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Wednesday June 24 COVID-19 Update

Dear neighbour,

Today our city moves into Stage Two of reopening. I have witnessed so many people working incredibly hard to get us here. I want to extend my thanks to the public health officials, frontline workers, family caregivers, mutual aid networks, and everyone else who has helped us get to this point.

Amongst the excitement of many businesses and services reopening, we must also remember that this virus is not gone. Over 1000 people in Toronto have died of COVID-19 since March. It is vitally important that each and every one of us continue doing all we can to prevent the spread and make sure numbers keep declining. This means continuing to practice physical distancing, washing our hands thoroughly, and covering our faces when we come into contact with others in businesses and on transit. The health of our most vulnerable neighbours and of our city as a whole absolutely depends on it.

Yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Jessica Bell'.

Jessica Bell (MPP for University-Rosedale)

In this newsletter:

- [What should school in September look like?](#)

[Subscribe](#)[Past Issues](#)[Translate ▼](#)[and racialized people's lives](#)

- [Exposure notification app to be launched](#)
- [Emergency Orders extended](#)
- [Moratorium on commercial evictions now in effect](#)
- [Immediate action needed to protect migrant workers](#)
- [Ontario Government announces new math curriculum](#)
- [Face coverings will be mandatory on the TTC](#)
- [New funding available for Indigenous-owned small and medium sized businesses](#)
- [Additional federal announcements](#)
- [COVID Kindness feature](#)

Jessica Bell, MPP University-Rosedale
invites you to attend an online townhall:

What should school in September look like?

Monday June 29, 6:00-7:00 PM

with special guests:



Marit Stiles
MPP for
Davenport



Nigel Barriffe
Educator
TDSB



Rachel Huot
Ontario Parent
Action Network



**Dr. Michelle
Science**
Sick Kids

Join in live to hear from MPP Bell and her guests here (no account required):



facebook.com/UniRoseJessicaBell

We will take some questions live, but will prioritize those submitted in advance here:



jessicabellmpp.ca/edutownhall

What should school in September

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On Friday the Ford Government released some preliminary funding plans for the 2020-2021 school year. I echo my colleague, Education Critic MPP [Marit Stiles, in recognizing](#) that the fact that any investments in education that are promised at this stage is **thanks to the hard work of millions of Ontarians like you** – educators, parents, students, and community members – who fought back against Ford's cuts over the past year.

Unfortunately, the Ford Government's current plans fall well short of the investment needed to address the challenges parents, students and staff are facing after this past year's course cuts, class-size hikes and the months of missed school due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Ontario Government also announced that they are preparing a [3-option plan](#) for September. School boards will be asked to plan for the following three scenarios -- online learning, in-class learning or a medley of the two. School boards are also required to communicate with parents and students prior to the start of the 2020-21 school year, outlining the safety plan, guidance on health and safety measures and protocols, and any other changes that will be implemented when schools open in September. The full announcement can be found [here](#).

I am determined to ensure that the plan for school in September is directly informed by the needs of parents, students, and educators.

That's why I am hosting an online townhall, [What Should School in September Look Like?](#) on Monday, June 29th at 6pm.

This event will bring together perspectives from across University–Rosedale to facilitate a broad discussion between parents, educators and experts on **what changes we need to make to better support students, parents and teachers in September.**

I will be joined by **an amazing roster of panelists:**

- MPP Marit Stiles (Davenport), Official Opposition Education Critic
- Nigel Barriffe, educator with the Toronto District School Board
- Rachel Huot, organizer with the Ontario Parent Action Network
- Dr. Michelle Science, infectious disease specialist with Sick Kids

We welcome and encourage questions and concerns to be submitted ahead of time. You can do so by replying to this email or [filling out this online form](#). The questions submitted will be posed for our expert panelists to answer. **Your comments submitted before, during, and after the townhall will directly inform the policy recommendations I bring forward for the return to school in September.**

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Note that **you do not have to have a facebook account to listen in**. Simply visit www.facebook.com/pg/UniRoseJessicaBell/posts/ at 6pm on Monday to tune in. More info [here](#).

Please share this invitation broadly with your networks. I have also posted information on Facebook [here](#) and on Twitter [here](#).

