



NORTHERN LIGHTS SCHOOL DIVISION NO. 69

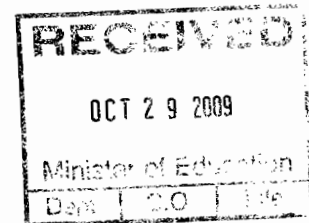
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Recipient of the Premier's Award for School Board Innovation and Excellence for our Literacy Programs

BY MAIL

October 26, 2009

The Honourable David Hancock
Minister of Education
323 Legislature Building
10800 - 97 Avenue
Edmonton, Alberta
T5K 2B6



Dear Minister Hancock:

The Northern Lights School Division No. 69 Board of Trustees discussed at length the School Act review at our October 21st Board meeting. The issues listed below reflect the areas of concern we have as a Board with the present School Act. We would strongly recommend you give serious consideration to these concerns when writing the new Education Act.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on this most important issue.

Sincerely,

Walter Hrycauk
Board Chair

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**Northern Lights School Division No. 69
Submission re Changes to School Act**

You have requested input on changes to the School Act. Our main concerns center around the definition and actual inclusion of public schools in the Act.

We believe that any school which declares itself public has the right and responsibility to accept and educate all those who choose public education. All schools which receive public dollars **MUST** accept **ALL** students and **MUST NOT** charge tuition or deny access based on the tenets of human rights, race, religion, finances, disabilities, sexual orientation or gender.

Are all Albertans born equal when it comes to education? None of the public should have greater rights than any other.

You have encouraged school boards to “think outside the box.” We at Northern Lights School Division envision an education system where **ALL** students attend a local common **PUBLIC** school, creating community, learning tolerance, and receiving a quality education. Under one umbrella all the needs of the students are met. Along with fulfilling provincial curriculum requirements, these local schools have the ability to offer courses requested by the community such as religious instruction and language options. Trustees must be locally elected as public education is the equalizer for students. The community must have the ability to place people representing the diverse choices of the community on the school board.

We believe that many problem issues would be resolved if public schools were clearly defined. If public schools exist as described above then issues such as coterminous boundaries, and transportation would no longer be issues.

We also feel strongly that boards should be granted natural person powers. This would enable boards to borrow money for local projects. Currently if a community feels strongly about a project they wish to have, there is no ability for them to contribute to it. School boards should have a small measure (e.g. 3%) of taxation authority without going to plebiscite.