



ALBERTA
EDUCATION
*Office of the Minister
MLA, Red Deer-North*

Dear Alberta Parents,

I know many of you are busy preparing for your children's return to their classroom at school on Monday following periods of learning at home. I hope students are looking forward to connecting in-person with their teachers and peers.

The decision to resume in-class learning on January 11 was reaffirmed after careful consideration of the importance of attending school in-person, as well as the latest evidence of COVID-19 cases dropping in all school-age groups in December.

Learning must continue, even during a pandemic. Schools play a critical role in supporting student learning as well as children's emotional health and overall well-being.

For many students, particularly younger children, learning at-home can be challenging from an academic, social, and emotional perspective. We know the vast majority of students across all grades, learn better in a classroom environment where they can connect with their teacher and interact with peers. Sadly for some students across Alberta, schools are essential to accessing critical additional support services they may need.

Understandably, some of you are feeling anxious due to the rise of COVID-19 in our communities and around the world. I want to assure you that we have a comprehensive plan to continue student learning throughout the pandemic and we are ready to make adjustments when necessary. The safety of your children, their teachers and all school staff remains our top priority.

It's important to recognize the tremendous effort Alberta schools, teachers and parents have put in every day to diligently follow the extensive health measures. As a result, only 0.4 percent of students and staff tested positive in total from the beginning of the school year until the winter break. Yesterday, the Chief Medical Officer of Health confirmed that the protocols in place are protective against in-school transmission and analysis of all our cases in school-aged children indicated that only 6% of these cases were determined to have been acquired at school.

I am extremely proud of our Education system for continuing to support students during this unprecedented time. I'd like to thank everyone in Alberta's school system for their incredible work as they prepare for the safe return to in-person learning next week.

I hope going back to a familiar daily routine of learning in schools will restore some sense of normalcy for students and families amidst these unusual times. I know my grandchildren have been eager to return to their classrooms, I hope your children share in this excitement.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Adriana LaGrange".

Adriana LaGrange
Minister of Education

