



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

March 26, 2021

TO: Board Chairs, Secretary-Treasurers

FROM: Josh Watt, Executive Director

RE: Trustee By-elections – Renewal of Temporary Suspension and Resources

The regulation under the *Temporary Suspension of Local Government Provisions* which governs trustee by-elections, expired on March 16, 2021. The government has now renewed the emergency orders until July 31, 2021, unless repealed earlier.

The Department of Education advised the association that with the continuation of Code Red provisions, Senior Elections Officers (SEO) may still proceed with trustee by-elections, however it is at their discretion for pandemic conditions in their location. Public health remains critical in view of ongoing safety measures and precautions need to be taken to keep our communities healthy and safe.

With this in mind, the use of school sites is prohibited under the guidelines pertaining to external visitors included in the *Restoring Safe Schools, School Operations Guidelines* which state that "visits should be minimized to the greatest extent possible." Using school sites for high volume and high traffic elections purposes would not cohere with this guidance.

SEO's may also refer to the Elections Manitoba guidelines (attached) for preparations of by-elections and may further reference the guideline provided by Manitoba Municipal Relations to use mail-in ballots.

These same orders also contained the continuation of the suspension of the requirement that school trustees physically attend a school board meeting at least once every three months (previously in the Order re Temporary Suspension of School Trustee Meeting Provision).

Attachment:

Elections Manitoba Pandemic Guidelines
Renewal of Emergency Orders – Cliff Cullen

JW/ja

ELECTIONS MANITOBA PANDEMIC GUIDELINES

Keeping voters and election workers safe during the current pandemic is a priority for election management bodies. The following are some best practices that various jurisdictions have been using:

For voters

- Ensure physical distancing at the voting station. Keep voters 2 metres (6 feet) apart
- Encourage voters to bring a non-medical mask with them when they come to vote
- Have non-medical masks available for voters who come to the voting place without a mask
- Have hand sanitizer available at the voting station
- Ensure surfaces at the voting station are disinfected throughout the day
- Provide single-use pencils
- Voters who feel unwell on election day should stay home. Explore other voting options such as absentee/mail voting or advance voting

For election staff

- Provide personal protective equipment(PPE) to workers, such as non-medical masks/face shields, gloves, hand sanitizer
- Require election workers to wear masks or a face shield during their interactions with each voter
- Separate workers from voters with acrylic sneeze guards (where available) or increased physical distancing
- Encourage workers to wash hands throughout the day
- Use online training if possible

Process

- If possible, use a larger venue for the voting place
- If possible, have separate entrances and exits at the voting place
- Have directional arrows/tape on the floor to guide voter movement in the voting place
- Have additional information officers at voting place entrances to inform/guide voters
- Have voters sanitize their hands upon entering the voting place
- Use social distancing floor stickers to reinforce staying 2 metres apart
- Limit the number of voters allowed to enter the voting place at one time
- Frequently clean high contact areas in the voting place
- Train workers on physical distancing, sanitization and PPE use



**MINISTER
OF EDUCATION**

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CANADA

MAR 22 2021

To: Chairs of School Divisions

Re: Renewal of Emergency Orders

Dear Colleagues:

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to present many challenges to our education sector. As you are aware, The Emergency Measures Act was amended to allow the Lieutenant Governor in Council to make Orders, including suspending or replacing specific statutory and regulatory requirements during a provincial emergency.

In order to provide flexibility to school divisions, the following amendments to provisions in The Public Schools Act are being continued in the Order re Temporary Suspension of Local Government Provisions, specifically:

- the suspension of the requirement that school trustees physically attend a school board meeting at least once every three months (previously in the Order re Temporary Suspension of School Trustee Meeting Provision);
- the suspension of area advisory committee elections;
- the requirement that the Senior Elections Official consider public health and safety when scheduling a trustee by-election

This means that school divisions continue to be able to postpone by-elections for public health and safety reasons. This also means that, in conjunction with the previously made regulatory amendment to section 5 of the Electronic Meetings Regulation, school board meetings may continue to be fully electronic if necessary and warranted by the public health situation at the time.

This Order takes effect on March 17, 2021, and will be in place until July 31, 2021, unless repealed earlier. The Order can be viewed at the following link: https://web2.gov.mb.ca/laws/statutes/index_orders.php.

This Order will continue to support efforts to minimize community transmission of COVID-19. In consultation with Public Health, we will determine whether these temporary changes will expire as planned or be extended should circumstances warrant.

Thank you for your continued efforts as we endeavor to keep all Manitobans safe during these uncertain times.

Sincerely,



Cliff Cullen
Minister
Education

- c. Dana Rudy, Deputy Minister, Manitoba Education
 - Sarah Whiteford, Assistant Deputy Minister, System Performance and Accountability
 - Christina Moody, Assistant Deputy Minister, Student Achievement and Inclusion
 - Manitoba School Boards Association
 - Manitoba Association of School Superintendents
 - Manitoba Association of School Business Officials
 - Manitoba Association of Parent Councils
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