it is equally as challenging for our staff. They are also dealing with, in many cases, their parents, their children, their economic and financial concerns, and their angst to continue student learning in an environment that, for many of them, is as foreign as it is frightening. That said, I have never been more proud of our staff and our schools for how they are all stepping up to the challenge that has been laid in front of them.

Through all of this, we will all need to be particularly kind and patient as we try and maintain our focus. We need to participate in social distancing and do our part to protect the safety of each other. We need to pay careful attention to our mental health at one of the most stressful times in our history. As we do our part to support each other's safety and our mental health, we also ask parents, students and staff to do their part to move the learning forward.

Knowing that classes will be cancelled for weeks and quite possibly months, it is important that we see some learning progress with our students from K-12 to ensure that they are set up for success for the 2021-22 school year. I want to be clear that the expectation is not that learning will proceed in the manner it has in the past. That would be asking too much of you and too much of our staff. As we move forward, the learning needs to be practical and reasonable, and it needs to be very respectful of the environment we are all living in.

We need our students to engage in their learning and we need you as parents to do what you can to encourage their engagement. We do, however, fully realize that you have other responsibilities and that your ability to support your child will not always be easy.

We will be doing everything we possibly can to help each student move forward to the next grade level on their pathway to graduation. We will also do everything we can to help our grade 12 students graduate.

Please know that prior to the end of April, we hope to provide you with clarity regarding fee refunds where applicable. We will do the right thing and return fees (prorated) that have already been paid. We just need a little more time to ensure we can do that fairly and efficiently.

In closing, I want to thank each of you personally for your understanding and for your patience. I wish you the very best as we move through this together.

Kurt Sacher
Superintendent of Schools