

January 28, 2021

**Memorandum to:** Chairs of District School Boards  
Directors of Education  
School Authorities

**From:** Stephen Lecce  
Minister of Education

Nancy Naylor  
Deputy Minister of Education

**Subject: Ministry of Education Updates**

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Thank you for your continued support for students, families and staff.

As you are aware, on January 20, 2021, we announced that elementary and secondary schools in seven southern Public Health Units (PHUs) would be permitted to resume in-person instruction on January 25, 2021. These PHUs joined the seven northern PHUs that were permitted to reopen on January 11, 2021. Schools in these 14 PHUs were instructed to continue in-person instruction unless otherwise directed by their local PHU.

Based on the most recent data and advice from the Chief Medical Officer of Health, elementary and secondary schools in the following Public Health Units will be permitted to resume in-person instruction on February 1, 2021:

- Eastern Ontario Health Unit
- Middlesex-London Health Unit
- Ottawa Public Health
- Southwestern Public Health

Schools located in all other PHUs will continue to learn remotely at this time. The Ministry of Education will continue to seek advice from the Chief Medical Officer of Health on the resumption of in-person learning.

Boards are required to align with the direction provided for the PHU in which their schools are located. School boards should continue to follow direction provided by their local PHU.

In areas where in-person learning is not yet permitted, school board and school-based staff who can work from home will continue to be asked to do so. Schools will continue to be open so that in-person instruction of students with special education needs who cannot be accommodated through remote learning continues throughout this period and to support staff who are unable to work from home.

The return to in-person learning will be supported by additional health and safety measures, including masking requirements for Grades 1-3 and outdoors where distancing cannot be maintained and enhanced screening protocols. An updated [Guide to Reopening Ontario's Schools](#) and [Operational Guidance: COVID-19 Management in Schools](#) reflecting these additional health and safety measures will be available soon.

## **Child Care**

Child care centres and home-based licensed and unlicensed child care for non-school aged children remain open during this time. In areas where in-person instruction for elementary students is suspended by the Province, targeted emergency child care will continue for school-aged children at no cost to [eligible parents](#).

Before and after school programs will reopen in alignment with the return to in-person learning in their PHUs.

We continue to ask school boards to make their school facilities available for the continuous delivery of child care, including emergency child care.

Child care centres and home-based settings are required to align with enhanced health and safety guidelines and the direction provided to the PHU in which they are located.

Thank you for your continued support.

Sincerely,

Stephen Lecce  
Minister

Nancy Naylor  
Deputy Minister

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