



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

**2015/16**

**FINAL REPORT OF  
THE ABORIGINAL AND INDIGENOUS EDUCATION ACTION PLANNING COMMITTEE  
MANITOBA SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOCIATION**

**Introduction**

In 2015, the Provincial Executive of the Manitoba School Boards Association (MSBA) identified the development of a multi-year plan for addressing matters related to Aboriginal education, as one of the Association's core priorities for 2015/16 and future years. Following the Executive's approval of a general discussion paper outlining the key background, concepts and principles that would be used by the Association as a framework for further engagement on this core priority (October 2015), the MSBA Aboriginal and Indigenous Education Action Planning Committee was convened, starting in December 2015, for the launch of a monthly series of information gathering sessions.

These sessions occurred during the first half of 2016. The December meeting was used to present an overview of the discussion paper and provided an opportunity to validate the content of this paper from all members of the Committee. This initial meeting ensured that the discussion paper not only reflected our Association's endorsed focus and direction but that it also reflected a broader consensus from key external partners concerning our association's proposed directions and priorities.

Between January and May, each session of the Committee was designed to identify and inform specific actions under the multi-year plan, which could be then forwarded for Executive's further consideration and approval. The Committee included participation by trustee members from across the province (including, in alphabetical order: Linda Ballantyne of Frontier, Hugh Coburn of Louis Riel, Julie Fisher of Pembina Trails, Lena Kublick of Lord Selkirk, Kelli Riehl of Swan Valley, and Leslie Tucker of Mystery Lake School Divisions). The committee also received approval by MSBA's Provincial Executive to expand membership by inviting key external partners to join the Committee, to help in designing and informing development of the multi-year action plan.

These partners were very engaged and dedicated and included: Elders Don Robertson and Eunice Beardy, the Aboriginal Council of Winnipeg, the Manitoba First Nations Education Resource Centre, Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak, Manitoba Métis Federation, the Aboriginal Education Directorate of Manitoba Education & Training, Manitoba Teachers' Society, Manitoba Association of Parent Councils, Manitoba Association School Business Officials, and Manitoba Association of School Superintendents. The Committee was also grateful for the formal liaison position established by MSBA Provincial Executive, to ensure that Executive was kept apprised of the Committee's progress and activities, as we progressed through this initial stage of design and development. Thanks to Alan Campbell, MSBA Director for Region 3 and a trustee with Interlake School Division, for fulfilling this important liaison role.

Focused on five main priorities, the Committee invited key informants to present on the theme of each priority, on a monthly basis, between January and May, 2016. While each meeting lasted approximately two hours, significant information was shared for the benefit and consideration of the Committee.

The following report outlines, for each meeting, the date, who presented, the key themes discussed, and some preliminary ideas on specific actions and initiatives that the Manitoba School Boards Association can further consider. The Committee would like to thank all presenters and partners who joined us for this exciting series. We would like to now invite the Provincial Executive to consider the proposed action items and other initiatives that are outlined in the following report. We have made every effort to ensure that each proposed action is achievable and will help to significantly advance each of the focus priorities that were approved by the Executive.

***PRIORITY: EXPANDING BOARD CAPACITY AND PROFICIENCY IN ABORIGINAL AND INDIGENOUS MATTERS***

**Date of presentation:** January 15.

**Key informant(s) / presenter(s):** Darren McKee, Executive Director of the Saskatchewan School Boards Association.

**Key theme(s) of presentation/discussion:**

- Many trustees have a good or basic understanding of Aboriginal and Indigenous historical, cultural, legal, and education-related contexts, but raising greater awareness is the necessary first requirement for expanding overall capacity and proficiency across all school boards.
- In attempting to enhance relations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities, it is important for all public school boards to recognize that tensions within such relationships will often occur naturally, owing to the long history of Aboriginal and Indigenous communities with education systems— too much tension or too little engagement in relationships requires careful correction.
- Maintaining meaningful working relationships between educational partners, especially among trustees, superintendents, teachers and staff, parents/communities, and external education authorities, requires concerted, purpose-driven, and balanced effort. Identification of shared goals and objectives can provide great benefit by expanding the overall capacity of the public education system to appropriately address and respond to Aboriginal and Indigenous matters.
- As a general concept, segregated schools or other independent models for meeting the needs of Aboriginal or Indigenous students, within or outside of the mandate of the public education system, ought to be explored as an option only if we believe that there remains no hope for, or no willingness to work towards, the success of Aboriginal and Indigenous students as full participants in that system. As long as there is hope and willingness however, the public education system can and should continue to strive for excellence in programming to meet the needs of all students, including Aboriginal and Indigenous students. This objective will be

