

This week I want to share a message in three parts.

1. Vaccinations
2. The importance of protocols and our additional measures in light of case counts and quarter turnaround.
3. Gratitude

Vaccinations. We are extremely grateful to have the opportunity to have vaccinations available for all of our school-based staff. These are the people who work closely and directly with children on a daily basis. In the end, in just over a week, over 90% of people who were offered the vaccine were vaccinated. We know that the reason we were first in line is our high prevalence of cases in our community which then show up in our schools. Again, we are enormously grateful and we know that many did not get vaccinated. We hope that all our colleagues and peers who work directly with children, and all K-12 employees are able to be vaccinated soon.

The importance of protocols and quarter turnaround. As our secondary students prepared for April 19th which is the final quarter of their year, it's critical to remain vigilant. There is no question that we have had numerous cases of COVID come through our schools. What we know is that our schools are a reflection of our communities and the City of Surrey and the City of White Rock have had a bulk of the cases of COVID in BC. Wherever you turn, COVID has been there. Our main defence against the spread of COVID is the protocols that have been developed by our Health Officials both provincial and local. If we want to stem the tide, it's essential that each of us do our part to follow the protocols and remain vigilant. I know that is tiring, I know that so many are doing so much, but it's still critical, particularly with our increased case numbers recently across BC that we follow the basics of what we know. So to you all, please:

- Remain Physical distancing
- Washing hands
- Don't touch your face
- PLEASE stay home if you have symptoms
- If you do have symptoms, please get tested
- Wear a mask where required and use proper care of your mask

The protocols help. These are the guidelines of our health care professionals on how we stop the spread of COVID-19. Once again, transmission in our schools mirrors transmission in our community. As our community cases go up, it's all the more reason to make sure we're doing all we can.

Separate from that, I know that people are tired. It has been a long road but I want to just acknowledge what we've accomplished. We have kept our schools open for 8 months through the eye of a pandemic. That is no small feat. It has required the dedication, perseverance, courage and professionalism of our staff on all sides to make this happen. I want to acknowledge that it's been an enormously taxing journey, but June is not far away. We are already in mid-April and the quarter turnaround means that our students are on the home stretch. Maya Angelou says that courage is the most important of all the virtues because without courage, you can't practice and other virtue consistently.

I thank each and every one of you for your courage, dedication, tenacity, and care for our students. Our schools are not just part of the community, they are the heart of our community. I will work with you doing all we can together to keep them, and you, safe.

Take care, stay well,

Hycepka