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April 20, 2020

Dear Chinook Families,

It has been just over one month since our communities were first impacted by COVID-19. This pandemic has been absolutely life changing and job changing for us all. We are now in the midst of an historical period and educationally we are “**satisficing**”: all of us, including you, are doing the best that we can for our children in the circumstance we find ourselves in. I sincerely thank you for your partnership.

As you know, the health and wellness of our students and staff is the top priority in Chinook. We believe that our division will continue to be a great place to work and go to school even if kids are not physically attending school in our buildings. By now, your child’s teacher has connected with you and your child. We know that solid teaching and learning is already taking place in several communities around the division. School in the COVID era will start up again this week. The last four weeks have been challenging for all involved as we navigate the emergent and rapid change that has come with the COVID-19 pandemic.

There have been some very positive things that have come out of this crisis. For the most part you, me, and your family and my family are presently healthy. We have made plans with you to continue to work with you and your child on a Supplemental Learning Plan. In our division, just over 94% of our students and families have chosen to work on **Supplemental Learning at Home**. That is outstanding!! This really emphasizes the importance of education in the southwest.

The pandemic has brought a pause from the chaos that some of us live with as we follow our children around our communities, province and country in their various pursuits. There has been suspension of travel, our children’s activities have for the most part been cancelled and we are not racing around taking our kids from one event to another. Life has slowed. We now have time to read, make and eat family meals together, go on family walks, play games, watch movies or make TikToks.

I am sure that many families have appreciated teachers connecting with them and most will be extremely happy that supplemental learning packages and activities have arrived. Some parents will have a new appreciation for the work that teachers do. There have been plenty of jokes on Facebook and Instagram about parents expelling their students, quitting, or using corporal punishment while teaching their kids. Some children may be missing school, as teachers and support staff are positive role models in their lives. School is a safe, friendly, caring, consistent and welcoming place in their lives for six hours a day. I want to thank you for your work at home supporting your child’s learning: trying to establish structure and routines, establishing regular bedtimes, playing educational games, having them read, reading to them and working with your child while instilling some life lessons.

For ongoing updates and resources, and to learn more about COVID-19 including symptoms, treatment and how to protect yourself, please visit saskatchewan.ca/covid-19.

We are living in an unusual time. We are making history. We are maintaining social distancing to help our community and to help our health care workers. Embrace the opportunities to reconnect with school and, most importantly, embrace the opportunity to reconnect with your own family. Everything in this life happens for a purpose.

Thank you for your commitment to student learning, for your partnership as parents and for making Chinook Rock, even in unusual circumstances.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'K. McIntyre', written in a cursive style.

Kyle McIntyre
Director of Education