

Open Letter to the Provincial Government

August 12th, 2020

Dear Premier Ford and Minister Lecce

The Clinton School Council would like to express our grave concerns with the Provincial Government's guidelines for school reopening in September 2020, particularly with respect to elementary students. We are now four weeks away from the start of school and find ourselves in the unacceptable position of having no confidence that our staff, students and teachers can return to schools safely and in adherence to current public health guidelines.

As a parent group we implore you to immediately address the shortfalls in your guidelines, and provide funding, to enable the school boards to do their job and come up with equitable and sustainable plans that will provide the best possibility of a safe return to public education.

Premier Ford and Minister Lecce, we are specifically requesting action be taken on the following high impact items:

- **REDUCED CLASS SIZES FOR ALL GRADES** – to ensure adequate social distancing as recommended by public health experts.
- **MANDATORY FACE COVERINGS FOR ALL** – with exemptions based on special needs or medical grounds.
- **RELEASE OF SUFFICIENT FUNDS** – to provide adequate PPE, hygiene and cleaning supplies, health screening, ventilation and safety equipment, and mental health and training supports for teachers and students across all Ontario schools.
- **DELAYED OR STAGED REOPENING** – to enable time for 1) adequate funds to be allocated; 2) boards to develop thoughtful plans; 3) schools to prepare and implement safety protocols, training programs, and healthy learning environments for all students, whether in-class or remote.

So many of our schools are suffering from infrastructure and basic hygiene challenges as a result of years of insufficient funding. Now is the time to correct this. The Government should be committed to the provision of public education in an environment that ensures the health, safety and emotional well-being of all members in our school communities; and even more so in the face of a global pandemic where there outcomes will have a direct impact on the social and economic well-being of the boarder community.

We must all do whatever it takes to minimize the risk of COVID-19 spread, while also providing our children with the opportunity to learn and thrive. It is not too late to address the clear gaps in your guidelines and support our school boards and administrators to make Ontario's return to school one of the success stories.

Sincerely,

Clinton Street Junior Public School Council