



BRANDON SCHOOL DIVISION

Office of the Superintendent / Chief Executive Officer

Mr. Mathew Gustafson, A/Superintendent / Chief Executive Officer
Mrs. Elaine McFadzen, Assistant Superintendent

June 30, 2021

Dear Parents, Guardians, and Students:

I hope that this finds you and your family well. As we approach the end of the school year, I wanted to take this opportunity to provide an update on our current year and next year planning.

Brandon School Division has worked collaboratively with Manitoba Education and Public Health to create plans for a safe learning environment for students and staff during this school year. This required a great deal of support and cooperation from parents, students, and staff for the planning to be effective for the more than 10,000 students and staff who attended our schools. The results of the planning and support were safe schools, with just over 60 positive COVID cases involving individuals who attended school during their period of communicability over the course of the school year. Additionally, the number of close contacts for these cases was also very limited.

We are optimistic that all Kindergarten to Grade 12 students will be able to return to in-class learning when the school year resumes in September. We are also optimistic that we will be able to offer a full range of courses/learning opportunities, including those that were limited over the past year, such as Band, Choir, Industrial Arts, Home Economics, and extra curriculars. However, we are also planning for the possibility that a full reopening may not be possible. The following steps have been taken to provide the greatest level of flexibility to schools to address any potential public health measures that may be in place.

- Prioritizing school staff to create additional classrooms where feasible to reduce class sizes and increase physical distancing
- Planning for personal protective equipment
- Use of individual desks to increase physical distancing
- Use of cohorts to reduce the number of close contacts
- Continued use of multiple entrances to limit student congestion
- Increased ventilation where possible
- Purchase of resources that support additional curricular opportunities

I commit to sending an update in August when we become aware of the potential public health measures.

Accepting the Challenge

Brandon School Division believes that in-class learning provides the best environment for students. However, we acknowledge that students who are medically advised to not return to in-class learning will require additional supports. During the 2020-2021 school year, we participated in the Westman Consortia to provide full-time remote learning. For the upcoming school year, students who are immunocompromised or who have immunocompromised household members will access remote learning opportunities through the Manitoba Remote Learning Support Centre (for K-8 students), and InformNet and the Teacher Mediated Option (TMO) courses (for Grades 9-12 students). Brandon School Division will work closely with families to support students in accessing these remote learning opportunities when required. Registration information will be sent to current remote learning students when it becomes available.

Finally, I would like to express my appreciation to the students, parents/guardians, and staff who demonstrated flexibility and willingness to work together to provide a beneficial educational experience while supporting the public health measures. It has been said that true character is shown in times of adversity. It is my opinion that the character of our community has been demonstrated over the last 15 months to the benefit of our students.

I hope that you have a wonderful summer as we optimistically look forward to the new school year.

Sincerely,

Mathew Gustafson
A/Superintendent/Chief Executive Officer
Brandon School Division