



Education and
Early Childhood
Development

Éducation et
Développement de la
petite enfance



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August 12, 2010

Mr. Owen Parkhouse
President
PEI Home and School Federation Inc.
PO Box 1012
Charlottetown PE CIA 7M4

Dear Mr. Parkhouse:

Thank you for your letter regarding the resolutions passed at your Annual General Meeting. First, let me thank you for giving me the opportunity to attend 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:

Regarding Resolution 1/10 - REQUEST FOR CLEAR PROCEDURES THAT ENCOURAGE PARENT COMMUNICATIONS AND INVOLVEMENT IN SCHOOL LIFE

Last Spring, I instructed my deputy, Dr. Alex (Sandy) MacDonald to discuss this point with Superintendents at an Educational Leadership Team Meeting and I will ask him to follow up once again at the next meeting to be held later this month to ensure that boards address your request. It is my understanding that boards have been discussing this among themselves as well.

Regarding Resolution 2/10 - AIR QUALITY TESTING IN SCHOOLS

The Department works closely with school boards to adequately resource the operations of Island Schools. School boards have agreed on a protocol regarding indoor air quality monitoring, ventilation system cleaning, and heating system cleaning. Each school has in place an occupational health and safety committee that meets regularly to review any issues that arise at a particular site. Concerns raised by the school level occupation health and safety committees are reviewed by the provincial coordinator who works with the school along with board and departmental staff to address issues. The Department will continue to work with school boards to ensure that concerns around indoor air quality are addressed.

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Regarding Resolution 3/10 - STUDENT ACHIEVE SYSTEM (SAS)

The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development purchases the license and provides resources to school boards to support teachers in the use of SAS. Although the software has been available to all schools, some technical challenges have been identified and IT Shared Services have allocated considerable resources to rectify the situation. More monitoring needs to be done before stability is assured in all schools. The Minister's Advisory Committee on Technology is presently considering a three year plan that would outline time lines for requiring teachers to provide information to parents through SAS. The implementation of the plan will depend on available resources.

The Students Achieve Provincial Committee's mandate is to address technical and training issues. It does not make decisions on who uses SAS or on how SAS is used because the levels of use have been, for the most part, a school by school decision.

Regarding Resolution 4/10 - CONSISTENT BOARD POLICY FOR REZONING AND SCHOOL CLOSURES

The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development recognizes the importance of having parent input on major policy initiatives such as rezoning and permanent school closures. The department and school boards understand the value of having similar policy throughout the boards on issues whenever possible. The school boards do work jointly on many policy initiatives.

The Department plans to conduct a review of the school closure regulations provided under the *School Act* to determine if amendments should be made to incorporate learnings from the recent process in the Eastern School District. If changes are implemented, the two school boards would need to update their policies to comply with regulations. The inclusion of parental input throughout the process is something that will be examined and taken into account.

Regarding Resolution 5/10 - EQUAL ACCESS TO EXTRA-CURRICULAR EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCES

I could not agree more with this resolution. In my experience, boards and schools in particular make a concentrated effort to include all students in activities. In my own experience in various schools, we always considered what we could do to be as inclusive as possible.

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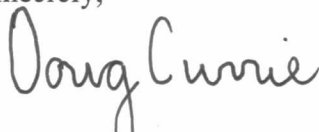
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Regarding Resolution 6/10 - EQUAL ACCESS TO SCHOOL ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION REFEREEING CLINICS

I have asked our staff to meet with you regarding your Resolution 6/10 to discuss how we might best respond. Richard MacKinnon our School Sport Coordinator may have already been in contact. It is a very complex, multi-faceted issue that needs significant clarification. We will be very interested to hear the recommendations from your discussion.

I very much look forward to our fall meeting where we can discuss these resolutions in greater depth and look forward to our continued collaboration.

Sincerely,



Doug W. Currie
Minister