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**MEMO TO:** Secondary Administrators and Staff of In-Person Schools

**FROM:** Senior Administration

**DATE:** December 30, 2020

**SUBJECT: Remote Learning Update**

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Thank you for your continued support. As a follow up to the communication that was shared with you on Monday, December 21, 2020, we wanted to provide you with additional details as we transition to remote learning.

### **Expectations for Remote Learning**

The Ministry has confirmed the expectation that remote learning in secondary schools in January 2021 will follow the required minutes for synchronous learning outlined in the [Program Policy Memorandum 164 – Expectation for Remote Learning](#).

At the secondary level, the Ministry expectation is that secondary students have the opportunity for 240 minutes of synchronous learning each day. It is important to note that synchronous learning may include times where the teacher is available online, but where students are working independently or in small groups (e.g., consolidation tasks such as practice questions, case studies, writing tasks, preparing a presentation, etc).

For remote learning period of January 4 to 22, TVDSB will maintain the current schedule of learning. Students will remain in their existing cohorts. In-person days will be synchronous, following the same timetable and schedule as is currently in place in the calendar. At home days will be asynchronous. Study hall will run as per usual.

The schedule of synchronous learning may need to be adapted slightly on January 4<sup>th</sup> to ensure that teachers have time to organize synchronous learning. *It is important to note that Google Meet is the platform for synchronous learning in TVDSB.* For this first day of remote learning, there should be a synchronous learning component, but this may not necessarily start at the beginning of the day. Instructions for accessing the first Google Meet session should be posted on the course digital platform by the start of the school day on January 4<sup>th</sup>, but students may be given an asynchronous learning task to start the day. Teachers' communication with students as we begin remote learning will be essential.

Teachers should encourage students to make use of study hall on their asynchronous learning days to provide ongoing support for learning and feedback on student achievement.

## **Professional Learning Educators for Remote Learning**

The Learning Technologies Team, along with other Learning Support Services staff will continue to provide supports for educators during Remote Learning.

The [TVDSB Digital Resources Sharepoint link](#) provides tip sheets, videos and links to upcoming virtual learning sessions. This will allow teachers to access professional learning supports at any time. Also available on this Sharepoint link is a list of upcoming, interactive virtual PD opportunities that will support educators' use of digital learning platforms, with a particular focus on setting up Google Meet sessions for synchronous learning.

A quick synopsis of key "start up" TVDSB PD resources for synchronous learning can be found at [Synchronous Learning Resources for Educators](#).

The Ministry of Education has also provided [Resources to Support Educators](#) with remote learning.

## **Access to Buildings**

Secretaries, custodians and administrators will be in school buildings in order to assist with school operations.

During the remote learning period, educators may attend their home schools to access resources and technology in order to deliver quality instruction, if needed.

Staff must notify the school administration if they are required to work in the school and must adhere to all health and safety protocols (i.e., masking, physical distancing, no congregating etc.). In addition, staff accessing the school must sign in and out each day, using the existing Visitor's Log, to ensure that administrators are aware of who accessed the school each day.

## **Device Deployment**

Families were asked to request computing devices by January 3<sup>rd</sup> through the Parent Portal. After this time, schools should still accept device requests through the school. While most students at the secondary level will have devices, as they were able to request devices to support their learning in the Adapted Learning Model, some students who were previously sharing a device in the family may no longer be able to do so with increased synchronous learning requirements. For families who do not have access to the parent portal, they were asked to email or phone the school to request a device. Administrators are asked to enter this information on behalf of families who did not submit their request through the Employee Portal (via Technology Needs Request / School Request Form for Students) on January 4<sup>th</sup>.

TSAs have started prepping devices for student use at home, based on requests received since December 28<sup>th</sup>. These devices will be delivered to the respective schools starting on January 4<sup>th</sup>. TSAs will continue working in schools the week of January 4<sup>th</sup> to prepare devices for student use at home, as additional requests are received. Once devices are ready in each school for student deployment, the TSA and/or their supervisor will advise

the administrator so that the office team at the school can contact families to arrange for front door pick-up of devices. It will take a number of days for devices to be prepared and deployed across the system. Detailed information about the process for device deployment processes will be provided to administrators early the week of January 4<sup>th</sup>.

Where specialized laptops for secondary Guidance and LST staff are required with remote Trillium access, consideration for deployment will occur as soon as possible. In the meantime, teachers who require remote Trillium access should make every effort to work in schools as much as possible.

