



SCHOOL DISTRICT 63 (SAANICH)

2125 Keating Cross Road, Saanichton, BC Canada V8M 2A5

Phone: (250) 652-7300 Fax: (250) 652-6421 [saanichschools.ca](http://saanichschools.ca)

March 31, 2020

## **OUR FIRST WEEK BACK – SOME UPDATES (Mar 31, 2020)**

Dear Parents / Guardians;

First, I want to thank all of you for your continuing understanding and patience as we build the Saanich Schools continuity of learning plan behind the scenes. Many people have been working very long hours building a solid foundation from which to launch our new remote learning reality. The purpose of my email today, is to outline some of the district-wide updates that pertain to that plan as well as give you some other information that you might find helpful.

### **Remote Learning**

I have heard some people describe this new learning reality we are entering as “On-line Learning”. We are not heading into an on-line learning environment, but instead are looking at teaching in a new emergency remote learning reality (A phrase I heard used by one of my colleagues). We have been tasked with turning an entire education system on-a-dime to something that looks very different than it did before Spring Break. It is going to take different forms for different learners and different teachers – not just because we have students who range from 5-19 years of age, but also because we have different courses, programs, learning styles and student needs. Some teachers are already using webpages, blogs and other electronic teaching tools, whereas others have been using more traditional means. As we move into this new normal, expect to see a variety of approaches being taken to provide your children with an educational program that addresses their academic and social-emotional needs in their grade, course or program. It is definitely a work in progress – but a challenge that we are definitely ready to tackle. The energy and enthusiasm from our staff is palpable.

### **Contacting Students & Families**

As we return from Spring Break, teachers have been meeting with each other and their administrators to plan their approaches to this new learning reality. Teachers and administrators will also be reaching out to families this week to have a ‘check-in’. You can expect that every family will have been contacted by the end of the week.

### **[Remote Learning Resources for Parents](#)**

In Saanich Schools, we have been busy developing an electronic resource library for our educators, but we have also not forgotten about our parent community. We realize that parents may not have the expertise, knowledge or time to provide extended assistance to their children as we begin this new journey into remote learning. As such, we have selected multiple resources that parents can access in one convenient location –

resources that are available to you at no cost, aligned with many curriculum goals and objectives, and readily available to help you explore new learning with your children.

On our new webpage, you will find resources on such things as:

- Social-emotional Learning
- Online books and Audiobooks
- Math, Coding and Computational Thinking
- Physical Activity
- Arts and Culture
- Science
- Information, Videos and Games
- Additional Resources

You will also be able to see the multiple resources selected for teachers. Many of these are subscription-based and available only to our staff – however, we wanted you to see the library that we have been collecting. You can access the parent resource library at the following public website: <https://learn.saanichschools.ca/>. Once at the webpage, click on RESOURCES and then PARENT/GUARDIAN. There is also a quick link at the bottom of the webpage. We hope that you will find this curated list of resources useful as we know you are also wondering how you can help support your child's learning. The list is being regularly updated.

The Ministry of Education has also launched a resource site for parents called [Keep Learning – Suggestions for parents and caregivers to keep their children learning at home during the COVID-19 pandemic](#). There are some helpful ideas in this site as well.

### **bc211**

A service provided by the United Way is now available to all BC families who have community-based questions about COVID-19. Bc211 is a free, confidential help resource that connects people to local government and social services in our community – services like mental health supports, or income and financial assistance. It's available by calling or texting 2-1-1 or going online to [bc211.ca](http://bc211.ca). This service is funded by United Way and is available 24/7, 365 days a year with phone service in over 160 different languages.

### **Provincial Government COVID-19 Website**

The government has also launched a new website for parents that includes updates on COVID-19 and its impact on schools. You can find it here: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/k-12/administration/program-management/safe-caring-and-orderly-schools>

### **The Power of Why – My Blog Space**

I have not been able to get to my professional blog (The Power of Why) as often as I have wanted to lately, but I did want to write on this current crisis we are confronting and what it means when you bring a team together in a time of crisis. You can read my latest blog entry *Sunshine in a Time of Crisis* here: <https://thepowerofwhy.ca/2020/03/31/sunshine-in-a-time-of-crisis/>



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### **Superintendent Q & A**

I will be beginning a new Q & A section on our district webpage where parents, staff and students are able to write in to ask me questions about our new educational reality. I am planning to select several of these questions and provide answers back approximately once or twice per week – likely in a video format. Stay tuned for more information as we hope to launch it in the near future.

### **Thank You**

Thank you for the kind wishes of support and understanding as we make this significant transformation in a very short period. We are a community who cares for each other and will rally together in times of need. I can feel the positive energy from our staff and from our community as we work to find our new normal. As always, we continue to update our own district website with new information – be sure to check back regularly: <https://www.sd63.bc.ca/>.

Together we've got this!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dave Eberwein", with a horizontal line extending to the right from the end of the signature.

Dave Eberwein  
Superintendent of Schools