enhanced through the development of greater capacity and proficiency at all levels of the public education system.

- It is important for the public education sector to remain aware of and to maintain good relations with First Nations schools, to ensure that appropriate understanding and consciousness is promoted concerning the past, present and future of First Nations educational authority and schools.

**Proposed action initiative(s):**

1. That MSBA Provincial Executive direct staff to work with partners to identify local external resources that can be used to assist with the further development of capacity and proficiency across all boards. Further, that such resources be shared with, or accessible to all partners, once identified.

*Timeframe: to be completed by end of 2016/17*

2. That MSBA continue to collaborate with MFNERC on the ongoing development and implementation of MFNERC's Provincial Transition Initiative, leading to the establishment of a pilot network of First Nations Schools across Manitoba.

*Timeframe: PTI to be implemented by 2017/18*

3. That MSBA Provincial Executive direct staff to prepare a series of virtual workshop videos containing relevant content relating to each of the five priority themes, for professional development purposes. These virtual workshops should provide essential overviews of the historical, cultural, legal and education-related contexts of local Aboriginal and Indigenous peoples, specifically targeted at a school board audience, in order to assist with the expansion of capacity and proficiency across all public school boards in Manitoba.

*Timeframe: to be completed by end of 2018/19*

4. That MSBA continue to work with its MASS and MTS partners through the Emamawi initiative, to share valuable information and identify common initiatives for augmenting proficiency and capacity across all three organizations.

*Timeframe: ongoing*

***PRIORITY: PROMOTING GREATER EQUITY AND JUSTICE THROUGH INCLUSIVE WORKPLACES AND ORGANIZATIONAL PRACTICES IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM***

**Date of presentation:** February 21.

**Key informant(s) / presenter(s):** Craig Hall, Chief Operating Officer, Aboriginal Human Resource Council (via teleconference).

**Key theme(s) of presentation/discussion:**

- It is important to regularly evaluate overall equity and inclusiveness toward Aboriginal and Indigenous peoples– both internal and external to the organization– on a corporate level. All corporate organizations, including school boards, are encouraged to examine their workplace and organizational cultural practices.
- Successful engagement and relationship building with Indigenous peoples is a key starting point for achieving greater equity and inclusion. This means developing competency and proficiency, engaging Aboriginal and Indigenous peoples and communities on the basis of Indigenous outlooks and concepts of well-being, and forging long term relationships built on trust, respect, honesty, ongoing communication and information-sharing.
- It is important to recognize that inclusion can be assessed according to a spectrum. Organizations navigate the path towards full inclusion by acknowledging the “step” on the spectrum where they currently find themselves. These steps include (in order of increasing inclusion): indifference, intimidation, image, integration, incubation and initiation. Integration, incubation and initiation are the three successive priority destinations for every organization, as these relate to the development of proactive policies and practices where inclusion is viewed across the organization (respectively) as a catalyst for growth, a core competency, and an operational imperative.
- There are several indicators of inclusive and equitable workplaces and organizations, reflected through policy as well as through practice. Relevant indicators tend to focus on establishing inclusive policy and practice frameworks pertaining to governance and leadership, community engagement, human resource development and employment, communications, and capital/goods and services procurement.

**Proposed action initiative(s):**

5. That MSBA, as a representative of all employing authorities for public education in Manitoba, engage all Faculties of Education in Manitoba to identify opportunities for enhancing the overall supply of Aboriginal and Indigenous teachers, as part of a larger review of teacher capacity that is reflective of projected supply shortages according to demographic profiles, as well as relating to teachable subject areas and other specializations.