City of Toronto moving to Stage Two of reopening

On Monday, the Ontario Government gave approval for Toronto to [begin Stage Two reopening](#) today, Wednesday June 24. In Stage Two, additional restrictions will be loosened while emphasizing public health advice, workplace health and safety guidance, and personal and collective responsibility. More businesses and services will be permitted to open, as well as community, recreational and outdoor spaces. Included in this list, as noted, are personal care services, restaurants and bars and recreational facilities. [You can find the complete list here](#). **It is important to note that while facilities are able to open, it is only recommended they do so if they are able to meet the new public health measures designed to keep their employees and customers safe.**

Toronto Public Health has [provided a number of helpful guidance documents](#) to help local businesses and community organizations reopen safely.

Calling for an end to police violence and investing in Black, Indigenous and racialized people's lives

Thank you to everyone who has tirelessly advocated to end systemic racism and police violence. Anti-Black racism is real and pervasive in our city, province, and country. I stand in solidarity with the Torontonians who have been marching in our streets, and all those taking a stand against anti-Black and anti-Indigenous racism and violence.

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interactions with police. **Regis Korchinski-Paquet, Rodney Levi, Chantel Moore, Stewart Kevin Andrews, Jason Collins, Eishia Hudson, Caleb Tubila Njoko, D'Andre Campbell and Ejaz Choudry**. These people were loved, and should be here today.

We know that these deaths are not isolated incidents, but part of a pattern in policing and in our society of systemic racism against Black and Indigenous people. I believe that we need to take a real, hard look at our institutions, including policing and our justice systems. We cannot continue to let anti-Black racism, and discrimination against other marginalized groups, continue unchecked.

There is a terrible imbalance between police budgets and spending on programs that address mental illness, racism, poverty, and barriers to opportunity. By cutting and underfunding youth programming, mental health supports, and anti-poverty programs, government after government has turned social issues into policing issues. We must put an end to this.

On Monday, the Ontario NDP [laid out its commitments](#) for overhauling policing and police oversight, tackling systemic racism, and making mental health crisis response safer, especially for Black, Indigenous and racialized people.

You can read the details of our proposal [here](#). This is a *living document* and we're committed to an ongoing dialogue with Black, Indigenous and racialized Ontarians to strengthen the proposals.

1. **Completely overhaul police oversight** so the public can have confidence that police forces and officers are no longer able to act with impunity, but instead are truly accountable to the public and the communities they serve.
2. **End carding once and for all** – rather than just driving it underground – and destroy every bit of data collected through this unconstitutional process.
3. **Invest in alternative first responders**, rather than the police, to respond to mental health, addictions, homelessness and school discipline calls.
4. **Demilitarize our police forces** -- getting military grade hardware like armoured vehicles, assault rifles and tear gas out of the hands of police and off our streets.
5. **Give elected representatives the help and power to set their policing budgets**, determine how they are spent, and prioritize what communities need.
6. **Invest heavily in programs and supports that improve quality of life** by considering and addressing the social determinants of health (social and economic factors that influence people's health) and use an anti-racist, anti-oppression framework.

[Read our full plan to End Police Violence and Invest in BIPOC lives here.](#)

Exposure notification app to be launched

The provincial and federal governments have partnered to [launch a contact tracing app](#) in the next two weeks called COVID Alert. It was developed by members of the Ontario Digital Service (ODS) and volunteers from Shopify. Users will be able to voluntarily download the app to their smartphone and be notified anonymously if they have been exposed to someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 within the past 14 days. The app will be used nationwide to ensure that interprovincial contact tracing is possible. Using Bluetooth data, the app will be able to connect with all individuals who have had close contact with a positive case, if both parties are using the app, within 24 hours of being identified. It will direct those close contacts to self-isolate for 14 days and follow up for symptoms on every day of their self-isolation.

Emergency Orders extended

All emergency orders currently in force under s.7.0.2 (4) of the Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act [have been extended](#) to June 30, 2020. A full list of active emergency orders [is available here](#). Premier Ford has also announced that he will be [seeking a further extension](#) of the State of Emergency until July 15, 2020.

