

Dear Parents/Guardians,

We wanted to update you once again on the current labour dispute and provide information about the potential for schools to open on Tuesday, September 2<sup>nd</sup>. On August 26<sup>th</sup> I wrote to parents saying that if there is any new information we would share it as soon as possible. We are at the point where we want to tell you what our plans are for opening day should a deal be reached this weekend.

### **The possibility of mediation**

We are very happy that mediator Vince Ready is involved and is monitoring the situation. We believe that he has the skills and abilities to find a resolution and we fully support mediation as a means to find a deal. Our understanding is that the decision to mediate is now in the hands of Mr. Ready and are pleased to hear that representatives of BCPSEA and the BCTF are meeting with Mr. Ready. Like you, we await for any signs of progress and we hope for a deal to provide certainty for our schools and children. We know that the outcome of yesterday's meetings is that bargaining teams have been asked to meet and to bring forward their respective proposals.

### **When will parents know if schools will open?**

We believe that parents want their children in schools as soon as possible just as we believe our teachers and support staff wish to go back to work. As stated in my letter of August 26<sup>th</sup>, if there is a deal even at the last minute, we will do everything possible to open schools right away. We have been informed by BCPSEA that if there is a deal, likely the process and timing for schools opening will be part of those final conversations with the BCTF. We are asking that parents watch the media and our website. Even if we heard about a deal as late as Monday evening, we could open on Tuesday with our normal shortened opening day routines.

We realize and respect that teachers have not been at work for a long time and that schools are in anything but normal shape. Timetables are not perfect, class organizations will need adjustments and teachers need to know what their assignments and classes look like. However we will welcome our staff and children back, do preliminary routines in a shortened day as we normally do on opening day and prepare ourselves for the weeks ahead. Teachers and support staff are highly experienced and skilled and principals and vice-principals have routines ready to the best of our ability. We believe we will be able to open doors and begin our opening routines on short notice even if things will be unsettled to start.

Once again I want to say that we expect a formal structure for opening would be part of any final conversations between the BCTF and BCPSEA but in light of limited information at this time, we wanted to communicate our plans out to parents and the community.

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### **A final word**

As stated in Tuesday's letter and again today, I believe we are all heading into the weekend hoping for a deal to emerge. The purpose of this letter is to give you the best information we have at this moment so that you can adequately prepare. We are encouraged by the fact the parties are meeting with Mr. Ready and what a great Labour Day gift it would be to start schools with the news of a deal. Only time will tell and as any other parent in BC public schools, I will be watching the news and media this weekend with interest and cautious optimism that a deal can still be reached.

Sincerely,



Jordan Tinney  
Superintendent of Schools/CEO

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