

Hello,

I wish to speak tonight to represent the voices of many parents who believe that we can and must do better than a hybrid plan for September. This favoured plan neglects the many realities that working parents, both in dual and single parent homes, are facing. Parents are burnt out from months of full time work and full time child-care. The majority of us willingly and gladly took the necessary steps required to flatten the curve, and while we understand that Covid is not over, we have seen a lot of success here in Ontario.

I had hoped that while we were doing our part, the province would be doing theirs in planning for the return to full-time education. From what I have seen however, educating our children has been a lower priority than the reopening of bars and nail salons. I, and many others I know, feel that the reopening plans have lacked creative solutions and have failed to consider all potential resources. We all understand school will look different, in September, but the hybrid plan does not protect children, it in fact will widen the social circle for many who will have alternative care three days of the week. Has the option of procuring unused spaces, potentially in community centers to be used as additional classrooms and the hiring of additional teachers to fill these classrooms been considered?

Children need to be in school for social and academic reasons. There are long term consequences if they are not. This has been recognized in a multitude of studies and statements, including those put out by Sick Kids, and the American Pediatric Association. In light of those studies, and the response from the recent parent/student survey, we ask you give further consideration and reassess what September can look like.