



August 2020

Dear Conestoga Families:

Welcome to the 2020-21 school year and a big welcome to the Class of 2024! I hope you have all enjoyed a relaxing and refreshing summer. The close of summer always brings the excitement and anticipation of a new school year. This year's start will certainly be unlike any other we have experienced at the Big C. In preparation for the start, we are writing to share information regarding the details of our opening.

### **2020-21 School Year General Information**

As you know, we are starting the school year in a fully virtual environment with ALL students taking classes from home. Teachers will provide instruction through the TEAMS platform using a synchronous model. Students will follow their schedule and report to classes at the assigned times. We are pleased to report that all courses will run in the virtual environment. Teachers have been working hard this summer to make modifications to be ready to deliver their courses in a virtual format. Student schedules were released on Friday, August 21<sup>st</sup> through Power School. Any student having trouble viewing their schedule should email the [familyhelpdesk@tesd.net](mailto:familyhelpdesk@tesd.net).

### **2020-21 Schedule**

Students are scheduled for up to 8 periods on their schedule. Four periods will meet each day for 85-minute blocks. On Garnet days students will report to odd periods, 1/3/5/7, and on Gray days students will report to even periods, 2/4/6/8. The calendar will proceed in an alternating pattern of Garnet and Gray days. In addition, we will also continue to have a six-day cycle. Each cycle day will last for two days in order to capture both the odd and even blocks. The September cycle day calendar can be viewed [here](#).

### **2020-21 Bell Schedule**

Each day, students are expected to follow their schedule, log in at the assigned time using TEAMS, and stay for the full 85-minute block. The 2020-21 regular bell schedule can be found [here](#). Teachers will provide a variety of activities during the 85-minute period as they would in a regular classroom. Please understand, teachers will NOT be lecturing for the full 85 minutes. They will certainly do some lecturing, but they will also provide discussion, small group work, guided practice and individual meetings with students. Students should expect to be engaged for the full block. In addition, teachers will also provide community building activities to get to know their students and teach students how to best communicate in a virtual classroom.

### **Opening Week & Orientation Programs**

Beginning on Monday, August 31<sup>st</sup>, all students will need access to a laptop or desktop computer. We will start the first day, and the first four days, with an extended HOMEROOM period in order to provide orientation to start the new school year. During these programs, students will hear from their grade level administrator, school counselor, librarians and our mental health specialists. Homeroom teachers and administrators will also provide information about online learning expectations and the necessary technology

skills needed for success. Students should go to TEAMS and click on their homeroom to join by 7:50 AM on Monday, August 31<sup>st</sup>. Students are encouraged to use their camera to best engage in activities.

### **Textbooks and Laptops**

At this time, all students should have returned district-owned laptops for reimaging as well as any textbooks from last school year. Beginning on Tuesday, August 25<sup>th</sup>, students will begin picking up their reimaged laptops, textbooks and materials for this school year. The schedule for pick-up is posted on the Conestoga website and can also be accessed [here](#). If you are unable to come at your scheduled time, we will hold make-up times on Monday, August 31<sup>st</sup> from 6:30 – 7:30a.m. and 3-5p.m as well as Tuesday, September 1<sup>st</sup> from 3-5p.m. It is important that all students pick up materials and textbooks so they are prepared for the start of the school year.

### **Student Virtual Learning Support and Student Expectations**

We are pleased to announce the district is offering a new platform, LAUNCH, which will provide tutorials and step-by-step directions for how to operate the various technologies students will need. LAUNCH will be available beginning Thursday, August 27<sup>th</sup> for all students to access in Schoology. We recommend students check out the videos to learn more about TEAMS, Schoology, One Drive and more. Because we will be using virtual learning throughout the school year it is important for students to understand the student expectations for being an online learner. We have added a section to our [Code of Conduct](#), titled “Virtual Learning Expectations”, which outlines this in more detail. We encourage parents and students to review these prior to the start of school. They will also be reviewed with students during orientation on the opening days.

### **Grading System**

We will utilize our regular, numeric grading system for the 2020-21 school year. Teachers will grade students through the use of various assignments, assessments and projects based on a 100-point scale. Each teacher will talk to their students about grading and expectations for their individual class. Additionally, we will not use the typical four quarter academic calendar, instead we will utilize a “quarterless” grading system. Student grades will accumulate for the entire year, so the grade you see in Schoology will be the current and cumulative grade for each course. This also means we will NOT be administering any midterm or final exams this school year due to the challenges the hybrid leaning environment will present for testing in a traditional manner.

### **Clubs & Activities**

We know many students are eager to get involved in the many clubs and activities Conestoga has to offer. We are pleased to be able to offer them in the virtual environment as well. We will hold a virtual Club Fair the week of September 21<sup>st</sup> including online signups. Clubs will officially begin to meet the following week, so stay tuned for more details!

We hope this information has been helpful to answer some of the questions regarding this year’s unique school opening. This information was also presented to students in the [2020-21 Principal’s Welcome](#) video which was posted on the Conestoga website. We know that we all had hoped we would be able to be together to start the school year in person. We look forward to the days when we can see each other again, safely and confidently. More questions will certainly arise as we respond to the changing pandemic conditions and look to transition to a hybrid learning format. We will continue to work

together to provide meaningful virtual experiences both in and out of the classroom, and welcome your involvement, questions and input. Please feel free to contact me at any time. We look forward to seeing our students, virtually, in homeroom on Monday, August 31<sup>st</sup> at 7:50a.m. Enjoy the final days of summer, and as always, Go 'Stoga!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Amy A. Meisinger". The script is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of each name being capitalized and prominent.

Amy A. Meisinger, Ph.D.  
Principal