

August 30, 2022

Dear students, staff, parents, and caregivers,

It is with great excitement for the year ahead that I welcome everyone back to a new school year.

But before we look to the year ahead, I find it helps to also take a moment to appreciate the foundations we are building on. The 2021–22 school year was filled with important milestones, powerful learning opportunities and exciting celebrations: that includes the opening of the new Skwo:wech Elementary, formal openings for both the Welcome and Wellness Centres, learning opportunities that spanned across schools, students engaging in exciting lessons that ranged from climate action to physical literacy initiatives. We celebrated getting our Living Wage Employer certification and saw the return of end-of-year ceremonies like the Qayqayt Rite of Passage ceremony.

I am impressed by and proud to work with the dedicated staff who made all this possible, and I encourage you to take a few minutes to read our [Good Things are Happening: 2021–22 in review](#) document that highlights this and some of the other work we're building on.

Now, as we turn to the upcoming year, I want to first assure our whole learning community that health and safety will continue to be a top priority. A few key things to keep in mind for the year ahead:

- Each day parents and caregivers are responsible for assessing the health of any student who will be attending school. And every staff member is responsible for assessing their health before entering a school building or other district site. Anyone who has new or worsening symptoms is expected to follow the guidelines provided by the [BC Centre for Disease Control](#), or from a health provider.
- Do not attend school or work if you are sick.
- Our ventilation systems at each site will continue to be maximized, with filters changed regularly.
- Mask wearing will continue to be supported as a personal choice. Disposable masks will continue to be available at each site for those who need or want one.

More information on the work and protocols that are keeping New Westminster schools safer, and

our updated Communicable Disease Plan, can be found on this page within our website:
<https://newwestschools.ca/protocols-and-practices-health-and-safety-measures-for-the-2022-23-school-year/>

Now, while we enter this year with continued protocols, we're excited about the opportunities this new and slightly more "normal" year will offer us all.

We know there's some heavy lifting to do – from ensuring students and families benefit from yesterday's funding announcement to the continued work to address our growing enrollment and capacity needs, and on to a wide breadth of learning opportunities. But I know the passionate leaders, educators and all our staff members are ready and prepared to take all of this on together.

Right now, our administrative and clerical teams are making final adjustments to get ready to welcome everyone back next week. If you have not heard from them yet, please know each school will be sending detailed information about what to expect by this Thursday at the latest.

I look forward to joining staff, students and families in celebrating our full return next week,



Karim Hachlaf
Superintendent of Schools / CEO