

BC Report CCSTA October 29th 2021

Back to School September 2021

All CISBC (Catholic Independent Schools of BC) returned to full-time, in-person instruction this September. Masks are required for all indoor spaces for K-12 staff, students and visitors. Schools are no longer required to maintain a COVID-19 Safety Plan but instead transition to communicable disease in the workplace. Schools continue to monitor the Ministry of Education and Public Health Officials for the health and safety guidelines that have supported this full-time, in-class learning, school sports and extracurricular activities this school year.

CISCBC continues to actively recruit Catholic teachers from across Canada as well as from other countries.

Student Enrollment

Student enrollment has increased slightly throughout the province. Many families who chose to either homeschool or enrol their children in an online school last year have returned to our brick-and-mortar schools. This is in addition to a number of International Students who have also returned to our schools.

Special Purpose Grants

The BC Ministry of Education provided independent schools with a special purpose grant in the amount of \$1.2 million for the COVID Recovery Plans to support health and safety compliance measures. Also a \$650 K provincial grant was provided to support mental health and wellness in schools.

School-Year Theme

The 2021-2022 school year theme for the BC Catholic schools is “One Family, One Hope in Christ”. The province-wide theme is a way for us to come together as one community, united with our local dioceses and the global Church to celebrate the “ Amoris Laetitia Family” year. We look forward to seeing how members of our school-parish communities will live out this beautiful theme in simple and extraordinary ways throughout the Church’s liturgical seasons during the school year. As we reflect on the historical figures of Jesus’ life and community, especially the Blessed Virgin Mary and St. Joseph, we pray that we may be encouraged to always hope in Christ and strive to grow in charity and holiness.

Truth and Reconciliation

In addition to having September 30th to reflect on the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, BC’s Catholic schools are making efforts to reach out, listen and learn from Indigenous Peoples and begin to understand with compassion the sorrow and pain caused by Residential Schools by

- Connecting with a local First Nations band,
- listening to the wisdom of an Elder in-person or virtually,
- holding difficult conversations regarding Canada and Indigenous relationships- past and present,
- honouring the residential school survivors,
- Engaging in self-reflection on our own relationships with this land and its peoples
- We considered September 30th not as “The” day of Truth and Reconciliation but as “a” day of continual progress towards the goal of being fair, friendly, and just nation that we proclaim ourselves to be.

Funding Reduction to Online Schools

The Federation of Independent Schools Association’s (FISA) complaint to the BC Ombudsperson regarding the reduction of funding to online schools was unsuccessful. The complaint was denied due to the fact that government has the legislative right to decide funding, and there is no set date in the Independent School Act as to when funding has to be announced.