



Maskwacîs Education Schools Commission

P.O. Box 58
Maskwacîs, AB
T0C 1N0
P: (780) 585-3333

March 25, 2020

Re: Summary of MESC's response to COVID-19 since March 2, 2020.

Dear Ohpikinahawasowak,

During these unprecedented times, we want to assure everyone that MESC has made the safety of students, families and staff our top priority. It's challenging adjusting to major changes in our day-to-day routines, but I'd like to emphasize the importance for everyone to remain calm and follow all health and safety precautions to protect each other. MESC encourages everyone to follow directions from Alberta Health Services and Maskwacis Health Services.

All instruction has been paused until April 14th. Moving forward, Alberta Education has shared their expectations for student learning to continue. These expectations align with the programming plan MESC has set in place to maintain student learning and promote confident, competent, Nehiyaw speaking students. Information on the learning plans will be shared after the spring break.

The following is a summary of actions MESC has taken in response to the rapidly evolving situation;

- Prior to class cancellation on March 16th;
 - As of the first week of March, MESC had implemented extra cleaning protocols, hand washing posters were sent to schools and ensured that students were instructed on handwashing and other health protocols.
 - Letter was sent to parents and staff on March 4th on MESC's initial response to COVID-19.
 - Cancelled all out of province school travel on March 10th.
 - Cancelled parent teacher interviews.
 - MESC planned to disable water fountains as a precautionary measure as advised by Maskwacis Health Services.
 - School gatherings were cancelled or postponed on March 13th. (eg. regular student assemblies and traditional gatherings such as feasts)
 - MESC had recommended all staff cancel all out of country travel until further notice.
- The Minister of Education has cancelled diploma exams and provincial achievement tests for the 2019-2020 schools year.
- Principals and teachers have been contacting students to gather information on how many families have internet access in their home. This is important information for our student learning support plan.
- We remind everyone that classes are cancelled but schools are still in operation. The Learning Services Branch has developed learning plans. Staff are expected to return to work after the spring break to work on continuity of student learning. MESC schools follow a staggered work schedule for staff after spring break to support social distancing. School staff will be updated if this changes.



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- MESC believes that it is important to protect the health of our employees who will be more vulnerable to the COVID-19 virus. Older persons (65 years of age and older) and those who are immune compromised or at a high risk of severe illness for other medical reasons are to work from home. Exceptions will be made as determined by their supervisor.
- Maintenance will be focusing on three areas; cleaning the air ducts, continuing cleaning and sanitizing all the buildings and painting.
- All MESC meetings have been cancelled as of March 16th, until further notice.
- MESC administration buildings are closed to the public as of March 19th.
- Starting March 23rd, MESC central office staff is operating on a staggered schedule to support social distancing in our offices. Guidelines have been established for staff working from home.
- Mental health supports for MESC staff are available through their work benefits.
- During these unprecedented times, the Nanâtohk Mîciwin staff prepared over 2000 food hampers with perishable food that was in stock to reduce waste. Maskwacis Health Services had delivered to homes in Maskwacis and Pigeon Lake.
- The MESC FaceBook and website are being updated as new information is made available for students, parents and Nation members. (<http://www.maskwacised.ca/covid/>)
- MESC is working with Maskwacis Health Services and each Maskwacis Nation to align messaging.

Thank you again for your patience and understanding. We must remain united and supportive of each other. Please everyone stay well and do your part to slow the spread by following the usual advice:

- Practice **social distancing** by staying 2 metres apart from others.
- **Wash hands** regularly with soap and water for at least 20 seconds and **do not touch your face**.
- Stay home if you are not feeling well.
- **Don't shake hands**. Wave or nod to each other.
- **Avoid crowds**.
- **Stay home**, unless it is essential to go out. (grocery shopping, picking up medication or work)
 - Shop during off-peak hours (first thing in the morning or late at night)
 - Wipe down carts and baskets
 - Use utensils and avoid open snack dishes such as peanuts and candies.
 - Reach out to friends and loved ones as often as you need. (telephone, txt, facetime, FaceBook)

Ay-hay, ekosi pitama,

Dr. Shauna Bruno
Board Chair, Maskwacis Education Schools Commission