

**Ministry of Education**

Minister

315 Front Street West  
Toronto ON M7A 0B8

**Ministère de l'Éducation**

Ministre

315, rue Front Ouest  
Toronto ON M7A 0B8



March 26, 2021

The Honourable Ahmed Hussen  
Minister of Families, Children and Social Development  
House of Commons  
Ottawa, On  
K1A 0A6

The Honourable Patty Hajdu, P.C., M.P.  
Minister of Health  
House of Commons  
Ottawa, On  
K1A 0A6

The Honourable Anita Anand, P.C., M.P.  
Minister Public Services and Procurement  
House of Commons  
Ottawa, On  
K1A 0A6

Dear Minister Hussen, Minister Hajdu and Minister Anand:

We appreciate the partnership as we continue to respond to the global pandemic. It has been an unprecedented challenge to our country, and in particular to our schools and our child care sector. We are collectively proud of what we have done to keep our children safe and our schools and child care open for much of the current school year.

We are now entering a new phase of the pandemic, one represented by cautious hope with the introduction of vaccines for adults that will help reduce the impact of COVID-19. **As Canada continues its vaccination efforts for adults, it is critical that we look ahead and apply lessons learned on the importance of forward planning for the procurement and distribution of vaccines for our students and children.** Already numerous clinical trials are underway to assess the safety and efficacy of vaccines in children and youth of different ages. Some of these clinical trials may begin to return results in just a few short months. While this is hopeful news, it also underscores the necessity to start to plan immediately so that Canada is the leader on vaccine roll-out.

Vaccination of children and students will be a critical part of ending the pandemic and keeping our children safe. Children and young adults often experience milder symptoms of COVID-19 when compared to older adults, but they are not immune. They can also spread the disease to those who are vulnerable and at risk: in child care and education settings, in their own households and in the community more broadly.

To achieve this imperative and to ensure recovery for human health and our economy, we are calling on the federal government to take immediate steps in preparation for the availability of vaccines for children and youth.

**First, we would call on Minister Anand to ensure that Canada immediately procures a robust supply of vaccine from a diversified range of potential suppliers for children under 16.** We have learned from the production of vaccine for adults that it is difficult to know which companies will be successful both in the development of a vaccine ready for approval and the ability to deliver it rapidly in sufficient quantities. There will be a very large global demand for these vaccines and it is important that Canada act now to ensure an adequate supply of vaccines for children and youth.

**Second, we ask Health Canada to stand ready to rigorously and rapidly review and, if safe, approve vaccines as companies complete their clinical trials and submit their vaccines for approval.** Vaccinating children and students as quickly as possible will help ensure that the next school year is as safe as possible and that our child care sector will be able to remain open, a critical driver of our province and country's economic recovery.

Finally, we believe the federal government should commit resources and commence planning to support education around the vaccination for children and youth. We cannot count on the vaccination of adults alone to end the pandemic. We need to ensure a plan is in place for the vaccination of children and youth to keep our schools and child care sector safe and to deliver the recovery our families deserve. That is why it is encouraging to see our province laying the groundwork for pediatric vaccination with a subgroup under Dr. Huyer's workstream. This subgroup is working to understand the current knowledge regarding clinical trials and potential future approval of vaccines for the under 18 age group. It is also working through considerations for implementation in the under 18 age group if vaccine approval occurs. Doing so will ensure that our province is ready to act should a vaccine be approved for use.

We look forward to collaborating with you on this next opportunity to end the pandemic in Canada.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'S. Lecce', written in a cursive style.

Hon. Stephen Lecce  
Minister of Education