*Timeframe: to be completed by end of 2016/17*

6. That MSBA work with the Aboriginal Chamber of Commerce to provide all school boards, superintendents and secretary-treasurers, with a goods and services procurement guide that

can be used to more readily identify local companies which are owned and operated by Aboriginal and Indigenous peoples, that employ a majority of Aboriginal and Indigenous peoples on their staff, or that demonstrate their commitment to social responsibility relative to Aboriginal and Indigenous communities.

*Timeframe: to be completed by end of 2017/18*

7. That MSBA Provincial Executive direct staff to explore opportunities with the Aboriginal Human Resource Council of Canada, to develop a voluntary workplace diagnostic survey tool that is specific to divisional contexts and that can be used by all school divisions to evaluate their own organizational journey along the inclusion spectrum.

*Timeframe: to be completed by end of 2018/19*

8. That MSBA Provincial Executive direct staff to explore opportunities with the Aboriginal Human Resource Council of Canada, to explore options for achieving a common license to online training and development opportunities available through the Council.

*Timeframe: to be completed by end of 2018/19*

**PRIORITY: ENHANCING ABORIGINAL AND INDIGENOUS VOICE AND REPRESENTATION IN SCHOOL GOVERNANCE**

**Date of presentation:** March 15.

**Key informant(s) / presenter(s):** Victoria Blackbird, Chair of the Rolling River School Board; and Kevin Settee, trustee candidate for the Winnipeg School Board during the Fall 2014 election.

**Key theme(s) of presentation/discussion:**

- When conducting public consultations in matters relating to identification of divisional strategic priorities, budgeting, and school planning, participation by Aboriginal and Indigenous communities is often enhanced through direct engagement in community-based locations. Similarly, ensuring that specific invitations are received by local Aboriginal and Indigenous community members in advance of such consultative processes can be a catalyst for promoting greater participation, representation and voice in school board decision-making.
- Participation by Aboriginal and Indigenous persons in the election process, whether as candidates or as electors, can be enhanced through the establishment of specific outreach initiatives and mentorship programs in advance of school board elections.
- The significant role of Elders and other recognized community teachers as cultural advisors should be carefully considered by all school boards relative to governance processes, as well as in the delivery of programs, supports and services to Aboriginal and Indigenous students and staff.

- In collective bargaining processes, it can be important to understand the clear differences between Indigenous and Western forms of qualification and profession. Too often, Aboriginal and Indigenous candidates' experience is measured (and too often discounted) according to Western standards. This can tend to result in a diminishing of inclusion and representation of Aboriginal and Indigenous Peoples, or the propensity to view relevant experience and qualifications through deficit lenses.

**Proposed action initiative(s):**

9. That MSBA Provincial Executive direct staff to develop a guide for engagement and participation of Elders and other recognized community advisors and teachers in school board processes. To this end, that MSBA staff be directed to survey all school boards for an overview of existing practices and models that can serve as a foundation for development this manual, while exploring practices and models that have met with success across other jurisdictions.

*Timeframe: to be completed by end of 2016/17*

10. That, upon completion of the guide for engagement and participation of Elders and community advisors and teachers, that MSBA Provincial Executive send a memorandum with copy of the guide to all school boards and superintendents, with encouragement to explore the relevance and roles of Elders as members of divisional staff, toward the general enhancement of voice and representation in board governance processes, as well as to promote culturally relevant and sensitive programming, services and supports for staff and student success.

*Timeframe: to be completed by end of 2017/18*

11. That Provincial Executive direct staff to develop a user-friendly resource manual that all school boards can reference for pursuing public consultation and community engagement processes, as well as democratic mentorship initiatives, with Aboriginal and Indigenous peoples and communities. To this end, that MSBA staff be directed to survey all school boards for an overview of existing practices and models that can serve as a foundation for development of this manual, while exploring practices and models that have met with success across other jurisdictions. Further, that MSBA consider advocating with the Province to include school boards as obligatory curricular content within secondary course units dedicated to government and democracy.

