



SCHOOL DISTRICT No.69 (QUALICUM)

April 24, 2020

Message to SD 69 2020 Graduates from Your Superintendent

Hello Class of 2020, and families. Let me say first of all how sorry we are for the impact that the COVID pandemic is having on your lives as you move toward the conclusion of your K-12 journey. We wish that we could have provided a normal lead up to the end of your grade 12 year, but we realize that we are all part of a much bigger picture with the COVID pandemic.

We also realize that as the Class of 2020 you have already experienced more change than would be your fair share, including our move away from middle schools as well as some major shifts in teaching and assessment that, while positive, provided a degree of stress. And now this. All we can do is say thank you for hanging in there as we prepare for your upcoming transition to life beyond high school. We know that the world will be better for your joining the ranks of adulthood. You are a creative and resilient group and we are proud to have been there with you for the time that you have been in SD 69.

We understand there are many questions about the next couple of months for you and your families given the ongoing suspension of in-class instruction. You will all have been contacted by teachers and other school staff to make sure that your most important learning priorities are being attended to. That focus continues to be based on what next year might look like for you, including ensuring that courses required for post-secondary are completed to whatever extent makes sense for you. Note that this does not mean “completing courses” as if we were in usual times. You will be complete in a course when, working in consultation with you, your teacher determines that enough learning has taken place given our context. To be clear, here is an extract of what I shared with parents last week.

*We are particularly focused on **grade 12** students as they move toward graduation in this most unusual way. The Minister of Education has been clear that suspension of instruction is not a free pass to graduation. Students are expected to (a) have been in good standing in their pathway to graduation as of spring break, (b) catch up on work that was outstanding at that point, and (c) continue with key essential learnings in order for the teacher to determine that sufficient learning has been demonstrated to meet the requirements of the course, abbreviated as that might be. According to the Ministry of Education:*

- *As in any given school year, students on track or eligible to graduate will be able to graduate provided the student has completed sufficient learning in their coursework. This includes what they have learned since the course started, along with the learning they will complete from now until the end of the school*

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- *To be “eligible to graduate” means a student will satisfy all graduation requirements upon successful completion of courses they currently have underway and are continuing through to June 2020. This does not mean that students will graduate no matter what.*
- *Sufficient learning will be determined by teachers using their professional judgement. Grounded in the curriculum, teachers will assess what individual students know, understand, and are able to demonstrate to determine whether enough learning has taken place to enable the student to pursue further learning in the curricular and content area.*
- *Teachers will work with students to develop plans and set reasonable expectations given the current circumstances and the individual needs of the students.*

We know that for some of you your life circumstances allow you to have a full and robust home learning environment with lots of time to spend on schooling. For others, you are not as able to establish home routines or access technology, and you may be busy working or looking after siblings. We are sensitive to those realities of life and that is why we are tailoring our expectations to your reality even as we require you do continue attending to schoolwork in order to graduate.

Now on to a few specific issues that are generating some questions.

CLC and Capstone: Teachers are also working with you to make sure you have fulfilled the requirements of Career Life Connections, including the Capstone project. If you don't have your 30 hours of work experience or career life experience yet you will be given opportunities to fulfill these requirements in alternative from home.

Bursaries & Scholarships: Check your school's website for information about applications and deadlines. School bursary and scholarship committees will continue to work on awarding bursaries and informing students of their awards by June. We understand that some of you are choosing to defer post-secondary plans for a year; we are working closely with businesses and post-secondary institutions to ensure the secured amounts can be delayed for a minimum of a year.

Transition to Post Secondary: If you are moving toward post-secondary studies next year, your counsellors, principals, vice-principals and teachers are making sure that your grades to date are ready to share with post-secondary institutions as if this were a normal year. That said, you have to continue working on your assigned work in order to ensure that your grades remain at the levels that you need for post-secondary. Remember, that does not mean grades in relation to all the expectations of a course. We are customizing our approaches to assessment while we customize our teaching of courses, and as long as you put in the best effort you can we will do all we can to support you in a successful transition. The Ministry of Education has promised to ensure that transcripts reflect all final course marks submitted by schools to enable post-secondary institutions to proceed with their admission processes, modified to reflect the current circumstances. We will continue to update you as information becomes available.

Celebrating your Graduation: We know that graduation and commencement ceremonies are really important to you. They are to us as well. However, because this year there are to be no large gatherings, commencements and proms have been cancelled. We are hoping that there may be some way to acknowledge graduates virtually and to find ways to celebrate with you when it is safe to gather. Whether or not there can be some sort of event in August will be based on health authority advice and requirements. For now, it is wait and see what might be possible.

Graduates, if you have any questions, I encourage you to reach out your school principal, or I would be happy to hear from you directly at kelder@sd69.bc.ca.

Stay safe and healthy.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Keven".

Dr. Keven Elder
Superintendent of Schools