



BRANT HALDIMAND NORFOLK  
CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

## Message to families – April 26, 2020

Today's announcement from the Honourable Minister Lecce to extend the closure of schools to May 29th, 2020 was not unexpected. As we continue to take direction from the Ministry of Health and Education, we understand the importance of doing our part to reduce the spread of COVID-19.

I am happy to report that our Board was actively planning for this announcement, and that the continuation of the learning plan is well underway; and that students of the Board are actively participating in instruction in one form or another.

Our dedicated staff have connected with their students, and they are participating in virtual learning. Special education resources and equipment have been directed to students, as has computer technology, and we are distributing printed material to students who need it. There have been a few logistical issues that we have had to overcome and we know that nothing is perfect, but the trustees and I are incredibly proud at how quickly and effectively our district has worked, together with families, to ensure that the 2019-20 school year continues.

As we progress through the evolution of this pandemic, the likelihood of events and trips being cancelled or postponed is high, I want to stress that these are indeed unique times and the safety of all of us is paramount. I want all of you to know that you have the board's commitment that schools will be keeping you updated on the process for refunds and the possibility of new dates as soon as they have that information.

As a father of a child in our system, I understand that you have many unanswered questions. Will our children go back before the end of the school year? Will my child progress to the next grade in September? What happens to year-end trips and payments? What will my Grade 8 or 12 child's graduation look like? At this time, and with the information that has been provided to Ontario school boards, we still do not have all those answers. What we do know, and to be clear, if your child was on track to graduate, he/she will be graduating, and there will be no impediment to post-secondary education as a result of the closing of our schools. I can also share that if your child was on track to progress to the next elementary grade level, he/she will progress.

As we receive more direction and clarification from both the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Education, we will be able to answer those questions for you in more detail, along with a proper implementation plan.

I also recognize that we have all had to roll-up our sleeves in the assistance of our children's education in these challenging times. As we continue down the road of distance education, I want you to know that our teachers, principals, and staff are here to support you and assist you in any way possible for the success of our children. As we continue to move forward, I encourage you reach out to them if you need help as they are here for you.

I wish to thank all of you for your patience, understanding, and commitment to working with the board in the continuity of learning of our children during this pandemic.

I want to also express my deep appreciation for all our teachers, staff, principals, and union partners for all their hard work during the difficult times. They have truly exemplified what it is to be a Catholic educator, and it underscores their dedication commitment to the learning of our children.

For the most up to date information please visit the Board's website for updates as we share them.

I wish you well and will continue to provide you with information as I receive it.

God bless,

Rick Petrella, Chair of the Board