

March 30, 2020

Dear Parents/Guardians and Staff:

Subject: *Message from the Chair of the Board of Education*

Life as we know it has changed drastically because of the COVID-19 global pandemic, particularly over Spring Break. Our new normal involves mandatory time at home, physical distancing and changes to our work and/or school life. And now we have “continuity of learning” while K-12 in-class instruction has been suspended in British Columbia.

What does this mean for the students and families in the North Vancouver School District? “Continuity of learning” simply means that instead of receiving instruction in a traditional classroom, students will be learning through alternate means. How this will look for individual students and classes is still being reviewed, and you will be contacted by your child’s teacher/school this week with more details.

Our District Staff have been working through Spring Break to plan for this shift in our educational delivery model. Facilities, Planning and Maintenance staff are making sure buildings are cleaned and measures are in place to keep our staff and students safe, in accordance with the recommendations set out by the Provincial Health Officer. Our Senior Leadership team is following Ministry of Education guidelines to prepare and coordinate for the upcoming month(s) while classroom learning has been suspended. District education continuity teams are supporting our schools by putting plans in place so that students will have opportunities to re-connect with their classroom teachers.

Spring Break is normally a time for school staff to have some much-needed rest, but I know for many, there was a high level of angst due to the uncertainty of what “continuity of learning” would mean for them and their students. I appreciate that this new arrangement is daunting, but I hope that by collaborating with colleagues and working with the educational systems already in place, the learning opportunities available to our students will be just as rewarding for the educator.

Many parents have also reached out with concerns about home learning and expectations for parents to educate their children. “Continuity of learning” will look different from district to district, from school to school and from home to home, as teachers and families navigate different learning styles and methods of delivery, but there will be a plan for each student. This is the time to come together to support our students and set realistic expectations for their learning while at home.

I want to acknowledge the stress that the coronavirus has created for our staff and our families. We all have challenges, and I hope that as a community we can help and support one another.

As a Board of Education, how we conduct business has changed as well. Our public board meetings will continue to be livestreamed and recorded, and, to respect provincial guidelines around physical distancing and group gatherings, Trustees will have the option to participate by teleconference. Partner groups and the public will not be able to attend in-person but will have the opportunity to provide input by email in advance of the meeting or through a phone link that will be set up for this purpose (information will be posted online with the board package).



Our Board is still mandated to pass our district's budget by June 2020. This process has already started, however our Finance and Facilities standing committee meeting, scheduled for April 7, has been cancelled and instead our partners groups (NVTAs, NOVA, CUPE, NVPAC, DSLC) have been asked to share their input on budget priorities in written form. Please watch for more information on our school district website ([www.sd44.ca](http://www.sd44.ca)) and in our board meeting package. Communication will continue to occur through the website as well as through SchoolMessenger emails and social media.

On behalf of the Board of Education, I want to thank our staff, our families and our students for their hard work, patience and positive energy. The COVID-19 pandemic has created unprecedented change for everyone in our community, but also to those in communities across the world. Life is different right now, and while it may not always feel this way, we will get through this and be stronger for it.

Sincerely,

North Vancouver Board of Education:

Christie Sacré, Chair  
George Tsiakos, Vice Chair  
Devon Bruce, Trustee  
Cyndi Gerlach, Trustee  
Megan Higgins, Trustee  
Kulvir Mann, Trustee  
Mary Tasi Baker, Trustee