

Friday, Sept. 10, 2021

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**Dear Parents and Guardians,**

The weekly Letters to Families that were issued prior to the start of school have been well-received, so [Near North District School Board](#) (NNDSB) is continuing to update families on a weekly basis, at least through September. We hope this helps students and families learn more about how we will support you in the return to school.

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The Launch Learning Tutoring program has been designed to support schools initiating small group tutoring activities that help students in Grades 1-10 return to classroom learning, with focused learning activities designed to develop social, literacy and/or numeracy skills.

Research shows that additional time and appropriate support can help students learn the skills they need to be successful. While the COVID-19 pandemic has affected students differently, there are key themes emerging which make up the foci of the Launch Learning Program, including:

- the re-engagement of students;
- the need to focus on student mental health and well-being; and
- supports for literacy and math learning.

The Launch Learning program is currently active at four NNDSB sites with tutoring activities occurring throughout the last week of August and during the month of September. Innovative tutoring programs will continue to be introduced at schools across NNDSB as we embrace learning recovery and renewal.

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Between Sept. 13 and 27, the North Bay Parry Sound District Health Unit will be holding vaccination clinics at all NNDSB secondary schools for those students who choose to receive a vaccination. Individual schools will communicate specific dates for these clinics.

\*

Emergency Response Preparedness remains a priority for all NNDSB schools. Every school creates a fire safety plan annually, which is reviewed by the fire department within that school's jurisdiction. Each year, schools participate in six planned fire drills (three in the autumn and three in the spring) along with two lockdown drills.

This ensures that all staff and every student know how to respond in a safe, orderly manner in the case of an emergency. Like last year, schools will practice these drills in a manner that ensures COVID-19 protocols, such as physical distancing and masking, are maintained in accordance with public health guidance.

\*

Several NNDSB schools are being used for advanced polling and on Sept. 20 as polling stations for the federal election. In its lease agreement with Elections Canada, NNDSB has followed all directions from both the public health unit and instructions for Ontario's Chief Medical Officer of Health, Dr. Kieran Moore.

Families can be assured that if their child's school is being used, that the public will not be in proximity to staff or students, and that all COVID-19 protocols will be in place.

\*

Thank you to our students and families for taking the time each morning to complete their COVID-19 self-screening. This screening is an important tool to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in our schools. Teachers will confirm with their students each day that this self-screening has been completed at home. The screening tool is available online [here](#). A downloadable version is also available on the website for printing. If you require a paper copy of the screening tool, please reach out to your child's school.

Our staff and students look forward to welcoming back sports and other extracurricular events this fall. We understand the importance of these activities for the mental and physical well-being of our students. We continue to work alongside our other local school boards and the North Bay Parry Sound District Health Unit to create a safe plan for inter-school activities. Many sports and activities will resume at our area schools in the coming weeks with protocols in place as outlined in our [NNDSB Reopening Guidance for Schools Document](#).

\*

Many teachers are discussing land acknowledgements with their students, working towards developing more personal statements that reflect their understanding of Canada's relationship with Indigenous Peoples. Indigenous Education Lead Tracy Hendrick has created a Land Acknowledgement Guidebook to help support teachers taking on this important work.

NNDSB's current land acknowledgement is "*We acknowledge in a good way, the original people of the land here. We value the cultures, histories and relationships with the Indigenous Peoples of Turtle Island (North America).*"

\*

NNDSB follows the direction of the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Health and the public health unit when devising COVID-19 plans.

Thank you,  
Near North District School Board