FÉDÉRATION
DES SYNDICATS
DE L'ENSEIGNEMENT
CSQ

QPAT 1864 APEQ

Québec City, November 16, 2020 BY E-MAIL

Mr. Christian Dubé
Minister of Health and Social Services
Ministère de la Santé et
des Services sociaux
ministre@msss.gouv.qc.ca

Dr. Horacio Arruda
Provincial Public Health Director and
Associate Deputy Minister
Ministère de la Santé et
des Services sociaux
horacio.arruda@msss.gouv.qc.ca

Subject: Vaccination of Teachers

Dear Sirs,

We are writing to you once again to express the concerns and anxieties of the teachers we represent regarding the situation of COVID-19 in Québec's schools.

Like you, we note that the number of outbreaks in schools account for a significant percentage (roughly 27%) of all active outbreaks identified by the Government.[1] In addition, as we stated clearly in our letter of October 21st, we are perfectly aware that the absence of effective ventilation in certain classrooms is a factor in the spread of the virus. To address this, we are asking for portable air purifier units to be installed in all classrooms that do not have adequate ventilation systems, in order to protect the health of teachers and students. Carbon dioxide detectors should also be installed in classrooms considered problematical, for the same reasons. Although our request for good quality air in classrooms is made in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is also applicable at all other times too, since classroom air quality should always be optimal under CNESST standards.

Based on these observations among others, we ask you to include Québec's teachers and education staff on the list of at-risk personnel to whom vaccines will be offered first, when they become available. We completely agree that health personnel should be given priority, along with the most vulnerable citizens with difficult medical conditions. However, we also believe it is essential to offer this additional protection to teachers, since they often move between groups of students, meaning that they could become significant vectors of transmission to families. It is also important to remember that they work in poorly-ventilated rooms full of students, and should therefore be protected in every possible way.

[1] https://www.lapresse.ca/covid-19/2020-11-10/les-ecoles-source-d-eclosions-et-d-inquietude.php.

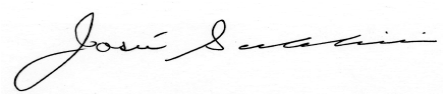
In addition to the fundamental mission of Québec's schools, which teachers carry with conviction, the Government has also said that their presence at work is necessary to keep businesses open and hence keep Québec's economy on track. We believe the important contribution made by teachers to offer support during the crisis, has unfortunately, more often than not, placed them at risk for catching the virus and has multiplied the protective measures to be taken at work.

The FSE-CSQ and QPAT believe it is both necessary and unavoidable, as a preventive measure, to include teachers and education personnel on the list of at-risk personnel to whom vaccines will be offered. It will also reduce the risk of COVID-19 outbreaks in schools and centres.

We hope very much that our request will receive due consideration, for the well-being of all Québec's teachers, their students and the community in general.

Yours sincerely,

President, FSE-CSQ,



Josée Scalabrini

President, QPAT,

Heidi Yetman