



TECT Delegation to the Board of Trustees November 19, 2020

Doug Ford stated yesterday: *The virus is spreading at an alarming rate in these areas and I can't stress this enough; this situation is extremely, extremely serious.*

The experts have stated that a successful reopening of schools is dependent on lower numbers of COVID-19 in the community.

On September 18, 2020, Ontario reported 425 cases and Toronto reported 130. Yesterday, Ontario reported 1417 cases and Toronto, on its own, had 410 cases.

On September 18, two TCDSB schools reported COVID-19 cases. By the beginning of this week over 127 schools had cases with 84 still dealing with active cases. Yesterday there were 136 active student cases in our schools.

We are reminded by the experts that each one of those documented cases is a child or an educator with a family. A family whose future may well be compromised by exposure to this virus.

I have heard from my members who love teaching, but who are worried that more students may become infected and that they too, or a colleague, may become infected. They are concerned that this virus will spread among loved ones.

Regardless of the numbers or these concerns, Minister Lecce proclaimed yesterday that “*Ontario’s safe schools plan has worked to keep students safe.*”

His comments are reminiscent of the Walkerton tragedy where 7 people died and thousands, including children, became violently ill. Even after people became very sick, public officials said, “**The drinking water was OK.**” This reckless denial of the situation led to more suffering and deaths.

It is time for Minister Lecce and Premier Ford to stop saying the schools are “OK.” It is time for the government to make the hard decision and close schools.

As the largest Catholic School Board, please do not also say, “Everything is OK.”

Pope Francis reminds us that **All it takes is one good person to restore hope. As Trustees you can:**

- Restore hope by empathizing with our members and students.
- Restore hope by holding this government accountable and recommending to Minister Lecce, that schools must close until COVID-19 cases in the community significantly decrease.
- Restore hope by acting to save lives and stop the suffering within our TCDSB communities.