

March 12, 2021

Andre Tremblay
Deputy Minister
Office of the Deputy Minister, Education
7th Floor Commerce Place
10155 102 Street
Edmonton AB T5J 4L5

Dear Sir:

**Subject: TDM, TCM, TMB, and DB - Public Fatality Inquiry
Response to Recommendations**

Please find enclosed a copy of the Honourable Judge J.E. Schaffter's three reports to the Minister of Justice and Solicitor General for the deaths of the above-noted four young persons. This report will be publicly released on April 2, 2021.

The following recommendations made by Judge Schaffter may impact Alberta Education:

- The experts spoke at length about brain development research and research into the effects of trauma on children and the potential for long term negative impacts on the child in childhood and into adulthood. The greater the number of adverse childhood experiences the greater the potential negative impact. The Report, *Into Focus* by the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate states that "trauma, abuse, family breakdown, parental substance use and lack of connection to school may increase a young person's risk of substance use." Early identification of childhood trauma and education of individuals, professional and familial of the effects of trauma on a child will assist in helping the child to develop resiliency in order to mitigate the effects of the trauma. Programs such as Head Start are geared towards providing young children who are experiencing difficulties with additional supports. Operation of these programs largely falls to not for profit community groups and in smaller rural areas such a group may not exist. **Government ministries should investigate and actively facilitate the operation of early intervention services in rural areas.**
- Although it appears from the representations of the panel members that education on a trauma informed approach for professionals has increased over the last 10 years, **Brain Development and training in the trauma informed approach should be maintained and enhanced.**

- Each of the four youths reviewed, experienced school attendance issues and some were expelled at various times for truancy. A greater understanding of the effects of trauma and resulting behaviors, by teachers, school administrators, counsellors is imperative. Interventions in the past have been about consequences, limit setting and punishments as opposed to root causes and developing of individual supports. The Office of the Student Attendance and Re-engagement has now been created (which was not in existence when these youths were attending school) to approach truancy using restorative principles; engaging family, student, supports. **School Administrators should be strongly encouraged to use the services of the Office of Student Attendance and Re-engagement when attendance issues first arise with a youth and prior to proceeding to suspension or expulsion.**

I ask that you please advise the following:

- a) Whether Alberta Education accepts, accepts in principle, does not accept, or has a different response to the recommendation;
- b) A brief explanation of why that decision was made; and
- c) If Alberta Education intends to accept the recommendation, or to implement different measures, what steps will be taken in that regard.

A response to this enquiry is not mandatory. However, please be advised that 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>.

If a response has not been received by August 3, 2021 (four months from the public release date) that information will also be made publicly available.

Thank you for your cooperation in this matter.

Yours truly,

Original Signed

Abid Mavani
Fatality Inquiry Coordinator

Enclosures