

May 29, 2020

Dear R.F. Staples and Westlock Outreach Families,

Nine weeks of learning from home is complete and there are three weeks to go until the last official day of classes. Teachers are preparing final assessments in their courses but it is going to look different from course to course. Please check with your child(ren)'s teachers if you have questions.

A few items to note;

- If you would like a yearbook, please email Mrs. Wolfe at opal.wolfe@pembinahills.ca.
- Class of 2020, stay tuned for more details. Mr. Kulmatyski and team are working on putting some things together. Due to the pandemic, it was decided that the class of 2020 will be celebrated as a whole and not just the students that are on track to graduate.
- All resources - textbooks, library books, chromebooks, and other items from the school should be returned the week of June 22. More details to follow.
- Junior High options are still being organized. Information on option selection will be sent later in June.

Teachers have worked to focus the content on key learner outcomes and provide opportunities for students to complete work in a variety of ways. It is not perfect but the expectation for students does not have to be perfect either. The key to completing the school year successfully is communication and honesty. Students providing evidence of progress in a course, working together with their teachers, and having a plan if they are behind have the greatest chance of success. Courses have been reduced to as much as 25% of what is typically expected and there is no automatic passing of courses. Outreach courses have remained the same. I have provided two links to the Pembina Hills School Division website. The Learning from Home link provides direction regarding assessment and marks.

[Year End Q and A](#)
[Learning from Home](#)

It is very important that parents and guardians check their child(ren)'s progress. There are too many students that are in danger of failing one or more of their courses. Even if you are signed up to view their progress on PowerSchool, have them log in and show you how they are doing. Go farther than just the overall mark as it can sometimes be misleading. Look at the assignment list to see what has been completed. Missing assignments may not be included in their final mark at this time causing the mark to be inflated.

Motivating students in the month of June is going to be difficult. There are students that have fallen behind. Students and teachers are finding that learning from home can be difficult. Physical distancing is reducing interactions and a sense of community. It is not just motivating

and keeping students focused, staff need the same support, myself included. That being said, teachers are up to the challenge and will continue to encourage and support the students.

I am proud of the staff at R.F. Staples and Westlock Outreach for the work they have done during this pandemic. I am proud of so many students for persevering. I am worried though and I am not alone in this. R.F. Staples and Outreach are institutions of learning and high school graduation is a wonderful accomplishment. It has been a hard balance of maintaining academic requirements and meeting the emotional needs of students. Speaking with teachers, the conflict they are in is palpable. The struggle of students is real as they navigate the completion of their courses while lacking the close interactions of their teachers and classmates.

The analogy of being in an ocean storm is accurate. The waves and winds may be a shared experience, but the boats each of us are in are very different. The impact of the storm affects us differently depending on the boat we are in. Maybe you are in a yacht with many supports or in a boat with no oars and a leaky hull. How someone learns, or how someone is able to teach is affected by the boat.

I do not have the answers but I am confident that working as a community is a step in the right direction. Please reach out to us if you need support. Staff are trying to reach out to you too.

Work hard, be kind.

Sincerely,

Wayne Rufiange, Proud Principal
Richard F. Staples Secondary School
Westlock Outreach School