



NEWS RELEASE

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FEDERATION CALLS FOR COVID-19 MEASURES TO BE REINSTATED

SASKATOON – The Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation is calling on Minister of Education Dustin Duncan and the Government of Saskatchewan to immediately reinstate COVID-19 public health measures in schools. The latest wastewater data from the University of Saskatchewan shows an alarming increase of 742 percent in Saskatoon. Data for North Battleford and Prince Albert also shows surges of 250 percent and 56 percent, respectively.

“Saskatchewan educators want to be in schools along with their students, teaching and learning in a safe environment. These new wastewater results are alarming and need to be taken seriously,” said Patrick Maze, President, Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation. “This government has a responsibility to keep students, staff and the greater community safe. Our health system is over capacity and health-care workers are stressed. We need to ensure that those who are ill receive the assistance they need in a timely way. By reintroducing these basic and minimal health measures, fewer people will require hospitalization and schools can continue to operate safely.”

The Federation is calling for:

- Mandatory masks in schools, on school buses and for extracurricular activities.
- Isolation requirement for those who test positive and are close contacts.
- Increased transparency and data sharing with schools on COVID-19 cases.
- Increased reporting on cases to the public, so parents can make informed decisions and exercise personal responsibility.
- Access to PCR testing for teachers and all student-facing school staff.
- Reconvene the Education Sector Response Planning Team to ensure successful and consistent implementation of measures.

“Students have already sacrificed so much. It is time to prioritize and protect their needs,” said Maze.

“We cannot wish COVID-19 away. Learning to live with COVID-19 must mean learning to take appropriate and reasonable measures when the situation calls for them. The government’s decisions have left us with very limited data available to assess the risk in our communities. Absenteeism is unusually high for teaching staff and students, and there is a lack of available substitute teachers.”

If the government continues to ignore the reality in communities and classrooms, and fails to introduce basic health measures, the Federation urges the school divisions to fulfil their obligations and exercise their authority to protect students’ access to education and the health of students and staff.

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