



Education,
Early Learning
and Culture

Éducation,
Développement
préscolaire et Culture



Office of the Minister
Holman Centre
250 Water Street, Suite 101
Summerside
Prince Edward Island
Canada C1N 1B6

Bureau du ministre
Centre Holman
250, rue Water, pièce 101
Summerside
Île-du-Prince-Édouard
Canada C1N 1B6

October 22, 2018

Mr. Cory Thomas, President
Prince Edward Island Home and School Federation Inc.
PO Box 1012
Charlottetown PEI C1A 7M4

Dear Mr. Thomas:

Thank you for your letter regarding the resolutions approved at your 65th Annual General Meeting. With regards to the resolutions, I am pleased to provide the following responses:

RESOLUTION 1-2018 - SCHOOL CLOSURE FOR DEATHS IN THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY

The entire school community is impacted by the death of a person connected to the school. The Department of Education, Early Learning, and Culture (EELC) defers to the Public Schools Branch (PSB) on the sensitive decisions that must be made in consideration of each loss. I trust the PSB will continue to seek input from school administration when considering possible impacts on the school day while respecting the arrangements made by the family. Finally, the PSB is to be commended for providing additional supports from their counsellors and Student Services staff during such times. By keeping schools open, people have a place to gather together and offer one another comfort.

RESOLUTION 2-2018 – COMMUNICATION PROTOCOLS IN URGENT SITUATIONS

The Public Schools Branch provides staff emails through the PSB website under “Contact Us” and therefore contact information for all principals and the Director of the PSB is readily available.
<https://edu.princeedwardisland.ca/psb/>

RESOLUTION 4-2018 – SEEK POLICY ADVICE FROM STUDENTS ON THE AUTISM SPECTRUM TO HELP ALL STUDENTS WITH TRANSITIONS

The Public Schools Branch Student Services Division practices extensive planning for students diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder and the transition process is outlined in the PSB Student Services Handbook. Early planning, case conferences, IEP meetings, and Exit Plans are key components of the process used to ensure students are well-supported through transitions. Students participate in school visits and/or playground visits and are often provided pictures of new staff to prepare for an upcoming

.../2

Mr. Cory Thomas

October 22, 2018

Page 2

transition. Exit plans and transition action plans are planned with students and their families, along with Autism consultants. Also, it is important to continually review existing processes and current research. I will be recommending to the PSB that they hear from students, parents and educators and that this information, along with current research, be considered in updating policies and procedures.

RESOLUTION 5-2018 – REQUEST FOR A REVISION OF THE EDUCATION ACT AND A RETURN TO ELECTED SCHOOL BOARD

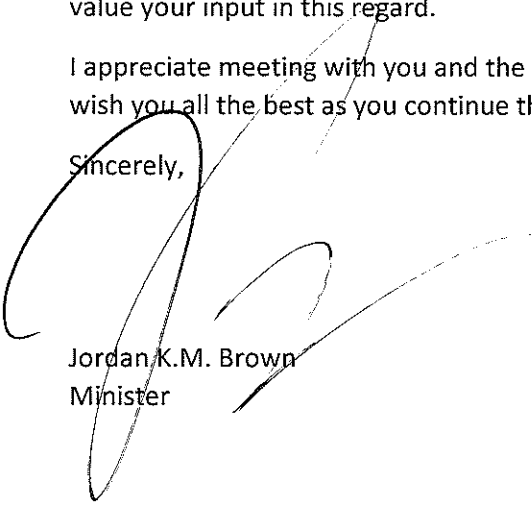
The Department of Education, Early Learning and Culture believes Islanders must have a strong voice in public education in our province. Nearly 200 Islanders are now directly engaged in our education system through the three councils: the members of the 8 DACs, the 62-member Principal Council and the 25-member Learning Partners Advisory council. DAC members include students, parents and community members who are very connected to their schools and are most able to identify challenges and opportunities in their family of schools.

In the spring of 2016, the Legislature voted unanimously in favour of amendments to the *Education Act*, which did not include elected boards for the English system. Three trustees were subsequently appointed by the Minister. The three trustees hold a great depth of wisdom and experience in education which informs decision-making that is based on what is best for all students.

The new governance model allows more Islanders to be directly involved in shaping the direction of learning in this province. As indicated when I met with President Thomas to discuss this resolution, while we do not have any plans to make amendments to the *Education Act*, we continue to review ways in which we can strengthen the current model, including through the provision of greater voice to the District Advisory Councils (DACs) within the confines of the existing legislation. We thank you for and value your input in this regard.

I appreciate meeting with you and the members of your Executive regarding these resolutions, and I wish you all the best as you continue the important work in education in the year ahead.

Sincerely,



Jordan K.M. Brown
Minister