

SEPTEMBER RESTART
QUESTIONS & ANSWERS
FROM “TOWN HALL” ZOOM MEETING
HELD AUGUST 20, 2020 AT 6:00 P.M.

Please see the Q and A from August 13, 2020 as posted on the district website (<https://www.sd69.bc.ca/Documents/Q%20and%20A%20-%20August%2013%202020.pdf>). Some questions asked and answered in that document have not been repeated here even if they were asked again in the town hall on August 20.

For context, on August 20 we provided an overview of plans that are emerging for the September restart, including confirmation that secondary schools will have intact classes for the full year at grades 8-10, and a quarter system for 2 classes per day for grades 11-12. The afternoon class will have partial attendance only, in order to facilitate distancing as students leave their morning learning groups. For elementary, we will have students in their own classes of 20 to 29 students as usual (depending on the grade) and that will form the learning group for each of those students. The expansion to a cohort as large as 60 will only happen as two classes are together periodically for outdoor play time and the like. All schools will operate on their normal schedules other than (1) staggering start, end and break times as necessary to create fewer overlaps of learning groups and (2) ending school 30 minutes earlier than usual for all students as described in the previous Q and A (although that document did speculate that we might start late, and now we know we will end early). As for other key matters, such as health and safety and transportation, see the district's official restart plan that is under development and will be shared widely on August 26.

Q: If 3 teachers are going to be teaching a learning group of 60, wouldn't it be safer for 1 teacher to teach a fixed group of 20 students?

A: Our elementary learning groups will be intact classes, with three teachers assigned to those two classes, including the two enrolling teachers and one other specialist teacher or a PE or music teacher that no longer has to do prep coverage because of the early dismissal of students. The “third teacher” will be needed for specialty supports both within the learning group and beyond (with distancing and masks). As well, we are looking to create some teacher time within that team of three teachers to provide outreach to students at home.

Q: Will staff and students be required to wear masks?

A: Within learning groups that will remain intact for an extended period of time masks will not be necessary but anyone who wants to wear one of course will be welcomed to do so. Outside of the learning group, including on buses or when moving in proximity to other as will happen within hallways and common spaces, all students from grade 6 to grade 12, and all staff, will be required to wear masks. We encourage everyone to have their own washable, reusable mask or to have on hand a constant supply of disposable masks. The district has ordered 4000 masks to provide to those who do not have or have perhaps lost or forgotten their mask on a particular day. Everyone is reminded to review resources on line (e.g. CDC) that speak to what kinds of masks are best.

Q: Do we have a schedule for kindergarten starts yet?

A: Communication on kindergarten start times will come from each school to parents of incoming kindergarten students. The staggered start approach will be used as in any other year, although orientation may take different forms based on the measures that we will have in place for health and safety. Stay tuned for news from your school.

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Q: Since the CEAP elementary program has already established a distance learning curriculum and teaching practices, why can't the same program also be run out of each elementary school in addition to regular offerings to keep kids in their home schools? This would save transferring kids in and out of schools, and allow for long term distance learning for those parents not comfortable sending kids back this year.

A: We have decided to stay with CEAP as a DL environment and allow students in schools to stay supported by their neighbourhood schools as noted above. That said, we are leveraging what we have learned in the DL environment to support those school based efforts.

Q: What happened to the proposed availability of another option outside of full time in class learning for French Immersion students? The one that was talked about in the last Board Meeting which stated "District 69, within our school restart plan include parents receiving home supports from their neighborhood school based on family health and well being even in absence of COVID 19 symptoms."

A: That options remains available for all students. Parents are being asked via a survey being sent out on August 21 to indicate whether or not they will be requesting support from home, whether in Immersion or not.

Q: Will there be any support for special needs children that choose to do the CEAP program because of high risk adults in the family? Like once a weekly in home tutoring since the child does generate extra funding for the school district.

A: CEAP provides supports for unique and diverse learners, albeit at a distance.

Q: Has there been any real forward movement in solidifying an option for those who have immune compromising issues?

A: We have completed a survey to send to parents on August 21 and one option is home support for people who have wellness and immune compromised situations.

Q: How long would home support last?

A: Support for children at home will continue for any period of time that is needed by the family.

Q: What happens if a child in French Immersion moves to home schooling, DL or home support, in terms of the ability for students to come back to Immersion?

