

Eastern School Board

July 12, 2005

1. OPENING

A meeting of the Eastern School Board took place on Tuesday, July 12, 2005, in the District Conference Centre, St. John's. The meeting was called to order at 7:04 p.m. by the Chair, Bruce Peckford.

Members present: Bruce Peckford, Chair
Danny Button
Earl Elliott
Ron Ellsworth
Joan Marie Gatherall
Angus Gilbert
Cyril Hayden
Jim Hearn
Mel Hong
Joe Keating
Rick Martin
Vi Parsons
Brendan White

Also in attendance: Dr. Bruce Sheppard, Director of Education
Ms. Gwen Hurley, Executive Assistant

Mr. Peckford thanked all for their attendance at this special meeting, which was called on the recommendation of the Executive after it accepted the resignation of the Director, Dr. Sheppard on July 5. The Chair cited the reason for the Director's resignation as failure to reach an agreement on salary. The Chair noted that the Department of Education (DOE) is not willing to negotiate on that point and the salary scale is set. This scale, however, will be available privately to interested candidates in the recruitment process.

2. BOARD AUTONOMY

The Chair reviewed the various opportunities this Board and other school boards have taken to advise the Minister of their frustration with the perceived "department interference and control" over school boards in the past year, citing the primary example of the Premier's overturning of a decision of Nova Central Board.

Each trustee discussed their frustration with the lack of autonomy of the Board and several expressed their unwillingness to continue as trustees if this situation were to continue.

Mass resignation in protest was discussed. Mr. Peckford advised that each trustee has his/her own decisions to make in this regard. It was noted that NLSBA has not spoken to this issue publically, except in regard to the Nova Central issue.

Several trustees expressed disappointment at the Director's decision to resign, citing his exceptional leadership style, his very open and transparent style of administration and leadership which fostered optimism for the board under his directorship. Dr. Sheppard was thanked for the past year of service and wished well in all his future endeavours.

3. RECRUITMENT OF NEW DIRECTOR

Mr. Peckford reported that he had apprised the Minister of the Director's resignation. The chair presented two options for recruitment that he had discussed with the Deputy Minister.

- i. Board committee place the advertisement, screen the applications, and invite a departmental representative to sit as an equal partner on the panel.
- ii. Board ask the Public Service Commission (PSC) to organize the process, with board involvement in the selection, as well as a departmental official.

Mr. Peckford felt using the PSC would ensure the integrity of the process without question, pointing out that they have skilled personnel for this type of process. It would be administered by an independent body, thereby protecting the Board from outside influences.

The Chair expressed concern over the timely recruitment of a new director for the new school year.

Discussion was held on the Board's authority and responsibility for recruitment of senior officials under *The Schools Act, 1997*, and also under ESD By-Laws before the Board. Both make it the responsibility of the Board. It was also noted that having an outside party sit on a board committee is not permitted.

The members also discussed using a facilitator to help with the process as had been the practice of some boards previously. It was recommended that NLSBA not be used in this instance, due to the immediate past association of present Executive Director of NLSBA with the Board.

Motion: Moved by Earl Elliot, seconded by Jim Hearn, that the Executive of the Board handle recruitment for the Director, with a Department of Education (DOE) representative being included as an active participant in the process. Defeated

Motion: Moved by Ron Ellsworth, seconded by Brendan White, that the Executive Committee of the Board initiate immediately the selection process for recruitment of a new director, and bring back a recommendation of a candidate to the full Board per *The Schools Act, 1997* and Section 4.2 of ESD draft By-Laws. Carried.

Motion: Moved by Ron Ellsworth, seconded by Rick Martin, that the Executive may include an official of the Department of Education as an observer if they deem it advisable. Carried.

If there is a negative reaction from the Department of Education on the decision of the Board to carry out the recruitment process in-house, a full board meeting will be called to discuss this matter.

It was agreed that the distributed advertisement for the C.E.O./Director of Education position would be placed in the Telegram for Saturday, July 16 & 23 editions, with the closing date of July 29, advertising for 2 weeks from this weekend paper.

4. **ADJOURNMENT**

Motion: Moved by Jim Hearn, seconded by Ron Ellsworth, that the meeting adjourn. Carried.