



Bluewater District School Board

Continuous Learning Plan (COVID-19) – Q and A

We know this is a difficult time for students and families and many of you will have questions about your child's learning. Please see below for a Q and A regarding the Phase 2 Learn at Home Plan.

Please, if you have further questions, reach out to your school principal.

The following applies to the closure period of April 6 to May 4, 2020 as issued by Ministerial Order by the provincial government.

Communication with Parents/Guardians

Q. Will staff communicate with parents/guardians/students over 18 years old?

A. Yes. Staff communicated at the beginning of the implementation of the continuity of learning plan. Staff will also have ongoing communication with families and students throughout the implementation.

Learning Program

Q. Will the learning program look the same within the continuous learning plan?

A. No. Continuous learning will not mirror learning as it normally does in school. Educator teams are working to design learning that might best use the home environment and available tools to maintain the continuity of learning, with realistic expectations.

Learning Platform

Q. What learning platform will staff use in teacher-led learning with their students?

A. Some staff will use the Brightspace learning platform vLE. Other staff may use the Microsoft Suite or other support models.

Access to Technology for Students

Q. Will students have access to technology and internet?

A. Students may have uneven access to devices and the internet. If available, the board will enable distribution of laptops or devices from schools to students through the technology access protocol, while observing public health direction. BWDSB has launched a survey on the board website to determine needs and next steps.

Learning Time and Content

Q. How much time will be spent at each division level and what content will be the focus for the learning?

A.

Grade Range	
K-Grade 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none">· 5 hours of work per student per week· Focus: Literacy and math
Grades 4-6	<ul style="list-style-type: none">· 5 hours of work per student per week· Focus: Literacy and math + science and social studies
Grades 7-8	<ul style="list-style-type: none">· 10 hours of work per student per week· Focus: Core math, literacy, science and social studies
Grades 9-12	<ul style="list-style-type: none">· 3 hours of work per course per week for semestered students;· Focus: Achieving credits/completion/graduation
Hours refer to the approximate amount of time <u>students</u> would spend on the work assigned by teachers.	

Students with Special Needs

Q. Will students with special needs receive support that is aligned with their Individual Education Plan?

A. Yes. The continuous learning plan will support differentiation for students with special needs for continued access to the curriculum. To that end, the board will leverage the capacity of professional, para-professional staff and Educational Assistants remotely where possible and within the context of applicable privacy legislation.

Mental Health Supports

Q. Will students continue to have access to mental health supports?

A. Yes. Mental health workers, paraprofessionals, and other professional staff remain available to students to support the students who have a current support plan during this difficult time.

Assessment and Evaluation

Q. Will secondary students receive a mid-year (March/April) report card?

A. No. The requirement to issue mid-year (March/April) report cards for all secondary students, including graduating students, is suspended for this school year.

Q. Will graduating students receive final marks in time to support post-secondary school applications?

A. Yes. As a result of further discussion and collaboration with Ontario Universities' Application Centre (OUAC), marks for graduating students can be submitted by boards between April 23rd and May 1st. The ministry is continuing to collaborate with the college sector and will provide an update regarding marks to the Ontario College Application Service (OCAS) next week.

In determining mid-year marks for the admissions process, teachers may use evidence that reflects work completed prior to the school closure period, as well as provide opportunity for students to submit a missed and/or additional assignment to demonstrate their learning. Teachers can adjust the weighting of assigned tasks in their determination of a mark, if needed. Marks should represent the most accurate reflection of student work, based on what is reasonable and in the best interest of students during this time. In alignment with Growing Success, teachers will use their knowledge of curriculum expectations, context, evidence of learning, and methods of instruction and assessment to support their students in the current context.

The Ministry of Education is continuing to work with the post-secondary sector, including OUAC and OCAS to support the admissions process and transition to post-secondary.

Q. Will elementary students receive a final report card?

A. Yes. Final report cards are required for all elementary students.

Teachers will use assessment for learning (formative assessment) to gather evidence of how students are progressing in their learning and provide feedback to their students to support their continuous and ongoing learning.

