



LEADERSHIP, ADVOCACY AND SERVICE FOR MANITOBA'S PUBLIC SCHOOL BOARDS

August 2, 2016

The Honourable Kelvin Goertzen
Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living
Legislative Building
302-450 Broadway
Winnipeg, MB R3C 0V8

The Honourable Ian Wishart
Minister of Education and Training
Legislative Building
168-450 Broadway
Winnipeg, MB R3C 0V8

Dear Ministers Goertzen and Wishart,

On behalf of the Manitoba School Boards Association (MSBA), we wish to share with you a request for action that was received by our Provincial Executive from one of our member boards, the Winnipeg School Board.

While such requests for action do not come before our full membership for debate and approval during our annual convention, they are received from individual members from time and time, and discussed with our full provincial executive. Oftentimes, such requests for action are received when a topic is of a particularly sensitive nature.

The request for action was as follows: *that Manitoba School Boards Association request that the Province of Manitoba (Education and Health) collaborate on updating the current health curriculum taught in schools. The health curriculum has not been updated in many years and in certain instances, may pose a risk to students with respect to their sexual and reproductive health.*

The above request for action was precipitated given concerns around drug-resistant bacteria and, in particular, bacterial infections such as gonorrhoea.

According to background information received from the Winnipeg School Board, MSBA understands that Manitoba has one of the highest infection rates of gonorrhoea in Canada among youth ages 15 to 24. According to Manitoba Health, up to one third of all grade 9 students and close to one half of Grade 11 student report having oral sex at least once. Oral sex may be perceived as being safe in light of the risk of pregnancy: however gonorrhoea can be acquired by oral sex if a condom is not used.

Public health experts are now also expressing growing concern over the prospect of antibiotic-resistant gonorrhoea. If untreatable, it could increase to become an epidemic. At current time, Manitoba's Provincial health curriculum states that gonorrhoea can be successfully treated with antibiotics. In view of the concern raised by public health experts, trustees at the Winnipeg School Board remain concerned that health curriculum may be out of date concerning the above reality, and possibly also as it pertains to other information. Consultation and review of the curriculum by public health officers is therefore recommended, to ensure that students remain apprised of the latest developments and information.

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MSBA's Provincial Executive has approved submission of this request for action to your offices and we trust that you will consider the above information more closely given its significant and sensitive nature.

Should you require any further information or background concerning this request for action, please do not hesitate to contact us. We would also be happy to meet with you to discuss this request for action further, should this be required.

We look forward to hearing from you concerning this matter and thank you in advance for extending due care and concern to our request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Ken Cameron', with a small flourish at the end.

Ken Cameron
President

KC/ak

cc MSBA Provincial Executive
Winnipeg School Board