

March 31, 2020

Hello TCDSB Staff and Families,

I pray that all of you are keeping safe and well during these challenging times. I know that we are all focused on supporting the successful completion of the school year for our students, as well as advancing opportunities for the upcoming school year or post-graduation.

I apologise in advance for this lengthy letter but believe all the information included will be critical as we move ahead. I would like to share highlights from an announcement made by the Premier of Ontario and the Minister of Education earlier today as well as a Ministry of Education provincial guidance document that was issued to all school boards. The **new date for schools to open** for staff is now expected to be Friday, May 1 and for students on **Monday, May 4**. Please note that this decision will be re-evaluated by the government based on the advice of public health officials and if there is another extension, we will provide you with further information once it becomes available.

The Ministry recognizes the collective efforts being made to restore the continuity of learning for students. We all understand that distance/online learning will not replace the learning that takes place in the classroom where teachers are able to assess the unique needs of learners, but given the environment we find ourselves in, flexibility, creative thinking and adaptability will be required in order to respond.

The TCDSB has already been preparing for **Phase 2 (post-April 5) of the school closures** including issuing a survey that went out to all teachers and families asking about their technological needs. We are hoping that the information obtained will give us a better sense of what might be required by teachers and students to ensure participation in the continuity of learning process. For instance, where needed, the TCDSB will make every effort to provide teachers and students with technological equipment to carry out teaching and learning. In consultation with Toronto Public Health, we communicated a protocol today to allow teachers and school-based support staff one-time access to their schools in order to pick up any teaching supplies and equipment safely.

In order to support teacher professional development and the ability to prepare for online teaching, the TCDSB has offered professional learning opportunities to teachers in a few modalities. Teachers will choose from using the Ministry provided Virtually Learning Environment: Brightspace, Google Classroom, G-Suite, email or the school website for communicating lessons with their students or parents depending on the age of the child. The Ministry has also outlined **expected hours of weekly teacher-led learning per division on suggested areas of curriculum focus** which includes:

- 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: ten 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)

We expect that our teachers will prepare assigned work and provide feedback and assessment to their students. We also expect that **students with special education needs** receive appropriate accommodations where necessary and be provided with assigned work by teachers based on the student's IEP, as well as feedback or assessment.

For **secondary students**, it is expected that teachers will provide assessment and evaluation on assigned work, and the culmination of learning activities will inform students' final marks in their courses. Grade 12 students scheduled to graduate this year will be supported so they can graduate. Teachers of graduating students will be expected to provide marks by April 23<sup>rd</sup> for work completed by that time in order to meet admission requirements for post-secondary education. The Ministry is engaged in discussions with colleges and universities about how best to move ahead in the admission process for students applying to post-secondary education, and further information will be provided once available.

**The graduation requirement to complete 40 hours of community involvement has been suspended for this school year.** Previously documented community involvement hours will still be identified on report cards of graduating students.

It is our expectation that **all students receive a final report card, including the Kindergarten Communication of Learning.**

To all of the TCDSB families, we are reminding you to **complete the survey** shared on Friday to confirm the availability of devices and internet connection at home. We ask for this to be completed no later than noon on Friday, April 3, 2020. The survey can be accessed here:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/TCDSB-Home-Technology>

Parents are also reminded to ensure that your child's school has up to date email and phone contact information on file as **your child's teacher will be contacting you** in the coming days, if not already done. Be aware that this call may come through as a blocked or private number.

We want to thank all of you for your continued commitment to the TCDSB and our efforts to support our students.

*Be strong and courageous.*

*Don't be afraid.*

*The Lord, your God, is with you wherever you go. - Joshua 1:9*

Sincerely,

Rory McGuckin