

Resolution 1A

MANDATORY CIVICS HIGH SCHOOL COURSE (PASSED)

⇒ County of Pictou

WHEREAS Nova Scotia is the cradle of Responsible Government in Canada and for the generations following Joseph Howe's remarkable advancement of parliamentary democracy, Nova Scotians maintained high voter turnout at municipal, provincial and federal elections; and

WHEREAS following the Second World War, Nova Scotians and Canadians demonstrated their democratic rights with high voter turnout, culminating with the 1988 Federal Election, where voter turnout reached a modern day high of 75.3 percent nationally; and

WHEREAS voter turnout in Nova Scotia has dropped steadily since the mid 1980's and voter turnout in the most recent federal election dropped to just 61.3 percent in Nova Scotia; and

WHEREAS the decline in voter turnout will likely continue, as the number of voters aged 18-34 are not exercising their right to vote. Voter turnout among first time and young voters reached a low of 38.8 percent according to a report on the 2011 Federal Election. This means six out of ten young Nova Scotians don't vote; and

WHEREAS our education system in Nova Scotia remains our best opportunity to teach the next generation of voting age adults the value of civic engagement and becoming involved in their communities; and

WHEREAS the focus of our educational efforts should be to prepare and engage all of our students to become active and responsible citizens; and

WHEREAS the oneNS Report highlighted the necessity for a more engaged, robust debate on the future of our province eliciting the support and ideas of Nova Scotians of all ages;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED the UNSM work with the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development to create a Civics Engagement Committee on developing and implementing a mandatory Civics Course for high school students.

Response from:

Department of Education and Early Childhood Development

RESPONSE:

The Nova Scotia Department of Education and Early Childhood Development is committed to ensuring that we are providing the next generation of young Nova Scotians with the competencies and essential skills required to meet the ever-changing demands of our society. As outlined in the Action Plan for Education in January 2015, the department is creating a streamlined, coordinated, and innovative curricula to address the full range of student learning needs. As part of our plan we announced a mandatory Citizenship course for grade 10.

The focused participation of educators, scholars, and community members with relevant expertise will be called upon to support the design of the new Citizenship 10 course. As with the design of all department curricula, a curriculum development team, with expertise in the subject area, curriculum planning and design, in pedagogy, and assessment, will be established. Our team will seek advice and feedback from key stakeholders, including the Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities, as we move forward with this work.

We look forward to working with all of our education partners throughout the process of curricula renewal.