On behalf of the
Manitoba Inclusive Education Professors' Roundtable

Prepared by

Dr. Nadine Bartlett
Faculty of Education
University of Manitoba
Nadine.bartlett@umanitoba.ca

Dr. Alison Wells-Dyck
Faculty of Education
University of Manitoba
Alison.wells-dyck@umanitoba.ca

Dr. Rick Freeze
Faculty of Education
University of Manitoba
Rick.freeze@umanitoba.ca

Dear members of the Manitoba Commission on Kindergarten to Grade 12 Education,

It is encouraging that a review of the education system in Manitoba is being conducted. While aspects of the educational system are working well, there is room for improvement as we strive to build an educational system where all students, regardless of their unique needs, are provided with the same access to learning opportunities as other students, and are meaningfully engaged in the academic and social aspects of schooling.

The attached report is a synthesis of 138 voices who gathered on the evening of April 16th, 2019 in the Faculty of Education at the University of Manitoba to discuss how to maintain, improve and strengthen inclusion in Manitoba schools (details are provided in Appendix A). The attendees engaged in conversation circles and discussed what is currently working well and where changes are needed in order to make Manitoba's schools, *schools for all."* The key ideas shared during the conversation circles were recorded by facilitators and are included within this report, along with recommendations for future practice. The members of the Manitoba Inclusive Education Professor's Roundtable sponsored this event as a forum for sharing ideas in the interests of advancing public discourse on inclusion in K-12 Education in Manitoba. The recommendations are as faithful a synthesis of the ideas of those of the participants as the authors could achieve. The report is structured using the six focus areas outlined in the Public Consultation Discussion Paper, which was distributed in April 2019. Although a lens of inclusion framed the conversations, we want to emphasize that we do not consider inclusion, or inclusive pedagogy an "add on" to the educational system. "The fundamental principle of inclusive education is that all children have the opportunity to learn together" (Peters, 2007), and that no one is left behind (United Nations, 2013).

The attendees who participated in the conversation circles were all adults and included but were not limited to: parents of students with disabilities, classroom teachers, educational assistants, resource teachers, school counsellors, other inclusive educators, school and school division administrators, clinicians, professors, university students, citizens interested in inclusive education, representatives from Indigenous advocacy organizations and service providers, representatives from disability advocacy organizations and service providers, and school trustees. In some instances, individuals belonged to more than one of the aforementioned groups (see Appendix A for a list of facilitators and participants who chose to have their names included in the submission).

We trust that that Commission on K-12 Education will thoughtfully consider the issues and recommendations raised in this report as it develops a plan to shape the future direction of education in Manitoba.

Sincerely,

Manitoba Inclusive Education Professors' Roundtable

Chers membres de la Commission sur l'éducation de la maternelle à la 12e année,

Il est encourageant de constater qu'une revue du système d'éducation du Manitoba est en cours. Bien que certains aspects du système d'éducation fonctionnent bien, nous pouvons faire mieux en nous efforçant de mettre en place un système d'éducation dans lequel tous les élèves, quels que soient leurs besoins, ont le même accès aux opportunités d'apprentissage que les autres enfants et qu'ils sont impliqués de manière significative dans les aspects scolaires et sociaux de leur scolarisation.

Le rapport ci-joint est une synthèse des propos des 138 personnes réunies lors de la soirée du 16 avril 2019 à la Faculté d'éducation de l'Université du Manitoba pour discuter de la façon de maintenir, d'améliorer et de renforcer l'éducation inclusive dans les écoles du Manitoba (des informations supplémentaires sont fournies à l'annexe A). Les participants ont pris part à des tables rondes et ont discuté de ce qui fonctionne actuellement bien et des changements nécessaires pour que les écoles du Manitoba deviennent des « écoles pour tous ». Les idées clés partagées lors de ces tables rondes ont été consignées par les facilitateurs et sont incluses dans le présent rapport, avec des recommandations pour de futures pratiques. Le rapport est structuré selon les six domaines d'intervention décrits dans le document travail sur la consultation publique, qui a été rendu public en avril 2019. Bien que les conversations aient été axées sur l'inclusion, nous tenons à souligner que nous ne considérons pas l'inclusion ou l'éducation inclusive comme un « ajout » au système d'éducation. « Le principe fondamental de l'éducation inclusive est que tous les enfants ont l'occasion d'apprendre ensemble [Traduction libre] » (Peters, 2007) et que personne ne soit laissé pour compte (Nations Unies, 2013).

Lors des tables rondes, les participants étaient tous des adultes et comptaient, sans toutefois s'y limiter : des parents d'élèves handicapés ; des enseignants ; des chargés de cours ; des aides-enseignants ; des enseignants ressources ; d'autres éducateurs inclusifs ; des directions d'école et de division scolaire ; des conseillers scolaires ; des professionnels de l'éducation ; des professeurs ; des étudiants universitaires ; des citoyens intéressés par l'éducation inclusive ; des représentants d'organisations de défense des droits des peuples autochtones ; des représentants d'organisations de défense des droits des personnes handicapées. Dans certains cas, les individus appartenaient à plus d'un des groupes mentionnés.

Nous espérons que la Commission sur l'éducation de la maternelle à la 12e année tiendra dûment compte des problèmes et des recommandations soulevés dans le présent rapport lorsqu'elle développera un plan pour définir l'orientation future de l'éducation au Manitoba.

Cordialement,

Table ronde des professeurs d'éducation inclusive du Manitoba

The Inclusive Education Professors Roundtable

Vision Statement:
The goal of the Inclusive Education Professors' Roundtable is to promote the equitable inclusion of all individuals in school and society, in order that all may share in valued social participation and successful academic and vocational outcomes.

Terms of Reference:
- to promote collaboration between university professors in inclusive education, their institutions, and other stakeholders in the field of inclusive education,
- to promote research, scholarship and university teaching in the field of inclusive education,
- to promote cooperation with disciplines allied with inclusive education,
- to constructively influence government policies affecting inclusive education and building an inclusive society, and
- to promote inclusive educational and other societal provisions for people with disabilities, learning differences and unique socio-economic needs.

