

October 14, 2015

Dear Parents and Guardians,

As you may know, a new curriculum has been developed in BC. This work has been years in the making with many teachers involved in its development, and implementation is a huge task. For the past two years the curriculum has been available for teachers to use in their practice, but starting September 2016, it will be the only available curriculum in grades K-9.

On Monday, September 28th the Ministry of Education and the British Columbia Teachers Federation (BCFT), supported by provincial partners in education, announced a plan to support the implementation of the new curriculum. As part of this plan, districts have been asked to add 10 hours of non-instructional time (or two days) in this school year. The time will be provided for teachers to familiarize themselves with the new curriculum and to plan for its implementation in the coming year. As an additional part of the plan, the Ministry is also allocating \$1M to provide release time for 2000 teachers across the Province to further support implementation of the curriculum.

We needed to determine how to choose the dates for these two non-instructional days. We have looked at November 12th as a likely day that could be chosen. November 11th is Remembrance Day, and November 13th is already a non-instructional day. The placement of a single day of instruction between a statutory holiday and a long weekend certainly is not optimal for parents and students. We have met with our local teachers' association to agree on the use of those days, and we are recommending November 12th be one of the two days. We have met with the Board of Education, and at the upcoming October 22nd Board meeting a motion will be presented to approve an adjusted local calendar declaring November 12th as a non-instructional day.

We apologize for the short notice to parents and our community, but in our preliminary collaboration with small groups, the consensus has been that November 12th is a logical choice. Many people have commented that parents need to know right away given that they will need to make alternate arrangements for that day. We still need to decide how to select the other day which likely will come in the spring, but that date is yet to be determined.

A final note is that this support plan will look different from district to district. Each district must create a plan with their local teachers' association, and the provincial plan allows districts to establish the dates or manner of non-instructional time. What we have presented is a Surrey solution, and we simply wanted you to have as much advance notice as possible so that you can make plans for your family.

Thank you for your understanding and we hope this letter helps shed light on our processes and the context. We are pleased that teachers have been given time to spend on the new curriculum. These days are but a small part of a much larger plan for implementation as it unfolds across BC.

Regards,



Jordan Tinney
Superintendent of Schools/CEO

LEADERSHIP IN LEARNING

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