

Ms. Janet McDougald
Chair
Peel District School Board
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Nov. 3, 2015

Via email: janet.mcdougald@peelsb.com

Ms. McDougald,

I would like to call your attention to the communications from Mr. Woodland, Peel DSB Director of Communications. There are instances where he has provided misleading and misinformed information to teachers, principals and the general public. He has also made statements that I find irresponsible for an employee of an organization dedicated to educating students in a safe environment.

As the former President of Microsoft Canada, I am aware that you cannot oversee all communications from your staff. However, once an error has been brought to your attention, you have the opportunity to take corrective action. I await your response to my concerns below.

In an email to Principals and other individuals on Sept. 25, 2015, Mr. Woodland stated that C4ST hosted an event the previous evening, where we claimed “testing was not accurate since it was not done during the school day”. If Mr. Woodland had accepted the invitation to attend, he would have known that the event was hosted by students attending Peel board schools, not C4ST. Their concerns were a result of the report “Electromagnetic Radiation (EMR) Testing Report Twenty-Five Schools”.

In addition, we stated, and continue to state, that page nine of the report specifically stipulates that four devices were tested, one laptop and three tablets. Despite repeated requests to Mr. Woodland for the detailed summary of the number of devices tested, under what device load, for each site, we have received no response. He has instead referred us to the board report, which provides even less information.

Mr. Woodland also refers to C4ST as the “anti-wifi” group. This is not only inaccurate, but an insult to the dozens of volunteers who have donated thousands of hours to educate and inform Canadians about the potential harm from wireless devices and worked with all three levels of government to improve safety standards across Canada.

In a Tweet on Sept. 29, 2015, Mr. Woodland stated “there is no study that links harm to wifi”. According to Canada’s Parliamentary Health Committee this is false. Mr. Woodland’s comment suggests he is not current with the scientific evidence. I have attached a brief overview of only a few of the dozens of peer-reviewed, published studies that show harm to humans at levels below Health Canada’s Safety

Code 6, upon which the Peel board relies. In addition, in testimony before the Parliamentary Health Committee, March 24, 2015, Mr. Andrew Adams of Health Canada admitted there are studies that show harm below Safety Code 6ⁱ, even within levels recorded at your schools; particularly, harm that contributes to cancer and infertility.

In the above mentioned email, Mr. Woodland also offered the following instructions: “Do your best to avoid this topic appearing on your school council agenda, do not allow information to be distributed on school property and refer media to me”. Does this accurately reflect the Peel DSB policy?

The Parliamentary Health Committee, composed of MP’s representing the Conservative, NDP and Liberal parties reported to the Government on June 17, 2015. The twelve recommendations contained in the report were unanimously approved by all parties.

There are two sections of the Report that apply directly to the school environment.ⁱⁱ

On page 26.

“Given the testimony that vulnerable groups, such as infants and young children, are being exposed to radiofrequency fields and the fact that other countries have taken protective measures, the Committee recommends

Recommendation 8

That an independent scientific body recognized by Health Canada examine whether measures taken and guidelines provided in other countries, such as France and Israel, to limit the exposure of vulnerable populations, including infants, and young children in the school environment, to radiofrequencies should be adopted in Canada.”

and on page 28,

“The Committee agrees that children in schools should be protected from unnecessary exposure to wireless technology, particularly when alternative technologies exist. The Committee therefore recommends

Recommendation 9

That the Government of Canada develop an awareness campaign relating to the safe use of wireless technologies, such as cell phones and Wi-Fi, in key environments such as the school and home to ensure that Canadian families and children are reducing risks related to radiofrequency exposure.”

The debate about the number of devices running during testing is a distraction. The reliance on Safety Code 6 by the Trustees of Peel DSB is the main concern. We believe that Health Canada’s admission that harm exists to humans below Safety Code 6’s current guidelines, should be enough concern for the Board to call for a full investigation. Attached is the document “Response to common statements from School Trustees re Wi-Fi in Schools” that will help you understand the information you will receive from your staff. I hope it is enlightening.

It was our expectation, that after the publication of this report, the Peel DSB would investigate the peer reviewed, published evidence that is available and to engage parents and councils on their concerns. I have attached the C4ST Fact Sheet for your information. This dialogue is the right of all students, teachers and parents as well as the responsibility of the Trustees.

The final comment from Mr. Woodland is the most concerning. In more tweets on Oct. 8th, 2015, when asked if Peel DSB should provide information to students about the warning labels that are provided on all wireless devices, he explains that parents are responsible and states “in case you are confused, we are not the parents. We are the school”.

I do not understand the resistance from Peel DSB Trustees and employees to the simple request to inform students, teachers and parents about the warning labels that already exist.

Ms. McDougald, I have tremendous respect for the time, effort and dedication of school trustees. Most programs are beneficial to students. Unfortunately, unlimited Wi-Fi access in all school grades for the entire time students are in the school is not a safe implementation of technology. We are asking that you ensure the information that is disseminated by Peel DSB be current and accurate. We also ask, again, for the opportunity to present the current evidence to you and your Board. The attached Fact Sheet outlines the experts who presented to the Parliamentary Health committee. These are the experts we can make available to the Peel DSB if you permit.

I look forward to starting an informative dialogue with you.

Sincerely,



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ⁱ<http://www.parl.gc.ca/HousePublications/Publication.aspx?DocId=7936469&Language=E&Mode=1&Parl=41&Ses=2> at time 1540

ⁱⁱ<http://www.parl.gc.ca/HousePublications/Publication.aspx?DocId=8041315&Language=E&Mode=1&Parl=41&Ses=2>