Roundtable Membership:
Academic professors and instructors in the area of Inclusive Education at Manitoba universities: Brandon University, Université de Saint-Boniface, University of Manitoba, and University of Winnipeg. To date, the Manitoba Inclusive Education Professors' Roundtable includes:

Dr. Chris Brown, Brandon University
Dr. Patty Douglas, Brandon University
Shelley Kokorudz, Brandon University
Dr. Breanna Lawrence, Brandon University.
Dr. Alexa Okrainec, Brandon University
Dr. Nadine Bartlett, University of Manitoba
Dr. Charlotte Enns, University of Manitoba
Dr. Rick Freeze, University of Manitoba
Dr. Nancy Hansen, University of Manitoba
Dr. Zana Lutfiyya, University of Manitoba
Dr. Alison Wells-Dyck, University of Manitoba
Mary-Ann Updike, University of Manitoba/University of Winnipeg
Dr. Lesley Eblie Trudel, University of Winnipeg
Dr. Ken Reimer, University of Winnipeg
Dr. Sheri-Lynn Skwarchuk, University of Winnipeg
Dr. Laura Sokal, University of Winnipeg
Dr. Sylvie Berthelot-Dilk, Université de Saint-Boniface
Dr. Marie-Élaine Desmarais, Université de Saint-Boniface

Focus area 1: Long-term vision

What should the goals and purpose of a K to 12 education be in a rapidly changing world?

- What students need to know and be able to do, including the knowledge, skills competencies they need to know to succeed in life after High School Graduation.

In order for inclusion to be sustained, the participants thought that students at all grade levels needed to accept and celebrate the full spectrum of human differences and learn to use "people first" language. That is, to see and refer to students as people, and not identify them by their disability labels. Students imitate the speech and attitudes of their peers and the important adults in their lives. If children see some of their peers are devalued and segregated by their teachers, they will learn to discriminate and demean. Consequently, all students need to be present in the regular classrooms and other learning spaces of their neighborhood schools. Students need to learn how to provide social and academic supports to their peers, participate in long-term planning processes for themselves and/or their peers, advocate for themselves and their peers, and show empathy for their peers and others.

Recommendation 1.1

We recommend that educators at all levels be coached to use people first language when discussing students. Educators need to better understand the vital importance of modeling inclusion through their speech, actions, teaching and policies.

The participants thought that students must know that schools are safe, accessible environments with welcoming and caring adults. They must trust that all students belong, including those who will best succeed with leaning technologies, supports and scaffolds that compensate for their physical, perceptual, and learning and intellectual disabilities. Schools need to be designed with supports that meet a wide range of student needs, including the needs of those who will best succeed with social-emotional learning opportunities, counselling psychology supports for mental health challenges, and positive behavior interventions and supports. Finally, they acknowledged that many schools play important roles in meeting kids' basic needs through breakfast programs, health and wellness initiatives, physical education, sports and recreation options, clothing exchanges, extra-curricular activities, and many other valued programs. In general, the participants thought that schools should approach the diverse needs of their students using pro-active, preventative, child and family centered, evidence-based and positive strengths-based approaches that are universally available to all students.

Recommendation 1.2

We recommend that pre-service and in-service educators at all levels be prepared to use pro-active, preventative, child and family centered, evidence-based and positive strengths-based approaches that are universally available to all students. We need to build schools that plan for the inclusion of all students from the outset; rather than planning for' average' students,

only to be faced with the need to retrofit policies, teaching and assessment methods and other provisions, after the fact.

In order to support better academic inclusion for all students in a complex and rapidly changing world, the participants thought that the traditional goals of education need to be broadened. More students can be successfully included socially and academically when the Universal Design pedagogical principles of multiple means of presentation, multiple means of engagement, and multiple means of representation are adopted (Meyer, Rose & Gordon, 2014). For example, the traditional Language Arts goal of acquiring information effectively by listening and reading needs to be broadened to include other modes of information presentation. Such modes might include viewing, inquiring, observing, experimenting, and researching in interdisciplinary contexts that better represent the complexities of contemporary work and life. While some progress has been made at the elementary level, many children and adolescents are taught in largely separated academic subject silos, age cohorts and programmatic streams that are holdovers from a low technology, pre-information age worldview. Information technology has been a great leveler for many people with disabilities. Text to speech apps, screen magnification and other similar tools, on-line academic instruction, credible informational videos, and many other forms and features of information technology allow students with disabilities to participate equitably in academics. Interdisciplinary inquiry-based leaning (Minner, Levy & Century, 2010) and project-based learning (Bell, 2010) have been shown to be integral to such a broadened conception of information-age learning goals. Teaching students how to use information technology resources safely and responsibly was a concern associated with the rapidly changing landscape of learning.

Allowing multiple means of engagement means that students can work independently, as well as in pairs, small groups, large groups, very large on-line groups. It is through such cooperative work that students learn real world skills in communications, time management, organization, critical thinking, problem solving, empathy and advocacy for themselves and others. It also means students can become invested in their learning, because they have more voice and choice in how they learn. There is a wealth of research support for the efficacy of cooperative learning strategies in elementary and secondary teaching (Barron & Darling-Hammond, 2008).

The participants also stressed the need for multiple means of representation. They thought many students, especially those with learning differences, were excluded from representing their knowledge and skills by traditional assessments. In inquiry-based and project-based learning, students have many options for the final products they create to demonstrate their knowledge. For example, a student's understanding of the water cycle might be demonstrated by an essay, a detailed annotated diagram, or a physical model accompanied by an oral explanation.

Recommendation 1.3

We recommend that Universal Design for Learning (Hitchcock, Meyer, Rose & Jackson, 2002; Meyer, Rose & Gordon, 2014) pedagogical principles be adopted and promoted to achieve better academic outcomes for all students. To that end, curriculum documents should

incorporate interdisciplinary options incorporating information technology scaffolds and supports for learning, and multiple means of presentation, engagement and representation in teaching and learning.

The participants also thought that traditional learning goals need to be better balanced. For example, although there are many students reading below grade level at all grade levels, reading instruction is limited to the elementary grades. In spite of the fact that almost half (42%) of Canadian high school students cannot read well enough to cope with the reading demands they face (Frontier College, 2003), reading instruction is all but abandoned after the elementary grades (Edmonds et al., 2009). Struggling readers in high school are more likely to drop out of school (Steinberg & Almeida, 2004), experience life-long low literacy (Edmonds et al., 2009), enter the justice system (Drakeford, 2002), and earn lower wages (Heisz, Notten & Situ, 2016). They are less likely to enter postsecondary education and enjoy meaningful, long-term jobs and careers (Slavin, Cheung, Groff & Lake, 2008). Interestingly, there is a strong correlation between low reading and poor health outcomes as well as increased emergency room visits (Seccomb, Lockwood & Reder, 2005; Rootman & Ronson, 2005). Unfortunately, even when high schools try to intervene and help struggling readers, their methods are rarely evidence-based (Vaughn et al., 2010). Too often, high school interventions for struggling readers stress phonic decoding, passage comprehension strategies and reading enjoyment; when the research evidence suggests that learning word meanings and improving reading fluency are more important variables (Vaughn et al., 2010). In addition, reading instruction needs to be better balanced so that it represents both narrative and expository sources. Reading instruction in elementary school is tilted towards narrative text (story), while most reading in high school, college, university and the workplace involves expository text (information). Finally, there is strong evidence that all students, including high school students, need explicit instruction, using evidence-based practices, in order to learn to read well enough to succeed in post-secondary education and in the workplace (Kamil et al., 2008). In conclusion, learning to read needs to begin before kindergarten and reading instruction needs to continue until the end of high school using evidence-based methods for struggling readers.

