

President's Message

January 24, 2022

I would like to offer a big thank you to all our principals and vice principals across the province for your time, effort and hard work ensuring that your school communities are safe for students and staff to attend school for in-person learning. We recognize how challenging it has been on all of you, with the many added responsibilities you have due to Covid-19. Thank you for going above and beyond to support the well-being of your students!

Principals' Duty to Report Communicable Diseases

We have had conversations with CODE (the Council of Ontario Directors of Education) and know the directors share our concern with regard to principals' discharge of their reporting duties under the *Education Act* and *Health Protection and Promotion Act* in the context of the transmissibility of the Omicron variant and the challenges confirming positive cases. In an effort to be responsive to this issue, CODE, with the support of its legal counsel, has developed [this template letter](#) (accessible to Members only) and shared it with directors across the province, encouraging boards' implementation of this practice. While the template's use is ultimately a board by board decision, including any accompanying instructions, we are hopeful that a plan for a simple and consistent reporting practice will be broadly supported.

WSIB Claims and Covid Cases

It has come to our attention that some employee groups are fielding questions regarding WSIB claims related to COVID-19 contracted at work. Pandemic related areas of law continue to evolve, and such claims will be assessed and determined by the WSIB. If you receive questions from a member of your staff, follow your board's process for reporting and direct the case to Human Resources.

With the transition back to in-person learning, we recognize that you are being directed to oversee a number of tasks such as the implementation of Covid-19 screening tools, monitoring the use of PPE and reporting when absences rise above 30%. While it may be arguable that this work is part of the overall health and safety protocols that you are required to follow to support a safe working/learning environment, we know this work is consuming an extraordinary amount of your time. You are not alone in this. Reach out to your supervisor for more support. Let me know so that I can share your examples and stories during meetings with the Minister and ministry staff. We are advocating for province-wide responses and supports. Please also let us know if your board has implemented a practice or response that is working well. We want to spread the word about "best practices" across the province.

Media

- [Ontario to start sharing data about school absences](#)

- [Ontario needs a plan to help kids who are falling behind](#)
- [Boards hiring uncertified emergency staff](#)
- [Indigenous people need allies to keep fighting for a seat at the table](#)
- [Organizing rapid test kits adding to school staff workload](#)
- [As students return to school, lunch becomes the most complicated meal](#)
- [Remote First Nations schools await PPE promised by government](#)
- [Support for Indigenous languages is key to reconciliation](#)
- [Students seek grade freeze during interrupted semester](#)

Queen's Park

The House is in recess until February 22.