

To: ETFO Thames Valley Teacher Local Members
From: Craig Smith, President, ETFO Thames Valley Teacher Local (ETFO TVTL)
Date: April 23, 2021
Regarding: Summary of Meeting with Deputy Minister of Education (Shared with Local Presidents)

Presidents, my summary of today's meeting is outlined below:

1. Vaccinations – The Affiliates asked for an update on the coordination of vaccinations for educators. Is the Ministry overseeing this process? Is there any tracking occurring at the provincial level? Concern was expressed about significant inconsistencies from board to board. The Deputy Minister advised that they are working closely with the Health and Vaccine Task Force and don't want to add extra steps. Boards are required to let the Ministry know when educators are being vaccinated. They heard about Peel and Simcoe recently. She advised that tracking in the hot spot areas is more challenging as there are pop-up clinics happening. The Ministry will think this through some more.

A discussion on the hot spot areas continued. The Deputy Minister was asked whether educators are actually being prioritized or just deemed eligible. Where eligibility has expanded in hot spot areas such as Peel and Toronto this is resulting in educators being bumped further down the line. Many educators working in-person are still not vaccinated. The Deputy Minister responded to say that there is an underlying prioritization. It is by age cohort and then by workforce segment. Educators and childcare workers are in the top cohort of the workforce segment. Special education educators have been brought forward within the educator grouping. Hot spot prioritization is also happening where people who live and work in these areas are prioritized. She further advised that supply has been a factor and they expect an improvement in this by the first week of May.

2. Consultation with Special Education staff re eligible students – The Deputy Minister was advised that there is limited or no consultation occurring on the issue of what students are deemed eligible for in-person instruction. This may be due to the timing of the memo late on Friday and the lack of time for Boards to consult. The consultation must occur even if it is after the fact.
3. N95 masks – The Deputy Minister was asked why the Ministry will not provide N95 masks to all educators working in person at this time. Dr. Tepper responded to say that he is monitoring this situation closely. He is communicating with the Provincial Public Health Office as well as the Science Table for direction on this. He consulted within the last seven days and their position remains unchanged. Droplets are the primary source of transmission. Educators working with students who require aerosol generating medical procedures should be issued an N95 mask. Other educators are issued a Level 2 mask

which is appropriate for their protection. A face shield is also an option. This issue is not just specific to education but health care as well. Dr. Tepper will continue to monitor this situation.

Sharon O'Halloran
General Secretary

For more information regarding this *summary* please contact the ETFO Local office by phone at 519-474-3150 or by email at etfotvtl@etfothamesvalley.com.

c. *ETFO TVTL Released Officers*
Terry Card, President, ETFO Thames Valley Occasional Teacher Local