Recommendation 1.4

We recommend a review of reading instruction in Manitoba. The review should focus on the imbalances and gaps in reading instruction, as well as the effective, evidence-based practices that should be promoted. Reviewers should consider best practices in early reading prior to school entry for all children, and sustained reading instruction in the middle and senior grades for students who need it.

The participants concern about the knowledge, skills and competencies that students need to succeed were largely related to where, when, how and by whom they are taught. If students are to enjoy learning and see themselves as learners, they must belong to a community of learners and be taught by teachers able to meet their academic needs. Unfortunately, in Manitoba, many students (especially high school students) are partially or fully segregated from their peers and taught by educational assistants rather than teachers. In addition, the

instructional methods employed are insufficient for many students. Educators, in all roles, need more and better pre-service education, in-service professional development, and on-the-job pedagogical supports. Today, inclusive supports tend to be restricted to additional personnel (usually educational assistants), new technology (often without training or support), planning (often without accountability for implementation, fidelity or outcomes), clinical assessments (often lacking in practical strategies that can be used in the classroom), and professional development opportunities (often without enough follow-up or specificity to make a difference in the classroom). Sustained on-the-job training programs in evidence-based pedagogical approaches that build social and academic inclusion are needed. The participants stressed the importance of viewing inclusion as contributing to better instruction for all students.

Recommendation 1.5

We recommend that Manitoba Education and Training adopt policies that eliminate the segregation, exclusion, isolation and marginalizing of students with differences. Educators, in all roles, need more and better pre-service education, in-service professional development, and on-the-job pedagogical supports to build social and academic inclusion.

An additional concern of the participants was that all students, including students with learning differences, have access to 21st Century learning goals in areas like critical thinking and problem solving, communication, collaboration, and creativity and innovation. These goals often are associated with learning about science, technology, engineering, mathematics, and the arts. Learning projects that involve scientific and mathematical thinking, computer programming, teamwork, shared accountability, product design and development, and marketing are not common in our schools. The participants were hopeful that new 21st century curricula would address inclusion from the outset and not require retrofitting for inclusion.

Recommendation 1.6

We recommend that Manitoba curricula be informed by 21st Century learning. This includes greater attention to learning goals in areas like critical thinking and problem solving, communication, collaboration, and creativity and innovation. Research into the STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, the Arts and Math) approach to learning should be reviewed and incorporated into curricula, where appropriate, in ways that assume and support inclusion from the outset (Government of Ontario, 2016)

- The elements of the existing system that remain relevant

The participants affirmed parent choice of their child's school, including the option of home schooling. They also supported the policy of educating every child in the regular classroom of his or her neighborhood school or school of choice. They acknowledged that there has been significant progress toward teacher acceptance and understanding of inclusion. However, they noted that the inclusive philosophy must extend beyond attitudes to competencies in inclusive teaching. For example, teachers need to know how to: (a) use inclusive technologies, (b) collaborate effectively with clinicians, (c) manage educational assistants, and (d) use inclusive

teaching methods. This involves teachers and parents working together more closely, especially as parents have unique insights into their children's unique needs. With respect to students with disabilities and other complex needs, the participants recommended that transition planning (typically limited to the high school to work transition) be extended to include the pre-school to school transition, elementary to secondary transitions, secondary to post-secondary transitions, post-secondary to work transitions, as well as transitions, at any stage, from rural and remote locales to urban settings.

Recommendation 1.7

We recommend a significant investment in preparing all pre-service and in-service educators to work in inclusive schools. This endeavour should include, but not be limited to, knowing how to: (a) use inclusive technologies, (b) use inclusive teaching methods, (c) collaborate effectively with clinicians, (d) manage and make effective use of educational assistants, (e) participate in transition planning, and (f) listen to and work closely with the families of students with learning differences.

- The elements of the existing system that are no longer relevant

The participants thought that the deficit-based approach grounded in a negative psychology and language of disability, dysfunction, disorder and disease needs to be replaced by a strengths-based approach grounded in a positive psychology and language of ability, educative positive behavior supports, evidence-based solution focused interventions and wellness education. This is *not* to say that learning deficits, disabilities and other disadvantages do not exist - they do. However, they must be the impetus for the acceptance of differences, better and more universal academic provisions, and a recognition of the need to teach positive social-emotional attitudes and behaviour skills proactively.

Recommendation 1.8

We recommend that divisional and school administrators, clinicians, support service teachers, classroom teachers, and educational assistants be encouraged and educated to adopt and promote a strengths-based approach grounded in a positive psychology and language of ability. This means that they come to understand and implement with fidelity: (a) preventative, proactive and educative positive behavior supports, (b) evidence-based solution focused interventions, (c) proven approaches to wellness education, and (d) research supported universal and targeted instructional interventions.

- The interconnections between education and the array of external factors that impact student learning and teaching

The participants thought that factors beyond the control of vulnerable children and adolescents were sometimes driving decision-making. For example, they noted that segregated and exclusionary provisions with low curricular expectations lead to low academic achievement and abnormal social skills development. Those outcomes are then used to justify greater

segregation, exclusion and even lower expectations. The fact that many schools and divisions have eliminated or reduced the segregation and exclusion of students with differences was appreciated by the participants. However, consistency across the province is lacking, as some divisions have been more successful than others and desegregation and inclusion are more apparent in elementary than secondary schools.

The participants also were concerned that non-attendance sometimes was exacerbated by school policies that include: (a) punitive rather than educative consequences, (b) segregation, suspensions and expulsions rather than positive behaviour interventions and supports, and (c) tolerance for inconsistent attendance rather than transition supports for new students (especially English language learners, students who have migrated through many schools, and students with mental health problems). They thought educators needed policies, guidance and professional development to implement more preventative, proactive, educative and positive responses to non-attendance.

Recommendation 1.9

We recommend the consistent adoption of inclusive, educative, and positive supports for children and adolescents to replace exclusionary, punitive, and negative consequences, where they exist, across the province.

- Education equity and fairness for all

To achieve educational equity and fairness for all, school administrators need more knowledge and skills related to building inclusive schools. Division and school leaders need to know how to ensure: (a) differences are accepted and celebrated in every classroom, (b) family centered, strengths-based approaches to planning and programming are implemented, (c) physical, social and academic outcomes are achieved using evidence-based 21st Century pedagogical practices and developmentally appropriate programming, (d) meaningful and inclusive Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles are employed in teaching and learning, (e) high quality individualized programming and modified programming in elementary and secondary school, and (f) programming includes authentic Indigenous history, culture and language.

