

June 25, 2020

Dear Parents/Guardians and Staff:

*The following is a message from the Chair of the Board of Education*

When I wrote to you last, the Ministry of Education, under the direction of the Provincial Health Officer, had suspended in-class instruction for all grades and students. Our district and school staff were tasked with putting in place a framework to provide for educational continuity for our students during this period of remote/online instruction.

As parents, guardians and educators, you all played a vital role in providing for our children not only comfort and connection but also support for their ongoing learning. Supporting a child's learning is a shared responsibility during normal times, yet the home/school partnership was taken to a new level due to COVID-19. There was certainly a learning curve for all involved, but the education community rose to the occasion within the parameters given.

I think it is important to take some time now to honour the incredible work that has taken place over the last few months. I remain inspired by the many examples of the innovative and creative ways our teaching staff adopted technology to foster connection and create engaging learning experiences for students. A few examples include:

- Challenging students to think outside the box and empowering them to direct their own learning with topics that inspire them.
- Keeping students connected to their educators, support staff and/or classmates through weekly online meetings.
- Encouraging physical literacy by challenging students to complete Terry Fox's Marathon of Hope route.
- Nurturing the love of reading by safely delivering books to children's doorsteps.
- Inspiring students to find new ways to continue singing, making art, and composing music while at home.



Beyond instruction, the North Vancouver School District came together to deliver on a promise to provide for our community the continuity of care. From hearts painted on the windows of the Education Services Building to those that adorned people's homes as part of the #NVSDFamily Cares project, you have all played a part in showing our wider community just how much we care.

Our work around the continuity of care did not stop with those bold and colourful displays of art. We provided full-time childcare to the children of essential service workers and full-time support to vulnerable students and those with diverse abilities. We re-organized our Food Access program to provide food security support to our children and their families through the allocation of Save-on-Foods gift cards, preparation and delivery of meals, and continuation of our Backpack Buddies program. Working with Evergreen Computers, the District was able to meet the technology needs of its students and their families through the distribution of refurbished computers.

Our strong ties with the local community also made it possible for the District to ensure a very special group of our students—the Class of 2020—was able to celebrate the culmination of their 13-year public education journey. I enjoyed being a part of this unique graduation celebration and would like to sincerely wish all of our grads—a group that has demonstrated grace, resilience and courage—the very best in their educational and/or career pursuits.

While there is much to celebrate, I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge the events and pivotal moments in our history that are unfolding across the globe and here at home. Members of our community—and in particular, Black, Indigenous, and Asian—are hurting. The North Vancouver School District is committed to promoting respect and understanding of the diverse lived experiences of our school community. We are thoughtful that we are stronger together and richer when we embrace the diversity that exists here at home and around the globe.

Before I conclude, I would like to acknowledge that amid what can only be described as a challenging year, much was achieved by working together, and all in a very short period of time. I sincerely wish I could give you concrete plans for September. The June restart provided a greater sense of normalcy for our students, and it was wonderful to hear excited chatter in the hallways and laughter on the playground. It also provided the Ministry of Education and our District a lot of information that will be used in planning for the fall. The Ministry will be providing detailed updates as to what September will look like, and the District will share that information with families. You can be assured that no matter the [stage](#) we find ourselves in, plans will be in place for a safe return to school.



Until then, on behalf of the Board, I hope you enjoy your summer. We look forward to connecting with you again in the fall.

Sincerely,

Christie Sacré, Chair

On behalf of the North Vancouver Board of Education:

George Tsiakos, Vice Chair

Devon Bruce, Trustee

Cyndi Gerlach, Trustee

Megan Higgins, Trustee

Kulvir Mann, Trustee

Mary Tasi Baker, Trustee