

A Message from the Board Chair and Superintendent

Dear Parents/Guardians:

We are very excited to welcome new and returning students for the 2020/21 school year. While this year may look and feel different due to the global pandemic, our Board of Education and our dedicated staff are ready to continue the important work of supporting our students and building on our tradition of excellence in education.

Student and staff safety being paramount, our organization has been working incredibly hard to prepare for the safest return for everyone. Our Pandemic Response Team along with our team of professionals have been working through the summer to refine our Stage 2 Restart Plan. Adhering to the requirements of the Public Health Office, we have implemented extensive health and safety protocols to ensure every member of our learning community is safe and feels comfortable returning to our buildings.

As part of our on-going commitment to provide safe learning environments, we have invested in additional resources and reorganized our schools to best support our students.

We have increased our custodial staff and added 120 hours per day of custodial time across the District so our schools are cleaned deeply and regularly disinfected. We have purchased electrostatic sprayers for effective and touchless applications to reduce cross contamination. The sprayers pair well with Vital Oxide, a hospital grade disinfectant that produces no harmful by-products. Hand sanitizing stations have also been set up in classrooms that do not have direct access to sinks.

Schools are being reorganized to support learning groups. The 'schools within schools' model will see no more than 60 people in a learning group for elementary and middle schools and no more than 120 people in a learning group for a secondary school. This organization is designed to minimize the number of in-person interactions and ensure quicker contact tracing by health authorities. More than 48,000 masks and 1,600 face shields have been ordered to add additional protection for our students and staff.

Staggered start times, recess and lunch breaks may be implemented at schools depending on scheduling and the number of students in a building. Controlled traffic flows will also be established throughout the schools with signage and floor markings to help minimize physical contact.

The Greater Victoria School District wishes to recognize and acknowledge the Esquimalt and Songhees Nations, on whose traditional territories, we live, we learn, and we do our work.

The District will also continue to install additional plexiglass and custom barriers for common areas with special requirements such as school offices and libraries. We are physically rearranging school spaces to best protect our students and staff.

Staff will return to school on September 8th to review all the safety measures and prepare for students' arrival on September 10th. If you have not heard from your school, please connect with them immediately.

Each year, school start-up is an exciting time for our students and families, however, we understand that this year there may be some uncertainty due to COVID-19. We want our families to know our District, schools and staff are here to support you. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact your school.

While the year ahead may present some challenges, we believe there will be opportunities to work together and strengthen our relationships. More than ever, we must exercise Dr. Henry's wisdom of being kind, calm, and safe.

We all have an important role in keeping our community safe. Please continue to practice good hand hygiene and stay home if you are not feeling well.

We will continue to engage with our parents and guardians throughout the year, as you are one of the most important supports in the educational success of our children. We are committed to providing regular updates to keep our families informed.

We know we will see the greatest success for our children if we are one learning community working together with students' best interests in mind.

We very much look forward to building on our partnership with you and the entire community for the 2020/2021 school year. We have a very busy and exciting year before us, and we eagerly await the arrival of our students and staff.



Shelley Green
Superintendent of Schools



Jordan Watters
Board Chair

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