

WEEKLY MEMORANDUM

TO: Trustees
Student Trustees

FROM: Camille Williams-Taylor, Director of Education and Secretary of the Board
Michèle Giroux, Executive Officer, Corporate Services

DATE: 22 April 2020

RE: **Weekly Memorandum to Trustees #3 (April 20-24)**

Update on Emergency Operations

- **Coaching Sessions** - Since 6 April 2020, almost 2500 educators have taken part in the PAL (Program & Learning) Instructional Coach support sessions. The initial focus of the sessions was on supporting the learning platforms, in partnership with Business & Learning Technology (B<), and resources compiled in our Continuity of Learning Teacher Resource and the OCDSB Online Learning Supports for Students. Coaches provided sessions in all curricular areas across all grades. During the first two days alone, 350 educators took part in sessions supporting K-12.
During Week 2, PAL coaches worked cross-departmentally to offer sessions related not only to learning applications but also to online learning model delivery (e.g., over a two day period, over 250 kindergarten educators attended sessions presented by PAL and Early Learning on collaborative planning). Given the interactive nature of these sessions, PAL has encouraged feedback from educators across the system.
Based on this feedback, sessions have continued to evolve into Week 3. Secondary coaches are running assessment and evaluation sessions tied to course areas such that teachers across the District can work together to plan for student learning and assessment. Elementary coaches are focussing on formative assessment.
Of note, Dr. Marian Small, renowned math educational researcher contacted the District after hearing positive feedback from the math educator community regarding the math coach sessions run by the District. She offered to partner with our coaches to deliver sessions at no cost. PAL Numeracy Coaches and ESL Coaches partnered together with Dr. Small and over 425 educators participated in these sessions over two days. Dr. Small has committed to continuing to partner with our numeracy coaches in providing further sessions. Sample

feedback can be found below from one teacher:

“I feel like the support I have received has been really helpful in this strange and unusual new normal for all. I have been able to attend some stuff live and the recorded sessions are also really helpful. I was feeling really overwhelmed at the beginning of this phase two of work at home but am really getting the hang of it now.”

The combined total of coach sessions across departments since the school closures have involved almost 5000 educators. Sessions will continue to be tailored to the needs of teachers throughout the school closures in support of student learning.

- **International Baccalaureate (IB)/ Advanced Placement (AP)** - The International Baccalaureate (IB) program is presently offered at Colonel By Secondary School and Merivale High School. As the program has just begun at Merivale HS, all of their students are in the pre-IB program and thus do not participate in the final IB exams. The IB organization (IBO) has cancelled all IB exams globally. Colonel By SS students have been contacted by the school principal and the IB coordinator to advise them of these cancellations. Teachers will consider other IB-specific assignments completed up to March 13 to inform the course mark, and, as with our guidelines, other submitted evidence of improved learning after the closure. IB diplomas will be granted, and the IB organization sees no impact for students on advanced placement to universities. Advanced Placement (AP) grade 12 exams will be delivered online. The AP organization has shared that they will be open book/open note format and will take place online at the same time, worldwide, from May 11-22. The exams will also be shortened, to approximately 45 minutes in duration.
- **DELFL (Diplôme d'études en langue française)** - The Grade 12 French as a Second Language Proficiency test (DELFL) takes place twice a year in the OCDSB (November and April). The April assessment was cancelled by the District and later cancelled at the international level due to COVID-19. The dates to run DELFL sessions are established by an international governing body, France Education International. The spring date administration sessions in Canada are April, May and June. The May dates have been cancelled in Canada by the governing body and they anticipate cancelling the June dates as well. France Education International is not considering moving the assessment to a virtual platform due to the nature of the assessments. A request for the addition of an August DELFL administration in Canada has been submitted. We will provide an update should the request be considered by France Education International.
- **Reach Out Campaign** - Schools continue to reach out to families with whom no contact has been made (or families where initial contact was made and has since dropped off). As part of our ongoing effort to make contact, we have prepared a standard letter which will be mailed to families with whom we have had no contact and a social media awareness campaign titled [Hello #OCDSB Families We Are Trying To Reach You](#). We have also asked our community partner agencies to support our efforts to reach out to families. In addition, we are working with Ottawa Public Health (OPH) and the Children's Aid Society to develop additional resources and support for families in need.
- **Thoughtexchange** - Last week the District completed a Thoughtexchange engagement with students, parents and community members. Over 7000 people

participated in the discussion. The [results](#) can be viewed on the District website. This week, staff is going deeper into the data analysis to use this information to inform decision making. Additional analysis will be shared with the community this week and a report will be included on the 28 April 2020 Board meeting agenda.

