



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

**ADMINISTRATION OFFICE**

Stephen McNiven, B.Ed., M.A., Superintendent of Schools  
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November 28, 2021

Good afternoon Merritt Families,

We know that this is an extremely difficult time for our families and students. We also understand that there is an added stress and greater concern when we are not able to provide our students with face-to-face learning. Please know that we are working hard at opening schools and providing this support as quickly as possible. As we progress through this upcoming week, we believe we will have three schools available for face to face learning: Nicola-Canford Elementary, Merritt Bench Elementary and the Kengard Learning Centre (KLC). In an effort to get these schools up and running we will be preparing them to meet WorkSafe requirements, confirming staffing levels and providing social-emotional support.

In addition to inviting back catchment area students, it will be our goal to provide 2 classrooms at Nicola-Canford Elementary and 2 classrooms at Merritt Bench Elementary for children of prioritized essential service workers. The district will be communicating out a survey to gather information from you and will be doing its best to prioritize those in need. Space will be provided for primary and intermediate students at each of the schools. Students, who are not part of the catchment areas, are also a priority for face-to-face learning. In an effort to provide this support for all students while repairs are made to other schools, we have been planning for the use of alternate SD58 spaces as well as other non-school district facilities (including local First Nations Communities) for the purpose of creating temporary classrooms. We will be doing this as quickly as possible; however, we continue to face challenges with our operations due to flood damage, limited to no access to our operation facilities as well as potential staffing shortages.

Remote learning will continue as needed for many learners and it is our expectation that this work will become more robust as we gain access to teacher technology as well as increase our ability to distribute technology to our students and families in need. Lastly it is important to know that we are planning to the best of our ability with the current information at hand. The situation remains fluid and complex and therefore we may need to adapt to emergent situations or challenges that we come across. We ask for your patience and understanding as we will need to be flexible in order to react to the needs of our students and community. Please see the additional information for each of the schools below:

**Nicola-Canford Elementary School**

- Undamaged and available for face-to-face learning

**Merritt Bench Elementary School**

- Undamaged and available for face-to-face learning (Phase 1)

**Collettville Elementary School**

- Early assessments indicate that the school is undamaged (Phase 3)
- Currently unavailable due to location and potential non-school related infrastructure concerns

#### Diamond Vale Elementary School

- Damaged and currently unavailable for face-to-face learning (Phase 3)
- Early assessments indicate that the level of damage may allow us to have repairs completed prior to winter break
- Availability may also be impacted by any non-school related infrastructure concerns

#### Merritt Central Elementary School

- Substantial damage and unavailable for face-to-face learning (Phase 3)
- Early assessments indicated that the grounds and exterior have been heavily impacted
- Further interior assessments needed to determine timeline of repairs

#### Kengard Learning Centre (Community Learning Centre (CLC) and South Central Interior Distance Education School)

- Undamaged and CLC available for face-to-face learning (Phase 2)

#### Merritt Secondary School

- Damaged and currently unavailable for face-to-face learning
- Early assessments indicated that the exterior and grounds are heavily damaged
- Interior assessment indicated a range of damage from minor to moderate
- Further interior assessment needed to determine timeline of repairs

#### School Board Office / Maintenance Shop / Bus Storage

- Damaged and currently unavailable for support
- Shop and maintenance area prioritized for repairs in order to support ongoing District needs and repairs to schools

More details will be provided to staff and families as further assessments are completed and information becomes available. Details regarding dates for school openings and specific learning opportunities will be communicated further at the school level and we will continue to provide briefings on a regular basis. In closing we would also like to inform you that we are closely monitoring incoming weather warnings and any related alerts or orders. The safety of our students and staff is our top priority and with this in mind the district will be doing everything it can to support the community, remote learning and the safe return to face-to-face learning.

Sincerely,



Stephen McNiven  
Superintendent of Schools