Moratorium on commercial evictions now in effect

On June 17 the Ontario Government [passed the Protecting Small Business Act](#), temporarily halting or reversing evictions of commercial tenants and protecting them from being locked out or having their assets seized during COVID-19. The legislation applies to businesses that are eligible for federal/provincial rent assistance for evictions from May 1, 2020 until August 31, 2020.

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commercial evictions retroactive to mid-March. Early drafts of the Ontario Government's legislation placed a partial ban of evictions retroactive to just June 3. This would have left out thousands of commercial businesses who received eviction notices throughout the pandemic. As a result of our advocacy over the past few weeks, the Ontario Government backdated the eviction date to May 1.

While this is a partial win, the legislated moratorium on commercial evictions [excludes thousands of businesses](#) as it only includes businesses eligible for the flawed Canada Emergency Rent Assistance Program (CECRA). It also provides no protection for tenants whose landlords still refuse to apply for rent assistance, it simply pushes the eviction date down the road. If you have been impacted directly by this legislation, please contact me.

Immediate action needed to protect migrant workers

[A third migrant worker in Ontario has died of COVID-19](#) – Juan Lopez Chaparro, 55, died Saturday in a London, Ontario hospital. Chaparro had worked for a farm near Simcoe, Ontario that has been experiencing an outbreak of the virus. I join my colleagues in [urging the Ford Government to take action to protect workers](#), and asking why it has taken this government so long to address a problem it has long known about. While details have not yet been released, the provincial and federal governments has [announced](#) that they will begin joint site-inspections of farms which employ migrant workers. It is unfortunate that it took the death of a third worker from Mexico and [intervention from the Mexican government](#) to make the provincial and federal governments agree to take this basic step. [More information on this issue here](#).

Ontario Government announces new math curriculum

Yesterday Ontario Education Minister Stephen Lecce announced the Ford government's [new elementary school math curriculum](#). It has also decided there will be no EQAO testing in the 2020-21 school year to allow for students to adjust to the new curriculum and recover from the fallout of the pandemic

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September 2020. I think that it is [irresponsible to introduce a new math curriculum](#) in the middle of a pandemic when our teachers and families have already been going above and beyond to meet children's needs. This change should only be considered when there is enough time to properly consult educators, students, parents and when it will not create an additional burden on teachers.

Face coverings will be mandatory on the TTC

The Toronto Transit Commission's board voted to [make face coverings mandatory](#) for all customers on the TTC starting July 2.

New funding available for Indigenous-owned small and medium sized businesses

The Ontario Government will provide up to [\\$10 million to Indigenous-owned small and medium sized businesses](#). Loans of up to \$50,000 will be available to businesses that are either ineligible for, or unable to access, existing federal and provincial COVID-19 response initiatives for small businesses. The funding is being delivered through the Support for People and Jobs Fund.

Additional federal announcements

Camping to resume in national parks and national historic sites

The Federal Government announced that camping will resume gradually at a number of national parks and national historic sites across Canada starting on June 22.

Federal government outlines return to work plan for federal public servants

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that the return process will be gradual and will be different depending on each federal department. Most public servants have been working from home and only essential staff have been working in federal buildings.

Changes announced to extend time periods for temporary layoffs

The Federal Government extended the grace period during which certain employers can re-hire employees temporarily laid off due to COVID-19.

Today's COVID kindness feature

Thank you to the many people who wrote in last week to let us know that our last newsletter was too long for their mailbox and that this last section was cut off. For that reason, I am including it once again.



Today I'm so pleased to highlight **The People's Pantry**, a grassroots Toronto community response to COVID19. Since March, this mutual aid effort has been providing hot meals and grocery care packages to thousands of people across Toronto and the GTA impacted by COVID-19: free of charge, no questions asked, delivered to your door.

Ellie and Yann are two of the hundreds of people who have put a lot of love into baking, cooking, delivering as well as back-end coordinating of the People's Pantry..and it shows!

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Note that this email and all previous COVID-19 updates are available at: www.jessicabellmpp.ca/coronavirus

As always, if you require urgent assistance from my office, please contact my team at 416-535-7206 or email us at jbell-co@ndp.on.ca

