

JAN 21 2010

Minister of
Education



Legislative Building
Regina, Saskatchewan S4S 0B8

January 19, 2010

Ms. Sandi Urban-Hall, President
Saskatchewan School Boards Association
400 - 2222 13th Avenue
REGINA SK S4P 3M7

Dear Ms. Urban-Hall:

I am pleased to provide the responses to the resolutions that were passed at the 2009 Fall General Assembly which pertained to the Ministry of Education.

I look forward to our continued co-operation and partnership in providing the best educational opportunities and experiences for all Saskatchewan learners to succeed in the education system.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ken Krawetz".

Ken Krawetz
Deputy Premier
Minister of Education

Enclosure

cc: Audrey Roadhouse, Deputy Minister of Education

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D-3 BE IT RESOLVED that the Saskatchewan School Boards Association lobby the provincial government to provide all school boards with an exemption from the payment of the provincial sales tax.

- Our government will continue to consult with representatives of the educational system as we consider all options available to the operation of the education system. Careful consideration of recommendations regarding education funding will be reviewed in the context of the province's restrained fiscal capacity and provincial priorities.
- The Ministry of Education does not have authority to provide school divisions an exemption from the payment of provincial sales tax. Such a decision would involve government as a whole along with Finance officials. The amount school divisions spend collectively each year on provincial sales tax is not collected by the ministry.
- In addition, our government continually examines options to improve the sustainability of the Saskatchewan economy, the fairness of the overall property tax regime in the province, and the financing of public education in the interests of all Saskatchewan students.

E-1 BE IT RESOLVED that the Saskatchewan School Boards Executive establish a position statement that clearly articulates that:

- the responsibility and authority to determine the appropriate level of staffing for school divisions is vested with the Board of Education;
- Article 9 of the Provincial Teacher's collective bargaining agreement in no way allows for the diversity of delivery of education in Saskatchewan; and
- Article 9 is no longer relevant as a result of restructuring;

and that the members directly involved strive to have Article 9 removed from the Provincial collective agreement in the next round of bargaining.

- Article 9 of the Provincial Collective Bargaining Agreement between the boards of education, the Government of Saskatchewan and the teachers of Saskatchewan describes the criteria for the designation of out-of-scope personnel. Boards of education have an opportunity to raise this issue at the collective bargaining table during the normal course of negotiations. It would be inappropriate for the Minister of Education to interfere in this process.

D-1 BE IT RESOLVED that the Saskatchewan School Boards Association undertake an ongoing public lobby campaign with the goal of educating stakeholders, property tax payers and the general public with respect to the need for and benefits of adequate funding for K to 12 education.

- The 2009-10 budget introduced significant changes for funding the province's PreK-12 education system. With these changes, government is fulfilling its promise to achieve a fairer balance for education funding. Increasing the amount of government funding for education ensures the PreK-12 education system is properly funded.
- In order to comply with the changes, the Ministry of Education implemented a new method of funding school divisions for the 2009-10 fiscal year. For 2009-10 and 2010-11, education funding provided by the province will be based on school division actual financial information. In 2009-10, the province increased its share to school divisions by \$241M.

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- The Ministry of Education, in consultation with school divisions, will develop a new funding system to determine allocation of education funds among school divisions. The new funding model will provide a means to allocate funding to school divisions to provide a quality education that reflects the needs of students and society.

D-5 BE IT RESOLVED that the Saskatchewan School Boards Association expand its advocacy on the behalf of school boards with agencies, such as Health, Justice, Social Services, Ministry of Education etc., in which decisions to cut services handicap the delivery of educational services by downloading these costs to school boards onto what is now a fixed budget.

- Education funding provided by the province for the 2009-10 transition year was based on school division actual financial information. Therefore, what the school division is actually spending on educational services including intensive needs, diversity, transportation, etc., will be incorporated into the funding.
- Ministry staff met with each school division to discuss their specific 2009-10 funding requirements. Adjustments to operating funding were considered based on school division specific requirements. These meetings also provided opportunity to clarify roles and responsibilities, including the continued authority for school divisions regarding day-to-day business, board elections, budget allocations and planning.
- Ministry staff also held a set of meetings with school divisions, regarding funding for 2010-11. Education Finance and Facilities Branch has undertaken significant work to address all aspects of the transition phase.
- The Regional and Integrated Services (RIS) Branch works with the Human Services Integration Forum (representing nine human services ministries) at the provincial level and the regional intersectoral committees (RICs) at the regional level to support service integration across the province. The RICs are forums for regional integrated decision-making regarding existing and emerging local needs. They work with government and non-government regional partners, including community-based organizations, to address issues and allocate resources more effectively than agencies could do on their own.
- At an operational level, the Student Support Services Branch engages in ongoing discussions with the ministries of: Health; Social Services; Advanced Education, Employment and Labour; and, Corrections, Public Safety and Policing. These discussions include: the provision of staffing and supports to meet demand; potential inconsistencies in service delivery; mandate clarification; potential overlap; and, other topics.

