



THE EDUCATION CENTRE - AURORA

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January 21, 2022

The Honorable Stephen Lecce
Minister of Education
Ministry of Education
5th Floor, 438 University Avenue
Toronto, ON M7A 2A5
minister.edu@ontario.ca

The Honorable Christine Elliott
Minister of Health
College Park 5th Floor, 777 Bay Street
Toronto ON M7A 7J3
minister.moh@ontario.ca

Dr. Kieran Moore,
Chief Medical Officer of Health
Ministry of Health
Box 12, Toronto ON M7A 1N3
Kieran.Moore@ontario.ca

Dear Minister Lecce, Minister Elliott and Dr. Moore,

I am writing on behalf of the York Region District School Board to advocate for additional measures to be implemented to ensure safe and healthy school environments for students and staff members in York Region.

The York Region District School Board (YRDSB) has prioritized student health and safety while ensuring optimal learning within the Ministry of Education (the Ministry) and public health parameters. Throughout the 2021-2022 school year, the YRDSB has closely aligned with the Ministry's COVID-19: Health, Safety and Operation Guidance for Schools (2021-2022) and implemented all measures outlined by the Ministry and as directed by our local Public Health unit. These have included masking mandates for all students from JK to grade 12, non-fit tested N95 masks for staff, student cohorting, cleaning/disinfecting procedures, and upgrades to school ventilation systems using MERV-13 filters.

We value the actions that the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health and the Chief Medical Officer of Health have taken to date, to address the health and

safety of our students and staff when in school. However, more is needed and we are strongly advocating that additional and enhanced measures be implemented immediately to ensure the highest level of safety during this pandemic.

These include the following:

- additional availability of masks for all students including consideration of the provision of non-fit tested N95 respirator masks for all students;
- additional portable HEPA filter units to ensure that each classroom has a unit installed to enhance the air quality in our student's learning spaces;
- resuming the requirement for contact tracing, reporting and dismissals of cohorts by local Public Health units when positive cases are confirmed;
- providing an ongoing supply of Rapid Antigen test kits for all students and staff which can be distributed without re-kitting, and
- transparent and timely communication with parents that clearly describes changes in protocols and rationale and which is fully accessible in format and multiple languages.

The Board of Trustees want to ensure that students, families and staff have the utmost confidence that their learning and working environments are safe and that all possible measures are taken to minimize the transmission of COVID-19.

Your consideration and support of this request is greatly appreciated and we will support effective communication to families, staff and students.

The York Region District School Board looks forward to your response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Allan Tam." The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned diagonally across the page.

Allan Tam

Board Chair, York Region District School Board

cc. YRDSB Trustees and Student Trustees
Ontario Public School Boards' Association,
All York Region Members of Provincial Parliament
Ontario Public School Board Chairs