

Hello, I'm Jordan Tinney, Superintendent of Surrey schools, and I want to present an update to our staff, our parents and our community about targeted measures that we're going to be looking at after spring break with respect to COVID. This presentation is intended to give you as much detail as you need so that you can understand what we're looking at as a district.

First and foremost, Ey Swayel, I want to honor and acknowledge that we always work and play and live and learn on the shared, unceded, traditional territory of the Kwantlen, Katzie and Semiahmoo Nations. We are very grateful for their heritage and their history.

Surrey remains a substantial hot spot

Learning intentions:

- What do we know about COVID in our community and in our schools?
- What does the evidence to date show us?
- Why is there a need for more targeted measures?
- What are those measures?
- Why will they make a difference?
- How might they impact you as a parent family, school, and the staff member?
- What is our process from here?

What do we know about COVID in our community and in our schools?

Looking at a map from the BC Centre for Disease Control and its cumulative cases of COVID from January 2020 to February 2021, it shows the geographic distribution. When you focus in on Surrey, in particular, you can see that it remains a substantial hotspot. The numbers you see are the number of cases over time and as you look at our neighbors on either side of us, and those around us, our numbers are quite a bit more substantial and not a surprise to those who lives here. The comparators, places in the Fraser region like Chilliwack, Langley and Delta have 2000 to 2700 cases and when you look at Surrey with over 23,000 that puts it in perspective. Even compared to Vancouver with a combined 12,000 cases (population is slightly larger than Surrey) you see that our number of cases is far beyond anything around us. So in the Fraser Health Region, Surrey has more cumulative cases than all of the other districts combined, just to put it in perspective.

A very large community case profile combined with overcapacity schools

To put it in perspective:

- Surrey has 20 secondary schools.

- 13 of our secondary schools are over 1400 students.
- Of those 13, they operate at a combined average capacity 122%.
- In these 13 schools, we are over capacity by about 3400 students.
- We have five schools (Tamanawis, Sullivan Heights, Semiahmoo, Fleetwood Park and Earl Marriott), each of which have over 300 students more than their capacity.
- Sullivan heights is 595 students over capacity. Fleetwood Park is 408 students over capacity.
- We have 13 elementary schools over 600 students.
- We have 5 over 700 students.
- We have 2 elementary schools (Hazelgrove and Katzie) that house over 1800 students and have 29 portables on site. A new school will open next door after spring break.
- We have 11 current capital projects underway.
- We just opened two new elementary schools and a third will open after spring break.
- We're extremely grateful for our Capital Project, but COVID is here right now as we catch up.

Within Surrey, COVID does not appear equitably. Looking at a map showing the relative number of case counts in Surrey, it shows you the relative intensity, the brighter red colours, meaning the higher number of case counts in the community.

How does this community prevalence descend upon our schools?

To date, we have issued:

- 907 Letters of Exposure
- 1077 Letters to Self-Monitor (whole class)
- 91 full class Self-Isolations Letters
- 2 Outbreaks (twice we have closed schools due to an outbreak (Cambridge and Newton Elementary))

Even with areas of high prevalence, there is unequal distribution.

- We have issued over 2077 letters to our schools to date.
- We still have eight schools who have never received a letter.
- We have 22 schools that have received one or fewer letters.
- We have 42 schools that received two or fewer letters.
- Approximately 1/3 of our schools have received two or fewer letters.

For some of our schools, those in a more intensive area:

- It is a weekly occurrence.

- It is intense and exhausting for those staff and communities to receive an unending stream of letters and notices.
- Specifically the families of schools in Tamanawis, Ecole Panorama Ridge, Frank Hurt, Sullivan Heights, Queen Elizabeth, Princess Margaret, L.A. Matheson, Enver Creek, and Guilford Park. These families of schools have seen over 670 letters in the first 25 weeks of school. That's an average of 30 letters per week.

We can do more as a district.

We believe that we can do more as a district. I believe our staff and our schools are doing amazing work, but what about the district overall? What can we do in addition? We think we can do more to support our schools, our staff and the community where there is an intensity. In education we talk about universal and targeted and intensive support when we're talking about children. So the measures that we're proposing this week are in that form of universal, targeted and intensive, and they're designed to be used in different ways across the district. Part of our 'do more as a district' is to use the evidence we have, in collaboration with health, to focus our attention and support on those schools that need it most.

This model will be familiar to many people. These are tiers of intervention depending on where these schools are relative to COVID exposures and isolations in the district.

Universal means measures that we consider for all schools

Targeted means measures for just some schools based on the community prevalence

Intensive is based not only on the community prevalence, but repeated exposures or multiple isolation.

The Measures – Universal (All Schools)

- Reaffirm the requirement for masks for all secondary students and all staff at all times. Consistent with the provincial guidelines which provide exemptions when sitting at your desk; when there is a barrier in a place; when you're eating or drinking; or when outdoors. These are the existing rules, but still, in a recent survey by almost 2600 students, and in follow up conversation with them as leaders, they say mask wearing is still inconsistent, particularly at breaks and lunch. Masks in secondary schools are but one measure, but they are a measure, we all must implement.
- Require all teachers to organize their classroom spaces and within existing furniture in a manner that maximizes physical distancing and reduces face to face contact. Again, this is a reaffirmation of existing rules. The provincial guidelines say: "Seating arrangements where students directly face one another should be avoided, where possible,

particularly middle secondary schools.” Our measures are more prescriptive. We expect that the vast majority of teachers already do this but we continue to hear of situations where this may not be happening. We need to work with those teachers and all schools to make sure that we're keeping students apart to the greatest extent possible, and not seated face to face at any time.

