

For immediate release

11 September 2020

District receives additional funds for safer reopening of schools

Comox Valley, B.C. – Comox Valley Schools will receive approximately \$3.4 million as part of the federal funding which was allocated to the province to assist with school restarts.

Tom Demeo, Superintendent of Schools, assures parents and guardians that the increased funding will enhance its Return to School Plan 2020 with much needed staff and resources to support all learners while continuing to maintain a safe environment.

“In the past few weeks, our school administrators have reached out to families to get a sense of their intentions this fall. Although the majority of students will be returning to in-class instruction, many responses indicate a mix of in-class and remote learning preferences,” explained Demeo. “An important goal for us is to keep each student closely connected with their school to support their social and emotional wellness. Therefore, we intend to invest some of these funds toward hiring staff to oversee school connection opportunities for those students not ready to return to the classroom. Additional funding couldn’t come at a better time to put this plan into place right away.”

The District plans to use the new funding for mental wellness initiatives, mental health support for students and staff, additional health and safety resources, technology requirements, and creating outdoor learning environments.

Demeo acknowledged that plans for the new funding were developed in close collaboration with all educational partners.

“Moving forward, we will continue to engage with our partner groups and learn about their specific concerns and needs as we return back to our schools,” added Demeo. “We want everyone to know they have a voice and that staff and families can feel confident about the school year ahead.”

To ensure school communities feel confident about reopening schools and returning to learning, the District created an encouraging video message to address health and safety, choices for education opportunities and meeting needs of vulnerable learners. The video can be viewed on YouTube at <https://youtu.be/rjJrJG15fyA>

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For more information on the District's Return to School Plan 2020 visit:

https://bit.ly/SD71_ReturntoSchool2020

For more information on increased funding from the Ministry of Education, visit:

<https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2020EDUC0062-001652>

Full details of the BC Governments Stage 2 Return to School can be found on the provincial website at:

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/k-12/covid-19-return-to-school>

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