W.R.D.S.B. EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANTS ASSOCIATION

eUpdate

The Latest Information to Keep YOU Informed

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UPDATES FROM THE EAA OFFICE

April 3, 2020

Good afternoon:

Who would have known that we would be sitting where we are at this moment, in just three short weeks. The onset of the COVID-19 Pandemic has consumed all of our lives both professionally and personally. I've been thinking about Helen Keller's words "Keep your face to the sunshine and you cannot see a shadow." Thank goodness for the sun these past few days. Helen's words inspire me to keep moving forward during these challenging times.

Please know that your Executive has been working tirelessly to keep you informed. To some of you, it may seem like forever as you wait for direction. We ask for your continued patience during these unprecedented times. The Board Personnel have been working from their homes so this affects the speed of information being gathered and shared.

I would like to share the following updates and information:

PARTICIPATING IN ONLINE TRAININGS AND SURVEYS IF YOU ARE ON A LEAVE:

If you are on a Medical Leave, you are not required to do Surveys or Training. This is similar to the practice that is in place when schools are open. Members on a leave do not attend PD Days, or participate in any training until they are back to work.

DOES YOUR TECHNOLOGY ALLOW YOU TO PARTICIPATE IN A SURVEY, VIRTUAL MEETING OR TRAINING?

If you are unable to participate in Surveys, Training or Virtual Meetings with your school, please reach out to your Administrator and let him/her know.

ARE SUPPLY MEMBERS GOING TO RECEIVE ANY COMPENSATION?

The answer if yes. Please read the Memo that was sent out this morning. Please view below, the section of: **Friday, April 4, 2020 ALL STAFF System Memo #1** - There will be two different payout dates and the amounts that Supply Members are paid will vary, depending on an averaging of hours.

WILL MEMBERS IN THE EXTENDED DAY BEFORE AND AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAMS BE PAID AFTER TODAY?

Please refer to the Memo that was sent out this morning. Please view the below the section of: **Friday, April 4, 2020 ALL STAFF System Memo #1** - The Board will be reaching out to each Extended Day Member individually. Please note that the Extended Day Program is funded by Parents and not the GSNs (Grants for Student Needs). GSNs fund the core day programs only. The Board must provide a two-week notice for any Extended Day Term position that may be cancelled.

EA AND CYW EXPECTATIONS:

Phase 1:

- All EAs and CYWs received a communication with self-directed professional development opportunities on March 30, 2020 (Paraprofessional Professional Development - March 30th).

Phase 2:

- All EAs and CYWs will continue to receive weekly self-directed professional development opportunities.

EAs and CYWs Communicating/Connecting with Students and Families/Caregivers

- Moving forward, and under the direction of School Administrators, EAs/CYWs are now able to reach out to the students and families/caregivers that they support through phone calls (preferred communication) and emails.
- These opportunities to connect with students and families/caregivers are to happen during regular school hours.
- In determining when EAs/CYWs should be connecting with students and families/caregivers, consider the following:
    - EAs/CYWs in congregated classes such as ACE/Behaviour/Integrated Support Program are able to reach out to their students and families as the nature of these programs allows for established school and home relationships.
    - EAs working in 1:1 situations or closely with a few students and have established relationships with the students and families/caregivers.
    - CYWs who currently have students on their caseload for whom parental consent has already been given.

- Vulnerable students/families/caregivers who have been identified by Phase 1 Teacher phone calls and would benefit from continued and consistent staff connections.

*The role of the EAs/CYWs will evolve as virtual MDTs take place and additional students are identified who would benefit from regular and on-going check-in by school staff/a caring adult.

EAs and CYWs Supporting Distance Learning

- EAs and CYWs will work in collaboration with administrators, special education resource teachers/department heads, classroom teachers and other staff to support programming and regular check-ins for vulnerable students, taking into consideration access to technology, as well as learning and social/emotional needs.

I wish you all peace and the best of health as we move forward through the coming days. We have much to be thankful for. Please stay at home and enjoy your time spent with loved ones. Cherish each moment that you are alive and well.

Sincerely,
Colleen Dietrich Sisson
President - EAA

EAA Charitable Donation

Hi everyone,

Please be aware that on behalf of each one of our Members, the EAA is donating $1000 to the Food Bank of Waterloo Region. This contribution will be in lieu of our historical year end Charitable Donation.

