

Trustee Newsletter

Spring 2020



*Katie Lutz
Town of Saugeen Shores
Municipality of Arran-Elderslie*

Welcome to Spring!

This is certainly a spring like no other! As I write this, we are over 50 days into physical distancing life, and are hopeful for a return to some sort of normal. It is exciting to see the many ways our teachers, staff, students, and families are continuing their learning, school spirit, and social connections. This is a challenging time for everyone, and I am so thankful for the hard work everyone is putting into making this situation work for our students. On a personal note, I want to acknowledge that distance learning is not going all that well in our household. So if you are struggling, know you are not alone. Our Director of Education has emphasized the priority of taking care of our mental health and well-being. We are in this together, and we will get through it together! Please check in on one another. Everyone needs extra support right now. Offer it when you can, and accept it when you need it. If you or someone in your family is struggling, reach out to your healthcare provider, your child's school, or call 211. I look forward to the return of school, and the energy and excitement our students bring to our classrooms, hallways, and playgrounds. Until then, stay safe and well. As always, you can contact me: 519-832-3051 or katie_lutz@bwdsb.on.ca

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](#)



vLE Support



BWDSB



COVID-19 Upd...



Welcome

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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