



WEST OTTAWA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

ADMINISTRATION OFFICES

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May 4, 2020

Dear West Ottawa Families:

I'd like to start this week's correspondence by acknowledging the individuals that make West Ottawa the place that it is - our teachers. May 4-8 is Teacher Appreciation Week and I am so very grateful for the men and women who have dedicated their lives to inspiring our students. Their passion and devotion have never been more obvious than in these difficult times.

During the past several weeks, our teachers have worked tirelessly to ensure students are able to continue to participate in learning activities, building on the momentum established since the beginning of the school year. While remote learning presents many challenges, our teachers remain committed to providing your children with the highest quality educational experiences possible. Please join me in thanking them for their dedication.

Last week saw the successful introduction of our Mobile Wi-Fi Hotspot Program, with 15 West Ottawa school buses serving as mobile internet access points. The buses were parked in select locations throughout the community on Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 8:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m., the same schedule we plan to continue through the end of the school year. This program is essential for the continued growth of our students and I appreciate our families adapting their schedules to take advantage of the hotspots. For those who have yet to participate, the locations of all 15 WO Mobile Wi-Fi hotspots can be found on our Remote Learning Resources page at this link:

<https://www.westottawa.net/internet-access-options-tech-support/>.

As Governor Whitmer and legislators continue to discuss re-opening Michigan's economy, one of the biggest challenges facing our families is daycare. With parents and guardians eventually returning to work outside of the home, daycare is not only top-of-mind among families but for district leaders as well. To that end, we are currently exploring potential solutions to support our families and will share more information in the coming weeks.

It's no secret that the past several months have been difficult – especially as it relates to our collective mental health. I have seen many positive changes across schools in my years as an educator, but I am extremely proud of the increase in services available to address the social and emotional well-being of our students and staff. Earlier this school year, West Ottawa Public Schools added 9.5 new staff positions focused on students' mental health. While our school buildings may be closed, our counselors remain available to your children. We must work together to battle feelings of isolation and uncertainty—if your child requires additional support, please visit <https://www.westottawa.net/wops-online-resources/> and review our Mental Wellness Resources and reach out to one of our highly qualified professionals.

In closing, on behalf of the entire West Ottawa Public Schools district, I would like to thank you, once again, for your commitment to your child's education. We have seen great engagement with our Remote Learning Plan thus far and expect that will continue throughout the remainder of the school year. We may only have a few weeks remaining in the official school year, but there's still much work left to be done. As a reminder, you can access the Remote Learning Plan by visiting the district's website at www.westottawa.net and clicking on the blue announcement bar at the top of the page.

Sincerely,

Thomas K. Martin
Superintendent of Schools

Preparing Students to be College, Career and Life Ready!