NAVIGATING the JOURNEY TOGETHER

A resource for Parents/Guardians

Volume II
June 24, 2020

Contains UPDATED Information
Distance Learning

- What is it?
- What can I expect as a parent/guardian?
- What are some guiding principles and tips to engage in distance learning for parents/guardians?
- What are some guiding principles and tips to engage in distance learning for students?

Supporting Distance Learning- What does it look like?

- How are teachers and support staff helping students learn at a distance?
- What will be the focus and time allotted for learning at a distance?
- How will student learning be assessed, evaluated and reported (Secondary)?
- How will student learning be assessed, evaluated and reported (Elementary)?
- What are learning resources parents/guardians can use to support distance learning for their child?

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How Can I Stay Informed?

- Where can I find the most up-to-date information about school closures and learning at a distance?
Distance learning has been a new experience for all of us. We recognize that these have been challenging times and individuals have been affected in different ways. These past three months has been a learning journey of how to navigate this new reality together. Our goal remains, to support the GECDSB community in service to our students, as best as possible. We are here to support teaching and learning for all GECDSB students.

What is it?

Distance learning means that children and youth can continue learning with support from their teachers. Our focus is on helping students:

- To continue to engage in learning to prepare for the next year or to graduate,
- To stay connected to their school community, their teacher(s) and their peers, and
- To maintain mental health and well-being.

Distance learning is not the same as in class learning or home schooling. The supports being provided by the GECDSB educators are not intended to replicate the school day. These are temporary measures in response to the school closures. Families can support their child/ren with learning activities provided by the educators as much as possible, given individual circumstances, but are not expected to take on the role of the classroom teacher.
What Can I expect as a parent/guardian?

**Caring Connections:**
- Students' best interests are our number one priority.
- No student will have a reduction in grades/marks as a result of the school closure.
- Teachers will continue to connect with individual students and families to answer questions and provide feedback.
- Support staff will continue to be available to help students and families.

**Access to Materials:**
- Every effort has been made to deploy a device if students did not have a device at home.
- Offline learning materials have been made available to students who need them. If you would like to make a request for offline learning materials please contact your child's teacher.
- If students and families need help in trouble shooting issues with technology please contact your classroom teacher or Principal for assistance. Alternatively you can go to the board website: www.publicboard.ca and search for Student Technology Assistance FAQ's that can help with general information about devices, passwords, Edsby and Lexia.

**Flexibility:**
- As the learning, in most cases, is occurring through online channels without real-time interaction, students/families have choice in how they organize their day. Any real-time sessions are scheduled in advance.
- Educators and students can communicate and connect safely using a variety of methods.
- Students can learn through a variety of activities.

**Inclusive Support:**
- Students have access to learning resources where they see themselves represented and reflected.
- Staff will continue to listen to and work with families and community partners to identify needs and find solutions in the best interest of students.
- Supports are being provided to students and families in response to changing needs and circumstances.
What are some guiding principles and tips to engage in distance learning for parents/guardians?

GECDSB Guiding Principles and Tips to Engage in Distance Learning for Parents/Guardians

**Addison Grade-Specific Guiding Principles:**

- **Kindergarten to Grade 3 (3 hours per week with a focus on Math and Literacy)**
  - Set a daily learning routine that includes Math and Literacy activities.
  - Encourage your child to participate in daily physical activity.
  - Make use of online resources to create a fun and engaging learning environment.

- **Grade 4 to Grade 6 (4 hours per week with a focus on Math, Literacy, Science, and Social Studies)**
  - Encourage your child to participate in daily physical activity.
  - Ensure your child’s learning is consistent and balanced.
  - Make use of online resources to create a fun and engaging learning environment.

- **Grade 7 to Grade 12 (10 hours per week for Grade 7A with a focus on Math and Science, History and Geography)**
  - Ensure your child’s learning is consistent and balanced.
  - Encourage your child to participate in daily physical activity.
  - Make use of online resources to create a fun and engaging learning environment.

**Helpful Tips:**

- Provide a quiet and comfortable learning environment.
- Set a daily routine that includes a set learning time.
- Encourage your child to participate in daily physical activity.
- Make use of online resources to create a fun and engaging learning environment.

