

## Message to Families: COVID-19 Update

April 3, 2020

Dear Families,

The learning continues in SRPSD! Thank you for the patience, cooperation and support that you have demonstrated to the division's staff. As we reached out to families in the last few days, parents frequently greeted our staff with warmth, appreciation and genuine concern for staff well-being. Thank you for that support. We all know that these may be difficult times, and we are not immune to the challenges and problems that exist, but the strong encouragement and mutual support certainly helps us all endure the difficulties.

Most of the schools have completed most of their parent contacts, and parents might be interested to know that:

1. **Most schools have been able to contact between 90-100% of families.** In some schools, families have been more difficult to reach (all phone numbers or email addresses are either not connected or not answered) so between 70-90% of families have been contacted in those schools.
2. **Most families are choosing to participate in the supplemental learning program.** In most schools between 80-100% of families, indicate a desire to participate. About a third of schools report that between 50-80% are participating.
3. **Most families prefer a tech-based delivery mechanism for supplemental learning.** In most schools 80-100% of families prefer Google Classroom, SeeSaw, email and a mix of other online tools.
4. **In some schools, more families prefer learning opportunities through some form of pick-up at school, mail delivery or other method.** In about one-third of our schools, most families prefer a non-tech method. The division is working with the Chief Medical Officer of Health and others to determine the most safe and appropriate way we can provide these kinds of delivery methods.

If your family has not been contacted by your school, please contact your child's teacher, if you have the contact information, or contact the school. If you are not able to make contact, please leave a message at the division Education Centre indicating how to best reach you and we will ensure that your child's teacher connects with you. The Education Centre voice-mail number is 306-764-1571.

We continue to work hard to support students and families with the best possible learning opportunities. I encourage each of you to take advantage of the program your teacher provides and work together with your child's teacher to find resources, programs and activities best suited to your needs. As you pursue the supplemental learning with your child or children, please take time to consider the mental health needs of your family. The environment may be more stressful than it was just two weeks ago, so it becomes even more important to care for our mental health and the mental health of others as well. There are support lines that are available, so if you need support or just need ideas, please reach out; we can help.

SRPSD is making great progress on developing and delivering the supplemental learning program, but it will take time for staff and families to become more experienced and comfortable in this new environment. It will also take some more time to refine the supports needed for specialized needs like counselling, home learning programs, intensive learning needs, speech therapy, English as Additional Language programs and other diverse needs. We know there is more to do in these areas, but our specialized staff have made some amazing progress and this support will continue to grow and develop as we proceed.

One of the final areas of concern that affects a specific group of students is the concern for graduating students moving to post-secondary education. SRPSD is providing for the students' learning needs and considering adjustments to local scholarship programs while the province is planning with universities and colleges to manage the admissions process. There are no final answers yet, but the Ministry is working within the province to create a system for smooth transitions. In addition, provinces are working together for those students who plan to attend post-secondary training outside of Saskatchewan. It is promising that all parties are fully aware of the challenges and seeking ways to support students. You can look for more information to come from the province, but perhaps not for several weeks.

In closing, please stay connected with your child's teacher(s); continue to work through challenges together and share the successes and celebrations of learning success as well. As you do that, also remain vigilant in your efforts to prevent the rapid spread of COVID-19. Stay home; if you cannot stay home then be sure to stay distant from others in public and wash your hands often. Visit the website [www.Saskatchewan.ca/coronavirus](http://www.Saskatchewan.ca/coronavirus) for more COVID-19 information. Take care of each other.

Yours in Education,

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