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To: Horizon Families and Staff
From: Kevin C. Garinger, Director of Education
Date: March 27, 2020
Re: Supplemental Learning During COVID-19 Closures

Good evening, Horizon families and staff.

I am writing to inform you of Horizon School Division's next steps to provide ongoing support for you and your children. First, a point about our public health. School playgrounds in all Horizon communities have been closed until further notice. We strongly urge you to avoid visiting playgrounds with your children at this time. The COVID-19 virus has been found to survive for several days on outdoor surfaces, and it is imperative that we respect the Chief Medical Health Officer's guidance to maintain a minimum distance of 2 metres between ourselves and others outside our immediate household. For the time being, this includes playgrounds where children may be in contact with other children. It is truly heartbreaking to announce the closure of playgrounds; but, by following these measures, we will slow the transmission of this virus and hasten our return to normal activities. Thank you for your understanding on this matter.

Now, in regard to important information about supplemental learning and your child's continuing education. **Horizon School Division will be offering learning opportunities and support for your children, our students, throughout this period of school closures.**

March 20-27 has been a "pause week" for Saskatchewan's school staff. As ordered by the Premier and the Ministry of Education, no instructional activities took place this week, to allow us time to adjust and plan for the new reality of education during this pandemic. Over the course of this week, the education sector's [Response Planning Team](#), sub-committees, and school divisions across Saskatchewan have been busy meeting via teleconference and videoconference to develop plans for how we will support student learning throughout this period of closure for our province's schools. After this week, we have a much clearer picture of how this time will look for our students, families, and staff.

All Horizon staff will continue to work from home at this time, outside of a few exceptions such as caretakers and facilities staff required to provide essential services within our buildings. School staff will be coordinating with their principal or supervisor to access our buildings if there is a need to retrieve supplies or equipment. This will be managed to ensure staff are in and out of the buildings quickly, and respecting the 10-person maximum for gatherings set by our government.

The rapidly-changing nature of updates, recommendations, information, and the general uncertainty of this pandemic have added new levels of anxiety to our daily lives. Our goal is to alleviate that anxiety for each of you as it relates to your child's educational wellbeing.

Starting in the afternoon of Monday, March 30, 2020, Horizon School Division teachers will begin directly contacting families to touch base and discuss how we will move forward with support for your child's learning needs, and the specific needs of your families. You will hear from your child's teacher over the course of the coming week. Teachers will also be busy developing lesson plans and preparing to support you and your student(s) in the days and weeks to come, if choose to have your child continue their learning. This process is going to take time to develop, as teachers

will be coordinating the communications to families and preparing for the delivery of learning that will look much different than most have ever had to deliver before. Many of our teachers have already submitted their ideas and feedback for supplemental learning, and both our system and our province are very grateful for their contributions. **You can anticipate that we will begin teacher-directed supplemental learning on April 20, 2020 – immediately following the Easter Break.**

In the meantime, we have also been developing a collection of online resources for students and families to access – **Horizon’s Learning Practice Tool** – to practice learning and skills that align with our intended student outcomes. We are currently exploring options for how this sort of tool can be made available for our students who do not have regular access to the internet. The Horizon Learning Practice Tool will be easily accessible on horizonsd.ca, beginning Monday, March 30. We hope this will allow for independent practice for students, and take some pressure off families trying to support your child’s learning needs while teachers are preparing for supplemental learning.

Other individual student supports, such as speech and language pathologists, counsellors, occupational therapists, and educational psychologists, will be working to determine methods to meet the needs of individual children across Horizon. More information regarding these and other supports will be shared as we move forward and plans are finalized.

Regarding student marks, supplemental learning, and distance education, please review the information below from the Ministry of Education and our sector’s [Response Planning Team](#):

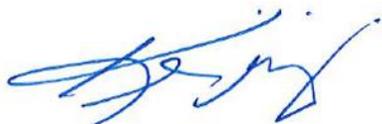
- A minimum final mark record of 50 per cent or greater is to be applied to the outcomes evaluated to date in the subject areas as of March 13, 2020. Students will be afforded the opportunity to improve the mark record through options provided within the capacity of the school division and local school if students choose.
- Students will be invited to continue learning; however, if they and their families choose not to, they will be assigned their grade as of March 13, 2020, as per the statement above.
- A mark of 50 per cent will not be applied where a student has not completed any outcomes or where the teacher has not evaluated any outcomes as of March 13, 2020. Students will have the opportunity to engage in supplementary learning opportunities to obtain a mark record.
- Marks will be submitted to the Ministry of Education as per the usual process by July 2, 2020, as per the Registrar’s Handbook.
- For students who choose to engage in supplemental learning opportunities, teachers will provide formative assessment and other feedback.
- The processes for evaluation, in order for students to increase their marks from March 13, 2020, will continue to be determined by the teacher.
- Provincial examinations within the K-12 system are waived for non-accredited teachers from March 13, 2020 through to the end of June 2020. All course challenge requests would occur with local teachers/schools.
- Home-based students and adult learners access to provincial examinations will be made available through the Ministry of Education.
- Schools and teachers will develop communication plans for students and families to inform them about learning opportunities.
- In instances where students are enrolled in distance learning, their classes will carry on, should the student choose to continue. If currently enrolled students choose not to continue, they will be granted a minimum final mark record of 50 per cent or greater, based on the outcomes evaluated to date in the subject area, as of March 13, 2020.

[Please review the latest update for Saskatchewan families from the provincial Response Planning Team, found here.](#)

Please continue to use Horizon School Division's Communications Centre Hotline for any questions or concerns, at **1-306-682-2558** (please ask for the Communications Centre). Continue to visit www.horizonsd.ca for regular updates. My previous communications on COVID-19 and school closures are archived there, as well as links to other resources and supports. I will continue to remind you all of the resources available at www.saskatchewan.ca/covid19 and the provincial HealthLine that can be reached by dialing **811**.

This situation has sent us on a new journey in education. We are carving a path forward through changing terrain. It has seemed daunting at times, and I am sure there has been no shortage of stress in your homes about what this will mean for the months ahead. I take comfort knowing we are on this journey together, knowing that we have our incredible families, communities, and partners supporting this work. Please know, we care very deeply about your children, our students; and I can say that with confidence on behalf of everyone in Horizon School Division. We are here for you. We will remain here for you...Creating a Better World, One Student at a Time.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Kevin C. Garinger', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Kevin C. Garinger, B. Ed, M.A. Ed
Director of Education/CEO
Horizon School Division No. 205