

Message to Families: COVID-19 Update

June 18, 2020

Dear Families,

It has been a month of waiting to see what the plans might be for the close of this year and the re-opening for the 2020-2021 school year. There has been government-led communication to parents and the public about the end of this school year and some changing limits on what would be permitted for graduation celebrations. There has also been a number of other uncertainties that you and your children have endured. Thank you for your resilience and your dedicated support to the relationship between your family and your school. It has been a challenging time and the mutual support has been one of the things that has helped us to sustain our efforts and to achieve some amazing things together, despite the challenges.

On June 18, 2020, the Government of Saskatchewan announced the guidelines for the return to school in the fall. Under the direction of Saskatchewan's Chief Medical Health Officer, and with the help of the Education Response Planning Team (RPT), the Ministry of Education created the *Primary and Secondary Educational Institution Guidelines* for the return to classroom learning. It is available online at www.saskatchewan.ca/coronavirus This framework will provide the direction for us to create our local plans for returning to school in a way that protects the health of students, staff and families while also providing excellence in education.

We will be creating the SRPSD plan in the coming weeks. Some of the essential elements of the plan will be known by June 30, 2020 but decisions about other details will be made in August 2020, closer to the start of the school year when more information about the context and circumstances is clear. It would be comforting to provide all the details now, but unfortunately there are still some details that remain unknown. You can be sure that our division plan will adhere to the guidelines provided by Health and Education. While it seems that school will return in ways close to what we are familiar with, there will be additional procedures expected. Schools will

- increase sanitation measures;
- promote enhanced hygiene practices;
- establish clear protocols for bringing items like backpacks in and out of schools; and
- plan for minimized contact among students, as much as possible.

We anticipate that you will have many questions and there are many details to be determined. As this situation evolves, the guidelines may be updated and adjusted depending on the impact of COVID-19 over the course of the summer. We deeply appreciate the trust you have placed in Sask Rivers to develop effective plans and I hope that you and your family can take a break from thinking about school after next week and look for information from schools next August.

It has been a privilege to share information directly with you over the last few months and your replies with questions, comments and encouragement certainly have been appreciated. We will continue to

share some Division-level information, and hope that you will maintain that close connection to your children's teacher and your family's school. If you have any questions in the next weeks, please connect with your child's teacher, your school principal or with us at the Education Centre (306-764-1571).

More information from the Ministry may be coming in the coming days but, in the meantime, please remain vigilant in your efforts to prevent the rapid spread of COVID-19, especially as the summer welcomes us and the Re-Open Saskatchewan Plan is moves into the next phases. Take care of each other.

Yours in Education,

Barry Hollick, Board Chair and Robert Bratvold, Director of Education