September 25, 2018

Dear [Redacted]

Re: You are entitled to the records - 2018-07346-EDU

Education & Early Childhood Development received your application for access to information under the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act on August 26, 2018. In your application, you requested a copy of the following records:

A copy of the briefing notes included in the minister's Legislative Briefing Binder for the 2018 fall session of the House of Assembly.

Responsive records have been located and are attached.

You have the right to ask for a review of this decision by the Information Access and Privacy Commissioner (formerly the Review Officer). You have 60 days from the date of this letter to exercise this right. If you wish to ask for a review, you may do so on Form 7, a copy of which is attached. Send the completed form to the Information Access and Privacy Commissioner, P.O. Box 181, Halifax, Nova Scotia B3J 2M4.

Please be advised that a de-identified copy of this disclosure letter and the attached response to your FOIPOP application will be made public after 14 days. The package will be posted online at https://informationaccess.novascotia.ca. The letter will not include your name, address or any other personal information that you have supplied while making your application under FOIPOP.

Please contact Jennifer Dell at 902-424-3127 or by e-mail at Jennifer.Dell@novascotia.ca, if you need further assistance in regards to this application.

Yours truly,

[Signature]

Cathy Montreuil
Deputy Minister

Attachments
Bussing

KEY MESSAGE(S):

- We take the protection and safety of children very seriously and we know this is a shared concern for families, schools and the regional centres/Conseil scolaire acadien provincial (CSAP).

- Under the Education Act Regulations, transportation must be provided if students live more than 3.6 km from a school, if a student has special needs, or if a regional centre/CSAP determines transportation is necessary, for example to ensure student safety.

- Courtesy bussing may be provided by the regional centres/CSAP for lesser distances, if space is available.

- Regional centres/CSAP are responsible for transportation and we expect them to address situations where student safety may be of concern.

KEY FACTS AND FIGURES:

- The department invests approximately $6 million per year on school bus purchases.

- The number of buses purchased over the past three years are as follows:
  - 2018 = 118 buses (including 1 bus for the Eskasoni First Nation)
  - 2017 = 57 buses
  - 2016 = 55 buses

- Of the more than 1,000 school buses in service across the province, approximately 700 are owned by the regional centres/CSAP.

- Three education entities contract student transportation:
  - Halifax Regional Centre for Education fully contracts its transportation
  - Conseil scolaire acadien provincial contracts a portion of its transportation
  - Annapolis Valley Regional Centre for Education contracts a portion of its transportation

- The regional centres/CSAP are responsible for operation and maintenance costs associated with bus services.
Early Learning and Child Care Funding

KEY MESSAGE(S):

- The province invests significantly in the early learning and child care system and will continue to do so, to make quality child care more affordable, accessible, and inclusive.

- The investment in all areas of child care, not including pre-primary, is approximately $76 million annually, and includes subsidy, sector grants, early intervention services, and professional development for Early Childhood Educators (ECEs). The direct funding to the regulated child care sector (via subsidy and sector grants) is $64 million, up from $53 million in 2017-18.

- Most recently, Nova Scotia and the federal government signed a three-year Early Learning and Child Care Agreement, adding an additional estimated $11.8 million annually to the system.

KEY FACTS AND FIGURES:

Early Learning and Child Care Agreement

- In January 2018, Nova Scotia signed a three-year, $35 million, child care funding agreement with the federal government which will support more affordable, accessible, quality, and inclusive regulated child care for Nova Scotia.

- Under the agreement, actions to be undertaken over the next three years will focus on:
  - Making child care more accessible and affordable for Nova Scotian families through changes to the subsidy program and supporting the growth of 1000 new spaces through regulated child care and family home day care. In addition, government invested $2.7 million in a space conversion grant to support child care centres to respond to the changing landscape of child care in the province and is providing an infant incentive in the amount of $4/day per infant space to ensure infant care remains affordable for families.
  - Supporting quality through workforce development by providing funding for child care staff to engage in post-secondary training in early childhood education, leadership and inclusion practices and for Early Childhood Development Support Sites to hire inclusion coaches and develop a comprehensive professional plan on the new early learning curriculum for ECEs across the province.
  - Embedding inclusion in early learning and child care environments through:
    - $1 million in programming and bursaries to support individuals from under-represented communities in obtaining an early childhood education diploma;
    - One-time Program Inclusion Grants in the amount of $2 million (released February 2018 to all funded centres) to enable centres and family home day care agencies to purchase materials and resources specifically designed to create inclusive environments that respond to the diverse needs and experiences of children and families;
    - Annual inclusion grants totaling $8.8 million to all funded child care centres (available April 2018) that combine federal funding with existing provincial funding to hire additional staff, provide professional development to staff, and purchase materials and resources for the centre; and
Piloting the ‘Pyramid Model for Promoting Social Emotional Competence in Infants and Young Children’, which is an evidence-based approach with specific strategies and training modules to ensure all children receive the support they need to develop to their fullest potential.

