ST. THOMAS AQUINAS REGIONAL SECONDARY SCHOOL

2020 Year End Plan due to the COVID-19 Pandemic

Friday, May 1, 2020

The novel corona virus has put our world on notice like never before. Our school life as we know it has been turned upside down and we have to make adjustments. I am extremely impressed with the yeoman's effort put in by staff, students, and parents alike. When we have a serious situation like we are experiencing, we need to count on each other to move ahead. We will become "normal" again.

Thank you to all who responded to the surveys on Wednesday. We received a great representation from all of our constituents, staff, students and parents. It helped the Department Head leadership team to come up with a strategy to bring clarity for the remainder of the 2019-20 school year.

- **Homework Expectations**
    - Taking into consideration that the on-line instruction is not the same as in-class instruction, we are instituting guidelines for homework.
        - Grade 8 – 15 minutes per class
        - Grade 9 – 15 minutes per class
        - Grade 10 – 15 minutes per class
        - Grade 11 – 20 minutes per class
        - Grade 12 – 20 minutes per class
    - Keeping in mind, students may have more homework one class and then none the next. Also, some students want to go beyond just maintaining their marks, they want to improve them or want to learn in greater depth. This may result in more time being spent on certain subjects.
    - Some teachers are providing assignments which are due at the end of class time. Others might give an assignment and give some class time to get a start on the homework. If the students use this class time effectively, the extra time after classes needed to complete homework would be minimized.

- **Final Exams/Assessments**
    - We are suspending our traditional final June exams for the balance of the 2019-20 school year.
    - Individual departments may provide alternate assessments through oral interviews, portfolio assessments, projects, etc.
    - As there will be no Exam week, the classes will continue to June 17th rather than ending June 10th.

- **Final Term Weighting**
  - The switch from pre-COVID and post-COVID instruction has been dramatic. We recognize that and have therefore reduced the emphasis on the post-COVID weighting for mark calculation to benefit the students.
  - The mark weighting will reflect an 80% pre-COVID, 20% post-COVID calculation.
  - The post-COVID assessments should show an improvement in percentage over previous standing if students have kept up with assessment expectations (regular attendance, used class time effectively, completing homework and assignments, studying for unit assessments, etc.).

- **Graduation 2020**
  - Our grade 12 students are the ones most affected by this pandemic. The culminating events rewarding 13 years of education will either be altered or cancelled.
  - We are considering having a Virtual Graduation Mass, Virtual Commencement Ceremony and maybe a Virtual Dinner Dance. I know the last one is a bit of a reach, but we will try to make the yearend as memorable for the grads as we can.
  - We will be having a virtual meeting with all of our grade 12s on Wednesday May 6th at 3:30 to hear their concerns and see if we can come up with a plan.
  - Miss Hughes is planning a 1 day Virtual Retreat for the students as unfortunately the retreat at Camp Stillwood is cancelled. There will be a refund to the students as this fee was part of their school fees paid in September. The date of the virtual retreat will be announced next week. Grade 12 classes would be cancelled that day.
  - The Provincial Assessments, Numeracy 10 and Literacy 10, have been cancelled for this school year. There are a small number of graduating students who have not written the Numeracy 10 Assessment (the only mandatory one for this year's grads), but as of today, the Government still has not come up with a plan to address this.

- **Career Education**
  - There will be changes to the expectations for the Career Education classes to be announced next week.
  - The adjustments being considered will be a result of the inability to complete WEEL projects, service hours, Capstone projects, etc. due to not being able to leave your house.