

April 16, 2020

To: Grade 12 students and their parents/guardians,

I am writing to you in hopes of alleviating some of the concerns we have heard from our graduating students and provide you and your families with further information concerning your final year of high school.

I want to begin by saying how sorry we are that we had to cancel proms and commencements and other student events for the remainder of the school year. This was a difficult decision to make but it was a necessary one, made with guidance from public health officials. We are currently looking at ways we can celebrate and acknowledge our graduating students once the restrictions on large group gatherings are lifted and we can safely be together again.

Your teachers, principals and I recognize that Grade 12 can be a challenging year for students and the many changes due to the COVID-19 pandemic has created additional challenges. Be assured that the Halton District School Board and the Ministry of Education are in alignment that **no student will have their graduation compromised by COVID-19.**

The Ministry of Education continues to collaborate with the Ministry of Colleges and Universities to ensure there will be no barriers for graduating Grade 12 students to access post-secondary education.

This includes:

- Waiving the graduation requirement of 40 hours of volunteer service
- Waiving the requirement to successfully complete the Grade 10 Literacy Test requirements
- Graduating students in a SHSM program unable to complete their SHSM requirements will be supported through the override request process
- Midterm marks for Grade 12 students will be based on work done before March 13. Any learning tasks completed after April 6 may be used if it improves your midterm mark. These midterm marks will be entered by April 24. These marks will be centrally uploaded to the Ontario Universities' Application Centre ([OUAC](#)) and the Ontario College Application Service ([OCAS](#)) on April 30.
- Demonstrated improvements in learning will be taken into consideration when assigning a final mark; however, you must complete the work required to demonstrate your understanding of key curriculum expectations. Where you require special consideration, please connect with your teacher, Guidance Counsellor, SERT, and/or principal.

We are aware that distance learning is not a one-size fits all approach and learning during this time will look different. This means you are not expected to be online with your classmates for 75-minute periods. We recognize that siblings are sharing technology, that not all students have computers and internet access, and that some of you are supporting your community by working in essential services. Please ensure your teachers are aware of your situation.

I trust you will work hard, maintain good time management and organizational skills, participate actively in your courses, and look after yourselves and your families. As encouraged when schools are open, I hope you continue to communicate with your teachers and ask for the support you need to be successful. Guidance counsellors, Student Success Teachers, Special Education staff and ESL/ELD teachers are available to help with pathway planning and any additional information, resources or support you may need.

We are committed to working together with you to ensure that this time of distance learning is a positive and supported one in this very important final year of high school.

Please refer to the [FAQs for Graduating Grade 12 students](#) on the HDSB website (hdsb.ca) for answers to some of the most common questions we have received from graduating students. If you have a question not on the FAQs, please email contact@hdsb.ca.

Sincerely,

Stuart Miller
Director of Education