



MESSAGE FROM K-12 PRESIDENTS COUNCIL PRESIDENT WARREN WILLIAMS

CUPE members continue to play a vital role in B.C.'s response to COVID-19 through support and service to our students and vulnerable children, as well as the families of those providing essential services to all of us. I am proud that CUPE members stepped up during this challenging and ever-changing time.

Premier John Horgan announced today that schools throughout B.C. will expand in-person schooling for K-12 on a voluntary basis in June. The government is working out details and will be releasing a plan for how all grades will access additional in-school instruction. We are pleased that the government is developing plans to get kids back in schools because public schools provide a vital service to all communities.

When this crisis started, many of our members were fearful about their safety because of the varied approaches districts were taking. We need to ensure that workers get consistent information on how the safety of students and staff is being addressed in schools. Physical distancing can be a challenge in school, but all districts must follow basic safety standards as set by the WorkSafe BC and the Provincial Health Officer.

Our members are on the front line, supporting essential services workers by providing child care and keeping schools clean and safe. School districts brought back daytime custodians to deal with the pandemic. With the announcement today, we know that more students and staff will be coming into schools. Not only do we need to keep those daytime custodians, we need additional custodians to be able to stay on top of disinfecting high-use surfaces and keeping schools safe.

We appreciate how difficult these last six weeks have been for CUPE members; parents; children who miss their friends, teachers and support staff; and essential services workers. Premier Horgan's planned phases towards our 'new normal' allow for a dry run of bringing more students and staff into classrooms in June — but doing that safely for kids and staff.

Thank you to K-12 members for all that you do. We will get through this together.

In Solidarity and Safety,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Warren Williams'.

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