

THE BOARD OF EDUCATION OF SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 19 (REVELSTOKE)

TO: All Trustees

FROM: Mike Hooker, Superintendent of Schools

DATE: January 12th, 2022

INFORMATION: Vaccination Policy Update



Press Release

On January 11th, 2022 the Revelstoke Board of Education passed a motion to implement a Proof of Vaccination Procedure for all district employees and contractors working in our schools. At the meeting, trustees expressed appreciation to the Ministry of Education and the BC Public School Employers' Association for bringing together K-12 partners, including CUPE and the BC Teachers' Federation, to create a framework to support this process. The Board believes that everyone who is eligible to be vaccinated should do so and views this step as an enhancement to the health and safety measures that are helping maintain healthy school environments for students and staff.

Motion passed on January 11th, 2022:

“THAT the Revelstoke Board of Education direct Superintendent Hooker to create, implement, and amend as necessary, a Proof of Vaccination Regarding COVID-19 Operations Procedure to help protect the health and safety of both staff and students in accordance with the following:

- The procedure will be consistent with the K-12 Sector Guidelines for Vaccination Policies and the BC Public School Employers' Association Template Operations Procedure.
- Appropriate employee representatives (including unions and joint health and safety committees), District Parent Advisory Council, Indigenous Education Advisory Committee, and community partners will be consulted.
- The procedures will ensure that the School District complies with its obligation to accommodate individuals who are legally entitled to accommodation for medical reasons or under the Human Rights Code of British Columbia or Canadian Charter of Rights of Freedoms.
- The procedure will ensure the School District's privacy obligations are met.
- That the finalized procedure and communication plan be implemented by April 1, 2022, if feasible, or as soon as possible thereafter.”

Background

The health and safety of students and staff in BC schools has been the main focus of all K-12 partners throughout the COVID-19 pandemic and recovery. A coordinated approach to health and safety guidelines and measures across the K-12 sector has been a key part of why schools have remained open to provide in-person education to students.

Public health officials have been clear that vaccines are the most effective way to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission in schools and communities. The vaccines used in B.C. are highly effective against COVID-19, including among variants of concern. Boards of education have the ability as employers to set terms and conditions of employment and to create policies and procedures on a range of measures related to employee and workplace well-being and health and safety. Within the current COVID-19 context, boards have been contemplating implementing a vaccine policy as part of their overall health and safety strategy. Education partners have agreed that there is value in having a coordinated approach to implementing such policies so as to avoid highly variable health and safety standards in schools and other K-12 workplace settings.

As part of that coordinated approach, in October 2021 the Ministry of Education convened an Advisory Committee comprised of Ministry and sector representatives (including employer and union representatives) to design guidelines for boards of education who choose to implement vaccination policies. Since that time, the BC Public School Employers' Association has also been working closely with union representatives in the sector to develop resources and reach agreements to further support boards of education who choose to implement vaccination policies. These processes have taken into account the obligation of boards of education to comply with operational and statutory requirements, and to ensure alignment with collective agreements, the BC *Human Rights Code*, and the BC *Labour Relations Code*.

The balance struck by this process resulted in a template COVID-19 proof of vaccination procedure which requires K-12 employees to provide their employer with proof of full vaccination, and those who are unwilling or unable to do so will be provided with routine rapid testing as a condition of continued work or the option to be placed on an unpaid leave. The procedure developed includes accommodation for those who cannot be vaccinated for reasons protected by the BC *Human Rights Code*.

The Board of Education of School District No. 19 has voted to implement a COVID-19 proof of vaccination procedure which is consistent with this coordinated sectoral approach and is in alignment with the guidelines and resources that resulted from the processes described above.