



## School District No. 51 (Boundary)

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April 6, 2020

Dear Parents and Guardians,

Staff and students *would* have been back to school for a week already had these been normal times; but these are not normal times. These days are truly unprecedented, and we appreciate your patience as our educators prepare for the new continuity of learning model.

Last week our teachers were training and learning on new remote sharing platforms like Zoom, Microsoft Teams and Google Classroom in their effort to plan learning opportunities for their students. Our teachers are truly becoming 21<sup>st</sup> Century learners and we are very proud of their diligence, flexibility and positivity as they engage in these remote learning platforms. In addition, they actively connected with students and families to see how they were doing and to determine individual student learning needs.

As you can imagine, this change is extensive and will require these gifted educators to adapt and innovate. We want to emphasize the need to go slow so as to ensure that we are doing the right things and so we don't overwhelm staff, students or our families.

Starting today, week 2 (April 6th - April 9th), we will begin to transition students into the world of remote learning. The focus will be to continue making meaningful connections with students and to familiarize them with remote learning platforms. Remote learning platforms will generally be technology based but can also include learning packages depending on the needs of each student.

In week 3 (starting April 14), weekly learning engagement/formats will become more formalized and support staff will become more fully engaged in connecting with students requiring supports beyond their classroom teacher(s).

While this new remote learning format will not look the same as in-class learning, it will open doors to other ways of engaging learners. Please be assured that no one is expecting you to become a 'teacher'. All we ask is that you support your child with the learning opportunities sent home as best you can, and to not feel guilty if you are unable to do so. We are in this together and we want to work together to ensure all students are successful!!

We believe more support will be needed from parents/guardians the younger your child is. For example, students in primary grades K-3 will need more support than students in high school who will likely be able to work independently. In fact, we hope students in higher grades will connect with other students from their classes to collaborate and problem solve.

Below are some key guidelines for continuity of learning in SD51:

- Teachers will provide meaningful, flexible educational opportunities that are accessible to all their students, recognizing their social/emotional needs are paramount.
- Students will be provided with a variety of learning experiences to develop literacy and numeracy skills.
- Diverse circumstances of families will be considered in teacher planning and they will do their best to be responsive to differing student needs (including offering options of online learning and/or resource packages.)
- Teachers will be organizing their planning by focusing on prioritizing the remaining learning outcomes that will best support student success in the future.
- There will be communication of learning plans and activities to students & families on a weekly basis as well as ongoing connection with students via phone or remote learning platforms.
- We will continue to address the needs of students with diverse abilities through a collaborative consultation approach where Student Support Services, enrolling and non-enrolling educators, students, and parents are involved in the decision-making process and education of their child.

**There is a presumption that students will continue to participate in remote learning opportunities to the best of their ability.** Teachers will generally provide weekly plans of learning opportunities to students.

- In the primary grades (K-3), there will be a focus on literacy and numeracy. Teachers will collect information on how students are doing with the tasks provided along with ongoing communication with their students.
- In the intermediate grades (4-7), there will be a focus on literacy and numeracy as well as a nominal focus on social studies and science. Teachers will be connecting with students using a combination of phone calls and remote learning platforms.
- In the middle years (8-9), there will be a focus on math, english, science and social studies. The focus will be dependent on what courses have already been completed in their first semester. Teachers will be connecting with students with a focus on engagement using remote learning tools.
- In the grad years (10-12), the following messages are important for students:
  - Final marks will be affected by the level of engagement in the learning tasks provided over the months of April, May and June. The Ministry of Education has made it clear that students will receive a final grade/assessment based on how they were doing before Spring Break and the level of participation/engagement after Spring Break.
  - If you were not passing a course prior to spring break (for example, received an “I” on your interim report card), you are expected to get the incomplete work done. Your teacher will provide you with information on what needs to be done so that you can be successful in the course. That window of opportunity to submit incomplete work will be determined by your school Principal.
  - Some elective courses will continue to run dependent on how the school prioritizes and organizes for remote learning.

As we move forward, we know this format of learning is different and even disconcerting for some, but all we ask is that you:

- Do the best you can under these stressful conditions. Do not stress about the learning! Stress and anxiety are high in many families due to the current state of things.
- Please focus on what your child needs to feel safe and secure during this time; *ultimately, the learning is secondary at this point.*

- Please support your teacher(s) efforts. This is new, uncharted territory for all of us.

Please remember that schools are locked. Information on how to get your child's personal belongings will be shared with you by your child's Principal.

Finally, we appreciate your patience and your supportive messages. As we learn to use and share this new modality of learning with our students, we anticipate there will be growing pains. We are hopeful that as our learners and educators become more familiar collectively with our continuity of learning tools, that remote learning opportunities will feel more natural and accessible. We applaud you for any support you can provide during these unprecedented times.

Wishing you the best.

Take care and stay healthy,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "K. Minette". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Ken Minette  
Superintendent of Schools  
School District No. 51 (Boundary)