



Trustee
Chris Tonks

Ward 6, York South-Weston



March 23, 2020

Dear Ward 6 Parents, Guardians and Community Members:

Update on Continuation of Learning for Students

The continuation of student learning is our top priority as we return from March Break and face the challenges this poses in the current unprecedented situation where schools are closed.

Today, phase one of support for student learning was launched with the Ministry of Education's [Learning at Home](#) website. This portal provides supplementary learning materials in math and literacy for elementary and secondary students. The website will help keep students learning and engaged during the COVID-19 school closure period. The ministry has said that these resources do not replace what students have been learning at school, but are intended to help mitigate learning loss during the COVID-19 shutdown period.

In announcing this new initiative, Education Minister Stephen Lecce also stated that if school closures go beyond April 5, the Ministry of Education will launch a second phase of *Learn at Home*.

Also today, the TDSB is providing [additional online resources](#) that will support the Ministry's *Learn at Home* initiative, covering a range of grades and subjects that may be helpful for students and parents during this time. It is important to note that these online resources are not mandatory or graded and are meant for families to use as optional resources to support independent learning while students are at home.

In addition, the ministry has asked school boards to use the next two weeks to develop plans to re-establish the delivery of curriculum, and to explore ways to provide students with access to devices and internet connectivity in the event the closure is extended. In creating our plan, we are collaborating with school administrators, educators, and union and federation partners to explore a range of ways that teachers and educational workers will be supported to be able to reach students during the school closure period. These relationships are important in supporting students' wellbeing and learning. School closures due to Covid-19 have created new stressors for some students and their families. Beginning on Monday, March 23, 2020, many members of the Professional Support Services staff with mental health expertise will reach out to the students with whom they have relationships. In a few days, a variety of mental health resources will be announced on the TDSB webpage. Students who require urgent

support should contact the Kids Help Phone at 1-800-668-6868. Alternative methods of contacting them are available at <https://kidshelpphone.ca/call>. Their counsellors are available 24 hours a day, 7 days per week.

We understand that parents and students are very concerned about this interruption to student learning. We also understand the importance of teachers, administrators and all education staff to provide the learning opportunities and programs our students need. We ask for your patience as we collaborate with all stakeholders to finalize how this direct support to students will be offered over the next while. We are committed to working through all aspects of this situation quickly and effectively under these very challenging circumstances.

The TDSB has been working to resolve a number of challenges that lie in creating conditions where all students and teachers have access to devices and the internet and supporting our Special Education and English as a Second Language students. We are committed to working through all aspects of this situation quickly and effectively under these very difficult circumstances. We are working on our plan and once finalized, we will share it with staff, students and families.

These are the challenges that school boards are working on now with the Ministry of Education as we know the continuation of learning is top of mind for parents and students. We remain committed to keeping you informed as we strive to meet the challenges of supporting student learning during these most extraordinary times and conditions.

Update on Student Graduation and Post-Secondary Transition

We know that parents of students in their last year of high school are concerned about graduation. We heard from the Minister of Education today that no student will be denied graduation as a result of school closures due to COVID-19. Parents are also concerned about the impact of the disruption to learning on students' post-secondary plans, the submission of marks and applications. We understand the Ministry of Education is working with the Ministry of Colleges and Universities to ensure there is post-secondary transition contingency plan in place and more details from province will be provided soon.

Regards,



Chris Tonks
Trustee, York South-Weston