

Educational Governance Review Report and Consultations

INFORMATION FOR TEACHERS | FEBRUARY 2017

On December 21, 2016, the Government of Saskatchewan released the Educational Governance Review Report: Kindergarten to Grade 12.

The government has also established an advisory panel to hear public input on the proposed changes. On January 24, 2017, the Federation presented its official submission on the Educational Governance Review Report to the advisory panel.

TOGETHER WE TEACH AND LEARN

How You Can Help

- Share your perspective on educational governance with colleagues, parents and the Federation.
- Become familiar with the *Educational Governance Review Report*, its recommendations and the Federation's response. Let colleagues know where to access this information.
- Advocate for students and teachers by reminding others that teaching and learning and the relationships fostered in the classroom remain at the heart of education.

Background

- The Government of Saskatchewan's *Educational Governance Review Report* proposes three options for modifying the province's current framework:
 - A "provincial model" consolidating all 18 public school divisions into one.
 - A "regional model" establishing four regional public boards of education.
 - Restructuring public school divisions or realigning school division boundaries, thereby reducing the number of public school boards to a number between eight and 14.
- The report notes that separate school boards and the francophone school board have constitutional rights that will have to be respected regardless of changes that are made to governance.

STF Advocacy and Key Messages

- In response to the report, the Federation has proposed five principles to inform or guide the discussion on governance:
 - Universality and equity of publicly funded public education.
 - Clarification of roles and responsibilities in the education sector.
 - Improvements to teaching and learning as the only impetus for changes to governance and administration.
 - Holistic educational services that put the student first.
 - Respect for teacher collective bargaining rights and conventions.
- **Principle One:** Publicly funded public education is a universal right of all children and youth.
 - The level of services offered to students must be as equitable as possible no matter where the student resides.
- **Principle Two:** Roles and responsibilities in the sector should be clarified.
 - The government has the responsibility to meet the public's expectations by setting common goals and standards for the education sector.
 - It is the role of government to fully fund an education system that supports the achievement of goals.
 - Given the appropriate resources, teachers have the professional knowledge, skills and judgment to interpret curriculum and design instruction that responds to the needs of all students.



- **Principle Three:** The heart of education is the teaching and learning relationship. Everything in the system exists to support this relationship and the instructional process.
 - Resources saved by governance changes should be reinvested into teaching and learning.
- **Principle Four:** Governance must support the delivery of holistic educational services that are responsive to the needs of each individual student.
 - The best way to ensure the well-being of all students is to make decisions about education as close as possible to the teaching and learning environment.
 - In keeping with the recommendations of the 2001 School^{PLUS} final report, the school should be part of a larger human service network that will improve teaching and learning by addressing complex social issues that affect education.
- **Principle Five:** Existing local and provincial teacher collective agreements must be respected.
 - The current educational governance review process does not sufficiently address collective bargaining to justify any changes to how bargaining is conducted.
 - If changes to bargaining structures will be undertaken, they must be addressed through a separate process that includes meaningful consultation for teachers.
- If changes are to be made to educational governance, any new governance structure must recognize that:
 - The teaching and learning relationship is enduring and will always be the most important part of education.
 - The school should be recognized as the central hub of community activity and support to students, families and communities.
 - Each school should be given flexibility and latitude in how it will respond to the context of its community.
 - Teachers and principals should be given flexibility and latitude in terms of how they will provide the best education for students.
 - Local voice must continue to determine the character of education in each community. Education must remain democratic and accountable to the people who are served directly by it.
 - The role of School Community Councils should be reviewed in order to increase local community involvement in education and renew local voice in educational decision making.
 - Principals should be recognized as instructional leaders in their respective schools and be properly supported in carrying out their work in schools.
 - Principals should continue to be teachers and remain in scope.
 - Teachers should play a leading role at all levels of curricular decision making and in all phases of curriculum development, implementation and actualization.
 - Teachers should be engaged in improved professionally led professional development.
 - The roles and responsibilities of education sector partners need to be clarified.
- If created, an Education Quality Council should be in the form of a Provincial Leadership Quality Council with these elements:
 - It should be focused on defining quality education as opposed to enforcement and accountability.
 - It should serve to inform and develop Ministry educational policy and support strategic planning.
 - It should be representative of all stakeholders in the sector and include all Saskatchewan communities concerned with education: educational and public policy experts, members of the public, teachers and First Nations and Métis communities.

Questions about the Federation’s perspective on educational governance?

Contact STF Member Support by email at administrative.staff@stf.sk.ca.

