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July 29, 2020

Dear employees, parents/guardians, students and representatives of educational partner groups:

I am writing as a follow up to the announcement made today by the Minister of Education, Mr. Rob Fleming, and the Provincial Health Officer, Dr. Bonnie Henry, regarding the Return to School Plan for September 2020 <https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2020EDUC0040-001415>. As stated in this announcement, the citizens of BC have worked very hard to adhere to public health guidelines in order to reduce the spread of COVID-19 and “flatten the curve”.

A provincial advisory committee has been working diligently over the summer in order to determine how students can return to school in September 2020 in the safest possible manner. Based on the advice of the Provincial Health Officer, students and staff will be organized into consistent learning groups or cohorts. This will reduce the number of contacts, thereby reducing the risk of transmission and ensuring more efficient contact tracing by health authorities. As stated by Dr. Bonnie Henry: “We have put a lot of thoughtful work and consideration into reopening schools this fall and in making sure we’re supporting children in ways that keep the people who teach them and our communities safe.”

The following information provides an update on current procedures that will support the K-12 Return to School Plan for September and 2020/21:

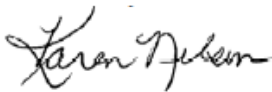
- **Revised Five Stages Framework for K to 12 Education**  
<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/administration/kindergarten-to-grade-12/safe-caring-orderly/k-12-education-restart-plan.pdf>
  - Stage 2 (in-class) return to school for September 2020
  - Cohorts of students with specified sizes at elementary (60), middle (60) and secondary (120)
  - Density targets are not applicable
  - Full-time instruction for all students for the maximum instructional time possible within cohort limits
  - Self-directed learning supplements in-class instruction, if required
  
- **Revised Public Health Guidelines**  
[http://www.bccdc.ca/Health-Info-Site/Documents/COVID\\_public\\_guidance/Guidance-k-12-schools.pdf](http://www.bccdc.ca/Health-Info-Site/Documents/COVID_public_guidance/Guidance-k-12-schools.pdf)

- **Additional one-time investment of \$45.6 million to support and ensure the health and safety of students and staff. This funding will be utilized to provide the following:**
  - **Additional staff and staff time for cleaning of schools**
  - **Sufficient cleaning supplies**
  - **Improving and increasing access to hand hygiene**
  - **Availability of reusable face masks upon request, and for all students who need to travel on school buses or public transportation outside their learning groups**
  - **Support for remote learning, such as technology loans or software to support students with disabilities or complex needs**

**As you are aware, I will be retiring effective July 31, 2020. Mr. Balan Moorthy, incoming superintendent, and Ms. Renge Bailie, incoming assistant superintendent, will be working with our principals/vice principals in order to operationalize the return to school plans. They will also be consulting with representatives from each of our educational partner groups. Additional information will be provided as soon as it is available.**

**I would once again like to take this opportunity to extend my sincere appreciation to each of you for the dedicated support you have provided for our students not only in response to the challenges of COVID-19 but also on an ongoing basis, each and every day. It has indeed been an honour and a privilege to work with each of you. Thank you and please remember to continue to be kind, be calm and be safe.**

**Most sincerely,**



**Karen Nelson, EdD  
Superintendent of Schools**

**cc. Mr. Ron Johnstone, Chair, Board of Education  
Mr. Balan Moorthy, incoming Superintendent  
Ms. Renge Bailie, incoming Assistant Superintendent**