

## **School Closures Extended to Keep Students, Staff and Families Safe**

*Students Will Still Be Able to Complete School Year*

**NEWS**

April 26, 2020

TORONTO — Today, Education Minister Stephen Lecce announced that all publicly-funded schools will remain closed until at least May 31, 2020, as part of an effort to keep students, staff and families safe from COVID-19.

The extension was based on expert advice from the Chief Medical Officer of Health and health officials on the COVID-19 Command Table and is part of the government's ongoing effort to stop the spread of the virus. The advice was to extend school closures for an additional period of time to permit updated modelling and data to inform next steps, given the government's absolute commitment to safety.

"We will do whatever it takes to keep our students safe," said Minister Lecce. "The government is taking a careful approach which provides our medical experts the time to review the modelling and make the best decision for the safety of our students and the future of learning."

The government took immediate action to close schools in Ontario, the first in Canada to do so. The ministry continues to monitor the evolving situation and if necessary, the closure may be extended further to protect the health and safety of Ontario's school communities.

At the same time the Ontario government is taking steps to ensure learning can continue. In March the province unveiled its Learn at Home portal. It offers all students high-quality resources, featuring made-in-Ontario math and literacy resources, created by Ontario-certified educators, in both English and French. Elementary resources are designed to help young students learn at home with interactive activities that encourage participation through entertaining and stimulating digital content. High school content was designed with a focus on STEM courses and ensures core competencies and skills are reinforced.

At the end of March the Ministry of Education unveiled the second phase of Learn at Home to ensure the continuity of learning for students. This included providing clarity for parents, enhancing education supports and creating opportunities for educators to connect with students.

The government has also partnered with Rogers Communications and Apple to help meet the educational needs of students and families during the COVID-19 outbreak. iPads are being purchased and distributed by Ontario school boards, pre-equipped with free Rogers LTE wireless data. Apple is providing on-going support in French and English to teachers, parents and students, with a collection of resources to support learning and working from home. To date, over 20,000 iPads have been sent to targeted families in need. The free Rogers wireless data will be available until the end of June.

"Regardless of what transpires over the coming weeks, Ontario's students will be able to complete their school year with confidence," added Minister Lecce. "In particular, for students in their final year, we are removing all impediments to ensure students graduate and pursue post-secondary education."

## QUICK FACTS

- Should schools be permitted to reopen, school employees will have access as of [May 29, 2020](#).
- The Ministry of Education will move forward to replace the remainder of Professional Activity (PA) days and examination days with instructional time, as well as the introduction of an expanded summer learning program that will focus on credit recovery, supports for vulnerable students, and course upgrading. Boards are to find solutions at the local level in keeping with this direction while upholding collective agreement obligations.
- Private schools, First Nation schools, licensed child care centres and EarlyON programs will remain closed until May 6, 2020, with certain exceptions for licenced care, under an emergency order made under the *Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act*, which only allows closures to be extended for 14 days at a time.
- Through the [Ontario Together](#) web site, the province received more than 300 proposals from businesses, organizations and everyday Ontarians to provide solutions to remote learning while schools are closed during the COVID-19 global pandemic. Next steps will be shared soon.

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

[Learn at Home](#)

[Ontario Together](#)

Visit Ontario's [website](#) to learn more about how the province continues to protect Ontarians from COVID-19

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