

For Immediate Release:

CONTINUITY OF LEARNING

Parksville, BC – May 23, 2020

New lifestyle habits that minimize risk to our health and safety during the COVID-19 pandemic are currently part of our everyday routines and ways of interacting. New to education, “continuity of learning” describes how our students have been continuing their education in different ways as a result of the pandemic. Guided by teachers and supported by families, increased technology use and experiential learning have made meaningful learning possible for our students during this unusual time.

Teachers and students have been connecting and communicating in virtual spaces, sometimes for learning that resembles in-person experiences and sometimes to take advantage of innovative approaches. For example, in one English class, students have been watching their teacher model the writing process during videoconferencing, exploring diverse styles of poetry on websites, and sharing their own poetry with peers through digital portfolios. Others have been participating virtually in large group instruction, while also benefiting from one-to-one support as needed with their teacher. Additionally, teacher-developed presentations, videos and podcasts, as well as class websites providing learning advice, are available to families to access when convenient for their varied schedules. Students with unique needs continue to be supported in a variety of ways too, including small group sessions with teachers and support staff, as well as access to technology devices and internet connectivity as needed.

Reflecting on their growth in the core competencies (such as collaboration, critical and creative thinking, and social responsibility) is another important focus for student learning at this time. For instance, one elementary class has been generating comics using digital tools to creatively express how they are developing core competencies while learning at home. Similarly, graduating students have been delving deeper into post-graduation learning goals while reflecting on core competencies through their capstone projects. This year’s capstones include producing creative works to add to art portfolios in preparation for post-secondary studies, authoring and designing learning resources on environmental stewardship, and virtual presentations to showcase personal learning journeys and post-graduation plans.

Learning remotely has provided many new opportunities for experiential learning too. Students have been connecting hands-on learning at home to their educational goals from school. One student has been writing in French and English about the technical skills he is learning as he builds a dirt bike with his dad. Another student has produced a video for Food Studies coursework that showcases her home cooking and media design abilities. And another student has created backyard obstacle courses to help his family stay active during quarantine, making sure to track everyone’s fitness progress.

Our district recognizes the efforts of students and staff in continuing meaningful learning in different ways during these unusual times, and appreciate families’ flexibility and support, even as they try to stay on top of their own work and responsibilities. We know that it takes a village to raise a child, and during this pandemic, the ‘why’ of this truism continues; it is the ‘how’ that has shifted for us right now. We look forward to next steps in “continuity of learning”, including optional in-person part-time and remote learning, as we move into Stage 3 of the K-12 Education Restart Plan on June 1.

**For further information
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