

HWDSB

Dawn Danko
Chair of the Board of Trustees
Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board
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April 12, 2022

Dr. Elizabeth Richardson, Medical Officer of Health
City of Hamilton
100 Main St W, Hamilton, ON L8P 1H6

Dear Dr. Richardson,

Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board (HWDSB) Trustees appreciate that you have stated your position where you recommend and encourage masking in indoor environments, especially where it is difficult to distance or when near vulnerable individuals, and recognizing schools meet this criteria.

During the Board Meeting on April 11, Trustees expressed their concern with the current provincial stance on mask requirements after learning about [Public Health Ontario's assessment](#) of the current state of COVID-19 that stated: *"optimizing layers of prevention in K-12 schools, including temporary re-implementation of masking requirements indoors and improved air quality can reduce the risk of in-school transmission and related disruption for students, families and educational settings."*

Trustees have also received strong calls from several union partners and the community to reinstate masking in schools, especially given the resurgence and the presence of COVID-19 Omicron Variant Sub-lineage BA.2.

Based on the Public Health Ontario report, the status of case projections in Hamilton, and the persistent increased absences that we are experiencing, Trustees are seeking your support for the reinstatement of indoor masking requirements in schools through a recommendation or direction, as appropriate, under your authority as our Chief Medical Officer of Health.

We will continue to communicate the important message that we are strongly recommending mask wearing in our schools. Trustees will be ready to call a Special Board meeting should there be any new direction from Hamilton Public Health Services or the Ontario government that changes public health guidance for schools.

Sincerely,



Dawn Danko
Chair, Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board