

*Jim Dawson
Township of Southgate
Municipality of Grey Highlands*

Welcome to Spring!

This certainly is a different spring than what we envisioned in our schools. I would like to commend our parents, teachers, and support staff for the engaging and innovative learning happening in our communities. All have had to learn quickly how to deliver curriculum to students using unconventional and often unfamiliar methods. This has not been an easy adjustment for anyone. Everyone is doing their best to manage many priorities and responsibilities from home while adapting to distance learning. Despite the steep curve, I thank all parties for their unyielding cooperation, patience, and commitment since schools closed. As our Director of Education has emphasized, taking care of our mental health and well-being is a priority for all of us. We are in this together, and we will get through it together! I look forward to the eventual return of school, and the energy and excitement our students and teachers bring to our various learning centres. Until then, stay safe and well. For updates on the local impact of COVID-19, view Grey Bruce Health Unit's daily situation reports. As always, contact me with any questions or concerns: 519-924-3766 or jim_dawson@bwdsb.on.ca. Also keep updated by visiting my [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#) pages.

Labour Update

We are pleased to hear that tentative provincial agreements have been reached with the Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario and Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation. While the agreements still require ratification by all parties, this news provides some reassurance and certainty for our students, staff, and families during these otherwise uncertain times. We extend our thanks to all parties involved in these complex and challenging provincial negotiations over the past several months for coming together to reach common ground through agreements that support the best interests of all students.

Grey Bruce Health Unit
Situation Reports

[Click here for regular updates](#)

Continuous Learning Plan

At our first online Regular Meeting of the Board on Tuesday, April 21, 2020, trustees received a detailed update from staff on Bluewater District School Board's continuous learning plan during the provincial shutdown of schools. In order to support the diverse needs of all students and families across our district, the plan is being executed in a multi-phased and careful approach that is mindful of our priority around well-being. Chronologically speaking, the phases thus far have included: 1) connecting with students; 2) connecting to our virtual learning environment; 3) developing continuity of learning programs; and 4) supporting students with limited or no access to devices and/or reliable internet. [Click here for an overview](#) of the topics covered in the presentation.

As always, students and parents/guardians are encouraged to contact their teacher or principal with questions or concerns regarding the continuous learning plan. Here are some important links from our board website to keep handy:

[Continuous Learning portal, how to get started, Q and A](#)
[Mental health and other resources related to COVID-19](#)
[COVID-19 updates and parent/guardian letters](#)



Upcoming Board Meetings

Due to the current COVID-19 situation and our efforts to practice physical distancing, all Bluewater District School Board regularly scheduled board meetings are being held online until further notice. Online Committee of the Whole Board meetings on the first Tuesday of the month will be held only as necessary. Regular Meetings of the Board will continue as previously scheduled at 7:00 p.m. on the third Tuesday of the month. We are unfortunately unable to entertain delegations during this time. To enable public access, meeting recordings will be posted on our [webcast video archives web page](#) and [YouTube channel](#).

New Director of Education Announced

Trustees are thrilled to welcome Lori Wilder as Bluewater District School Board's new Director of Education as of October 1, 2020. Lori has served for the past several years in our board as Superintendent of Education overseeing a wide variety of portfolios at the system level. These have ranged from special education, student mental health, and parent involvement, to student athletics, Indigenous learning, and human resources, among many others. We look forward to her expertise and leadership in guiding Bluewater into a promising future! To ensure a smooth transition, Lori will become Director Designate effective June 27, 2020 as we say goodbye to our retiring director Alana Murray. Speaking of which, we extend our deepest gratitude to Alana for her long and storied career serving the students and families of Bluewater. The incredible legacy she has built will resonate for years to come. We are so thankful for all that she has given as both 'educator' and 'leader', and will miss her very much. Please join us in wishing Alana all the best in her retirement, and congratulating Lori on her new role.

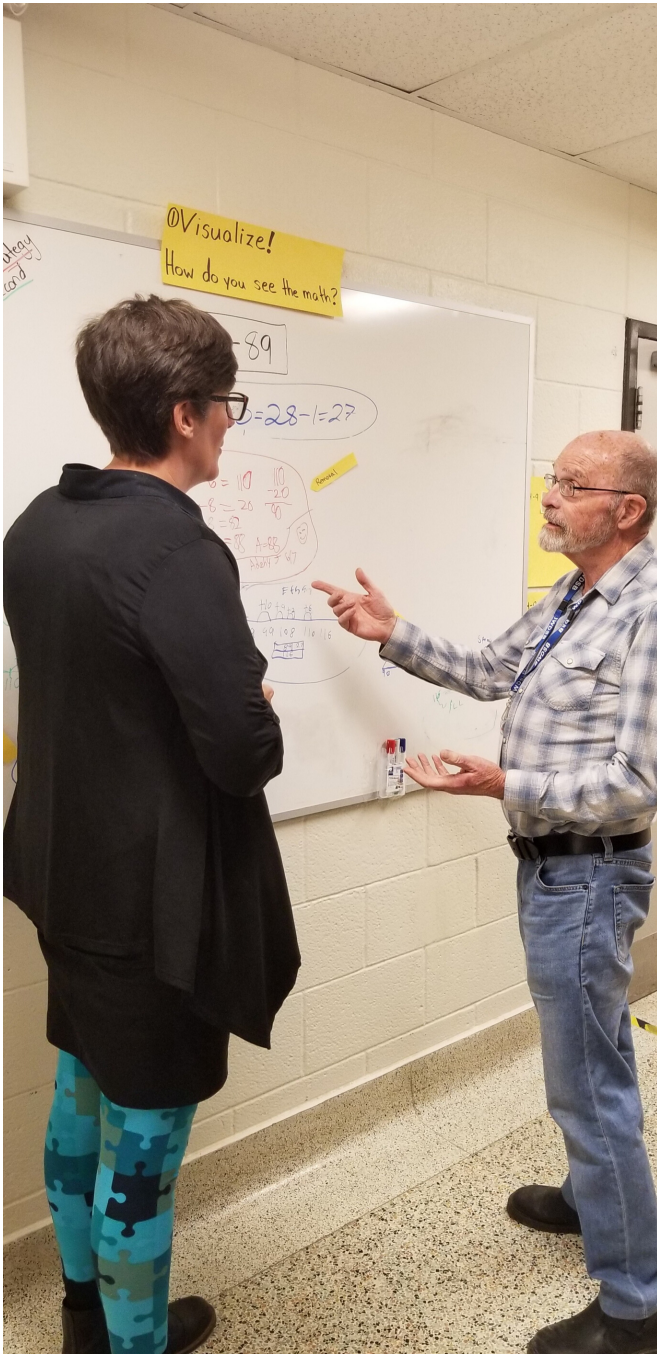
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Fun with Math

In February, I had an opportunity to visit Egremont Community School to witness how students work together to solve math challenges. I was impressed by the depth of engagement demonstrated by the students as they worked together to solve the challenges, and the varied approaches that were taken to reach a solution.