

EXC/23/7/893

July 25, 2023

Cris Rowan
CEO Reconnect Webinars, Zone'in Programs Inc.
and Sunshine Coast Occupational Therapy
crowan@zonein.ca

Dear Cris Rowan:

Thank you for your email of July 9, 2023, requesting that the Department of Education, Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, partner with the **Fairplay for Kids - Screens in Schools** committee, to publish screen usage guidelines for K-12 schools.

I appreciate your interest in this important area, and that you are sharing related information with the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador. The proposed policy guidelines for use of screens in schools, with references to supporting research, as presented in your email, are quite thought provoking.

The Department of Education is committed to providing students with every possible advantage to succeed. We acknowledge the need to be cognizant of the effects of excessive screen time for children and youth in our schools. Our **Safe and Caring Schools Policy** includes the topic of Teaching Digital Citizenship.

Provincial curriculum renewal occurs over a multi-year cycle. The Department of Education's program development specialists responsible for specific curriculum areas consider many factors during this process and update accordingly. In the case of technology education, for example, courses developed in the last three years now include outcomes that require students to reflect on the implications of excessive screen time. Future curriculum development at the Kindergarten to Grade 6 levels will address digital citizenship, and provide students, starting in Kindergarten, with the opportunity to reflect on their digital wellness. These efforts are complemented by resources being provided to K-12 teachers, students, and parents/guardians.

There are province-wide policies that guide the provision of instruction for students, and related decision making, in schools. Further to this, individual school administrations are responsible for the daily operation and administration of each school.

Your correspondence has been shared with Department of Education staff for consideration. I suggest that you also share this invitation and information directly with the senior officials to whom principals of K-12 schools report:

- Mr. Terry Hall, Superintendent of Schools, TerryHall@nlesd.ca
- Ms. Selena Mell, Director of Education, selenamell@csfp.nl.ca

Thank you for your commitment to education; it is important that the Department of Education hear opinions, such as yours, on education related matters.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "K. Howell", written in a cursive style.

HON. KRISTA LYNN HOWELL, MHA
District of St. Barbe - L'Anse aux Meadows
Minister