

March 19, 2020

Dear staff,

As you are aware, the Minister of Education has indefinitely suspended in-class instruction in all B.C. schools. This news is a sign of the times and I'd like to take this opportunity to update you on our current status as we approach the end of spring break on March 30th.

You will have many questions and we want to provide the most up-to-date answers given that the landscape is shifting daily. We wanted to wait to send a letter to staff until after we had a chance to conference directly with the Minister and the Deputy Minister of Education to get more clarity on what government expectations are over the coming weeks, and how our district can respond effectively.

The most clarity we can provide right now is that while students may not physically be in classrooms, schools are not closed. The expectation from the Ministry of Education is that "schools are operating and providing services."

Everyone will be wondering what this announcement means in a situation where some daycares are closing, recreation facilities are closed, post-secondary institutions are going online, and an enormous array of services are being halted or drastically changing operations. We are actively working on this, and have until March 30th to do our planning. You will see communications on this in stages.

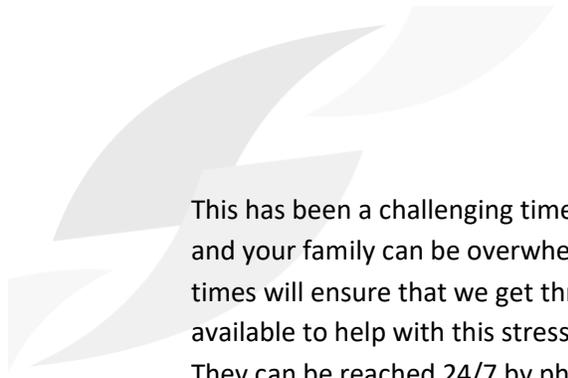
In today's message, I want to highlight the basics of the ministry announcement and stress that our top priority is the health and well-being of our staff and community. With recommended health precautions, including remaining 1-2 metres from other people and the ban on gatherings of 50 or more people, we are trying to determine exactly how that will unfold in our sites, as we have buildings which have well over 50 people.

We are schools and at our very core we are social enterprises. These measures and this announcement will hit at the heart of what we do. In our plans, we are strongly considering to what extent we can provide services remotely, including from home. It may not be that all staff are attending a school site as your normal workplace.

I know that many of you are nervous about coming back to work on the 30th. These concerns are also top of mind for the district and that is why we are exploring all options for work. It is also time for us, as a system, to harness the power of online technologies and video conferencing. We have the ability, as a district, for every school to host their first meetings on March 30th online. I say this so that you have an idea of the things we are considering.

I will share more details in the coming days. Know that it will not be "business as usual" on the 30th and we will need to prioritize our work and there will be an adjustment period. We have exceptional staff and we look forward to putting these plans in place together.

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This has been a challenging time, with a lot of uncertainty. The impact this situation may have on you and your family can be overwhelming at times. Let's all look out for each other. Our resiliency in these times will ensure that we get through this together. I also want to remind staff that there are resources available to help with this stress. Homewood Health is our Employee and Family Assistance provider. They can be reached 24/7 by phone at 1-800-663-1142 or accessed directly online through their website at www.homeweb.ca. I'd encourage anyone who needs it to reach out for support.

Our Human Resources department has also compiled additional resources that can be accessed on the [Hub](#). The health and wellbeing of staff and their families is always our top priority, and we will continue to keep you informed as the situation develops.

In the meantime, please stay healthy and take the time you need during spring break. It is time to rest and relax and we are very hopeful that in these times, you are resting and taking care of you and your family. Let us plan, let us communicate and share ideas, and please stay well.

Thank you,



Jordan Tinney
Superintendent of Schools/CEO

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