

June 21, 2021

The Honourable Stephen Lecce, Minister of Education
Ministry of Education
315 Front Street West, 14th Floor
Toronto, ON, M7A 0B8

Dear Minister Lecce,

During this past school year, students and staff have experienced innumerable academic and social challenges due to the pandemic. Keeping students and staff as safe and healthy as possible, while maintaining our commitment to academic excellence, has been our priority. In doing this, we have been guided by the Region of Waterloo Public Health Unit as well as directives from your Ministry. One of the results has been the use of a quadmester model in secondary schools which has allowed for the cohorting of students into limited groups. This approach enables better contact tracing by public health in the event of any COVID infections within the cohort.

At a meeting on May 31, 2021, the Board of Trustees for the Waterloo Region District School Board (WRDSB) heard from our Student Trustees the negative mental health impact of the quadmester model used this past year. Student Trustees surveyed grades 7-12 students, who reported mental health concerns related to the quadmester model that was implemented this year. Overall, students shared that learning in the quadmester format is challenging due to a compressed workload, a lack of motivation, an overwhelming sensation of stress, and a learning disadvantage in comparison to non-quadmester formats. In response, Trustees approved a motion to write to you indicating our concern for the quadmester model used this past year, and asking that the Ministry of Education consider directing the use of the quadmester model as a last choice when determining the approach for the 2021-2022 school year.

We appreciate the complexity of balancing all the concerns related to controlling the pandemic, and we ask that you consider the need to support the health and well-being of students in making your decision.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Joanne Weston". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and "W".

Joanne Weston

Chairperson of the Board of Trustees
Waterloo Region District School Board

CC:

MPP Belinda Karahalios

MPP Laura Mae Lindo

MPP Amy Fee

MPP Michael Harris

MPP Catherine Fife

Ontario Public School Boards' Association (OPSBA)

Ontario Public School Boards

Ontario Student Trustees' Association (OSTA-AECO)

Sent by email: minister.edu@ontario.ca



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