

**Letter: April 26, 2021: Letter from Chair Brush to Minister Lecce: Letter of Support,
Rainbow District School Board**



**District School Board
Ontario North East**

Schumacher Board Office

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Honourable Stephen Lecce
Minister of Education
Mowat Block
900 Bay Street
Toronto, ON
M7A 1L2

Sent via email to Minister.edu@ontario.ca

April 26, 2021

Dear Minister Lecce,

On behalf of District School Board Ontario North East (DSB1) Trustees, Senior Administration, staff, and students I write to you in support of the Rainbow District School Board letter dated April 9, 2021 regarding the Province's proposed plan to make online and remote learning a permanent option for parents/guardians and students.

Significant information and observation indicate substantial effects on student and family well-being and mental health due to remote learning. Although evidence-based data of pedagogical impact of remote learning is not available, there has been an increase in Child and Family Services referrals for non-attendance and non-participation in remote learning classes. The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has further exposed inequities in Northern Ontario, with limited access to internet and reliable technology.

Effects of remote learning in students with special needs, students who struggle with mental health and students who are at risk are further intensified as they are dependent on repetitive and extensive services that can only be provided in person and access to community and social support services.

The Provincial proposal fails to address students who identify as Indigenous' treaty right to education. DSB1 has a significant population of students who identify as Indigenous. There is grave concern in doing so as the plan will further inequities and be detrimental to students' learning in this minority population.

DSB1 respectfully requests that the Ministry of Education reconsider proposed changes to online and remote learning in Ontario until evidence-based data is collected and reviewed in collaboration with key stakeholders post-pandemic.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bob Brush".

Bob Brush
Chair of the Board



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cc: Doreen Dewar, Rainbow District School Board Chair
Premiere Ford
Nancy Naylor, Deputy Minister of Education
Gilles Bisson, MPP Timmins
John Vanthof, MPP Timiskaming-Cochrane
Cathy Abraham, OPSBA President
School Board Chairs
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