

July 29, 2020

Dear Parents/Guardians,

Under normal circumstances, my first communication to you as your new school superintendent would not be an update on school reopening plans but we are in unprecedented times and I wanted to ensure that you receive the most up to date information.

On July 29, 2020 Minister Rob Fleming and Dr. Bonnie Henry announced that B.C. schools will reopen in September under Stage 2, which means near normal daily operations with additional control measures in place. Just suggesting this as it aligns with the language we had previously employed with staff and parents. [Deputy Minister's Bulletin, K-12 Education Restart Plan for 2020-21 School Year.](#)

We welcome this announcement as it helps parents and staff plan and prepare for the 2020-2021 school year. Teachers and staff are eager to get back to the classroom and resume learning with their students.

The Ministry of Education released new [COVID-10 Public Health Guidance for K-12 School Settings.](#)

Stage 2 of BC Reentry Plan introduces a few new elements and adjusted language to keep current with what we know about school health and safety. **Cohorts/Learning Groups** of students at school levels, **Elementary, Middle and Secondary** will be used to group students who will interact with each other during the day in classes and unstructured times. Cohorts of students place students in smaller groups that stay together throughout the day/term/year. These groups are intended to better control the number of students that your child comes in contact with while at school. Cohorts of students replace the density requirements we had in place during stage 3 in June. At the elementary and middle school levels, one cohort will comprise a maximum of 60 students and staff. These cohort limits, in most cases, will allow for two classes to have contact with each other for the purposes of learning and other activities throughout the school term. Based on a class size of 30 students this would mean that up to two classes could have contact with each other during the day for things like lunch breaks and recess breaks. At the secondary level the cohort number increases to 120 students because these students are older and can better practice social distancing and hygiene throughout the day.

There is a great deal of information to digest and we will be working over the next few weeks to develop school plans based on the guidelines and recommendations from the ministry. Plans will be made public on August 26th, 2020.

The goal is to resume **In-Class Instruction** full time for all students for the maximum instructional time possible within cohort limits.

We will work with the School Medical Health Officer to develop our reopening plans to ensure that our schools are as safe as they possibly can be and will prepare rapid response plans to quickly and effectively respond to any identified cases, should they occur.

The health and safety of our students, teachers and staff is our top priority. We are preparing processes and protocols to ensure that our learning environments are safe for our students and staff. We will continue to work with the Ministry of Education to update our plans as we get closer to September 8. In late August, your child's school will share detailed re-entry plans with you so that you can prepare your child(ren) for back to school.

Rocky Mountain SD6 Administration, Facilities and Operation Department and custodial staff have been working hard to prepare our schools and plan for your child(ren)'s safe return to school.

Information is constantly changing and we will strive to keep you up to date. Please visit the [Rocky Mountain School District COVID-19 Communication website](#) regularly as we will provide additional updates in the coming weeks. If you have any questions or comments please call the district office.

Respectfully;

Karen Shipka, Superintendent of Schools
SD6 Rocky Mountain