

Message to Families: COVID-19 Update

March 27, 2020

Dear Families,

We appreciate your patience and support as SRPSD works with the Ministry of Education and our internal team to make plans in an environment that is constantly changing. Parents are a child's first and most important role models and we know that you continue to work hard to support your children's needs. SRPSD will continue to work hard to support students and families, and for the next while, our support will look very different. Except for a few rare occasions, teachers and educational staff will work from home until April 9th and then the planned school break will follow.

Managing uncertainty is one of the challenges we are dealing with and many things remain unclear. We do not know if classes will resume this school year. We also do not know the details about how the supplemental learning plan will look, but we do know a few things:

- The division has activated its Business Continuity Plan and most of the school division operations will be paused, except for essential business services.
- School buildings are closed until further notice. We may have some division staff in schools after March 27, 2020 for operational purposes but classes remain suspended.
- Use of school playgrounds is discouraged. Many municipal governments have directed public to avoid parks and playgrounds and SRPSD is doing the same.
- Schools that have provided breakfast or lunch programs will not be able to provide these programs in the near future. Some schools may be able to provide some nutrition programming in the coming weeks, but stay connected to your local school for details.
- Teachers will be contacting parents the week of Monday March 30 to talk about what families need to support learning while classes are suspended and to outline what the possibilities for SRPSD support. Initially, you can anticipate several calls from the school because your child or children may each have several teachers who are each keen to stay connected and may have various perspectives and plans. If teachers do not contact you by the end of day on April 3, please contact your child's teacher or principal by email
- The development of the supplemental learning plan is in progress and will evolve and change as students, staff and parents become more experienced in this model.
- It is valuable for schools and families to stay connected and engaged in the planning together.

We also know that the Ministry of Education has provided some information they want us to share with families. The full message is attached but if you have trouble accessing the link, the main points are here:

- The Saskatchewan Education Response Planning Team, made up of education representatives, have been working hard on new ways to address the learning needs of students. Staff and school communities are focused on ensuring the safest and most appropriate way of offering education during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- A special thank you to students and families for your ideas, understanding, patience and flexibility during these extraordinary times.
- Saskatchewan school divisions are committed to providing all students an opportunity to learn and to support well-being.
- Families and caregivers are not expected to deliver Saskatchewan curriculum.
- Teachers, administrators and school staff want to remain connected to the students, families and communities they serve.
- Teachers are best positioned to offer, during this time of physical distancing, some learning opportunities to the students they are currently teaching, should their students/families choose to take advantage of them.
- In effort to engage all students, we will need to support teachers and staff in many different ways of delivering and offering learning opportunities.
- The learning opportunities will be to support families and caregivers in a continued learning structure for students if they choose to use them.
- Learning programs and decisions should be made with the most flexibility to ensure vulnerable students are given the opportunity to be successful.
- When school divisions receive these guidelines they will, in consultation with principals and teachers, be determining the most appropriate learning opportunities based on the local circumstances of their communities, schools, families and students. Your local school division staff will begin to connect with families and students as deemed most appropriate.

SRPSD teachers and staff are concerned by the sudden suspension of classes and the loss of daily connection with your children, and they are also managing the COVID-19 anxiety that exists in many of our personal lives. However, our schools are already planning ways to support students in their learning over the coming weeks and will depend on your patience and support as that plan gets out into place. We will provide updates to families as information becomes available. Messages will be sent through School Messenger and will be posted on www.srsd119.ca as well as on our SRPSD Facebook page. Please share the messages widely on your social networks because we want all parents and students to know that SRPSD is here and ready to support their learning needs.

In closing, please be sure to take precautions so that you and your family stay healthy and help prevent the rapid spread of COVID-19. Hand washing, coughing etiquette, social distancing and appropriate self-isolation are crucial. Current information about prevention, self-assessment and other details are available at www.saskatchewan.ca/coronavirus. It is also important to consider the emotional and psychological needs of children and others in your lives. Take care of each other.

Yours in Education,

Barry Hollick, Board Chair and Robert Bratvold, Director of Education