

RESOLUTION 2021-1

K-12 E-LEARNING IN PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

Submitted by Colonel Gray Home and School Association

WHEREAS the COVID 19 pandemic has clarified the need for virtual schooling options for K-12 students in Prince Edward Island, and

WHEREAS with the exception of Prince Edward Island, all Canadian provinces offer free distance and online public education to K-12 studentsⁱ, and

WHEREAS the move to online learning during the pandemic has shone a light on both the benefits and challenges of virtual schoolingⁱⁱ and presents a unique learning opportunity to move forward with virtual schooling in this province in a way that is collaborative, informed, and innovative, and

WHEREAS it is recognized that *most* students learn better in a classroom setting, *some* students, who may otherwise fall through the cracks in our system, will benefit from virtual schooling,

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the PEI Home and School Federation requests the Public Schools Branch and the Department of Education and Life Long Learning to form a working group, with PEIHSF representation, to review public K-12 virtual education in Prince Edward Island and how to better serve PEI students.

DESTINATION: Public Schools Branch
 Department Education and Lifelong Learning

BACKGROUND:

ⁱ State of the Nation: K-12 Learning in Canada, <https://k12sotn.ca/>

ⁱⁱ Virtual Schooling in Canada <https://sites.google.com/site/virtuelschoolscanada/>

ⁱⁱⁱ Prince Edward Island Department Education and Lifelong Learning Flexible Learning 2020-2021

https://www.princeedwardisland.ca/sites/default/files/publications/eelc_flex_learning.pdf

RESOLUTION 2021-2 REQUEST FOR COMMITTEE TO REVIEW FUNDING OF REPLACING EXPIRED OR UNSAFE PLAYGROUND EQUIPMENT

Submitted by Greenfield Home and School Association

WHEREAS playground equipment is a valuable tool for developing school age children's physical strength and co-ordination, social skills such as sharing, teamwork and competition and mentally preparing them for classroom expectations.

WHEREAS playground equipment located on school property benefits not only the students of that school but the surrounding community as well. Many school yards house the only playground structure for their particular communities.

WHEREAS playground equipment, even when properly maintained, due to age, normal wear and tear, changes to CSA standards or vandalism may be deemed by the PSB to be unsafe or unfit for use and be removed or ordered to be removed from site.

WHEREAS PSB operational procedure 202.1, subsections 4.4 and 4.5 state: "4.4 A school, Home and School Association or other school affiliate will be fully responsible for all costs related to site preparation, purchasing and installing playground equipment and protective surfaces, to CSA standards; 4.5 The Public Schools Branch will assume ownership, upon final inspection, of the playground equipment that has met CSA and Public Schools Branch standards and will take responsibility for all ongoing costs related to inspection, maintenance, warranty and insurance related concerns."

WHEREAS schools and Home and School Associations have very limited means to fund replacing removed playground equipment.

WHEREAS the PSB owns, inspects, maintains, warrants and insures playground equipment purchased by schools and Home and School Associations, as per PSB operational procedure 202.1, the PSB should share with schools and Home and School Associations some of the responsibility for replacing removed playground equipment.

BE IT RESOLVED that the PEI Home and School Federation requests the Public Schools Branch and Department Education and Lifelong Learning to form a committee, with Federation of Municipalities, PEIHSF representation, to review school community supports for the provision of safe school playgrounds across the province.

DESTINATION: Department of Education and Lifelong Learning
Public Schools Branch

RESOLUTION 2021-3 WEEKLY UPSTREAM MENTAL HEALTH AND OUTDOOR CURRICULUM
Submitted by Hernewood Home and School Association

- WHEREAS the first and second pillars (priorities) of the P.E.I. Public Schools Branch Strategic Action Plan^{i.} are Student Success and Wellness, and
- WHEREAS a study on Canadian Children by the Canadian Index for Child and Youth Well-being^{ii.} revealed only 46.9% of children feel positive about school, 26.8% have more school work than they can handle, 35.2% experience discrimination, 1/4 experience fighting, regular bullying, and/or violence at home, 59.8% go to school feeling tired, 34.2% have weekly mental distress, and 1 in 4 live in poverty, and
- WHEREAS numerous peer-reviewed studies including ones from Berkley and the University of California^{iii.} highlighted the direct correlation between student success and time spent connected to nature; academic gains and attitudes improved in language arts, math, social studies and science when outdoor lesson time was incorporated into weekly learning; scores in science improved an impressive 26%; teachers in the same study reported improved connections with all types of learners and an increase in their own job satisfaction, and
- WHEREAS numerous peer-reviewed studies including one from Harvard,^{iv.} show a link between reduced anxiety, hostility, stress and depression with time spent outdoors; a study conducted by the American Institute for Research^{v.} published that 75-93% of the children studied, reported that an outdoor setting calms them down when angry; a study published in the Journal for Attention Disorders^{vi.} shows children with ADHD behave better and have less severe symptoms when they are outdoors and rate their experiences with outdoors education more positively compared to traditional classroom settings, and
- WHEREAS numerous peer-reviewed studies, including one published in the Oxford Journal of Medicine,^{vii.} showed outdoor learning activities help combat childhood obesity and may help reduce the risk of nearsightedness, and
- WHEREAS children and teens are spending less and less time outdoors due to changes in technology and societal norms resulting in nature deficit disorder^{viii.}, and
- WHEREAS half of all mental health conditions start by 14, but the majority remain undetected and untreated with only 1 out of every 5 youth who need mental health services receiving them; whereas suicide is the leading cost of death in 15-24 year-old Canadians, second only to accidents, and ranked as the second-highest hospital care expenditure in Canada^{ix.}, and
- WHEREAS the current cost to our economy due to mental health illness^{x.} is at a minimum 50 billion dollars per year and growing; with 1 in 5 Canadians suffering each year and 3.2 million youth aged 12-19 at risk for developing depression; 1 out of 2 Canadians will have or have experienced a mental illness by the age of 40 - which are notably pre-COVID19 statistics, and
- WHEREAS there are continuous shortages of qualified workers in PEI leading to vacancies within the social work, guidance and psychology fields and there are many students who will not receive help or not know they need help because of a lack of weekly upstream mental activities, and