**Here to Help:**

- Maintain communication with your child’s teacher.
- Provide support to your child in distance learning.
- Make use of online resources to create a fun and engaging learning environment.

**Distance Learning for Students**

- Set a daily routine that includes Math and Literacy activities.
- Encourage your child to participate in daily physical activity.
- Make use of online resources to create a fun and engaging learning environment.

GECDSB Guiding Principles and Tips to Engage in Distance Learning for Students

GECDSB Guiding Principles and Tips to Engage in Distance Learning for Parents/Guardians of Children with Learning Differences and Special Education Needs

- **Set the Environment:**
  - Establish a daily routine that includes Math and Literacy activities.
  - Encourage your child to participate in daily physical activity.
  - Make use of online resources to create a fun and engaging learning environment.

- **Helpful Tips:**
  - Provide a quiet and comfortable learning environment.
  - Set a daily routine that includes a set learning time.
  - Encourage your child to participate in daily physical activity.
  - Make use of online resources to create a fun and engaging learning environment.

- **Here to Help:**
  - Maintain communication with your child’s teacher.
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- **Here to Help:**
  - Maintain communication with your child’s teacher.
  - Provide support to your child in distance learning.
  - Make use of online resources to create a fun and engaging learning environment.
Supporting Distance Learning - What Does it Look Like?

How are teachers and support staff helping students learn at a distance?

Educators will continue providing materials and learning activities and be flexible in their approach and expectations of students.

Educators are supporting learning in the following ways:

- Staying in regular contact with students and their families to provide for continuity of learning and to maintain a positive home-school relationship
- Responding to student and family questions and/or requests in a timely manner
- Documenting ongoing communication with students and their families
- Providing feedback to students on their progress and producing final reports cards or the Kindergarten Communication of Learning at the end of the year
- Using Board approved learning platforms (i.e. Edsby, Office 365 Microsoft Suite Products, Brightspace-D2L and myBlueprint) to help keep students learning safely online
- Providing printed learning materials (GECDSB offline learning packages K-8) for students when needed
- Being as flexible and creative as possible to support students who may not have access to technology or the Internet (e.g. accepting student work via email attachments, two way conversations to assess student understanding or curricular expectations)
- Planning for and designing learning that is based on the overall expectations for each grade from the Ontario Curriculum
- Co-planning to integrate additional content (e.g. French, Art, Physical Education) within the minimum focus areas set out by the Ministry of Education
- Providing students some choice in how they demonstrate their learning in response to students' circumstances and/or learning needs
- Providing learning activities that are safe to do at home with the appropriate communications as to safety guidelines
What will be the focus and time allotted for learning at a distance?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>What is the focus of Student Learning?</th>
<th>How much time are students expected to spend on teacher assigned learning?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>K-3</td>
<td>Literacy and math</td>
<td>5 hours/week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-6</td>
<td>Literacy, math science and social studies</td>
<td>5 hours/week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7-8</td>
<td>Literacy, math science and social studies</td>
<td>10 hours/week</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 9-12  | Focus on achieving credits and graduation | SEMESTERED COURSES: 3 hours/week  
NON-SEMESTERED COURSES: 1.5 hours/course per week |
How will student learning be assessed, evaluated and reported (Secondary)?

- For students in secondary schools, teachers will assign learning tasks, projects and culminating activities for both formative and summative purposes with the intention of enhancing learning and understanding as students cope with stresses during COVID-19.

- On April 27, 2020, the Minister of Education stated, “If students can improve their marks over this period, let them do so. It’s not a time to reduce their mark. It’s really a time to see how we can strengthen their marks.”

- Teachers will provide feedback for assessments during the period of Distance Learning to students. These assessments can be used only to improve students’ final course marks.

- Furthermore, we are committed to ensure students who are on track to graduate are not impeded by the COVID-19 pandemic. To this end, the Ministry announced that the literacy requirement and 40-hours of community service requirement have been waived for students graduating this year.

- Grade 10 Careers/Civics: Teachers engaged students in the second half of their Careers/Civics on April 6, 2020. Unlike other courses, teachers of Careers/Civics designed the courses to be taught and learned on a distance platform from the course beginning on April 6. Teachers have been sending formative tasks to students, and they have been providing feedback to students to prepare them for their final summative assignment. This culminating assessment will begin later in the semester. Teachers will use distance student achievement and their professional judgement in assigning a final grade for the second-half course.

