

Saanich Schools

2125 Keating Cross Road, Saanichton, BC, Canada V8M 2A5

(250) 652-7300 Fax: (250) 652-6421

April 24, 2014

Dear parents and students in the Saanich School District community,

As the community is already aware, the BC Teachers' Federation recently began strike action that, at this time, represents the withdrawal of a number of teacher-related duties including the supervision of students in the morning, at recess and after school. District specialists, excluded staff and management are required by the Labour Relations Board to engage in supervision at our district's 16 schools to the degree that is possible during Phase 1 of this strike. Supervision is currently being provided, but some play areas have been closed for safety reasons.

At the in-camera meeting of the Board of Education held on April 23, 2014, trustees voted to cancel recess starting Wednesday, April 30. Many other districts in the province are also taking this step. The rationale for this decision is twofold; we have a significant concern about our ability to ensure student safety in all areas of our schools, and, the Board wishes to declare its position that during this labour dispute there needs to be a level of pressure placed on all parties, not just those employees undertaking supervision. As many of you remember, a dispute of a similar nature and a similar withdrawal of duties in 2011/12 lasted for eight months and had no impact on the bargaining processes.

This cancelation of recess means that the school day will finish 15 minutes earlier for students (not staff) and that buses will run 15 minutes earlier from all schools. For secondary schools, break periods will be shortened.

We apologize for the inconvenience this will cause families. We have delayed the cancelation of recess to Wednesday of next week to give families time to plan. Our Board believes it is time for pressure throughout the system in order to expedite bargaining at the provincial level and avoid another long, protracted labour dispute that damages relationships and ultimately programs and services for children.

Please assist us in making arrangements for your children to be picked up, to be met at home or to be accommodated in child care placements due to this time change.

Again, we thank you for your help and for your continued support of education in the Saanich District.

Yours truly,



Nancy Macdonald
Superintendent of Schools

NM/klg

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