



***Message from the Honourable
Jennifer Whiteside, Minister of Education***

Dear educators, school staff and leaders:

As spring break approaches, I want to thank you for all the incredible work you've done to support student learning and keeping our schools safe and open.

The past year has been one of the most challenging for all of us.

In spring 2020, COVID 19 forced us to make a monumental shift in teaching and learning in order to effectively respond to the COVID-19 pandemic and by September 2020, we were able to safely re-open schools. I am grateful for the tireless work and dedication of you – our teachers, school staff, administrators and others who have continued to exemplify compassion and professionalism in British Columbia's education system.

Keeping schools open in BC has been important for students and their families. We know the challenges of the pandemic have made it difficult for many of you and your colleagues. I recognize and appreciate your strength, dedication and ongoing commitment. You have put the intellectual, social, and emotional wellbeing of students first and they have been able to rely on your calm, kind and thoughtful leadership throughout this unprecedented journey.

While this school year has presented a variety of challenges so far, we have continued to work together to address concerns, consistently implement our health and safety guidelines and respond to issues in order to help students learn, stay connected and receive the supports they need to succeed. We know the classroom is the best place for students to learn, and our united approach has been critical in supporting students across our province. Because of the hard work we have done together BC is viewed as a positive model for so many other jurisdictions in Canada and around the world.

I recognize this may not be the spring break we had all hoped for, but I hope everyone can take some time to relax and recharge.

Our vaccine rollout brings renewed hope. We will get through this health crisis together, and I know we will reflect on the accomplishments we achieved in the face of adversity.

Thank you for continuing to go above and beyond to ensure BC students are supported to achieve their best, stay connected to their school and retain, as much as possible, a sense of normalcy in very trying times.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jennifer Whiteside".

Jennifer Whiteside
Minister of Education