



**August 18, 2020**

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

Since my previous update, district partners and staff have continued working to prepare a Return to School Plan that is centered on a healthy and safe return for students and staff. While our Ministry-approved final plan will be out to parents on August 26, we wanted to share a few insights into what parents, students and staff can expect.

Under Stage 2, we will have all students returning to school. The Public Health Officer has directed schools to design “cohorts” or “learning groups” that limit the interactions between students in the school. With a cohort limit of 60 students, elementary schools can be fairly easily configured using existing class structures and we expect a fairly “normal” return for students in our elementary and small rural schools, with the obligatory added focus on cleaning, hand washing and hygiene.

With a cohort configuration of 120 students in secondary schools, our existing semester system of 4 courses over a 20 weeks period does not comply with the Ministry learning group limit. As a result, our secondary schools will be transitioning to a quarter system of 2 courses over a 10-week period to achieve the reduced student contact to 2 courses per day. This timetable alteration requires secondary administration to significantly alter schedules in order to adhere to the cohort limitation of 120, with the unfortunate loss of some student choice over their elective courses. Changes to schedules and course selection are not our preference, but we ask that parents and students consider the unique challenges of the situation and recognize that districts across the province are all grappling with this challenge.

Beyond limiting contacts, the use of the quarter system at secondary allows us to more-seamlessly transition into another stage or delivery model should government make changes to the restart plan to address future developments.

Student district transportation will be different, as middle and secondary students will be required to wear masks on the bus due to the inability to socially distance. The school district will provide students with 2 reusable masks for any situations where distancing is not possible.

We are confident in our ability to offer a safe learning environment for our students and staff and we are excited for the full return of students. Not only will the learning groups limit student body interactions, they will ultimately help the health authority effectively contact trace in the event of exposure, thus limiting its impact.

Please direct any specific questions you may have to the administration of your child’s school once the full plan is released at the August 26<sup>th</sup> announcement.

Thank you for your patience and understanding.



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Please see the following websites for more information:

BC Ministry of Education [B.C.'s Back to School Plan](#)

BC Ministry of Education [K-12 Education Restart Plan](#)

and the district website at [www.sd27.bc.ca](http://www.sd27.bc.ca) for regular updates.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Chris van der Mark', with a small dot at the end.

Chris van der Mark  
Superintendent of Schools