



March 17, 2020

Ref: 218690

Dear Parents, Guardians and Staff:

The health and safety of our students, staff and their families is our highest priority.

The global pandemic COVID-19 is moving quickly and its impact on British Columbians is growing.

We have followed the direction – daily – of public health officials and scientists in making fact-based decisions when it comes to B.C.'s school system.

Today, under the direction of the Provincial Health Officer we are directing all schools to immediately suspend in-class instruction until further notice.

While classroom lessons are suspended it is expected that schools will implement a variety of measures to ensure continued learning for students.

We are urging teachers, principals, school districts and independent school authorities to begin planning now to ensure continuity of learning and I have tasked Ministry of Education staff to work with our education partners to coordinate these initiatives.

We expect school districts and independent schools will develop plans to maintain some level of service for children of people who are performing essential services across our province – like medical health professionals, first responders, pharmacists and critical infrastructure workers.

We also know there are vulnerable students who have unique needs; important services like school meal programs, and child care services operating on school grounds that need to be addressed. We expect schools to consider these issues in their planning while we work together through these extraordinary times.

Every student will receive a final mark, and all students on track to move to the next grade will do so in the fall. For grades 10 and 11 students, graduation assessments will be postponed.

Every student eligible to graduate from Grade 12 this year will graduate. The only graduation assessment required for current Grade 12 students is the Grade 10 numeracy assessment. The Ministry of Education will ensure Grade 12 students who have not yet completed this assessment and who are otherwise on track to graduate are able to meet this graduation requirement.

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The ministry will also work with the Ministry of Advanced Education, Skills and Training and with post-secondary institutions on admissions and the smooth transition of graduating students in this extra-ordinary year.

We will continue to work in consultation with our education partners as we plan for ongoing learning, including frequent contact with school districts to ensure we work through this together as plans are developed.

This is a very challenging time in B.C. and around the world. Please take necessary preventative measures to keep you and your families healthy. If you think you have symptoms the Ministry of Health has developed an online self-assessment tool at covid19.thrive.health. If you do have symptoms you can call 8-1-1 to pre-arrange health testing. While symptomatic, self-isolate.

The province has a launched a new non-medical information line for British Columbians who have questions about COVID-19: **1-888-COVID19**. Phone lines are open 7 days a week from 7:30 AM to 8 PM, and information is available in more than 110 languages.

These measures are temporary. But we must act together and act now to prevent the further spread of COVID-19.

Sincerely,



Rob Fleming
Minister