- We encourage parents/guardians and students to contact their Teachers, Guidance Counselors, Principal, Vice-Principal or other school staff, if they have any questions about their academic progress or pathways. We are all here to help.

- A code of “I” on the report card indicates “insufficient evidence.” Students who receive an “I” on their report card do not receive a credit for that course. In this case, the principal and teaching staff, in consultation with the parents/guardians and the student, will determine what type of program would best enable the student to meet the expectations and earn credit for the course, including credit recovery and/or retaking the course.

- The Ministry of Education has also announced an adapted Learn at Home website for secondary students to outline the key learning that takes place in high-demand and pre-requisite courses (e.g., Math, Science, English/Français). This optional summer learning is designed for secondary students and is not-for-credit nor teacher-facilitated. Through the use of free, online resources, students may independently review key concepts in preparation for the 2020-21 school year. Secondary school students can take advantage of the chance to refresh their learning, and build confidence entering the 2020-21 school year. The summer Learn at Home site will be available before the end of the school year and will be communicated once launched.
How will student learning be assessed, evaluated and reported (Elementary)?

- On April 27, 2020, the Minister of Education stated, "If students can improve their marks over this period, let them do so. It's not a time to reduce their mark. It's really a time to see how we can strengthen their marks."

- Final report cards will be provided for all elementary students at the end of June. Final report cards will be full reports and will include grades/marks, learning skills and work habits and comments.

- All forms of student work will continue to be assessed during our distance learning phase, including learning tasks, conversations, and projects. Teachers will provide feedback on these assignments to enhance student learning and understanding and will communicate the results of these marked assignments to students and parents in order to report on growth and inform next steps.

- The final report card marks will be based on work completed from January 27th, 2020 (the start of second term) until March 13th, 2020. For information gathered from April 6th, for the duration of the school closure, teachers will use their professional judgement to inform the final report card if the assessment data is used to improve marks/grades.

- Every effort will be made to report on all of the strands with information gathered since September. If there is insufficient evidence of student performance or if there are content areas not addressed during the school closure period, teachers would indicate an "I" with a comment as to why the "I" has been issued (due to school closure).

- Reporting on Learning Skills and Work Habits will also reflect information gathered prior to March 13th, 2020.

- The Kindergarten Communication of Learning will be based on teachers' and ECE observations of key learning and growth in learning prior to March 13th, 2020 in each of the four frames. Teachers may include comments on growth in learning demonstrated during the school closure period when it is to the child's benefit.

- The Alternative Report Card for students in GAINS classrooms will be based on teacher and support staff observations of expectations in the Individual Education Plan (IEP) prior to March 13, 2020. Teachers include comments on growth in learning demonstrated during the school closure period when it is to the child's benefit, for example, data collected from Boardmaker On-line or Lexia.

- We encourage parents/guardians to contact their Teachers, Principal or Vice-Principal, if they have any questions about their academic progress or the final report card for their child. We are pleased to be of assistance and support to students and families.

- Elementary report cards will be mailed home at the end of June.
What are learning resources parents/guardians can use to support distance learning for their child?

**UPDATED**

For Summer Months:

- Arts
- Business Studies
- English Literacy
- French as a Second Language
- Health and Physical Education
- Mathematical Literacy
- Science and Technology
- Social Studies, History & Geography, Canadian World Studies & Humanities
- Indigenous Education
- Technological Education
A comprehensive list of Virtual Library Online Resources K-8 of library resources

Step by Step instructions as to how to access the databases

GECDSB Parent Guides K-8
The WSO has provided the GECDSB with amazing read aloud links for students to enjoy at any time.