*Timeframe: to be completed by end of 2017, one year prior to next school board elections*

12. That Provincial Executive direct staff to develop and implement a research informed strategy for enhancing the participation of Aboriginal and Indigenous candidates, through MSBA's pre-election candidate information sessions and recruitment initiatives. Further, that MSBA extend consideration to arranging for orientation sessions to be delivered for Aboriginal and Indigenous persons as a special outreach initiative.

*Timeframe: to be completed by end of 2017, one year prior to next school board elections*

***PRIORITY: FOSTERING A CULTURE OF CREATIVITY AND INNOVATION FOR ABORIGINAL AND INDIGENOUS STUDENT SUCCESS***

**Date of presentation:** April 15.

**Key informant(s) / presenter(s):** Chris Goring, Principal, Niji Mahkwa School; Jackie Connell, Principal, Children of the Earth School; and Rob Riel, Director of Aboriginal and Newcomer Programs with the Winnipeg School Division.

**Key theme(s) of presentation/discussion:**

- Achieving distinctive, wholistic school models founded upon the formal integration of Aboriginal and Indigenous perspectives, worldviews and knowledge into every aspect of learning and teaching has and can continue to be achieved through public schools in Manitoba. These models provide benefit to all students, not just those who are of Aboriginal and Indigenous ancestry, by helping every student understand and appreciate Aboriginal and Indigenous ways of knowing and doing, much the same way that other public schools are founded on Western ways of knowing and doing.
- Creativity and innovation ought to be informed by the community as a whole, rather than by just one team or group of divisional staff members. Listening and hearing the community's ideas can help to spur new approaches and strategies and capture valuable teachings or concepts that can be passed along to new generations through the local context of public education.
- Developing cultures for Aboriginal and Indigenous student success involves everyone in a school division. In this respect, it is important for school boards to foster cultures where senior administration and staff within their division have the discretion and authority to promote creative and innovative classroom and learning-based models for student success. It is equally important to recognize that school boards can often add value to the classroom experience by leveraging their own resources and networks to help provide meaningful and valuable opportunities for students that would not otherwise be available through conventional channels, especially in terms of establishing after school, extra-curricular or career development, and summer engagement activities and programs.
- A critical component for fostering Aboriginal and Indigenous student success involves providing a continuum of education from the sequential K-12 model through to Adult Learning and Literacy supports and post-secondary programming. Adult Learning Centre programs are essential to advancing graduation and completion for Aboriginal and Indigenous learners.
- Into the future, it will be important to build greater capacity for language programming: proficient language speakers among staff employed in the public education sector are in high demand but short supply. Many language programs and initiatives remain at risk, given the relative age and possible employment transitions for most Indigenous language instructors.

**Proposed action initiative(s):**

13. That MSBA seek permission from the Winnipeg School Division to share the Niji Mahkwa and Children of the Earth whole school learning models with all Manitoba school boards and superintendents via the proposed virtual workshop videos, to provide deeper understanding of how school divisions can engage with their communities to formally integrate Aboriginal and Indigenous models for K-12 education in the public education context.

*Timeframe: to be completed by end of 2016/17*

14. That MSBA Provincial Executive direct staff to work with Aboriginal Languages of Manitoba and the partners involved with the Manitoba Aboriginal Languages Strategy, to share relevant information with all school boards and superintendents pertaining to the optimization of language instruction resources across Manitoba.

*Timeframe: to be completed by end of 2016/17*

15. That MSBA Provincial Executive distribute a memorandum to all school boards and superintendents, encouraging all divisions that operate or have partnered for the operation of an Adult Learning Centre or Adult Literacy Program, to ensure that these ALCs or ALPs are prominently featured or included on the divisional website or other lists of schools operated by each division.

*Timeframe: to be completed by end of 2016/17*

16. That MSBA continue to work with all co-signors to promote the Collaborative Blueprint for Indigenous Education in Manitoba, in order to enhance creative and innovative approaches for greater Aboriginal and Indigenous student and community success, across early, middle, senior and post-secondary providers. Further, as part of this work, that MSBA place emphasis on:

- a) the expansion of dual credit opportunities for Aboriginal and Indigenous youth to achieve a head start on post-secondary completion and success
- b) increasing and measuring Indigenous students' school and post-secondary participation and success rates, and
- c) development of a comprehensive web portal that can serve as a hub not only for building linkages to available resources, but also for posting relevant events across the province relating to Aboriginal and Indigenous education.