The participants encourage Manitoba Education and Training to consider: (a) more flexibility in structuring the school year, school day, and school timetables, (b) more pro-active, preventative approaches to student mental health, bullying, non-attendance, etc., and (c) improving access for all students, including students with differences, to high school work education and apprenticeships with pathways to post-secondary education and employment.

The province needs to ensure: (a) consistency in inclusive teaching practices from school to school, within and across divisions, and from grade to grade, (b) consistency in the implementation of inclusion in French, English and French Immersion schools, (c) province-wide consistent timely access to specialist clinical services, (d) consistent timely access to qualified resource teachers, counsellors, literacy support teachers, Elders, etc. within schools

(especially in rural and remote jurisdictions), and (e) inclusive education is valued at all levels, pre-school to university,

Equity and fairness for all students must be measured by outcomes. For example, when the outcomes for Indigenous students, in terms of high school graduation, post-secondary readiness and workforce participation equal provincial averages; then, we will have achieved equity and fairness. A similar metric should be applied to the outcomes of students with other differences (i.e., disabilities, poverty, gender, race, ethnicity, and 2SLGBTQ).

Recommendation 1.10

We recommend that all administrators receive a thorough education in inclusive education. This will lead to greater consistency in inclusive teaching provisions and practices across divisions, schools, grades, and languages of instruction. In addition, we recommend that all students, province-wide, have timely access to clinicians and qualified resource teachers, counsellors, literacy support teachers, and Elders, etc. The participants encourage Manitoba Education and Training to consider more flexibility in structuring school schedules, to allow interdisciplinary inquiry-based and project-based learning and to improve access for all students, including students with differences, to high school work education and apprenticeships with pathways to post-secondary education and employment.

Focus area 2: Student learning

What are the conditions required to achieve excellence in student achievement and outcomes in Manitoba?

- What does excellence in student achievement look like?

Participants shared that excellence can be achieved when parents/guardians, students, and teachers are working towards the success of all students. All students can achieve excellence when they have caring teachers who maintain a strong focus on their strengths, use developmentally appropriate strategies, and plan meaningful lessons grounded in Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles (Meyer, Rose, & Gordon, 2014). Excellence in student achievement looks like steady growth and active engagement in their learning, and includes providing peer support for others. Excellence is achieved when each student is challenged, and successful, working within his or her zone of proximal development defined by Vygotsky (1978) as the "actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving' and the higher level of 'potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers" (p.86). Some participants emphasized that gifted learners also must receive personalized learning opportunities but that often their needs are overlooked because of limited resources.

Some participants said that there is some movement towards a holistic, strength-based approach in Manitoba, but there is still room for growth in this area. Some participants also expressed a lack of confidence in knowing how to apply Universal Design for Learning and Differentiated Instruction principles effectively to meet the needs of a diverse group of students. They thought additional training and support in developing and implementing an inclusive pedagogy would be helpful.

Recommendation 2.1

We recommend that a strength-based approach be promoted and implemented by all branches of Manitoba Education and Training. Further, we recommend that teachers participate in ongoing professional development in the use of Universal Design for Learning principles and differentiated instruction. An effective way to build teachers' capacity is through Professional Learning Communities (PLCs). Increasing resources to support initiatives like the one the Manitoba Teachers' Society (2019) has in place to support collaborative learning teams would help to strengthen the capacity of teachers.

- What engages students in their own learning?

Participants expressed that students are engaged in their own learning when they are: (a) actively working in their areas of strength, b) offered meaningful, interesting and authentic learning experiences, c) given a voice and choice in what they are learning, d) allowed time to play and to think, e) able to experience the joy of learning, and f) provided spaces that promote creativity.

Recommendation 2.2

We recommend that schools be given a choice in how they create their daily schedule so they can create environments that enhance student engagement. This may look like a flexible start time (especially in high school), use of a balanced school day schedule, or any number of strategies, schedules and calendars that meet the needs of students in a particular school.

- What is the relevance of the core Manitoba curriculum for today's students?

Participants communicated that separate curricular structures (i.e., math, science, social studies, language arts, etc.) and outcomes that align simplistically with the report card are barriers to planning and integrating several curriculums into one unit of study. This impedes the use of learning strategies such as inquiry-based learning, as teachers need to provide a grade for each subject separately on the report cards. Teachers would like to see a different curricular structure that allows for learning that is more authentic and flexible structures for assessment. There is a general agreement in Manitoba that there is too much curriculum to teach in a year. This means there is little time for deep, authentic learning, developing higher order thinking skills, and 21st century competencies (Lombardi, 2007; Lujan & DiCarlo, 2006). Manitoba Education outlined a typical day in middle years as follows: 70% (3.85 hours) of the day should be spend on core curriculum subjects, 17% of the day in physical-education and art, and 13% of the day on optional credits like French. The core curriculum documents for middle years contain over 200 specific learning outcomes. It seems an impossible task to teach all SLO's in less than four hours per day, leaving teachers overwhelmed and frustrated (Froese-Germain, 2014; Karsenti & Collin, 2013).

Recommendation 2.3 (a)

Several provinces (e.g., British Columbia, Alberta, and Quebec) have moved to a competency-based curriculum. We recommend that the commission look at the models of these provinces and consider developing a similar system in Manitoba. This will require updated curricula and more flexibility in the structure of a typical school day.

Participants also expressed the idea that today's curricula need to support the inclusion of all learners. Currently, Manitoba Education and Training operates as two separate branches that separates inclusion from curriculum development. From educators' perspectives, there does not seem to be very much communication and collaboration between these branches. There is very little mention of inclusion and inclusive strategies in the curriculum documents, and even less connection to curriculum in the numerous documents provided by student services. In fact, there is only one document on Differentiated Instruction that was published in 1996 (Manitoba Education & Training, 1996). Many of the documents on the Manitoba Education and Training website are outdated and do not include up to date information – especially those in the area of student services.

Recommendation 2.3 (b)

Review all the documents currently on the student services section of the Manitoba Education and Training website and update them so they reflect current practices in the province. As new curricular and inclusion documents are created, they need to present a holistic, strength-based approach to education. All new documents should provide support for an inclusive pedagogy, that is practical and applicable to today's classroom.

- What is the relationship between mental and physical health, well-being, safe environments and student learning?

