

March 27, 2020

Dear Families:

As I reach out to you today, at the close of our Spring Break, I hope this letter finds you and your loved ones doing well. I am writing to share some updates and provide you with a sense of what you can expect next week. And, once again, I want to thank you for your continued support and understanding as our community works together through this extremely challenging time.

### **Update and Guiding Principles**

Following the announcement by the Ministry of Education to suspend in-classroom learning on March 17, school district staff have been working diligently, along with the guidance and support from the Ministries of Health and Education, to best provide supports for students, staff, families and our community. The Provincial Government has established four guiding principles that inform our work:

- Maintain a healthy and safe environment for all students, families and employees.
- Provide the services needed to support children of our essential workers.
- Support vulnerable students who may need special assistance.
- Provide continuity of educational opportunities for all students.

The Ministry of Education has also created a Frequently Asked Questions document for families on continuity of learning. You can find it [here](#) and on our website.

### **Continuity of Learning**

The Ministry of Education has asked that school districts put learning opportunities in place no later than mid-April. While we will begin next week, learning opportunities for your student during these extraordinary times will not be the same as their previous classroom experience. Things will be different.

We also recognize that families already face enormous pressures – from worries about the economy, safety and health to name a few. Knowing that the plans moving forward will not fit every family perfectly, we have considered flexibility a key factor. Please know that everything we are creating is with a view to providing a sense of connection, normalcy, and routine that keeps your child engaged in their own education.

After Spring Break, we are taking a phased approach with the immediate focus on connecting with students, gaining valuable insight from our school-based staff, and providing tools for students and families to use at home. To assist families with planning, please find the following timeline:

- Next week, school staff will reach out to and connect with students and their families.
- Also during the week of March 30, you will find details on our district website ([www.burnabyschools.ca](http://www.burnabyschools.ca)) about access to our newly created Continuing Learning Website. It contains self-directed activities for students at home. We will suggest the following initial explorations on the new site for students.
  - **Grades 8 – 12:** complete the online module “Digital Citizenship Quest”. Much of the work going forward will take place through technology. This module will help build an understanding of each of our roles in a digital environment, including how to stay safe, as well as how to be a caring and productive member of any digital community. Whether students are socializing with friends, playing video games, or working on a school assignment, this is an important life skill in a technological age.
  - **Kindergarten – Grade 7:** explore activities by grade level on the Continuing Learning Site.
- **You will receive additional information with links to access our new learning website next week.**

Connections and relationships are at the heart of everything we do in the Burnaby School District. While COVID-19 has dramatically changed how we all reach out to one another, it cannot take away from the importance of

relationships and the powerful connection between students and teachers. We thank you in advance for your patience next week, as our school staff reach out to our 25,000 students and their families.

### Unique Needs and Essential Service Workers Survey

We have a number of families whose children have unique learning needs and/or who may not have access to technology. We are looking at these considerations as well as what special supports might be needed for our families.

I would also like to take a moment here to acknowledge the incredible efforts of our essential service workers in our community. Their work is critical to the health and well-being of us all. The Ministry of Education is working closely with the Ministry of Children and Family Development to ensure children of essential service workers have access to care. The Burnaby School District partners with several on-site childcare programs and is working collaboratively with them to provide services for these families.

All of our families have been sent an email asking essential service workers in our district who need on-site childcare to complete the survey as soon as possible. You can access it [here](#) and on our website.

### Supporting Your Student

We recognize that the changes and disruptions brought by COVID-19 to all our lives are unsettling. As we move forward, you may feel that your child is finding it difficult to focus on learning. Please know that our intention is to provide resources and activities that can be used in a way that best suits your family.

Children and youth thrive on routine and predictability, both of which have been impacted. You may wish to consider some of the resources and supports we have on our website ([www.burnabyschools.ca](http://www.burnabyschools.ca)) about supporting children with questions or concerns about COVID-19.

### Supporting Each Other

As I mentioned in my last letter, these are extraordinary times that require extraordinary efforts. COVID-19 has brought substantial changes to how we live, learn, and work.

While the coming weeks will not look anything like our typical school days, please know that we will be continuing to support you in the very best way we can. There will undoubtedly be bumps along the way as we try something new on such a massive scale.

I want to share some words of wisdom from local children that I spotted the other day. In colourful chalk for all passers-by to see on the sidewalk, they drew smiling children with the message: "Be strong, do not worry, you're safe. Stay home. Smile every day." You can see it [here](#). During these uncertain and challenging times, one can find comfort in the wisdom of children.

In closing, I would like to commend all Burnaby School District staff for their tremendous leadership and dedication. To our entire Burnaby community, please accept my sincere thanks for your unwavering support and partnership. As we continue to manage these very challenging times together, the kindness, understanding and generosity of all is defining our collective future.

I wish you, your families, and the people you care about all the very best.

Sincerely,

Gina Niccoli-Moen, Superintendent

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|  <p>BOARD OF EDUCATION<br/><b>BURNABY</b><br/>SCHOOL DISTRICT 41</p> <p><b>IMPORTANT INFORMATION</b><br/>PLEASE HAVE THIS TRANSLATED</p> <p>RENSEIGNEMENTS IMPORTANTS<br/>Prière de les faire traduire.</p> <p>重要資料<br/>請找人為你翻譯</p> | <p>これはたいせつなお知らせです。<br/>どなたかに日本語に訳してもらってください。</p> <p>알려드립니다<br/>이것을 번역해 주십시오</p> <p>CHỈ DẪN QUAN TRỌNG<br/>Xin nhờ người dịch hộ</p> <p>ਜ਼ਰੂਰੀ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ<br/>ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਇਸ ਸੰਬੰਧ ਵਿੱਚ ਭੈਣਕਾਰਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਸਹਾਇਤਾ ਦਿਓ</p> <p><b>INFORMACIÓN IMPORTANTE</b><br/>Busque alguien que le traduzca.</p> | <p>اطلاعات مهم و سودمند<br/>لطفاً از یک نفر بخوانید که برای شما ترجمه کند</p> <p>ITO AY MAHALAGANG IMPORMASYON<br/>Isalin sa wikang tagalog kang hindi maintindihan</p> <p>برجی ترجمه هذا<br/>معلومات هامة</p> <p>ВАЖНАЯ ИНФОРМАЦИЯ<br/>Переведите это, пожалуйста.</p> |
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