



Dear Agent Partners,

Thank you for all your well wishes in a time that seems to be both chaotic and yet, surreal. We have been on a daily and at times, hourly shift following our COVID-19 situation in BC and Canada.

I will try my best to formulate this letter to discuss the news we received yesterday. It is very early in the game so have patience with my understandings as I write to you.

***School in BC has been suspended as a "face to face model" at this time.*** This is the general theme of yesterday's message from our Premier and BC Ministry of Education.

Once out of Spring Break, our teachers will be meeting virtually to discuss how to deliver their assignments, projects and assessments over a virtual framework.

This does not mean that kids will be running off to sign up for DL courses. The Union and our Ministry has teachers reporting to work, from their home space, and in teams developing a plan for the following weeks. The goal is to maintain social distancing, and to limit congregations of people to less than 10. Our school sites will not be open next week, but planning will be going on behind the scenes.

This directive is all very new, but as of my 6 pm meeting last night with senior administration our site principals were given a task of developing this new educational model. We still have the rest of this week in our Spring Break holiday- so the message was, "think about how this could look and what we can achieve."

We may still re- open if this rolls away within the time left in the school calendar? In 8 weeks China was starting to resume life, albeit slow and considering their dense population.

There are 5 districts in BC one week ahead of all the rest in the Spring break timeline. The first 5 districts are at a bit of a loss and in our district 40% of all staff flew away to warmer areas, so they are coming back to 14 day self- isolation.

In the big districts, they were still in school for the border closing and so warned not to fly abroad. If they did, then they must use sick time and or will be penalized financially. But they will not be back into schools for another 1.5 weeks and so we are ahead of them on this task and timeline.

We haven't had kids leave at this point. Most parents are concerned about what they are flying back too and with it being Canada, they don't seem as worried? Our numbers of infected patients on the island are minimal (7) and we have been proactive with the closing of restaurants, movie theatres, community centres, and events over 10 people. People are being very deliberate about limiting their social contact and yet, continuing to be active in personal outdoor activities ( running, hiking, etc).

Our ISP team has been deemed Essential Services, so students and host families will know that our offices will continue to be open, our Emergency phone team operating, and communication is wide open.

The question burning right now is whether students should travel home. We cannot make this decision for families but will be encouraging them to discuss this with

I hope that this letter has helped to fill in some of the gaps in the information chain. I will update you once a full educational plan is in place.

We are trying to channel all our communication to make it easier and more efficient for our team. Please advance any questions to the [lgamble@sd79.bc.ca](mailto:lgamble@sd79.bc.ca) email and we will get back to you immediately.

To our partners, we hope everyone is safe and healthy. We are eternally grateful for your continued support and well wishes and please let us know if you need our help.

As Always,

Liz

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