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**Eastern School District**

[www.edu.pe.ca/esd](http://www.edu.pe.ca/esd)

June 14, 2010

Mr. Owen Parkhouse, President  
PEI Home and School Federation Inc.  
PO Box 1012  
Charlottetown, PE C1A 7M4

Dear Mr. Parkhouse:

Thank you for your letter received May 10, 2010 regarding the resolutions passed at your Annual General Meeting. The trustees of the Eastern School District have asked me to respond as follows:

Resolution 1/10 - Request for Clear Procedures that Encourage Parent Communication and Involvement in School Life

The Eastern School District agrees that taking the necessary steps to protect our students and staff has resulted in protocols that some visitors to schools, including parents, may perceive as barriers.

The intent of video surveillance, photo identification, ID visitor tags, and one entrance access is to make our schools safer for all. The unintended result or perception is that our schools may now be more visitor/parent "unfriendly".

The Eastern School District welcomes and values parent involvement as active partners in all schools. School staffs are continuously engaging and working with parents to make each child's educational experience a positive one.

Schools presently have websites, newsletters, Tell Them From Me Parent surveys, Student's Achieve, School Councils or Home and School organizations, Meet The Teacher nights, information sessions and many other ways to foster communication with parents.

However, with the above recent changes, we do see the value in working with the Western School Board in creating a meaningful set of guidelines and procedures so that parents have consistent, clear messages in terms of accessing school or Board personnel.

The Eastern School District and the Western School Board have been in contact and have agreed to meet in the near future to discuss and address the concerns expressed in Resolution 1 .

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### Resolution 2/10 - Air Quality Testing in Schools

The Eastern School District shares the concern of the PEIHSF with indoor air quality in our schools. Our focus has changed from being reactive to indoor air quality test results to being more proactive - preventing poor indoor air quality. Regular air quality testing is only one tool to evaluate the school's air quality. It takes many weeks to conduct indoor air quality testing, evaluate the testing results, prepare the report, communicate the findings, implement the recommendations and to do follow-up testing. History shows the indoor air quality reports all have similar conclusions:

- 1) The need for better housekeeping practices by all users of the building.
- 2) The need for building occupants to understand factors that effect poor indoor air quality and what they can do to improve indoor air quality.
- 3) The need for a preventative maintenance program that addresses issues prior to indoor air quality complaints.
- 4) The need for trained and active Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committees at each school

We would support the request for additional funding from the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development to provide more training for Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committees and additional staff resources to provide the training and follow-up.

### Resolution 3/10 - StudentsAchieve System (SAS)

The Minister's Advisory Committee on Communication and Information Technology will be making a recommendation to the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development on an implementation schedule for use of StudentsAchieve. This recommendation will consider appropriate use at each grade level, technology infrastructure, and training for teachers. The Eastern School District is supportive of the committee's recommendation.

### Resolution 4/10 - Consistent Board Policy for Rezoning and School Closures

The Eastern School District agrees there is value in getting together to solidify the process of rezoning and permanent school closures. The Eastern School District, Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, and Western School Board have agreed to discuss a consistent process for school rezoning and permanent school closures. This would involve looking at the acts and policies presently in place, including the involvement and role of parents, and balancing this with the obvious administrative decisions that are part of this process.

The Eastern School District will commit to contacting the Western School Board and the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development to set up a meeting at a time and place agreeable to all three.

Resolution 5/10 - Equal Access to Extra-curricular Educational Experiences

The Eastern School District recognizes that valuable educational experiences can and do occur outside the classroom. We encourage curriculum-related field trips, participation in extra curricular sports, various festivals, science and heritage fairs, drama, and much more. We have always strived to give all students equal access to these, regardless of geographic and/or socio-economic factors.

However, we believe strongly that for some events the decisions to attend must reside with the Superintendent and/or Principal of the school. Factors such as time out of the classroom versus the educational value of the event must be considered. Administrators have to decide if attending a one-hour event which keeps students out of the classroom for most or all of a day has the educational value to support attending. For example, occasionally a decision may have to be made as to whether an event outside the classroom is curriculum related or simply entertainment.

However, we feel good decisions are being made that do not deprive students, of educational opportunities out side the classroom - regardless of geographic location. We have travel budgets for schools that reflect their geographic location and every effort is made to grant requests that schools make to attend events.

Resolution 6/10 - Equal Access to School Athletic Association Refereeing Clinics

This resolution would be more appropriately addressed by the PEI School Athletic Association.

Thank you for the opportunity to consult on these important matters. Please feel free to contact me if there are questions.

Sincerely,



Robert Clow  
Board Chairperson

/cjm  
Att.