*Timeframe: ongoing*

***PRIORITY: ACKNOWLEDGING TRUTH AND CHAMPIONING RECONCILIATION THROUGH PUBLIC EDUCATION***

**Date of presentation:** May 13.

**Key informant(s) / presenter(s):** Charlene Bearhead, Education Director of the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation.

**Key theme(s) of presentation/discussion:**

- Living reconciliation and talking about reconciliation are two very different realities: the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) was focused on hearing survivors' stories (truth) so that meaningful action (reconciliation) could then take place to redress the legacies of the past, through the creation of meaningful futures.
- If school boards agree to champion reconciliation, this reflects a very strong commitment by accepting leadership and therefore, through taking action. This is the desired starting point that was intended by the TRC. It is important to recognize the past, including the residential school experience, and ensure that it is never forgotten through the ongoing education of future generations of Canadian students. However, this should not be the only or final objective of the public education system, in light of the calls to action issued by the TRC.
- Respect for Aboriginal and Indigenous peoples, places and their ways of knowing and doing have not disappeared and should therefore again become part of daily practice and what it means to live in Canada. "Indigenizing" education or any aspect of the public education system, tends to imply that ways of knowing and doing must be introduced, in an often artificial or arbitrary manner, into the thing that is being "Indigenized". By contrast, acknowledgement that Aboriginal and Indigenous peoples, places and their ways of knowing and doing have always been and have continued in spite of significant efforts to extinguish them, will be important to achieve along the path toward genuine reconciliation.
- The calls to action under the TRC provide all educational partners, including school boards, with clear direction to maintain focus on the survival and teaching of Aboriginal and Indigenous languages, due to efforts by residential schools to extinguish this vital aspect of Aboriginal and Indigenous culture, and also in recognition of the consequent and growing loss of these languages across Canada.
- In order for public schools to support efforts to affirm and reintroduce Aboriginal and Indigenous languages in today's classroom, the overall role, educational achievement and demographic profile of Indigenous first language speakers must be acknowledged and accommodated: in real terms, this means respecting the skill and competence of these speakers as instructors in their language where there may otherwise be no formal qualification. Steps must be taken to formally recognize the instructional competence of Elders and other community advisors or teachers who retain language abilities, if language is to survive and language programming is to prove successful.

- Consideration for the role of language nests as part of early learning and child care programming available through public school facilities should become part of overall planning for the achievement of reconciliation.

**Proposed action initiative(s):**

17. That, as part of the proposed development of a guide for engagement and participation of Elders and other recognized community advisors and teachers in school board processes, that the guide also provide recommended policy and practice for formal integration of Elders and other traditional community teachers into school programming, for the specific purpose of promoting additional language learning and capacity.

*Timeframe: to be completed by end of 2016/17*

18. That MSBA host a provincial forum and professional development opportunity, open to all school boards, as well as to education and Aboriginal and Indigenous partners, dedicated to successful practices and models for the learning of Aboriginal and Indigenous languages across the early, middle and senior years.

*Timeframe: to be completed by end of 2017/18*

19. That MSBA enhance the work of partner organizations in leading the implementation of learning resources and other opportunities dedicated to educating all Manitoba students about the residential school experience and past efforts to extinguish Aboriginal and Indigenous cultural identity. To this end, that MSBA coordinate efforts to ensure that all Manitoba high school libraries are provided with copies of “A Knock on the Door” and “Wahbung, Our Tomorrows” as part of their holdings.

*Timeframe: to be completed by end of 2018/19*

20. That, given school board roles and responsibilities as locally elected officials, MSBA coordinate efforts to assume an appropriate leadership role relative to the TRC calls to action on the promotion of greater funding equality and resources for Aboriginal and Indigenous students, as well as the enhancement of Aboriginal and Indigenous language instruction within the public education system.