The Food Bank supports several agencies and programs throughout our community. Programs that benefit many students that we support. For more information on the Food Bank's COVID-19 response please visit their website https://www.thefoodbank.ca/

I would like to use this opportunity to acknowledge those members who are taking initiative and displaying leadership in these uncertain times. I know that our group is well revered throughout the WRDSB community and I am so proud to be a member.

Stay safe and healthy,
~Lisa

Lisa Weiler Haskins

Vice President
Educational Assistants Association

Friday, April 4, 2020 ALL STAFF System Memo #1

We are all working through what is an unprecedented time for our schools, our communities, and for each of us personally. We are striving to support each and every one of our students and staff. The continued commitment of our educators to meet the needs of, and engage with, our students is an inspiration. Thank you for your continued dedication to our students.

On March 31st, the Minister of Education announced that schools will remain closed to staff until May 1st, and to students until May 4th, with the possibility for further extension if needed. Additionally, a second phase of Learn at Home was announced, along with a new set of expectations for educational communities. We understand that many of these expectations have created more questions than they have answered, and we would like to assure you that we are working as quickly as we can to address them.

We want to first acknowledge that there are many questions regarding Assessment, Evaluation and Reporting and we are seeking clarification from the Ministry of Education. We will continue to communicate as soon as possible.

The Ministry of Education has also made clear that students should be engaged in learning at home for a minimum number of hours per student/per week. Please note the WRDSB is considering the number of hours proposed by the Ministry of Education as a target number of hours for students. Educators should strive in their lessons planning to provide for learning expectations that meet but do not surpass the targeted amounts of time students will need to successfully meet these expectations. We know that students' varying needs and contexts will impact what they are able to accomplish and feel good about. We trust educators to use their professional judgement as they plan for individualized learning. This will also require educators to regularly check in with families to monitor the amount of time students are spending on work.

We are now working toward the implementation of Phase 2 where educators and students will begin to interact through distance learning. Our goals for next week include:

- Continuing to respond to the needs of educators (teachers, DECEs, EAs, CYWs) to build our collective capacity as they begin to engage in distance learning for all students

- Creating central supports for administrators and educators based on the data collected through our survey
- Educators beginning to engage in distance learning for students by connecting with students and families to ensure they have what they need to begin distance learning
- Continuing to identify barriers to student and family engagement and developing alternate approaches to overcome these barriers.



With these goals in mind, we are announcing the launch of WRDSB Staff@Home, which is available as of Friday morning. It will serve as a hub for additional resources to support you as we all work to design and implement the next phase of distance learning. This staff website will continue to grow over the coming days and weeks, and we encourage you to check back for new information and resources.

We wish to emphasize that this week is focussed on setting the stage for Distance Learning. Teachers should not introduce content this week. Your focus this week needs to be on readying yourself, your students and your families to engage in this new way of learning at home.

Responsibilities by Role: Week 1 of Phase 2 - April 6 - April 10

All of our educational stakeholders will play a role in Distance Learning.

Phase 2: Week 1

School Personnel Roles and Responsibilities

Administrators

- Work in collaboration with staff to support staff learning, develop learning plans for students
- Host a weekly virtual staff meeting to support staff
- Continue to use established practices to access supports (SBT, SSST, MDT)
- Reflect on Student Needs Assessment Data for your school to determine next steps
- Ensure ongoing communication with students and families by educators

	• Foster collaboration among staff to coordinate communication and structures to support students
	• Familiarize yourself with documents shared with staff:
	  ◦ Elementary Admin: First Week Considerations provided by Learning Support Services
	  ◦ Elementary and Secondary: Resources at WRDSB Staff@Home (LSS, VLE and Google Classroom supports)

DECEs	• Work in collaboration with classroom teacher to begin developing programming plans for each student, taking into consideration access to technology, as well as student learning needs/environment • Work in collaboration with the classroom teacher so all students have received a contact from the educators
EAs and CYWs	• Work in collaboration with administrators, special education resource teachers/department heads, classroom teachers and other staff to support programming and regular scheduled check-ins for vulnerable students, taking into consideration access to technology, as well as student learning and social/emotional needs.

