



Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board  
*Believing, Achieving, Serving*

June 5, 2020

Dear Students/Learners,

We are now in the home stretch of this school year and before too long our students will begin summer holidays. Although COVID-19 has prevented our graduating Grade 8 and Grade 12 students from marking the completion of their elementary and secondary Catholic education with a graduation ceremony and prom, it in no way diminishes their accomplishments, nor does it make the celebration any less real. We offer our warmest congratulations and prayers to our graduates as they set out on the next phase of their life journey. We also want to acknowledge the positive contribution and commitment of parents/guardians to their child's success in Catholic education.

During these days of physical distancing and home learning, our students have shown incredible resiliency in the face of challenge and have served as true sources of light and hope for our system, our communities and our world. We applaud each of them for their hard work and determination of the past year, especially during these last few months of the school shutdown.

As we continue in these remaining weeks of online learning, we have several important updates to share with you.

**We stand with you**

We have been outraged and deeply saddened by recent events in the U.S. and Canada. The HWCDSB joins together with OCSTA and Catholic school boards throughout Ontario in denouncing anti-black racism in our society. This particular type of social injustice has been prevalent for too long and we join in solidarity with good people everywhere to strive towards the eradication of racism in all its forms. See the [full statement](#). Resources are currently being developed and will be available soon on our board website for students and families.

**Retrieval of Personal Belongings from School**

Students will be able to retrieve their personal belongings from school starting June 15th. Families will receive a letter via email from their principal describing the procedure that has been implemented at the school to facilitate the safe pick-up of personal belongings. Parent/guardians or students will be required to confirm in advance that they meet certain conditions related to symptoms, travel history and contact with person(s) who may have COVID-19, and comply with the School Access Procedure, developed with and approved by Hamilton Public Health Services.

**Report cards**

Reporting on student achievement is an essential part of the teacher-student-family relationship. It is an opportunity for teachers to formally celebrate the achievement of students while also informing students and parents/guardians about those areas that should be a focus for next steps. In this time of uncertainty and disrupted teaching and learning, it is even more important

that the report card provides students and parents/guardians essential information to prepare for the next phase of the academic journey.

The provincially-mandated school closure from March 13, 2020 – June 30, 2020 will be included in the reporting period for the June report card. Families/students will receive an electronic copy of the report card along with a letter from the school principal with details on the reporting procedure. A signed copy of the report will be placed in the Ontario Student Record (OSR) at a later date.

### **Summer Learning**

Following the Ministry of Education's announcement regarding summer learning, we are currently working on changes to our summer school program. Our online registration system will reopen for registration on Friday, June 5, 2020 as we make the move to e-learning. Please check your secondary school website or the [St. Charles website](#) for details.

### **Ontario's COVID-19 Testing Plan**

The well-being of all members of our school communities, including students, families and staff, is a top priority for the HWCDSB. That is why it's important for you to know that the province has released its testing plan, [Protecting Ontarians Through Enhanced Testing](#), to support Ontarians who have identified the need to get tested. As of May 24, 2020, people no longer need a referral to be tested for COVID-19.

### **ThoughtExchange Consultation**

A ThoughtExchange consultation was launched in May to invite feedback from students, parents and staff about their personal experiences with the home learning reality. A total of 2,066 respondents took part in the exchange, including 1,071 parents/guardians, 584 staff and 411 students who together shared 2,874 thoughts and rated close to 51,000 others. To all those who participated, we thank you for taking the time to complete the survey. Your thoughts and ratings will enable us to better support home learning and will provide important input as we consider various scenarios for the 2020-2021 school year.

Our plans going forward will be guided by our priority concern for the safety and well-being of our students and staff and our shared commitment to provide the highest quality Catholic Education possible. Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, we do not yet know what the September return to school will look like, but we ask our staff, students and families to remain flexible and understanding during these uncertain times. Over the last few months of distance learning, we have been encouraged by the collective effort of parents, teachers and support staff to support our students in their learning. To our Principals, Vice-Principals, teachers and school and system support staff, we offer our deep appreciation for their tremendous service and important Christian witness and to you, our learners and parents, thank you for your understanding, patience and support of Catholic Education.

### **Hope in our World**

At our most recent board meeting, the Board of Trustees approved "Our Lady of Hope" as the name of our new elementary school currently under construction in Binbrook. This beautiful name and the story of Our Lady of Hope will provide great inspiration, great comfort and great

witness for the staff, students and families who will make up the school community of Our Lady of Hope Catholic Elementary School for many years to come.

We pray through her intercession for the continued well-being of our students, staff, parents and Parish communities.



Patrick J. Daly  
Chairperson of the Board



David Hansen  
Director of Education