

Motions presented to the Regina Public School Board Annual Meeting of Electors, Jan. 29, 2013.  
*These motions were developed based on input received from RealRenewal members and supporters. Unfortunately the motions were all defeated by a voting block of board-affiliated staff and officials, who outnumbered 'ordinary' ratepayers at the meeting. Still, the motions represent some very solid ideas for change worth working on.*

### **First Nations, Métis and Inuit Education**

**WHEREAS** the board's Continuous Improvement Plan Report indicates First Nations and Métis students have experienced a widening achievement gap under the current education model;

**AND WHEREAS** the aspirations of First Nations, Métis and Inuit people to create a better world for all have reached a critical turning point, as evidenced by the Idle No More Movement;

**AND WHEREAS** we have a broad community of experience, expertise and enthusiasm to draw on that currently sits outside the halls of decision-making;

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that a special Action Committee be created by this assembly to address First Nations, Métis and Inuit concerns regarding public education in Regina, which would include majority representation from the Aboriginal community in Regina and majority representation from non-board personnel, and be chaired by a person of Aboriginal ancestry;

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that Action Committee members be selected through an open and fully transparent public nomination process, within 30 days of this date;

**AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that this Action Committee be empowered to explore and facilitate advocacy for necessary changes and to develop binding recommendations for further action.

- Moved by Sheila Brass

### **Rationale / Background**

Despite best intentions over the years, the board and the province continue to struggle with substantially improving the learning environment for First Nations and Métis students.

In the Continuous Improvement Plan Report, the board stated its desire to develop an Action Plan to address the achievement gap that is already widening by Grade 2.

It is time to reach out to the community and to First Nations people to tackle these issues, because that is where needed knowledge and expertise lies.

Therefore we propose creating a community-based, First Nations-led Action Committee to lead the way, which includes investing it with the power to make a difference.

### **Powers of School Community Councils**

**WHEREAS** Policy 18 of the Regina Board of Education cites the Duties of School Community Councils as stated in the Education Act Regulations, Part II, 2, 3.9.2;

**AND WHEREAS** Policy 18 is silent on the Powers of School Community Councils as stated in the Education Act Regulations, Part II, 2, 3.9.3;

**BE IT RESOLVED** that the Powers of the School Community Councils be added to Policy 18 and quoted in future board communications dealing with SCC roles and responsibilities, specifically:

“A School Community Council may:

- (a) provide advice and recommendations to the board of education respecting policies, programs and educational service delivery, including fundraising, school fees, pupil code of conduct, grade discontinuance, school closure, religious instruction, and language of instruction but not including educational service delivery by a specific teacher;
- (b) provide advice to the school staff respecting school programs; and
- (c) provide advice to other organizations, agencies and governments on the learning needs and well-being of pupils (Education Act Regulations Part II, 2, 3.9.3)”

- Moved by Trish Elliott

### **Rationale / Background**

When one speaks of responsibilities under law, it is important to also speak of rights.

Whether the topic is school closures or Ministry policies, SCCs are routinely advised that they have no mandate to address issues that directly affect their children and communities.

Quoting the Education Act Regulations clarifies that SCCs have a voice at all levels of society and government, and that they have a right to exercise that voice.

The power to speak to others about “the learning needs and well-being of pupils” should be broadly interpreted because:

- “Learning needs” are supported by a full roster of educational and social policies and programs, and;
- “Well-being” extends to the health of the community and social supports for children.

### **Designation of Heritage Property**

WHEREAS Davin School, constructed in 1929, was successfully placed on the Regina Municipal Heritage Holding Bylaw List, with the support of Regina Public Schools, in honour of its 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 1989, and subsequently went on to win a 2004 City of Regina Heritage Award;

AND WHEREAS Connaught School, constructed in 1912, is an equally valuable heritage asset owned by Regina Public, as identified by Regina Public's heritage consultant report and having been recognized as one of Heritage Canada's Top 10 Canadian Endangered Heritage Sites in 2012;

AND WHEREAS heritage schools are recognized around the world as uniquely valuable contributors to 21st Century education and to history of place;

BE IT RESOLVED THAT Regina Public seek Municipal Heritage Holding Bylaw status for Connaught School to honour its 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary, and as a first step toward potentially accessing federal-provincial grants for repairs to recognized heritage properties, including new grant initiatives for heritage buildings being launched in advance of Canada's 150th anniversary.

- Moved by Florence Stratton

### **Rationale / Background**

This resolution offers the board an opportunity to stop viewing its historic properties as liabilities that must be gotten rid of – instead of valuable assets that offer unique opportunities in financing and community engagement.

The Heritage Holding Bylaw does not hold the board to any specific course of action regarding the future of a building. But it does open doors to cost sharing programs for repairs, safety improvements, maintenance and even major renovations, doors that would otherwise be shut.

The federal government has announced its intention to increase funding for heritage renovations in the coming years. This includes historic schools, particularly when they are partnered with community groups.

This in turn opens the door to community engagement in fundraising, grant writing and sweat equity. There is tremendous community expertise and enthusiasm to be tapped in a neighbourhood that has excelled in giving robust second life to buildings deemed unfixable at some point in their lives (including Davin School, which was once given two months to live).

Being on the Heritage Holding Bylaw list is not something to be feared. It has not hurt Davin School, and won't hurt Connaught – but it might be helpful down the road. RealRenewal can recommend heritage experts, who trustees can sit down with to learn how to take full advantage of heritage properties as some of their most valuable assets.

### **Determining school population**

**WHEREAS** support for holistic, cohesive communities plays a beneficial role in student achievement and community well-being;

**AND WHEREAS** school community members perceive themselves as a holistic entity;

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that Regina Public's school enrolment counts include all Ministry of Education-funded students;

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that English and French programs situated in the same school building be counted together as a single school population.

- Moved by Trish Elliott

### **Background / Rationale**

In school closure discussions, too many students are left out of the equation, including special needs students and pre-k students who are the future of the school.

As well, French and English students are counted as separate, unrelated schools.

When families see their children excluded from enrolment counts, they feel excluded in general.

While dividing up school populations may make sense from a bureaucratic perspective, it makes no sense whatsoever from a community perspective.

School communities regard themselves as one family – whatever their level of need.

Ministry funding recognizes and counts all students in a school – so should the school division.

### **Employee bargaining**

**WHEREAS** the Education Act identifies boards of education as employers;

**AND WHEREAS** for the purposes of adequate public representation it is important for trustees to be well informed of bargaining processes;

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that any bargaining group can request the presence of a school trustee during contract negotiations;

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that, in the absence of any compelling circumstances otherwise, every effort will be made to meet that request.

- Moved by Trish Elliott

### **Rationale / Background**

As citizens, we elect trustees to take a front seat, not a back seat, in the running of our schools.

This includes observing contract negotiations to ensure the public interest is being upheld and that our school employees are being treated fairly and respectfully.

Our trustees are our elected ears, eyes and voices – they must be present and accountable for these important discussions.