



March 23, 2020

Dear Parents, Students and Families:

As we collectively face the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, I want to take a moment to share a few things with you. Specifically, our preparation for continuity of learning, some information about the ways in which we can continue to provide support, a few additional updates, and to thank you for your patience and understanding.

This is an incredibly difficult time for everyone. I recognize that in times of uncertainty, there may be some comfort in having regular communication, even as the fluidity of the situation with COVID-19 means we don't have all of the answers. As we enter the final week of Spring Break, I wish to provide you with as much clarity as I can at the present time. I will share some work that is underway in our District, as well as a sense of what we anticipate in the weeks ahead.

### **Continuity of Learning**

On March 17, the Minister of Education announced that all K-12 in-class instruction would be suspended indefinitely. You can see Education Minister Rob Fleming's letter on our website ([www.burnabyschools.ca](http://www.burnabyschools.ca)), where he reassures all families about movement to the next grade, graduation, and what's being done to support transition to post-secondary.

Public education is one of the pillars of our society and during uncertain times it is perhaps even more important. Our schools are vital to our communities—in addition to providing education, they provide a critical public service. This is a responsibility we take very seriously.

Please know that we are in regular communication with the Ministries of Health and Education, and they will continue to advise and guide us. And while we are actively preparing for what continuity of learning may look like here in our schools, we do not have all the answers and details worked out at this point. It is critical for our school-based staff to be a key part of any plans moving forward, as they know our students, families, and school communities best. There is no doubt that our schools will look and feel different on March 30. Things will not be the same – and are unlikely to be perfect or without challenges. What I do know with certainty is that staff are working hard to create plans to provide a sense of normalcy, connection, routine, and continued learning for students.

As Spring Break draws to a close, you can expect to receive further information from us by the end of this week.

### **School Buildings, Grounds and Playgrounds**

We continue to be in close contact with our public health officials. During Spring Break, we have enacted cleaning protocols in all our schools and in other district sites to provide a safe environment and workplace.

In order to assist with physical distancing and limiting the spread of COVID-19, we have closed our buildings for public access and request that families and members of the general public call regarding any inquiries, including those for which they would have previously made an in-person appointment.

In addition, we made the difficult decision to close all our school playgrounds, school fields, and hard-court areas on our school sites. While this may be disappointing for some children and families, it is another prudent and necessary step, as we do our part in stopping the spread of this virus. We thank you in advance for respecting these closures.

The health, safety and well-being of our staff and entire community remains paramount—it is our sincere hope that these measures will help to keep our community safe.

## Supporting Families

During these new times with “social distancing” and “self-isolation” we are finding unique ways to reach out to each other, sharing laughter, support, and encouragement. However, we must not lose sight of the fact that we may also be feeling a high degree of uncertainty, worry, anxiety and/or stress about the health and safety of our loved ones.

I would like to remind you that we have collected a number of resources on the COVID-19 section of our website from us, the Fraser Health Authority and others. Information regarding managing anxiety and talking to children can be found directly here:

[www.burnabyschools.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Tips To Support You and Your Family.pdf](http://www.burnabyschools.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Tips To Support You and Your Family.pdf)

And to support you and your family with making informed choices about social distancing, we have created a simple information graphic to help. You can also find it on our website and directly here:

[www.burnabyschools.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Social-Distancing-for-Families\\_infographic\\_web.pdf](http://www.burnabyschools.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Social-Distancing-for-Families_infographic_web.pdf)

## A Message to Students

To our students, I wish I had an answer to the many questions you must have: When can I see my friends? How will I be able to talk to my teacher? Will I be able to get my things out of my locker? What about work experience? What about my graduation ceremony and celebration? When can I come back to school? We acknowledge that we are living in a time of seemingly more questions than answers. But what we do know is that your positive attitude and the things you do matters.

While people often say that you are the leaders of tomorrow, make no mistake, you are the leaders of today. Without a doubt, we all need you: we need your creative spirit; we need your thoughtfulness; we need your kindness and compassion. For, it is during times like this, that we appreciate – even more – your voices, resiliency, and wisdom for us all, as we collectively find a way forward.

## Supporting Each Other

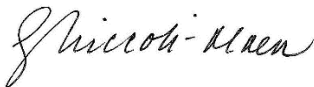
I have been overwhelmed and humbled by the outpouring of support and offers of help expressed by parents, community members and our own staff. It has been said that in times of crisis, we will see the very best of humanity. Nowhere is that more apparent than right here in Burnaby. These are extraordinary times that require extraordinary efforts. How we care for and support each other today, is defining our future. We will, indeed, manage these difficult times, together.

COVID-19 has brought substantial changes to how we live, learn, and work. What has not changed is our commitment to you. Your children remain our students, and we will continue to support them and you in the very best way we can.

We will communicate with you again later this week and, should we receive any information or updates in the meantime, we will reach out to you sooner and/or post them on our website: [www.burnabyschools.ca](http://www.burnabyschools.ca).

Thank you for your continued support and understanding. I wish you, your families, and the people you care about all the very best.

Sincerely,



Gina Niccoli-Moen, Superintendent

 <p><b>BOARD OF EDUCATION BURNABY SCHOOL DISTRICT 41</b></p> <p><b>IMPORTANT INFORMATION PLEASE HAVE THIS TRANSLATED</b></p> <p>RENSEIGNEMENTS IMPORTANTS Prière de les faire traduire.</p> <p><b>重要資料 請找人為你翻譯</b></p>	<p>これはたいせつなお知らせです。 どなたかに日本語に訳してもらってください。</p> <p><b>알려드립니다</b> 이것을 번역해 주십시오</p> <p><b>CHỈ DẪN QUAN TRỌNG</b> Xin nhờ người dịch hộ</p> <p><b>सबुधी साटवारी</b> विकल्प बनने बिने बहल रिम दार छिल्लमा वरवारण ।</p> <p><b>INFORMACIÓN IMPORTANTE</b> Busque alguien que le traduzca.</p>	<p><b>اطلاعات مهم و سودمند</b> لطفاً از یک نفر بخواهید که برای شما ترجمه کند</p> <p><b>ITO AY MAHALAGANG IMPORMASYON</b> Isalin sa wikang tagalog kung hindi maintindihan</p> <p><b>يرجى ترجمة هذا معلومات هامة</b></p> <p><b>ВАЖНАЯ ИНФОРМАЦИЯ</b> Переведите это, пожалуйста.</p>
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