

August 16th, 2020

To whom it may concern:

We are a group of parents with grave concerns regarding teachers and students' health and safety as a result of the CBE school re-entry plan set for early September during the COVID-19 pandemic.

We are feeling nervous and anxious as there are no alternatives or emergency plan like other provinces or countries are adopting or "Plan B" in place (such as adaptation mode or mixed mode) , leaving students, teachers, and the family uncertain about their safety. From the results of the opening of schools in other countries in the world, if there is not a comprehensive plan, the schools reopening is still facing significant risks. **Some facts are as follows:**

- Schools in England saw 44 outbreaks of COVID-19 after they reopened in early June.
[\(https://globalnews.ca/news/7111202/england-schools-coronavirus-outbreak/\)](https://globalnews.ca/news/7111202/england-schools-coronavirus-outbreak/)
 - **Question:** What would happen to our class as we don't think Calgary would be exempted?
- In Israel, a large COVID-19 outbreak in a high school 10 days after schools reopened in May. Testing of the complete school community revealed 153 students (attack rate: 13.2%) and 25 staff members (attack rate: 16.6%) who were COVID-19 positive.
<https://www.eurosurveillance.org/content/10.2807/1560-7917.ES.2020.25.29.2001352>
 - **Question:** Are we really prepared for it?
- After relaunch phase 2, Alberta has the highest per-capita rate of active cases in Canada. Early July had the highest percentage of positive COVID-19 tests.
<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/calgary/alberta-covid-case-rates-high-1.5683218>
 - **Question:** How can we justify that the control of COVID-19 in Alberta is in a controllable and stable process, and how do we prevent our campus from the outbreak?

These are all facts and reality happening elsewhere and in our homes. Calgary campus would most likely be next if we do not take precautions measures.

According to our understanding of re-entry plan provided by CBE, the following problems need solutions:

- The density of student in the schools are very high and the social distancing for campus learning has not been fundamentally addressed.
- Class size limit has not been regulated.
- The HUB learning approach which provides online classes is not available for the students enrolled in the IB and AP programs which has high intensity.

We understand that CBE prioritizes the safety of our students, staff, and adheres to the continuity of student learning. But we would like to urge the school and CBE to consider adopting the appropriate precautions measures to keep our students, teachers and supporting staff in a safe and sound physical school environment. Meanwhile we have consulted with Health Professionals and analyzed the school opening arrangements in different provinces and countries, we are putting forward the following suggestions.

- **MODEL 1: Mixed delivery model for physically- return- to-school students**

Reduce the number of students in each classroom (the prevailing class size in other areas or territories is 15).

Half of the students of each class in rotation to study in classroom every other day while the other half will stay at home with access to the live stream of their teachers' instructions in the classroom in real time (which means the other half learn remotely from the same classroom from the teacher, who is teaching the other half in the classroom)

This approach has been successfully adopted by an international school in Germany (<https://www.mis-munich.de/>) since May 2020 and proved workable both for teachers and students.

The plan should also consider a different ratio for K-9 programs and high school programs. The high density in high school programs and maturity of the students will allow remote learning to achieve the same goal, meanwhile reducing the high exposure risk of infection.

(Please refer to Manitoba's school reopening plan on this portion.

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/manitoba-school-reopening-plan-1.5668819>)

- **Advantages:**

- All students including IB, AP or other special program students have a fair opportunity to continue their learning both remotely and in-class learning.
- Students will not feel that they are missing out on some information taught in class or not at the same pace compared to in- class students as it is offered in a synchronized approach and access to the same instructions.
- If half or even more students will learn from home every other day, the number of students in the classroom will be reduced greatly so as the risk level of being exposed to COVID-19 virus.

- **MODEL 2: Half-day physical classes and half-day online classes**

It is recommended for the CBE to hold half-day physical classes and half-day online classes, as modeled in Ontario's back-to-school plan. "In Ontario, secondary schools in school boards designated by the province will open on an adapted model, with class cohorts of approximately 15 students, on alternating schedules with at least 50% of in-class instructional days."

<https://www.ontario.ca/page/guide-reopening-ontarios-schools>

- **Advantages:**

- This would be extremely important to reduce the risk of staff and students being infected during school lunch hours.
- The student's time at school has been reduced by 50%, so the risk of infection will also be reduced.

- **MODEL 3: Phased-in approach**

It is recommended to take a phased-in approach for the school re-opening: the students going back to school according to their grades and urgency. For example, Grade 6, 9 and 12 students can start in-school lessons early as they are having PAT. The other student will continue their online lessons as we did during the past school year from March to June to protect the teachers and most kids. After running the pilot program for several months with a better picture, we could decide how to proceed.

- **Advantages:**

- Slow down the pace of school reopening. The number of students at the earlier stages is small and easy to control.
- Through this process, we can draw lessons for all reopening of the school in the future.

In order to ensure students and staff return to a safe school environment with proper precautions and schedules, we urge CBE postpone this school year and finalize a more detailed plan before school resumes so that schools and teachers have adequate time to plan and prepare for the students' return (such as the electric devices for streaming or class-room retrofit etc.)

We also understand that safety measures should be enhanced in school when they reopen. Please refer to the following suggestions for improving the infection control and tracing system.

1. Testing

Each school should set up a temperature monitor procedure at the school entrance. It is principals' responsibility in each school to ensure that no student with COVID-19 symptoms attends school. This needs to be done on every school day.

2. Control

School should provide the specific protocols before back-to-school day. Physical distancing should be the minimum guidance.

3. Tracing

Each student will get a fixed seat in each course, which aims to trace contacts when someone gets sick. The principal should send an email to parents every week to report the status of the school during the week. Information includes: number of new tests are positive and students or staff who are self-isolating at home, number of recovered, and returned to school, and students have contact with family members or friends who have tested positive (grades and names should not be announced).

Last but not least, we sincerely hope that the CBE and the government officials take these suggestions into consideration and work to find effective solutions to protect the physical and mental health of teachers and students at this unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic time. We sincerely hope our kids, teachers and millions of families behind are safe and healthy.

Thanks for your time and consideration!

A group of concerned parents in Calgary