

Back-to-School Planning – Summer 2020

Frequently Asked Questions

What did you learn from the feedback survey sent to students and families in June?

In June, we shared a survey with families and students to get feedback about their experiences while in-class instruction was suspended and students were learning from home as well as feedback about the part-time, voluntary in-class instruction in June. Based on responses, several themes emerged for us to consider moving forward. These include feedback about the use of the TEAMS online platform by teachers and students, the need to streamline and coordinate information so families and students have a consistent channel to use and the importance of social connection for students with each other and their teachers. A further theme was the consideration of time management needed by students and their families – particularly at the elementary level – with families’ wishes to have more details to support children’s learning. We also heard that families wished there was more time and information provided to them when they were asked to make a decision about sending their child to school in June.

How is the District planning for the return to school in September?

Based on details from the Ministry of Education in the spring as well as feedback from students, families and staff, we are planning for a number of scenarios in September and throughout the school year.

When will specific schedules and health and safety measures for schools be shared with families?

We are awaiting details from the provincial government about which stage it anticipates for September. This information will outline density limits as well as health and safety protocols that will determine schedules at both the elementary and secondary levels. With our ongoing plans for various scenarios, we will be able to quickly provide schedule details to students, their families and our staff.

Will attendance be on specific days or during staggered times throughout the week again? What about staggered drop-offs/pick-up times, lunches/recess breaks?

We are planning for all possibilities and as always, health and safety is our top priority. Measures in place at schools in June, like staggered drop-offs/pick-ups, staggered lunches/recess breaks and frequent hand washing/sanitizing, will remain come September – regardless of the stage we return to. Specific schedules will be determined based on direction from the Ministry of Education and provided to families and students so you are able to plan.

Why is the District changing the secondary school schedule to two semesters? What does that schedule look like?

As we respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Ministry of Education requires school districts to have plans in place to accommodate for potential changes while ensuring student learning is continually supported. To do so, the district will change the secondary school schedule this year. Usually secondary students take their courses throughout the year (known as a linear

schedule). This school year, the district will schedule courses in two semesters. Students will take half of their courses in the first semester and the other half of their courses in the second semester. This will ensure students have more time to focus on their schoolwork throughout the year. Students will also have more face-to-face time with their teachers and their peers with less impact on their learning should the COVID-19 pandemic response require changes throughout the school year. Some secondary courses may still run throughout both semesters. A two semester schedule at the secondary level will only be in place this school year.

Will secondary students' schedules once again have gaps of hours or days between attendance?

Based on feedback from students, families and staff, Vancouver secondary schools will operate on a semester schedule this school year. A semester schedule will help ensure students are connected to their school, have more face-to-face time with teachers and are able to focus more time on their courses by splitting them via two semesters. The same number of courses will be taken; however, student schedules will look different with some courses taught in the first semester and then the remaining courses taught in semester two.

Are you expecting a hybrid of learning through in-school attendance and learning from home/online?

At this point, we are planning various scenarios from full-time regular attendance to a mix of learning in-school and from home/online. Thanks to the dedication and expertise of our teachers, administrators and support staff, we are confident that students' learning will be well supported regardless of the stage we return to in September. Our plans will also be responsive should that stage change based on direction of the Ministry of Education and the Provincial Health Officer in response to managing the COVID-19 pandemic.

Will students who received lunches following the suspension of in-class instruction and during the partial return in June continue to receive lunches in the new school year?

Yes, all students who received lunches following the suspension of in-class instruction in March and the partial return to in-class learning in June will continue to receive lunches when school opens in September. In addition, eligible families will also continue to receive weekly grocery bags.

Will the District provide computers/tablets for students' use again?

The District will reach out to students' families who do not have access to technology and allocate available devices to support them in a remote learning environment. Our resources are limited; however, we will attempt to address the equity challenges that many families face.