



School start up during COVID-19

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As the 2020-2021 school year has begun under the cloud of COVID-19, school start up has been challenged like never before with so much uncertainty swirling around.

Here are a few guiding thoughts that might help you better manage the early school year turbulence.

1. Everyone is affected by COVID-19

As you will all have experienced in your own personal and professional bubbles, there is a wide range of opinion and response to the pandemic. We are all vulnerable and influenced by the COVID-19 reality. It's important to remind ourselves (and others) that it's not one person's fault that we have to deal with this as individuals or as a collective. We are truly all in this together and need to be sensitive and acknowledge it as such. As my grandfather from Saskatchewan reminded me on his 100th birthday, it's important to find ways to 'pull together' during difficult times. Seek common ground and mutual understanding, as we are all in this together.

2. Staying present

As we envision the school year unfolding, it's easy for all of us, particularly educational leaders, to be drawn to predicting and anticipating our future professional reality. However, consistently looking too far ahead (or behind) can create increased feelings of being overwhelmed and out of control. Make space daily to check in, ground yourself and be in the moment. This is the space where leadership truly thrives.

3. Cultivating best practices

As administrators, for many of you, you've had the benefit of engaging in return-to-school activities during the previous school year. As well, administrators across the province (and the world!) have discovered and

developed creative ways of approaching and overcoming various COVID-19 obstacles challenging public education. Check in with your local and provincial BCPVPA contacts. There are best practice 'gems' being shared regularly during the weekly BCPVPA Coffee Connections Zoom chats. There is also great information to be found in the recent annual BCPVPA magazine publication, [Leading: Back to School Fall 2020](#). Share with your colleagues and cultivate best practices that can help overcome COVID-19 obstacles that are topical to your community and school.

4. Keeping our emotional temperature in check

All of us at various times during the start-up of 2020-2021 will be challenged and feel uncertain. As leaders, it's important to be mindful of our own emotional responses to these challenges and feelings. Find professionally safe relationships and spaces where you can debrief, check assumptions and decompress in healthy ways. Should you struggle regularly with your own emotional regulation, seek support. There are many resources to help you gain greater confidence in your ability to keep your emotional temperature in check. Please reach out to the [BCPVPA EIP Program](#) should you seek support and guidance around remaining professionally well during this challenging time.

With great respect and admiration,

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