

Sept 3, 2020

Dear YRDSB Trustees and Director Sirisko,

We are writing to you today, mere days away from when schools are to reopen to staff and students, in order to express our grave concerns with the Government's inadequate plan and to call for your immediate action to ensure the safety of students and all school staff.

Doug Ford and Steven Lecce have made it abundantly clear through their inaction and glaring underfunding for a safe reopening of schools that they have abandoned public education and they do not intend to take responsibility for supporting a safe and healthy reopening for Ontario's students, teachers and education workers. They have ignored and impugned teachers and education workers, selectively ignored critical aspects of medical experts' advice, and completely disregarded safety measures put in place in our communities, most notably the basic need to ensure we maintain physical distancing of at least 2 meters.

We recognize the critical role the education system plays relative to the current economic challenges, in addition to supporting the education, mental health and wellbeing of students. We also know that a safe reopening of schools is critical to supporting public confidence and thereby supporting economic recovery for all.

We implore you to do everything necessary to protect the physical and mental health of students and staff, including but not limited to:

- Reducing class sizes to allow for a 2 meter physical distancing to be maintained between students and between students and staff in all classrooms, mirroring Public Health protocols in place for public spaces in our communities
- Mandatory masking in all grades
- Ensuring your reopening timeline allows for full safety preparedness across every YRDSB school
- Publically telling the Ontario Government that their plan does not adequately support a safe return to school and that as a Board you require more resources and funding to hire additional school staff and to improve the safety conditions on Board provided transportation
- Publicly identify any and all shortcomings in the Government's Plan to reopen schools

The students, staff and families of the YRDSB are depending on you to take every available action to allow you to open schools in a manner that all can have confidence in, because it transparently prioritizes safety above all else.

Darren Campbell, President, Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario – York Region
On behalf of the ETFO-YR Executive

Sandy Glassford, T/OT President, D16 OSSTF

Todd Canning, President-CUPE 1734 York Region District School Board