



**THE BOARD OF EDUCATION OF
SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 58 (NICOLA-SIMILKAMEEN)**

ADMINISTRATION OFFICE

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November 18, 2021

Dear Parents, Caregivers & Students,

You may be reading this from a hotel room or other location. We hope you are safe. Like many of you it is sinking in after 2 days that November 15 changed our lives and the lives of everyone in our community. Although temporary, we are without all those things that we took for granted. Whether that is a loss of power and gas in Princeton; the mass evacuation of Merritt; or road and bridge washouts in our rural communities, we all now have a collective experience that will always bind us together.

This past year we have all been forged in a crucible of COVID, Fire and now Flood and through it all our schoolhouses have been the anchors for our neighborhoods. The good news is that most of our schools suffered little to no damage. The exception was Merritt Central Elementary School, and the Merritt School Board Office that took the full onslaught of Nature's fury; to our relief Merritt Secondary suffered only limited physical damage. This is a good starting point for us as we build back better.

By the time you read this we will have completed a bunny rescue at Colletteville as one of the bridges is now certified safe to cross. I mention the bunny to remind us of the human side within all of us to do small acts of kindness to support one another as we walk this journey together.

We have started mapping out what the broad strokes of what a return to Learning Plan will look like. We are in unknown territory, but the plan will probably be a combination of in person and online learning depending on individual student needs. Like our staff, we know you have all been blown to the four winds so expect in the coming weeks to have us reach out to you to find where you are and what your immediate needs are as we begin to build a way forward.

Together we will build back our communities and have a bright future.

K^wuk^wscemx^w - Thank you,

Gordon Swan
Chair, Board of Education
School District No. 58 (Nicola-Similkameen)