

Medicine Hat Public School Division601-1st Avenue SW, Medicine Hat, AB T1A 4Y7 | Phone 403.528.6700 | Fax 403.529.5339 | www.mhpsd.ca

10 February 2021

Office of the Minister of Health
Honourable Tyler Shandro
423 Legislature Building
10800 – 97 Avenue
Edmonton, Alberta
T5K 2B6

Via email: health.minister@gov.ab.ca

Dear Minister Shandro,

The Board of Trustees of Medicine Hat Public School Division is reaching out to advocate for the teachers and school workers of the province of Alberta and, by extension, the tens of thousands of Alberta families who rely on them as a support to our economy. To date, the plan posted to the Alberta COVID-19 vaccination [website](#) is silent regarding the timing of the vaccination of teachers and school support staff. Given that teachers are front line workers, critical to the development of our children and youth and to the function of our economy, our Board asks that you consider ensuring teachers and school staff are vaccinated as soon as possible.

We know that the decision to keep schools open has been made based on solid science and attention to the role of schools in the economy. We understand that younger children do not contribute to the spread of the virus at the same rate as older children and adults. We are proud that our schools attend to the public health direction provided by AHS. This work both limits the spread of the virus and provides an efficient support to contact tracing. Finally, when our schools function without disruption it relieves strain on families and on the private sector of the economy.

The front-line workers who serve our Alberta's students are a reasonable representation of the workforce of the province. They come to work with comorbidities that, in normal times, do not pose significant risk to their health or to the stability of the organization. However, COVID-19 (and the emerging variants), coupled with the challenges to physical distancing that are inherent to schools, leave school staff more vulnerable. By extension, the support that schools provide to our community through the provision of consistent, high quality service to children and youth are put at risk.

We contend that vaccinating these valuable public servants at the commencement of Phase 2 is the wisest course of action; ideally, this would ensure that school staff were vaccinated prior to the beginning of the 2021-2022 school year.

The Board of Medicine Hat Public School Division understands the immense pressures and challenges faced by you and your department during these unprecedented times. We thank you for taking the time to read our letter and look forward to your response.

Respectfully,



Ms. Catherine Wilson, Board Chair
Medicine Hat Public School Division

cc: Medicine Hat Local No. 1 – Alberta Teachers' Association
CUPE 829 – Medicine Hat Public School Division Michaela
Glasgo, MLA for Brooks-Medicine Hat
Drew Barnes, MLA for Cypress-Medicine Hat