



From the Desk

of Silke Yardley
Superintendent, Southeast Kootenay
School District



April 14, 2020

Dear parents, guardians, students and staff:

I hope that you had a restful Easter weekend. The weather was beautiful on Sunday and Monday and I hope families were able to get out for a walk to enjoy the beauty the East Kootenay offers. It is hard not to be able to see family and friends but it is important for all of us to support the recommendations of the provincial health officer during these times.

As principals, vice-principals, parents and staff start to share the positive learning that is happening, my hope is to share this with others as well. **Please use our CBO email address (cbo.mailing@sd5.bc.ca)** if you wish to share your projects and activities with the school district. Your photos or short videos may go on our website or our School District Facebook page. I have been pleased to see some very cool learning opportunities for our students. At Isabella Dicken in Fernie, school principal Nicole Neufeld had a virtual assembly with her students! What a wonderful idea to connect with students and staff! Check out the following video sent by a teacher from Rocky Mountain Elementary school. This is a great example of the connections and learning that is happening in School District 5.

<https://www.sd5.bc.ca/Documents/Seed%20Life%20Cycle%20720.mp4>

A big thank you to the school staff and our district team for all their work to support our students. There has been a lot of work behind the scenes from getting support for our children of essential services workers, to supporting technology for our staff, teachers planning learning activities for students, and staff delivering food for our families. Thank you to Jessica at Fort Steele for the very generous donation of Easter baskets and goodies that the Easter Bunny was able to hand out to some of our families.



We had a call last Thursday with a Ministry of Education representative where we shared how we were doing with the following areas. I was very pleased with our conversation, as the ministry was supportive and we are right on track with their expectations.



The Ministry of Education has provided the following direction to all School Districts which we are following as we do our planning and support:

1. **Maintain a healthy and safe environment for all students, families and employees.**

- Please have a look at our new link to mental health services for families and staff. Our school counselors have created a webpage as well where families can connect with them. (click [here](#))



2. **Provide services to support children of essential workers.**

- Through the weeks of March 29 – April 5 we had 73 family submissions for support with school care for 130 children. This included Tier 1 workers as well as Tier 2 and 3. Support of families in need began the week of April 6.
- Eight of the eleven elementary schools identified a need to begin supporting students immediately and two others in the weeks to come. We expect to have 46 students attending their home school for school care support as needed in the weeks to come.
- ***We continue to accept submissions by having families connect with their school principal and/or completing the necessary form found on the SD 5 website. We have also included information and links for those families requesting support for children who are not yet in Kindergarten.***

3. **Support vulnerable students who may need special assistance.**

- Last week we were able to support 89 families with mini hampers of food. We hope to provide 130 families with food on an ongoing basis. ***If you know of someone that requires support please let your school principal know and they will pass on the information.***
- District-level staff are sharing with school staffs the options for remote learning that exist such as our regular digital resources – text-to-speech and speech-to-text applications.
- School staff are developing targeted supports for students on IEPs and are supporting classroom teachers in the adaptation of access to assignments they are giving students.

4. **Provide continuity of educational opportunities for all students.**

- All students should have been contacted by their teachers or school staff. If a student hasn't been contacted please let your school principal know and they can help to make the connection.
- Going forward, teachers will be contacting students once a week at a minimum. ***Parents, please let your teachers know what form of communication works best for you and your child.*** As part of attendance for students, the district will be collecting data on which children the school has been unable to reach and will look at ways in which we can help the families and schools make connections. It is very important that we have students connect with their teachers at this time.
- Learning opportunities have been rolling out last week and this week. There are many creative and different ways teachers will make connections and create learning opportunities with their students.



- ***If a student does not have access to technology and needs it for their school work, please contact their school principal and they will help you with an application form.*** While not all teachers will be using computers for learning opportunities, there may be some instances especially in the higher grades where a device may be needed.

Take care of yourselves,

Silke

Please click [here](#) for the most current information on our website.