WHEREAS daily mental health activities and/or interaction with nature are integral to student's mental and physical health; and strong pillars of Student Success and Wellness cannot be achieved without upstream mental health and outdoor education,

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the P.E.I. Home and School Federation requests the Department of Education and Lifelong Learning to implement weekly upstream mental health and outdoor curriculum time into the education stream to coincide with its commitment to Student Success and Well-being.

DESTINATION: Department of Education and Lifelong Learning

BACKGROUND REFERENCES:

- i. Public Schools Branch. (June 2018). *Public Schools Branch Strategic Action Plan 2018-2021*. Retrieved from <https://edu.princeedwardisland.ca/psb/about/about-the-psb/public-schools-branch-strategic-action-plan-2018-2021/>
- ii. Wolff, Lisa. UNICEF Canada (August 2020). *Investing Upstream in Mental Health Promotion: 2019 Baseline Report* (p. 11-13) Canadian Index of Child and Youth Well-being. Retrieved from the Atlantic Summer Institute for Healthy and Safe Communities 2020 policy conference.
- iii. Suttie, Jill (May 2018). *The Surprising Benefits of Teaching a Class Outside: A new study finds that a class in nature helps kids be more attentive and focused once they return indoors*. Retrieved from https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/the_surprising_benefits_of_teaching_a_class_outside
- iv. Harvard Men's Health Watch (2018, July). *Sour mood getting you down? Get back to nature: Research suggests that mood disorders can be lifted by spending more time outdoors*. Harvard Health Publishing, Retrieved from <https://www.health.harvard.edu/mind-and-mood/sour-mood-getting-you-down-get-back-to-nature>
- v. New, Karina (April 2016). *Bringing the Classroom Outdoors: An Analysis of Toronto Educator Perceptions and Challenges*. (p. 27-28) Retrieved from https://tspace.library.utoronto.ca/bitstream/1807/72254/1/New_Karina_C_201606_MT_MTRP.pdf
- vi. Szczytko, Rachel, Carrier, Sarah, & Stevenson, Kathryn & Kuo, Ming (Ed.) (2018). *Impacts of Outdoor Environmental Education on Teacher Reports of Attention, Behavior, and Learning Outcomes for Students With Emotional, Cognitive, and Behavioral Disabilities*. Retrieved from <https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/feduc.2018.00046/full>
- vii. World Health Organization–Brien Holden Vision Institute, University of New South Wales (March 2015). *The Impact of Myopia and High Myopia*. Global Scientific Meeting on Myopia. Retrieved from <https://www.who.int/blindness/causes/MyopiaReportforWeb.pdf>
- viii. Denworth, Lydia (February 2018). *The benefits of learning outdoors*. Brain Waves. Retrieved from <https://www.psychologytoday.com/ca/blog/brain-waves/201802/the-benefits-learning-outdoors>
Marchant, Emily, Todd, Charlotte, & Brophy, Sinead (February 2021). *Outdoor learning has huge benefits for children and teachers - so why isn't it used in more schools?* Retrieved from <https://theconversation.com/outdoor-learning-has-huge-benefits-for-children-and-teachers-so-why-isnt-it-used-in-more-schools-118067>
Swansea University (June 2019). *An hour or two of outdoor learning every week increases teachers' job satisfaction*. ScienceDaily. Retrieved from www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2019/06/190611102710.htm
- ix. Culberson, Andrew. NB Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (August 2020) *Promoting Positive Mental Health by Exploring Our Purpose* (p. 15) Retrieved from the Atlantic Summer Institute for Healthy and Safe Communities 2020 policy conference.
- x. Canadian Mental Health Association Ontario (January 2013). *Mental illness costs Canadian economy \$50 billion per year*. Retrieved from <https://ontario.cmha.ca/news/mental-illness-costs-canadian-economy-50-billion-per-year/>