

October 14, 2010

Mr. Bob Clow  
Chairperson, Board of School Trustees  
Eastern School District  
234 Shakespeare Drive  
Stratford, PE C1B 2V8

Dear Chairperson Clow,

The PEI Home and School Federation strongly urges the Board of School Trustees to begin the process of rezoning the Eastern School District (ESD) as recommended in the School Organization Plan released on January 7, 2009. This report recommended that Donagh Regional, Cardigan Consolidated, Souris Consolidated, Montague Intermediate, Glen Stewart Elementary, West Royalty Elementary, Birchwood Intermediate and Stonepark Intermediate be rezoned to better balance student populations and improve curriculum delivery, and that this take effect September 2010. The 2009 School Organization Plan describes rezoning as a critical next step in the reorganization of the school board following recommended school closures. The Board of School Trustees approved the closure of 8 schools in 2009 but has remained silent on rezoning. The Federation's position remains that board-wide rezoning is needed, including a comprehensive transportation review.

As you are aware, the Federation met with Eastern School District trustees on February 22, 2010 to discuss school rezoning. The Federation recommended that rezoning be expanded to include all schools in the board, that a new process be initiated immediately that involves meaningful input from parents, principals and trustees, and that a timeline be set to ensure rezoning recommendations take effect no later than September 2011.

The Federation provided an overview of a new process at the February 22 meeting. We recommended that rezoning start at the local school level, from March-June 2010, where the principal would engage teachers and parents to discuss rezoning issues at that school with input from the local trustee. The information gathered from the schools would then be collected by the school board, organized around families of schools and pulled together as a preliminary report to be completed by August/September, 2010. This preliminary report would then be given to an external consultant hired by the school board in October/November 2010 to complete the rezoning and transportation review.

With this new process, the input from teachers, parents and trustees would frame the

key questions around rezoning. They would be encouraged to input at the start of the process versus commenting on a rezoning report at the end of the process. We recognized that the external consultant's recommendations would need to be received by the Board no later than February/March 2011, in order to ensure that rezoning recommendations could take affect in September 2011. As you know, many trustees were very receptive of these ideas and suggested additional ways to improve the process. Trustees even suggested that they would work with Home and School to draft a discussion document that principals could use to initiate discussion at the local level. There appeared to be good momentum at that meeting.

Unfortunately the momentum appears to have diminished soon after that meeting. The Federation is concerned that rezoning will be conducted in a vacuum, excluding the input/concerns of parents, principals and teachers. We need answers and better communications to ensure that the needs of our children and communities are being met. The issue of rezoning and school closures also majorly affects communities and they too should be engaged in the process. Cooperation is the key to success!

Sincerely,

Owen Parkhouse  
President  
PEI Home and School Federation

cc Eastern School District Trustees  
Eastern School District Superintendent  
Minister of Education & Early Childhood Development