**Child Care Subsidy**

- On February 1, 2018, the income threshold for families to receive the maximum child care subsidy was moved from an annual income of $25,000 to $35,000. This means that families with an annual income up to $35,000 will receive the maximum subsidy rates and families with an annual income up to $70,000 will receive a higher rate. This step builds on improvements made in 2016 that raised the subsidy per diem rates for the first time since 2010. An estimated 1,225 children have benefited from these changes.

- The subsidy program is also now available in part-day child care centres. This will lower the child care fees for approximately 375 children who will now be able to access the subsidy program.

**New Funding Model for Regulated Child Care**

- On January 1, 2018, the government implemented a new funding model for child care operators. This model directly responded to concerns raised by centre operators and early childhood educators. The funding model supports child care centres in achieving quality outcomes in areas of programming, compliance, and accountability.
Inclusive Education

KEY MESSAGE(S):

- The inclusive classroom model we have in place is not working – that’s why the Commission was set up.
- We also recognize that the solution does not exist solely with one government department, or even with just government broadly.
- The work of the Council to Improve Classroom Conditions and the Commission on Inclusive Education will help to further support and enhance the educational environment for students and staff.
- We are investing $15 million, including $5 million for complex classroom needs, to enable changes to take place this school year.

KEY FACTS AND FIGURES:

- In March 2017, the department announced a three-person commission to examine the status of inclusive education in public schools in Nova Scotia. Commission members included Dr. Sarah Shea, Ms. Monica Williams, and Ms. Adela NJie.
- The Commission examined the model of inclusion for students, reviewed current practice and policy, engaged front-line teachers, parents, students, and associations, and reviewed best practices across Canada.
- In its final report, released in March 2018, the Commission recommended increased funding, resources, professional development, and improved teaching and learning conditions.
- In response, government announced a $15 million investment in resource and training supports for the first year of implementation (September 2018). This includes the hiring of 190 specialists and student and classroom supports, additional training, 8 new alternative education programs, and new student health partnership nurses.
- Additionally, two new Achieve sites will open this September at the NSCC Akerley campus in Dartmouth and the NSCC Pictou Campus bringing the total number of Achieve programs across the province to 9. Achieve is a transition program that prepares young adults with disabilities for life after high school.
- The department is engaging Inclusive Education Canada as a critical advisor to our policy development and implementation.
- The department is procuring a developmental evaluation by researchers with expertise in inclusive education to provide evaluation and direction throughout the implementation. There will be an annual public report on the progress.

Prepared by: Kristen Tynes, Executive Lead, Strategic Initiatives, 424-2626
Date: August 27, 2018
Contact: Kristen Tynes, Executive Lead, Strategic Initiatives, 424-2626
Secondary Contact: Pam Menchenton, Director of Communications, 424-8286
Department: Education and Early Childhood Development
Pre-primary Program

KEY MESSAGE(S):

• Phase 1 of PPP has been a tremendous success for children and families, and with over 2500 children entering the program for September, we expect Phase 2 to be no different.

• We are on track to have a free universal PPP by Sept 2020 which we know will have long term benefits for success in school and life for our children.

• We are pleased to welcome all CSAP schools into the PPP this year which has allowed the board to eliminate their waitlist and support more children to participate in a French first language early learning experience.

KEY FACTS AND FIGURES:

• Current enrollment in the Pre-primary Program is at 2560. The province is set to have approximately 175 pre-primary classes in 143 school communities across Nova Scotia for September 2018.

• In total, 344 early childhood educators (ECEs) have been hired.

• This fall, the department is partnering with the Kings County Family Resource Centre Family Day Home Agency, a licensed child care provider to deliver the pre-primary program for children registered at Kings County Academy. This is a partnership pilot for one year and will be evaluated at the conclusion.

