

Staff, students, parents and community,

This has been a week filled with news on our direction forward. We've had our Provincial Health Officer outline the guidelines for the province as we head to a lifting of restrictions and the Premier on Wednesday outlined government's plan to reopen our province and that includes a return to face to face instruction. So what exactly was said and what does it mean for all of us? Once again, I'll try to wade through the messaging as a way to clarify the likely direction.

Let's start with what was said this week. Most importantly, Dr. Bonnie Henry has stated that our new practices of physical distancing, limiting social interactions and holding much smaller gatherings are here to stay. This will impact our schools. Following those protocols and celebrating our success holding COVID19 in check, the premier has stated that after the Victoria Day long weekend there will be a lifting of restrictions. We'll be able to get a haircut, enjoy our BC parks, play tennis, go to a restaurant, and visit a museum. Likely, a return to face to face instruction will emerge soon after. The premier has said that "We want to make sure we can do a dry run from the beginning of June to the end of June. We're not anticipating a big increase in in-class learning until after the long weekend." So in that window of May 19<sup>th</sup> – June 1<sup>st</sup> I anticipate that we'll see a significant shift in our current mode of offerings.

The model that the province is announcing includes:

- A part-time return to face to face instruction for children in grades K-5;
- Part-time face to face instruction for students in grades 6-12; and
- The continuation of remote and online learning.

The guidelines we are hearing suggest that balance will be the equivalent of alternating days for students in K-5 and one day a week for students in grades 6-12. School districts are busy now trying to design models that meet the goalposts of these guidelines.

The provincial guidelines include the principle that parents will have the choice to have their children remain learning at home or to have some access for face to face balanced with their current online/remote learning. No matter what, our hybrid models include face to face and online or remote learning for all children.

We said a few weeks ago that whatever came would give us time to plan and that planning would begin with the health and safety of our staff and community. Nothing has changed about our overall approach which is slow and steady, caring and connected. The additional information now helps us to plan in earnest. We now need to turn our minds to the design of possible models. We still need to wait for the new Health and Safety protocols and more information from the Ministry which we hear is coming next week and then we need to place our models up against that new information.

Where will we begin? We will begin with our people and the need to design our system around their health and safety and then toward a model that balances face to face and online/remote learning in a way that supports a gradual return. Hopefully, these new steps will also pave the way for September and the ability to expand our model even further if the virus remains in check. There is lots of work to be done but our administrators, teachers and support staff have done remarkable work in rebuilding a system after March 30<sup>th</sup>, we now will have to turn that expertise to the new task which is bringing a return to once again meeting our students in schools in large numbers.

Most immediately for us, the weather this weekend looks remarkable, and this is a great reminder that summer is not far away. We look forward to a limiting of restrictions after the May long weekend and I hope that you all have a chance to enjoy the sun this weekend and to celebrate Mother's Day this Sunday.