



Office of the Minister

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Education and Early Years

Éducation et Petite enfance



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June 24, 2026

Mr. Tom Deelstra, President
P.E.I. Home and School Federation
P.O. Box 1012
Charlottetown, PE C1A 7M4

Via Email: peihsf@gov.pe.ca

Dear Mr. Deelstra:

Thank you for your letter dated May 1, 2026, on behalf of the P.E.I. Home and School Federation, which outlined three resolutions approved by the Federation at its annual general meeting on April 18, 2026. I look forward to our meeting on June 24 to discuss these resolutions, the work of the Department, and other important topics. Until then, I will be providing written responses to these resolutions.

Resolution 2026-01: INTEGRATING OUTDOOR PLAY SPACES AND INFRASTRUCTURE INTO THE PROVINCIAL CAPITAL BUDGETS

Our government is making historic investments in educational infrastructure with a 5-year capital plan worth nearly \$437 million. That funding will be used for new schools such as East Royalty Elementary School, Georgetown Elementary and Stratford High and for major renovations and additions at Westisle, Evangeline and Francois Buote. These investments prioritize the schools themselves to ensure optimal learning environments for students. Playgrounds are an important part of the overall school environment. That is why the province provides 50% funding, up to \$25,000, for new playground construction. We are grateful for community partners, like the P.E.I. Home and School Federation and its local associations, which help fundraise costs over and above what we support. Once the province's fiscal outlook allows us to consider including more funding for playground equipment in our capital investments, we will.

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Resolution 2026-03: REPEAL SECTION 43 AND PROHIBIT CORPORAL PUNISHMENT OF CHILDREN

Our department, and the education authorities, support the intent of this resolution. In fact, Section 50 of the *Education Act* expressly prohibits corporal punishment:

Corporal punishment prohibited

(1) The manner in which a student is disciplined while attending school or school-sponsored activities shall be similar to the discipline administered by a kind, firm and judicious parent, but shall not include corporal punishment.

Reasonable restraint where danger

(2) Subsection (1) does not preclude reasonable action by a school staff member to restrain a student who is creating an immediate danger to the student or to others or is creating significant damage to property.

The *Criminal Code of Canada* is federal legislation and outside the jurisdiction of the provincial government. In 2004, the Supreme Court of Canada upheld the constitutionality¹²³⁴ of Section 43 but placed strict limits on its application. Force is legally unreasonable and considered assault if it involves:

- Children under two:
 - No physical discipline may be used on toddlers younger than 24 months.
- Teenagers:
 - Physical correction may not be administered to adolescents.
- Objects or head blows:
 - No hitting or slapping the head, and no objects (e.g., belts, rulers) can be used.
- Severity:
 - The force must be minor or "transitory and trifling" in nature. Any force that leaves a mark, bruise, or endangers life/health is illegal.
- Anger:
 - Force used in retaliation, in anger, or on a child who is incapable of learning from the situation is unjustified.

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¹ https://lop.parl.ca/sites/PublicWebsite/default/en_CA/ResearchPublications/201635E

² <https://ojen.ca/en/resource/landmark-case-the-spanking-case-testing-the-validity-of-section-43-of-the-criminal-code-of-canada-the-canadian-foundation-for-children-youth-and-the-law-cfcyl-v-canada/>

³ <https://www.canada.ca/en/office-federal-ombudsperson-victims-crime/recommendations-recommandations/2024-25/20241201.html>

⁴ https://criminalnotebook.ca/index.php/Corrective_Force

Teachers cannot use physical punishment under any circumstances. However, the defence allows educators to use reasonable force to maintain order, such as physically removing a disruptive child from a classroom or forcing compliance with safety instructions; as per *Education Act* 50(2) noted above.

Our provincial curriculum, and associated student learning outcomes, include education on gender-based violence, healthy relationships and bystander intervention training (not just promotion) which can be effective in reducing violence/bullying in the school setting. Such evidence-based programs and cross-sectoral work with education system stakeholders include kindergarten transitions, social-emotional learning, school goals framework, Positive Behavioural Interventions and Supports, alternative education, Indigenous Education, anti-racism, diversity, equity and inclusion, inclusive education and sexual health education; just to name a few.

**Resolution 2026-04: URGING COMPLIANCE WITH PEI TEACHER LIBRARIAN
DIRECTIVE (MD 2025-05) BY HIRING A PROVINCIAL TEACHER-LIBRARIAN LEADER**

School library positions have existed for many years and they play an important role in the successful functioning of a school. *MD 2025-05 Education Authority Staffing and Funding Program for the 2025-2026 School Year* is the mechanism for providing financial grants to the education authorities. Staff allocations, such as for teacher librarians, are outlined within the Minister's Directive each year. As can be seen within MD 2025-05, teacher librarians are allocated to the Public Schools Branch through a student/FTE formula. All staffing is conducted through the education authorities, and each school utilizes its library/dedicated librarian based on the school's needs and the expertise/skillset of the librarian.

The 2026 Minister's Directive will be released to the education authorities in the coming weeks, now that the Department's budget has been debated and approved and the Legislature has now closed.

On behalf of the Department of Education and Early Years, we thank you for your continued advocacy towards the province's public education system.

Yours truly,



Robin Croucher
Minister

c John Cummings, Acting Deputy Minister