



April 20, 2020

Dear All HPEDSB Graduating Grade 12 Students and Families of the Class of 2020:

Re: Update for Grade 12 Graduates during the COVID-19 Pandemic

I want to acknowledge the current reality that we all face through COVID-19, and specifically what you, as graduating students, are facing. This is quite simply a situation that nobody anticipated nor has anyone encountered before. Therefore, if you are feeling uneasy and experiencing uncertainty, you are not alone and have good reason for it; there is nothing we can compare our current challenges to.

As the Director of Education and as a former high school principal, I recognize a number of the important factors that go into a Grade 12 graduating year for you. These include completing the prerequisite courses for admission to colleges, trade schools and universities. There is also emphasis on marks, grades, exams, culminating activities, and even out-of-classroom experiences, such as COOP and OYAP placements. I also recognize that many of you are thinking of applications for scholarships and bursaries as you plan for the future. For many, extra-curricular activities, such as music and drama performances, field trips, out of country school trips and athletics are not happening. Your senior prom and graduation itself are also affected.

All of the above are considerations that go into the workings of a memorable graduating high school year. Our reality remains that there is nothing normal about this school year.

I want to assure you that if you were on track to graduate this school year, you will graduate. In saying that, I want you to know that this is not a reprieve on the work now being provided by your teacher. As a graduating student who was on-track, I encourage you to do the work that will keep you learning and preparing for your future.

I also want to share that the Ministry of Education has announced that for students graduating in June 2020, the requirement of 40 hours of community service is waived. Hours accumulated to date are valid and still count towards awards. All secondary aged students are encouraged to find safe and appropriate ways to be of service to their communities. Community involvement hours that have been completed will be reported on the report cards of graduating students.

I recognize that many of you will have questions around the actual graduation event itself. While there is no denying that graduating from high school is a significant moment in your lives, it will, in all likelihood, look different this year. As we live through and make history together, I encourage you to think of different possibilities to consider. You, your graduating peers, your teachers and all staff in your school are in this together as you celebrate the culmination of your senior year.

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Hastings and Prince Edward District School Board

Possibilities
TODAY & TOMORROW

Lucille Kyle, Chair of the Board
Sean Monteith, Director of Education

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Life can, at times, feel and appear unpredictable and even uncertain. As young adults, and our leaders of tomorrow, I ask you to look at the challenges we are facing and consider the big picture—what our priorities are and need to be at this time: our health and the health of our families, our responsibility to each other, and the hope for a long and promising future.

Stay safe and be well.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sean Monteith".

Sean Monteith
Director of Education