Teaching Staff	• Engage in personal professional development, based on personal learning needs.
	  ◦ Elementary and Secondary Educators: consider use of materials found on WRDSB Staff@Home
	  ◦ Elementary Educators: review First Week Considerations
	  ◦ Secondary Educators: Secondary Resources
	• Review the data collected from students and families
	• Begin developing programming plans for each student, taking into consideration access to technology, as well as student learning needs/environment. Content should not be introduced during this week.
	• Work in collaboration with appropriate staff (e.g. DECE, EA, CYW, SERT, Special Education Department Heads, and Guidance Counsellors) as appropriate to coordinate communication and support students
	• Connect with each of your students (phone call, Google Classroom, D2L, email, etc.). The use of Virtual Meetings (e.g.,

Google Hangouts) with students is NOT permitted at this time in both the elementary and secondary panels so that privacy and safety concerns can be assessed; an update will be provided. Please note that “Zoom” is not a supported WRDSB tool and should not be used by educators.

We understand that distance learning may feel like an insurmountable challenge for many of our educators, but we are confident that together, our WRDSB educators are up to the task to be there for each other and for our students. Please know we are working to support all of you through this unusual time and our overall focus is on finding simple and effective solutions.

Like so many in our communities, the closure of our schools and workplaces has taken a toll on us all. We recognize the many pressures that educators are facing right now as they work to continue to support their students. Please consider your own well-being as we move into our next phase of learning. Refer to these resources if you want to access any of the mental health or well-being supports available to WRDSB staff.

We thank you for your ongoing dedication to our students and their families during this time. Your commitment to reaching out and caring for students contributes to students’ and families’ sense of belonging and well-being. We all have a tremendous opportunity to make a difference in the coming weeks but as we go forward remember that less is more, relationships, caring and connection need to lead the way, and we all have permission to go slow in the beginning so we can go faster later on.

Thursday, April 3, 2020 ALL STAFF System Memo #2

On Thursday, March 12, 2020, the Minister of Education issued a Ministerial Order to close all publically funded schools. The order was approved by the Lieutenant Governor in Council, on the advice of Dr. David Williams, Ontario’s Chief Medical Officer of Health and the experts at the COVID-19 Command Table. The rationale for the decision by the Ministry was to provide the opportunity for staff to self-contain and reduce the risk of spreading the infection.

On March 31, 2020 the Office of the Premier announced that:

Public schools will remain closed to teachers until Friday, May 1, 2020, and to students until Monday, May 4, 2020. As these dates come closer, this decision will be re-

evaluated based on public health advice. The closure may be extended if necessary to protect the health and safety of students, families and staff.

Unless the Board receives different directions from the Ministry of Education, the Board intends to continue to pay Permanent and Long Term employees through Friday, May 1, 2020. Daily supply staff (DECE, EA, OT, SMACA, THR) are not anticipated to be used after the initial closure period ending April 5, 2020. Please refer to the below for additional information.

The HR, Payroll, and Wellness team has been exceptionally busy ensuring normal payroll continues to operate at the Board in this unprecedented and challenging time and would like to provide an update on several key areas below.

Employee Pay:

Permanent (Contract) Staff:

- These staff will continue to receive their pay.

Long Term and Term Position Staff:

- Occasional Teachers and Education Workers in Long Term assignments that continue following March Break; will continue to be paid, provided the assignment remains active. At this time, this would include elementary supervision monitors within SMACA as well as ESS THRs in long term assignments.
- These staff will continue to receive their pay for the duration that their position remains active.
- Should the assignment end prior to the end of the 2020-2021 school year or as notified by a date by the Ministry of Education, payment entitlement will end on that date.
- Some Term assignments that are not 100% funded by the Government may be temporarily postponed; these employees will be notified by the Board directly.

Short term Daily Supply Staff:

- The Board recently received a Ministry of Education SB02 Occasional Teacher and Casual Education Worker Payments Memo prescribing how the Board is to handle daily supply staff (DECE, EA, OT, SMACA, THR, CAMA CMH) during the closure period from March 14 through to April 5, 2020.
    - Daily supplies will be paid per the previous twelve-week average calculation methodology outlined by the Employment Standards Act, 2000.
    - Daily Supply Staff are paid on a two-week lag cycle. As such, the 1st week of pay for the above will be paid on the April 9, 2020 pay period. The 2nd week of pay will be paid on the April 24 pay cycle.