Currently there is no curriculum or strategy in place to address students' mental health. According to a recent report on the mental health of Manitoba's children, mental health issues are on the rise (Chartier et al., 2016). There are also many children and youth who have experienced trauma. As a profession, we are beginning to understand the long-term impact of the mental health and well-being of our students. The mental health of children and youth in our schools is concerning, and in some situations even alarming. Sometimes teachers are placed in the role of mental health first responders. Some teachers said that they do not think that they are equipped to manage the mental health needs of students in their classrooms. Many schools have adopted various social-emotional and well-being programs (e.g., Mind Up, Responsive Classroom, The Incredible Five-Point Scale, How Does Your Engine Run, Roots of Empathy, etc.). These are often seen as "add ons" that teachers need to fit into their already busy day. More importantly, the participants thought that in some cases interventions for mental health were implemented far too late and that early intervention is the key to positive mental health in middle years and high school. One course that has netted positive results is Mental Health First Aid. According to the Mental Health Commission of Canada (2019), Mental Health First Aid is a best practice meaning it has:

- High Impact - positive changes related to the desired goal(s).
- High Adaptability - successful adaptation and transferability to different settings.
- High Quality of Evidence - excellent quality of research/evaluation methodology, confirming the intervention's high impact and adaptability evidence

Another initiative to consider is Trust Based Relational Intervention (TBRI) developed by Dr. Karyn Purvis and Dr. David Cross.

> TBRI is a relationship-based model that can be administered by nurturing, insightful caregivers, and can be implemented in virtually any environment with children and youth of any age and any risk level. Holistic in nature, cost effective to implement, and developmentally respectful of the impact of trauma, TBRI appears to hold significant potential for creating positive impact in the lives of children and youth who have come from the hard places (Purvis, Cross, Dansereau, & Parris, 2013, p. 361).

This approach has been introduced to classrooms across the United States with very positive results.

Recommendation 2.4

We recommend that Manitoba Education develop a comprehensive plan for addressing students' health and well-being that is integrated into all aspects of the curriculum across the grade levels. Several resources we recommend you investigate as you develop this plan are: a) Social Emotional Learning Resource Finder (University of British Columbia, 2019), b) Educating Hearts, Inspiring Minds (The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning, 2019), c) Wellness Education (Alberta, Education, 2019), d) Mental Health First Aid (Mental Health Commission of Canada, 2019), and e) TBRI (Purvis et al., 2013).

- How important are class size and class composition?

Participants expressed concerns about bigger high schools contributing to more fears and concerns for all students. They also noted that smaller class sizes allow for the discovery of individual student strengths and challenges, especially considering the diversity within the composition of the classes. Smaller class sizes allow for more experiential learning, a strategy that keeps students engaged in their learning. Some participants shared the benefits of multi-age classrooms.

Recommendation 2.5

We recommend that the commission reconsider class size, especially during the early years as this is when the foundational skills for literacy and numeracy are developed. Students need strong literacy and numeracy skills to achieve excellence in education, a point supported in the report Literacy and Numeracy in Manitoba: Setting the Context (Manitoba Education and Training, 2019).

- How do knowledge, capacity and attitudes within the system impact a response to the full spectrum of learning needs and abilities?

Participants shared that they thought knowledge, capacity, attitudes, and structures can create barriers to meeting a full range of students' learning needs. Participants acknowledged that teachers have different levels of knowledge about, and understandings of, inclusion and how to successfully use inclusive pedagogies. This lack of understanding can lead to inconsistencies in the strategies used within Manitoba classrooms.

There was a consensus that adaptations and differentiated instruction were not always evident in high school classrooms. We heard a strong consensus that interventions in preschool were beneficial and that investing in children when they are young nets benefits as they get older. However, participants shared they are not always sure which interventions net the best results. Sometimes it seemed that different administrators had different ideas about which program/s to use, and that this was confusing for classroom teachers.

Most participants agreed that early intervention in literacy and numeracy is effective when students are learning to read and write. Research backs up this assertion. Barnett (2011) found that "early educational intervention can have substantive short- and long-term effects on cognition, social

emotional development, school progress, antisocial behavior, and even crime. … These findings are quite robust with respect to social and economic contexts" (p. 977). Barnett also discovered that not all early intervention programs netted the same results.

Several school divisions in the province have formalized early years, literacy and numeracy policies and practices in place (i.e., River East Transcona School Division, Seine River SD) however, there is no consistency across the province with respect to the type of model that is used.

Recommendation 2.6

We recommend that the commission review multiple literacy and numeracy interventions and recommend evidence-based practices that school divisions should use.

- What is the impact of learning pathways and transitions on student success?

Students make many transitions over the 13 years they attend school. When transitions do not go smoothly students' success can be negatively impacted. For example, frequent moves and changes in schools can affect student behaviour, learning, and success (Engec, 2006). Likewise, students who lack a connection to the school and their teachers are less successful. A lack of connection may influence students' attendance, which in turn, may adversely affect student success. According to Hattie's (2012) list of influences on students' achievement or success, teacher-student relationships rate 12th out of 150 factors with a high effect size, while student mobility has a negative effect size meaning a negative impact on student learning.

Recommendation 2.7

Our recommendation is for the commission to develop a province wide policy that allows students to stay in their home school (whenever possible) regardless of where they live (either with their biological or foster family). Funding should not be the determining factor in where a student attends school. Remaining in the same school creates opportunities for strong teacher-student relationships to develop.

- Is the traditional structure of the school calendar and school day working?

Participants discussed the traditional structure of the school day and year, and how it creates barriers to learning, attendance and keeping students in school. Some thought that full day kindergarten was necessary, others thought year-long programming was beneficial to students learning. Several people thought the existing structure should be more flexible to allow schools to be the "right fit" for students rather than trying to fit students into traditional structures.

One of the barriers to more flexible structures is the current Public Schools Act. For example, if schools want to move to a balanced school day schedule, they have to request permission to be granted an exemption from the Public Schools Act. An exemption is only granted for a limited number of years, and then the school has to apply again.

Recommendation 2.8

We recommend changes to the Public Schools Act so that schools can use more flexible systems, such as the balanced school day, without having to seek permission on an ongoing basis. As long as the correct number of hours and days are adhered to, schools should have the flexibility to make changes to the day as they see fit to accommodate their specific group of. We also recommend the commission consider the addition of full day kindergarten in areas of the province where students would benefit the most from a full day program.

Focus area 3: Teaching

How can teachers and school leaders become most effective?

Highly effective teachers and school leaders are among the most significant factors to impact student learning. Teachers are the true change agents in education, and their preparation, competencies and ongoing professional development are key to improving student outcomes. For this reason, it is critical to ensure that teachers are not only highly trained before they enter a classroom for the first time, but to ensure ongoing and sustained professional learning and growth throughout their careers.

