



An Open Letter to all PVNC Grade Eight Graduating Students and their Parents/Guardians from the Director of Education

May 12, 2020

Dear PVNC Grade 8 Graduates of 2020:

I am writing on behalf of the board of trustees, the senior leadership team, and all of the principals and vice principals of our thirty elementary schools in PVNCCDSB. I hope this letter finds you safe and healthy, and coping well with the unique times we are in and the challenges we are all facing. Who could have imagined, last September when your graduating year began, that we would all be dealing with a global pandemic, learning and working from home, and being challenged to adapt to a new way of living and learning?

I am so impressed with how you have taken up the challenge to continue to be engaged in your learning through our PVNC Learn@Home program. This online learning opportunity is growing every day, despite the fact that it has required teachers and other staff members to learn a whole new way of leading and supporting your learning, as well as the fact that you have had to adapt to a whole new way of being a student and engaging with your teachers and classmates. I thank you and your teachers for your courage, your dedication, and your perseverance.

No doubt everyone is wondering about Grade 8 graduation ceremonies. Much discussion has taken place, and we have heard from a number of students and parents. We realize it is very important to do something significant to mark the end of Grade 8 and the elementary school years. We understand that if we leave it to the fall, it just won't be the same. Therefore, each of our PVNC Elementary Schools will be holding a virtual grade 8 graduation ceremony during the last week of June. We had a virtual Catholic Student Leadership Awards Ceremony just last week and it was a big success.

Each school will set their own date and time and communicate the details to you and your families. The online or virtual ceremony will allow for greetings from school and board staff, a parish priest, the valedictorian, and a recognition of the completion certificates and awards that have been achieved by all of the students. There is the opportunity to include many of the elements that are unique to each school community, and we look to the creativity of each school to put together a memorable online graduation. The school will also communicate with you individually should there be any privacy concerns already flagged with the school office.

Page 1 of 2



Everyone will miss the face to face gathering, but you can “dress up” for the occasion, and have your picture taken with those family members in your homes. In the fall, if things are more back to normal and larger gatherings are allowed by public health officials, then each school will discuss with you the option of having some type of gathering or reunion to allow time for goodbyes and good wishes.

Graduates, we will all remember this year for the challenges we faced and the changes to which we adapted. Hopefully, we will also remember this year for the resilience we summoned, the courage we demonstrated and the generosity we showed to others, in our own homes and in the communities in which we live. The theme of this year’s Catholic Education Week 2020 was “IGNITING HOPE”. That’s exactly what we all need to do: look to the future with hope for new possibilities, a hope that is grounded in our faith in God and our love for those around us.

My best wishes to all of you. You are in my prayers and I am wishing you every success as you complete your Grade 8 year.

Sincerely,

Michael Nasello
Director of Education

MN/mk