

# Kawartha Lakes students chime in on Learn@Home

*Catherine Whitnall*

With the end of the school year just around the corner, the public school board continues to address student needs for learning at home.

Trillium Lakelands District School Board director of education Larry Hope updated trustees on Tuesday (May 26), sharing input from students regarding finishing their year and ensuring everyone has access to what they need.

“We’re up to about 400 families that have requested paper resources to support their learning from home,” said Hope. “We know that not all homes have access to the reliable internet they need ... and are doing whatever we can to ensure they can continue to learn.”

Staff are also finalizing plans so students and parents can retrieve personal property from schools. This is expected to begin in June. Teachers have already been allowed into schools to use resources for lessons, but Hope noted this is optional and teachers must follow “very clear and strict rules.” The offer is not being extended to other employee groups at this time.

The board is also working toward addressing concerns raised by students through a recent Thought Exchange survey asking how the board could improve online learning. Close to 1,300 students in grades 7 through 12 responded, generating more than 750 “thoughts.” A key focus was the amount of work assigned. Hope said the dissemination of assignments will be made a priority in upcoming discussions with principals.

Students also chimed in on the usefulness of learning platforms.

When asked what learning platforms were found the most helpful for learning at home, 67 per cent said Google Classroom followed by recorded video lessons (10 per cent) and YouTube (four per cent). Four per cent of students found Edwin helpful as a resource bank used in concert with Google Classroom. Phone calls and emails from teachers, as well as paper resources delivered to home each garnered two per cent while nine per cent said “none of the above.”

“We’re not sure what this means, but we will be looking into this, and sharing with our principals, as we move forward,” said Hope referring to the last detail.

Questions regarding graduations and proms were also raised.

Hope said principals will discuss plans regarding graduations, insisting that some type of celebration be held to “honour students as they move on to the next stage of their lives,” but noted there will be no proms for 2020 graduates.