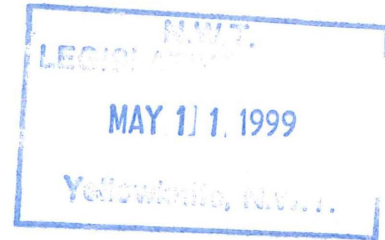




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7 Gaetz Drive  
Hay River, NT XOE OR8  
May 7, 1999  
Phone: 867-874-6660  
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Mrs. Jane Groenewegan  
Member Legislative Assembly  
Yellowknife, NT

Dear Jane:

I am writing this letter to express my concern over what is happening in education. I have taught nearly 30 years and I am concerned when I listen to our younger teachers talk about leaving the profession within the next 10 years because of what is happening in our schools. The problems that I see are:

1. There is a wide ability level in all classes and class sizes have increased. With the reduction of personnel it is difficult to meet every child's need. Our teachers are working exceptionally hard and for long hours but it is becoming more difficult to do an acceptable job. Students that are in need of individual attention are fortunate if they get 5 minutes per class time of the teacher's time. Teachers are stressed out and our students are not faring much better. Over the past few years there have been more displays of inappropriate and unacceptable behaviour. When I watch the news about Columbine and Taber it scares me a great deal. Hopefully, this scenario never happens in the N.W.T. but my gut feelings are that it is only a matter of time and God please let me be wrong!!
2. There is an urgent need of support services such as Program Support Teachers, Specialists in various areas, and Special Needs Assistants. With the wide ability levels in the classroom more help is needed to deal with students needing help with academics and behaviour.
3. Many of our students do not go on to post secondary institutions but our schools tend to focus on the academic subjects with vocational training being incidental. If our students are to function in the work world they are in need of more vocational training at the junior and high school level. More technology courses are required for all of our students to function in this world.
4. Over the past few years our budgets have been reduced to the point that limited resources are purchased to run our programs. New curriculums such as Math and English are being implemented in the schools at the present time. Without adequate budgets to purchase texts and material, it will be difficult to implement the programs successfully.

Page 2

I felt very optimistic when the Minister's Forum was traveling around to the various communities listening to the different concerns. However, when the Minister said there was not enough money to run existing programs, I wondered why \$350,000 was spent for the study. Maybe the \$350,000 would have been better spent if it had been turned over into existing educational programs.

It is important that our education system is the best as our children are our future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Pat Burnstad", written in black ink.

Pat Burnstad