

January 7, 2021

Dear Students, Parents, Guardians and Staff,

On behalf of the North Vancouver School District and Board of Education, we would like to extend a warm welcome back from Winter Break. We hope you found time to relax, recharge, and connect with loved ones, and in ways that kept your family, your friends and your community safe. The New Year brings with it a renewed sense of optimism, and we hope that you share in our enthusiasm for what lies ahead for our community.

We acknowledge that 2020 was a year like none other. We began the current school year under strict new health and safety measures, with schools implementing new operating procedures and the use of learning cohorts, and with families having the opportunity to select a learning option that best met each family's unique circumstances and needs.

We are so pleased that through our collective efforts, our trust in each other, and our will to restore a sense of normalcy for our students, families and staff, the vast majority of our students are back in school, engaging one another and learning together. For students who are learning and connecting with their school and classmates online, know that you are integral to your school community and that we very much look forward to welcoming you back to the classroom soon.

This new school year saw a renewed effort by our staff to continue to provide meaningful learning experiences and build a strong sense of community for students. Traditions and events of significance were recognized, honoured and celebrated, albeit with some needed and yet creative modifications. [Terry Fox Day](#), [Orange Shirt Day](#), [Remembrance Day](#) and holiday concerts were held in ways that involved the entire school community and put on display the amazing depth and breadth of talent present among students and staff. We hope that you were able to experience some of these important moments too through a virtual recording.

We also focused on using technology in creative and innovative ways to ensure we remained responsive to the needs of our families and our community. Technology played an important role in providing timely, relevant information – from a [video tour](#) of what the inside of schools would look like in the fall, to our first [virtual live town hall event](#), where Dr. Mark Lysyshyn, Deputy Chief Medical Health Officer, Vancouver Coastal Health, answered school-related COVID questions. Technology has also played an important role in the delivery of [Artists for Kids' virtual art school classes](#), our first virtual [Kindergarten Orientation presentation](#) and our [Board of Education Public and Standing Committee](#)

[meetings](#). These are but a few of the many ways we use technology to ensure we all remain safe but still connected with our community as we continue to navigate the COVID-19 pandemic.

The New Year brings with it our ongoing commitment to creating safe, welcoming, inclusive, accessible, healthy and sustainable learning environments. This is exemplified through our large capital projects, such as the new [Argyle Secondary School](#), which opened its doors to its school community this week; the [Mountainside Secondary seismic upgrade project](#); and the [Handsworth Secondary replacement project](#).

Our commitment to creating welcoming, inclusive, safe and healthy learning environments is one we maintain for all schools and facilities. Our dedicated teaching staff continue to collaborate, share best practices and find new ways to embed Social and Emotional Learning, First Peoples Principles of Learning, Career Education, Inclusive Education and Outdoor Learning principles into the new curriculum. Our district staff—from Facilities and Maintenance to Information and Communication Technology to Human Resources—ensure that supports are in place to help all students feel like valued and contributing members of their community while reaching their educational, personal and professional goals.

This year will also see the North Vancouver School District embark on a new Strategic Plan. We look forward to sharing more details about the progress we have made in this area with all of you soon. We will also be inviting you to share your feedback on our draft plan, and hope that you do take the time to participate.

In closing, we are excited to start 2021 with our staff and students learning together. We also look forward to sharing more stories of the North Vancouver School District – your district community – as we continue to learn, share and grow together.

Sincerely,

A blue ink signature of George Tsiakos.

George Tsiakos
Chair, North Vancouver Board of Education

A black ink signature of Mark Pearmain.

Mark Pearmain
Superintendent, North Vancouver School District