

Haida Gwaii

ADDITIONS & ATTACHMENTS of the REGULAR MEETING of the Board of Education School District No. 50 (Haida Gwaii)

Location: District Administration Office, Daajing Giids/
Queen Charlotte and via Google Meets

Date: Monday, March 08, 2021

Time: 6:00 PM

Use Google Meet code: <http://meet.google.com/pdu-ayeh-jnz>

Distribution List:

Board of Education	SD50 All staff
CUPE Local 2020	Haida Gwaii Principals & Vice Principals Association
Haida Gwaii Teachers' Association	Old Massett Village Council
Skidegate Band Council	Skidegate Haida Immersion Program
Haida Gwaii Observer	School District No. 50 Website
Parent Advisory Councils	Village of Queen Charlotte
Village of Port Clements	Village of Masset
Area D Director	Ernie Gladstone
Jennifer White	Jason Alsop
Laverne Hamilton	Student Trustees- Kiarah Brady & Kelsey Ross

ADDITIONS & ATTACHMENTS:

13 – Correspondence: Haida Gwaii Teachers Association

From: Kevin Black kblack@sd50.bc.ca
Subject: Email from HGTA
Date: March 3, 2021 at 12:35 PM
To: Maureen Benoit mbenoit@sd50.bc.ca, Carey Stewart cstewart@sd50.bc.ca



On Feb 21, 2021, at 8:14 PM, Warren McIntyre
<wmclntyre@sd50.bc.ca> wrote:

Dear Trustees,

Teachers on Haida Gwaii are deeply concerned to hear about exposures connected to more infectious variants of COVID-19 in schools in Surrey and Delta and the rising number of confirmed positive cases locally. It is time for decisive action by government, health officials, districts and trustees to counter this new threat to the safety of schools.

It's imperative that staff, students, and parents within these school communities follow the directions of health officials. In the broader community, we need people to do all they can to limit the potential spread of these variants, so they don't find their way into our schools. However, it's clear that the existing measures are not enough.

We need the Ministry of Education, Provincial Health Officer, and Health Authorities to do more to protect staff, students and the families they all go home to. The BC government and health officials have the power to make schools safer and they must use that power. With COVID-19 variants clearly spreading in communities, it is time for these officials to take immediate action.

To start, trustees need to demonstrate leadership and empower school district 50 with the authority to go above and beyond the established health and safety guidelines when necessary. When there is a high rate of COVID-19 within a community, a school district should be able to make regional or site-based enhancements to the safety protocols. Those enhancements include mandating masks everywhere in specific schools, including at elementary schools, and making changes to schedules or online learning access to reduce density and increase physical distancing. The HGTA is concerned that teachers are being burdened more and more by a default expectation to provide dual programming for students; in-class instruction and "homework packages" for students whose families are choosing to keep their children at home indefinitely.

School districts need to be able to exceed the health guidelines to ensure everyone in schools is better protected, especially when there has been an exposure to a COVID-19 variant. This will help keep people in schools safe, but also prevent the variants of concern from spreading to vulnerable adults living in students' homes.

We also need to see widespread rapid testing when a COVID-19 variant of concern shows up in schools. This is not the time to be conservative with testing. Everyone connected to a class with a COVID-19 variant exposure should receive a rapid test. This could help find more cases and reduce the stress and anxiety that is rapidly rising.

Warren McIntyre
HGTA President

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**BOARD OF EDUCATION
SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 50
HAIDA GWAI**

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March 2, 2021

Warren McIntyre
HGTA President

Dear Mr. McIntyre:

Thank you for your email dated February 21, 2021 regarding going above and beyond the established health and safety guidelines.

The Board relies on the guidance of the Provincial Health Officer, the Ministry of Education and responsible government agencies, as well as from the School Medical Officers, to provide guidance on health and safety issues during the pandemic. The Board has no specialized expertise which would justify it in acting inconsistently with the guidance of the officials within government entrusted with the responsibility for ensuring public safety and best practices during this time. The relevant guidelines can be reviewed at:

http://www.bccdc.ca/Health-Info-Site/Documents/COVID_public_guidance/Guidance-k-12-schools.pdf

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/administration/kindergarten-to-grade-12/safe-caring-orderly/k-12-covid-19-health-safety-guidelines.pdf>

The guidelines do not contemplate the universal use of masks by all students. The current guidance for elementary students, with which the Board is expected to comply, is as follows:

Elementary student are not required to wear a mask in schools or on school buses. Elementary students' mask use should be based on their personal or family/caregiver choice, and their choices must be respected.

In line with current public health guidance, masks are not required for elementary school students based on international evidence regarding younger children's capacity to comply with the correct use of masks (e.g. frequent touching/removal of mask, wearing mask incorrectly, etc.), and potential impact of mask wearing on learning and development.

Our staff will follow the guidance of the responsible authorities. Parents are of course free to direct their elementary aged students to wear masks in school if that is their choice.

To the extent the Board were to adopt a mask policy requiring the use of masks in circumstances contrary to this guidance, it may lose the protection afforded by the Protection Against Liability (Covid-19) Order issued by the Minister of Public Safety and Solicitor General which protects persons providing essential services from liability arising from COVID-19 transmission, provided that certain conditions are met.

The Order provides as follows:

Reliance on emergency and public health guidance

3 (1) A person is not liable for damages resulting, directly or indirectly, from an individual being or likely being infected with or exposed to SARS-CoV-2 as a result of the person's operating or providing an essential service if, at the relevant time, the person

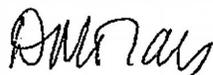
(a) was operating or providing the essential service in accordance with all applicable emergency and public health guidance.

We understand and appreciate the concerns parents have regarding the safety of their children and the Board will continue to fulfill its responsibilities under the relevant orders and guidance.

Questions regarding the content of the existing guidance should be directed to the relevant provincial authorities, who have the relevant expertise to respond.

We trust this is responsive to your enquiry.

Sincerely,



Dana Moraes
Board Chairperson
School District No. 50 (Haida Gwaii)