

# Office of the Superintendent

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*Deb Whitten – Interim Superintendent*

December 16, 2021

**RE: Happy Holidays!**

As 2021 draws to a close, I would like to take this opportunity to reflect and express my gratitude to everyone in our learning community for their continued care, kindness and commitment to all students during this pandemic.

I recognize it has been difficult under the evolving challenges of COVID-19, and I am grateful to have the opportunity to work and learn alongside Rightsholders, partners, students, staff and families as we continue to keep schools safe places to learn.

Living through a pandemic and adapting to our new normal is no easy task. I want to thank all of our staff for going above and beyond to ensure our students feel connected, safe and a sense of belonging in our care.

I have heard many stories of incredible learning opportunities throughout our schools. It is amazing what we can achieve when we work together. That said, I am very appreciative of all of you—and everything you do.

In addition, I would like to extend my appreciation to families for doing their part in preventing the spread of COVID-19. Thank you for following public health orders and helping to keep our communities safe.

As I reflect on the past four months, I want to express gratitude towards the Four Houses (Esquimalt First Nation, Songhees First Nation, Métis Nation of Greater Victoria, and Urban People's House Indigenous Advisory) for the on-going dialogue to strengthen our relationships and to provide the best supports and services for Indigenous students and families in the Greater Victoria School District.

I would also like to thank our Board of Education, CUPE 947, CUPE 382, Exempt staff, Allied Specialists Association, the Greater Victoria Teachers' Association, Victoria Confederation of Parent Advisory Councils and the Victoria Principals' and Vice-Principals' Association for their leadership throughout this school year.

While we are ready to move forward to a post-pandemic reality, we are not quite there. I would like to remind families of the current and evolving federal travel requirements. Please be mindful of how your winter break travel plans may affect your child's return to school.

For more information on international travel advisories and requirements for unvaccinated or not fully vaccinated children returning or entering Canada, please visit: <https://travel.gc.ca/travel-covid/travel-restrictions/covid-vaccinated-travellers-entering-canada>

As we wrap up this year, I want to wish all of you a well-deserved break. I remain hopeful that good things are in store for 2022.

Until then, I want to wish you a very happy holiday!



Deb Whitten

Interim Superintendent of Schools

*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.*