

**Prince Edward Island Home and School Federation**  
**Approved Resolutions**  
**Annual General Meeting, April 13, 2024**

**RESOLUTION 2024-1      REQUEST AN INQUIRY INTO THE TEMPERATURE OF PEI SCHOOLS**

WHEREAS the Public Schools Branch should be concerned with reducing the carbon footprint of PEI schools, and the energy savings cost of heating island schools, (The Energy Star, 2019), and

WHEREAS schools are being heated during unoccupied times, (CBC News, 2007), and in unnecessary places such as gyms, and

WHEREAS island schools are being overheated to the point that windows are opened in the winter to let the excess heat out, (Government of Canada, 2023), and

WHEREAS costs savings on heat could be used for much needed cooling systems in PEI schools due to climate change, (PSB Policies and Procedures, 2024), and

WHEREAS data supports that student performance on numbered and language tests improved when the heat was reduced from 77 – 68 °F or 25-20 °C (Regional Educational Laboratory Program, 2018), and

WHEREAS staff and students can dress for the temperature instead of the Public Schools Branch incurring the costs of overheated schools, and

WHEREAS UPEI has established standards of heating and cooling temperatures for both occupied and unoccupied spaces for both comfort and improved energy efficiency. (University of Prince Edward Island, 2024), and

WHEREAS the PEI Public Schools Branch does not currently have a policy on the regulation of heat in PEI schools;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the PEI Home and School Federation request the Prince Edward Island Public Schools Branch to conduct a survey, which includes infrastructure capabilities, to determine the temperature of PEI schools during occupied and unoccupied times and consider a governed temperature reduction at 20 °C in every school to reduce heating costs, overall operating expenses, energy emissions and optimize the learning comfort for students and staff.

**DESTINATION:** Minister of Education and Early Years  
Public Schools Branch Director and Chair of the Board of Trustees  
Minister of Environment, Energy and Climate Action  
Minister of Health and Wellness

## REFERENCES:

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*PSB Policies and Procedures*. Public Schools Branch. Retrieved January 27, 2024, from <https://psb.edu.pe.ca/policies>

Regional Educational Laboratory Program., (2018, November 1). *Optimal Classroom Temperature to Support Student Learning*. Retrieved January 27, 2024, from <https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/west/Ask/Details/64>

**RESOLUTION 2024-2      AMEND AN ADDITION TO PROCEDURE 205.1 OF THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS BRANCH WEATHER RELATED CANCELLATION, DELAY, OR EARLY DISMISSAL POLICY TO INCLUDE EXTREME HOT WEATHER/HEAT WHEN THE HUMIDEX IS OVER 35°C**

- WHEREAS climate change shows us that warmer and hotter temperatures begin earlier in the spring and can last well into the fall school year. These temperatures can create unsafe indoor temperatures for PEI students and staff especially when the humidex reaches 35°C or above and there are no cooling systems in the schools, and
- WHEREAS extreme heat can pose health related injury to the most vulnerable populations which includes children, pregnant women, those with pre-existing health conditions as well as, behavioural diagnosis. (Morgan, 2023), and
- WHEREAS climate significantly affects more vulnerable populations than others. One of the key factors is the capacity to adapt. Social determinants of health are also exacerbated by heat which affects health outcomes when fewer resources are available to certain populations. (The Health Costs of Climate Change), and
- WHEREAS “educators say students can be unmotivated and distracted when sitting in a hot classroom and research shows that cognitive function declines during excessive heat, leading to slower reaction times” and the data also shows more instances of aggressive behaviour and violence when it’s hot. (Will, 2022), and
- WHEREAS protective measures need to be evaluated and put in place for students and staff for extreme heat the same way we do for cold or stormy weather and we need to ensure we are protecting everyone while they are in PEI school buildings, and
- WHEREAS Education Week says “public health experts warn that children are more susceptible to heat illnesses than adults and heat-related illnesses can include muscle cramps, heat exhaustion—which may come with nausea, vomiting, fatigue, and fever—and heat stroke, which in extreme cases can lead to seizures or even death” (Will, 2022), and
- WHEREAS a fan is not an acceptable solution for PEI classrooms, and
- WHEREAS “Poor air quality can severely impact the performance and health of all individuals” (SIRC, 2023), and
- WHEREAS the burden of heat related stress puts more pressure on the already strained health care system on PEI, and
- WHEREAS individual factors that influence heat vulnerability “include income, age, medications, personal behaviour, type of housing, fitness level, health status, acclimatization, and access to cool places” (Government of Canada, 2020);

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the PEI Home and School Federation request the Prince Edward Island Public Schools Branch, Board of Trustees, Minister of Education and Early Years, Minister of Environment, Energy and Climate Action, and Minister of Health and Wellness work collaboratively to amend the PSB procedure 205.1 to include heat related closures, cancellations or delays when the humidex reaches 35°C.

