



March 3, 2021

Dear students, staff, parents, caregivers:

Almost a year ago on March 12, 2020, the Ministry of Education announced that our schools would be going to online learning. This announcement, the day before our spring break, had a significant impact on all of us. While I reflect on the year, I feel very proud and grateful to be a part of School District 5. I want to acknowledge the struggles and difficulties that last year brought and the adverse outcomes and sadness that resulted. It was a challenging year for all and I want to recognize the resiliency I saw day to day in our students, staff, and parents during this time.

Kevin Cameron, Executive Director, North American Center for Threat Assessment and Trauma Response has offered insight about this past year and strategies to help guide us through this Covid-19 marathon. You can find his recent article [here](#).

I want to thank each and every one of you for the part you played in ensuring that our students could come to school to learn each day.

While school is not the same, and we do not offer all the same courses or opportunities, it became very clear from the few months that we did online learning that students needed to be at school to learn with their peers and staff. Sending children to school was not for all families and although some families chose to learn in other settings, the majority of our students came back to us.

Our staff did a marvellous job of adhering to the health and safety protocols laid out by the provincial health officer. While it was difficult, and people wanted “things back to normal” the district health and safety working group was able to continue to guide and lead us through this.

I feel renewed optimism for the next school year, but we need to hang in there for a bit longer. The news each day indicates we are closer to having a vaccine which will enable us to get back to some type of normal in the near future. All staff will be looking at the fall and working together to look at what went well last year, what we should continue doing, and what we should change. I will be curious to see what changes we decide to keep as a result of the pandemic.



As the image says “In a marathon, the last miles are the toughest.” We have done such a good job in our communities following the protocols laid out by the provincial health officer. It is important now, more than ever, (while I acknowledge it is difficult) to please continue to be diligent and follow our [guidelines](#) as we wait for vaccines and new information from the provincial health officer.

Thank you to all the parents and staff who continue to send us wonderful photos and videos of the good things happening in our district. Please continue to send them to [cbomailing@sd5.bc.ca](mailto:cbomailing@sd5.bc.ca) and we will put them on our [Facebook](#) page as well.

I wish you a restful spring break and hope you take advantage of all of the endless outdoor activities in our beautiful East Kootenays.

Take care,

Silke

