

who has agency is, 'Are you jumping on the bandwagon of a racist problem or are you part of the solution?'" he said.

Should I be concerned about the return to school?

Fulford said sending children back to school on Jan. 4 should not be a main concern as case numbers in Ontario schools have not demonstrated an increased risk but rather have been reflective of the population.

Fulford added that, rather, she would be concerned about extending the break, as children would have increased opportunities for socialization in risky settings.

Furness agreed.

"When they're not in school, all those people who don't have agency and all those people who do but choose to be careless, they're going to be mixing their kids together and are going to be doing it without masks, so I think kids, in some ways, will actually have more exposure to COVID outside of school than in," he said.

Stranges added that his main concern about increased socialization is for older students in high school and post-secondary institutions. He said Western University, along with others, have chosen to extend the break until Jan. 11 – a decision he supports.

He said an extra week would afford students and their families the opportunity to have a better concept of the numbers before going back to classes or visiting campus.

Despite these perspectives and despite the provincial government stating last month that winter break would not be extended for students participating in in-person learning, Education Minister Stephen Lecce sent a letter to school boards Dec. 16 advising them to prepare for "all scenarios."

"We are recommending that boards encourage students and staff to take home any materials that they may require for remote learning before they leave school for the holiday period so that we can continue to be ready for all scenarios," the letter reads.

Headlines newsletter