



May 15, 2017

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THE HONOURABLE DON MORGAN
MINISTER OF EDUCATION
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Dear Minister Morgan:

This letter is in regards to the implementation of the recently approved amendments to *The Education Act, 1995*, and the processes by which the Ministry of Education will be working with education stakeholders as related regulations will be developed and approved in the coming weeks. The Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation and its members expect to be included in these consultations as valued partners in education; however, we have yet to be fully informed of the Ministry's plans or processes and have only heard about them through the media and chance discussions with other sector partners.

It is our understanding that the Act and regulations will come into force for the 2017-18 school year, and that four project teams made up of directors of education, senior school division officials and Ministry officials have been established. While the Federation understands that a lot of the work of these committees may be outside the purview of front-line teachers and principals, these professionals will nonetheless be affected by any changes and the continuing uncertainty in the sector. Therefore, we hope that consideration has been given to communicating with us regarding the work of these teams as well as some of the more specific areas they may be examining.

For example, in recent correspondence we highlighted the need for meaningful consultation on all proposed legislative and regulatory amendments with education stakeholders including the public, school divisions, professional organizations and other partners in education in Saskatchewan. Therefore, as the Ministry develops related regulations or contemplates any further amendments to the Act, the Federation should be informed and included as full participants in the process prior to them being introduced in the legislative assembly or elsewhere publicly.

Further, work currently being undertaken by one of the four teams to examine education sector purchasing and services should be consulting with the Federation on matters related to information technology platforms and data sharing requirements. Improved integration and consistency of information that the employer collects as well as fee and premium remittances to the Federation have been a long-identified goal that could be realized through a more inclusive approach to this work.

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In regards to issues being addressed through the organization design and staffing of division offices, our concerns are related to those Federation members that may be directly affected through their employment in central offices or those who may be indirectly affected by redeployment of positions into schools. Our expectation is that all provisions of the Provincial Collective Bargaining Agreement will be respected and that communication among school divisions and local associations is timely and as transparent as possible.

Related to the structural governance changes under consideration that may result in the redrawing of school division boundaries for northern, Regina and Saskatoon areas, we would encourage meaningful consultation beyond school boards and directors of education to other educational stakeholders including teachers and principals. The last round of boundary changes and school closures impacted the culture in education and communities in a variety of ways. The more positive experiences can be traced back to opportunities for the public and professionals in education to be informed about and engaged in the decision making.

Finally, with the continuing emphasis on the education sector strategic planning, the Federation wishes to reinforce the need to expand the contribution and leadership of teachers and principals in these processes. Without the opportunity to participate in identifying issues, developing research and analysis, and decision making on initiatives they will be expected to carryout, our members continue to express frustration about the lack of consultation, impact on their teacher time and workloads and ability to exercise professional autonomy and agency. Too many initiatives in the PreK-12 education sector continue to be created and implemented in a top-down manner.

On behalf of the Federation, I invite further discussions regarding the concerns identified in this letter, and look forward to continued opportunities to collaborate on these matters.

Sincerely,



Randy Schmaltz
Executive Director

cc: Julie McRae, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Education
Patrick Maze, STF President, Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation