

May 26, 2020

Good evening and welcome to our virtual Board Meeting.

It was only ten days ago that the Premier, Minister of Education, Minister of State for Childcare, and the Provincial Health Officer held a news conference to share BC's plan for schools. In that short period of time, the amount of work district staff, principals, and teachers have done to prepare for the June 1 expansion of in-class learning is nothing short of heroic. On behalf of the Board, I want to thank you for all of your efforts toward preparing for our part in the province's Restart Plan. As a board, we also want to thank our partner groups for their critical expertise and partnership throughout.

It's clear that schools are a key part of British Columbia's recovery plan. I know that district staff have been preparing for an expansion of in-class learning for some time, with careful planning, consultation, and trying out different pilot models, as well as caring for children of essential service workers in our schools. As a board, we couldn't be prouder of not only the work that has been accomplished, but the way it has been done. Everything has been done in lock step with our partner groups. Everything has had the primary focus on what matters most: the health and safety of students, staff and the wider community.

Parents and families have a choice as to whether they will send their child to school the week of June 1. I want to reassure them, as well as our staff, that the entire district is implementing even more health and safety measures to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission. This includes continued vigilant cleaning, as well as requiring everyone to clean their hands before entering the building, and other important measures advised by the Provincial Health Officer.

Together, we are ensuring implementation of the latest guidelines, guidance, protocols and standards from Dr. Bonnie Henry, the Ministries of Health and Education, as well as the Fraser Health Authority and WorkSafe BC. We have done so much – one step at a time – and together, we will take this next step and continue to successfully and safely deliver education during these challenging times.

We look forward to welcoming more of our students and staff back into schools next week.

Gary Wong, Chair

Burnaby Board of Education