

Dear Students,

Today is the first National Day of Observance for COVID-19 in Canada. Flags have been lowered at OCDSB schools in recognition of this.

We encourage you to take a few minutes to reflect on the past year. How did you spend your time? What memories will you carry with you? Were there any silver linings?

We all look forward to resuming more regular life. For now, we need to continue following public health guidelines. Visit [this page](#) for simple tips on how to cope with COVID.

Course Selection Reminder

The Course Selection deadline is fast approaching. Refer to the message shared by your school for details. For more information, visit [OCDSB's Student Guide to Course Selections webpage](#).

Back to School Confirmation - Reminder

Last week, parents were asked to confirm student attendance for in-person or virtual learning for the upcoming school year. The form must be completed by 11:59 p.m. on March 14, 2021.

We are planning for the return to school in September. We have heard your concerns about the current secondary model. We hope to start the school year with at least two classes a day. We will be discussing this with the Education Ministry and health authorities and will share updates with you. **If you have questions, please contact your principal.**

Winter COVID-19 Survey Results - Student Feedback

We recently asked for feedback about how things are going right now. From February 16-26, we had 12,365 students, parents and staff share 17,052 thoughts, with students having the highest participation. Thanks for sharing your feedback with us! Among other things, we heard about:

- learning challenges some students are experiencing online and in-person;
- feedback on the pace in the quadmester model/schedule;
- concern for student well-being;
- the desire for more opportunities for social interaction;
- difficulty keeping up with the workload;
- and appreciation for the opportunity to see the thoughts of others, which was validating for those with a similar experience.

Results to the survey questions and open-ended feedback can be found on [this website](#). We recognize the immediate need to support student well-being and respond to what we heard. This work is already underway, including meetings with groups of OCV students which were held last week. Additional updates will be shared as we move forward in this work.

COVID-19 testing

Mobile COVID-19 testing clinics continue in communities across the district. These clinics offer testing for individuals who may or may not have symptoms (asymptomatic or symptomatic). If you receive notice of a testing clinic from your principal, we encourage you to go. Ottawa Public Health publishes weekly results on testing clinics, [which can be found here](#).

Supporting Black Students - Mental Health and Pursuing Excellence

- Black Youth Virtual Sharing Circle - March 24, 6:00-7:30 p.m.
 - Join this virtual discussion on the barriers around mental health services for Black secondary students. The discussion will be moderated by students from the Black Youth Forum Class and other OCDSB facilitators. Students will receive an honorarium for their participation. If interested, contact steven.mckibbin@ocdsb.ca by March 17th.
- Black Excellence Discussion Series
 - The OCDSB held its first session of our [Black Excellence discussion series](#) focused on how we can cultivate Black excellence at the OCDSB. The panel featured Mariam Abdullahi (former OCDSB student), Tess Porter (OCDSB Black Graduation Coach), and Prince Duah (OCDSB Superintendent of Instruction).
 - Watch the discussion here: <https://youtu.be/PWtG2KRL-II>. Look out for the second session coming later this spring.
- Sankofa Centre - Pathways to Excellence Series
 - The Sankofa Centre of Excellence Graduation Coach Program is hosting a series of virtual workshops for students to learn about post-secondary opportunities. For dates and registration details, visit the [Pathways to Excellence webpage](#).

Consultations - Human Rights Policy and Police Involvement in Schools

The OCDSB is inviting you to participate in two policy consultations. The consultations will include surveys, small group discussions and larger community meetings. Students are encouraged to join these discussions and share your perspectives.

- Human Rights Policy and Human Rights Complaint Procedure
 - [Watch our video](#) | [Complete the survey](#)

- Visit the [Consultation website](#) to learn more. Dates and times for small groups and community meetings coming soon.
- Police Involvement in School - Policy and Practice Review
 - Visit the [Consultation website](#) to learn more. Dates and times for small groups and community meetings coming soon.

International Certificate Program Information Session - March 23, 7:00 p.m.

The OCDSB's International Certificate Program is designed to recognize and honour students in grade 9-12 who demonstrate a commitment to being motivated, engaged and active global citizens. The OCDSB will hold a virtual information session for students in grades 8-11 and parents/guardians. [Learn more and register.](#)