

**THE LINDSAY ADVOCATE**  
KAWARTHA LAKES' FINEST MAGAZINE

KAWARTHA LAKES' FINEST MAGAZINE



Ensuring Ontarians avoid hot locales like this or even Canadian travel is on the mind of the education minister.

---

# Local health unit favours delaying March break, not cancelling it

*Published on February 9, 2021 — in Education — by Kirk Winter*

---

What began as idle speculation last week has now turned into a full blown discussion about what the 2021 school spring break will look like for almost 17,000 Trillium

Lakelands District School Board students — and it could mean a deferral of March break, if the local health unit has its way.

GO TO  
**TOP**

However, the minister of education, Stephen Lecce, has decided to frame the March Break question as a public health question rather than an educational question and it looks like the public health community is rallying behind him.

“My decision point is going to be made exclusively on medical advice. If (doctors) believe that cancelling the break will disincentive travel and is in the best interest of public health, I’m going to follow that advice full stop,” Lecce told a press conference in Ottawa on Feb. 4.

Lecce says the government will follow the advice on March Break from Ontario’s chief medical officer of health, Dr. David Williams. “We’ll get the final opinion from the CMO, I suspect in the coming days.”

Opinions are starting to trickle out from medical officers of health around the province and things don’t look good for a break occurring as planned running from March 15-19.

Locally, HKPR acting medical officer of health Ian Gemmill favours something short of a complete cancellation of March Break. “I would support a deferral of March Break. It reinforces the message to the public not to travel.”

Although the federal government’s international travel restrictions and disincentives make getaways to warm holiday destinations highly impractical, a deferral of March Break will also reduce the likelihood of domestic travel. It is better to delay March Break until there is warmer weather and the coronavirus decreases naturally, meaning there is there is less likelihood of it circulating.”

Last week, Eastern Ontario region medical officer of health Dr. Paul Roumeliotis

suggested March break should be cancelled for all students to keep COVID-19 case counts down in the community.

“I think if kids stay in school it’s not going to be a problem,” said Roumeliotis. “Unless kids stay home and parents keep them home during spring break and don’t mix with others then that’s not going to be a problem but what we saw during Christmas break was really the opposite. The numbers really went up four-fold in terms of positivity for the age group between 11 and 13 for example.”

Colin Matthew, president of OSSTF District 15 who represents all high school teachers in TLDSB, stated, “The discussion over March break is a distraction. There has been no disruption the work our members are doing nor in the expectations of students. While distance learning remains a poor substitute for face to face, for many of our students cancelling an anticipated break would be a dismissal of the significant work our members have done supporting students through this.”

Leaders of the two largest teacher federations in Ontario have gone on record publicly opposing any change to the planned break.

OSSTF president Harvey Bischof, in a televised interview on Feb. 4, went even further than Matthew and said educators, students and parents need the break.

“Bearing in mind the pressures under which everybody in education have been under, cancelling March break does seem like a bad idea,” said Bischof.

The Elementary Teachers Federation of Ontario is also calling on the Ontario government to give students and staff the week off.

“ETFO strongly opposes any change to the 2021 March Break. We are living in unprecedented times that continue to create high levels of stress, fear and anxiety for everyone,” said president Sam Hammond.

Even the Ontario Principals Council who represent all the principals and vice-principals in TLDSB have come out strongly in favour the break running as normal when they tweeted on Feb. 3, “Principals & vice-

principals believe March Break is important for students, staff & families to spend time together, recharge & rest. It is especially important this year. We look forward to (March Break) taking place as planned.”

A decision from Dr. Williams is expected soon. “We’re going to hope to get that out to parents the week of Feb. 8, to give sufficient time for families to plan,” said Lecce.

[FACEBOOK](#)
[TWITTER](#)
[GOOGLE](#)
[PINTEREST](#)
[LINKEDIN](#)
**TAGS:**
[DR. IAN GEMMILL](#)
[EDUCATION](#)
[HEALTH UNIT](#)
[HKPR](#)
[MARCH BREAK](#)
[SCHOOL](#)


---

## YOU MIGHT BE INTERESTED IN

FEBRUARY 11, 2021

### **March break now April break; Octoblocks not certain for the fall, says board**

Education Minister Stephen Lecce has postponed March Break, so that schools can help to limit community

FEBRUARY 4, 2021

### **Health unit requests money from city after reduction in public health spending by Conservatives**

With the Ontario Conservative government reducing provincial grants by 30 per cent for mandatory provincial programs,

The Trillium Lakelands District School Board (TLDSB) will receive a total allocation of \$600,787.

FEBRUARY 3, 2021

### **New COVID-19 funding for HKLB school boards**

In an effort to keep schools safe from COVID-19, the Ontario government is investing an additional

KIRK WINTER LATEST POSTS

GO TO  
TOP