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January 20, 2012

Hon. Jody Carr
Minister of Education & Early Childhood Development
Place 2000, 250 King Street
P.O. Box 6000
Fredericton, NB E3B 5H1

RE: Questions from District Education Council concerning the restructuring of Districts, DEC's and Subdistricts

Dear Minister Carr,

At the District Education Council public meeting for School District 2 on January 17, 2012, the council had a broad discussion of the proposed changes to the organization and governance of school districts.

As we understand these changes in the next election there will be 6 DEC members elected, one from each sub-district. In addition to these individuals there will be 6 members from PSSC's who will sit on the new DEC. Finally as the boundaries indicate, there will be a First Nations representative, a student representative, and 1 or 2 persons appointed by the Minister. This makes for a new council of 15 – 16 people, an increase of 3-4 people.

From this discussion, we wish to pose the following questions:

1. How will the 2 people be appointed to councils that are based on pre-determined competencies? Will this be a Minister appointment and who will decide what competencies are needed on each Council? What will be the duration of their appointment? Can the appointees be elected to the Chair position?
2. As PSSC members are elected in individual schools on a yearly basis, will the PSSC members be appointed for a four year term? How will they be appointed? Can they still be considered a PSSC member if their child leaves the school they were elected in?
3. Will the PSSC members join the council in September or October following PSSC elections in the schools? How will this work for training/orientation etc. when the District Education Council elections are in May and the council begins work in July?
4. Can a PSSC member be elected Chair?
5. Will the Chair of the local DEC still be a locally elected position?
6. How will the PSSC members who will be appointed to represent many schools be able to feel that they know the concerns of individual schools? What process will be in place for this?

7. Will the new payments being made to Council members be a stipend or an expense or taxable income? As the Subdistrict boundaries now are quite extensive, will mileage be paid to DEC members in addition to the suggested \$3,000 for each member?
8. Are the payments being made to Council coming from "new money" that will be added to budget lines? Based on 15 DEC members and one Chair (\$3,000 x 15 members + \$6,000 x 1 chair = \$51,000)
9. Why was a more concerted effort not made to level out the student enrolments of districts? The funding formulas and inequities have been issues and will this new model prevent this from continuing to be an issue?
10. How was the number of DEC members decided for each district? It appears that the Anglophone East district should have 7 members with 16000 students and not have just 6 as the Anglophone North district has with only 7,700 students.
11. What is the cost of the implementation of these changes? Has this been calculated as part of the savings?

We are also concerned about the very quick changes that are going to be made to the Education Act through legislation. These are sweeping changes that are impacting the lives of many students, families and staff. It seems that making these significant changes to governance and structure would take more than three months to implement and this does not seem like a reasonable or responsible time line for change.

In closing, we as the current members of District Education Council for District 2 understand the pressures and the position that the Province is currently in, and that changes to all Departments are required to help our financial situation for the future of our Province.

We respectfully request a timely response to our questions.

Sincerely,



Harry Doyle
Chair, District Education Council
School District 2

Cc: District Education Council
PSSCs
Hon. David Alward, Premier
Hon. Marie-Claude Blais, MLA Moncton North
Hon. Bruce Fitch, MLA Riverview
John Betts, MLA Moncton Crescent
Hon. Sue Stultz, MLA Moncton West
Wayne Steeves, MLA Albert
Hon. Claude Williams, Kent South
Sherry Wilson, MLA Petitcodiac
Hon. Mike Olscamp, Tantramar
Karen Branscombe, Superintendent, School District 2
District 02 Website