- The relationships among Manitoba's teacher training programs, teacher certification requirements and what teachers need to be well prepared for today's students and classrooms

Participants shared that they thought that universities in Manitoba needed to improve the training they provide for pre-service teachers. Specifically, they thought that pre-service teachers needed to be better prepared to teach to the diversity in today's classrooms. They shared that teachers needed to have an in-depth understanding of the range of needs of all learners and of evidence-based instructional strategies that address a diversity of needs. Presently, the provincial requirements for a Bachelor of Education only require one three-credit course in inclusive education. Moreover, teaching English as an additional language course work is optional. There are also no required courses in instructional technology (except for in the senior years stream), and there are no required courses in mental health and well-being. In daycare/early childhood centres, Childcare Assistants may have as little as 40 hours of training, while Early Childhood Educators (ECE II or III) are only required to have 2 years of post-secondary education specific to early childhood.

Recommendation 3.1

We recommend a review of the provincial requirements of the Bachelor of Education degree to identify and address areas where teacher training may be strengthened in order to appropriately teach to all students. We also recommend a review of the provincial requirements of Early Childhood Educators given the importance of high quality instruction in the early years. We suggest an examination of the educator-training model used in Finland where the teaching profession is highly valued and teachers receive a 5-year Master's degree. The training model in Finland is similar to that of the medical profession, and often only 1 in 10 of those who apply are admitted. In addition, educators in daycare/early childhood centres generally have Bachelor degrees (Finnish National Agency for Education, 2019). The universally high standards for all educators have contributed to enhanced preparedness and competence, and have resulted in high levels of student well-being and achievement (Sahlberg, 2010).

Participants expressed concern that there were limited and inconsistent approaches to supporting the professional development of early career teachers. They identified the need for formalized induction programs that include mentorship opportunities in order to build the capacity of early career teachers. The benefits of teacher induction programs are well documented in educational

research and include: a) enhanced professional growth; b) improved student learning; and c) reduced teacher turnover (Glazerman et al., 2010; Ingersoll & Strong, 2011; Lepp, 2017). A recent study of induction and mentorship programs in Manitoba found that of the 24 school divisions that were studied, 54% did not have formal mentoring programs, and of those that did, all but one lasted one year or less (Lepp, 2017).

Recommendation 3.2

We recommend the establishment of province-wide induction programs for early career teachers, which include formalized multi-year mentorship programs. We suggest an examination of the mentorship support that has been mandated in the province of Ontario since 2006. The model in Ontario provides 1st year teachers with a reduced teaching load and mentorship from a teacher who also receives a reduced teaching load to support ongoing professional learning. The Northwest Territories also has had a teacher induction process and a formalized mentorship program since 2001. The approach in the Northwest Territories may serve as a further resource in the development of this approach (Government of Northwest Territories, 2018).

Many participants shared that one of the most important resources that teachers needed in order to be most effective in their practice was time within the school day for inter-professional dialogue and collaboration with fellow teachers, resource teachers, counselors, clinicians, and other team members. The participants described how the increasing complexity of students' needs had necessitated team-based approaches, but that there was insufficient non-instructional time for such collaboration to occur. The connection between higher levels of teacher collaboration and stronger student performance and teacher satisfaction are well established in the research literature (Goddard, Goddard & Tschannen-Moran, 2007; Markow & Pieters, 2010; Simon & Johnson, 2015) and yet participants consistently reported that time for collaboration was limited. There are two kinds of collaboration that have been found to be most effective in enhancing student achievement and they include: (1) collaboration involving analyzing student data and developing instructional responses, and (2) collaboration which focuses on curriculum and instructional decision-making (Ronfeldt, Farmer, McQueen & Grissom, 2015). Collaboration which focuses on curriculum and instructional decision-making includes co-teaching or group instructional practice (Friend & Cook, 2010). Co-teaching was repeatedly mentioned by the participants as necessary to improve instructional practice and student learning.

Recommendation 3.3

We recommend that increased resources should be provided within the school day to support quality collaboration (Hattie, 2012, 2015). Since the provision of designated time and structures, which support collaboration, are strongly linked to enhanced student performance, this kind of support should be embedded within the school day. We further recommend that the provision of co-teaching should become a priority. Co-teaching enables greater differentiation and individualized instruction, which not only supports students with disabilities (Conderman, 2011*), but also support students who do not have special needs (Villa, Thousand & Nevin 2013), and students who are English as additional language learners (Hang & Rabren, 2009).*

Participants shared that educational assistants played a significant role in supporting professional staff (e.g., teachers, clinicians) in the provision of support. However, they highlighted the need for educational assistants to have training in order to perform the key competencies expected of the role. Presently, in Manitoba, school divisions determine the qualifications that are required of educational assistants and many do not require specific training in order to perform this important function. For example, in the provincial support document, *Educational Assistants in Manitoba Schools* (Manitoba Education, 2009) over 75 student-specific competencies that may be expected of an educational assistant are described, and yet prerequisite training is optional (Manitoba Education and Training, 2009). While school divisions may provide on the job training for educational assistants, educational assistants may be hired with no educational training beyond a grade 12 diploma or "equivalent". The absence of educational requirements for educational assistants is particularly concerning given that they often support professional staff in providing essential care for students with extremely complex needs. The issue of insufficient training for educational assistants has not only be raised in the research literature (Giangreco, 2013), but also has been identified as problematic by the Office of the Auditor General of Manitoba (2012). While educational assistant diploma programs exist in Manitoba (e.g., University of Winnipeg, Red River College, Assiniboine Community College), the training provided at each of these institutions is highly variable and optional in our province.

Recommendation 3.4

We recommend the development of a provincially recognized diploma program for educational assistants in partnership with accredited post-secondary institutions. The provincially recognized program would establish standards with respect to the academic and practicum requirements of educational assistants. A similar recommendation was made in the Manitoba Special Education Review: Final Report (Proactive Information Services, 1998) and over 20 years later, this issue has not been addressed. The province of New Brunswick, which is regarded as a leader in the area of inclusive education, has instituted educational standards for educational assistants. While they have not mandated a provincially recognized diploma program, they have established educational requirements for educational assistants, which include the minimum criteria of one year of post-secondary training and experience in a related field. Examples of related fields are programs or degrees in Early Childhood, Youth Care, Human Services Counsellor and Educational Assistant programs. Examples of related experience include previous employment in Youth Care, Group Homes, Support Services, Relief Care, Supported Employment, or Training Centres (Anglophone East School District New Brunswick, 2019). These standards may serve as a model from which to begin to establish educational standards for educational assistants in the province of Manitoba.

Participants shared that they valued the opportunities for ongoing professional learning provided for in-service teachers. Specifically, they mentioned the Post Baccalaureate Diploma in Education and the Master of Education programs as important in the professional development for teachers. Having trained resource teachers with special education certification and trained counselors with counseling certification were described as strengthening the capacity of schools to teach to diversity and foster inclusion. However, in the province of Manitoba holding these certificates is not a requirement of the role. Participants also shared how the role of the school principal was invaluable in creating a school culture that fosters inclusion, however, the participants described that the education and training of school administrators with respect to inclusive practices also was

inconsistent. Presently, the School Administrators Certificate does not require coursework in inclusive education, nor is it a requirement of the role.