In determining final grades and marks for the final report card, teachers will use the evaluation information gathered before March 13th. When in the best interest of students, we encourage teachers to include evidence of learning completed during the school closure period in their determination of final grades. Reporting on Learning Skills and Work Habits should also reflect information gathered prior to March 13th. Teachers should choose to include comments on the final report card if they feel that doing so would support the student's progress.

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

Q. Will secondary students receive a final report card?

A. Yes. Final report cards are required for all secondary students.

Teachers will assign learning tasks, projects and culminating activities for both formative and summative purposes. Teachers will communicate results of these marked assignments to students. Results will be used by teachers to inform students' final course marks. In keeping with the understanding that marks should represent the most accurate reflection of student work, based on what is reasonable and in the best interest of students during this time, and in recognition of performance prior to March 13th, teachers can adjust the weighting of assigned tasks in their determination of a final mark as needed.

Reporting on Learning Skills and Work Habits should reflect information gathered prior to March 13th. Teachers should choose to include comments on the final report card.

Q. Can marks go down after March 13th?

A. No. Grades and marks will not go down from what they were on March 13th. **No student's mark should be negatively affected by performance during the school closure period. This applies to both elementary and secondary students.** Continuity of learning is critical to prepare students with the knowledge and skills for success in the next grade, course or postsecondary destination. Every effort should be made to keep students involved and engaged in their learning, recognizing that some students in extenuating circumstances may no longer be able to participate. The ministry and its education partners are considering how the school closure period will impact planning for the 2020-21 school year.

Q. For kindergarten students what period of time are the observations of the key learning and growth based on for the report card?

A. The observations of key learning and growth in each of the Four Frames will be based on the student's progress from the beginning of Term 2 (February 3) to March 13.

Teachers may choose to include comments on growth in learning demonstrated during the school closure period when it is to the child's benefit.

Q. For elementary students what period of time are the Learning Skills and Work Habits ratings based on for the report card?

Ratings for Learning Skills and Work Habits will reflect the period from the beginning of Term 2 (February 3) to March 13.

Teachers may choose to include comments on growth in Learning Skills and Work Habits demonstrated during the school closure period when it is to the student's benefit.

Teachers may also include the following statement in the comment section of the report card when there is no demonstration of growth during the closure period:

For this report card, the evaluation of Learning Skills and Work Habits is based on evidence from prior to the school closure period.

Q. How will Grades 1-6 achievement be recorded?

A. For Grades 1 to 6, student achievement will be reported using letter grades.

Q. How will Grades 7 and 8 achievement be reported?

A. For Grades 7 and 8, student achievement will be reported using percentage marks.

Q. For elementary students what if there is insufficient evidence to assign a grade/mark due to the closure period?

A. In such cases where there is insufficient evidence of learning in a particular subject or strand (including math strands), the code "I" may be used on a student's report card. Teachers will use their professional judgement to determine when the use of "I" is appropriate and in the

best interest of the student.

In the case where "I" is used for this purpose, the following statement may be included on the report card:

Due to the school closure period, there is insufficient information to determine a grade/mark.

Q. For secondary students what period of time are the Learning Skills and Work Habits ratings based on for the report card?

A. Ratings for Learning Skills and Work Habits will reflect information from between the beginning of the second semester (February 3) and March 13.

Reporting on Learning Skills and Work Habits may reflect work completed after April 6 that serves to improve the student's rating.

Teachers may also include the following statement in the comment section of the report card, where applicable:

For this report card, the evaluation of Learning Skills and Work Habits is based on evidence from prior to the school closure period.

Q. For elementary students how did the teacher determine the final mark/grade?

A. In Grades 1 to 8, students will be assigned the grades/marks based on their learning from the beginning of Term 2 (February 3) to March 13, 2020.

Evidence collected during the school closure period that shows improvement in learning may be taken into consideration by the teacher when assigning a final grade/mark in a strand or subject.

