



**Education,
Early Learning
and Culture**

**Éducation,
Développement
préscolaire et Culture**



Office of the Minister

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RECEIVED SEP 19 2017

September 7, 2017

Ms. Lisa MacDougall, President
Prince Edward Island Home and School Federation Inc.
P O Box 1012
Charlottetown, PE C1A 7M4

Dear Ms. MacDougall:

Thank you for your letter regarding the Resolutions passed at your April 8th Annual General Meeting. First, let me thank you for giving me the opportunity to attend your spring meeting and speak to your membership. As you know, I strongly believe that engaged parents make a significant contribution to learning.

With regards to the resolutions, I am pleased to provide the following responses:

RESOLUTION 1 – 2017 – School Counselling Services

The Department of Education, Early Learning and Culture (EELC) recognizes the importance of addressing mental health for students. Student well-being is one of the education system's three overarching goals. Government, in collaboration with the DEELC and the Department of Health and Wellness have invested funding to assist schools in addressing this issue through a Student Well-Being Supports Program. New supports for students will be introduced, building on government's recently-released Mental Health Strategy. These changes will be fully implemented over three years, beginning with the Montague and Westisle Families of Schools this fall. These initiatives will reduce wait times, improve service coordination, increase awareness of supports available, increase the focus on prevention, and ultimately result in better outcomes for youth and families. This level of support for schools will help Guidance Counsellors in their regular work to attend to students experiencing mental health challenges. In reference to the school counsellor allocation, the Education Authority Staffing and Funding Minister's Directive stipulates that 1 counsellor is allocated for every 400 students. From that funding, the education authorities allocate the counsellors to the schools.

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RESOLUTION 2 - 2017 – School Food Guiding Principles

RESOLUTION 3 – 2017 – School Healthy Snack Time (tabled)

RESOLUTION 4 – 2017 – Provincial School Food Strategy

RESOLUTION 5 – 2017 – School Lunch Time Frame

The concept of a “Provincial School Food Strategy” would need to be positioned as part of a larger provincial food strategy or initiative. Although it is recognized that schools are a key setting to influence the healthy eating habits of both students and staff (through formal education, school nutrition policies, and health promoting environments) this work would need to be imbedded within a larger provincial strategy. All stakeholders within the education system, as well as other departments, business sectors and community partners, would need to be engaged in any future discussions. The *School Food Guiding Principles*, recently adopted by the PEIHSF, would be an important consideration to include in this work.

As you know, the PEI Department of Agriculture and Fisheries is currently leading the development of a new Community Food Security and Food Education Program. This new program is the result of community and grass-root organizations who have identified that local food systems should be a priority. This program will include support for three local food pilot projects in schools which will aim to increase the amount of local food available on lunch menus. Other small grants will be administered to support projects which increase local food education in schools; knowledge of where food comes from; community food security partnerships; and sustainable models. Applications for funding will be reviewed and adjudicated by a committee of government and community representatives who will make recommendations to the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries. The results of these projects, in which the Department of Education, Early Learning and Culture, Public School Branch, Department of Health and Wellness and PEIHSF representatives are key partners, will help us collectively understand local food systems and how to increase school’s access.

The Department of Health and Wellness remains a key partner in supporting the healthy eating environment in schools. Two new Healthy Eating Officers have been visiting schools to explore school specific needs regarding breakfast/snack program implementation, school nutrition policy adherence, and other areas of interest. Their future work will include a possible revision of the School Nutrition Policy, which was first adopted in 2005 by elementary/consolidated schools, then expanded to include intermediate and senior high schools in 2011. The revision process would engage all school stakeholders (i.e., students, teachers, parents, government and community) in the discussion. During the revision process, key elements, such as appropriate time for lunch and eating lunch after outside play, would be important components to consider carrying forward.