- Daily supply staff such as DECE, EA, OT, SMACA, and THRs are not anticipated to be used after the initial closure period ending April 5, 2020. Facility Services is presently working through required CMH support.

Record of Employments for Service Canada

- The Board has completed and submitted all electronic Record of Employment (ROEs) to Service Canada for the March Break shutdown period.
- Where applicable, the Board will continue to provide and transmit Record of Employment (ROEs) due to an interruption of earnings in accordance with Service Canada Requirements.
- If you are receiving EI benefits beyond March 20, it is the individual's responsibility to report any income received from the board for weeks March 20 onward to Service Canada.

Self Service Portal (SSP) - Employee Self Serve

Further to the All Staff Notice posted on March 13th, regarding the Self Service Portal (SSP) change, Human Resource Services (HRS) and Information Technology Services (ITS) would like to officially confirm that the update has been successfully completed. Please note that the SSP looks different, but has similar functionality.

Important Notes:

- The Board has temporarily disabled electronic timesheets due to the COVID-19 Pandemic business continuity response and is following the Ministry of Education SB02 Occasional Teacher and Casual Education Worker Payments Memo mentioned previously for determining a prior twelve-week average calculation of regular wages to those dependent on timesheets.
- Access to all other SSP functions has been restored.
- The location of the SSP has not changed - your browser favourites/bookmarks will continue to work

Questions?

- Payroll questions can be directed to your respective payroll assistant, based by surname.

- Please know that the Payroll team is focused on pay continuity and may not respond right away, or have access to the details you seek at this time.

SUPPORTING OURSELVES SUPPORTING ONE ANOTHER

Supporting Ourselves, Supporting One Another:
While our schools and workplaces are closed, it's important that we remain focused on supporting our health and well-being. During this time of uncertainty and physical distancing, it's important for us all to take time for self-care, and supporting our own physical and mental health. Below, you'll find a selection of resources and content selected to help you support your well-being and the well-being of your children.

The theme of our second edition is supporting children. Below, you'll find a selection of resources and content selected to help you support the well-being of children as we all navigate this uncharted territory.



Supporting Child and Student Well-being

Talking to Children About COVID-19

By the Waterloo Region District School Board

Children and youth have many questions as they learn about the virus too, and look to the adults around them for answers. We have compiled these resources to help start and guide these conversations with children and teens.

Caregivers' Guide To Accessing Support For Students With Anxiety

By the Waterloo Region District School Board

The Caregivers' Guide will help parents and caregivers to recognize signs their child may be struggling with anxiety, while also providing resources to help them succeed. This includes a variety of home-based strategies, as well as apps and online support for families of a student with anxiety.

- Guide for Elementary Students

- Guide for Secondary Students

[Supporting Teenagers and Young Adults During the Coronavirus Crisis]

By the Child Mind Institute

Having teenagers confined to home during the coronavirus crisis may not be as labour-intensive as being holed up with small children, but it definitely has its challenges. While younger children may be thrilled at the prospect of having parental attention 24/7, adolescents are likely to feel differently.

[How to Change Negative Thinking Patterns]

By the Child Mind Institute

Children can be their own worst critics. This is particularly true for kids with mental health disorders, who may be especially down on themselves. They can get stuck in negative thinking patterns that contribute to depression, amp up their anxiety, or make painful emotions feel overwhelming.

[Personal Resiliency Tips for Helpers Who Support Students]

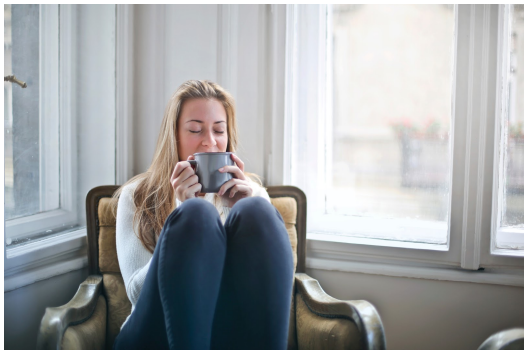
By School Mental Health Ontario

It's essential to take care of yourself, not just for your well-being, but also for those you care about and support. Your self-care will help improve your energy, focus, ability to cope with challenges and overall life experience. And you're modelling wellness strategies for the children and youth you serve.

