



WEST OTTAWA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

ADMINISTRATION OFFICES

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May 18, 2020

Dear West Ottawa Families:

This is a bittersweet time for so many of us across the West Ottawa Public Schools community as this week traditionally marks the graduation celebration for our seniors. It is a time where we acknowledge not only the hard work and dedication of our graduating class, but also their families and their teachers – from kindergarten through high school – who have worked closely beside them along the way. Among their many incredible accomplishments, I am pleased to share that the Class of 2020 broke the district's record for scholarships earned, securing \$16.4 million for post-secondary education.

While it certainly is unfortunate that we cannot join together in person this week to honor our Class of 2020, we can join together in congratulating them for their remarkable achievements. I am always impressed by the resiliency our students demonstrate, but never more so than during these peculiar times. Their continued commitment to their studies and to their future is a testament to our students, our families, our teachers and our community.

With just a few weeks remaining in the school year – our last day is Friday, June 5 – we continue to explore the possibility of hosting a graduation ceremony over the summer. We will keep you informed as plans develop. In the meantime, the devoted team at West Ottawa High School has planned a week-long celebration for the graduating class, taking place this week. Festivities will include a graduation motor parade, a virtual Honors Convocation ceremony and the presentation of the Panther Pride Award.

As we celebrate this year's graduating class, we must also look ahead to the next school year to ensure our students receive the high-quality education they deserve. In the weeks since our school buildings were first closed, we have been working not only to provide our students with the necessary resources to successfully complete this school year, but also to prepare for 2020-21. We are working closely with neighboring school districts and public officials at local, county and state levels to determine the appropriate course of action for our children and our community.

I know you are anxious to hear possible plans for the 2020-21 school year and, with the Governor currently working to establish a task force to provide recommendations on how schools can safely reopen in the fall, we will share plans as soon as they are made available to us. Please know that as our partner in the education of your children, we are committed to keeping you engaged throughout this process. To that end, we will provide updates surrounding the upcoming school year as often as possible. I truly appreciate your patience and understanding on this matter, and I welcome any and all questions you have along the way.

Preparing Students to be College, Career and Life Ready!

Promoting ongoing learning throughout this difficult time is critical to our students' success. We're fortunate to have programs like the district's Bookmobile available during the summer months. What's wonderful about the Bookmobile program is that it isn't exclusively for our students – it's open to the school community. As we celebrate the Bookmobile's 45th anniversary this year, we have three generations of readers accessing the program. I would encourage all residents to continue to take advantage of the Bookmobile, but especially our students, as strengthening their reading skills is essential to their academic growth.

While there are only a few weeks remaining in the school year, that does not mean our work is complete. Now, more than ever, we must work together to ensure children receive the support they need to thrive. Thus, please continue to work closely with your children and teachers to finish the year strong. 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 for more information.

Thank you for your continued commitment to your child's education.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'T. Martin', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Thomas K. Martin
Superintendent of Schools