May 12, 2020

Dear Parents and Guardians,

As British Columbia begins to ease restrictions relating to COVID-19, public schools will play an important role in the provincial government’s Restart Plan. As you will likely have heard, the government is planning for a phased-in return to in-class instruction likely before the end of this school year. Although there are still many details to be worked out, I wanted to reach out to you to share what we know about the proposed plan and to talk about what we can expect in the coming weeks.

**Plan to Return to In-Class Instruction**

On May 6, the Ministry of Education released a plan for a staged return to in-class instruction. All school districts are currently in Stage 4. Based on direction from the Provincial Health Officer, schools will likely move to Stage 3 at the beginning of June:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage 1</th>
<th>A return to full in-class instruction.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stage 2</td>
<td>In-class learning for all students in elementary school (K to 7) on a full-time basis. In-class learning for secondary students (Grades 8 to 12) on a part-time basis. Remote and online learning continues to be available for secondary students.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stage 3 <em>(By June 1)</em></td>
<td>In-class learning for students in kindergarten to Grade 5 on a part-time basis. Access to in-class learning as needed for Grades 6 to 12 on a part-time basis. Remote and online learning continues to be available for students.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stage 4 <em>(Current stage)</em></td>
<td>In-class learning for children of essential service workers and vulnerable students. Remote and online learning continues for most students.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stage 5</td>
<td>Suspend all in-class instruction for all grades and students. Remote and online learning for all students.</td>
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</tbody>
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We anticipate that further details regarding this plan will be released by the Ministry of Education either later this week or early next week. Those details will likely include operating standards and public health guidelines for K-12 schools.

**Health and Safety**

The health and safety of our students and staff members will continue to be our top priority. We want to reassure you that we will continue to be diligent in ensuring that all public health expectations are met or exceeded as more students and staff return to our schools. As has been the case throughout the pandemic, the District will continue to take direction from the Public Health Officer and Vancouver Coastal Health. All decisions made will reflect those directions.
In-Class Instruction

When will this next stage of return to in-class instruction happen?
It is likely that the next stage of in-class instruction will commence at the beginning of June.

If I don’t want to send my child to school between now and the end of June, do I have to?
Parents will continue to have the option of keeping their children at home and engaging in remote learning.

How much in-class instruction will be offered to each grade level?
Our understanding is that in-class instruction will be offered on a part time basis, however the exact amount of time for each grade level has not yet been determined. We anticipate that students in Kindergarten through Grade Five will be offered approximately two days per week of in-class instruction. Percentages for older students are still being determined, however we anticipate a greater focus remaining on remote learning for these grade levels.

How many children will be in each classroom?
It is not yet known how many children will be in each classroom. This will be dependent on guidelines from public health officials that ensure a safe learning and working environment for all students and staff members.

What will my child’s day look like while at school?
The details of what happens in classrooms have yet to be determined. Once the district receives more information from the Ministry of Education, more detailed plans will be worked out at the school level and communicated to parents.

I am an Essential Services Worker receiving onsite support for my child. Will the school district continue to provide full time support during the school day for my child?
Yes. All children of essential services workers will continue to be offered support five days per week during the school day through the end of June. As other students return to school, the district may adjust the current model of support. More details will be provided in the next week or so.

What will happen in September?
It has not yet been determined what school will look like in September. The amount of time students spend in school and the type of instruction received will be directed by public health officials based on factors such as the transmission rates of the COVID-19 virus.

Preparing in Richmond

A further provincial announcement on the phased-in approach to resuming in-class instruction is likely to be made within the next week by the Ministry of Education. As the district receives this information, more detailed plans will be developed in conjunction with district stakeholder groups and then shared with parents and students.

In order to assist us with our planning, the district will be surveying parents of elementary-aged children early next week to determine approximately how many parents are considering sending their children to school. At the same time, the district will continue to work with our employee groups as we move forward in our preliminary planning.
In the interim, remote and online learning opportunities will continue for all students. I encourage you to continue to work with your child’s teacher(s) and school principal if you have any questions or concerns. You will receive further details from your school principal over the coming weeks as plans become clearer and we are able to move towards welcoming more students back to school in early June.

I would like to once again thank all parents and guardians for your patience and understanding as we navigate these turbulent waters together. As a province, I believe we all have much to be proud of as we have collectively managed to ‘flatten the curve’ while balancing concerns about health and the economy. Our goal as a school district is to do whatever we can to assist families in moving to this next stage of learning, while ensuring that we maintain the highest standards of health and safety for all our students, their families and our valued staff members. I am grateful for the effort, compassion and patience shown by our entire school district community and look forward to this next phase of our journey together.

Sincerely,

Scott Robinson
Superintendent of Schools