



August 4, 2020

To: The Honourable Dennis King, Premier of Prince Edward Island
5th Floor South, Shaw Building
95 Rochford Street
Charlottetown, PE C1A 7N8

Re: Report to the Premier – Summer 2020

Dear Premier King,

We are pleased to be meeting with you again to promote and protect the Human Rights of our fellow Children and Youth in Prince Edward Island.

Since our inaugural Report to you in early June, we have been actively engaging in the community in a number of ways: From taking part in the virtual town hall meetings with the Department of Education, to having ongoing back and forth feedback with Deputy Minister Bethany MacLeod on the fall return to school plans. With many Youth having questions regarding access to affordable and safe housing, we had Sonya Cobb, Director of Housing Services for the Department visit a Table meeting as a guest to answer many questions and share about available resources.

Enclosed in this Report are our Table meeting minutes since we last met with you. We will bring your attention to the Questions and Answers document. This is a LIVE part of our website where children and youth who bring forward questions from across the Island, can find the responses we were able to advocate for to receive. By sharing in this way, we will be able to get the resources and information to more of our peers who need it.

Last month we meet with Senator Brian Francis. We welcomed him to the Office with an Elder from the Mi'kmaq community who performed a smudging ceremony for us. It was important that the Office was opened in this manner to cleanse and clear the space and people who will be doing critical work with us. Senator Francis was exceptionally receptive of our report to him. We have enclosed for you a copy of the research conducted by one of us, Sarah Knockwood, focused on Indigenous access to language and education that is culturally relevant. A copy of our entire report is being shared by Senator Francis with the whole Senate, and has been widely shared by the Mi'kmaq Confederacy of PEI. Recognizing that there are issues we see here in PEI that are under Federal laws, we appreciate the Senator's support.

A member of the Prime Minister's Youth Council also spent time with us to talk about how our Table and their Council can work together. Our hope is to share our research between the groups, and collaborate as much as possible on issues that affect children and youth under Federal authority.

We have welcomed Marv Bernstein as PEI's first independent Child and Youth Advocate! Marv immediately took our approach very seriously and in fact himself, followed the Adult application process to apply to be a member of the Table. We look forward to all the hard work Marv and the now opened Office will be able to do in PEI as an independent Advocate.

Issues today we wish to discuss with you include:

- **Equitable pay for Early Childcare workers.** This is a critically important sector right now – ensuring young children have the best care possible when coming out of COVID isolation time. What is happening to ensure these essential workers are hired and paid at rates that are livable?
- **Food and Grocery Security issues:** Our questions are concerning what is being done to ensure best practices are being followed at the retail level to keep our food supply safe?
- **Foster to Adoption:** This is an issue we have indeed raised to the Adult members of our Table and received reply on. Our concern is that PEI does not match the rest of the country when it comes to the ability for a foster parent to adopt a child they have in their care already. Hearing that this is 'under review' sometime in the next year, does not meet the needs of Children and Youth now.
- **Extended Care:** We have attached following this letter, great details on our ongoing concerns for PEI to be in alignment with the rest of the country and to support Youth who have lived in care to finish their post-secondary experience with the same supports in place as when they started. The current decision-making process on this policy did not include Youth.
- **The Atlantic COVID Bubble:** We have ongoing concerns with the changing documentation needed, and the process itself. Border crossings are indeed not following screening procedures at all times. We have included in this report the thoughts and questions after reflecting on our last meeting and our continuing concerns.

Lastly, we would like to offer a kind reminder on the commitment to 'like' our *personal* social media posts on Instagram about our meetings with you. This amplifies for other Children and Youth the ability the Table has to reach decision-makers. Thank you for doing so for the Table account handle.

Having celebrated together the start of the Act, we are passionate to continue this work for our Island community. Thank you for your time to meet with us today. We look forward to your thoughts.

Sincerely,

The Founding Youth Members

The Founding Youth Members

Jade Ward
George Martin
June Horne
Sarah Knockwood

Shauna Bjornson
Shaylee Bjornson
Maggie Bain
Payge Kowalesk