

MANITOBA REGIONAL OFFICE

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DELIVERED VIA EMAIL: minedu@leg.gov.mb.ca

August 27, 2020

The Honourable Kelvin Goertzen
Minister of Education
Room 168 Legislative Building
450 Broadway
Winnipeg, Manitoba
R3C 0V8

Dear Minister:

RE: K-12 SCHOOL REOPENING - SUPPORT STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS

On behalf of approximately 5,000 K-12 school support workers in Manitoba, we would like to raise several concerns about the upcoming school year.

CUPE represents education assistants, custodians, cleaners, school bus drivers, library technicians, intercultural and community liaisons, trades persons, office administrative staff plus more in 25 school divisions across Manitoba.

While we applaud your government for releasing additional funding for school divisions to hire more staff, we would like to reiterate the importance of ensuring these resources are allocated where needed as well as increased when needed. Additionally, we expect that Manitoba's \$85.4 million share of today's announced new Federal funding should be in addition to funds already announced by your government, and we expect your government to release these funds to the divisions immediately, and without complication.

CUPE members are experts in their field, and it is with that expertise that we are writing to you today. We have reviewed the province's back-to-school plan, as well as plans from various school divisions across the province. While we are excited to get back to school and support our children's education, our members have highlighted a few shortcomings in the back-to-school plans that need to be addressed.

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MARK HANCOCK

National President/Président national

CHARLES FLEURY

National Secretary-Treasurer/Secrétaire-trésorier national

DENIS BOLDOC, PAUL FAORO, FRED HAHN, JUDY HENLEY, SHERRY HILLIER

General Vice-Presidents/Vice-présidences générales

We hope that you act on these recommendations and provide direction and additional funding resources to school divisions to ensure these needs are immediately met.

CUPE Manitoba's K-12 school support workers would like to see additional funding for:

- Hand sanitizer dispensers for every classroom and every school entrance, additional hand washing stations, and staffing to install and refill as necessary;
- Increased custodial and cleaning staff in schools to be able to keep up with greater cleaning requirements. We strongly urge government and school divisions not to contract out additional custodial and cleaning work to private, for-profit companies;
- Additional education assistants to help with cohorting and monitoring mask and physical distancing requirements;
- Additional education assistants to help students with special needs, language barriers, hearing disabilities, health concerns, etc.;
- Additional intercultural and community liaisons to help families with language and cultural barriers;
- Additional support staff on school buses to help ensure student compliance with mask and physical distancing requirements;
- Professional and paraprofessional support to aid additional classrooms with mental health and wellbeing for students and staff;
- Plexiglass barriers installed in school offices, libraries, and other staffed areas;
- Adequate masks and other personal protective equipment made available for all school support staff;
- Opening school spaces not currently used for instruction to accommodate smaller class sizes (including additional support and cleaning);
- An audit of school ventilation systems across Manitoba, and funding to upgrade these ventilation and filtration systems where necessary. This includes replacing any windows that are unable to open.

- Clear direction on the protocol when a student exhibits symptoms while in the care of the school division. More specifically, who is responsible if a student tries to enter a school bus with symptoms and the parents are not home to receive the student who is not allowed on the school bus.
- Additional school buses and bus drivers where needed. Once again, we strongly urge the government and school divisions not to contract out school buses to the private, for-profit sector.

These recommendations come directly from our membership, and we hope you will act on all our recommendations prior to the commencement of the school year.

As always, we are available for further discussion.

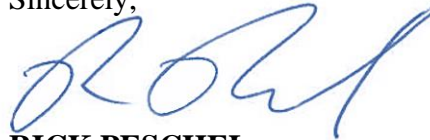
Sincerely,



ABE ARAYA
CUPE MANITOBA PRESIDENT

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Sincerely,



RICK PESCHEL
CHAIR, CUPE SCHOOL DIVISION SECTOR

cc: Wab Kinew, Leader of the Official Opposition
Dougald Lamont, Leader of the Manitoba Liberal Party

**CUPE represents approximately 5,000 school support staff in twenty-five school divisions across Manitoba, including:*

Brandon School Division
Division scolaire franco-manitobaine
Evergreen School Division
Hanover School Division
Interlake School Division
Kelsey School Division
Lakeshore School Division
Lord Selkirk School Division
Louis Riel School Division
Mountain View School Division
Park West School Division
Pembina Trails School Division
Pine Creek School Division

Portage la Prairie School Division
Prairie Rose School Division
River East Transcona School Division
Rolling River School Division
Seven Oaks School Division
St. James-Assiniboia School Division
Sunrise School Division
Swan Valley School Division
Turtle Mountain School Division
Turtle River School Division
Western School Division
Winnipeg School Division