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The Department and Public Schools Branch staff look forward to our continued work with the PEIHSF, the DHW, and other partners, as we collaboratively support and improve the school food environment and ultimately the health and well-being of Island students

RESOLUTION 6 – 2017 – Minister’s Directive on School Libraries

The Education Authority Staffing and Funding Minister’s Directive stipulates the full-time teacher allocation for various teaching positions in schools. There are many competing demands in all schools in the province. Over the last ten years, we have seen many changes regarding literacy support to students and with the new literacy libraries in many elementary schools, more books are available to students and many initiatives are held in the classroom to assist students with reading. We recognize the importance of school libraries to support teaching in schools. However, certain schools may have different priorities they need to address to respond to their particular needs. The following is the allocation provided for both education authorities

For schools with less than 200 students	.25 full-time teacher position
For schools with 200 – 299 students	.5 full-time teacher position
For schools with 300-799 students	1.00 full-time position
For schools with 800 or more students	1.5 full-time position

RESOLUTION 7 – 2017 – Increase to 5 period days for high schools by decreasing class length to 60 minutes

This concept has been discussed and continues to be discussed at various levels of the education system. There are various components to consider at the curriculum level, the staffing level and the infrastructure level before making a major shift like this one in high schools. At the present time, the Department is working with the Public Schools Branch to address the transitions that have resulted from the recommendations of the School Review Process. The priority is to focus on student’s needs to ensure a smooth transition. Across the system, three goals have been identified: High-Quality Education, Well-Being and Public Confidence. We are focusing our efforts on these goals through the implementation of new curriculum using the Essential Graduation Learning Competencies, focused professional learning for teachers, the Student Well-Being Supports Program, the Student Transition and Graduation Planner and through communication with all partners in the educational system.

I wish you all the best and look forward to further conversations on educational matters.

Sincerely,



Doug W. Currie
Minister

Health PEI

One Island Health System

Health PEI Board
16 Garfield Street
PO Box 2000, Charlottetown
Prince Edward Island
Canada C1A 7N8

Santé Î.-P.-É.

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Conseil d'administration de Santé Î.-P.-É.
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August 7, 2017

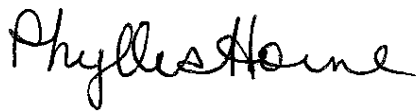
Ms. Lisa MacDougall
President
PEI Home & School Federation Inc
PO Box 1012
Charlottetown PE C1A 7M4

Dear Ms. MacDougall,

Thank you for your recent letter on behalf of the PEI Home and School Federation dated May 1, 2017. Your concerns regarding the two resolutions have been sent on to the Department of Health & Wellness for their response.

The Health PEI Board will continue to work with the leaders of our health system; specifically the Federations' concerns regarding mental health services provided by Health PEI. We feel early intervention and the services that are offered by Health PEI welcome the opportunity to work with the Department of Education. You can expect a formal reply from the Department of Health & Wellness

Sincerely,



Phyllis Horne
Health PEI Board Chair

c: Dr. Michael Mayne, CEO, Health PEI

RECEIVED AUG 25 2017



Health and
Wellness

Santé et
Mieux-être



Office of the Minister
PO Box 2000, Charlottetown
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October 23, 2017

Bureau du ministre
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Ms. Lisa MacDougall, President
PEI Home and School Federation Inc.
PO Box 1012
Charlottetown, PE C1A 7M4

Lisa
Dear Ms. MacDougall:

Thank you for sharing HSF School Food Guiding Principles and Resolution 5-2017 regarding a provincial school food strategy. Healthy eating and access to, and affordability of, healthy food are very important considerations if we hope to change our current health trends. We know that poor diet is linked to chronic disease, a growing burden for our Island population, country and worldwide. Islanders consume less fruits and vegetables than the average Canadian and Islanders are more likely to be either overweight or obese.

I applaud the HSF for suggesting through these guiding principles that more effort needs to focus on the social determinants of health, the societal conditions that influence people's health, like the school environment (physical and social environments) and income and social status (equity), and that a more collaborative solution is needed to address school food issues.

The concept of a provincial school food strategy may help to assist schools and parents in dealing with food related issues and programs but a much larger collaborative effort would be necessary to engage all stakeholders in this issue if sustainable change is desired. While children do spend a significant amount of time in the school setting, a larger population level change will be required to address this complex issue.

The Department of Health and Wellness remains committed to supporting schools and other settings in developing evidence-based food policies. Through current Healthy Eating Program Officers and other staff in the department and Health PEI, we continue to offer our resources and support to assist schools and local home and school associations establish effective food policies and practices. We look forward to being an involved partner in any initiative the Public Schools Branch may wish to lead in this area.

Sincerely,

Robert Henderson
Minister

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/sla

c: Dr. Heather Morrison, Chief Public Health Officer
Laura Lee Noonan, Manager of Health Promotion