



*Local Voices
Local Choices*

Because schools belong to communities



Background

In January, 2019, the provincial government will be launching a review of Manitoba's K-12 education system. Two matters which may be under consideration in this review are the large-scale amalgamation of the current 37 elected school boards in our province, and a possible move to appointed, rather than elected, school boards.

School boards are grassroots, democratic institutions. Alone, either of these changes would severely undermine the ability of communities to shape local schools. The first would create overly-large administrative units, and the second would eliminate the right of communities to choose their own representatives to govern their school system. Together, these two changes could silence the community's voice in education completely. Together, they would take away community ownership of local schools.

If you value education and your ability to help shape local schools to meet community needs, we encourage you to voice your concerns about these possible changes with provincial government officials, including the Premier of Manitoba, the Minister of Education and Training, and your local MLA. We have provided a template letter, below, that you are welcome to use for this purpose. Contact information for all MLAs, including email addresses, is available at http://www.gov.mb.ca/legislature/members/mla_list_constituency.html.

Thank you.



www.mbschoolboards/localVoices.php



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Dear _____:

As a community member in the _____, I am writing to express my support for Manitoba's current system of elected school board governance.

My school board is my voice when it comes to the programming, services and supports offered in our local schools. The school board works with me and for me, to ensure that the schools we have are the schools my community wants and needs. The schools in my community look different from schools in other parts of the province. Those differences are the result of choices my school board has made on my behalf. Those differences are the result of grassroots democracy in action.

I am also writing to express my opposition to any mandated reduction in the number of school divisions in Manitoba. A reduction in numbers means an increase in size, and an increase in size means that it will become more difficult to have my voice heard. School divisions, and the boards that govern them, are already administered efficiently. Experience has shown that there are few, if any, savings to be found in amalgamating school divisions. I am not prepared to trade a say in my local schools for minimal or non-existent savings; the trade-off is not worth it.

I believe that when it comes to education, we need to support local voices making local choices, because schools belong to communities.

Sincerely,