



## **Health and Safety Heads of the Union Meeting Minutes—January 27, 2022**

*All the union Presidents within the Board meet with TDSB Senior Management to discuss Health and Safety COVID-related issues at least twice monthly.*

*The minutes reflected below our issues specific to the Elementary Teachers of Toronto bargaining unit.*

### **Why is there a shortage of Non-fit tested N95 masks, and what is the plan to resolve it?**

TDSB receives all PPE throughout the pandemic through the Ministry of Government and Consumer Services. They are the vendor to all school boards and other public sectors in the province. The TDSB places orders through them monthly. We know some people are running short, and we're trying to order more as the Ministry did not supply enough to do a total distribution to everyone. As a result, we will only be sending it out based on what headcount the site tells us and about a week supply based on one mask a day, per person. We plan to ensure we have enough for everybody when they want one and when they ask for one.

### **If this is just a distribution issue, why not order a larger quantity and distribute more masks at one time?**

Our initial order got cut in half. We asked for just over 1.2 million masks on our first order. The Ministry cut the order in half, so we've been working with 616,000. If we try to increase the order, they're reducing it based on allocations because the Ministry's approach is that the blue masks are still the standard.

### **Durability**

Staff can use the N95 masks numerous times. This is not a different practice from hospital workers because N95 masks are a scarce product in Ontario. Provided the masks are not physically damaged, contorted or soiled. It is not something that you would take off and on and throw away at every single opportunity; it's something that can be reused. If a child spits on the worker, then the mask will need to change, but masks will generally last several days at a time.

### **When was staff notified about this?**

I believe it went to all staff as a couple of weeks several weeks ago, January 13 email from the Director

### **There are mixed messages about how many masks per person, per day.**

Upon the Ministry's announcement, we were sending out information and instructions. Things were changing quite rapidly. The Ministry changed to one per person, per day. The N95 masks are limited; we still have a lot the blue masks. The fact is that blue masks are still the standard.

### **Some members want to wear their own N95 mask.**

At this time, members are not permitted to use their own masks as the Ministry provides them N95, and the blue masks are still available as the standard.

### **We are still asking for the TDSB to Be consistent with their practice and exceed the ministry mandate regarding the 30% threshold.**

We are looking at a lower threshold instead of 30%. We are looking at a lower number, but we need to be using the correct data. Right now, the 30% could mean anything from a broken leg, a vacation to COVID, but we're still discussing this with TPH. The understanding is it doesn't have to be COVID-related if it's an absence. We are working on different parameters because there's the Ministry's reporting that we must do. We must collect the information in a particular way, but we're also trying to differentiate based on actual in-person absent students due to COVID. We are currently looking at different ways to track for different reasons to understand whether real "number."