

## Winter break extended for K-12 students

December 30, 2021

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To support a successful return to school and provide additional planning time, the kindergarten to Grade 12 winter break will be extended provincewide to January 10.

The extended break will give school authorities time to gather additional data to assess staffing implications and the potential operational impacts of the current COVID-19 situation.

To assist with the safe return to classes, Alberta Health and Municipal Affairs' PPE Task Force will also deliver 8.6 million rapid tests and 16.5 million masks to schools, starting the week of January 10.

To further support high school students whose learning is disrupted by this extension, January diploma exams have been cancelled. A decision will be made later in 2022 regarding April and June diploma exams.

“With the COVID situation rapidly evolving, so too must our response. This pause will give teachers, school administrators and school authorities more time to plan for students to return safely to learning. Under very challenging circumstances, I am very grateful to parents, students, teachers and education partners for their flexibility during the pandemic.”

*Adriana LaGrange, Minister of Education*

School authorities will use the extended student winter break to prepare for potential in-person and at-home learning scenarios, as they have done previously during the pandemic. Information and guidance to support school authorities and parents is available on [alberta.ca/returntoschool](https://alberta.ca/returntoschool).

With this change, we are responding to concerns from Education stakeholders and aligning Alberta with other provinces in Canada. A pause will also help school authorities plan for changes in testing and contact notification.

The rapid test distribution will offer enough rapid tests to provide two five-test kits to each student and staff member across the entire education system. Distribution is being finalized and more information will be shared next week.

Medical-grade masks will also be distributed through schools to students and school staff through a phased approach. When fully distributed, staff and students will receive an eight week supply. Both pediatric and adult medical grade mask distribution will be coordinated in a phased approach through Municipal Affairs' PPE Task Force and more information will also be shared next week.

More information on next steps related to whether students will learn in class or at home beginning January 10 will be communicated late next week. The decision will be evidence-based using operational information provided by school authorities, case information and other available health data.

## Related information

- [Staying safe and healthy this school year](#)

## Multimedia

- [Watch the news conference](#)
- [Listen to the news conference](#) (available after the event)

## Media inquiries

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