

Ministry of Education

Minister
Mowat Block
Queen's Park
Toronto ON M7A 1L2

Ministère de l'Éducation

Ministre
Édifce Mowat
Queen's Park
Toronto ON M7A 1L2

Ministry of Labour

Office of the Minister
400 University Avenue
14th Floor
Toronto ON M7A 1T7

Ministère du Travail

Bureau du ministre
400, avenue University
14^e étage
Toronto ON M7A 1T7



March 9, 2018

Dear members of the Provincial Working Group on Health and Safety,

We want to start by thanking each and every one of you for working tirelessly over the past year to ensure that our working and learning environments are safe for all students and staff, including teachers, education workers, principals, vice-principals and leaders. We are writing as a follow up to the recommendations you made to address workplace violence in our schools and we are committed to working with you on an ongoing basis to enhance a culture of health and safety mindedness in our schools.

We are very pleased with the progress of the Working Group in developing the deliverables to support the three priorities as set out in our letter of June 2017. We look forward to working collaboratively with our education stakeholders on the implementation of these important steps.

The first priority was to develop Ministry of Labour guidance material to assist all parties' understanding of the requirements under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* (OHSA) and provide a consistent platform for the Ministry of Labour inspectors and workplace parties. A new document, [Workplace Violence in School Boards: A Guide to the Law](#), has been completed and posted online. The release of this guide is an important part of our efforts to keep our staff and students healthy and safe. We are committed to working with you to ensure effective dissemination of the guidance material in spring 2018 for implementation by school boards during the 2018-19 school year. We recognize this discussion must continue and encourage stakeholders to offer further suggestions at future Working Group meetings.

The second priority was to ensure all staff have access to the information they need to protect themselves and to maintain a safe and inclusive school environment. We are pleased with the creation of two new forms to assist school boards with their obligation to alert staff of a potential risk of physical injury involving students or others in schools, which are provided within [Workplace Violence in School Boards: A Guide to the Law](#). We expect school boards to develop policies and procedures to support the introduction and implementation of the forms in preparation for the 2018-19 school year. We are committed to continue working with the Working Group in the coming months to develop resources to assist in this regard.

The third priority focused on the need to clarify and streamline existing reporting requirements for incidents of violence in schools. We are moving forward to require all school boards to implement a common online reporting tool for staff to report violence incidents for the 2018-19 school year. This tool will provide a simpler and more standardized process to report incidents, as well as enhance data analysis to inform local decision-making and focused work on prevention and reduction of violent incidents to meet our shared requirements to act to prevent violence in our schools.

Additionally, we are committed to collaborating with the Working Group to further streamline reporting procedures. The Ministry of Education will be conducting an engagement this spring on required changes to Policy/Program Memorandum (PPM) 120: *Reporting Violent Incidents to the Ministry of Education*, PPM 144: *Bullying Prevention and Intervention*, and PPM 145: *Progressive Discipline and Promoting Positive Student Behaviour*. We expect that the engagement will inform improvements and standardization of existing reporting practices and allow for integration into the online reporting tool in the coming school year.

We remain committed to the goal of schools free of violence for all staff and students. We look forward to working with you, as well as the broader education sector and community partners, to carry on this meaningful work. Although these are important first steps, we realize there is more work to be done beyond what has been accomplished over the past year, particularly in supporting students with special needs and student mental health.

Ensuring the health and safety of staff and students in Ontario's public education system is a top priority for our government, and we thank you for your ongoing leadership and support on this important initiative.

Sincerely,



Indira Naidoo-Harris
Minister of Education
Minister Responsible for Early Years and Child Care



Kevin Flynn
Minister of Labour