*Timeframe: ongoing*

21. That MSBA continue to promote, both on its own and as a member of the Canadian School Boards Association, the formal recognition of Aboriginal and Indigenous languages as founding languages of Canada by Federal and Provincial Governments, with exploration of sustainable resources to enhance overall language instruction and programming.

*Timeframe: ongoing*

## **ADDITIONAL FINDINGS OF THE COMMITTEE**

During the course of its meetings, the Committee also heard some very distinct proposals that address multiple themes crossing over many of the priority areas. In terms of achieving greater inclusion and reconciliation, it was suggested that school boards may be able to effect positive differences for staff and students by considering adoption of formal policy frameworks devoted to recognition and use of ceremonial tobacco and smudging on school properties, and the formal enshrinement of traditional territories and lands acknowledgement as part of the public meetings and official ceremonies hosted by each school division, and also as part of the patriotic exercises performed by all public schools prior to the beginning of the regular school day.

Developing and maintaining partnerships among and between Committee members was also a repeated topic of discussion during each of the Committee meetings. Formal MSBA attendance, participation and support for activities and events proposed by the partners throughout the year will be important for ensuring that all board members remain apprised of significant opportunities to enhance relationships and identify shared priorities for continuing response and action.

### **Proposed action initiative(s):**

22. That MSBA Provincial Executive direct staff to share the Smudging Protocol and Guidelines developed by the Aboriginal Education Directorate of Manitoba Education & Training with all boards, by way of supporting boards in establishing appropriate policy and practice in respect of the recognition and use of ceremonial tobacco and smudging on school properties. Further, that MSBA develop a template that may be used by school boards that may wish to formalize the Smudging Protocol and Guidelines into their divisional policy and practice.

*Timeframe: to be completed by end of 2016/17*

23. That MSBA Provincial Executive issue a memorandum encouraging all boards to implement formal acknowledgement of traditional territories and lands into all Manitoba school divisions' practice for official ceremonies, public meetings and daily patriotic exercises. Further, that MSBA Provincial Executive direct staff to work with educational partners in approaching the Government of Manitoba to amend The Schools Patriotic Observances Regulation (472/88R) under *The Educational Administration Act*, consistent with this implementation strategy.

*Timeframe: to be completed by end of 2016/17*

*See also the action proposed under 16(c) re: development of a web portal.*

## **PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT AND TRANSIENCE**

Based on feedback received from the Aboriginal Education Directorate of Manitoba Education & Training (MET), several useful suggestions were provided concerning data collection, measurement and information gathering relating to Aboriginal and Indigenous students. Below are some observations and recommendations tabled by MET for consideration by MSBA Provincial Executive:

- MSBA has a role to play in supporting data analysis and measurement of student progress. Consider informing action and strategy through data analysis as drawn from the achievement and engagement data that is provided to school divisions from the Student Achievement Support Unit of MET.
- Boards are strongly encouraged to be informed/participate in The K-12 Framework For Continuous Improvement Planning and Reporting on student achievement, that school divisions are now required to provide to MET on an annual basis. This framework utilizes provincial assessment data and disaggregates achievement by all students, male/female, non-Aboriginal /self-declared Aboriginal, EAL, and others.
- MSBA support for the goals and objectives of the Collaborative Blueprint on Indigenous Education will be important, particularly as they relate to increasing and measuring Indigenous students' school and post- secondary participation and success rates.
- It is also important to ask what role MSBA can take in facilitating mobility for transient students between school divisions?

**Proposed action initiative(s):**

24. That MSBA Provincial Executive issue a memorandum encouraging all boards to utilize achievement and engagement for school planning purposes, based on the recent availability of disaggregated data by non-Aboriginal/self-identified Aboriginal cohorts.

*Timeframe: to be completed by end of 2016/17*

25. That MSBA Provincial Executive direct staff to work with MASS and MASBO on producing a guide of best practices and models for addressing transient student support and integration.

