



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

ADMINISTRATION OFFICE

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February 11, 2022

Good morning School District 58 Families:

We are happy to let you know that we are making good progress in repairing schools on the Merritt side of the district, progress is steady and our plans for schools being ready for kids remain on track. We are optimistic that both Merritt Secondary and Diamond Vale Elementary Schools will be ready for kids and staff after Spring Break, on Monday, April 4th, 2022. Merritt Central Elementary School has a longer timeline for repair, but we are still planning to move all Central students and staff to Coquihalla Middle School after Spring Break until their building is hopefully ready for occupancy by September of 2022.

Schools in Princeton are fully functioning except for the boil water advisory in place in Princeton. It has been wonderful to see students and staff back in their buildings and engaged in their learning and activities together again.

We are aware that as things start to feel more normal for some in our communities, there are many families who continue to feel overwhelmed by the ongoing impact of the floods. Please reach out to your school for assistance if you are needing it – we will work together to help connect you with supports to get through this time. This is incredibly difficult, and we are here for you.

Also be reminded that the “Merritt Support Centre” is open 7 days a week from 9 to 4 beside the Railyard Mall for drop in, you can call them at 1-877-655-0341, or email at returnhome@merritt.ca. They have a team of people on site who can assist you. The Merritt Foodbank and the Conayt Friendship Society are just two of the many community partners who remain available for anyone in need.

Similarly in Princeton the Princeton Food Bank is available at its new location at the former United Church downtown at 190 First Street and drinking water is available at the Curling Rink. Princeton's Resiliency Center, at 137 Tapton Avenue, is also available to help families impacted by the flood to connect with resources.

Everyone's mental health remains as important as always. Everyone is feeling the effects of all that we have been through, please know that you and your families are not alone, and that we will continue to do everything we can to help anyone needing emotional support. The centres mentioned above in both Merritt and Princeton are set up to connect with anyone needing someone to talk to. Indigenous community agencies offer a wide variety of resources. Your school principals, teachers, FNSWs and counsellors are available to help you find support as well. You can reach out to District Principal of Student Support Services, Jane Kempston at jkempston@365.sd58.bc.ca or District Principal of Aboriginal Education Shelley Oppenheim-Lacerte at slacerte@365.sd58.bc.ca if you would prefer. And there are many online/virtual supports available for families, such as the Foundry that can be found at www.foundrybc.ca/virtual or by calling 1-633-308-6379, that provides 24/7 supports for youth ages 12 to 24.

Success for ALL Learners ~ Today and Tomorrow

We would also like to make you aware that schools are continuing to be impacted by the Covid-19 and the Omicron variant. Overall absenteeism has begun to decline; however, based on the ongoing review of attendance patterns we continue to see higher than typical numbers of absenteeism amongst students and staff. As a result of this we will continue to follow up with public health regularly and will share back any recommendations or additional actions that should be taken. We thank you for being cautious, completing the daily health checks and ensuring that the health of your child, yourself and others remains paramount.

In the link below, please find the most recent information and steps as to how to manage illness, signs of illness and what to do when tested. We also have attached copies of the information for you to have on hand.

[daily-health-check---jan-2022.pdf \(gov.bc.ca\)](#)

Stay safe and healthy, continue to follow the protocols that are helping us all get through COVID, and let us know if we can help in any way. We care about all of you and are here for you.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jameel Aziz', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Jameel Aziz, Assistant Superintendent