Recommendation 3.5

We recommend that certification for resource teachers and counselors become a requirement of these roles. This recommendation is consistent with the recommendations of the Manitoba Special Education Review: Final Report (Proactive Information Services, 1998) and it is consistent with the recommendations of the Office of the Auditor General of Manitoba (2012). The Office of the Auditor General (2012) pointed out that school clinicians were required to be certified in order to be employed by school divisions. They further described how Clinician certificates required clinicians to hold appropriate degrees, and that certification was conditional until a 3-credit-hour university course, Legal and Administrative Aspects of Schools for Clinicians, and 2 years of supervised clinical experience in a Manitoba school were completed. The ability to ensure that clinicians hold appropriate degrees and certification in Manitoba demonstrates that the requirement for certification for resource teachers and school counselors may also be possible. We further recommend that the training for school administrators include course work in inclusive education, as presently it is not a core competency in the School Administrators Certificate. Similar to the requirement for resource teachers and school counsellors, we also recommend that certification for school administrators become a requirement of the role.

Participants shared that the rhetoric of inclusion in Manitoba's policies did not match its practical application in many schools and school divisions. They described how separate schools, separate classrooms, and separate spaces continue to exist throughout the province. They further cited how the degree to which a student is educated in an inclusive setting may depend in part, on where they reside in the province. For example, some school divisions have few, or no separate programs, whereas others offer a range of specialized classrooms and programs, even though there is mounting research to indicate that there are many social and academic benefits of inclusion (Mitchell, 2010, 2014), and that segregated settings often provide less access to curriculum and lower expectations (Mitchell, 2010). The participants shared that if we value inclusion in Manitoba there should be a reduction in segregated programs and of "pull-out" models of support. However, participants shared that a reduction in the segregation of students needed to go hand and hand with increasing teacher capacity through enhanced professional learning and team-based models of support such as co-teaching.

Recommendation 3.6

We recommend that the province of Manitoba review the segregated programs, classrooms, and schools in this province. Such a review should be conducted through an equity lens to not only identify the educational objectives and outcomes of students in these programs, but also the populations that they serve. A recent review of segregated special education program in the Toronto District School Board posed two very important questions: Who benefits? and Who is further disadvantaged? The result of this study found that placement in segregated programs perpetuated inequity in that most students in segregated programs in elementary school continued to be excluded from academic programming in high school, which adversely affected post-

secondary options. It also found that students placed in special education programs were more likely to be racialized, poor and have limited resources (Parekh & Brown, 2019). This research may provide a framework to examine segregation in Manitoba's schools, and may inform the movement toward greater inclusion, and a greater alignment between the philosophy of inclusion and its practical application.

Participants identified the need for partnerships to be strengthened with families and among all support providers from cradle through to adulthood. They emphasized the need for pedagogical support to be provided in tandem with clinical and social supports, and that schools should play a central role in the provision of such support. They cited many examples of how a lack of collaboration with families and among service providers created barriers to the timely receipt of support. The participants provided several examples of service fragmentation including but not limited to: separate agency mandates, separate accountability mechanisms, and separate funding structures. Transition supports for individuals with disabilities were identified as essential at all stages (pre-school/early childhood/adulthood) and yet there were many participants who shared that that communication and collaboration often broke down at these important stages.

Recommendation 3.7

We recommend that service integration be expanded in school-based settings. One way to reduce service fragmentation is through the utilization of the community school model. Surrounding youth and families with a constellation of supports in school-based settings can strengthen collaboration among service providers, and improve the frequency and ease with which students and families access support (Grossman & Vang, 2009). Research indicates that community schools positively influence: a) achievement, (b) attendance (c) personal and family situations, (d) graduation rates, (e) parental engagement, and (f) early intervention and prevention practices for the entire populations that they served (Blank, Melaville, & Shaw, 2003). The expansion of the community school model in Manitoba may be one way to overcome the barriers to service fragmentation and build the capacity of local communities to meet the presenting needs.

Focus area 4: Accountability for Student Learning

How can the education system develop a stronger sense of shared accountability for student learning?

When thinking about this focus area, you may wish to consider:

- The role of measurement and student assessment in teaching and learning

Participants shared that teachers regularly conduct classroom-based assessment. However, when students require more advanced assessments they are often placed on a lengthy waitlist. Waitlists can result in delays in developing and implementing a student plan that includes the best strategies for that individual student to reach his or her full potential. In order to develop an appropriate IEP (Individual Education Plan) for a student, the support team needs to have all information about how a student learns in order to make informed decisions.

Recommendation 4.1

We recommend improved access to support/clinical services (especially in the Northern and rural communities) so students are not left on lengthy waitlists. This will require additional services be put in place, and coordination of the various services to make them more efficient as suggested in recommendation 3.7.

- Home-school communication about student learning

There was a general consensus that there needs to be accountability for student learning and that it is central to the relationship between parents/guardians, students, and teachers. Many participants expressed the importance of open, ongoing, communication between home and school as a first step to developing shared accountability of student learning. An important aspect of home-school communication is a common understanding and clarity about what "student learning" means especially in the areas of literacy and numeracy. Students and parents must know what grade level expectations are and how well students are meeting them. If students are not meeting expectations, then a solution-focused mutually agreed upon plan needs to be put in place.

Recommendation 4.2

We recommend the commission reviews and implements the following suggestions from the report Literacy and numeracy in Manitoba: Setting the Context (Manitoba Education and Training, 2019):

Ensure learners and families are at the centre of literacy, numeracy, [and all educational] development efforts. This means keeping the best interests of learners as the primary focus and adopting student-centred approaches that meet students and families where they are. It means understanding the needs of learners and their families, and working to address these holistically

to deliver responsive, strength-based support for learning. Emphasis on supports for parents and guardians is required, particularly in the early years, so they have what they need to support their children in literacy and numeracy (Manitoba Education and Training, 2019, p. 9).

Build shared understanding of what literacy, numeracy, [and all facets of education] mean now and for the future. This means bridging the diverse perspectives about literacy and numeracy, how they are defined, and how they relate to competencies such as critical thinking and communication. Literacy and numeracy are much broader concepts than reading, writing and arithmetic, and are continuously evolving as the contexts for their application evolve. For example, the meaning of literacy and numeracy has dramatically changed in the digital age. Attitudes that hinder improvements in literacy and numeracy, such as "...it's ok not to be good at math," will require the support of families and communities to change for the better" (Manitoba Education and Training, 2019, p. 8).