*Timeframe: to be completed by end of 2018/19*

*See also the action proposed under 16(b) re: increasing and measuring participation and success rates.*

**FORMAL LAUNCH**

During the feedback session on the draft final report, many partners felt that the proposed actions developed by the committee were significant enough to warrant a formal launch event designed to raise greater publicity. It was felt that the public, as well as MSBA members and partners, would benefit from such a launch. Suggestions also included developing a press kit for select media outlets (such as APTN) to showcase the report.

**Proposed action initiative(s):**

- That MSBA Executive direct staff to prepare a press kit on the final report once approved, with request to staff to return with a plan for a formal launch event with distribution of the press kit to relevant media outlets.

*Timeframe: to be completed by end of 2016/17*

**THE CANADIAN SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOCIATION**

It is noteworthy that, with the Executive Director of MSBA's nomination to serve as Chair for the First Nations, Métis and Inuit (FNMI) subcommittee of the national executive for the Canadian School Boards Association (CSBA) in 2016/17, several additional initiatives will be led and coordinated by Manitoba in conjunction with CSBA administration. These initiatives will be considered and approved by the CSBA national executive. However, it will be the intention that these actions and initiatives will bear specific outcomes in Manitoba, as well as on the national stage. Based upon the three year CSBA strategic plan for 2016/17 through to 2018/19, current actions and initiatives identified to date include the following:

- Draft advocacy correspondence and statement for submission to all national and provincial elected representatives, on achieving equal Federal and Provincial funding in support of First Nations education.
- Compile, via national survey questionnaire, general and best practices for First Nations, Metis, and Inuit education.
- Support for the work of the Assembly of First Nations in developing a mental health strategy, in the aftermath of Attawapiskat.
- Draft letter of inquiry to Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada re: policy frameworks and clarification emerging from the decision of the Supreme Court of Canada in *Daniels v. Canada*.
- Monitor upcoming conferences for opportunities to submit presentations on the work of school boards relative to Aboriginal and Indigenous education, with particular focus on the World Indigenous Peoples Conference on Education (Toronto, 2017).
- Promote the National Trustee Gathering on Aboriginal Education at future conventions of the National School Boards Association in the United States. Ensure that national Indigenous organizations such as the Assembly of First Nations, Congress of Aboriginal Peoples, Metis National Council, and Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami are formally invited to participate in the Gathering on an annual basis.

Thus, based on our provincial association's significant role through MSBA's participation in the ongoing work of CSBA, the above actions and initiatives can and should be included under the scope of our proposed multi-year action plan. The timeframe for the above actions and initiatives have been generally established for completion through to the end of the strategic plan in 2018/19.

## **CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS**

The submission of this report to MSBA Provincial Executive by the Aboriginal and Indigenous Education Action Planning Committee is intended to reflect the major themes and suggested actions emerging from the series of monthly meetings that the Committee held from December to May 2016.

The Committee would like to note that, in keeping with the action plan framework that was used to guide our work, the development of MSBA's multi-year action plan will continue to be an iterative process (involving regular discussion, ongoing consultation and frequent opportunities to receive feedback and direction). Through the Aboriginal and Indigenous Education Action Planning Committee, MSBA has developed internal capacity with which to negotiate and accommodate the many requirements that development and implementation of the action plan will involve. The Committee looks forward to supporting implementation of the proposed items and initiatives that have been outlined.

Starting in Fall 2016, the Committee will begin to meet on a quarterly, rather than a monthly basis. It is our intention that through these quarterly meetings, MSBA will, as per the action plan framework, remain apprised of new developments within the Aboriginal and Indigenous educational environment wherever these may occur, so that the action plan remains adaptive and responsive to emerging trends and opportunities, rather than remaining fixed upon a limited set of activities, events or initiatives (which risks the action plan then becoming stagnant and potentially unresponsive to community needs).

Thus, for now, the actions that have been proposed within this report reflect those items and initiatives that have emerged based on our initial meetings. The Committee will be certain to monitor implementation consistent with available MSBA staff resources, to ensure that the plan remains on track, while also taking stock of external events and developments to ensure that the plan remains relevant and current.

We look forward to receiving MSBA Provincial Executive's consideration and approval as we proceed to fulfill these important mandates.