**DESTINATION:** Minister of Education and Early Years  
Public Schools Branch Director and Chair of the Board of Trustees  
Minister of Environment, Energy and Climate Action  
Minister of Health and Wellness

## **REFERENCES:**

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MacDonald, D. (2021, June 17). Teachers' Federation supports school closures in extreme heat. *The Eastern Graphic*. [https://www.peicanada.com/eastern\\_graphic/teachers-federation-supports-school-closures-in-extreme-heat/article\\_4ff1575e-cddf-11eb-9118-93b909b44df3.html](https://www.peicanada.com/eastern_graphic/teachers-federation-supports-school-closures-in-extreme-heat/article_4ff1575e-cddf-11eb-9118-93b909b44df3.html)

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SIRC (2023). *Air pollution & sport safety*. Sport Information Resource Center. Retrieved January 30, 2024, from <https://sirc.ca/air-quality-and-sport/>

*THE HEALTH COSTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE*. The Canadian Climate Institute. <https://climateinstitute.ca/reports/the-health-costs-of-climate-change/>

Will, M. (2022, September 26). *The School Year Is Getting Hotter. How Does Heat Affect Student Learning and Well-Being?* Education Week. Retrieved January 17, 2024, from <https://www.edweek.org/leadership/the-school-year-is-getting-hotter-how-does-heat-affect-student-learning-and-well-being/2022/09>

**RESOLUTION 2024-3      FEASIBILITY OF INSTALLING VAPING DETECTORS IN SCHOOLS**

BE IT RESOLVED that the PEI Home and School Federation asks the Minister of Education and Early Years, the Public Schools Branch, the Minister of Health and Wellness and Chief Public Health Office to meet with the PEI Home and School Federation to discuss the prevalence of vaping in PEI's consolidated, intermediate and high schools<sup>1,2</sup>, with the goal of investigating the feasibility of installing vape detectors<sup>3</sup> in Island schools to assist administrators and teachers with enforcing substance use regulations on school properties.

DESTINATION    Minister of Education and Early Years  
                      Public Schools Branch Director and Chair of the Board of Trustees  
                      Minister of Health and Wellness  
                      Chief Public Health Office

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<sup>1</sup> Miller A. May 17, 2023. *Canada has some of the highest teen vaping rates in the world, new data shows*. CBC News (Health) <https://www.cbc.ca/news/health/canada-teen-vaping-survey-e-cigarettes-1.6845408>

<sup>2</sup> Prince Edward Island COMPASS Health Survey 2022-2023. <https://www.livewellpei.ca/node/377>

<sup>3</sup> Williams, E. September 3, 2023. *New detectors are sniffing out teen vape-users in these Northern Alberta schools*. CBC News (Edmonton) <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/edmonton/vape-detectors-schools-youth-alberta-1.6954866>

**RESOLUTION 2024-4      CREATION OF A POLICY RELATED TO SCREEN USE IN  
PRIMARY SCHOOLS ON PEI**

RECOGNIZING the incredible efforts of our dedicated teachers, both parents and educators agree on the monumental work teachers undertake for the betterment of our children's education. Despite the challenges presented by the rapidly evolving technological landscape, teachers strive to provide the best possible learning environment, and

RECOGNIZING the evolving landscape of educational technology through the permeation of screen-based entertainment and education options alongside the introduction of smartboards and WiFi enabled classrooms, technology has outpaced policy, creating a need for updated and consistent guidelines across Island primary schools that address the current realities of screen use in education. See Appendix A for examples of policy catching up to technology.

WHEREAS PEI youth currently accumulate roughly 8 hours/day of recreational screen time<sup>1</sup>, which is 4 times higher than Canadian public health recommendations, and which negatively impacts their physical and mental health, as well as their ability to learn<sup>2</sup>; although much of this screen use takes place outside of school hours, it highlights the need to ensure that school-related screen use is maximally effective while minimizing the likelihood of harms, and

WHEREAS three-quarters of Canadian parents and one-third of students are concerned about students' social media use and time spent online<sup>7</sup>, and

WHEREAS reports from the Quebec National Institute of Public Health<sup>3</sup>, the Sedentary Behaviour Research Network<sup>4</sup>, and Departments of Education<sup>5-6</sup> in other jurisdictions have highlighted the impacts of school-related screen use, as well as offering guidance on ways to maximize the benefits and minimize the harms of school-related screen use (See examples in Appendices), and