A: If a student moves away for a year from French Immersion then we would do everything we can to hold that spot for an eventual return. Continued language development would be important and we would work with families to ensure that that is happening.

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- Q:** Is there a plan to ensure that more French speaking TTOCs will be available?
A: We will continue to look for TTOCs that can support French Immersion. That is an ongoing priority that is a challenge across the province.
- Q:** Can courtesy riders that are not currently able to access bus transportation be served with additional routes?
A: We are sorry that we are unable to create those additional routes, both from a cost point of view and the fact that students would be picked up so much later. Courtesy ridership remains a priority, but only where space is available after seating all eligible riders. This coming year the eligible riders will fill the buses to their newly mandated 2/3 operating capacity.
- Q:** Will my child in grade 12 get all of the electives that we chose in the spring?
A: Yes. For grades 11 and 12 the only things that are changing are the move to a quarter system (2 courses at a time) rather than semester and having part time attendance for the afternoon.
- Q:** What we can expect in terms of parent entry into elementary schools?
A: At this point parents have to leave children at the door knowing that we will take good care of them, although a small number of parent volunteers programs will remain in place such as breakfast club for children in need. Because parents are understandably concerned about routines and safety, we are looking to build video tours for parents to see how the school will operate.
- Q:** Is there going to be an option for childcare in the p.m. within the learning groups at the schools?
A: For now childcare is through the providers already operating on school sites or in the community. We are looking for ways to expand that through provision of programs, perhaps through the RDN, after school (not childcare per se, but some form of programming). More information on that will be forthcoming. In terms of learning groups, the health authority has said that children may be outside their learning groups for before and after school care.
- Q:** Will children be physically distanced 2 m from others in the classroom?
A: No, children will be in regular classes along with students and adults that are in that “bubble”. They will naturally be in close proximity to others in that class or learning group, a model that is endorsed and supported by the health authority.
- Q:** If parents send their child to school, I assume we have the option to make our child wear a mask in school (not just common spaces, but in class spaces) even though they are not mandatory. Is this correct?

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Q: Will adults be wearing a mask anytime they are within 2 m

A: Yes, if they are not from that particular learning group.

Q: If enrollment decreases, will there be reduced funding to schools?

A: The information to date from the Ministry is that we will address those issues if and when they arise on a district by district basis

Q: Is there any consideration being given to decreasing the class sizes and splitting students into different learning groups for different days

A: We have to organize in accordance for Stage 2 rules which include classes being of normal size. Those may come down in terms of on site if some are at home for family and health reasons but parameters indicate that the entire class can be, other than as described for grades 11 and 12 in the afternoon.

Q: Does the District not have the ability to be flexible on what the Ministry says they should be done as opposed to what the whole world feels is safe or not.

A: We have limited discretion, with one example of that being the Board’s motion to support parents wishing to keep their children home for reasons of family health and well-being (an option not contemplated by the provincial plan).

Q: What can we expect from the health authority by way of information for parents?

A: We are also awaiting information from the health authority that provides an evidence based case for the restart model being minimal risk.

Q: If some eligible riders are riding only part time might that make space for courtesy riders?

A: We will analyze ridership on an ongoing basis, starting with confirming people’s intentions through the parent survey going out on August 21.

Q: Will they still be doing PE classes and music at elementary?

A: Although PE and music will not be taught by specialists doing prep relief coverage (prep and collaboration will be after students leave 30 minutes early), students will get PE and music to the extent possible within the scheduling of those specialist teachers across learning groups as well as to the extent possible with their own classroom teachers.

Q: What will happen with school sports?

A: We have approval to start school sports but only within schools and not with inter-school competition. If students are engaged in sports with others from outside their learning group them distancing and masks may be needed.

