

## **CONNECT 33 MESSAGE:**

### **Superintendent's Welcome to the 2022/2023 School Year!**

Welcome Back! I hope the amazing summer weather provided you with lots of opportunities to spend time with family and friends and that you are rejuvenated and looking forward to the new school year.

#### **New School and Project Update:**

Congratulations, and thank you to the Facilities Department team for their outstanding work in supporting the completion of our newest K-8, 930-seat school - Stitó:s Lá:lém Totí:lt Elementary/Middle School. It is with great pride that we welcome students, staff, and families to our newest school when our doors open on September 6. The facilities team has also successfully supported completing the Vedder Elementary 10-classroom addition project. The GW Graham Secondary 450-seat addition project is due to be finished this fall. We also want to take this opportunity to thank the Ministry of Education and Child Care for their continued investments in new schools in Chilliwack, given that we are one of the fastest-growing school districts in the province.

#### **Communicable Disease Prevention Plans:**

As we return and settle into the routines of a new school year, it is reasonable to expect that COVID-19 won't completely disappear. Instead, it will likely continue to emerge in waves or develop into a seasonal disease, circulating similar to cold and flu season, and be managed as other respiratory infections in the community.

As per the updated [Provincial Communicable Disease Guidelines for K-12 School Settings](#), schools will continue to be supportive environments for communicable disease prevention by promoting health awareness and illness practices listed below. We will continue to be vigilant as a school community by engaging in the following practices:

1. Cleaning and disinfecting of frequently touched surfaces once in 24 hours and when visibly dirty.
2. Continuing to ensure all mechanical heating, ventilation and air-conditioning systems are operated and maintained – please see up-to-date information regarding school ventilation systems [here](#).
3. Engaging in hand hygiene and good respiratory etiquette – rigorous handwashing reduces the spread of illness.
4. Staying home when sick - staff and students are aware that they should not come to school if they are sick and unable to participate fully in routine activities.
5. Ensuring individual choices for personal practices (e.g., choosing to wear a mask or face covering) are supported and treated with respect, recognizing varying personal comfort levels.

The above practices are not new and are a continuation of practices from the latter part of last year. Engaging in the above practices as a school community will reduce the risk of communicable diseases in our schools. Also, as per guidance from BCCDC, vaccines continue to be an important tool to protect against many serious communicable

diseases and reduce the impact of COVID-19 on our communities. Evidenced-based immunization information and tools for B.C. residents are available from [BCCDC](#) and [ImmunizeBC](#) websites.

### **Strategic Plan Update:**

This year will be the 2<sup>nd</sup> year of implementation of our [Strategic Plan](#). District staff and school leaders, along with the Board of Education, have worked hard to align documentation and processes to ensure we build coherence in the system. Part of the new process includes schools engaging in a 90-day growth plan cycle. 90-day cycles are more predictable than annual plans. It is much easier to accurately forecast what actions schools need to take over the next 12 weeks than the actions schools need to take over the next 12 months. Also, a 90-day plan helps schools narrow their focus and tackle current challenges for the greatest impact on student achievement and a success plan for all students.

### **Staffing Update:**

Gerry Slykhuis, Secretary Treasurer, will be retiring effective December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2022. We will miss Gerry for his humour and leadership. We have initiated a search process with the posting going out the week of September 6, with the competition completed by Friday, October 14<sup>th</sup>. We will have a new Secretary Treasurer in time for the inaugural Board meeting after the elections on November 8, 2022.

Also, Nadine Clattenburg and Rachael Green will co-lead the Human Resources Department and engage in a visioning and review process effective September 2022. Gerry Slykhuis will supervise and support the HR Department until December.

### **Welcome, New Staff Members:**

Welcome to all new staff members joining us for the new school year. Chilliwack is a great place to work and learn, where trust and vulnerability are fundamental in all we do, and we are glad that you have chosen to join the Chilliwack family. Together we will continue to make Chilliwack School District a top-notch place to work, learn, and thrive.

### **Art of Fulfillment:**

Finally, here is a great piece of advice from a former CEO of a company, which resonates with what I believe is important for a great work-life balance. Imagine life is a game of 5 balls you juggle in the air, trying not to drop any of those balls. One is made up of rubber, and the rest of glass. Work, Family, Health, Friends, and Soul are the five balls.

It will not be long before you realize the rubber ball represents work. Whenever you drop the “work” rubber ball, it will bounce back again, and you will continue to work hard to make a difference for students and families in our system. The rest of the balls are

made up of glass. If one of them falls, it will not return to its previous form, it will be cracked.

As part of our journey in achieving the art of fulfillment, we need to strive to manage our work environment and maximize our resourcefulness and effectiveness during work hours, give the necessary time to family and friends, and take the appropriate time to rest daily to rejuvenate, look after our health, be mindful and live in the moment. I hope this will be a year where you thrive in all these areas of your life.

Thank you for your ongoing dedication and commitment to each other and the students in our school district. Have a great start to the school year, and let's continue to work together to make Chilliwack a great district!

Take Care,

Rohan Arul-pragasam