



COALITION FOR SAFER SCHOOL RELAUNCH ACROSS ALBERTA

ABDocs4Patients, RAD Educators Network and Support Our Students Alberta have formed a coalition in support of a safer relaunch for Alberta schools.

The coalition partners physicians, educators, parents and Alberta residents in the urgent quest to achieve a safer, equitable relaunch for students and education workers across the province.

Strategies for creating a safer working and learning environment include (but are not limited to);

1. Implementing a variable class size cap for **ALL** grades (k-12), in a way that relies on physical distancing measures, ensuring that all physical spaces used for learning prioritize the 2m distance mandate. Schools should designate cohorts with staggered entry, lunch, recreational and dismissal times. The ability to physically distance is **ESSENTIAL**, and plays a primary role in mitigating spread of COVID19.
2. Encouraging masks when child-appropriate and adequate physical distancing is not possible, recognizing that masks are not a sufficient replacement for adequate distance. The decision to require masking must be based on age as well as individual cognitive abilities. Family physicians or pediatricians should provide guidance when the decision is unclear.
3. Address transportation for students to and from school, limiting occupancy to reflect physical distancing mandate (2m), incorporate assigned seating, and mandating masks when appropriate.
4. Providing each school the ability to access expedited testing and results turnaround for COVID19. Dedicated access to testing will minimize delays, risk, and unnecessary disruptions in the continuity of education.
5. Alberta Education, in conjunction with Alberta Health, must provide all the necessary personal protective equipment(PPE) for education workers, including masks, shields, disinfectant, and thermometers.
6. Establishing clear and transparent protocols for regular screening, positive cases, what defines a school outbreak, and how many positive cases are required for a school closure.

7. Cancel all standardized tests at all grades in recognition of the added stress and trauma testing creates for both students and education workers. Understanding also that measuring standards in a non standard year where the inequity around in-class versus remote learning, and likely frequent disruptions to learning resulting from illnesses and isolation periods will only skew results and magnify inequities. All standardized testing funding should be redirected to Covid19 mitigation resources.
8. Establishing a policy for substitute teachers that minimizes risk of inter-school transmission.
9. In the event of a scenario change (hybrid or complete remote learning), provide adequate resources for families and education workers unable to properly supervise children. Special considerations for children of essential care workers and students with complex needs.
10. Reducing community transmission locally prior to school reopening as well as on-going intensive community COVID19 mitigation is essential to protecting schools.
11. Committing to the health and safety of Alberta students and education workers during a pandemic as the first priority by providing provincial funding to support every public school in meeting these criteria, recognizing the support needed will vary by school.
12. Acknowledging that the start of school can and should be delayed until the resources and parameters for a safer school relaunch itemized above can be secured equitably across Alberta.

Recently Canada's Chief Medical Officer Dr. Teresa Tam announced that Canada will be addressing COVID19 as a threat for the next 2-3 years. It is the *Coalition For A Safer School ReLaunch's* position that every measure implemented for a safer school relaunch should be for the long term. Now is the time to invest in standards and protocols, like the ones listed above, that will create lasting safety measures for students and education workers alike.

#abdocs4teachers is project of **#abdocs4patients**, a grassroots, nonpartisan physician-led organization working to protect and strengthen public healthcare for the safety and well-being of all Albertans through collaboration with our communities.

The RAD Educators Network is a collective of educators (teachers, professors, researchers, activists, early-childhood educators, etc.) from across Alberta who are working for equity and social justice education.

Support Our Students Alberta (SOS AB) is a non profit citizens action group advocating for universally accessible and equitable public education in Alberta.