

## Memorandum

**FROM:** Malcolm Lavoie  
Deputy Minister of Justice

**OUR FILE REFERENCE:** AR 59212

**YOUR FILE REFERENCE:**

**TO:** Lora Pillipow  
Deputy Minister of Education  
7th Floor, Commerce Place

**DATE:** March 11, 2024

**TELEPHONE:** 780-427-5032

**SUBJECT:** **Alexandru Radita Fatality Inquiry:**  
**Request for a Response to Recommendations**

Please find enclosed a copy of the Honourable Justice S.L. Van de Veen's report to the Minister of Justice regarding the public fatality inquiry into the death of Alexandru Radita. This report will be publicly released on March 25, 2024. Please do not share the contents of the report in any manner that would cause it to become available publicly prior to this time.

The following recommendations may impact Education:

1. It is recommended that school authorities (including schools, school boards and Department of Education personnel) recognize that extended absence from school is often accompanied by serious parenting issues which may place young children at risk. Accordingly, it is recommended that local school officials consider requesting wellness checks in cases where extended unresolved school absence occurs and if necessary reports to Child Welfare authorities be made to ensure children are not at risk. In particular, if such absence continues for a period of a month, or such shorter period school authorities consider appropriate, it is recommended school authorities consider reporting to either police or Child Protection Services notwithstanding any ongoing school authority efforts to resolve the issue of school absence.
2. It is recommended that school authorities create and improve collaborative relationships with local police and local child protective services to reduce or remove reluctance to involve police or child protection services in cases where there is extended absence from school by children. It is further recommended that availability of resource officers be expanded to include small schools and school boards, as well as the large school boards in larger centers, since ongoing relationships tend to remove the stigma attached to requesting the assistance of either police or child services.

3. It is recommended that the procedure relating to the entry of student withdrawal information into the provincial educational data system known as PASI be reviewed to ensure the manner and content of the entry of such information is consistently and effectively monitored to deal with students who have withdrawn from one school and are not registered into another school.
4. It is recommended that the Department of Education consider amending the annual Guide to Education provided by the Alberta Education to school authorities to include provision for such authorities to consider wellness checks, when appropriate, in cases where young students are absent from school for an extended timeframe, or in cases of remote learning, not providing work required by online programs for an extended time period.
5. It is recommended that there be improved communication by the Department of Education with schools and school boards concerning the need for wellness checks when extended attendance from school is an issue. This communication should be broad enough to include not only a superintendent, but attendance officers charged with monitoring attendance. It is recommended that the Office of Student Attendance and Re-Engagement consider recommendations in writing to the various schools and school boards, large and small, that wellness checks in the event of extended non-attendance be considered. The importance of local school authorities initiating wellness checks arises from the fact that ongoing proceedings involving the Office of Student Attendance and Re-Engagement are lengthy and are not designed to deal with potentially emergent situations, where young children may be at risk.
6. It is recommended that the Department of Education of Alberta collaborate with Child and Family Services and other stakeholders in the examination of the general alert system described in recommendation number 5 of the Recommendations Relating to Child and Family Services found in page 36 and 37 of this report.
7. It is recommended that the government of Alberta review the provisions of the Choice of Education Act relating to the Notification System of Unsupervised Educational Programming. The lack of oversight resulting from this choice has the potential to isolate dependent children from the childcare communities mandated to protect the health, welfare, and cognitive development of children. Alexandru Radita was not registered in school for four years prior to his death which significantly contributed to the isolation preventing his need for protection from coming to the attention of the Child Protection Services in Alberta.

I ask that you please advise the following:

1. Whether Education accepts in principle, does not accept, or has a different response to the recommendations.
2. A brief explanation of why that decision was made.

3. If Education intends to accept the recommendations, or to implement different measures, what steps will be taken in that regard.

A response to this enquiry is not mandatory. However, be advised that this memorandum and any response received will be publicly released and posted on the Open Government Portal: <https://open.alberta.ca/opendata/responses-to-public-fatality-inquiry-recommendations>.

Please email Education's response to the Fatality Inquiry Coordinator Abid Mavani, at [abid.mavani@gov.ab.ca](mailto:abid.mavani@gov.ab.ca)

If a response has not been received by July 25, 2024 (four months from the public release date of Justice Van de Veen's report), that information will also be made publicly available.

Thank you for your cooperation in this matter.

*Original Signed*

Malcolm Lavoie

Attachment