



SCHOOL DISTRICT No.69 (QUALICUM)

January 9, 2022

Dear Parents, Guardians, and Staff,

We look forward to welcoming students back to regular instruction on Monday, January 10th. This previous week, as you know, was spent planning for the coming weeks and months. School safety committees have used the updated Provincial and District Communicable Disease Plans to bolster precautions in our buildings. When students and parents return to their school sites, they will notice adjustments that include limits to the number of people who can gather in common spaces, reduced access to buildings for non-staff, a return to greater controls on hallway traffic, and a shift back to online meetings. Messages from schools and/or classroom teachers that offer updated expectations have been shared or will be shared shortly.

As mentioned in my previous letter (Dec. 30), the Provincial Health Authority has determined that contact tracing is not an effective tool for tracking or preventing the spread of the Omicron COVID-19 variant. Therefore, we are again asking everyone to complete a Health Check before attending a School District No. 69 site to work or to learn, and to stay home when advised to isolate. Much of teachers' time this week was spent readying their online presence in order to support students with learning activities more easily in the event that student attendance is not possible but they are well enough to continue to do school work from home.

The biggest question most people likely have is regarding potential closures. In short, a Functional Closure would be a district decision made in response to a significant staffing and replacement shortage. If enough teachers are available to support students online, there would be a shift to learning from home for a period that may last approximately 5-7 days before a return to in-person learning. A Health Closure would be made by the Health Authority in response to significant outbreaks in a community in order to reduce stress on the Health Care System. Again, a shift to learning from home may occur for approximately 5-7 days should staff be available to support it. We do not know how often these types of closures may be necessary, if at all, but we do expect to face ongoing challenges with absenteeism impacting both staff and students in the coming months and will need to be flexible in our service delivery during this time.

On a final note, in addition to participating in daily Health Checks and staying home when advised, we are again reminding everyone that vaccinations and masks both have a significant role to play in preventing the spread of COVID-19. While we will not be excluding staff or students from our schools, we will continue to ask that everyone do their part to help keep others safe and to help maintain a positive and productive learning environment. My hope, of course, is that impacts to our learning community are minimal and that we are able to enjoy a relatively uneventful return to learning this month.

Thank you again for your support and patience.

Sincerely,

Peter Jory
Superintendent/CEO