WHEREAS the Canadian Pediatric Society<sup>7</sup>, Canada's Food Guide<sup>8</sup>, and the Sedentary Behaviour Research<sup>4</sup> recommend avoiding the use of screen-based devices while eating, and the Canadian Pediatric Society encourages parents to "Advocate for schools, child care centres and after-school programs to consider developing their own plan for digital literacy and screen use"<sup>7</sup>, and

WHEREAS other jurisdictions in Canada<sup>9</sup> and abroad<sup>10</sup> have begun to institute policies to limit the harms and maximize the benefits of school-related screen use, including Quebec and

WHEREAS Prince Edward Island does not currently have policies to limit the harms and maximize the benefits of school-related screen use;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the PEI Home and School Federation requests the Public Schools Branch Board of Trustees and Minister of Education and Early Years to implement specific policies regarding the appropriate use of screens in Island primary schools with consideration of the historical shift toward interactive technology usage in classrooms and acknowledging the dedication of teachers and their commitment to adapting instructional methods to the ever-changing technological landscape.

DESTINATION: Minister of Education and Early Years  
Public Schools Branch Director and Chair of the Board of Trustees  
Minister of Health and Wellness  
Chief Public Health Office

## APPENDIX 1 – Examples of technology moving faster than policy

For reference when considering the value of creating policy around screen use in primary schools:

### Social Media and Online Privacy:

- **Technological Advancement:** The rapid rise of social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram in the mid-2000s allowed individuals to share personal information, photos, and updates instantly with a global audience.
- **Policy Lag:** Privacy policies and regulations struggled to keep pace with the evolving landscape, leading to concerns about data breaches, unauthorized use of personal information, and the misuse of social media for cyberbullying.

### Autonomous Vehicles:

- **Technological Advancement:** The development of autonomous or self-driving vehicles has advanced significantly in recent years, with companies like Tesla, Google's Waymo, and others conducting extensive testing and deploying semi-autonomous features in consumer vehicles.
- **Policy Lag:** Regulations and policies governing the use of autonomous vehicles on public roads have not kept up with the pace of technological innovation. Questions about liability, safety standards, and ethical considerations remain largely unaddressed, leading to challenges in widespread adoption.

### ChatGPT:

- **Models like ChatGPT,** developed by OpenAI, leverage advanced natural language processing and machine learning techniques to generate human-like text responses based on input prompts. These models have shown significant improvements in understanding context, generating coherent responses, and performing a wide range of language-related tasks.
- **Policy Lag: Ethical Use and Bias:** The rapid progress in AI language models has raised concerns about ethical use, potential biases in generated content, and the need for responsible deployment. Policymakers face challenges in developing comprehensive guidelines to address issues such as misinformation, biased language, and the potential for malicious use of AI-generated content.
- **Legal and Accountability Frameworks:** As AI systems become more sophisticated, the lack of clear legal frameworks and accountability mechanisms poses challenges. Questions about liability for AI-generated content, accountability for unintended consequences, and ensuring transparency in AI decision-making remain areas where policies are still evolving.

## APPENDIX 2 – Sedentary Behaviour Research Network Recommendations

A healthy school-day includes:

- Breaking up periods of extended sedentary behaviour with both scheduled and unscheduled movement breaks
  - At least once every 30 minutes for ages 5-11 years.
  - At least once every hour for ages 12-18 years.
  - Consider a variety of intensities and durations (e.g., standing, stretching breaks, moving to another classroom, active lessons, active breaks).
- Incorporating different types of movement (e.g. light activities that require movement of any body parts, and moderate to vigorous activities that require greater physical effort) into homework whenever possible, and limiting sedentary homework to no more than 10 minutes per day, per grade level. For example, in Canada this means typically no more than 10 minutes per day in grade 1, or 60 minutes per day in grade 6)<sup>1</sup>.
- Regardless of the location, school-related screen time should be meaningful, mentally or physically active, and serve a specific pedagogical purpose that enhances learning compared to alternative methods. When school-related screen time is warranted:
  - Limit time on devices, especially for students 5-11 years of age.
  - Take a device break at least once every 30 minutes.
  - Discourage media-multitasking in the classroom and while doing homework.
  - Avoid screen-based homework within an hour of bedtime.
- Replacing sedentary learning activities with movement-based learning activities (including standing) and replacing screen-based learning activities with non-screen-based learning activities (e.g., outdoor lessons), can further support students' health and wellbeing.

