



WEST OTTAWA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

ADMINISTRATION OFFICES

1138 136th Ave.
Holland, MI 49424

(616) 786-2050
www.westottawa.net

May 11, 2020

Dear West Ottawa Families:

I hope this update finds you and your family safe and well. Several weeks into our Remote Learning Plan, I'm pleased to report that engagement numbers for our elementary students are excellent across the district. This is a testament to your commitment to your child's education and growth, and I am grateful for your ongoing dedication.

We are still compiling numbers at the middle school and high school levels, but I'm hoping that our older students will follow the example of our youngest learners. Learning loss is always a critical factor during extended periods of time outside of school, so it is vital that all of our students remain focused on their academics. Doing so will put us on firmer ground for the beginning of the next school year. To that end, I would encourage all parents to work closely with their children and teachers for the remainder of the school year. If you have not accessed the Remote Learning Plan, please visit the district's website at www.westottawa.net and click on the blue announcement bar at the top of the page.

As we continue to work closely with students and families, planning is underway for the 2020-21 school year. While much uncertainty still exists, we are running through a variety of scenarios to ensure we are able to provide our students with the high-quality education our families have come to expect. We will provide updates in the coming weeks and appreciate your continued patience throughout this difficult time.

Just as I am proud of how our teachers have handled the transition to working online with students, I remain proud of the tremendous work our food service team has done throughout the stay-at-home order by Governor Whitmer. To date, the district has provided more than 180,800 meals to West Ottawa Public Schools families and that's a direct result of the devotion our food service team has for the children we are privileged to serve. Please note that meal prep and delivery will continue until June 30.

You are likely aware that the Governor has extended the stay-at-home order to May 28. However, she has made modifications to allow construction projects to proceed across the state. As a result, we are able to move forward with construction projects under the bond the community approved last year, including work at Harbor Lights Middle School, Pine Creek Elementary, Sheldon Woods Elementary; and planning continues on the PAC and Stadium. With work already begun at Harbor Lights, our hope is to make up for lost time and have it finished on time. In our commitment to protect our school community, we have implemented a number of safety requirements in alignment with the Governor's Executive Orders.

It should come as no surprise that tax revenues are down sharply across the state due to COVID-19's impact on local businesses. There are several unknowns with how this may impact schools in Michigan. I don't share this information to cause unnecessary anxiety, but rather to ensure that as our partner in your child's education you are aware of the potential economic realities facing the district in the near future. Our first priority is and always will be the safety and well-being of our students, and that includes making sure they have access to essential programs to promote their academic growth. We are monitoring the funding situation closely and will keep you informed moving forward.

Finally, this is normally an exciting time of year for all of our students, especially our senior class with graduation looming. We understand their disappointment, and yours, that in-person graduation ceremonies will not be taking place next week. We remain committed to celebrating our Class of 2020 and hope to have an update on how we plan to do so in the coming weeks. Their hard work has not gone unnoticed and deserves recognition. Until then, we will look for ways to acknowledge their achievements and encourage the entire school community to join us in doing so.

Sincerely,

Thomas K. Martin
Superintendent of Schools