

Honourable Lisa M. Thompson
Minister of Education
22nd Floor, Mowat Block
900 Bay Street
Toronto, Ontario
M7A 1L2

Dear Minister,

In recent weeks, we have become increasingly concerned about what Health and Physical Education curriculum may be in place this fall.

On July 11, 2018 you stated that your ministry would be doing away with the existing curriculum. However, the following week on July 16, you declared that components would remain and that changes – if any - would occur only after a province wide public consultation. Understandably, this has led to considerable confusion among boards across the province – including here at the Renfrew County District School Board (RCDSB).

With a little over five weeks left before classes resume on September 4, 2018, we recommend that the 2015 Health and Physical Education curriculum be left in place until such a time when your ministry has had the full benefit of time to complete its consultation with Ontarians.

The RCDSB believes very strongly in equity and providing classrooms that are a welcoming environment for all students. In fact, our Strategic Plan 2017-2020 includes “Safe, Caring, Inclusive and Respectful Environments” as one of our three Guiding Principles. To that end, we believe that the existing Health and Physical Education curriculum respects this tenet by providing important learning opportunities for students. It contextualizes healthy relationships, consent, online safety, and mental health all within the realities of our online and connected world.

Our students deserve a curriculum that meets current learning needs and is supported by appropriate and responsive learning materials in support of physical literacy, student health and wellness. Our teachers need time to plan with the curriculum for the upcoming school year. Our parents need to understand how this will be managed at school so that they can make decisions about how they can best support their child’s learning on these topics at home.

We urge you to initiate that consultation immediately so that Ontarians can be heard and multiple curriculum changes can be avoided. We would be happy to share the details of your consultation with our community so that parents, students, staff or any member can participate and/or share their perspective on this important issue.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Wendy Hewitt
Chair
Renfrew County District School Board

cc: Hon. John Yakabuski, MPP Renfrew – Nipissing – Pembroke