



BULLETIN #1 re: COVID 19 from K-12 President Warren Williams Tuesday, March 17, 2020

Premier John Horgan announced today that in-class instruction has been suspended indefinitely in all B.C. schools to help prevent the spread of COVID-19. Most public schools are already on spring break and any schools not closed for spring break have been directed to close now. We don't know how long schools will remain closed.

CUPE, along with other stakeholders in education, have been involved in discussions with our provincial government around school closures and what that will look like for our members. We have also been in discussion with BCPSEA and tabled our urgency to find agreement on the continuation of wages and benefits for our members in K-12. We haven't heard back from BCPSEA and we will notify you immediately when we do.

Education Minister Fleming said that they are 'planning a path forward' and details will come following discussions and decisions with the Federal government in the coming days. He noted that B.C. has 550,000 children in our public system. Students will receive a final mark and Grade 12 students will graduate, regardless of how long the closure is in effect.

The Premier promised that the government will ensure that British Columbians' jobs will be protected amidst the COVID-19 outbreak, and that they will amend the *Employment Standards Act* so that all workers are supported during this crisis.

The COVID-19 situation is constantly evolving and it's too early to know how federal and provincial funds to support workers and families will be allocated. Each local will have their own issues arising that should be addressed at the district level.

We'll get additional announcements in the coming days as things unfold and we will keep you posted as we get information. Updates will be posted on CUPE BC (cupe.bc.ca) and at bcschools.cupe.ca web site.

Please follow the direction of our B.C. Health Officer Bonnie Henry: stay at home as much as possible; wash your hands frequently; don't touch your face; and use social distancing measures.

Stay safe.
In solidarity,

Warren Williams
President, K-12 Presidents Council

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