

MAR 7 - 2006

Minister of Learning



Legislative Building  
Regina, Saskatchewan S4S 0B3

February 28, 2006

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

Dear Mr. Bean:

I am pleased to enclose my department's response to each resolution that was passed at your 2005 annual convention that pertained to the Department of Learning. I understand the resolutions that may relate to other departments or agencies will be forwarded directly to them for response.

I look forward to our continued cooperation and partnership in providing the best educational opportunities and experiences for all Saskatchewan learners.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Deb Higgins".

Deb Higgins  
Minister of Learning

cc: Bonnie Durnford, Deputy Minister of Learning

**Saskatchewan Learning  
Responses to the 2005 Annual Convention Resolutions**

**RESOLUTION N-1**

**BE IT RESOLVED that the Association lobby the Government of Saskatchewan to amend section 349 of *The Education Act, 1995* to change the tendering requirements for making capital expenditures for acquisition of motor vehicles, furniture, etc. from \$20,000.00 to \$50,000.00**

**Department Response:**

- This resolution will be considered as part of the Continuous Improvement Framework currently being developed by Saskatchewan Learning for pre-K-12 renewal. Saskatchewan Learning will work with sector partners including the Saskatchewan School Boards Association to develop the Facilities Management and Infrastructure Renewal section of the framework that will deal with this issue.

**RESOLUTION D-3**

**BE IT RESOLVED that the Association lobby the Government of Saskatchewan to amend legislation so that the school division's fiscal year end change from December 31 to June 30 to conform with the school year.**

**Department Response:**

- The Department of Learning, in partnership with the Saskatchewan Association of School Business Officials, is working toward changing the school division fiscal year from the current calendar year (January 1 - December 31) to the school year (July 1 to June 30).
- The Department of Learning fully supports the change and believes this change will improve planning, budgeting, and accountability practices.

**RESOLUTION N-2**

**BE IT RESOLVED that the government of Saskatchewan immediately enact legislation establishing an authority to identify those school-aged children ("hidden youth") who are not registered in any school, and be authorized to use resources and strategies necessary to ensure enrolment and attendance of these children in school.**

**Department Response:**

- Meeting individual students' needs and taking appropriate measures to ensure students are in school is a shared responsibility between local education authorities, the departments of Learning, Community Resources and Employment, Health and Justice, and other provincial organizations (e.g., Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations, Métis Nation of Saskatchewan, Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation, Saskatchewan School Boards Association and League of Educational Administrators, Directors and Superintendents).

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- Saskatchewan Learning has authority within *The Education Act*, 1995 to:
  - compel mandatory attendance of children between the ages of 7 and 16;
  - require school divisions to hire a local attendance counsellor, whose responsibility it is to resolve attendance issues; and,
  - enter into information-sharing agreements with other parties, like Saskatchewan Health.
- In response to the issue of "hidden youth", Saskatchewan Learning has expanded its existing student tracking system. The enhanced student tracking system will:
  - register all children from K-12 (includes students in provincially funded schools, independent schools, First Nations schools, custody and care facilities, and home-schooled students);
  - provide reports to school administrators listing students who have withdrawn from their schools and have not re-enrolled in another Saskatchewan school, or have never attended school; and,
  - assist the education partners in determining why these children are not attending so that appropriate measures can be taken to ensure students are in school with access to a high quality education.

**RESOLUTION D-6**

**BE IT RESOLVED that due to declining enrolments, higher operating costs per student and the need for capital and maintenance funds to balance program budgets, the Association lobby the Department of Learning to again explore the feasibility of Life Cycle Facilities Management as identified in the Facilities Restoration Program presented by the Facilities Planning Unit in June 2001.**

**Department Response:**

- This resolution will be considered as part of the Continuous Improvement Framework currently being developed by Saskatchewan Learning for pre-K-12 renewal. Saskatchewan Learning will work with sector partners including the Saskatchewan School Boards Association to develop the Facilities Management and Infrastructure Renewal section of the framework that will deal with this issue.

**RESOLUTION D-7**

**BE IT RESOLVED that the Association petition Saskatchewan Learning to include increased energy costs in recognized per-pupil expenditures.**

**Department Response:**

- Funding decisions are made in the context of the government's provincial budget development process. Resources need to be balanced against the priorities and funding pressures across government.

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**RESOLUTION G-1**

**BE IT RESOLVED that the Association urge the University of Saskatchewan and the University of Regina to re-instate their respective *Library Science Programs*.**

**Department Response:**

- The universities are responsible for their own academic affairs, in accordance with their respective Acts. Therefore, the resolution concerning the establishment of library science programs should be directed toward the respective Deans of Education at the University of Saskatchewan and the University of Regina.

**RESOLUTION D-1**

**BE IT RESOLVED that the Association lobby the Government of Saskatchewan to amend legislation to provide boards of education with the legislative authority to set the maximum rate of discount that all taxing authorities in a school division could utilize on the school division's portion of the annual levy, as an incentive for prompt payment of property taxes.**

**Department Response:**

- The department is willing to consider options for school boards that will ensure education property tax revenue is provided to school divisions in a timely manner and as directed by legislation.
- Government will continue to work with stakeholders to develop a long-term solution to property tax relief that considers the impact of revaluation, restructured school divisions and the new school operating grants system, and will result in equity for both students and taxpayers.

**RESOLUTION J-1**

**BE IT RESOLVED that the Association lobby the Government of Saskatchewan to require the use of school bus arms in areas where the speed limit is in excess of 40 kilometres per hour.**

**Department Response:**

The Facilities Branch of Saskatchewan Learning will work with other government departments, SGI, and the Saskatchewan School Boards Association to fully research this issue and determine the best approach. School divisions will be advised of the outcome of this review.

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**RESOLUTION A-I**

**A-I BE IT RESOLVED that the Association lobby the Department of Learning to retain the election of members of local boards and the election of members of any new local school engagement entity in some manner.**

**Department Response:**

- School community councils will be comprised of two kinds of members: representative members (with parents in the majority); and, permanent members.
- Parents will form the majority of the representative membership, which will include:
  - five to nine elected parent and community members that are representative of the student demographics in the school (i.e., Aboriginal, new Canadians);
  - one or two secondary student members in schools offering 10, 20 or 30 level credits (secondary and pre-K-12 schools); and,
  - one or more representatives of First Nations that have students who live on-reserve and are enrolled in the school.
- Permanent members will include:
  - the principal (and/or designate(s) reporting to the principal of the school);
  - one teacher; and,
  - other members approved by the board of education through two-way consultation with the school community council.
- The following procedures are the minimum procedures for the nomination and election of parent and community members of the school community council:
  - the board of education will name one employee, other than the principal of the school, as an Election Supervisor for the purpose of the nomination and election of the school community council;
  - public notice will be given of the annual meeting held to elect representative members; and,
  - parent and community members will be elected by secret ballot at a public meeting. People eligible to vote and run for membership include:
    - parents of students who are enrolled in the school (including parents who do not reside within the attendance area of the school); and,
    - electors that reside within the school attendance area.
- Participation on school community councils will be voluntary. Officers of school community councils are to be selected from among the elected volunteer members.