



August 30, 2019

Back to School 2019

Dear parents and guardians of B.C. students:

Welcome to the new school year – I hope you enjoyed a safe and restful summer. Whether your child is entering Kindergarten or nearing graduation, it's a great time to be a student in B.C.'s education system.

New this year, all students in the province will be learning from B.C.'s new curriculum and working towards completing the new Graduation Program and assessments, with the K-12 curriculum redesign process now complete. Students now have more opportunities to explore their passions and engage in inquiries and hands-on activities as they develop their foundational skills and knowledge. In the graduation years, students will have a range of new course options in areas such as environmental science, web development, digital media, engineering and robotics, giving them the chance to develop the skills they need to pursue their individual goals.

We are committed to true and lasting reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples, and education is a key part of that. Indigenous students deserve culturally relevant services and programs, and all students have something to gain from an education that includes Indigenous cultures and perspectives. First Nations partners have helped us ensure the new curriculum accurately and fairly reflects the rich history of Indigenous Peoples in B.C., across all grades and subjects.

Parents know better than anyone that kids today are facing challenges we never imagined when it comes to social media, mental health and other challenges. All students deserve the best educational experience possible in healthy, positive and safe schools. We've expanded the ERASE (Expect Respect and a Safe Education) strategy to focus on mental health and wellness, substance use, social media safety, gang prevention and supporting students of all sexual orientations and gender identities.

All students in B.C. will have access to free menstrual products in school washrooms this year – ensuring stigma free access so that students don't miss school, extracurricular, sports or social activities because they can't afford menstrual products.

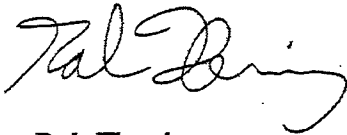
Students are returning to an education system that has more resources than ever before. Our government is investing \$1 billion more in education than just three years ago. They will attend some of the smallest classes in a generation, with more educators and others supports in the classroom. And we've invested over \$1.5 billion in new schools, expansions and seismic upgrades to ensure our kids are learning in safe, modern and comfortable schools.

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Students in B.C. public schools are achieving world-class student outcomes, consistently ranking among the top in international assessments, and outcomes for Indigenous students and students with special needs are continuing to improve. Earlier this year, delegates from 40 countries visited B.C. to find out more about what we're doing right. These great results come from the hard work being done by students, teachers and our entire education system. We know there is always room to improve, and we are working hard every day to better support student success.

I wish every B.C. student and their family the best for the year ahead. The success of students is at the centre of all we do, and I look forward to another year of working hard to make improvements in our education system to support all students as they strive to reach their goals.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rob Fleming". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Rob" being more prominent than the last name "Fleming".

Rob Fleming
Minister of Education