



August 12, 2020

Dear School District 27 (Cariboo-Chilcotin) Families and Staff:

We are writing to update you on the School District planning and progress in support of the provincial back to school plan that was announced last week by the Minister of Education and the Provincial Health Office. In the announcement, Dr. Bonnie Henry clearly stated that B.C.'s Covid-19 data supports a safe return to full-time in-class learning for all students and she is confident that it is safe for staff and students to return to schools.

Our District recognizes that the announcement has raised many questions and that some of our families and staff are feeling anxious about some aspects of the plan. Our return to in-class instruction last June proved to be safe for our staff and students and we will build on our safe practices while we continue to work toward safe solutions to the challenges bringing all our students back into schools may raise.

In September, we will be in Stage 2 of the Revised Five Stage Framework for K-12 Education. We have included links below to the Ministry documents which are guiding our preparations. There will be a full return to in-class instruction for students, who will be organized into learning groups. A learning group is a group of students and staff who remain together throughout a school term and whose only interactions are between those in the learning group. This has the effect of significantly reducing the number of individual interactions while allowing most students to receive in-person learning in a close-to-normal school environment.

Learning groups do not change the class sizes, which remain at normal district levels. Students in Grades K-8 will have their interactions limited to the 60 students in their learning group, while students in Grades 9-12 will have their interactions limited to the 120 students in their group. Elementary students will be in their regular class for the vast majority of the day, while Middle and Secondary school students will be scheduled to ensure classes are taken with students in their learning group. The nine small schools in our district enrolling fewer than 60 students will operate as normal, with all enhanced health and safety measures. Physical distancing and/or masks will be required for any classes that occur outside of a student's learning group.

The full return of students necessitates an increased emphasis on cleaning and safety guidelines. The Ministry of Education is providing increased funding to districts for additional cleaning supplies, additional cleaning staff, and the purchase of reusable masks for staff and older students that will be available on request. Busing will be operating under revised safety guidelines, which include mandatory masks for middle and secondary school students.

As we stressed in the spring, it is imperative that any staff or students who feel sick should stay home and not report to school. Parents who work outside of the home may wish to consider securing an alternative caregiver for their child in the event they are sick and cannot attend school on any given day.

“Learning, Growing and Belonging Together”



The School District is currently developing a local return to school plan that will meet the approval of the Province and be posted on our website by August 26. As noted above, we have a high degree of confidence that we can create a learning environment for all students that will look and feel fairly familiar, while maintaining our focus on health and safety protocols established by the Provincial Medical Health Officers. District staff will continue to work with administration and partners groups to ensure a safe, smooth start to the new year.

We are looking forward to welcoming our students and staff back to school in September, but in the meantime, take time to enjoy the last weeks of the summer break. Stay safe and be well.

Please see the following websites for more information:

BC Ministry of Education [Schools Restart Plan – 5 Stages explanation](#)

BC Ministry of Education [Schools Restart Plan](#)

BC CDC COVID-19 Public Health [Guidance for K-12 School Settings](#)

and the district website at www.sd27.bc.ca for regular updates.

Sincerely

Chris van der Mark
Superintendent of Schools