

Petition in Support of Maintaining Educational Assistants

We, the undersigned residents of the Province of Saskatchewan, wish to bring to your attention the following:

That all Saskatchewan children have the right to learn in a supportive and stress-free environment that ensures they have the best possible chance to succeed in school;

That Education Assistants (EAs) provide support to students with intensive needs, including learning disabilities and behaviour concerns, ensure that their behaviour does not disrupt the learning environment for other children, and are an integral part of the professional team that attends to the different supportive needs of students;

That the Ministry of Education's document "Enhancing Opportunities through Full-Service School Divisions" dated November 16th, 2009, revealed a seven year plan to reduce the number of EAs in the classroom by more than 70%;

That since the release of the document in 2009, 82% of school divisions have reduced 350 full time equivalent EAs;

That the Ministry of Education's document "Frequently Asked Questions Transformation of Special Education to Student Services in Saskatchewan" dated November 2008, shows the number of students requiring additional supports to succeed in schools has more than doubled since 2000;

That the Ministry of Education's staffing profiles from 2007-2010 provide evidence that an additional 712 students required intensive supports, indicating a continued increase of students requiring supports;

That to replace a large number of EAs with a much smaller number of ancillary professionals like speech language therapists and psychologists is not practical since many families, particularly those living in rural communities, will not have access to these professionals on a regular basis, and are no substitute for the loss of daily in-class supports that EAs provide;

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan take the following action:

Cause the government to provide appropriate funding for the required number of Education Assistants to provide intensive needs students with the supports they require to maintain a positive learning environment for all Saskatchewan students.

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