

FEB 12 2009

Minister of Education



Legislative Building
Regina, Saskatchewan S4S 0B3

February 5, 2009

Mr. Roy Challis, President
Saskatchewan School Boards Association
400 - 2222 13th Avenue
REGINA SK S4P 3M7

Dear Mr. Challis:

Enclosed please find the Ministry of Education's responses to the resolutions that were passed at your 2008 General Assembly which pertained to the ministry.

I suggest that the following two resolutions be referred to the appropriate ministry/corporation for a response as they have the main responsibility for the issues mentioned in the resolution:

Resolution D-1 - responsibility of the Ministry of Municipal Affairs
Resolution N-1 - responsibility of Crown Investments Corporation

I appreciate the opportunity to respond to the resolutions and look forward to our continued partnership to ensure all Saskatchewan learners succeed in the education system.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ken Krawetz', written in a cursive style.

Ken Krawetz
Deputy Premier
Minister of Education

Enclosure

Ministry of Education Responses
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B-2 BE IT RESOLVED that the Saskatchewan School Boards Association lobby the Minister of Education to set the school year at 200 days with additional costs to be borne by the Provincial government.

The Education Act, 1995 section 163 stipulates that the school year is to have 200 school days but that, in any year, the Minister of Education may order a lesser number of days. The ministry will continue to consult with both the Saskatchewan School Boards Association and the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation before establishing the number of school days in any year. The number of school days is typically conveyed to boards before the end of February each year. This allows school divisions to set their school calendar for the fall.

D-2 BE IT RESOLVED that the Association lobby the provincial government to clarify the role and mandate of boards of education regarding partnerships with organizations that provide daycare programming and that any expansion in mandate for boards of education be recognized by the government in its funding formula.

Child care centres are usually governed by boards of directors comprising parents of the children enrolled in the centre and/or other community members. Child care centres may also be governed by municipalities or other public entities. The ministry assists non-profit child care centres with capital and operational funding.

Children aged 12 and under, and their younger siblings, require child care for part of the day when their parents are employed. Schools may be convenient locations for child care centres. The relationship between schools and child care centres is evolving. Ministry officials are currently meeting with school divisions to consult and obtain input regarding the development of linkages between schools and child care centres.

D-3 BE IT RESOLVED that the Saskatchewan School Boards Association lobby the Saskatchewan Ministry of Education to make funding available to all Boards of Education that support Pre-Kindergarten programs for all students at risk.

The ministry currently increases funding for Prekindergarten programs when additional resources become available. There has been a significant increase in funding for Prekindergarten in recent years. As of January 2009, the ministry supports 193 programs across the province.

Ministry officials are currently meeting with school divisions to obtain input into the development of proposals concerning expansion of the Prekindergarten program.

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D-4 BE IT RESOLVED that the Saskatchewan School Boards Association urge the provincial government to take any steps necessary to ensure that Saskatchewan Government Insurance provides financial support for the Driver Education Program that Saskatchewan Learning requires boards of education to provide.

This government believes that it is important to reduce the fatality levels on our roads and highways. We also believe that education has an important role to play in preparing youth for the responsibilities of driving, for personal safety and as an employability skill.

Saskatchewan Government Insurance (SGI) funds the driver education consultant employed by the Ministry of Education. The Ministry of Education distributes funds through the School Operating Grant to school divisions to support all the required services including Driver Education.

This government and SGI are committed to improving the quality of the High School Driver Education program for Saskatchewan youth.

N-4 BE IT RESOLVED that the Saskatchewan School Boards Association request that the provincial government consult widely with educators, including school boards and the professional organizations of teachers, before changing legislation which currently imposes restrictions on the employment of children in the province.

The legislation that imposes restrictions on the employment of children in the province falls under the Ministry of Advanced Education, Employment and Labour. My understanding is that consultations are expected to occur prior to legislative or regulatory changes.

A-1 BE IT RESOLVED that the Saskatchewan School Boards Association lobby the Government to join with the Association in advocating for all “interested” citizens across the age, gender and cultural spectrum to let their names stand for Board of Education elections in October of 2009. In doing so, the Association is encouraged to clearly articulate the issues to the Government and to develop joint solutions that demonstrate the Province’s appreciation and commitment in support the work of school boards and the desire to encourage on-going succession efforts; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Association provides encouragement to employers in a manner that helps them recognize the importance of employees performing public service as an elected school board member. Messages circulated through the media in short radio and/or TV messages are recommended strategies; and

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BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Association look for creative ways to allow school board members with young families to attend provincially held events by considering options around child care.

The Ministry of Education supports the association's interest in encouraging citizens across the spectrum to run for school board elections in October 2009. The ministry will promote this issue at regular provincial meetings with directors of education and other educational stakeholder groups. We recommend that the Saskatchewan School Boards Association Communications Branch and the Ministry of Education Communications Branch work collaboratively on strategies that may address this issue.

N-3 BE IT RESOLVED that the Saskatchewan School Boards Association lobby the Members of the Legislative Assembly and the Government of Saskatchewan to amend *The Local Government Election Act* to require all individuals running for election as trustees in school boards in Saskatchewan to complete a criminal record check.

Responsibility for *The Local Government Elections Act* falls under the Ministry of Municipal Affairs. I understand that Municipal Affairs has been doing some work on this issue and is currently considering a request for criminal record checks for northern municipal councillors as part of *The Northern Municipal Act* review.