• The Conseil scolaire acadien provincial will deliver the Pre-primary Program through its Grandir en français program. All CSAP Grandir en français programs have rolled into the PPP umbrella for 2018-19.

• Full implementation of the program is expected by the 2020-21 school year.

• The department has been working on a number of initiatives to attract and retain ECEs, including a marketing campaign, supporting ECEs with diverse backgrounds through a bursary program and adding more spaces to the ECE program at the NSCC.

Date: August 24, 2018
Contact: Janet Lynn Huntington, Executive Director, Early Childhood Development Branch, 902-424-7506
Secondary Contact: Denise Stone, Director, Early Years Integration & Community Development, 902-424-5009
Department: Education and Early Childhood Development
Provincial Advisory Council on Education

KEY MESSAGE(S):

- The Provincial Advisory Council on Education (PACE) will provide regional voice and advice directly to the Minister on matters related to Nova Scotia’s education system. Members could bring forward advice on the needs, challenges and opportunities that exist in regions and communities across the province.

- The council will be made up a diverse range of individuals who share one thing in common and that is an interest in improving the learning and achievement of children and youth in our province.

- Like other provincial advisory groups (e.g. The Council on African Canadian Education, CME, etc.), they will be guided under the conditions set out by their terms of reference.

- Advice to Minister is confidential. The discussions and advice provided by this council would be no different.

KEY FACTS AND FIGURES:

- On March 1, 2018 the Education Reform (2018) Act was introduced. Part of this Act included the introduction of a new Provincial Advisory Council on Education (PACE).

- PACE will have a total of 15 members, 3 of which are designated for representatives from the Conseil scolaire acadien provincial (CSAP), the Council on African-Canadian Education (CACE), and the Council on Mi’kmaq Education (CME). The remaining 12 seats will be appointed.

- In July 2018, the Province announced that it would be accepting applications from Nova Scotians interested in serving as members of PACE.

- The deadline for applications was August 13, 2018. In total, 133 applications were received.

- Members will be appointed through government’s process for appointing individuals to an Agency, Board, or Commission.

- It is anticipated that PACE will be in place in the early fall.
Public School Administrators Association of NS

KEY MESSAGE(S):

- Second only to teachers, principals/vice principals are regarded as having the most influence on a student’s ability to achieve.
- In recognition of their unique, leadership role within the education system, principals, VPs and other senior, educational leaders entered into the Public School Administrators Association as of August 1.
- A professional association led by, and for, senior educational leaders, will foster better leadership overall by providing a network of support, learning and professional development to help all our senior administrators be the instructional leaders we need them to be.

KEY FACTS & FIGURES:

- The Public School Administrators Association of Nova Scotia (PSAANS) was created through Schedule B, the Public School Administrators Employment Relations Act, of the Education Reform Act (2018).
- Principals, vice-principals and other regional education leaders working in regional education centres and the Conseil scolaire acadien provincial, are now part of PSAANS, effective August 1, 2018.
- The Association will enter into an affiliation agreement with the Nova Scotia Teachers Union to provide services to the association.
- A 13-member, interim board is currently in place and had its first meeting via conference call on August 28, 2018.
- The focus of the first meeting was to begin plans for PSAANS’ first annual general meeting (AGM), which is scheduled to be held in Halifax on October 25-26, 2018.
- Members of the first permanent board will be selected by association members at the AGM this fall.

Prepared by: Jared Purdy, Chair, Principals’ Forum of NS DEECD Support to PSAANS, 902-219-2401
Date: August 24, 2018
Contact: Jared Purdy, Chair, Principals’ Forum of NS DEECD Support to PSAANS, 902-219-2401
Secondary Contact: Donna MacDonald, Lead, Strategic Initiatives, 902-424-7365
Department: Education & Early Childhood Development
School Advisory Councils

KEY MESSAGE(S):

- Education research tells us that the important role parents have in schools increases student success.
- The important role of School Advisory Councils will be further enhanced, beginning this school year.
- Along with representing the school community voice, council members will manage a budget that supports student achievement and provides advice on regional and provincial education policy development, starting with a new school extracurricular supervision policy coming later this year.
- Changes to enhance the role of School Advisory Councils are part of how the province is ensuring regional and diverse voices are well represented in decision making.

