



Government
of
Saskatchewan

JAN 24 2017

Ministry of Education
Deputy Minister
5th Floor, 2220 College Ave.
Regina, Canada S4P 4V9

January 13, 2017

Mr. Darren McKee, Executive Director
Saskatchewan School Boards Association
400 –2222 13th Avenue
REGINA SK S4P 3M7

Dear Mr. McKee:

The Ministry of Education has taken the opportunity to review the resolutions passed at the 2016 Saskatchewan School Boards Association (SSBA) Annual General Meeting. You will find our responses below.

The ministry appreciates the important role that your members play in supporting education and finding opportunities for improvement. We look forward to continuing to work with the SSBA in the future.

16-04 BE IT RESOLVED that the SSBA Executive establish a working advisory group to evaluate the effectiveness of the current School Community Council framework in supporting the educational needs of schools and their communities and make recommendations to the government based on its findings.

RESPONSE: School Community Councils (SCCs) are a vital component of our education system. The Ministry of Education collects detailed data on SCCs through each school division's annual report. The reports for 2014-15 indicate that SCCs are well-established and active across the province and that boards of education are providing orientation, training and networking opportunities for SCCs using a variety of processes and tools. The ministry continues to monitor the successes and challenges of SCCs, and welcomes the opportunity for further dialogue and information sharing with the SSBA.

16-05 BE IT RESOLVED that the SSBA Executive lobby the Government of Saskatchewan to amend the School Review legislated process to include the ability for rural school divisions to develop long range facility plans which may include consolidation.

RESPONSE: The ministry recognizes the challenges that *The Education Act, 1995* presents to school boards in developing long range facility plans including consolidations and school reviews. The ministry welcomes feedback from school boards on issues related to the legislated sections regarding school review and any other considerations.

16-06 BE IT RESOLVED that the position paper, crafted by the SSBA with guidance from the Aboriginal Constituency, be used to advocate to the Ministry of Education for mandatory curriculum that includes the rich and diverse history of the First Nations and Métis Peoples with their experience of the arrival of the European newcomers, and the legacy of the Indian Residential Schools era.

RESPONSE: Since 2013, renewal of most curricula, including secondary level courses has been on pause. Lisa Lambert, Legislative Secretary to the Minister of Education, is currently in the process of making recommendations to the Minister of Education concerning principles to guide future curriculum development. Decisions regarding the development of specific secondary level courses are pending based on these recommendations. Additionally, Jennifer Campeau, Legislative Secretary for First Nations and Métis Student Achievement is completing her engagement sessions regarding treaty education, truth and reconciliation and anti-racism. Once complete, she will present options and recommendations to the Minister of Education. Treaty Education is required for all K-12 students. Educating our children about the rich and diverse history of the First Nations and Métis people is important to the Ministry of Education and we have collaborated with the Office of the Treaty Commissioner to develop resources and other support materials for teachers.

16-07 BE IT RESOLVED that the SSBA request that the Ministry of Education initiate a provincial strategy to support students experiencing a high degree of transience.

RESPONSE: The Ministry of Education is developing policy related to credit recovery and completion, and guidelines for schools to use that will welcome and engage new students. Our ministry has also implemented a new *Confidential Student Summary Report* that will assist teachers in designing instruction for students.

16-08 BE IT RESOLVED that the SSBA collectively affirm the commitment of Boards of Education to the principles and vision for inclusion outlined in the *Saskatchewan Disability Strategy*, and that the SSBA request that the Ministry of Education dedicate new, targeted funding for school accessibility projects that reflect the intent of *Saskatchewan's Disability Strategy*.

RESPONSE: The Government of Saskatchewan's funding model for the provincial school system supports local decision making, ensuring that the needs of students are being directly served. Also, the Preventative Maintenance and Renewal (PMR) program provided approximately \$34 million in 2016, an increase of \$7 million over the prior year, to school boards to assist in the proactive inspection, detection and correction of emerging failures. The intent of the PMR program is to include initiatives related to meeting accessibility requirements and intensive support needs.

16-09 BE IT RESOLVED that the SSBA consult with the Ministry of Education to review the rationale for and mechanics of the "social impact bond" recently entered into by the Government of Saskatchewan with a view to the broader potential impact on funding for public education in Saskatchewan and the operation of publicly funded schools.

RESPONSE: Some promising new initiatives are being taken in response to the Joint Task Force on Improving Education and Employment Outcomes for First Nations and Métis people, and that includes the Social Impact Bond (SIB) at Mother Teresa Middle School. The SIB is designed to improve school performance and graduation rates for children. The funding model mobilizes private capital for social good and transfers the risks of the program to the investor resulting in public sector savings. Like other targeted initiatives supported by the ministry, this innovative financial instrument is not a replacement for the education funding model.

Mr. Darren McKee

January 13, 2017

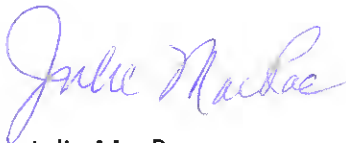
Page 4

16-10 BE IT RESOLVED that the SSBA urge the Government of Saskatchewan to revise The Education Property Tax Bill to include the establishment of a distinct and separate fund to which education property tax levies would be deposited and payments made to school boards.

RESPONSE: Education Property Tax (EPT) revenue is itemized and publicly reported annually by the provincial government. Under the new model, EPT will continue to be reported publically in the same manner. As the provincial government considers how to implement changes to EPT it will also consider how to report these revenues.

Thank you for taking the time to review the Ministry of Education's responses to the SSBA resolutions. If you would like to discuss any of the matters in greater detail, please contact me at 306-787-2471 or julie.macrae@gov.sk.ca.

Sincerely,



Julie MacRae
Deputy Minister of Education

cc: Donna Johnson, Assistant Deputy Minister of Education
Clint Repski, Assistant Deputy Minister of Education
Rob Currie, Assistant Deputy Minister of Education