



**Education and Early Childhood Development
Office of the Minister**

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December 1, 2023

Dear Families,

In September 2021, I was mandated, as Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development, to “Consult with a variety of groups, including parents from across the province, teachers, administrators, program assistants, representatives from the African Nova Scotian, First Nations, and disability communities to determine a governance model for P-12 education that allows for increased local voice in Education policy and decision-making.”

Since that time, we have hosted public engagements where we have asked students, families, school staff, School Advisory Councils (SACs), community members, and the public how to increase local voice in their schools and in the education system. You can learn more about how we engaged, who we engaged with, and what we heard, here: [Strengthening Local Voices | Education and Early Childhood Development \(ednet.ns.ca\)](https://ednet.ns.ca/Strengthening-Local-Voices-Education-and-Early-Childhood-Development). You can also view the full suite of actions being undertaken as a result of these engagements on this website.

Thank you so much for your participation in the engagement process. Your feedback has provided direction on how we are moving forward to ensure families and others have an enhanced voice in the education system, that SACs have greater support and funding to ensure meaningful input into local and regional school decisions, and that families can better connect to schools and regional centres for education (RCEs)/the Conseil scolaire acadien provincial (CSAP). The current governance structure of the CSAP continues, therefore not all of the actions identified below will apply. The following changes will be implemented over the next year:

An enhanced role for SACs in supporting schools and RCEs/CSAP, through:

- A new Innovation Fund that provides grants up to \$10,000 to a school SAC to support student well-being and achievement; SACs must apply for individual grants;
- An annual conference for all SAC Chairs to provide policy input and discuss common school challenges and opportunities;
- More opportunities for input into how school funds are distributed in schools, including the Healthy Schools Grant; and
- Additional parent/guardian and community representation.

Enhanced transparency and engagement with school regions and leaders by having:

- Regional Executive Directors lead public engagement sessions with parents and guardians of school-aged children and regional leaders, three times a year, to discuss student achievement well-being, and capital planning, etc.; and
- Improved Parent Navigation in all RCEs and the CSAP to ensure families get questions answered in a timely manner.

Enhanced voices in the education system by creating:

- A regional student advisory committee that reports directly to their Regional Executive Directors/Superintendent on topics such as achievement and well-being and other aspects of student experiences, especially as it relates to the Student Success Survey; and
- A regional advisory table that reflects the diversity of the region, made primarily of SAC members, to advise Regional Executive Directors.

We look forward to continuing to work together as these changes are implemented in the education system. We know that students do better when families are involved. Thank you again for your engagement and support throughout our work to increase local voice in education policy and decision-making and support the achievement and well-being of our students.

Sincerely,



Becky Druhan
Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development