



Statement Regarding Ministry of Education Return to School Plan

For Immediate Release
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Toronto, ON- Parents across Ontario have been expressing their concerns about return to school plans released last week from the Ontario Government. Since 1939 the Ontario Association of Parents in Catholic Education has fulfilled its mandate to advocate for parents who share a common goal in supporting the continuation and preservation of excellence in publicly funded education in Ontario. We believe that the school plans tabled do not reflect the voice of parents in this province or ensure the safety for our children at school.

The Ministry of Education have left parents in an absolutely untenable position - in many cases having to literally choose between their jobs and their children's safety. "Lack of safety and equity both sit at the head of this poorly laid table of the government's return to school plan", quotes a parent from Toronto CDSB.

Elements of the plan do not align with what are the new Health and Safety policies we have come to accept to keep us all safe. Indeed, parents are watching what is happening in other countries and seeing that cases have increased in the community from back to school settings. With so many unanswered questions parents will be forced to continue remote learning, and once again, those students with no home supports will be the ones left to suffer – in the best-case scenario of remote learning there STILL needs to be support from parents at home for its success.



The general sentiment from parents is that of confusion and distrust, as the protocols in health and safety and social distancing are not supported in this initial back to school plan. “At each stage as Ontarians we have been encouraged to move slowly to control the spread, however, the back to school plan requires a leap of faith and appears to move too far away from and too quickly from what are the current new norms in society”, quotes a parent from Dufferin Peel CDSB.

Without further changes, investments, and a clear direction on outbreak protocol it is likely a lot of parents will not feel confident in sending their children back to the proposed “face to face delivery” in September. “The classroom protocols are insufficient, or at least unclear - for parent’s, safety is their primary concern for their children, the logistics need to be more clearly articulated for parents and it not fair for administrators, teachers and staff to bear the weight of safety protocols”, a parent from York CDSB said.

OAPCE has provided ongoing feedback to the Ministry repeatedly stating that there needs to be added investments to allow smaller cohorts, more investing to hire additional resources, staff and clear and concise guidelines for the handling of possible outbreaks. “This plan has not allowed parents to feel fully safe to make the firm decision of sending their kids back to school, it has done the opposite, and made parents feel more nervous about placing their children in an unexpected environment,” said a parent from Brant Haldimand Norfolk CDSB.

We urge all parents to contact their local MPP’s, the Ministry of Education and Premier Doug Ford. Our children deserve the best publicly funded Catholic Education and that includes a safe education.

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About OAPCE

As Ontario's parent voice association, the Ontario Association of Parents in Catholic Education (OAPCE) is the voice of Ontario parents and guardians in Catholic education. We are the provincial voice that is authorized through the Education Act and Regulation 612, to represent families with children enrolled in the English Catholic education system. OAPCE is a vital connection between the Ministry of Education, Catholic District School Boards in Ontario, the Institute of Catholic Education, Ontario Catholic Trustees, Parish, Regional Parent's Associations, Parent Councils other valuable parent groups, and prominent advocate for Catholic education excellence and student success. OAPCE elevates the profile of a publicly funded Catholic system of education by providing opportunities for ongoing information sharing, resources, learning, networking and community building.

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