- **Zoom Security** - There have been many media reports about privacy and security concerns regarding Zoom. The OCDSB uses Zoom for business meetings and has an enterprise license. In the classroom environment, the District uses Google Meet, where access to meetings is authenticated through the student's OCDSB email address. In both environments, the District is a licensed user and has optimized the security and privacy settings to protect information and access. [REDACTED]
- **Ministry Technology Initiative** - Last week the Ministry of Education announced a partnership between Apple, Rogers and the Province to bring technology and Wi-Fi to students and their families. School boards were offered the opportunity to purchase iPads from Apple at a slightly discounted price that also included free Wi-Fi access from Rogers through 30 June 2020. Prior to this announcement, B< staff was in the process of distributing 7,000 Chromebooks to students and families to ensure they were able to continue their learning. The District also purchased 1700 mobile hotspots from Rogers and Kajeet (Bell devices) that will be distributed to families later this week and next. This will enable students to have access to online learning during this time. The District purchased Samsung tablets that are being used as hotspots. If needed, they can be used as tablets in the future. We were also able to use our existing agreement with Rogers to obtain data at a very reasonable rate. B< is preparing a more detailed memo for Trustees on the enhanced digital rollout.
- **Special Education Supports** - Further direction is expected shortly from the Ministry of Education regarding support for students with special education needs, including Individual Education Plans (IEPs) and Identification, Placement and Review Committees (IPRCs). Learning Support Consultants (LSCs) have continued to support classroom educators in both the regular class and specialized program classes as they support learners during this phase of Learning at Home. Students who require assistive technology and brailers to access their educational program have been provided with that equipment. Some physical equipment (e.g., walkers, wheelchairs) has also been distributed taking into consideration that some equipment is highly specialized and proper training is needed for use at home. Learning Support Services (LSS) is currently working with individual schools to determine other physical equipment that will support students learning at home. In partnership with SickKids, LSS is providing an opportunity for students in the Empower program to practice the Empower reading skills they have already learned. Online student worksheets from SickKids are designed to provide consolidation, reinforcement, and enhancement of Empower Reading skills as well as support students' fluency and comprehension. Students receiving direct home instruction services from visiting teachers prior to school closures are now continuing their learning online. Our professional support services personnel (PSSP) have been connecting with individual students and their families while work is progressing on a provincial

level to determine an appropriate platform for telepractice. PSSP continues to consult with school-based staff through multi-disciplinary meetings to support student learning and mental health. Social Workers have been promoting “Bridges over Barriers”, outlining the application process to administrators, contacting families, assessing needs and providing immediate financial support (grocery gift cards) to families. Over \$11,000 has been spent in direct support to families.

- **PA Day 24 April 2020** - This Friday, 24 April 2020 is the annual PA day on which our federations and associations normally organize and deliver relevant professional activities and learning for their members. Although the face to face programs have had to be cancelled, staff will be spending the day engaged in independent and/or collaborative professional learning, online training, and as an opportunity to reflect, refine and refresh. We know that many of our staff have been actively engaging in professional learning these last few weeks. There has been high participation in the coach-led sessions being offered by Program and Learning and Business & Learning Technology. These sessions will also be available to staff on Friday, both live and through the staff portal.

Other operational business

- **Principal/Vice-Principal Appointments** - Trustees can expect a call from Superintendents of Instruction this week to confirm Principal appointments for next year. The details are confidential until Thursday, 23 April 2020. The number of changes were limited to ensure continuity at this time.
- **Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation (OSSTF) Settlement** - On Monday, 20 April 2020, Ontario Public School Boards' Association (OPSBA) advised that tentative central settlements have been reached with OSSTF (Teachers) and OSSTF (Education Workers). The details will remain confidential until they are ratified, which won't occur until May. The conclusion of these settlements means that all central agreements are now in place. The focus will now shift to local discussions and local agreements. Further information will be provided with regard to the OSSTF central settlements and local bargaining updates through upcoming in camera meetings of the Board.

cc Senior Staff
 Manager, Board Services
 Corporate Records