### **Student Attendance**

During this remote learning period, attendance will be taken once during the students' designated synchronous learning day for both blocks, by 2:00 PM, via Web Attendance. It is important that both blocks are recorded for Ministry reporting purposes. Student participation in synchronous or asynchronous learning at any point during the day counts as attendance for that entire school day (i.e., logging into learning platform, e-mail, telephone, handing in assignment). As per current practice, attendance is NOT taken for students who are not on their designated synchronous learning day.

Teachers are to reach out to absent students via phone to maintain ongoing contact for those unable to access the digital classroom.

### **Special Education**

Beginning January 11<sup>th</sup>, students enrolled in a TVDSB Developmental Education Classroom will have the opportunity to attend in-person, if they are unable to access remote learning. This shall be determined on a case-by-case basis and will involve a discussion between the school and the parent/guardian of any student under the age of 18, or with any parents/guardians who have retained parental decision-making authority for students between the ages of 18 and 21 years old.

This same opportunity will be extended to the parents/guardians of any student in an Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) or Transition Classroom who was, prior to the Winter Break, attending every day and accessing the ASD or Transition Resource Room.

On January 4<sup>th</sup> the teacher of each of the abovementioned students will be expected to connect, by telephone, with the parents/guardians of the students in their class. The purpose of the conversation will be to provide an overview of the schedule and learning opportunities for the week of January 4<sup>th</sup> - 8<sup>th</sup>, and to offer the opportunity to have the student attend in person beginning on January 11<sup>th</sup>. It is essential that the outcome of these calls be recorded by the educator team (teacher and/or Educational Assistant) using the enclosed [Student Survey \(click HERE\)](#) so that transportation may be arranged for those students who qualify. Teachers are strongly encouraged to use the script that is included with the survey when offering in person learning opportunities for students during the period of remote learning. All phone calls must be completed, and the requisite data entered into the tracker, by the end of the workday on January 4<sup>th</sup> so that STS has sufficient time to finalize transportation.

## **Supporting Students Remotely**

This pivot to remote learning will bring forth many challenges for staff, students and families. It will be important that we all work together to support the health and well-being of all staff and students. Social workers and other professional services staff are available to students requiring additional support.

Guidance Counsellors, Student Success and Learning Support Teachers will also continue to play a very significant role in supporting students during this time.

Guidance Counsellors should continue to support students with their social-emotional needs by reaching out on a regular basis. Guidance Counsellors, with the support of their administrators and the classroom teacher, will also support students in pathway planning. A follow-up memo to support the registration process will be provided the week of January 4<sup>th</sup>.

Student Success Teachers should continue to connect with the classroom teachers to support those students in-risk of not achieving their credit(s). It may be necessary to connect with students and caregivers to support students in-risk on a regular basis. Credit rescue/recovery opportunities for students should continue virtually.

Where appropriate, the classroom teacher, with the support from the LST, should provide more opportunities than the minimum requirements for synchronous learning for students with special education needs, based on their individual strengths and needs, and provide differentiated support and instruction.

## **Assessment and Evaluation Expectations**

As a result of this move to remote learning, teachers may need to adjust their assessment and evaluation plans to include more formative assessment opportunities and fewer summative assessments. As the final course mark will be based on 100% of the term evaluations, there may be a need to provide different formative and summative tasks than originally outlined and communicated to students at the beginning of the Quadmester due to this current change in learning model.

Ensuring that students have multiple and varied ways to demonstrate their understanding of the Overall Curricular Expectations continues to be the primary focus in each course. Flexibility and understanding for each student's situation will also be necessary during this time. Focusing on diagnostic and formative assessment and modifying instruction to prioritize expectations will allow more time and the flexibility needed to pivot successfully within the virtual classroom environment. Students should continue to receive opportunities to improve their marks. In addition to information provided in previous assessment and evaluation memos, teachers may consider the following as credit improvement opportunities: re-doing parts or entire assessments; engaging in conversations and/or other forms of observations (alternate assessments); using ongoing formative and diagnostic assessment to inform summative grades; using professional judgement, etc.

If it is not possible for some students to access work electronically, teachers may provide packaged materials for in-person pick-up through pre-arranged pick-up times at the school while adhering to all Health and Safety protocols. Families picking up materials should not enter the school. Materials may also be mailed home. Schools are encouraged to work with families to find local solutions.

### **Grade 9 EQAO Math**

Grade 9 EQAO Math assessments will not take place this Quadmester. Students and staff will have limited time to practice using the new online platform and will not be prepared to write the assessment. Please see the memo from Superintendent Marion Moynihan, that will be shared the week of January 4<sup>th</sup>, for more details.

### **Co-Operative Education**

All in-person co-op placements will cease until the provincial lockdown has been lifted. Teachers will provide remote learning opportunities for students to complete their program.

We sincerely appreciate your ongoing support, understanding and flexibility as we transition to remote learning.