



# Vancouver Elementary School Teachers' Association

September 21, 2021

Dear Suzanne Hoffman and VSB Trustees:

We are writing in response to the district's decision to discontinue the Option 4 model of hybrid or remote learning. It is our understanding that all students are now required to participate in in-class learning at their school or to access Vancouver Learning Network.

In our view, the Option 4 model resulted in significantly increased workload for teachers and serious privacy and pedagogical concerns. While we have, as a union, supported a remote learning option for students, we maintained, and continue to maintain, that staffing for remote students needs to be discrete and separate from staffing for in-class students.

Now that full time attendance is required in Vancouver schools, we wish to make our position on the ongoing workload, privacy and pedagogical discussions clear. Teachers are not responsible for providing learning opportunities for students whose families opt not to attend school, or to attend school on a less than full time basis. Without a district model for remote learning, it is our expectation that teachers will continue to provide in-class instruction using methodology appropriate to the task and will not be required to modify their program to accommodate online or remote learners, nor to report on the progress of students who are not attending full time.

We assert that teachers have professional autonomy regarding the methods of instruction and planning and presentation of materials as per Article F.20, and that while the district may choose to make resources such as TEAMS available to employees, there is no requirement for teachers to use these platforms to provide online instruction, to post assignments, or to conduct other communications with students or families.

Longstanding VSB practice is that "Teachers are not obligated to provide extra work or repeat instruction for any student who misses school due to an extended absence and/or vacation during the school year." We request that the district convey this expectation to families through site-based administrators to ensure that consistent messaging and working conditions be equitable throughout the district.

Our messaging to members over the coming weeks will include clarification on these positions. Absent any contrary direction from the district, we will rely on our Collective Agreement rights and the implementation of VSB policy. We outline our position in an attempt to be proactive, to apply learning from the stress points of the 2020-2021 school year, and to invite discussion with the district on ensuring that teacher workload is fair and manageable, and that families receive information about expectations early and consistently in all Vancouver worksites.

Lastly, should the requirement for students to return to full-time, in person learning generate a significant increase to the number of students enrolled at VLN, we request that a meeting be held early in the school year to discuss mechanisms to support the staff and students working and learning in this distributed model.

Sincerely,

Joanne Sutherland  
President, VESTA

