

December 15, 2011

Hon. J. Alan MacIsaac
Minister of Education and
Early Childhood Development
P. O. Box 2000 Charlottetown, PE C1A 7J8

Dear Hon. MacIsaac:

The 9th Annual Atlantic Caucus of Home and School/School Council Federations meeting took place recently in Fredericton, NB. Over the course of the two-day meeting, representatives from the Home and School Federations in Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island and the Federation of School Councils in Newfoundland Labrador discussed various topics of common concern related to education.

One on-going area of concern focused on our respective government's priorities on education and specifically in the provision of curriculum essentials for our students. After much discussion it was decided to call upon government and school officials to look at department and board spending in each Atlantic province. We are challenging and encouraging our departments of education officials to search for efficiencies in the system and redirect these funds into the classroom.

Looking for efficiencies would, for example, tighten up bulk buying for core curriculum supplies which varies widely between schools and regions. When parents, students and teachers are expected to fundraise to fill the core needs gap in our system, we no longer have the promise of free education that was made in 1852. We should all be working diligently to alleviate this fundraising burden that is placed on families who may not have the same capacity as others to provide essential school supplies to their children.

To this end, the PEI Home and School Federation is requesting that you as our Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development take on this challenge and work with your counterparts in Atlantic Canada to use economies of scale to find savings within our education systems and reinvest the monies to better education in Atlantic Canada.

I look forward to your response and would welcome any opportunity to sit down with you to discuss ways in which the PEI Home and School Federation may collaborate with your department to come up with solutions to benefit our students.

Sincerely,

Owen J.W. Parkhouse
President

Enc. Copy of Atlantic Caucus Press Release, Nov./11

PRESS RELEASE:

Atlantic Caucus of Home and School/ School Councils
Meets in Fredericton

Topics covered include:

- More Steps needed regarding Energy Drinks
- Call on Government / School Officials to Address Fund Raising Practices
- Challenges Departments of Education to search for efficiencies in provision of core curriculum supplies

Fredericton, New Brunswick October 30, 2011 ---- The 9th Annual Atlantic Caucus of Home and School/School Council Federations meeting took place in Fredericton, NB on the weekend of October 29th, 2011. Representatives from the Home and School Federations in Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island and the Federation of School Councils in Newfoundland Labrador participated in the meeting. Various topics of mutual concern were discussed over the two-day meeting, including the following items.

The Atlantic Caucus is pleased with Health Canada's Proposed Approach to Managing Caffeinated Energy Drinks, and while it believes that this is a step in the right direction, it is not enough. In line with the Canadian Home and School Federation, we continue to call upon the Federal Health Minister and Health Canada to restrict the sale of energy drinks and energy boosting products to persons over the legal age of majority.

The Atlantic Caucus also calls upon government and school officials to address the practice of students being required to participate in fundraising activities to purchase equipment and supplies such as smart boards and playground equipment. Many families cannot support these activities to the levels expected and the Caucus believes that such purchases should be funded out of a school's regular annual budget.

Finally, the Caucus challenges Department of Education officials within the Atlantic region to search for efficiencies in the provision of core curriculum supplies for our students - the cost of these supplies vary widely between schools and regions and the Caucus is concerned that a level playing field does not exist for all families. This may alleviate the burden placed on families who may not have the same capacity as others to provide essential school supplies to their children.

The Atlantic Caucus recognizes the challenges faced by government in providing the best education possible to our children and looks forward to the opportunity to provide further input and assistance to government in addressing these concerns.

-30-

For more information, contact:

Owen Parkhouse, President, PEIHS, Telephone 902-620-3186
Glyn Morgan, President, NBFHSAI, Telephone 506-451-6247
Vanda Dow, President, NSFHSA: Telephone 902-421-2663
Dave Pretty, President, NLFSC, Telephone 709-279-2789