

Saira David, Neena Kushwaha and Mariana Esponda - Planning for Return to School – 9 July 2020

Dear Board Members

We respectfully would like to submit our written comments on the OCDSB proposed plan for return to school.

We feel that the Board should be considering a full return to school with safety protocols in place for students, teachers and staff. We are not in support of the hybrid model of 3 days at home and 2 days in person. This is not aligned with other international jurisdictions such as Spain, Italy and Taiwan nor is it aligned with other Canadian approaches such as those taken in Quebec and Alberta.

The proposed approach puts a huge burden on parents to care for or arrange care for children at home and to play a co-teaching role which is not feasible, particularly for parents who have to work outside the home (e.g. at a hair salon or grocery store). On line learning is not practical for many younger children and the last few months have shown that a great deal of assistance is needed to connect to the programming and navigate. Also want to flag the sick kids report around mental health and stress. Please note that under guidance for classroom sizes, these experts recommend that *"the daily school schedule routine should not be disrupted for to accommodate for physical distancing."* (<https://www.sickkids.ca/PDFs/About-SickKids/81407-COVID19-Recommendations-for-School-Reopening-SickKids.pdf>).

Further, closing the school one day a week for a cleaning is simply not practical - has there been consideration to a weeknight shift to clean the schools? This is the approach that many hospitals and other organizations have taken - they are hiring staff to clean in the evenings.

We need to be looking at innovative solutions - taking advantage of other spaces such as the closed government or other buildings, portables on the playgrounds and green space that could be utilized to allow for smaller class sizes where social distancing can be respected and masking for students, staff and teachers.

We urge the Board to reconsider their approach and bring students back to school full time in a safe and supportive manner.

Saira David, Neena Kushwaha and Mariana Esponda