



Council of Ontario
Drama and Dance
Educators



First Nations, Métis and
Inuit Education
Association of Ontario



Ontario Association for
the Support of Physical
and Health Educators



Ontario Art Education
Association



Ontario Physical and
Health Education
Association



Ontario Music Educators'
Association

June 15, 2020

Dear Directors of Education/Trustees:

This letter is on behalf of six provincial subject associations that promote and support student well-being through critically important forms of experiential learning. We are deeply aware of the challenges that COVID-19 will present when Ontario students return to school. As provincial subject associations, we feel that it is imperative that our subjects have a place in the timetable and that they are delivered safely and equitably. Now, more than ever, the critical components of learning must include relationships, respect, critical thinking, and collaboration.

As we begin to reimagine what education looks like in the fall, we recognize that students will have been negatively impacted through various forms of trauma as a result of COVID-19. This pandemic has presented extraordinary challenges for the education sector and we are just beginning to understand the impact. The adverse effects of school closures on children’s safety, well-being, and learning are well documented ([UNICEF, Framework for reopening schools, p.1](#)).

After months of remote learning,

“...schools must not just prepare students for the future but they also need to help them make sense of the present. After disasters and crises, schools must as a first priority help learners safely explore the changed world in which they live.”
([Te Rito Toi](#) ¹)

Our unique disciplines of dance, drama, visual/media arts, Indigenous education, music, health and physical education provide the skills, knowledge, and attitudes to be able to build resilience, and heal trauma. Our curricula and unique pedagogical approaches allow students to explore safely their thoughts and feelings through critical thinking, physicality, creativity, and collaboration. These are areas of learning that have proven

successful in creating and sustaining the interest of a great many students, in particular, those from racialized and Indigenous communities. As we move forward in these uncertain times, the principle of inclusion is foundational to our work, in particular the perspectives of Indigenous peoples.

Our subject associations hold significant knowledge, expertise, and resources to support these critically important subject areas, specifically by having access to a network of professionals who have been learning together, sharing, and responding to students and families over the last number of months. We want to ensure educators are prepared and supported. In order to maintain a truly safe environment for all, educators must ensure that physical, emotional, social, and safety needs are prioritized within all learning environments and platforms. We recognize that Indigenous peoples have the right to education in their own languages and in a manner appropriate to their cultural methods of teaching and learning.

We have the research and the resources to assist educational stakeholders in reimagining what education will look like in the coming months. We invite you to prioritize experiential learning and direct your board administration to connect with us to make use of our expertise in the spirit of collaboration.

Sincerely,

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