

March 30, 2020

Message to grade 12 students

*I hope this message finds you all in good health and good spirits as we work to understand our new reality and what it means for you, on the brink of graduation. We appreciate everyone's commitment to following the Provincial Health Officer's recommendations to help stop the spread of COVID-19.*

*It is less than ideal that the suspension of in-class instruction falls during your final year of high school and I can assure you that the fact that it should be the culmination of your hard work and dedication is not lost on us. I wanted to reach out to you in these uncertain times as I am sure you all have many questions about your futures including;*

*Will I be able to graduate?*

*The Ministry of Education has stated that if you are eligible to graduate right now, then you will indeed graduate. Details about next steps and how that will look and what you will be required to do, will be available in the coming days. We will continue to work with the Ministry, your teachers and you to support this.*

*What will happen with my post-secondary, scholarships and bursary applications?*

*The Ministry is working with federal officials and post-secondary institutions nationwide to ensure transition to post-secondary is as seamless for you as it can be. We will share details with you around this as soon as we get them. We are also continuing to support scholarship and bursary applications. If you have specific questions about deadlines or submission criteria, your school staff will still be there to support you.*

*Can I still access support from counsellors?*

*All of our staff will continue to work, most of them remotely. We will be setting up processes for you to be able to connect with the staff you need. Early this week one of your teachers will be reaching out to connect with you.*

*What about graduation ceremonies, proms and their associated events? When, how and will they even happen?*

*While it is too early to predict what events will look like, at this point, we have not cancelled anything and will be looking very closely at what unfolds over the next while. If traditional graduation ceremonies are not possible, we will look at ways to celebrate your hard work in other ways.*

*The Sooke School District is a strong, vibrant, connected school community and we are working together to ensure your success (and the success of all our students) in these extraordinary times.*

*Not only do we care about your success but we also care that you are taking good care of your physical and mental health. We appreciate that this situation will cause some anxiety for you and we will continue working to find answers to your questions to keep those feelings that may be building, at bay.*

*Finally, thank you for your patience while we navigate this new reality. Please continue to keep yourselves and your families healthy following the advice of provincial health officials. Use the tools you have to connect with your friends and families while keeping your physical distance and remember that we are all in this together.*

*We will have more information to share with you in the coming days.*

*Best regards,*

*Scott Stinson, Superintendent of Schools*