



## **INFORMATION FOR UGDSB STAFF REGARDING COVID-19: Continuity of Learning**

March 24, 2020

To all UGDSB staff,

I hope this message finds you all well. This March Break has been unlike anything we have ever experienced and the next few weeks will provide challenges, but I am confident that we will work through this together and will be able to provide the best possible learning experience for our students while following the safety guidelines recommended by Public Health.

Next to the health and safety of our staff and students, our top priority is the continuity of learning for our students during the ongoing school closures. I would like to provide some information on the next steps the board is taking as schools remain closed.

Senior staff will continue meeting virtually, working actively on developing plans for our system during the school closure.

Last week, the Upper Grand District School Board shared information with families on [learning resources](#) to support UGDSB students. It is important to note that these learning 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.

Also last week, the Ministry of Education launched phase one of support for student learning through the Ministry'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.

The ministry has asked school boards to use the next two weeks to develop plans to re-establish the delivery of curriculum to the greatest extent possible, as the Premier has now indicated that the closure will be extended beyond April 5. We are actively working on a plan for the UGDSB and once finalized, we will share it with staff, students and families. In the meantime, we are encouraging families to check the board website and Ministry Learn at Home website for learning resources.

In creating our plan, we are collaborating with school administrators and educators to explore a range of ways to provide distance learning to our students and ensure the successful completion of the school

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### **Upper Grand District School Board**

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year for all students. We will also be consulting with our union and federation partners as we develop our plan. These relationships are important in supporting students' well-being and learning.

We have received a number of questions from teachers wishing to reach out to students. If you currently connect with your students on Google Classroom, please continue to reach out to provide reassurance and direct them to our board's website for our own UGDSB learning resources. Please do not use online "red tools" that have not been properly vetted or establish brand new alternate learning platforms or resources on your own at this time. We are currently working on developing a learning platform and will provide staff with details once our plan is finalized.

Please note that we cannot replicate our traditional school experience, however we will do whatever we can to provide supports and resources to our students and staff, and carefully consider issues of equity and accessibility.

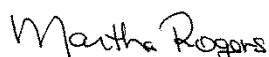
Finally, we also know that parents of students in their last year of high school are concerned about graduation. We heard from the Minister of Education that no student will be denied graduation as a result of school closures due to COVID-19. Parents are also concerned about the impact of the disruption to learning on students' post-secondary plans, and 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 a post-secondary transition contingency plan in place and more details from the province will be provided soon.

We are all faced with uncertainty during this time of social distancing and self isolation. It is important to monitor and take care of our mental health. We have prepared some resources to help with managing difficult conversations and supporting overall mental health during these difficult times:  
<https://www.ugdsb.ca/community/coronavirus/mental-health-resources-during-covid-19/>

The board's Wellness Department will continue to send out resources to support our staff during this period.

We will continue to keep you informed as we work through the challenges presented by these unprecedented times. Take care of yourself and your family. Our thoughts are with all of our staff, students and families.

Sincerely,



Martha Rogers  
Director of Education & Secretary-Treasurer

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