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Opinion

OUR VIEW

A minimal risk

The province announced on May 15 that schools will be reopening on June 1. This is a really promising development, and we think parents should seriously consider sending their kids back to class.

Physically sending children back to school is still voluntary, with the ultimate decision resting with parents. There are some children who should probably not head back to the classroom just yet, such as those with underlying health conditions. But for most kids the risk will be minimal.

Parents must weigh the fact that there are very few active COVID-19 cases on Vancouver Island at this time, so the risk of a child catching it from a peer or from a teacher or other staff member is very low. If this wasn't the case, it would be a whole other ballgame.

Parents also must weigh the fact that this isn't going to be class as usual. There will be physical distancing and sanitary measures in place. It will involve widening children's social contacts from what they have been of late, but that's going to have to happen sometime.

We cannot live forever in a bubble.

Parents have to weigh risks for their children all the time that walk the line between preparing them to live in the world and be resilient, and making sure they can handle the situations in which they find themselves. Sending them back to school is a risk worth taking.

At this point, it seems certain that schools will be back in session come fall, and it doesn't seem likely that the health situation will be very much different then. We're going to have to find a new normal in the classroom just like everywhere else. We might as well do it now.

We don't believe that our provincial health officials, who have done such an excellent job of keeping our experience of this virus manageable, would be suggesting a return to school if they didn't believe it could be done with minimal risk. Time to poke our heads out of our comfortable nests and venture out into the world again.

» We want to hear from you. Send comments to editor@cowichanvalleycitizen.com. Letters must include daytime phone number and hometown.

OTHER VIEWS



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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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CVRD directors well compensated for their time

The CVRD board should be ashamed of itself for letting some of its members try to sneak through a whopping \$11,000 or 33 per cent raise to themselves for April 1 when taxpayers are facing huge financial uncertainty and fear with today's virus threats. All they did in a recent meeting was defer the pay raise decision for a month and plan to bring it back again for approval. Talk about tone deaf and irresponsible and a cruel April Fool's joke!

Specifically directors Sierra Acton and Ian Morrison, who spearheaded this disgusting nonsense, should resign after explaining fully to the public as to what they were thinking. Acton's lame claim that 15 months of her work on this raise would be wasted was stupid — what hogfest did she participate in that could spend more than a year trying to figure out how to pick the public's pocket for such

an outrageous raise?

The CVRD directors are already well paid for the time they spend each month on their duties and meetings. Last election there was no shortage of candidates for these plum political positions at the current generous pay rates that cost us in total more than \$500,000 each year. The directors also pack home more than \$75,000 in annual expense claims.

The public would be more accepting if these guys did something really useful to protect taxpayers from huge increases in annual taxes or prevented the bureaucracy from expanding but they have done none of this. Our taxes increase every year without fail and they add more and more bureaucrats each year way in excess of population growth or inflation.

It would be very helpful if the CVRD and other local governments could also explain to taxpayers how they sat by and approved continuous raises every year for their senior managers so that now more than 130 of

them in the Cowichan Valley take home more than \$100,000 per year — some taking more than \$200,000 per year along with extremely generous life-long gold-plated pensions and benefits that taxpayers could only dream about.

You can bet not one of those collecting these huge salaries have lost their job or any pay in the past month unlike many in the private sector who are facing serious, devastating financial challenges. Businesses are suffering and threatened by these unprecedented times and we have local politicians trying to give themselves a huge raise! This irrational imbalance in our society has to be resolved and not by more money for undeserving politicians.

**W.E. (Bill) Dumont
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