



MEMO

Date: Friday, April 17, 2020

Topic: **Update on Plans for Continued Teaching and Learning**

Since the release of the divisional and provincial documents last week there have been two recurring questions that require attention:

- What is the consequence for students who choose to discontinue learning?
- What is Recovery Learning?

We are awaiting provincial direction on these two questions. In the interim, I will share our divisional interpretation of these questions.

It is important to remember that we are dealing with extraordinary circumstances. As we transition to remote teaching and learning, we must remember that what is happening is not a return to normal. Instead we are individually and collectively trying to figure out how to live with a pandemic that has overturned ordinary life, including ordinary school life. Consequently, we must be willing, as individuals and a system, to recognize that the normal way that we did things when students were in school may not work now.

What is the consequence for students who choose to discontinue learning?

The Province has said that while its goal is to have ongoing student engagement, student final marks may not be lower than where they were when regular classes were suspended. For Park West the baseline date for marks is March 13. We will encourage all students to stay engaged in learning if their circumstances allow, so that they will be better prepared for the return to regular classes.

That being said, there is no divisional or school consequence for students who discontinue learning and engagement beyond the likely recovery learning needs. Given provincial direction we cannot withhold credits. They were clear that students will not be held back or punished due to COVID-19. However students who discontinue learning could potentially find themselves disadvantaged when regular classes resume. Ideally, teachers and families will work together to support the ongoing engagement of learning.

The opportunity to improve marks will be one motivator for continued engagement and learning. Another motivator is that learning this year will help students be prepared to learn the next grade level's material. Our hope for all of our students is that they will be lifelong learners. This situation provides an opportunity for students to learn more independently than they may be used to. Developing this skill will serve them well in future grades and for the rest of their lives.

What is Recovery Learning?

A simple Google search provides the following definitions:

- Recovery - a return to a normal state of health, mind, or strength.
- Learning - the acquisition of knowledge or skills through experience, study, or by being taught.

Recovery learning in Park West will involve teachers and schools making informed decisions about what our students need to get ready for what comes next. We will work with students to regain knowledge, skills, and experiences so that they may return to a normal state of health, mind and academic success based on what was lost or missed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This process will include academic recovery if required as well as social / emotional support and recovery.

This is a challenging time that requires compassion, flexibility and a different approach to teaching and learning. We recognize there will be different levels of engagements for students during the suspension of regular classes. As a consequence, there will be different levels of learning during this time. Some students will have gaps due to a choice to not engage. Others may discontinue learning for reasons related to personal and family wellness. Regardless of the reason for the learning gaps, we will continue to support our students, assessing where they are to determine what they need to be successful. This is not a new process. It is what happens in Park West schools on a regular basis. The COVID-19 situation is simply compounding the challenge.

Once we are given further information about these topics we will update the divisional documents regarding continued teaching and learning.

Have a safe and restful weekend,
Stephen David