
From: Burton E. Matthews <MatthewsBE@ccrsb.ca>
Sent: Monday, March 05, 2018 6:17 PM
To: Office of the Legislative Counsel
Subject: Bill 72 amendments

Dear Committee Members,

I'm writing in concern over parts of Bill 72 to reform the Education system. While I applaud the zeal to reform the system, as a parent, teacher, and citizen I have great reservations about two of the proposed changes. The first is the loss of democratic accountability and the second being the changes to the status of principals.

Regarding the amalgamation of the school boards, if that is what needs to be done then do it. However, making the Provincial Advisory Council appointed instead of elected is a huge step backwards for democracy in this province. Citizens will lose their local voices in education and have no say in the appointment of future members. This voice will be lost and citizens are not even being given the opportunity through discussion, plebiscite, or referendum to have their opinions heard. While the English language school boards have their democratic practices stripped away, the French Language school board will keep their elected representatives. Hardly an equitable situation when some citizens have the option of a choice and others don't. I would propose that Bill 72 be amended to allow for elected school board officials in the English language school board which would be the same as the French language school board.

Concerning the changes to removing principals from the union, I believe they would be detrimental to delivering education to students in this province. Administrators were instrumental in founding the Nova Scotia Teachers Union and to be removed from the union by legislation without principals being given a choice is wrong. Principals will not be afforded the protection, benefits, and guidance they now have with the union. This is going to have massive effects in learning communities as experienced administrators go back to the classroom to remain within the union. New, energetic leadership will not leave the security of the known classroom environment to bring their ideas and energy to share with their communities. We will end up having administrators who know very little how classrooms work. One way to avoid this is to have principals form their own local within the NSTU. There can be joint negotiations with teachers as a whole while coming to mutual agreements in contracts that are specific to each group to address principals and employers concerns.

Please suggest amending this act to protect democracy and respect the educational leadership in this province. Allow the new school board to have elected members where the public is still given a choice to be heard. Allow principals to form a new local within the NSTU to reflect their unique situation within public education. Please listen to the voices you hear before you today.

Respectfully,
Burton Matthews
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