Q. For secondary students how did the teacher determine the final mark?

A. Final marks will reflect work completed by March 13, as well as any work completed after April 6 that serves to improve the student's final mark.

Teachers will use professional judgement to consider that some evidence carries greater weight than other evidence; for example, some performance tasks are richer and reveal more about students' skills and knowledge than others. Teachers will weigh all evidence of student achievement in light of these considerations and will use their professional judgement to determine the student's report card grade.

A final evaluation does not need to be an examination. Teachers may use a variety of tasks for a final evaluation. Culminating activities should include opportunities for students to demonstrate the essential learning areas from the course.

Teachers do not need to follow the 70/30 mark breakdown. Teachers can adjust and individualize the weighting of assigned tasks in their determination of a mark and if needed, weigh a final culminating task as zero to benefit the student.

Q. For secondary students when is it appropriate for a teacher to use the code 'I' during the closure period?

A. For students in **Grades 9 and 10**, teachers may use the code “I” on the report card to indicate insufficient evidence if the student did not have a passing mark prior to March 13th and did not demonstrate progress during the school closure period.

Due to circumstances resulting from the school closure period, the ministry is expanding the use of “I” for students enrolled in **Grade 11 and 12 courses**, where the student did not have a passing mark prior to March 13th and did not demonstrate progress during the school closure period.

If a student receives an “I” on their report card, they do not receive a credit for that course.

For Grade 11 and 12 courses, full disclosure will be waived, and no notation will be entered on the Ontario Student Transcript (OST). Any subsequent attempts at completing the course, (whether through credit recovery or retaking the course), will be recorded on the OST.

For graduating students who were relying on the course for postsecondary admission, special consideration should be given as to how the course should be recorded. Students and their guidance counsellor or principal, in consultation with parents, will contact the institution’s admission office to explain the nature of the student’s extenuating circumstances.

The following comment may be used for students receiving an “I” for a course:

Due to the school closure period, there is insufficient information to determine a final mark.

Where a student receives an “I” the principal and teaching staff, in consultation with the parents 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 retaking the credit.

Given the extenuating circumstance resulting from school closures, if needed, principals can grant credits to ensure student progression based on work completed to date and efforts made in these extenuating circumstances (*Ontario Schools: Kindergarten to Grade 12, Policy and Program Requirements*, Sections 7.1, 7.5).

Q. Will a statement be included on the Ontario Provincial Report Card regarding COVID-19 and school closures?

A. Yes. A common comment will be uploaded centrally onto each report card that will explain the current reporting context of COVID-19 and school closures.

Timeline to Drop Courses

Q. What is the timeline for Grade 11 and 12 students to drop courses without penalty?

A. According to *Growing Success* (page 60), students can withdraw from a Grade 11 or 12 course no more than five instructional days after the first report card is issued in a semestered school, or more than five instructional days after the second report card is issued in a non-semestered school. For the 2019-20 school year, this date has been changed to **May 6, 2020**. Schools will make every effort to reach out to students to communicate the deadline for dropping courses. Principals will use their discretion to continue to work in the best interest of each student.

At the end of the school year, final marks are provided to OUAC/OCAS, which replaces the midterm mark for consideration by postsecondary institutions. If a student withdraws from a course after their midterm mark has been provided to OUAC/OCAS, then their final mark will be revised with the new course status.

Final Exams

Q. Will secondary students write final exams?

A. No. Secondary students will not write final exams.

Final or Culminating Assessment

Q. Must the final or culminating assessment be worth 30% as per Growing Success?

A. As per the ministry clarification memo *"teachers can adjust the weighting of assigned tasks in their determination of a final mark as needed"* in the best interests of students during the crisis. As such teachers can use their professional judgement to weight the final or culminating assessment as they judge

Community Service Hours

Q. Are graduating students required to complete their 40 community service hours.

A. No. This requirement is waived for the 2019-20 school year. If a student has not completed their hours, they could be encouraged to volunteer to support during the COVID-19 pandemic from the safety of their home (e.g., write letters to seniors in long-term care facilities).