### How to Implement These Recommendations<sup>2</sup>:

Educators, school administrators, policy makers, parents/guardians, caregivers, physicians and healthcare providers can implement these recommendations using the Four M's approach:

- **Manage** sedentary behaviour.
  - See recommendations above.
- Encourage **Meaningful** screen use.
  - Prioritize face-to-face interactions over screen use.
  - Use screens when they are the best pedagogical tool for the job and likely to enhance learning.
  - Prioritize screens for mental and physical engagement, rather than for passive viewing.
  - Turn screens off when not in use, including background TV or videos while doing school or homework.
  - Avoid screen use during meal and snack times.



- Avoid using screens as the default method for content delivery or classroom management.
- Encourage students to review and self-regulate their screen use, and plan time for outdoor play and physical activity.
- Educators, healthcare providers, parents and caregivers should **Model** healthy and meaningful screen use.
- **Monitor** for signs of problematic screen use and follow-up with a physician or healthcare provider if concerns arise. Signs of problematic screen use can include:
  - Complaints about being bored or unhappy without access to technology.
  - Difficulty accepting screen time limits.
  - Screen use that interferes with school, family activities, sleep, physical activity, offline play, or face-to-face interactions.
  - Negative emotions following time spent playing video games, texting or using social media.

<sup>2</sup>Adapted with permission from the Canadian Paediatric Society (Canadian Paediatric Society, 2019).

Source: <https://www.sedentarybehaviour.org/school-related-sedentary-behaviour-recommendations/>

### **APPENDIX 3 – Recommendations from the Quebec National Institute of Public Health (translated via Google Scholar)**

“It is generally recommended to limit screen time in class and in services offered before or after school, to take frequent breaks when using them and to incorporate movement during breaks in order to limit sedentary behaviors to school.

Screens should not be the default method of teaching and classroom management. Rather, they should be used when they improve teaching and learning. More specifically, their use should be meaningful, active and serve an educational objective.

Particular attention should be paid to lighting, ergonomics and posture when using screens in the classroom.

The analysis of the recommendations suggests ways to improve consideration of the risks linked to the use of screens in schools: define and consider all the different types of uses carried out in schools, adapt the recommendations according to the types of screens, devices and the age of the students, consider the question of cumulative screen time at school among others.

The recommendations identified in the literature are consistent with the approach to health promotion in schools that currently prevails in Quebec, namely the ÉKIP reference. In this context, this referent represents a supporting conceptual anchor for the development of an approach to reducing health risks associated with the use of screens in a school context and the development of a reference framework integrating a public health perspective.”

Source: <https://www.inspq.qc.ca/en/node/658031>

## APPENDIX 4 - References

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6. Maryland Department of Health. Health and Safety Best Practice Guidelines: Digital Devices; 2019. p. 1.
7. Canadian Pediatric Society Digital Health Task Force. "Digital media: Promoting healthy screen use in school-aged children and adolescents". (2019): <https://cps.ca/en/documents/position/digital-media>.
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10. Felicity Caldwell. What students will and won't be allowed to do with phones at school next year. *Brisbane Times*. (2023). <https://www.brisbanetimes.com.au/national/queensland/what-students-will-and-won-t-be-allowed-to-do-with-phones-at-school-next-year-20231121-p5elm6.html>

**RESOLUTION 2024-5    REQUEST A REVIEW OF KINDERGARTEN EXEMPTION  
FROM SPLIT-LEVEL CLASSROOM COMPOSITION**

- WHEREAS the curriculum for kindergarten classrooms is a play-based learning model; and
- WHEREAS this type of play based learning model includes a wide range of activities all of which have the concept of play at the centre of their design; and
- WHEREAS the curriculum for the remaining grades of one through six is more of an academic model, which includes a more structured approach to learning; and
- WHEREAS kindergarten and grade one classrooms are currently allowed to be split; and
- WHEREAS a kindergarten and grade one split classroom could include children between the ages of four to seven; and
- WHEREAS children at age four and five have quite different learning and social capabilities comparatively to a child who is six or seven; and
- WHEREAS in older grades the age difference is less notable; and
- WHEREAS this split classroom model requires a teacher to teach both classes with the differing education models and to deal with learning and social differences between the children of different ages; and
- WHEREAS the two teaching models, of play based versus academic are not conducive to a split classroom setting due to their vast differences in learning approaches; and
- WHEREAS children in a grade one classroom should be in a learning setting that allows them to focus to the best of their abilities without distraction from a competing play based learning model; and
- WHEREAS children in kindergarten should be allowed to utilize the play-based model to the full extent without concern for disruption to a grade one class;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the PEI Home and School Federation shall request that the Department of Education and Early Years Department conduct a review around the appropriateness of kindergarten being included in split classes with the intent of creating a policy that in elementary schools, split classes shall only include grades one through six.

DESTINATION:    Minister of Education and Early Years  
                          Public Schools Branch Director and Chair of the Board of Trustees