

August 29, 2014

Dear Parents and Guardians:

Subject: Preparing for September

This letter is a follow-up to my message of August 25th to update you on the current labour dispute and provide information about the potential for schools to open, or not, on Tuesday, September 2nd.

The possibility of mediation

Representatives of the British Columbia Public School Employers' Association (BCPSEA) and the British Columbia Teachers' Federation (BCTF) met yesterday, and are meeting again today, with mediator Vince Ready. The intention of these talks is to assess the readiness of both parties for mediation. Depending on developments over the weekend, there is a possibility that school may open on Tuesday for our standard shortened opening day.

When will parents know if schools will open?

Please visit www.sd44.ca on Monday evening for an announcement to confirm whether or not school will be open on Tuesday, September 2nd.

We realize and respect that teachers have not been at work for a long time and that schools are not fully prepared for our regular opening procedures. However, as soon as this year's opening date is confirmed, we will welcome staff and students back, go through our first day, and begin the work of the year ahead. Teachers and support staff are experienced and skilled in addressing the demands of this time of year, and principals and vice-principals have well-developed routines in place. Attached please find Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) for further information on this year's start-up procedures.

Keeping informed

I will write again next week and school principals are also in the process of sending important information and direction for the start of the school year. Whether or not our start date is delayed, please take the time to read these messages in order to assist us with our opening procedures and the smoothest start possible for students under the circumstances.

We appreciate your continued patience and understanding.

Sincerely,



John Lewis
Superintendent of Schools



FAQs

September 2014 start-up

Q: *Is it still possible that schools will open on September 2nd?*

A: Yes. If an agreement is reached for a negotiated settlement, or a lifting of strike/lockout action while mediation is underway, then we will be ready to open schools on September 2nd.

Q: *How will I know if school will open on September 2nd?*

A: We encourage you to follow the media for any updates that may occur in the discussions scheduled for the weekend. We will also post any information to our website, www.sd44.ca, as soon as it has been confirmed. Other information sources available to consult are:

- BC Ministry of Education Newsroom <http://www.newsroom.gov.bc.ca/ministries/education>
- BC Public School Employers' Association (BCPSEA) <http://bcpsea.bc.ca>
- BC Teachers' Federation (BCTF) <http://bctf.ca>
- North Vancouver Teachers' Association (NVTa) <http://nvta.ca>

Q: *Who should I contact to voice my concerns regarding the current labour dispute?*

A: You may wish to express your concerns to:

- Honourable Peter Fassbender, Minister of Education Minister.Educ@gov.bc.ca
- Jim Iker, President, BC Teachers' Federation presidentsoffice@bctf.ca
- Mr. Michael Marchbank, Public Administrator, BC Public School Employer's Association contact.us@bcpsea.bc.ca
- The Honourable Christy Clark, Premier of British Columbia premier@gov.bc.ca
- Ralph Sultan, MLA West Vancouver—Capilano ralph.sultan.mla@leg.bc.ca
- Jane Thornthwaite, MLA North Vancouver—Seymour jane.thornthwaite.mla@leg.bc.ca
- Honourable Naomi Yamamoto, Minister of State for Small Business, MLA North Vancouver—Lonsdale naomi.yamamoto.mla@leg.bc.ca

Q: *If school does not open on September 2nd, can I take my child to school anyway?*

A: We cannot provide instruction or appropriate supervision without our full staff complement, and therefore ask that parents do not take or send children to school until our staff teams are once again in place and school is fully operational. Please make alternate arrangements, as necessary.

Q: *How can I get more information on registering my child for school?*

A: Student registration information is available at:

<http://www.sd44.ca/Schools/StudentRegistration/Pages/default.aspx>

Q: *If the labour dispute continues, can I still register my child for school?*

A: Yes. Please ensure you have consulted our registration information for directions and guidance on what documents are required to register your child/children for school.