- **The Book With No Pictures** by B.J. Novak
- **The Remarkable Farkle McBride** by John Lithgow
- **Grumpy Monkey** by Suzanne Long
- **Stella’s Magical, Musical Balloon Ride** by Robert Franz, Maestro, Windsor Symphony Orchestra
What Do You Do With a Problem?
by Kobi Yamada
and Read-Aloud by Robert Franz
Maestro, Windsor Symphony Orchestra

Interrupting Chicken
by David Ezra Stein
and Read-Aloud by Robert Franz
Maestro, Windsor Symphony Orchestra

Giraffe and Bird
by Rebecca Bender
and Read-Aloud by Daniel Wiley
Associate Conductor, WSO

Zin! Zin! Zin! A Violin!
by Lloyd Moss
and Read-Aloud by Robert Franz
Maestro, Windsor Symphony Orchestra

Stella’s Magical, Musical Balloon Ride
by Robert Franz,
Maestro, Windsor Symphony Orchestra

The Dot
by Peter H. Reynolds
and Read-Aloud by Daniel Wiley
Associate Conductor, WSO
* We were unable to celebrate Earth Day as we traditionally do in schools. We have developed resource pages that are division specific that educators may use with their students to engage student in learning to demonstrate environmental responsibility at any time.

Week at a Glance

Mental Health Week at a Glance
Water Conservation and Recycling Activities

We want to celebrate Water Conservation and Recycling with activities that are simple and easy to help students understand the importance of conserving our precious resources on earth! Activity pages are designed for varying student age groups to be used any time.

As part of our environmental commitment, we encourage students to Go Green! Reduce! Reuse! Recycle! These can be used at any time.
The GECDSB is pleased to provide families with a Month at A Glance (for Kindergarten, Primary and Junior/Intermediate students) to provide a continuity of learning during the summer months if they choose. Enjoy the learning opportunities in the area of literacy, mathematics, engineering, science, character education, mindfulness movement and the arts!

NEW!

Let’s Imagine we are on Fighting Island for the week!

The GECDSB has an amazing partnership with Fighting Island (BASF). Fighting Island field trips to support environmental education were very much missed during the school closure period. You will find a hotlink to posters, by division, to continue promoting our Environmental Stewardship initiatives at any time.
myBlueprint is a powerful tool that can be used by students, parents/guardians and educators to facilitate the exploration of careers, pathways, and course selections. The Individual Pathways Plan on myBlueprint will help students explore their interests, abilities and identify their strengths to plan for their initial post-secondary destination.

Students go to publicboard.ca and select myBlueprint from the Quick links at the bottom of the page.

D2L/Brightspace Environment
(all names refer to the same platform):

Brightspace (D2L) is the virtual learning environment (VLE) provided to Ontario school boards by the Ministry of Education. This common platform allows teachers to offer online and blended learning opportunities to students while promoting consistency in school boards around the province. Courses and class lists are pre-loaded based on our student information system (Trevlac) and content developed by teachers in the province can be loaded into these courses for student use or professional development. Teachers can also load in their own content and files, record video lectures, and hold web chats and meetings with students. Other features include: announcement posting, discussion area, quizzes, surveys, email, O365 account linking, and many more. To access tutorial videos on the use of D2L, follow this link:

This student orientation video will give you a general overview of some of the essential things you need to do to be successful in an online course, such as logging into your course, accessing the lessons, emailing your teacher, and submitting assignments.

Ministry of Education Learn At Home

* Please refer to the section about Special Education for specific teaching resources and supports for Special Education students.
The Information Technology Department has created a number of resources that will help all staff and students use the Board supported technology platforms. Our Board supported platforms include **Edsby**, **Office 365** (Microsoft Suite of Products), **Brightspace** (D2L) and **myBlueprint**. By using these Board supported resources the IT Department can offer service, support and protection from privacy concerns. This also allows us to communicate with all our families in consistent ways.

**What Technology supports are available to support student learning?**

**Edsby**
- Edsby is the platform that teachers use to communicate with their students and parents. As a parent/guardian you can see all of your child’s work and communicate with their teacher through this platform. To help you get started, here is a link that contains a number of short videos that demonstrate how to use many of the functions in Edsby.

**Office 365**
- Microsoft Office 365 is available to all students in GECDSB. Students can take advantage of all of Microsoft’s tools such as Microsoft Word, Powerpoint and Excel. Microsoft Office makes it possible to create, collaborate and share files with their teachers and other students. They are also entitled to five downloads of Microsoft Office for use on multiple devices.

