

## PEI HOME AND SCHOOL FEDERATION

### AGM ROUND TABLE DISCUSSION SUMMARY

APRIL 14, 2012

**QUESTION #1** "School board trustees - what are current barriers to being involved; how do we view their current role. How do we engage more parents/students in being involved? How do we feel about elected vs. appointed trustees? Did you vote in the last trustee elections? If not, why not?"

- Trustees hold very important role—represent parents at school board level
- There is apathy on the part of the public re trustee elections
- Educate the public around the role of the trustee and trustee elections
- How is the responsibility for governance divided between the Board and the Department?
- Use social media/print media to advise parents about what is going on
- Almost unanimous support for elected school trustees
- Develop framework around trustee terms of office and length of terms
- Promote and advertise trustee elections well
- Place trustee election on the provincial election ballot
- Have trustees representing “family of schools”
- Trustees need to be an advocate for education
- Need to have information in schools for parents talking about trustees role
- Include student representation on board of trustees
- Allow students 16 and older to vote in trustee elections
- Trustee should be a parent of children in schools
- Both boards will not be represented equally if amalgamated to one board
- Is government moving too quickly? Hurried decisions aren’t always the best ones
- Parent attendance at school board meetings very poor—do not feel welcome
- Trustees need to engage community
  - Attend Home and School Meetings
  - Meet by family of schools – “Meet and Greet”
- Need to have less than 20 percent voter turnout before appointing trustees
- Would like a polling station at each school to make voting easier
- Concern about political patronage in appointing trustees
- Resolution for next AGM around holding trustee elections
- Establish criteria for trustees to ensure skill/experience appropriate for role
- Provide a link between trustees and Home and School to
  - Help parents understand trustees role
  - Provide mechanisms for communication
  - Aid parent advocacy

- Hold trustee election 2014
- **QUESTION #2** What are some success stories from your school that addressed bullying? What are we expecting the school(s) to do in providing concrete action to address bullying? What should we expect from parents, home and the community with regards to stopping bullying?
- Different forms of bullying:
  - Physical
  - Emotional/mental
  - Cyberbullying
  - Exclusion
- Programs to address bullying:
  - RAP – Respect Accept Protect
  - Roots of Empathy – Power of Change Program
  - WITS program. W – Walk away I – Ignore T – Tell someone S – Succeed
- Peer to peer interaction is very powerful to combat bullying
- PAGE group (Greenfield, Parkside, Athena and Elm Street)
  - Best practices example
- Anti-bullying workshops:
  - U-fit – Gordon McNeily
  - “Sticks and Stones”
  - “Shark Bites”
- Reward and reinforce positive behaviors
- Concentrate on restorative justice; works better than separation
- Establish anti-bullying committees in schools/boards
- Hold bullying education workshops for parents
- Establish student leader/celebrity champions to foster anti bullying in schools
- Bullying leads to suicide and other negative events
- Team effort required to combat bullying: parents, teachers, administrators, boards
- Consistency in reporting, action taken, restorative justice and counselling needs to happen
- Effective communication established between school and home regarding bullying incidents
- Educate parents on how to speak out on bullying--how to be an advocate for their children
- Dealing with bullying different in elementary versus junior high and senior high
- What is the responsibility of the bystander?
- Vests to ID playground supervisor in elementary
- Time needs to be spent educating our children on respect and social skills
- Establish cell phone policy in schools
- Study best practices in other schools with regard to bullying
- Schools should send strong anti bullying message

- Increase resources for community/mental health in schools, i.e. guidance counsellors, etc.

### QUESTION #3 How do we keep the spotlight on the Education Governance Report Recommendations?

- Education Governance Report recommendations result of hard work by committee
- Locals question why recommendations to maintain two English language school boards and hold trustee elections rejected by government
- Federation recommended school governance be reconfigured around “family of schools”
- Concern that chaos will be the result of school board amalgamation
- Concern that rural areas will be ignored if only one school board in capital area
- Saving money should be result of board amalgamation—no evidence in report
- Keep Education Governance Report recommendations in spotlight via
  - social media
  - print media
  - talking notes for local presidents
  - writing letters to Minister of Education, Premier, MLA’s
  - discussing report at home and school meetings
  - inviting Committee member to speak at home and school meetings
  - school newsletters
  - forming a committee to work with government
- Federation hold government accountable to implement report recommendations
- Everyone read Education Governance Report
- Consensus favors elected school board trustees
- Home and School representation on School Organization Plan S.O.P. committees
- Birth rate is down and affecting enrollment numbers
- How will declining enrollment affect zoning and class size?
- Zoning needs to address need for low student/teacher ratio
- Socio/economic gap growing among students

## QUESTION #4. How is the PEI Home and School Federation helping your school and what could we do better?

- Acts as “one voice” for parents to government
- Developed Parent Engagement Fund - wonderful project
- Puts on annual meetings – schools getting together and sharing information
- Provides training for parents on establishing and running a local home and school
- Great resource for advice and information sharing
- Has access to media
- Lobby for home and school funds not to go to “core” materials
- Increase on-line information sharing through website, twitter campaign, etc.
- Encourage higher attendance at meetings
- Hold government accountable to the Education Governance Report
- Lobby for a Minister of State for Child and Youth including Education
- Be more vocal about their accomplishments, e.g. Put an insert in school newsletters
- Develop more user friendly web site, e.g., add a search box.