



MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD OF EDUCATION

April 3, 2020

Changing the education system from in-class instruction to remote delivery is a monumental task that will require innovation, collaboration, and cooperation from our dedicated staff, students and families. We will adapt to these changes together as we continue to keep students' wellbeing at the centre of what we do.

Because we do not want to rush into this transition in learning, we appreciate the continued patience of Central Okanagan families. Everyone wants to create a model that supports learner success. The Board would like to acknowledge the tremendous amount of preparation for this transition, from the establishment and implementation of safety protocols, to the support for learning technology and the assessment of student needs.

This week schools and staff connected with students and families in their community. This was done to reestablish relationships and assess each student and family's unique situation.

Thanks to the efforts of staff, the school district will continue to move forward on the delivery of the four principles the Ministry of Education set out:

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

Where we are and what families can expect next week

On Monday, April 6, learning services centres in some elementary and middle schools will begin to accommodate the children of Tier 1 essential service workers (e.g. health care providers, acute care workers, and emergency responders) who submitted applications. Teaching and support staff will provide learning and care for small groups of Kindergarten to Grade 6 children, Monday to Friday. Tier 2 and 3 essential service workers are currently on a waitlist and the District will attempt to accommodate requests according to available space.

The School District Health and Safety Department inspected the additional cleaning at schools and established a universal standard of strong safety protocols to protect everyone who enters. As we set standards for school spaces and personal conduct, the students of essential service workers and the staff who attend schools will maintain appropriate physical distancing and abide by new guidelines for a healthy and safe environment.

To support students experiencing food insecurity, our district will begin to distribute food packages to schools next week. We are grateful for support from community volunteers, who offered to provide food to schools. To reduce physical contact, our providers will deliver a week's

worth of lunches and breakfasts at one time. Teachers and support staff continue to reach out to families who are enrolled in these programs to determine need and arrange pickup/delivery. Our district also developed plans to support students who may require mental health services. *ARC Programs* and *Child and Youth Mental Health*, who partner with us in our schools, will continue to work remotely with identified students. *Foundry Kelowna* is collaborating with us to provide enhanced support for students who may require counselling services. In addition, the District, in partnership with community agencies, will offer virtual mental health educational opportunities for parents to enhance their ability to support their children during a challenging time.

As work continues to create continuity of educational opportunities for all students, we want to ensure that we understand each student's situation and that appropriate and meaningful learning opportunities are created. Families and students can expect that learning will likely involve both opportunities for students and teachers to connect in real time through technology, and independent learning, where students work at their own pace through assignments. Expectations of students will vary according to age and individual needs. We will provide further details moving forward as we finalize a new *Framework for Continuity of Educational Opportunities*.

Again, we are grateful for the tremendous amount of work accomplished across the district to assess needs and plan for new ways to learn. Students remain at the heart of what we do, and we continue to consider the variety of individual needs and abilities as we connect, collaborate, and organize. Trustees have heard from many families expressing their appreciation for the connections the teachers and school staff have made with them over the past week.

Thank you again for your patience, kindness, and support of our students as we navigate through these difficult circumstances. Together, we will continue to grow and learn.

Yours sincerely,

Central Okanagan Board of Education

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