KEY FACTS AND FIGURES:

- The Department is working with its partners to explore and define the role of School Advisory Councils (SACs) and in May 2018 conducted a series of focus groups with principals and SAC Chairs from each region across Nova Scotia.
- The Minister also met with several SAC representatives across the province earlier this year. Input from those sessions, along with a literature review and a jurisdictional scan, has provided clear direction for how the role of SACs can be supported and enhanced including:
  - Continuing to use the membership structure that has served SACs well in the past, while also working to solicit new members with an emphasis on increased diversity;
  - Seeking more opportunities at the regional/CSAP level to get feedback from SACs in areas such as policy, programming issues related to school improvement, student achievement, and student wellbeing;
  - Providing more professional development and resource support and greater opportunities for members to network within their region; and
  - Providing funding to assist SACs in their operations and to help them advance school goals and initiatives that are related to the school improvement plans.
School Capital Planning & School Review

KEY MESSAGE(S):

• Government is committed to investing in high quality, safe, and modern schools to enable student learning and performance.

• The department recently announced the first ever five-year capital plan. Government is investing approximately $300 million in the new schools along with major renovations, and other capital improvements.

• Final determinations on which projects move forward is the result of many factors including the status of the program’s development, budget availability, and critical infrastructure needs across the province.

• The Department continues to work with the Regional Centres for Education and the Conseil scolaire acadien provincial (CSAP) to address ongoing school infrastructure needs.

KEY FACTS & FIGURES:

• In Spring 2018, government approved a multi-year capital plan for school buildings including building new schools, making major renovations to existing schools and purchasing P3 schools in communities throughout the province over the next several years. The total investment is estimated at $300 million.

• Thirteen communities will get new schools or major school renovations over the next several years. The province is also purchasing two P3 schools in Cape Breton that had previously been identified to be returned to the developer. The upcoming school projects include:
  o Glace Bay area elementary school (new)
  o Northside area junior high, North Sydney-Sydney Mines area (new)
  o Breton Education Centre, New Waterford (renovation)
  o Ferrisview Elementary, North Sydney (renovation)
  o Harbourside Elementary School, Sydney (P3 Purchase)
  o Sherwood Park Education Centre, Sydney (P3 Purchase)
  o Springhill area elementary school (new)
  o Wedgeport area school (new)
  o Clare area School (new)
  o Halifax peninsula school (new)
  o École Acadienne de Pomquet (renovation)
  o Bedford Ravines area P-9 school (new)
  o Clayton Park-Fairview area school (new)
  o Eastern Shore area high school (new)
  o St. Joseph’s A. MacKay Elementary School, Halifax (renovation)

• Schools were chosen based on the priorities submitted by the regional centres and CSAP.

Date: August 27, 2018
Contact: Joe MacEachern, Executive Director, Finance and Facilities, 902-424-8885
Secondary Contact: Peter Howitt, Regional Director, 902-424-6957
Department: Education and Early Childhood Development
School Review of Cole Harbour & Auburn High

KEY MESSAGE(S):

- We appreciate the community’s interest in having the review process completed for Cole Harbor District High and Auburn Drive High.
- We are continuing to move forward with the work of redesigning the school review process so that it supports students and communities and is aligned to our new administrative structure.
- We will be happy to share more information once it becomes available.
- In the meantime, both schools will continue to support the students in their communities.
- While some programming options may not be available at all three schools, students can apply as an out-of-area student.

KEY FACTS AND FIGURES:

- On July 7, 2017, the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development directed school boards to stop any school reviews currently underway that did not involve a facility replacement. As a result of this directive, the school review involving the Auburn Drive and Cole Harbour District Families of Schools was paused.
- The review remains paused as government moves forward to determine next steps for the school review.
- The review included a number of schools including:
  - Auburn Drive High
  - Astral Drive Junior High
  - Graham Creighton Junior High
  - Astral Drive Elementary
  - Bell Park Academic Centre
  - Caldwell Road Elementary
  - Colby Village Elementary
  - Humber Park Elementary
  - Joseph Giles Elementary
  - Cole Harbour District High
  - Ross Road School
  - Sir Robert Borden Junior High
  - Atlantic View Elementary
  - Colonel John Stuart Elementary
  - George Bissett Elementary
  - Nelson Whynder Elementary
  - Robert Kemp Turner Elementary
- In accordance with the provincial School Review policy, a School Options Committee (SOC) was formed to conduct the review and make recommendations to the Governing Board, prior to the pause.