N-2 BE IT RESOLVED that the Saskatchewan School Boards Association lobby the Ministry of Education and Indian and Northern Affairs (Canada) to jointly develop protocols applicable to boards of education in Saskatchewan and First Nations, with respect to communities in Saskatchewan which encompass Indian reserve land, that encourage the board of education/CSF and First Nation to come together to discuss the possibility of utilizing resources to develop a jointly funded and operated school in that community that can provide a more well-rounded educational experience for all students and avoid duplication in provision of educational services.

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- The Ministry of Education acknowledges the authority and jurisdiction of First Nations people to be fully engaged as partners in education decision-making, planning and assessment. By suggesting that it is the Ministry of Education and Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) that need to be lobbied, in the *absence* of First Nations education authorities and leadership, they fail to demonstrate respect for this ministry's commitment to First Nations partnerships and working relationships. Although still in developmental stages, a memorandum of understanding (MOU) is currently being renewed (based upon the 2003-2008 MOU) with the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations. This MOU reaffirms a commitment to work together towards student achievement, while respecting jurisdictional authorities of each party.
- The Ministry of Education has been advised by INAC that their mandate is dedicated to on-reserve education and that it is the Office of the Federal Interlocutor who is mandated to work with off-reserve education. The Saskatchewan School Boards Association (SSBA) resolution fails to include OFI, in addition to First Nations partners as mentioned above.
- This Ministry of Education currently supports partnerships between provincial school divisions and First Nations authorities and communities. Through the First Nations and Métis Education Initiatives Fund, a total of \$1.2M is expended in student achievement projects that *require* First Nations partnerships. The ministry co-ordinates professional exchange of promising practises leading to more well-rounded educational experiences for all students.
- The Ministry of Education policy for First Nations and Métis Education, *Inspiring Success: Building Towards Student Achievement*, provides a framework and strategy designed to achieve the goals inferred in the SSBA resolution and is respectful of jurisdiction and First Nations education authority.

B-4 BE IT RESOLVED that the Saskatchewan School Boards Association lobby the Ministry of Education to amend clause 166(1)(b) of *The Education Act, 1995* to confer authority on individual boards of education and the Conseil scolaire fransaskois to set the five-day "spring vacation" period at a time that each considers advisable for its school divisions.

- Work is continuing in the province that may potentially impact alternative school year/school day arrangements within Saskatchewan school divisions. It is anticipated that the Provincial Panel on Student Achievement will be bringing forward recommendations in early spring 2010.
- *The Education Act, 1995* prescribes the statutory holidays and vacation period to be observed by schools during the school year. *The Education Act, 1995* section 166(3) provides the minister with the authority to change the spring vacation period if requested by a school division if the action is required to maintain a satisfactory schedule of the opening and closing dates of school. The ministry is committed to working with individual school divisions to address their unique needs.

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N-1 BE IT RESOLVED that the Saskatchewan School Boards Association lobby the provincial government to declare the first Tuesday following Labour Day of each year as "Provincial Students Day in Saskatchewan".

- The process for requesting a proclamation begins with an official letter sent annually from your organization to the Minister of Education at least two months prior to the day you wish proclaimed. Once the letter is received, your request will be taken into consideration and you will be notified of the decision.

D-4 BE IT RESOLVED that the Saskatchewan School Boards Association establish an official position that recognizes the real and distinct disparity in the costs of delivering equitable education opportunities in Saskatchewan, and continue to advocate that the Ministry of Education provide adequate funding for all students in Saskatchewan.

- The 2009-10 budget introduced significant changes for funding the province's PreK-12 education system. With these changes, government is fulfilling its promise to achieve a fairer balance for education funding. Increasing the amount of government funding for education ensures the PreK-12 education system is properly funded.
- In order to comply with the changes, the Ministry of Education implemented a new method of funding school divisions for the 2009-10 fiscal year. For 2009-10 and 2010-11, education funding provided by the province will be based on school division actual financial information. In 2009-10, the province increased its share to school divisions by \$241M.
- The Ministry of Education, in consultation with school divisions, will develop a new funding system to determine allocation of education funds among school divisions. The new funding model will provide a means to allocate funding to school divisions to provide a quality education that reflects the needs of students and society.

B-2 BE IT RESOLVED that the Saskatchewan School Boards Association lobby the provincial government to include a community service component as part of the requirements for grade 12 graduation.

- The ministry has examined the strategies for increasing the engagement of students within their community, and there is little evidence that a mandatory community service requirement is effective in improving students' engagement. The ministry has taken the approach of articulating, emphasizing, and infusing three Broad Areas of Learning into all renewed curriculum. Two of the broad areas of learning are *Building a Sense of Self and Community* and *Building Engaged Citizens*. As well, one of the four Cross-curricular Competencies that are addressed throughout all renewed curricula is *Developing Social Responsibility*. The ministry believes that by consistently addressing the Broad Areas of Learning and the Cross-curricular Competencies, students will develop the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that will enable and compel them to be actively engaged with their community in a positive way.