



September 14, 2020

Dear members of the School District 72 community,

We would like to take this opportunity to welcome students and staff back to school. As your Board of Education, we understand that the last six months have been especially challenging and that this fall may bring new concerns as students return to the classroom.

Our district is fortunate to have dedicated staff and educational partners that come together for the best interests of students every day of every school year. Since the start of the pandemic, as well as in the lead up to school reopening this September, our district's senior management team, school principals and vice-principals, teachers and school support staff have worked together to ensure that all the necessary health and safety protocols from the BC Centre for Disease Control and Ministry of Education are in place.

As trustees, we have individually and collectively reviewed the district's school occupancy protocols and have found them to be detailed and responsible, with many strategies to mitigate the potential risk of COVID-19 for both students and staff. We have full confidence that our school communities are being supported to the best of our collective abilities through this difficult time.

That said, we also appreciate that every family situation is unique, and that parents and guardians have had to carefully consider their family's personal circumstances in deciding what will be best for their child(ren) this school year. We fully support families in whatever decision they have made and are confident that these decisions are the right ones.

Our district has strived to provide families who, for a variety of reasons, are uncomfortable with the return to in-class instruction with a distributed learning option through our eBlend (K-9) and eBos (10-12) programs. These programs allow their children to learn outside of the classroom and still hold their spot in their regular school for next September. We are proud of our district for taking this extra step to support families through these challenging times.

Infectious disease experts continue to state that transmission rates of COVID-19 in schools will mirror the transmission rates within the community. Therefore, we all have a role to play in contributing towards the safety of our fellow community members and our children.

If we each behave in ways that reduce the risk – by washing our hands frequently, staying home if we feel unwell, and physically distancing or wearing a mask when we can't physically distance as we go about our business in the community – we can do our part to keep COVID cases low. The lower the levels within the community, the lower the possibility of there being cases within learning groups at school. Please do your part.

Best wishes to all students, parents and staff for another exciting year of learning.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Richard Franklin".

Richard Franklin, Chairperson
Board of Education, School District 72