EQAO

Q. Will Education Quality and Accountability (EQAO) assessments be administered.

A. No. All EQAO assessments are cancelled for 2019-20.

Dual Credit Programs

Q. Will dual credit programs continue?

A. Yes, dual credit programs will continue. We are currently in the winter term. One possible exception is the OYAP Level 1 courses. We are still awaiting decisions on these. Georgian College will complete its winter semester completely online. The summer semester will begin on May 19, two weeks later than normal. The semester will run 12 weeks straight until August 7. Those 12 weeks will be entirely remote delivery. Students required to complete labs and practical learning components from the winter and summer semesters will do so from August 10 to 28.

Q. How are dual credit programs impacted by the reporting process during the closure?

A. For college delivered dual credit courses, the policy states that the principal is to record the mark as provided by the college instructor, this may include a mark that is lower than March

13th.

School boards have been working with the college sector to support students enrolled in dual credits. In some cases, college courses are being offered remotely. Where this has not been possible, alternative college credits may have been offered. Where a student on track to graduate in the 2019-20 school year has not been able to obtain the college credit, a principal may grant a high school credit to support the student to graduate through the Prior Learning process.

The principal may award a Prior Learning Equivalency course code with an EQV in the percentage column of the OST under the following circumstances:

- a) Where the dual credit student earns a final mark that is lower than the passing grade for the college course.
- b) Where the student withdrew from the course after March 13 and did not register for a replacement course.

This should be done in consultation with the Student Success Team, parent (if applicable) and student to ensure that student progression based on work completed to date and efforts made under these extenuating circumstances are recognized (*Ontario Schools: Kindergarten to Grade 12, Policy and Program Requirements, Sections 7.1, 7.5*).

In this circumstance, students and parents must be made aware that while the student has been granted the secondary school credit, they will not be earning their college credit, and that the student's OST will be different from their college record.

Civics and Careers Half Credit Programs

Q. Will students in the civics and careers half credit programs be able to complete both half courses?

A. Yes. For students enrolled in Civics and Citizenship and Career Studies half-credit courses in the second semester, their final mark for the half-credit course underway at the time of school closures will be based on work completed as of March 13th. Where appropriate, teachers may adjust this mark in the best interest of students to be a more accurate reflection of their learning. Students are not required to complete any further culminating assignment for this course. Students will begin the work on the second half credit course the week of April 6.

Q. How will a teacher evaluate a student's achievement in a half credit program during the closure period?

A. Teachers should determine, based on their professional judgment, the essential learning areas for the course and assign learning tasks, projects and culminating activities, recognizing that there may not be evidence demonstrated for all expectations in the course.

For semestered courses, for the second half-credit in Civics or Careers, there is an expectation that some demonstration of learning will be provided by students in order to successfully complete the course.

Where the student does not provide sufficient evidence of learning, the student will be assigned an "I" designation and will not receive the half-credit for that course.

Where a student receives an "I" the principal and teaching staff, in consultation with the parents 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 retaking the credit.

Given the extenuating circumstance resulting from school closures, if needed, principals can grant credits to ensure student progression based on work completed to date and efforts made in these extenuating circumstances (*Ontario Schools: Kindergarten to Grade 12, Policy and Program Requirements*, Sections 7.1, 7.5).

eLearning

Q. Will eLearning courses continue?

A. Yes. Students requiring technology support should contact their teacher.

Specialist High Skills Major Programs

Q. Will a student be able to obtain the red seal associated with my SHSM program?

A. Yes. The SHSM program has an override request process already in place. Graduating students in the SHSM program unable to complete their SHSM requirements due to extenuating circumstances, including the impacts from COVID-19, will be supported through the override request process.

Adult Education

Q. Will adult education night courses continue?

A. Yes. Programs will be offered online with opportunities for students to interact directly with teachers online.

Q. Will adult education coop work placements be able to continue to accumulate hours?

A. Yes, if they are working in an “essential service”.

