
From: Education Minister <Education.Minister@gov.ab.ca>

Sent: April 11, 2016 11:08 AM

To: 'clementlavoie@hotmail.com'

Subject: Reply from Education Minister (AR 93457)

Dear Mme. Poulin, Mr. Lavoie and Mr. Asselin:

Thank you for your March 2, 2016 letter sharing your concerns related to the proposal put forward by the Greater North Central Francophone Education Region (GNCFER) to move to a model of equal representation of public and separate trustees.

I would like to reassure you that our government fully supports Catholic education. Minority faith education rights are guaranteed under the Constitution of Canada. They are also ensured through provincial legislation in Section 17 of the *Alberta Act, 1905*, which guarantees the constitutional right of the minority religious group, either Protestant or Roman Catholic, to establish a separate school district. The Government of Alberta, through legislation in the *School Act*, recognizes one publicly funded system of education which has as its primary mandate to provide education programs to students through either public schools or separate schools.

Alberta Education staff have been in communication with representatives from GNCFER in order to collect more information regarding this issue. On September 28, 2015, I met with representatives from the four Francophone regional authorities and MLAs. During that meeting, I requested that more information be provided in order to consider endorsing a change in the governance model of equal separate and public representation.

On November 27, 2015, department staff met with Kevin Bell, Board Chair of GNCFER, to discuss the intent to modify the composition of its board so as to have equal representation of public and separate trustees. During this meeting, it was explained that many issues need to be addressed before the proposed governance change could be brought forward to government.

For example, consultations with Francophone parents (public and separate), Francophone and non-Francophone stakeholders, and community members will need to demonstrate a high level of support for a governance change, showing consensus among eligible separate and public electors.

On March 11, 2016, I met with superintendents and board chairs of the four Francophone regional authorities. At this meeting, GNCFER was encouraged to work with department staff to put into place a process that would bring about the success of this project from the perspectives of all parties involved.

I appreciate being made aware of your concerns and have asked staff to keep me apprised of the situation. Thank you once again for your interest and involvement in Francophone education in Alberta.

Sincerely,

David Eggen
Education Minister

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