



BETTY EDEL
CHAIR OF THE BOARD

THE WINNIPEG SCHOOL DIVISION
1577 Wall Street East, Winnipeg, Manitoba R3E 2S5
Telephone: (204) 775-0231
FAX: 774-6211

December 30, 2021

*Honourable Heather Stefanson, Manitoba Premier
Honourable Cliff Cullen, Minister of Education
Honourable Audrey Gordon, Minister of Health and Seniors Care
204 Legislative Building
450 Broadway
Winnipeg, MB R3C 0V8*

Dear Premier Stefanson, Minister Cullen and Minister Gordon:

On behalf of the Board of Trustees of the Winnipeg School Division, I am requesting that the Government of Manitoba take immediate action to move our schools and province into Code Red to keep our students, staff and families safe through this current wave of COVID-19.

As elected officials, we have a responsibility to listen to the advice of professionals who have come forward to the government in an effort to protect our healthcare system and those individuals in occupations deemed as critical service workers through this pandemic.

I urge the provincial government to acknowledge that the current pandemic plan must be reviewed in light of the recent development with the Omicron Virus as the impacts are far greater than anticipated and current strategies are no longer effective to manage this crisis for Manitobans.

WSD has sacrificed so much over the past two years, in particular, the mental health of students and staff, including the recent deaths of staff over this winter break. WSD staff is overwhelmed both physically and mentally in coping with the many challenges associated with the delivery of education in complying with Public Health Orders.

Although, WSD has taken extreme measures all through the pandemic which included implementing mandatory vaccination for all staff in August 2021, in addition to wearing masks, sanitizing, distancing and improvements to ventilation, the virus has continued to spread throughout our schools and communities.

Clearly, these measures are not enough to control and combat the spread of this particular virus. Healthcare experts have indicated that a third vaccine is now required, as most individuals are no longer fully protected from contracting the virus, although symptoms may be reduced, it does not control infecting others, in fact, it lives to find another host.

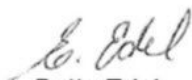
COVID-19 is raging out of control in our school communities. It appears that the provincial government is ignoring the advice of experts and continuing in their failure to act in response of this crisis.

On behalf of WSD, I am requesting that the Premier, Minister of Education and Minister of Health implement the following actions/strategies:

- move all classes to remote learning, with the exception of the children of Tier 1 essential workers and children deemed by educators as high risk;*
- make N95/KN95 masks available to all staff and students 12 and older who would continue to attend class in the classroom setting;*
- make rapid testing available for all students and staff who will continue to attend to school during Code Red;*
- put into place stringent public health restrictions to protect the community at large from a needless loss of life and the destruction of our healthcare system; and*
- ensure that all staff who work in the education system receive their 3rd dose of the vaccine.*

I am requesting that the Premier, Minister of Education and Minister of Health act not later than December 31st, 2021.

Yours truly,


Betty Edel
Board Chair