



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Elected School Board Trustees and Federal Politicians Connect in Ottawa

Ottawa, ON: Over the past two days, the Canadian School Boards Association board of directors has met with Members of Parliament and Senators to discuss the importance of democratic community voice in public education.

The CSBA board of directors came together from across the country to share information with Federal Parliamentarians on the significant roles that school boards play in the delivery of public education, and the relation to mandates under federal jurisdiction. “While it is important to recognize that education is a responsibility for provincial governments, there remains significant alignment between the priorities of school boards and our federal leaders. This includes the protection of democracy and the right to elected representation at the community level,” said CSBA President Laurie French. “We have been very fortunate to have meaningful discussions with a number of parliamentarians and policy advisors about the importance of public education and community representation across all levels of government, including school boards.”

Since the time of confederation in 1867, school boards and provincial governments have collaborated to ensure the best outcomes for all students. Many areas of such shared responsibility correspond to implementation of federal priorities. Maintaining strong local governance through school boards therefore remains essential to fulfil both provincial as well as federal objectives. Some shared responsibilities for local school boards and Canada's federal government include Indigenous education, minority official language education, supports for newcomer Canadians and refugees, mental health and addictions, and student safety.

“Unfortunately, in some areas of the country there is an increasing erosion of the fundamental rights of Canadians with regard to local democratic voice in public education through local school boards,” said Ms. French. “Governance of the education of children and youth in Canada has been entrusted to locally elected trustees across the country by members of the communities they serve. Protecting local voices to ensure local choices through school boards is important for all citizens. We knew it was essential to meet with MPs and Senators to ensure they understand the roles of local school boards, and the important work that school boards achieve in communities across Canada in service of our students.”

The CSBA also liaised with federal representatives to highlight the vital importance of protecting democratic rights at every level across the country. Governing school boards have felt their autonomy and flexibility slip away over time as provincial governments have taken more and more control from the local level. This has resulted in the loss of community voice and the ability to serve students.

“It is important to note that the CSBA, provincial associations, and regional school boards are not against change,” said Ms. French. “However, we believe strengthening of the public education system needs to be collaborative and in the best interest of students and communities.”

The Canadian School Boards Association represents governing school board members from across the country through their provincial associations. CSBA and its members champion collaboration and innovation in public education.

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For more information, contact:
Nancy Pynch-Worthylake
Executive Director
902-456-5574
executivedirector@cdnsba.org
www.cdnsba.org