

April 7, 2021

The Honourable Doug Ford, Premier of Ontario
Office of the Premier
Legislative Bldg Rm 281
Queen's Park, 111 Wellesley St. West
Toronto, ON M7A 1A1

RE: Prioritizing Education Workers in COVID-19 Vaccination Schedule

Premier Ford,

We are writing on behalf of the Halton Catholic District School Board with an urgent and time-sensitive request for your consideration.

Specifically, we are requesting that education workers in Ontario be given the highest priority in the current phase of the COVID-19 vaccination schedule.

As a school district, the safety and well-being of our staff, students, and families is our greatest concern. This year has presented extraordinary challenges, but we are working very closely with Halton Region Public Health to help ensure our schools are safe learning environments. We have a very comprehensive plan in place in each of our schools, which includes a number of health and safety protocols that were developed in consultation with Halton Public Health.

Our school staff, under the leadership of our school administrators, are doing a tremendous job supporting the students and families we serve during a very difficult school year. Despite our best efforts, COVID-19 continues to spread in our communities, and cases are coming into our schools.

Yesterday, Halton Region reported 138 new cases of COVID-19 – the highest daily case count to date. Just today, your office declared a provincial emergency to help slow the spread of COVID-19. This measure imposes a stay-at-home order; however, schools remain open for in-person learning.

As the virus continues to spread across the province, and case counts continue to climb in our communities, we are becoming increasingly more concerned for the well-being of our students and staff.

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While we would all agree that in-person learning is best for children and student mental health, the strain on our school staff cannot be overlooked.

This is a stressful time for everyone as we live and work through a pandemic, but there are additional pressures on each of our frontline workers in education.

Many of our school staff work closely with students with complex medical needs and should be vaccinated immediately. All staff who work with children and youth, including teachers and other education workers, school support staff, school bus drivers, and school administrators are at risk. Ensuring they are vaccinated as early as possible will protect our staff, so they can continue providing the exceptional service they are providing to our students, our families, and our community.

Stopping the spread of COVID-19 is a shared responsibility, and it is incumbent on us to protect the frontline workers in all essential services – including education.

We urge you to prioritize the immediate COVID-19 vaccination for all education workers in Ontario.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that appears to read "Patrick Murphy".

Patrick Murphy
Chair of the Board

A handwritten signature in black ink that appears to read "Pat Daly".

Pat Daly
Director of Education

- cc. *The Honourable S. Lecce, Minister of Education*
The Honourable C. Elliott, Minister of Health
Dr. H. Meghani, Chief Medical Officer of Health, Halton Region
M. Duarte, Milton Trustee & Vice-Chair, HCDSB
B. Agnew, Burlington Trustee, HCDSB
P. DeRosa, Oakville Trustee, HCDSB
N. Guzzo, Oakville Trustee, HCDSB
V. Iantomasi, Burlington Trustee, HCDSB
H. Karabela, Oakville Trustee, HCDSB
T. O'Brien, Burlington Trustee, HCDSB
J. O'Hearn-Czarnota, Halton Hills Trustee, HCDSB