

Elected School Board Trustees: Another Broken Promise



Bernard Baruch once said: “Vote for the man who promises least; he’ll be the least disappointing!”



During the last election, the Liberal party clearly had its thumb on the pounding pulse of political cynicism in PEI and wrote the following in its policy platform: “...we must work to reduce public cynicism about democracy and government which, unfortunately, has never been higher.” Enter Wade MacLauchlan.

Wade promised to be different; to consult and truly listen to Islanders; to honour democratic processes; to be transparent and accountable; and many Islanders believed he was sincere. Now, with each new broken promise, Islanders feel betrayed, disillusioned and really confused. Why is he doing this? It makes no sense that Wade would mislead us so badly, especially with his commitments regarding the education of our children. And what were those commitments?

Two key questions were asked during the Leader’s debate on Education held on April 11, 2015: Moderator: “Do you support the election of School Board Trustees in the English

Language School Board?"

Wade: "Yes....That's the point of a school board. It's got to be about governance, not about operations."

Moderator: "Do your plans include possible school closures in the future?"

Wade: "Let me say, we started out by speaking about school boards and the responsibility and authority they would have...when those school boards are in place, and they have authority, what a premier says here today shouldn't tie their hands."

Two commitments written in the Liberal Education Platform were: (1) No plans to close schools; and (2) Move forward with School Board Elections in 2016.

During the Premier's 2016 year-end interview with the Guardian he was asked: "Some people believe certain schools will definitely close and others will see their students rezoned. Have those decisions already been made?" Wade: "Absolutely not....This is genuinely in the hands of the communities." That is, unfortunately, not true.

As Minister of Education, Hon. Doug Currie stated in a February 3rd CBC Compass interview: "Cabinet does make the final decision on any recommendation on school amalgamation or school closures." And those recommendations to Cabinet are coming from three individuals appointed by government, one of whom is the Deputy Minister of Education.

By Wade's own standard, there was "a clear question" on education policy presented to him before he was elected. He answered that question saying he would establish an elected English Language School Board in 2016, further clarifying that an elected Board would govern independently, with authority to decide such issues as school closures.

As David Weale so aptly put it in his talk during the Kinkora meeting on February 2nd: "If our government says 'We won't build any bridges,' and there's a washout, and they build a bridge...that's not unacceptable; but when they say: 'We won't close schools,' and a year later they close five....that's unacceptable, that's devious, that's treacherous."