

March 30, 2020

To: All Horizon parents

March 30, 2020

Dear parents:

We know many of Horizon's families are adapting to a new reality in which parents play a more significant role in their children's learning. This was not the plan when we started school in September, much less two weeks ago, but it is the reality today. These are unprecedented times and the pace of change is hard to keep up with. Our government and our school division staff are working hard to respond to this pandemic and to ensure the safety of you and your family as well as our staff.

On March 15 we received notice that the government was cancelling classes for all Alberta students on an indefinite basis. At that time, we were informed that education funding would continue to be provided and we built our Continuity of Learning Plan based on that. Those plans included using all of our staff to support students learning.

On Saturday, March 28th, the province announced that they were shifting education dollars to Health so that frontline health workers could access the supplies they need to support Albertans during the COVID 19 pandemic. We understand that the focus at this time needs to be on the health and safety of all Albertans. Dr. Hinshaw stated that, "We need to respond to this extraordinary situation with extraordinary kindness." We agree and recognize that this requires sacrifices on the part of many Albertans.

Minister LaGrange has stated that educational decisions are being made based on four principles:

- The safety of students and staff comes first.
- Student learning will continue.
- Resources continue to flow to schools.
- School authorities have flexibility to do what is best for your community.

Our Board of Trustees and senior administration strongly support these principles. We also recognize that the government has a larger obligation to support all Albertans during this pandemic.

For Horizon, Saturday's provincial announcement regarding a temporary reduction in funding translates into a significant reduction of staff for the remainder of the school year. More than 150 support staff were informed today that they would be laid off effective April 17. These people are integral to our schools. They are part of our family. They were supporting our students and your children. There is some comfort in knowing their absence will only be as long as your children's absence.

Teachers remain committed to supporting your children during this historic event. We remain committed to keeping you up to date as best we can with these rapidly occurring changes. Schools will be making adjustments to their educational continuity plans to adapt to the temporary loss of deeply valued support staff and to ensure that the plan continues to meet student learning.

Your children's learning and well-being shall remain our top priority. We cannot wait to see your children and all our staff again in the months ahead as we return to regular classes.

Respectfully,



Marie Logan  
Board Chair



Wilco Tymensen  
Superintendent of Schools