



School Board Office, District No 40
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August 18, 2020

Dear parents, students and staff,

Thank you. Thank you for the patience you're showing as we work to collect all the guidance and answers we need from our various partners ... information that's helping us build the best possible plan for New Westminister Schools.

As recently as yesterday the operational guidelines for school districts were sent out – including direction on mandatory mask use in shared or busy spaces for all staff and students at middle and secondary schools – and now these and other pieces are now being layered into our local plan. (To read the Ministry's full operational guidelines: <https://www.openschool.bc.ca/covidguidelines/>)

We know you still have many questions. We know the uncertainty, particularly around this next stage, can be challenging. And we appreciate the thoughts, concerns and support you've shared with us throughout this process.

More will come very soon. But today I want to give you a general picture of what you can expect to come, when.

First, and always, the safety and well-being of students, staff and our community remain our top priority. Nothing has changed there. So while we execute on the direction we're been given by the Ministry of Education (<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/k-12/covid-19-return-to-school>), we do so continuing to work under the guidance of the Provincial Health Officer, WorksafeBC, Fraser Health and the BC Centre for Disease Control.

The plan we're building in New Westminister is based in recommendations from all these organizations, it is informed by what we've learned and the feedback we've collected along the way, and it seeks to channel innovation as we explore all our options, while considering the best way to support the diverse needs of our many school communities.

Right now we are drafting a plan that provides as much flexibility as possible – using the small size of our District to capitalize on opportunities, while acknowledging where it also presents limits.

By August 26th you'll get a detailed message that will include painting a picture of how our schools will look different in September, detailing how we've addressed the needs of our diverse learners, and providing health and safety requirements we're working under.

While we work hard to build the plan for our District's schools, we know that each family faces its own set of individual challenges in this crisis – from acute and existing health concerns to the varying levels of caution being taken. Next week's communication will also outline the alternatives we're working hard to provide for families ... including defining relevant information people will need to consider when deciding what will be best for their kids and individual household needs.

So, as we look at the path ahead, here are the key dates to keep track of:

- Friday August 21 – by no later than this date, we will have submitted our plan to the Ministry of Education for review and approval
- Monday August 24 – Parent Townhall (see notes below)
- Wednesday August 26 – by no later than this date we'll be sharing the approved details of our New Westminster plan
- September 8 & 9 – Orientation days and set-up time for staff (no students or parents in schools)
- September 10 & 11 – Orientation days (shortened days) for students
- September 14 – Start of regular schedules for all schools (schools will communicate gradual entry needs for Kindergarten students)

Again, we know you have questions. And we want to give you the most up-to-date answers, so we're setting up a series of townhall-type opportunities. The first will be for parents ... where I'll provide an overview of what the plan will be, and then answer your questions as best I can.

What: Townhall Talk with Superintendent Karim Hachlaf

When: Monday August 24, 7-8pm

Join online: (best option as we will have a few graphics)

<https://zoom.us/j/98263401630?pwd=QUovbUFwY3JlUkorbG1MOHh4dGdFZzo9>

Join by Phone: (+1) 778 907 2071

Meeting ID: 982 6340 1630

Passcode: 681321

Questions: Please submit your questions in advance to communications@sd40.bc.ca

A student Townhall event is currently being organized for August 27th, and the staff Townhall will take place closer to the beginning of the working year.

As we also head into this new school year, this is a great opportunity to make sure you're connected to all the right channels.

- Important updates like this will continue to come via the email addresses you've provided your local school (updates to those addresses need to happen through the school's office)
- News, guidelines, resources and the most in-depth content will be posted to our District's website: <https://newwestschools.ca/>
- Follow our Facebook channel for updates and to learn more about interesting things happening across our school communities: <https://www.facebook.com/newwestschools/>
- And our Twitter feed will give you the most current news and links to community resources: <https://twitter.com/newwestschools>

With much more to come, I want to thank you again.

With great appreciation,



Karim Hachlaf
Superintendent of Schools / CEO

