

SECTION IV

GOVERNMENT

58. EDUCATION POLICY — TEACHER/FACULTY INPUT

The NSTU shall work to ensure that the professional voice of the teacher/faculty member is an essential component in board and government policy decisions of an educational nature.

Reference: Resolution 2000-84; Amended 2003-82; 2007-95

59. FUNDING OF PUBLIC EDUCATION

The cost of inservicing members necessitated by the introduction of new programs should be borne by the provincial government and the regional school boards and not through Professional Development Fund clauses in the *Teachers' Provincial Agreement*.

Reference: Resolution 99-128; Amended 2003-83; Reaffirmed 2007-96

60. GUIDANCE COUNSELLORS

Teachers who have graduated from a minimum one-year university level program in counselling shall meet the standard of qualifications as set out by the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development to implement the comprehensive guidance program in Nova Scotia public schools.

Reference: 2007-87

61. PUBLIC — PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS

(a) PREAMBLE

- (i) The Nova Scotia government's initiatives to enter into partnerships with the private sector have created its own set of issues for education. In its Public Schools Program document, the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development presents the following goals for public education:

... to help all students develop to their full potential, cognitively, effectively, physically and socially; and to help all students acquire the knowledge, attitudes and skills necessary for them to continue as thinking, learning, physically active, valued members of society.

(b) PRINCIPLES

The NSTU believes that the following principles must be respected in order to ensure that the ideals and goals of public education are maintained throughout this province.

(i) ETHICAL PRINCIPLES

a. CONTROL

- i. Schools must remain in the public domain.
- ii. Public Private Partnership schools must be subject to the public school policies of school boards and the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development and all acts of the Legislature that are pertinent.
- iii. Administration of the school and the delivery of educational services must be the responsibility of duly certified teachers as defined in the *Education Act*.
- iv. Public Private Partnership schools must respect all duly negotiated collective agreements and the legislation on which the agreements are based.
- v. The legitimate interest of the private partner should be limited to construction, and/or maintenance of the facility.
- vi. As public funds are used to pay the lease, all use of school space and facilities should be solely under the jurisdiction of the school board and the educational administration of the school.
- vii. Partnerships (lease agreements) must respect the collegial atmosphere of the school and this should be reflected in lease agreements.

b. TRANSPARENCY OF PROCESS

The public has a right to:

- i. A fair and transparent process that instills confidence and protects the integrity of public education which would include public participation in decisions affecting site, design and leases
 - A. Full public disclosure of the arrangements around Public Private Partnership (P3) schools to allow for monitoring and evaluation
 - B. A justification of why the Public Private Partnership (P3) model is the preferred model in this particular instance
 - C. A clear definition of roles and responsibilities of all partners
 - D. A definition and assignment of risk including long term guarantees such as performance bonds.
- ii. Public need, as determined by the site selection committee, must be respected in site selection.
- iii. Social and ethical behaviour must be an important consideration when a school, a school board and/or the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, choose a sponsor, partner or consortium.
- iv. Leases must be signed before construction begins.

c. EQUITY

The Province, through consultation with the Nova Scotia Teachers Union and the public, must develop standards for equitable construction, renovations, upgrading, and the provision of resources for all schools. An action plan to implement the standards must be developed and communicated to the public.

(ii) OPERATIONAL PRINCIPLES

- a. The safety, security, health, well-being and privacy of staff and students must be priorities in all decisions relating to Public Private Partnership (P3) schools.
- b. Leases must contain guarantees of:
 - i. standards of construction
 - ii. levels of services
 - iii. quality of furnishings & equipment
 - iv. sustainability throughout the duration of the leases.
- c. Due penalties must be imposed if the conditions described in the leases are not met.

(iii) EDUCATIONAL PRINCIPLES

a. EXPERTISE

- i. Public Private Partnerships must not place limitations on the academic freedom of the school community.
- ii. Public private partners and agreements must respect the right of professional educators to make all educational decisions.
- iii. Public private partners and agreements must recognize that professional educators are in the best position to make decisions concerning school resources, program, methodologies and other pedagogical issues.

b. ACCESS TO STUDENTS

The educational environment of students must be protected. Access to students must be dependent upon a positive evaluation by educators in relation to educational objectives.

c. ADVERTISING

- i. Schools should be free of commercial enterprise, including such things as advertising, franchising and other forms of business for profit.
- ii. Schools should generally be advertisement free zones.
- iii. Commercial enterprise in schools must be consistent with educational values.
- iv. Commercial enterprise must not exploit students as a captive audience.
- v. Commercial enterprise must not infringe on the individual's freedom of choice, freedom of expression or the academic freedom of the school community.

d. CURRICULUM MATERIALS

- i. The Nova Scotia Teachers Union supports the position of the Canadian Teachers' Federation, which states:
"...materials intended for classroom use should be subjected to rigorous evaluation. Particular attention should be paid to:
 - *accuracy and completeness*
 - *objectivity*
 - *commercialism*
 - *bias and stereotyping"*
- ii. The names of sponsors of curricular supplements should be stated clearly on all packaging and teacher-directed materials.
- iii. Skills should be enhanced among school system officials, administrators, teachers, parents and students to assist them in a critical analysis of curricular materials.

e. SPONSORSHIP

- i. Sponsorship agreements must be consistent with educational values. Acknowledgment should be made only in appropriate ways.
- ii. The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development and regional school boards, in co-operation with the Nova Scotia Teachers Union, must develop policies providing guidance for sponsorships and their acknowledgements.

f. DISCIPLINE

Discipline and codes of conduct in Public Private Partnership (P3) schools must be in accordance with school and school board policies.

Reference: Resolution 2000-77; Reaffirmed 2003-84; Amended 2007-97; 2013-80

62. SCHOOL/EDUCATIONAL SITE CONSTRUCTION OR MAJOR RENOVATIONS

When regional school boards are proceeding with the construction or major renovations of schools, the NSTU will seek to ensure its membership is involved in the development and design of such schools.

Reference: Resolution 99-138; Amended 2003-85; 2007-98

63. SCENT-SENSITIVE SCHOOLS/EDUCATIONAL SITES

Nova Scotia public schools/educational sites are to be scent-sensitive places of learning and working.

Reference: Resolution 98-62; Reaffirmed 2003-86; 2007-99; 2013-81

64. STUDENT ATTENDANCE

- (a) School boards shall have written student attendance policies with delineated procedures for identification, intervention and follow-up.
- (b) School boards shall consider a spectrum of educational programs to serve as interventions for students with attendance problems.
- (c) Initial efforts to deal with student absenteeism shall occur at the local school level with specialized regional level personnel involvement when cases are classified as chronic.
- (d) Schools shall have a consistent, accurate procedure for monitoring student attendance and providing for immediate attention to student absences.
- (e) Ongoing discussions shall occur among school staffs, parent groups and community agencies for the purpose of developing and implementing cooperative approaches to student attendance problems.
- (f) Each school board should establish a team representative of the community (e.g. academic social service, medical, legal, ethnic) to address student attendance issues.

Reference: Resolution 2000-82; Amended 2003-81; 2007-94