

Mr. Wes Hahn
Director of Education
Trillium Lakelands District School Board
Box 420
Lindsay, Ontario
K9V 4S4

via email

April 16, 2021

Dear Mr. Hahn,

We are aware that both the modelling of Covid 19 spread and the actual infection and hospitalization rates are changing rapidly. Variants of concern appear to be much more virulent and to be making younger people more seriously ill. We believe even one workplace illness is too many.

In part due to the above circumstances the government has closed schools to in person learning indefinitely for most students and has called on public health units to immediately vaccinate educators both in cases where they come in contact with special education students and in hotspots. TLDSB has released information to specific educators who service special education students regarding their eligibility for vaccination and many have seized this opportunity.

The vaccination process requires both the opportunity to receive the vaccine and the medically appropriate period for the body to develop the necessary anti-body response. While educators in covered by the SMDHU are being vaccinated this week, we are aware that the earliest available vaccination dates in HKPRDHU are May 3 and 4. Despite this delay TLDSB has indicated that some special education students will be eligible to return to school in person April 19.

In light of this and for the following reasons we are requesting that TLDSB maintain distance education only for all special education students until the educators who come in contact with them are vaccinated and an adequate time period has passed for the vaccine to take effect.

Many of our special education students require close contact assistance of various kinds.

Many of our special education students are either unmasked, inconsistently masked, or improperly masked raising the risk that they might transmit the virus if they are infected. In certain instances students grab at the masks of educators and spit at personnel working with them.

The government has indicated that it expects most special education students to learn from home indefinitely in accordance with the closure order. Frontline educators should be involved in this discussion of who can learn from home.

We have local experience providing meaningful programming to special education students through a variety of distance means including the week after holiday break this year and for an extended period last spring.

We believe asking special educators to return to in person school while unvaccinated poses an undue risk to their safety, a risk the premier himself referred to as "risking your life" in an interview referring to those who declined to be vaccinated.

Thank you for your timely attention to this most serious matter.

Yours Truly,



William Campbell
President, CUPE 997

Karen Bratina
President, TLETL



Colin Matthew
President, OSSTF District 15