**Brightspace (D2L) Support**
- Brightspace (D2L) is the virtual learning environment provided to Ontario school boards by the Ministry of Education. This platform allows teachers to offer online and blended learning opportunities to students. While many of the courses are pre-populated with course material, teachers can also load in their own files, record video lectures, and hold web chats with students. Other features include: announcement posting, discussion area, quizzes, surveys, email, O365 account linking, and many more.

**myBlueprint**
- myBlueprint is a powerful tool that can be used by students, parents/guardians and educators to facilitate the exploration of careers, pathways, and course selections. The Individual Pathways Plan on myBlueprint will help students explore their interests, abilities and identify their strengths to plan for their initial post-secondary destination. Students go to publicboard.ca and select myBlueprint from the Quick links at the bottom of the page.
Support for Parents/Guardians

We have created a 'Parent Portal' on the GECDSB Homepage – a one stop shop for resources, supports and information for parents/guardians during the COVID-19 Emergency.

Parents/guardians can also access resources to support student learning at home at the GECDSB Home Study site.

Parent/Guardian resources and supports for Well-Being, including videos, links and podcasts are located at Supporting All of Us Through COVID-19.

Parent/Guardian Survey Report:

Our goal is to engage our parent/guardian community, to hear their voice and to gather information about the successes and challenges that they face in our current situation. This information will help inform our work moving forward.
What support is available for Students?

- Resources to support student well-being at a distance include:

The website - Web pages under the “Supporting all of us through COVID-19” banner:

There you will find a student survey for students and/or parents to complete, podcasts and videos, resources (for students, staff and families), weekly activities for student well-being (divided up by age group), community supports for families, and soon, KIS (Kids Information Sheets).

The data from the student survey informs what resources, Podcasts or KIS need to be developed by our personnel in Social Work and Psychology departments.

Other Resources:

On our webpages, we have many Kids Information Sheets packed with great information. For example, this one deals with birthday during COVID-19.
Students answer the question:

“What are you doing to make yourself happy?”

Ways We Can Help in Windsor-Essex County
This one page handout provides ideas on how we can support our community.

Follow us on Twitter at GECstudentwellbeing
Or
Instagram at gec.studentwellbeing
Or
Check out Edsby or our webpages
Supporting Special Education Students

What support is available for students with special education needs?

Our focus continues to be math and literacy as well as activities that promote independence. We have endeavoured to share resources that can be created from materials at home where necessary. The links below will take you to current Special Education resources that we have available to support our families. The links include activities to develop language development and fine and gross motor skills.

Special Education Week at A Glance

Literacy Activities
https://www.publicboard.ca/News/HomeStudyandStudentCurriculumResources/SpecialEducationResources/Documents/LITERACY%20ACTIVITIES.pdf

Math Activities
https://www.publicboard.ca/News/HomeStudyandStudentCurriculumResources/SpecialEducationResources/Documents/MATH%20ACTIVITIES.pdf

Fine Motor Activities
https://www.publicboard.ca/News/HomeStudyandStudentCurriculumResources/SpecialEducationResources/Documents/FINE%20MOTOR%20ACTIVITIES.pdf

Social Skills
https://www.publicboard.ca/News/HomeStudyandStudentCurriculumResources/SpecialEducationResources/Documents/SOCIAL%20SKILLS.pdf

Fine and Gross Motor Skills
https://www.publicboard.ca/News/HomeStudyandStudentCurriculumResources/SpecialEducationResources/Documents/FINE%20AND%20GROSS%20MOTOR%20WEBSTES.pdf

Literacy Resources
https://www.publicboard.ca/News/HomeStudyandStudentCurriculumResources/SpecialEducationResources/Documents/LITERACY%20WEBSTES.pdf

Math Resources
https://www.publicboard.ca/News/HomeStudyandStudentCurriculumResources/SpecialEducationResources/Documents/MATH%20WEBSTES.pdf

Virtual Field Trips
https://www.publicboard.ca/News/HomeStudyandStudentCurriculumResources/SpecialEducationResources/Documents/VIRTUAL%20FIELDTRIPS.pdf

ASD Websites
https://www.publicboard.ca/News/HomeStudyandStudentCurriculumResources/SpecialEducationResources/Documents/ASD%20WEBSTES%20and%20RESOURCES.pdf

