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February 12, 2021

Dear Prairie Spirit families:

At the end of Teacher and Staff Appreciation Week and as we begin the February break, I want to acknowledge and recognize all Prairie Spirit teachers and staff for the many ways they support students and student learning throughout our Division. I am so proud of the amazing work they do with our students every day and especially through this very challenging year.

Thank you to the families who have expressed thanks to staff at your local school. Staff members really appreciate your support and kindness during this special week and throughout the school year.

In tangible ways, our teachers and staff provide hope and light to our school communities. I think this is even more evident during this year. There is no doubt that we are all experiencing difficult times and the world has been turned upside down. Despite these challenges, our Prairie Spirit staff members continue to support students and focus on student learning. In doing this good work, we choose to share the good and the hope and to shine a light.

“Being positive does not mean ignoring the negative. Being positive means overcoming the negative. There is a big difference between the two.” (Marc and Angel 2021)

COVID update

There have been 12 incidents of COVID-19 in Prairie Spirit schools since my last letter to Prairie Spirit families in January (a total of 51 incidents since the school year started). Our schools have strong protocols and processes designed to help protect students and staff. Dr. Shahab, the provincial Chief Medical Health Officer, has specifically recognized the good work being done in Saskatchewan schools. I also want to acknowledge our school leaders and staff who work together to inform the class and school community when a case is identified and then adjust plans accordingly.

We appreciate the support of parents and families when a class is directed to self-isolate and learn from home for a period of time. An [overview](#) of this process is presented in an infographic posted on the Division’s homepage.

The Division will receive another shipment of disposable medical grade masks and face shields for staff from a provincial government order. This supply will include medical grade masks for children, which will be available at schools. In addition, the government will supply schools with child and adult-sized reusable three-layer cloth masks.

The provincial government has created specific training for staff regarding how to properly use face masks and face shields. All Prairie Spirit staff will be participating in this training as another layer of protection for our schools and offices.

Our partners in Public Health have indicated that the risk of COVID-19 transmission remains high throughout the province. It is critical that we continue to follow public health orders so that our efforts and sacrifices over the past year are not lost.

Planning for fall

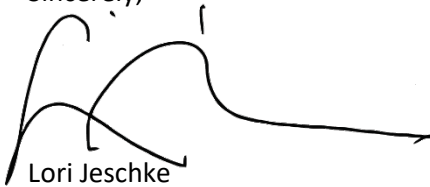
We are learning more about the provincial plan for the vaccination of the general public. According to Dr. Shahab, vaccinations should be available to most of the adult population by the return to school this fall. We know our plans for the 2021/22 school year will continue to include mitigating strategies for COVID-19.

As we look to the months ahead, we recognize there will still be challenges. We are confident in the good plans we have in place and the great leaders and staff members who are working together in our schools. Thank you to each Prairie Spirit family for your support and collaboration so far this year.

We are thankful that we get to partner with our families and communities as we focus on learning in safe and caring places.

Enjoy the Family Day holiday and the February break!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lori Jeschke', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Lori Jeschke
Director of Education