- Masks for elementary school staff are required at all times even when they are in the classroom with the exception of when providing direct instruction at a distance of more than two meters from others.
- Meetings: we want to prohibit any adult face to face meeting in a closed office. Of course people can stop by informally, face to face with the use of masks, but you need to be less than 10 minutes in length and always keep physical distance at all times.
- District-wide early dismissals once per month to review health and safety plans and to revisit any health and safety adjustments needed to be made. In order to make these adjustments, particularly when they are already doing all they can, we want to provide dedicated time for staff to meet and to go over health and safety plans. To review them, consider any exposures that have happened or any notices that have come your way, This is giving staff dedicated time, once per month, to review health and safety plans across the entire district. Meetings will be led by the school based health and safety teams and the meetings will include any recommendations or observations based on new exposures or mitigation strategies. This measure is about empowering and supporting those local health and safety teams that should be working in every single school.
- No visitation by district based staff to schools unless for critical response as organized by the school principal. We have a number of district staff that go to and from schools, and we want to make sure that we restrict that visitation to the greatest extent possible.

The Measures – Targeted (Identified Sites)

Working in collaboration with the Medical Health Officer to identify targeted schools based on community prevalence and/or exposures.

- Schools to reaffirm schedules for things like photocopying, so that you never have more than one adult in a photocopy room at any time and proper cleaning is in place and flow is maintained.
- All maintenance activities occur only outside of instructional time unless essential for continuity of service (e.g. flood or power outage).
- Reaffirming that all meetings should be held using virtual platforms.
- All teachers should teach specific health and safety protocols to their class. We want to provide additional materials for teachers to talk to students about health and safety

protocols, to make sure they know why we're doing what we're doing, and that they are staying as safe as they possibly can in their building.

- Minimize “platooning” - a practice where you have subject specific specialists (e.g. Math or English) in upper elementary teach another colleague’s class within a cohort. The focus for instruction now moves to one teacher – one class, but not teaching across cohorts.
- Outdoors and lunchtimes - zones of play being reinforced and renewed or adjusted, considering multiple lunches as options to reduce interactions between individual classes.
- No external visitors from the public or district to the school site unless essential for operation (e.g. deliveries or medical assistance). We want to keep as many adults out of our schools as possible.

The Measures – Intensive (Identified Sites)

Working in collaboration with Fraser Health and our Medical Health Officer to identify the school sites that may have multiple exposures or several classes where individuals are in self isolation.

- Staff rooms will be closely monitored to limit informal gatherings to ensure physical distancing, mask wearing and cleaning protocols. We have had repeated instances where staff rooms have been a place where more than one person has become infected. Staff need a place to sit, eat and take a break. If we shut down staff rooms completely, people will find other smaller places to have lunch. We are asking principals to engage with staff about the importance of limiting the informal gatherings in any setting inside a school because we know those have very often been a place of challenge for us.
- Working collaboratively with the school and partners to consider moving all elementary prep time to a common scheduled time before school begins. This would mean adjusting the start time by 22 minutes. Elementary teachers are required to have 110 minutes of prep time, so that's five days and 22 minutes. The goal is to eliminate adults moving across multiple cohorts. We know that this will not be easy. There's potential of impact on things like parents schedules and before and after school care. This is not for implementation the day upon return, we need to think about this one really carefully, there's lots of complexity that goes with it. The goal is to eliminate adults moving across multiple cohorts, and to stop adults from being exposed and becoming infected with COVID.

- Parents are not permitted inside schools unless on a visit organized by the school principal.
- Work with the Medical Health Officer to define the level of concern when we have multiple individuals isolated in a class. We want them to target the whole class and adults for self isolation as opposed to multiple individuals. We have seen a number of situations where five, six, or as many as 10, individual students are isolated out of a class and we would just want a conversation about why would we not isolate the whole class. We think we can provide continuity of instruction and it's likely safer for all.
- Moving the Strong Start program entirely online. These are our pre kindergarten programs. Strong Start, our pre-kindergarten program, are where adults come to school with their children. It's a wonderful structure, but it is bringing additional adults into a school community. Again, it limits the number of outside adults in the school or any people who have access to the school.
- When school ends, students and parents are asked to leave the premises. The intent is to limit gatherings and play after school. We know people want to hang around, people want to talk and kids want to play, but once again, these are the intensive measures. These are areas in schools with high prevalence, high cases, and we want people to move on to keep us all safe.

What are we trying to do?

- Protect our staff.
- Protect our children and their families.
- Support our community.
- These measures are intended to: reduce the number of cases coming into schools.
- Mitigate the effects of exposures.
- Ultimately - to prevent transmission in our schools

COVID isn't going away

March 13, 2021 we issued:

- Notices of exposures to 10 schools
- Self monitoring letters to 17 classes across the district.
- 40 letters of self isolation to 1 entire class, 2 staff members and 37 individuals across 8 schools.
- That is a pretty typical day for Surrey. 67 letters.

- For all those included in self isolation letters, they will spend their entire spring break in isolation.

We want to focus our efforts

- We believe our staff in schools have done remarkable work.
- As a district, we believe these measures will allow us to limit adults moving across cohorts, to reaffirm the strength of the existing provincial guidelines, and to carefully examine which schools may need to receive additional support.
- This is just one piece of a great big puzzle. The hierarchy of controls are a package.
- After spring break, our consultation at the local level begins for those targeted and intensive sites.
- We will engage with our rapid response teams that the Ministry of Education put in place a couple of weeks ago, and with our unions and parent partners and begin to consider what we can implement as soon as possible.

In the meantime please rest up and take care. Somewhere out there a solution is emerging. We all await that day, we will get there together I absolutely know we will. Stay well. Thank you very much for your time. Hy'ce:pka