

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 26, 2020

STATEMENT

Education workers are the first line of defence against spread of COVID-19 in schools

In response to the announcement of additional federal funding for Ontario's latest back-to-school plans, Laura Walton, president of CUPE's Ontario School Board Council of Unions gave the following statement:

CUPE members welcome any new funding that will help re-open schools safely. But we need to make sure it's going to be spent on the things that will make students and staff safer.

That means

- a lot more custodial staff for cleaning – at least one extra custodian per school;
- ECE and EA support to help reduce class sizes and cohorts and support off-site classrooms;
- more school secretaries and clerical staff, since they will be responsible for screening and tracing, and they will be the school's point person with public health in the event of a COVID outbreak in a school;
- more supervisors to look out for students during recess and breaks;
- a province-wide directive and plans to improve ventilation in schools.

To meet these needs, CUPE leaders are urging parents, students and teachers to demand full funding, this year and beyond, for everything that's needed for a safe return to school and to keep students safe throughout the year.

We know that we can re-open schools safely. But the right way to do it is to have more of the people who make up the first line of defence in schools: the education workers.

Education workers are the province's best option for stopping the spread of COVID-19 in Ontario's schools.

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