

Response Planning Team Update – March 20, 2020

The Education Response Planning Team (RPT) (including representation from SSBA, STF LEADS SASBO and the Ministry of Education) met for the fourth time on March 19. The group continues to build a framework to support school divisions in building plans to support student continued learning during the indefinite closure of schools in Saskatchewan due to COVID-19.

Today's discussion focused primarily on the matters of student evaluation, promotion and graduation. The recommendations announced today represent the necessary first step in terms of defining the framework under which additional educational opportunities will be made available to Saskatchewan students. The guidelines for the delivery of supplementary education have not yet been finalized and matters regarding the deployment of school division resources and staff are being considered. The RPT will continue to address these issues in their subsequent meetings and provide further direction in the days to come.

As noted in yesterday's update, the communications protocol is for the RPT to send updates to school division board chairs and directors, who are expected to share the information with their staff in a timely fashion. Following this, the organizations involved will share the same messages with their members. It is very important as the situation evolves rapidly we are sharing the same messages while continuing to follow the direction of the Chief Medical Health Officer.

As requested by school divisions, the RPT is also drafting communication that can be sent to families to update them on the status of the school year and the work of the committee as we understand there are many questions during these extraordinary times.

Here are key updates and messages from our meeting today:

- Students in grades K-9 will be advanced into the next grade in the following year. As has been stated, supplementary educational opportunities will be provided for these students. This will be done by local school boards in a manner which respects the role of teachers and staff. Further direction on this will be forthcoming.
- Consistent with messaging from the Premier, for high school, all actively enrolled students will receive a final grade at the time when the indefinite school closure was announced. A minimum final mark record of 50 per cent or greater is to be applied to the outcomes evaluated to date in the subject area 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 they choose.
- Following the one-week pause, Distance Learning will continue as normal for all students currently enrolled in distance learning programs. 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.

- In these exceptional times, teachers are asked to follow the direction provided by the province relating to final mark assessments and as such are deemed to be working within the bounds of their professional and ethical standards of practice. The Executive Director of the Saskatchewan Professional Teacher Regulatory Board has provided the following supportive statement;
 - “Teachers who provide final assessments consistent with the direction provided by the Ministry of Education and their school division upon the closure of schools for the COVID-19 crisis will be following the directions of their employer and would be considered to be acting within the expectations of the profession”.
- The use of a percentage grade will allow marks to be updated by the school until 30 days after the course end date.
- The use of ‘Standing Granted’ as opposed to percentages as a mark record is not appropriate during this unprecedented time.
- As per the Registrar’s Handbook,
 - Final mark records for the 2019-20 school year are to be submitted to the Student Data System within 30 days of the course end date. A course end date of June will allow you to make changes to the mark record on your local system until these marks are submitted to the Student Data System on or before July 2, 2020. *DO NOT CHANGE course end dates to March 13 or 20.*
 - The deadline for the submission of Class Registrations for all secondary level courses that finish on or before the end of June has been extended to **April 24, 2020.**
- Credit will not be granted for courses for which students have not yet been enrolled. Students will first need to be enrolled in the course and complete the requirements of the course before a grade can be granted.

We thank you for your continued leadership during these challenging times.

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