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WDG schools revert back to remote learning under Section 22

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Students in the Upper Grand District School Board (UGDSB) will be making the shift to remote learning once again, as Public Health issues a Section 22 Order.

Both the Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph (WDG) Public Health and UGDSB issued press releases late Monday (April 5) evening notifying that the change would go into effect starting April 7.

?I wish this step was not required,? said Dr. Nicola Mercer, medical officer of health and CEO of WDG Public Health. ?I know the tremendous burden this places on families in our region. The growing number of cases across the province and the severity of the COVID-19 variants of concern places all of us at risk.?

Under the Section 22 Order all five school boards in the region including the UGDSB, Wellington Catholic District School Board, Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board, Conseil scolaire Viamonde, and Conseil scolaire catholique MonAvenir, are to cease in-person learning.

According to the news release from WDG Public Health, all five boards supported the closure following a meeting between Dr. Mercer and Directors of Education discussing the ?troubling rise in cases of COVID-19 among children.?

At the time of print, the earliest schools will be eligible to return to in-person learning will be April 19, with the possibility of an extension if warranted.

?We continue to take aggressive steps on COVID-19 vaccinations; that is the only way out of this pandemic,? said Mercer. ?Until we reach significant levels of vaccination, we remain at risk. I urge people to continue to follow public health guidelines.?

The UGDSB said in their press release that all students including those in specialized DD class placements will be shifted to online learning.

The order will not impact childcare located in schools.

Students in the UGDSB were asked to attend school on April 6, the final day before the shutdown, and technology for remote learning would be provided to students that required it.

As of April 6, there were 19 schools in the UGDSB reporting cases of COVID-19 with a total of 26 confirmed cases.

The UGDSB said the Spring Break, which is schedules from April 12-16, will continue as planned.