



Calgary Board
of Education



January 22, 2021

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

Dear Minister Shandro,

Vaccinations for school-based staff

In your government's update to Albertans last week, we were pleased to hear significant progress has been made to ensure the most vulnerable in our society are receiving the COVID-19 vaccine. We also commend your government's decision to offer the vaccine early to healthcare workers.

We are writing on behalf of the metro school boards to advocate that all school-based staff, as essential workers, be placed in high priority to receive the COVID-19 vaccination.

As you are aware, school-based staff, including supply staff, do not have the privilege of working from home. Any staff member who works directly with children in our schools is potentially placed in situations daily which expose them to the COVID-19 virus. The impact of the pandemic on our students, families and staff can also be seen in the daily cases reported on the [Government of Alberta website](#).

There can be significant impacts on school operations when a single staff member contracts the virus. For example, when a staff member tests positive, anywhere from dozens to hundreds of students and often other staff are directed to isolate. If our staff is protected from COVID-19 by vaccination, significant costs associated with staff replacement could be minimized as would disruption to student learning. It is also important to keep in mind that, to date, no vaccine has been approved for those under the age of 16. Vaccinating staff would provide another layer of protection for these students and their families.

In closing, staff who work in our schools are a vital part of our public service infrastructure and, as such, merit the protection of early COVID-19 vaccination alongside all other essential

workers. Vaccinating staff who provide service in schools will, ultimately, keep schools open for in-person learning, help keep students in classrooms without disruptions to their instruction, and enable parents and guardians to focus on their endeavours, while their children are learning safely at school, which ultimately creates a more prosperous Alberta for everyone.

We thank you for your consideration and look forward to your positive response.

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