**Subject Line: Update on Graduations, Exams, Final Marks and Parent Suggestions**May 5, 2020

Dear Students, Parents, and Guardians,

We want to start off by thanking the students who participated in our secondary student Thoughtexchange over the last week. The information you provided will help us better understand your unique needs and ensure that we are working to improve the distance learning experience. The Thoughtexchange results are currently being analyzed and the DDSB will share a summary of the results with you in the future. As we work together during Distance Learning, we have developed a set of guiding principles with and tips for parents (see attached) to consider during this time.

We also recognize that there are a lot of questions about graduation ceremonies, the calculation of final course marks, and workload expectations with Distance Learning. This has been such an unusual and interrupted school year and it is understandable that students and families have questions and concerns on these topics.

**Exams, PA Days and Final Marks**

With some direction from the Ministry of Education, decisions have been made regarding examinations, PA days and final marks:

* Students final grades will be based on term marks only and there will be no final exams or tasks in June 2020;
* Exam and PA days will be replaced with instructional days; and
* Students will have opportunities to improve the grades they had as of March 13 during distance learning, but no mark will decline as a result of the school closure period.

**Assessment and Evaluation Practices**

The following information is a summary of the assessment practices that will be taking place during distance learning:

* Teachers will plan for 3 hours of learning for students per week, per course;
* Assessment will focus on giving feedback to improve learning;
* Where appropriate, students can improve their grades through assessed work completed after March 13th;
* The overall course expectations are to be prioritized and reduced, to reflect the loss of instructional time. Only prioritized overall expectations will be part of any summative assessment task; and
* Additional learning activities may be assigned, but they will not be required as part of a final assessment and will be presented as supplemental learning so that students can make an informed choice.

The DDSB developed ([Principles to Inform Distance Learning Practice for Secondary](https://www.ddsb.ca/en/programs-and-learning/resources/Documents/Distance-Learning/Principles-to-Inform-Distance-Learning-Practice-Secondary.pdf)) to guide teachers as they approach student assessment and evaluation. If you have questions about specific courses, please connect with the classroom teacher or school administration for clarification.

**Graduation Ceremonies**

We understand that some of you have questions about graduation ceremonies in June. We have not yet cancelled graduation ceremonies and are guiding our actions through the ongoing advice and recommendations of our public health officials and the province. We recognize what an important milestone graduation is in the lives of young people and we truly enjoy the opportunity to celebrate our student’s achievements as they move on to the next chapter in their lives.

With the uncertainty about when large gatherings can take place again and the extension of school closures until at least May 31, it is important to us that any school celebrations be done in ways that ensure the health and safety of all participants. We will continue to explore alternative options should June graduation ceremonies be cancelled. One such option may include events in the late summer/fall and would be dependent on the advice of public health officials and the province.

We appreciate and thank you for your understanding as we prioritize the safety of our school community. I sincerely hope that you find this information helpful and will be in touch as we determine what our approach is across the district. Should you wish to discuss any of the items raised, please do not hesitate to reach out to the appropriate individual. Thank you once again for your support and please continue to be well.

Sincerely,

Alison Evanoff   
Principal  
GL Roberts CVI