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[Education.minister@gov.ab.ca](mailto:Education.minister@gov.ab.ca)

Minister Adriana LaGrange  
Office of the Education Minister  
228 Legislature Building  
10800 97 Avenue  
Edmonton AB T5K 2B6

Dear Minister LaGrange,

**RE: Re-opening of Alberta schools requires additional safety measures**

United Nurses of Alberta (UNA) is calling on the Alberta government to reconsider the need for additional measures to increase the safety of children and teachers with the reopening of Alberta's schools. The health and well-being of our children, their families, teachers and staff can and must be the priority in all decision making. However, UNA also recognizes that a successful school reopening will be a key part of controlling the impact of COVID-19 on our communities and our economy going forward.

UNA finds the current plan for school reopening needs further enhancements to better protect the health and safety of Alberta's students and teachers and we are calling on the Alberta government for action in the following areas:

- Class sizes of 30 and greater are far too common in classrooms across Alberta. Cohorts of this size do not allow for sufficient physical distancing and therefore present a substantial risk to children, their families, and school staff. We call on the government to mandate smaller classes immediately and to fund school boards in order to achieve this target. Ensuring adequate physical distancing while in class would allow children to remove their masks safely while sitting at their desks.
- School boards must be supported to meet the additional requirements that come with COVID-19 pandemic restrictions which will require additional funding to ensure adequate staffing to cover additional cleaning, substitute teachers for sick time, and additional support for mental health needs of children due to the stress of a pandemic. School boards also require access to capital funding where infrastructure upgrades such as enhancing ventilation are needed to ensure safety.
- Masks should be mandatory for ALL children in schools at all times other than when they can be appropriately physically distanced.
- The opening of schools should be postponed if needed until these conditions are in place for a safe reopening, including smaller class sizes.
- AHS needs to be supported to ensure that they have adequate Registered Nurses (RNs) and/or Registered Psychiatric Nurses (RPNs) locally to provide rapid support to schools in responding to COVID-19 related public health questions and concerns, as well as ensuring the mental health of our children and youth in light of the pandemic. In school testing should be considered.

- Lastly, evidence would indicate that the highest predictor of successful reopening is keeping community transmission rates as low as possible. With that being said, UNA asks that you communicate with your Cabinet colleagues about the need to curtail lower priority indoor activities and gatherings that are currently contributing to the relatively high level of cases in our province.

We welcome further discussion should you have any questions or concerns regarding this recommendation. We urge you to ensure that the best policy decisions are made for the safety of Alberta's students and teachers. It is essential that these changes are made in a timely fashion as schools are rapidly approaching re-entry. The safety of our children is in your hands.

With kind regards,



Danielle Larivee, BScN, RN  
First Vice President  
United Nurses of Alberta

c.c: Premier Jason Kenney - [premier@gov.ab.ca](mailto:premier@gov.ab.ca)  
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