

MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 15, 2020, 5:30 p.m.

COVID-19 UPDATE – Minister of Education cancels classes indefinitely

Grande Prairie, AB – On Sunday, March 15, 2020 at approximately 5:30 p.m., Peace Wapiti Public School Division (PWPSD) shared the following announcement with staff, trustees, families and students:

Please see the latest announcement from the Minister of Education below. All classes are cancelled effective immediately and all students are expected to stay at home.

Thank you for your understanding this weekend as we responded to evolving information. I truly wish each and every one of you well during this unique time.

Sincerely,

Superintendent Bob Stewart,
Peace Wapiti Public School Division

Announcement from The Honourable Adriana LaGrande, Minister of Education:

I want to thank the many boards and education partners that have provided their views over the weekend. It has become clear that it would be challenging to implement health recommendations like social distancing and proper cleaning protocols.

The safety of our students, teachers and staff is the number one priority for all of us – for me and my Cabinet colleagues, for Dr. Hinshaw and for school staff.

With that in mind, we will be indefinitely cancelling classes across the province. Students are expected to stay home.

We are all in this together. And I hope you all agree this is the right decision.

School authorities are expected to continue their regular day-to-day operations and ensure the safety of our school facilities. We expect maintenance, capital projects, cleaning of facilities, and administrative work to continue.

Now I know that student progression will be on the minds of both parents and students. We expect every student to receive a final mark and that students will progress to their next grade level next year. However, provincial assessments, such as provincial achievement tests will be cancelled as of this time. Diploma exams essential for post-secondary acceptance will continue.

We are confident that every student who is eligible to graduate from Grade 12 this year will graduate.

The Government will also be working with post-secondary institutions to ensure that these extraordinary circumstances do not prevent our students from being eligible for admission to post-secondary studies for the upcoming school year.

Teachers and other school staff will still be expected to work, either from home or at their workplace, to ensure these expectations are met and to support student learning.

Decisions on how to do this are still to be made, and it may vary depending on the school jurisdiction. Given the unique situation, my department and I will work with school divisions throughout this process, and school authorities will still receive their full allotment of funding for the 2019-20 school year.

I know these are challenging times for everyone. I will be sending an open letter to parents in the coming days, and Alberta Education will be working directly with you to help navigate through these changes.

We all have a role to play to keep our students and the staff that work in our schools safe and healthy. This is – and will always be – our top priority. The most up-to-date information on the COVID-19 situation in Alberta can be found on alberta.ca.

I know this leaves you with many questions. Please stay tuned in the days to come for more details.

Sincerely,
Adriana LaGrange
Minister of Education

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PEACE WAPITI PUBLIC SCHOOL DIVISION provides service to approximately 6,000 Kindergarten to Grade 12 students in 36 schools, including nine Hutterite colony schools, two outreach schools, an online school, and educational programming at a group home facility. Visit us online at www.pwpsd.ca and follow @PWPSD on Facebook and Twitter.