[Youth Mental Health Resources]

Waterloo Region Suicide Prevention Council (WRSPC)

Are you or a loved one dealing with anxieties, fears, or worries about COVID-19? This page contains a list of resources available to support youth in the Waterloo region.



Support Your Mental Health and Well-being

LifeSpeak Resources for Staff

[Managing your money during a global pandemic]

A Q&A with Shannon Lee Simmons, Certified Financial Planner and founder of the New School of Finance

Choosing Happiness

This article, by clinical psychologist Marni Amsellem, Ph.D., will help you find positivity during these trying times, especially if you've been feeling down lately.

Alive@work

How to strengthen your immunity

Welcome to the latest edition of alive@work for Waterloo Region District School Board, where we aim to give you quick tools to inspire you on your health and wellness journey. Be sure to also check out the alive@work bonus Take 5, where you'll discover even more healthy cooking ideas and actionable health facts.

Stress & Anxiety Management During COVID-19

By Carizon

During this time of growing concern about COVID19, it is hard not to worry about what it all means for yourself, and for those you love.

Living with worry and anxiety amidst global uncertainty

By Psychology Tools

Worry and anxiety are common problems at the best of times, and when it takes over it can become all-encompassing. Psychology Tools have put together this free guide to help you to manage your worry and anxiety in these uncertain times.

Employee & Family Assistance Program - Resilience

Please note that as WRDSB employees, you have access to free counselling from Homewood Health. Homewood has assured us that their client service centres have been transitioned to work-at-home, so as per our plan, our 24/7 service remains available at full capacity.

To access counselling: call anytime 24/7/365 or visit myresilience.com

- Toll-Free English: 1-800-663-1142
- Toll-Free French: 1-866-398-9505
- International (Call Collect): 604-689-1717
- Required information: Plan Contract Number: 12500



Some things to feel good about

10 uplifting things that happened this week at home and abroad

By the Toronto Star

Supporting our Community Beyond Learning

By the Waterloo Region District School Board

How 'contagious' altruism can help us fight COVID-19

By CBC News

Canadian Neighbourhoods Figure Out How To Spice Up Walks For Kids

By HuffPost

Supporting Ourselves, Supporting One Another

We hope you enjoyed this edition of Supporting Ourselves, Supporting One Another! Keep your eyes on your inbox for the next edition. Want to share some uplifting news with us? Submit it here! Miss a past edition? View them all here.



COVID-19 INFORMATION

COVID-19 INFORMATON

As you likely know, the Premier of Ontario and Minister of Education have announced that school closures and distance learning will continue for all Ontario elementary and secondary schools through May 4 to help limit the spread of COVID-19.

During this period, it's important that our stakeholders, both internally and externally, know that we continue to be available to assist them and that core business functionality continues. With this in mind, we're asking two things:

- Please only set an email auto-reply ONLY if you are on a leave of absence or on vacation. If you are working, do not set an auto-reply.
- Please ensure your voicemail includes the information below

All Employees

Please make these changes as soon as possible.

Voicemail Suggested Response

How-to instructions can be found below:

“Thank you for your call.

By order of the Ontario Minister of Education, all public schools are closed until May 4 in response to the emergence of COVID-19. This includes the Education Centre.

I will be monitoring my voicemail messages and responding as soon as possible.”

Below, you’ll find resources and instructions that will walk you through the steps to setting your voicemail and email auto-reply.

How-To Resources

- Setting Your Voicemail Remotely (For staff with a dedicated telephone)
- Setting Your Voicemail Remotely (For staff without a dedicated telephone)
    - Note: If your password has not been changed the default password is your EIN number
- Out of Office or Vacation Reply Feature on Gmail

Questions?

Submit a ticket via the ITServiceDesk

Looking for more information about COVID-19?

Please remember to wash your hands, not to touch your face and maintain social distance. Find more information and links to helpful and fact-based resources on the Staff Intranet at staff.wrdsb.ca/covid, and on our public website at wrdsb.ca/covid.

Find all the info you need!

EAA: YOUR EXECUTIVE

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