Technology Resources for Students with Special Needs
https://www.publicboard.ca/News/HomeStudyandStudentCurriculumResources/TechnologyResourcesforStudentswithLearningDisabilities/Pages/default.aspx#/=

Speech and Language Activities
https://www.publicboard.ca/News/HomeStudyandStudentCurriculumResources/SpecialEducationResources/SpeechandLanguageActivities/Pages/default.aspx#/=
• **Proms are cancelled due to social distancing requirements.**

• **Graduations:** The GECDSB dates for elementary and secondary graduation range from June 16th to June 25th. Due to COVID-19 the graduation is in a ‘virtual graduation’ format for the 2019-2020 school year. A typical graduation ceremony will include the Land Acknowledgment, O’Canada, the Chair of the Board address, the Director of Education address, the Principal address, awards, the Valedictorian address, and closing remarks. The virtual graduation is being produced by the school and will be uploaded to the school specific You Tube site for all the families to view and enjoy.

Further to the graduation ceremony, the GECDSB created 18x24 lawn signs for every graduate from our elementary and secondary schools. There is a total of approximately 5300 signs that will make their way into the hands of the students or on the front lawn of their place of residence. Hopefully the students and families will use it as a keepsake of their graduating year. Congratulations to all of our graduates!
What About Summer School or Summer Camp Opportunities?

- Please visit our website for information on Summer Learning:
  www.summerlearning.ca

- Student Success:
  - Please visit our Student Success Instagram Account at: @gecdsbsss

- Summer Learning Opportunities
  - The GECDSB is very pleased to offer Camp Wonder, Camp Merveille and Camp Migizi via distance learning for the first three weeks of July. We look forward to serving hundreds of students with this learning opportunity!

Celebrations Occuring at a Distance

GECDSB Digital Photography Exhibition

The GECDSB 14th annual Digital Photography Context and Exhibition took a new twist this year by going virtual! We had 364 entries from primary, junior, intermediate and senior students. The keen photographic skills of our students is truly amazing! Click on the link below to check out all the submissions and the 2020 winners. Congratulations to all participants and winner! Keep creating beauty through your photographs!

Digital Photography 2020 Winners
GEC Stronger Together

We are developing a Greater Essex exclusive program entitled “GEC Stronger Together”. This program will feature messages of hope through themes of “You are not Alone”, “Keeping Healthy”, “Do what makes you happy” and Making Lemonade”. Watch for it!

The Pluralist  UPDATED

This year’s Pluralist theme is “Speaking Truth to Power.” Writing categories are divided into Junior (Grades 9 & 10) and Senior (Grades 11 & 12). All art submissions are being considered for the cover contest. The final submissions were due May 8th. The winners of the 2020 edition of the GECDSB Pluralist are found in the link below. The final version of the of the 31st edition of the Pluralist will be produced in August 2020 when the cover art piece will be debuted. Hard copies will be available to schools in the fall with a virtual copy with audio recordings online at the same time. Congratulations to all the participants and winners. Keep writing!

10 Kindergarten Registration

The Greater Essex County District School Board welcomes families to register their child for Kindergarten. Please contact your neighbourhood school to speak to the school Principal about registration or visit our website to register online.

https://register.publicboard.ca/Registration/
As we end the 2020 school year, all boards are working with recently released directives for the re-opening of Ontario schools for this fall. The Minister of Education has stated that we should be prepared for school to look differently in September.

We are planning for a variety of contingencies and are finalizing our GECDSB COVID-19 Safety Plan based on these possibilities. Our safety planning is done in partnership with the Windsor Essex County Health Unit and under the direction of our provincial Ministries of Education and Health. Our number one priority is the safety of our students, staff and families.

As more details are shared with us, and our plans finalize for September, we will share this information with you through local media, EDSBY, our webpage and our social media platforms.

Please visit www.publicboard.ca for the most up-to-date information.

Where can I find the most up-to-date information about school closure, distance learning and re-entry for September 2020?

- Visit the Board Website for the most up to date information
- Follow social media accounts
- If you have questions, please call your school and leave a message. Someone will return your call in a reasonable time-frame.
OUR VISION:
Building tomorrow together-
every learner, every day

OUR MISSION:
Excellence in public education-
confident learners, engaged communities,
ethical stewardship