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**May 13, 2020**

Dear KPDSB Families,

I am writing to you today to share that the difficult decision has been made to postpone all face-to-face secondary graduation activities (including dances and Safe Grad) for the 2019-2020 school year. This decision has been made in order to protect the health and safety of students, staff and families.

While the postponement of graduation activities is very disappointing, across Ontario, school boards are making the same decisions. Earlier this week, the Minister of Education, Stephen Lecce, issued a statement encouraging boards to reschedule these events based on input from medical officers of health. At this time, any potential new dates are dependent on the status of the COVID-19 pandemic and associated public health guidelines.

We know graduation ceremonies and events are extremely important to our graduating students and their families. Graduation activities are the celebration of the culmination of years of hard work and are an important life milestone as graduates prepare to head out into the world. Please know that as a Board, we are committed to providing some form of these special ceremonies and celebrations for students, including utilizing virtual methods where appropriate, before the end of the school year. What this will look like at our secondary schools may be different depending on the size of the school and the options available to them, but we want to assure families that we will take equity of access into consideration during our planning. The granting of awards, bursaries and scholarships will continue this year as usual.

Please watch for further communication next week directly from your child's school administration that will outline their plans for celebrating their graduates. As mentioned above, our schools recognize the importance of acknowledging and celebrating this year's graduates in a meaningful way before the end of June. We are working with local community partners and media to support the celebration of our graduates as well.

While we had hoped for a different outcome, I know our staff will do all that they can to celebrate your graduate. You likely have further questions about this decision and we encourage you to reach out to administration at your child's school for school-specific details.

As always, please remember that we are here to support you during this time. Our website has a [COVID-19 section](#) with additional supports for students and families during the pandemic, including Mental Health resources. You can also follow us on social media (search KPDSB on Facebook, Twitter or Instagram) for information and updates.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "S. Pharand".

Sherri-Lynne Pharand  
Director of Education, Keewatin-Patricia District School Board

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*The Keewatin-Patricia District School Board puts students first by creating a culture of learning.*