

Memorandum To: Chairs of District School Boards
Directors of Education
School Authorities

From: Stephen Lecce
Minister of Education

Nancy Naylor
Deputy Minister

Thank you for your commitment to ensuring that, even in these unprecedented circumstances, Ontario's education system is maintaining its focus on supporting student learning.

We are writing to advise that Minister Lecce has signed an order extending school closures to at least May 31, 2020. School employees will have access to schools as of May 29, 2020.

The closure may be extended further if necessary to protect the health and safety of students, families, and staff, based on the advice of public health experts and the province's COVID-19 Command Table.

In protecting the emotional and mental health of students, boards must ensure that mental health workers and professional staff are available to engage with students immediately, as needed, in a secure and safe conversation.

During this period, we encourage students and parents to continue to access learning resources and tools through ***Learn at Home/Apprendre à la maison***. These portals are continuously being updated to provide additional materials and content.

The previously-directed hours of work per student, per week, and the suggested areas of curriculum focus that were set out in the March 31, 2020 provincial guidance document continue to apply:

Grade Range	
K-Grade 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Five hours of work per student per week• Focus: Literacy and math
Grades 4-6	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Five hours of work per student per week• Focus: Literacy and math + science and social studies
Grades 7-8	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 10 hours of work per student per week• Focus: Core math, literacy, science and social studies
Grades 9-12	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Three hours of work per course per week for semestered students; 1.5 hours of work per course per week for non-semestered students• Focus: Achieving credits/completion/graduation

SUMMER LEARNING

In the coming weeks, we look forward to working together to delivering a robust summer learning program that will reach as many students as possible, with a focus on credit delivery, credit recovery and gap-closing programs and supports for vulnerable students.

PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITY DAYS, EXAMINATION DAYS AND SCHOOL CALENDARS

We want to take this opportunity to recognize the commitment to students demonstrated by educators and support staff across the province. Circumstances have required all of us to change how we do our work. We are encouraged that educators and staff are engaging in voluntary professional development opportunities, building skills and sharing best practices for supporting continued learning in a remote environment. For example, over 14,000 educators so far have participated in the ministry's webinars on using Brightspace, the province's Virtual Learning Environment and teaching in a remote environment, and many more have engaged in board-delivered professional development. We encourage educators to continue developing their skills and competencies in this area. The ministry will continue to offer resources and supports.

In order to maximize instructional time for students during this unprecedented time, Minister Lecce has directed that all remaining professional activity days and examination days for the 2019-2020 school year are to be used for instruction. Amendments have been made to RRO 1990, Regulation 304 (School Year Calendar, Professional Activity Days) under the *Education Act*.

Although professional activity days are formally cancelled for the remainder of the school year, we encourage school boards to work with teachers and educational assistants to ensure time is available for report cards in June. In particular, the time necessary to complete report cards is recognized as a priority for students and parents.

We would also like to confirm that, as we continue to plan for the 2020-2021 school year, school year calendar submissions are not being considered for approval at this time. As such, boards will not be required to submit a 2020-2021 school year calendar and professional activity day descriptions by the May 1, 2020 deadline. The ministry will provide additional direction regarding new deadlines once decisions on the 2020-2021 school year have been made. We recognize the significant effort that goes in to preparing, adopting and submitting your school year calendars and professional activity day descriptions and thank you for your efforts as we work together to help Ontario students continue their learning.

Thank you once again for your efforts, and for those of your board staff and educators.

Sincerely,

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original signed by

Stephen Lecce
Minister of Education

Nancy Naylor
Deputy Minister

- c: President, Association des conseils scolaires des écoles publiques de l'ontario (ACÉPO)
Executive Director, Association des conseils scolaires des écoles publiques de l'ontario (ACÉPO)
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