

April 5, 2023

**Newfoundland and Labrador English School District Addresses
Human Rights Tribunal Report**

The following statement is being issued on behalf of Terry Hall, Interim Superintendent of the Newfoundland and Labrador English School District:

“After taking the time to thoroughly review the recent Human Rights Tribunal report on Carter Churchill, the District accepts all the findings of the adjudicator; from the early failures of the system, to the current successes of the immersive classroom environment currently in place for Deaf and hard of hearing students in the St. John’s region.

We recognize and appreciate that the adjudicator highlighted the missed opportunities to explore further options for Carter early in his education. Those missed opportunities resulted in him being socially isolated and impeded his development of social and language skills, furthering a tremendous communications divide during his early years. The District fully accepts responsibility for what the adjudicator has clearly identified as ‘...systemic issues related to the District’s approach to education for a cohort of students with cochlear implants who arrive at school with severe language delays.’ The circumstances that surrounded Carter’s school experience from K to 3 was not the result of any individual’s actions, approaches or failings. Every employee assisting and working with Carter was engaged throughout our organization, however, the system did not have a wholly informed perspective of his needs. For that, the District has apologized to Carter and the Churchill family.

As we move forward, it is reassuring that the adjudicator recognized the great work being done within the DHH classroom. The adjudicator ultimately found that once this classroom was put in place for Grade 4, it met Carter’s needs as well as the needs of other DHH students and found no further grounds for discrimination after it was implemented. The report noted the manner in which the DHH team works together, as a team of student assistants, educational interpreters, DHH itinerants and TLA’s, creates a good co-teaching, supportive environment for the students.

Helping all students learn, grow, and reach their full potential is the daily focus of the individuals throughout the Newfoundland and Labrador English School District. To be told that we failed in our efforts to provide even a single student with ease of access through our education system is something we take seriously and must remain cognisant of moving forward. However, it also provides our organization with an opportunity to grow and learn as well, and to build on our successes. Together, with our staff, school communities and partners, we are moving forward with an eye to ensuring that we continue to grow and succeed alongside all students from Kindergarten through to Grade 12.”

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