



APSEA

Serving Children and Youth Who are Deaf,
Hard of Hearing/Blind or Visually Impaired

March 3, 2023

Caelin Lloyd
[REDACTED]

Dear Caelin,

Thank you for bringing forward your concerns on behalf of learners and families regarding changes to Short Term Programs (STP) to APSEA's Board of Directors. I want to commend you on being a strong advocate for students and families.

The Board has reviewed the materials provided and each of the concerns raised. We know that students who attended APSEA short-term programs valued that experience, yet we also know that it was not practical for many, particularly those not near Halifax. APSEA leadership carefully examined all areas of the Expanded Core Curriculum and identified the components that can be effectively delivered virtually, and which are best delivered in person. The Responsive Teaching and Learning Model aims to address the limitations of STP in terms of geographic accessibility and to find a more equitable method of delivering the key learning outcomes of these programs.

The Board supports the implementation of the Responsive Teaching and Learning Model, developed by APSEA leadership, as it better aligns with provincial inclusive education policies and tiered systems of support. In the redesigned model, services have been shifted to be offered in closer proximity to the learners' homes. Family education can be offered while working around the schedule of the families with multiple opportunities to make attending easier. A combination of virtual opportunities and in person support from APSEA teachers and specialists can enable the family to learn the strategies to ensure their child builds skills that lead to independence (Functional Living Skills). The APSEA Itinerant

Teacher and other specialists will continue to travel to support learners in their school, community, home, and/or early learning facility.

Providing opportunities for learners to come together remains a priority for APSEA. Opportunities continue to be scheduled for learners and their families to connect. Further, full day sessions with a focus on a specific area (i.e., Orientation and Mobility) are being developed. Virtual learning opportunities are available weekly for students to interact and socialize with learners identifying conversation topics they would like to discuss.

To address the concerns raised regarding the Service Delivery Review consultation, APSEA recognizes there have been technical challenges that may have led to low participation in the stakeholder review process. To help mitigate this issue in the future, APSEA has invested in a new email tracking software that enables it to closely monitor open and read-through rates of mass communications providing a better understanding of how the information is being reviewed.

Moving forward, APSEA is committed to closely monitoring the implementation of the Responsive Teaching and Learning Model. It will do this through data tracking which will capture participation rates from across Atlantic Canada and feedback from APSEA itinerant teachers, school teams, families, and learners. APSEA commits to more frequent communication and improved engagement with stakeholder groups, requesting feedback at regular intervals on the Responsive Teaching and Learning Model with the goal of continuous improvement of services being offered.

We recognize STPs were a valuable learning opportunity for you and for other learners who were able to attend. Through the Responsive Teaching and Learning Model, APSEA will continue to offer learning opportunities in the learner's local area, therefore being responsive, inclusive, equitable and accessible.

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Thank you for sharing your concerns and for your demonstration of leadership. We would like to extend an invitation to you to be a member of our APSEA/CNIB working group which is focused on developing and implementing programs for learners throughout the Atlantic Provinces, for the remainder of the school year. Please reach out to Glenda Parsons, Director of Programs for Students who are Blind of Visually Impaired, by email: glenda_parsons@apsea.ca

Best of luck to you as you finish high school.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Bethany MacLeod". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Bethany MacLeod
Chair, APSEA Board of Directors