



Memorandum

Date: April 22, 2020
To: Board of Education
From: Kevin Kaardal, Superintendent of Schools/CEO

Information Item: Superintendent's Pandemic Update

1.0 RELEVANT BOARD MOTION/DIRECTION

None.

2.0 BACKGROUND

This information is provided to the Board of Education as an update to the information shared at the April 8, 2020 Public Board Meeting.

3.0 INFORMATION STATEMENT

The following are Central Okanagan Public Schools updates on the Priorities set by the Ministry of Education:

1. Maintain a healthy and safe environment for all students, families and employees

School cleaning/custodial practices in place, including stock of supplies

- Increased the frequency of cleaning and redeployed CUPE staff so that expanded cleaning teams are at each site with a focus on contact surfaces.
- Inventory of cleaning supplies is sufficient.

Hygiene and distancing practices and protocols in place for staff/students

- The number of entry points into schools or administration buildings has been limited.
- Hand sanitizer dispensers are at every entrance.
- Safety protocols are in place at every site with requirements to wash hands immediately after entry.
- Physical distancing protocols are in place at schools for students and staff. Physical distancing is achieved by significantly reducing the staff onsite. Most employees are working remotely.

Mental wellness supports for staff

- Numerous messages have been sent to all staff from the Superintendent and the Board of Education reminding them that their wellbeing and the wellbeing of our students and their families is the place to start our connections.
- Students have been contacted to assess their needs and supports including social emotional and wellness needs.

- Employee Assistant Plan notices have been sent to each staff member reminding them of services that they can access during the pandemic.
- Processes are in place regarding immune compromised persons or persons providing direct care for immune compromised persons to have meaningful work remotely or in isolation.

2. Provide the services needed to support children of our essential workers (ESW).

Number of ESW families are being supported and spaces are being provided to children, including age groups of children, occupations being supported, and plans for expansion to additional occupations and numbers of school sites.

- Initial interest from families for over 1100 students to receive service (Tier 1, Tier 2 and Tier 3).
- The first response was focused on ESW Tier 1 workers as identified by the Deputy Minister's Special Bulletin:
 - o Tier 1: healthcare workers and emergency responders
 - o Tier 2: workers supporting vulnerable populations (e.g. social workers, income assistance workers); utilities workers and workers supporting key supply chain functions, (e.g. grocery store workers, warehouse workers), and
 - o Tier 3: teachers and childcare workers who do not have access to childcare and who are providing care or instruction to children of ESWs

A structure was developed to support 550+ ESW Tier 1 workers existing across 21 school sites. Small groups of children ages 6 to 10 are in each cohort with one teacher and one CEA to support the learning and safe social distancing.

- 225 students are receiving onsite learning services.
- Some families who indicated interest have found other arrangements and asking that we hold spots. More requests are being received daily to access the spaces from the original 550+ requests.
- Currently looking at filling the other spots with Tier 2 or at-risk students.

Structure of programs to support ESW children – all day care, instruction + before/after school care, in-house or community partnerships, etc.

- The structure is 8:00 am to 4:00 pm on school sites, and before and after school care at our traditional childcare providers' sites with YMCA and the Boys and Girls Club.

3. Support vulnerable students who may need special assistance.

School meals and other community supports, i.e. frequency of meal provision and how many families

- Distribution of 4,400 bag lunches a week to 880 families.
- Distribution of 2,900 breakfast packages a week to 580 families.

***Update: As of April 22, 2020 there are 7,500 school meals being distributed weekly.**

Planned supports for students with diverse abilities and disabilities and their families

- CEAs under the direction of their resources teachers and classroom teachers will be working remotely with Tier 2 and 3 designated students.
- Meeting with Parents for Inclusive Education to understand the needs of this community.

Other (non-meal) supports being provided within the community

- Counsellors are connecting with our case load of at-risk students.
- Arc Mental Health Workers are connecting with their caseloads and are available for remote referrals.
- Supporting connections with the local Foundry.

Supports for other students that Districts may be keeping an eye on (i.e. children and youth in care)

- Considering next steps for this population beyond the services already mentioned.

4. Provide continuity of educational opportunities for all students.

Access to technology including numbers of families with limited or no access and 'low tech' options is being provided:

- Over 2,000 Chrome Books or iPads have been loaned out to students requiring hardware support. ***Update: As of April 22, 2020 there are 2,400 Chrome Books or iPads loaned out to students.**
- Laptops have been loaned out to support staff providing modified instruction to students with special needs.
- Computer technicians have been repurposed to be deployed as an expanded HELP Desk.

Learning opportunities being provided now and planned for the future, including engagement between schools/teachers and parents/students

- The contacting of parents and students began during the planning week immediately after Spring Break. Staff started with social emotional and then asked what supports were needed. Learning opportunities began two weeks ago.
- The District has set up a Continuity of Learning Support team and a website to support teachers delivering quality education.

Communication

The following communication has been distributed to parents, staff and the media since the April 8th update:

- Board of Education Message re COVID-19 – April 17, 2020
- News Release "*District Student Council Issues Challenge*" – April 17, 2020
- Superintendent Letter to Parents re Continuity of Learning – April 14, 2020
- News Release "*Together We Dance*" – April 10, 2020
- News Release "*School District Provides Nearly 7,000 Meals*" – April 9, 2020

4.0 SUPERINTENDENT'S COMMENTS

On the whole, District staff are doing very well meeting the four priorities set out by the The Honourable Rob Fleming, Minister of Education, and Dr. Bonnie Henry, Provincial Health Officer.

There is more work to be done calibrating the appropriate amount of support required to fully meet each of the priorities. I am grateful for the efforts of staff who are working very hard to pivot quickly, learn about delivering learning, and other services, in a different way during this pandemic. Our motto has never been more appropriate: TOGETHER WE LEARN.

5.0 NEXT STEP

The District will continue to monitor, respond and adjust to directives of the Provincial Health Officer and Ministry of Education.