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- Q:** Will CEAP expand as needed based on enrolment?
A: We are attempting to support all applications for CEAP but the final determination of that will depend on how many students enroll and what our capacity will be to staff and resource the program. Parents can expect answers on within a week or so.
- Q:** How are TTOC’s going to be called out and what is the structure going to be and how do they limit our contact?
A: Senior staff are working through what our schools look like and how to support TTOCs so they know they are valued, and to ensure that health and safety remains paramount.
- Q:** When will final exams or assessments occur in secondary schools, and what about provincial assessments?
A: Final exams or assessments will be up to teachers, and will naturally land at the end of the course. As for provincial assessments in numeracy and literacy we expect that those will occur on the regular schedule as published by the Ministry.
- Q:** Will students who need support beyond the learning group, perhaps in relation to some unique need, be able to get that support?
A: Yes, those supports will be provided. If that occurs outside the learning group then a combination of masks, distancing and extra hygiene will come into play.
- Q:** If a child is sent home or stays home because of COVID-like symptoms, what will be the protocol?
A: We will take our direction from the Medical Health Officer in general, and in some cases in relation to a specific situation. In general, students who are ill will be at home until the student is symptom free. Parents will be expected to check with a doctor or 811 to determine whether there is sufficient concern for a COVID test to be done. We are requesting that parents keep the school up to date as needed. Should there be a case of COVID then the health authority will do follow up as they see necessary in terms of contact tracing and/or requiring anyone to monitor for symptoms or self-isolate.
- Q:** Will each child use their own school supplies?
A: Yes, it is expected that children will not be sharing supplies during the pandemic. As well, lockers will not be in use in secondary schools.
- Q:** Will band and performing arts classes be operational?
A: Yes, band, music, choir, musical theatre, drama and other performance based courses will be operating within safety parameters established by the healthy authority.

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- Q:** How are washrooms going to work? Who will teach my child to wash their hands?
A: Washroom use will be sequenced and spaced as is the case in public washrooms in the community, with specific limitations being unique to each setting. Schools will make their rules clear to staff and students. In terms of compliance with hand washing protocols, we see this as a shared responsibility among students, staff and parents.
- Q:** Will all classrooms have sinks for hand washing?
A: We have not been able to retrofit all classrooms with sinks, so we are providing hand sanitizers to all classrooms as well as putting touchless hand sanitizing stations throughout the schools.
- Q:** Are there any updates from the government on the possibility of international students arriving for September?
A: Students with student visas dated before March 18 will be eligible for the district's international program, however it will be up to the federal government as to which students are allowed to fly into Canada. As of now possibilities look somewhat slim.
- Q:** How will students be divided for the 2 day partial entry to schools on September 10 and 11?
A: The District is in the process of making the plan for which students will be in on which days. Parents will be provided with that information sometime next week.
- Q:** Will elementary students be going to back to their original classroom or to their new ones to reduce touch points
A: All students will go to their new classes from their first day back in school.
- Q:** Will there be additional counsellors in schools to help students struggling with additional issues.
A: We have counsellors in all schools and they will attempt to meet with children and understand their needs as they do at anytime in the school year. Teachers will also be monitoring and addressing that issue.
- Q:** What happens for people who have seasonal allergies? Are we expecting them not to go to school and supported until allergies reduce?
A: Our Medical Health Officer will be sharing information in the coming days. We know that people who have seasonal allergies may be able to attend school as long as their symptoms are known to be not consistent with COVID.

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Q: If we have two children in different learning groups, and one of our kids has to quarantine because they came into contact with someone who tested positive at school, would our other child have to quarantine as well since they live and will be around the child who came in contact? And if one child is sick but their sibling is not, can that sibling still attend school?

A: Any question in relation to COVID, including in regard to contact tracing, testing or quarantine, will be answered by the health authority on a case by case basis. Information coming from the Medical Health Officer prior to school start-up will provide some welcome clarity.

Q: Why is there no social distancing being attempted within those cohorts when outside of the school setting a maximum of 6 people sharing a space is being encouraged?

A: The rules for students returning in learning groups of 60 or 120 have been established by the Provincial Health Officer. We are not in a position to comment on that. We will, however, limit our learning groups to one class as much as possible and encourage students and staff within the group to follow whatever distancing and hygiene protocols as are possible within the group.

Q: Can students be registered in CEAP and access courses in the neighbourhood school?

A: A grade 10-12 student can be registered on a course by course basis in CEAP and a neighbourhood school simultaneously (cross enrollment). Ideally that planning is done early so we know where student will be for which course and where staffing is needed for those courses. For students in grades 8 and 9 attending CEAP full time we can usually make arrangements for students to opt into certain electives in KSS or BSS.

Q: Will high school students be allowed off campus for lunch as they have in the past?

A: Secondary students may be allowed off campus but it would be with a reminder to use distancing and mask protocols.

Q: Does SD69 intend to proactively inform parents before the start of school what the projected numbers are for their child's class size and arrangements that are being made for health and safety?

A: Each school will communicate with parents in ways that provide information that is important for parents to know.