



Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board
Believing, Achieving, Serving

April 1, 2020

Dear Parents/Guardians,

Following yesterday's provincial government announcement regarding the **May 4th school closure extension** and the rollout of Phase 2 student learning, the Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board has been working diligently with our senior staff, curriculum teams, principals and employee group representatives to actualize the return to teacher and educator supported learning.

This next phase of at home learning will begin on Monday, April 6, 2020 and will be delivered remotely using online resources and technologies. Since last week, staff across the system has been working very hard for the return to teacher and educator supported learning and has begun the process of reaching out to students to re-engage them in their learning.

In order to ensure equity in educational opportunity and access to required equipment, the HWCDSB is currently in the process of identifying families that do not have a digital device or Internet connectivity through an online survey, which you should have received yesterday. Over the next few days, the board will do our best to ensure technology gets in the hands of those who need it and to support students and families in accessing this next phase of distance learning. Like many of you, our teachers and support staff are eager to continue to lead students in their journey of faith formation, learning and discovery.

At a news conference on March 31st, Premier Ford and Minister Lecce stressed that it is their expectation that students will continue to learn while in-school classes are suspended. While we understand that teaching and learning will not be the same as it is in the classroom, the HWCDSB is committed to working collaboratively with our system and school leaders, teachers and support staff, and employee group representatives to support the continuity of learning over the next month of school closures.

Based on Ministry guidelines, the teacher/educator directed learning framework is as follows:

- Kindergarten–Grade 3: 5 hours of work per student per week, with a focus on literacy and math;
- Grades 4–6: 5 hours of work per week, with a focus on literacy, math, science, and social studies;
- Grades 7–8: 10 hours of work per week, with a focus on math, literacy, science and social studies; and,
- Grades 9–12: 3 hours of work per course per week for semestered students, and 1.5 hours of work per course per week for non-semestered students, with a focus on credit accumulation and graduation.

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Please note that the suggested hours of work per student per week are provided as a minimum guideline, as are the suggested areas of curriculum focus. **For HWCDSB students, Religious Education will also form an essential part of the learning framework.**

For elementary students, teachers will use formative assessment approaches to gather evidence of how students are progressing in their learning. It is expected that teachers will provide feedback to their students on their progress.

Secondary students will be assigned learning tasks, projects and culminating activities that will be marked by their teachers for purposes of formative and summative evaluation. Results will be used by teachers to inform students' final course marks.

Priority will be placed on students scheduled to graduate this year. Marks will be provided to graduating students by April 23rd on work completed up to that time, in order to meet admission requirements for post-secondary education. The Ministry has assured school boards that **no student's graduation or transition to post-secondary** will be jeopardized as a result of COVID-19 and the Ministry-ordered school closure. The graduation requirement to complete 40 hours of community involvement has been suspended for this school year.

We are also looking to leverage the capacity of our professional, para-professional staff and Educational Assistants to remotely support students with Special Education needs in accessing the Ontario curriculum. Our Social Work staff is preparing a number of resources to support the mental health and well-being of students and staff; these will be shared as they become available. Our social workers continue to maintain their regular case load and to connect with students on an as-needed basis. Students are also encouraged to contact [Kids Help Phone](#) for 24/7 counselling and information. It is important that no young person should feel alone during the COVID pandemic.

During times of crisis, we can't understate the importance of prayer. This Palm Sunday heralds the start of Holy Week, the last week of Lent before the great celebration of Easter. We encourage you to tune into Channel 14 Sundays at 11 am and CH at 1 pm for [televised Masses](#) from the Cathedral Basilica of Christ the King.

As we continue to prepare for this next phase of teacher and educator directed learning on April 6, 2020, we want to commend all of our staff for their dedicated service and want to thank our students and their families for their patience and understanding during these uncertain times. We fully expect that there will be some bumps and glitches as we work through this new delivery method, but with your support, our students will be back to learning in a teacher supported environment.

Through the intercession of Our Blessed Mother, we continue to pray for the health and safety of our students, staff, families and parish communities.



Patrick J. Daly
Chairperson of the Board



David Hansen
Director of Education