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Update from District 92 Nisga'a on Planning response to the Covid-19 Pandemic

Over the last few days District staff have been involved in multiple conferences with the Provincial Government and Nisga'a Lisims Government as we try to prepare a plan to provide some level of continuous educational service to students. The landscape changes daily, and as such many questions remain unanswered which I know creates frustration. We are hopeful that by early next week many of those questions will have some clarity.

We appreciate your understanding and can assure you that plans are developing. In the interim it is imperative we all stay safe and follow the guidance of our Public Health officials. I encourage everyone to take the self-assessment provided by the Ministry at <https://covid19.thrive.health/>

For parents and guardians, a new government website has been launched with up-to-date non-clinical information on COVID-19. British Columbians can also use the New provincial phone service by calling 1-888-COVID19, available seven days a week from 7:30AM to 8PM, with information in over 110 languages.

Specific public health questions re COVID-19 should be directed to your local health authority for response.

Continuity of Educational Opportunities

While classroom instruction is suspended, it is expected that schools/school districts are planning to implement a variety of measures to ensure continued learning for students. I assure you this is happening. We await more information to support school district planning around the continuity of learning, as well as other local planning efforts, and have been assured it will be forthcoming over the coming days.

Front and centre we are aware of the worry of our Graduating students and want to assure you that we will do everything we can to insure you have the opportunity to complete your requirements and graduate to your next adventure.

Staff return to work March 30th

This burning question still requires clarification and it is my hope that after our Monday March 23rd conference call with Government and BCPSEA some answers will be made available.

On March 19th a joint statement from BCPSEA, BCTF and CUPE contained the following:

“We are sending this joint communication to our respective members to let you know that representatives of the employer, unions, and the provincial government are working together to the best extent possible on employment-related issues and concerns arising from the quickly evolving COVID-19 pandemic.

We know there are many questions being fielded right now regarding matters such as EI eligibility, continuity of work and, in some cases, employment status.

We want to assure you that we are liaising with the Ministry of Education and the Public Sector Employers' Council Secretariat (Ministry of Finance) to address your questions and get answers to you as quickly as possible. In particular, we appreciate the concerns regarding continuity of pay and benefits, and we are working to communicate a response on this issue that is fair and consistent with the approach in the broader public sector.”

Solutions to our challenge

I am very appreciative of the several staff who have been providing ideas as to the ways and means we can continue to provide instructional opportunities to students. I encourage everyone to be thinking of these creative solutions so that when we return in some form to providing service we can do the best we can, given the challenging circumstances we are all Facing

Once again, I thank all members of the staff, parents, students, and community for their patience. Clarity will come and we will communicate as it does.

Respectfully

Joe Rhodes
Superintendent