



CAMPBELL RIVER

School District 72

December 2, 2020

Hon. Jennifer Whiteside
Minister of Education

Dear Minister:

The Campbell River Board of Education would like to express our heartfelt admiration and appreciation for all our district employees who made the return to school for students as safe as possible. As recognized by leaders in government and health, these employees are providing an essential service to the children of BC.

Despite uncertainty, frequent changes, fatigue, safety concerns, and stress, employees worked long and hard to make the return to school for students and colleagues as safe as possible. Despite some remaining concerns and questions that remain unanswerable, they continue to do so in classrooms, in hallways, on busses, and on school grounds, from the time students arrive each day until they leave. Those who work in classrooms are in a confined place with large numbers of students who are not required to wear masks. These workers are with the students for extended periods of time and may face the increased threat of infection from the Covid-19 virus as a result of these conditions.

The Board is very hopeful that an effective vaccine will be available in the near future. Although the timing for the availability of vaccines is still unknown, plans for implementation are well underway. A distribution system is being developed to identify and prioritize which parts of the population will receive earlier access to a vaccine. Currently this includes residents of long term care and retirement homes, hospitals and health care facilities; wherever the risk of infection and transmission is higher.

To demonstrate our support and appreciation for the work done by our school district employees, and to underline our concern for their ongoing health and safety, the Board strongly requests and advocates that these employees, both in our district and across the province, be considered front-line workers who are providing an essential service. As the provincial government deliberates on the groups of people who should receive the vaccine first, the Board asks that the government give a high level of priority to teachers, educational assistants and others who work with cohorts of students. In our opinion they deserve high priority to receive the Covid-19 vaccine as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

John Kerr
Chair, Board of Education
SD72 (Campbell River)

cc: Hon. John Horgan, Premier
Ms. Stephanie Higginson, President, BCSTA
Ms. Candice Spillsbury, President, VISTA
Mr. Dave Harper, President, CRDTA
Ms. Andrea Craddock, President, CUPE Local 723
Mr. Laird Ruehlen, President, CRPVPA
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