

For immediate release

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### **Teachers to Hold a “Road Rally for Safe Schools” in Prince Rupert**

(PRINCE RUPERT) The Prince Rupert District Teachers’ Union (PRDTU) is organizing a “Road Rally for Safe Schools” to raise public awareness on the importance of a mask requirement, better distancing measures, and other safety improvements for students and school staff. The rally is one part of a public awareness campaign, launched on December 2, 2020, that will include advertising in local media, leafleting outside of schools (before and after school, off school grounds), rallies for safe schools, and other community outreach for school safety.

Teachers are calling on School District 52 (SD52) to implement higher standards for students in the district. The Road Rally will be held on Thursday December 10th starting at 4 PM. Teachers and members of the public are invited to assemble along 7th Ave East, meeting at the corner at 7th Ave East and Green Street. Participants are asked to remain in their cars to ensure physical distancing. The rally will drive through town as a caravan, ending outside of the SD52 office.

Members of the local union, which represents teachers in SD52, held a General Meeting on Saturday November 21, 2020 to vote on recommendations for specific school safety improvements. At that meeting, teachers voted to recommend that masks be mandated in schools whenever physical distancing is not possible (with exceptions provided for medical and other student needs).

These recommendations were brought to SD52 at a November 30, 2020 meeting between union officers, the Superintendent, and the Board President. The PRDTU looks forward to hearing a response from SD52 soon and appreciates the opportunity to bring its recommendations directly to SD52.

“Local teachers are united around school safety,” said Gabriel Bureau, president of the PRDTU. “We want schools to be safe for everyone – students and staff alike. That’s why we’re calling for a mask mandate in local schools.”

The PRDTU believes that the unique needs of the North Coast region make a mask mandate and other measures especially urgent for SD52.

“We need local leadership on school safety, especially given the remote and rural location of many communities served by our schools, the number of vulnerable students and families in the district, and the importance of protecting Elders and other community members,” said Bureau. “Teachers in Prince Rupert and the region served by School District 52 want the community to know that we value school safety first and foremost for all our students. That’s why the teachers are calling for improvements to school safety.”