



490 Woodward Avenue
Saint John, New Brunswick
E2K 5N3

March 16, 2021

Minister Dominic Cardy
Department of Education & Early Childhood
Place 2000, 250 King Street
Fredericton, NB E3B 9M9

Dear Minister Cardy:

During the ASD-S District Education Council meeting of March 10, 2021, a motion was made and passed by Council to advocate in the strongest terms possible for the return of high school students to daily in person classes.

We are writing to request immediate attention towards two acute concerns we have for high school students in ASD-S: 1) the state of their education and 2) their mental wellbeing. We know that you share these concerns and appreciate the public support shown by both you and the media this past week.

We respect the incredibly difficult mandate involved in handling the pandemic, as well as the need to balance the many facets of public health that have been impacted; however, we are disappointed that the prioritization of youth in the vaccination plan has recently been rescinded. We would like to strongly reinforce the current public attention to our high school students - particularly those in grade 12 - that have been acutely impacted at a seminal point in their lives. As advocates for our education system, and first and foremost our children, we ask that you continue to advocate for all Public Health measures possible to return high school students back to class every day.

The ASD-S District Education Council has solicited feedback from students, parents, teachers and staff, and the near-unanimous feedback has been that the single most important thing we can do to help these students' education and mental wellbeing is to get them back to school five days per week. It is our collective opinion that this request should be weighed as a key element of the best interests for Public Health. While we know the current school situation is having considerable negative impact on the students' education and mental wellbeing right now; none of us know the extent of the medium to long-term impacts.

Some of our members have spent considerable time discussing this topic, including ideas for how to safely return the students back to school. We would be happy to connect them with any of you or your staff to discuss how we can leverage the incredible work done to keep our schools safe throughout this pandemic.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Robert Fowler'.

Robert Fowler, Chair
on behalf of Anglophone South School District Education Council

Copy: Premier Blaine Higgs & All Party COVID Committee
Minister Dorothy Shephard
Dr. Jennifer Russell
Dr. Kim Barker
Zoë Watson, Superintendent