



Vancouver Board of Education

School District No. 39

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

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Dear Parents and Guardians,

Thank you for your patience as the District develops plans to move forward as we all adapt to the limitations resulting from Covid-19. As your superintendent, I understand the anxiety and ambiguity that families and staff are feeling. I would like you to know that the Vancouver School District's number one priority is the health and safety of our students, staff and you as families. We care deeply about your well-being and will do all that we can to support you and your children at this difficult time.

As the official end of spring break is upon us, the District will implement a phased approach to provide continued learning opportunities for all students. In advance of implementing these opportunities, the District will focus on three initial priorities:

- Ensure the health and safety of students, staff and communities
- Communicate thoughtfully, transparently and in a timely manner
- Provide connections to ensure students feel valued and have a sense of belonging and community

With these priorities addressed, we will be able to move forward to implement our fourth priority:

- Continued learning opportunities so that all students can successfully transition to their next phase of learning

District staff have been working throughout spring break to develop plans and processes to begin to meet our goals. Throughout the past two weeks, many staff have transitioned to working from home, although some are still working in schools and offices. Those working with others have been practicing physical/social distancing and other measures that our public health officials have advised for everyone. As we transition to having a few additional staff members in schools, these important safety practices will be a continued expectation.

For Vancouver students, school will not be the same. As you know, in-class instruction is suspended. This means there will be a fundamental shift in school services and supports for students. Teachers and support staff will need time to prepare and plan for what that looks like and how to carry out the plans to support students. Next week, school staff will begin to communicate with families and students to check in on how you are doing, to establish connections, and to determine what would be most helpful in supporting your children.

One of our top three priorities is to establish ways to maintain supportive connections between home and school. I have every confidence that our dedicated administrators, teachers and support staff will strive to sustain a strong sense of community and ensure that students know they are cared for, valued, and that their education matters.

Here are some other things to expect from your schools and our District as a whole.

Toward the end of next week, school staff will reach out to provide further information on plans about how students can access materials and belongings from their schools, potentially some ideas about the continuation of learning, and plans to support the most vulnerable students and their families. This will not be perfect and there will be bumps along the way. Please be assured that we are working diligently to do the very best we can on behalf of all students.

In addition, I would like to provide two additional updates about work underway to support children and families.

Supporting vulnerable students:

Throughout the past two weeks, a team of District staff have been looking to continue to provide meals to eligible students, through our schools. Again, this will be a phased approach with initial steps starting on Monday, March 30. Information will go out to families about the health and safety requirements (such as social/physical distancing) and the pick-up plan for students who previously accessed this support service. Feeding children and youth who require this enhanced support is a priority for the government and for the Vancouver Board of Education. We are pleased to be able to do so and are thankful to members of IUOE – one of our unions – for working with us to develop and implement this plan.

Providing childcare for children of essential service workers:

All school districts have been tasked with ensuring childcare for essential service providers. Our staff have been working closely with government ministries (Education, Health and Children and Family Development) as well as the City of Vancouver, the Park Board and childcare service providers to put plans in place to support the children of healthcare providers and first responders during this challenging time. More details will follow as soon as they are available. In the meantime, please continue to check for updates online, via the District [website](#) or your school's site. We will also continue to share information on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#).

Personally, I am inspired by our community, and I am grateful for the dedication of our team who play a vital role in your children's lives. In closing, I want to highlight the importance of staying calm and reassuring children during this challenging time. As a community, our mutual support of each other in the interests of all children will help see us through these unprecedented times.

Sincerely,



Suzanne Hoffman
Superintendent of Schools
Vancouver School District