



April 28, 2021

Honourable Tyler Shandro  
Minister of Health  
423 Legislature Building  
Edmonton, AB T5K 2B6

Dear Minister Shandro,

## **Urgent request for vaccinations for school-based staff**

In January, we wrote to you to ask that all school-based staff, as critical workers, be placed in high priority to receive the COVID-19 vaccination. These staff do not have the option of working from home, nor can they limit their time in classrooms to short intervals.

To date, school-based staff have not received priority and the COVID-19 situation has worsened. We now have the more contagious variants of concern, cases of transmission and required isolations are higher than in January, the increase of reported in-school transmission cases and the stress on staff, students, families and our Education and Healthcare systems is relentless.

All of our divisions have had to ask that individual schools transition to online learning due to the impact of large-scale isolation requirements and insufficient supply staff to cover the shortages. As of April 19, all students in Grades 7 to 12 with the Calgary Board of Education and the Calgary Catholic School Division shifted to at-home learning for two weeks. As of April 22, all students in Edmonton Public and Edmonton Catholic School Divisions have done the same. The continued uncertainty and shifts between in-person and online learning disrupt learning, increase stress and cause real hardships for students and families.

Vaccinating school-based staff would reduce staff stress, minimize disruption to student learning and family schedules, and result in significant cost savings due to the decreased need for staff replacement. It would also provide increased protection to students, for whom a vaccine is still not approved.

School staff are critical workers and, as such, merit the protection of immediate COVID-19 vaccination. We urge you to work with Alberta Health and Alberta Health Services to immediately prioritize vaccinations for school-based staff.

Sincerely,



Marilyn Dennis  
Chair, Board of Trustees  
Calgary Board of Education



Mary Martin  
Chair, Board of Trustees  
Calgary Catholic School District



Sandra Palazzo  
Chair, Board of Trustees  
Edmonton Catholic Schools



Trisha Estabrooks  
Chair, Board of Trustees  
Edmonton Public Schools

- c. Honourable Adriana LaGrange, Minister of Education  
Lorrie Jess, President, Alberta School Boards Association

