

Ey Swayel. Good morning.

It's October 30th and I wanted to bring you a message just before the Halloween weekend to talk about our current context and some new issues we have going on. First and foremost as you likely know cases in our community are on the rise and the Fraser Health Authority has more COVID cases than all other regions. It's nothing new but of course the rise in cases are of concern to us all. We know that these cases are in our community, and our schools are a reflection of our community. So we will continue to see cases in our schools and we are committed to transparency and you will always know when this happened. One of the most important messages today is, as we have passed 100 notices of exposures in schools, we believe we have seen transmission in a very small handful of schools. When we opened the school year health told us the transmission would be small between children and between children and adults and right now we have seen just a small handful, likely fewer than five schools of over 100, where we've had transmission. And that's what the past two months has shown us from our evidence. We have protocols in place and those protocols are working, but we can always do better. Over the past couple of weeks I want to say I'm super happy to have partnered with health to do a deep dive into one of our large secondary schools. We've been working with them for a couple weeks on bringing a team, a combination of health authority and district staff and our union partners, to collaborate in school, spending hours in the school, in a day where you can take a look in terms of visiting classes, touring the schools, watching breaks, watching transitions, watching classes unfold, and really see what it's like on the ground in one of our schools. I want to send a big thanks to the staff of Ecolé Panorama Ridge Secondary, who hosted that event yesterday. To our union partners, both teachers and support staff were fabulous in terms of helping us shape the process and generate questions and to design a visit that really could give us the most insight into how things are actually going. So the team was there yesterday and we look forward to hearing their observations and comments, likely next week. We're very happy that Fraser health would partner with us on such an initiative. In the meantime, I share this initiative to show you how committed we are to the safety of our children. We're always monitoring how we are doing and how we can improve.

In my last message I reminded people about the provincial health requirement for masks in all common areas. This is our responsibility, and while we know that there will be exceptions where someone cannot wear a mask, it's the responsibility of all adults to take the steps we need. And what does it mean to have schools open, rather than closed? Over the past few days we've seen how the Halloween spirit is emerging. On social media we've seen this wonderful thread of community spirit where pumpkin patches have been donated to our schools. Rather than our traditional busing kids and sending them to the field, we are bringing the field to our schools. What does that look like? It looks like dedicated and caring staff, parents, volunteers, community partners and donations of trucks, pumpkins and forklifts. And in the end seeing great big fields



around schools, full of pumpkins and socially distanced children with big smiles on their face. Yes we are living with COVID. And yes we will continue to have exposures, and we will continue to monitor and adjust our protocols. In addition to that, we are finding new ways within our protocols, to celebrate and share the magic that is a smile on a child's face. It's great to see and what could be better in our current context, than just a little happiness in the lives of our children and youth and finding our own unique way and new normal.

I wish you all a great weekend and a happy and safe Halloween. Take care. Hy'ce:pka.

Thank you to you all.