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Education and Early Childhood Development
Office of the Minister

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April 30, 2020

Mr. Ronnie LeBlanc, Warden
Municipality of Clare
1185 Highway 1
Little Brook, NS B0W 1Z0

Dear Mr. LeBlanc:

I am responding to your letter of March 27, 2020, regarding training for the use of Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs) in schools.

The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development has had many discussions with stakeholders on the importance and availability of AEDs in our schools. We agree that these are important, life-saving devices that benefit all Nova Scotians.

I had the pleasure of meeting with cardiologists and representatives from the Heart and Stroke Foundation to discuss this issue. I have asked Department staff to look into ways to enhance access and training for AEDs.

Within the school system there are formal opportunities for students to become familiar with AEDs through our Options and Opportunities (O2) and Co-operative Education programs, and we encourage opportunities for all students to become familiarized with AEDs in all our schools. The Department also ensures that where students/staff require an AED on-site due to medical issues, the school has an AED in the building and has provided instruction to individuals for its use.

One of the advantages of AEDs is the ability for anyone, regardless of if they have been trained or not, to use them. As you know, they include visual and voice prompts and will only deliver a shock if the heart is in a rhythm which can be corrected by defibrillation. Emergency Health Services (EHS) and the Heart and Stroke Foundation provide free online training videos on how to use an AED.

Thank you for sharing your ideas on AEDs in our schools and for your interest in this important life-saving device.

I hope this information was helpful.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Zach Churchill'.

Zach Churchill
Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development