The idea that assessment needs to be embedded into all aspects of the learning process was identified in the report *Literacy and numeracy in Manitoba: Setting the Context* (Manitoba Education and Training, 2019), and it also was raised by some participants on April 16th: The key points included:

- Assessment should informing instruction, guide next steps, and involve checking progress and achievement. Quality assessment should create the conditions for improvement and not be used in a punitive way.
- Assessment should be interconnected with curriculum and instruction and should stimulate appropriate action. For this to occur, educators must be assessment and data literate. They need a common understanding of the purposes of assessment, have access to common tools to administer assessments, and support for consistent application.
- Assessment provides valuable information for educators to target instructional improvements, identify needed supports and communicate to learners where they are at and what they need to work on (Manitoba Education and Training, 2019).

Recommendation 4.3

As the commission moves towards a competency-based curriculum as suggested in 2.3a, we recommend a comprehensive overhaul of the current assessment practices. This would include use of the current report card and standardized tests. We suggest considering an assessment system similar to one used in British Columbia (Government of British Columbia, 2019) where the focus is on classroom assessment and reporting.

Focus area 5: Governance

What type of governance structures are needed to create a coordinated and relevant education system?

When thinking about this focus area, you may wish to consider:

- The role of student, parent and community engagement in the education system – at the school and school division level
- The elements of the existing governance structures that remain relevant
- The elements of the existing governance structures that are no longer relevant
- How do we better encourage and facilitate local input and engagement in the education system?
- The role of government in K to 12 education

Two ideas that emerged in the report *Literacy and Numeracy in Manitoba: Setting the Context* (Manitoba Education and Training, 2019) regarding the role of government in education were echoed by the participants at the April, 2019 inclusion event. The ideas included:

(1) Connecting and partnering between and among systems. This means developing mechanisms to enable integrated, collaborative and co-ordinated ways of working across organizations, programs, mandates and structures. While roles, responsibilities and resources vary across systems, greater flexibility and responsiveness is needed to deliver holistic solutions to the complex challenges facing Manitobans in developing literacy and numeracy, and

(2) Supporting seamless transitions for learners. This means understanding the complexity of learner pathways and transitions along their literacy and numeracy journeys. It means anticipating the natural and expected transitions, as well as unexpected hurdles and disruptions that inhibit learning. Seamless transitions begin with empowering learners and their families to navigate the choices and decisions available to them. It is also important to provide more intentional pathways for learners and accessible services and supports, when they are needed (Manitoba Education and Training, 2019, p.7).

Recommendation 5.1

We recommend the commission investigates and establishes criteria for integrated, collaborative and co-ordinated ways of working across organizations, programs, mandates and structures.

Recommendation 5.2

We recommend the commission launch a plan that supports seamless transitions for all students in Manitoba, which includes allowances for students to remain in their "home" school regardless of their place of residence

Focus area 6: Funding

What actions are required to ensure that the education system is sustainable and provides equitable learning opportunities for all children and youth?

- Manitobans deserve a high-quality K to 12-education system at a reasonable cost to taxpayers, who expect that financial resources invested in the education be strategically allocated to provide the best possible learning outcomes for all children and youth. Despite regular increases in funding, the overall system is not yielding desired levels of student achievement and outcomes. Why?

Participants expressed their concerns that the education review commission is looking at education as an isolated system. Education is part of a larger system in Manitoba with a long history of systemic problems. For example, before students across the province can be successful in school they need: a) their basic needs met (i.e., running water, access to affordable food, safe housing, a healthy vibrant community supporting them), b) access to an excellent education (trained and caring teachers, relevant curriculum, physical and human resources, accessible buildings, K-12 schools in their community), c) equitable funding, and d) a system that is less focused on standardized test scores and more focused on helping all students obtain the knowledge, skills and understandings they need to be contributing citizens and to gain access to "the good things in life" (Wolfensberger, Thomas & Caruso, 1996). The "good things in life" include but are not limited to being accorded dignity, respect, acceptance, a sense of belonging, an education, a voice in the affairs of one's community and society, opportunities to participate, a decent material standard of living, a place to live, and opportunities for work and self-support (Osburn, 2006).

Recommendation 6.1

The financial resources needed to provide the "good things in life" need to be evaluated alongside the review of financial resources invested in education. Funding could include; a) expansion of afterschool programs, such as Wayfinders, Sistema, Boys and Girls Clubs, Peaceful Village, language programs, etc. from K to 12 in all divisions, b) proper winter clothing for all students so they can participate in land-based learning year round, c) accessible playgrounds, d) fully accessible schools, e) expansion of programs like the MET school in Seven Oaks School division, f) expansion of sustainable work experience/apprenticeship community partnerships, and g) expansion of programs like Career Trek.

- Equitable funding

Many of the participants conveyed their concerns about the lack of equitable funding and programming across the province. For example, not all high school students have access to the same kind of supports. Some schools have advanced learning opportunities for students, others offer sports options, some have opportunities to explore trades, but all students do not have access to all these opportunities. Some of the students who live in rural or northern communities have to leave their home community to complete high school.

Recommendation 6.2(a)

We recommend that Manitoba Education and Training ensure that all students in the province have access to equitable funding and programming from Kindergarten to Grade 12.

Recommendation 6.2(b)

We recommend that funding should be based on the needs of students, not on enrollment alone. Furthermore, there should be flexible funding available when the needs of the student population change,

General Recommendations 7:

Some of the ideas generated by participants did not fit into one of the six focus areas of the commission; therefore, they are presented in this general recommendation section.

Recommendation 7.1

We recommend the commission evaluate the physical spaces in school buildings and playgrounds and improve the accessibility of all spaces allowing for full inclusion.

Recommendation 7.2

We recommend expanding teacher training programs like CATEP to increase the number of Indigenous teachers and leaders in Manitoba Schools

Recommendation 7.3

We recommend Manitoba Education and Training create a platform that allows divisions to share successful innovative programs they are using, such as the MET school, Literacy Links, Propel, and Weeks Without Walls.

Recommendation 7.4

The word "inclusion" reflects the provincial educational philosophy and the pedagogy of teacher preparation programs. We recommend changing the language in the provincial Special Education Certificate and Guidelines (outlined by Professional Certification and Student Records Unit) to align with the language and pedagogy of inclusion. Specifically, we recommend changing the name of the "Special Education Certificate" to the "Inclusion Education Certificate" and, Changing the name of the "Special Education Certificate Guidelines" to the "Inclusion Education Certificate Guidelines." This recommendation was sent to the Minister of Education in June of 2018 by the Inclusive Education Professors' Roundtable and has not yet been addressed.

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Appendix A

Strengthening Inclusion in Manitoba Schools: Join the Conversation

Event
The *Strengthening Inclusion in Manitoba Schools: Join the Conversation* event was held at the University of Manitoba Faculty of Education on April 16, 2019 from 6:00 to 8:30 pm. The event agenda included a territorial acknowledgement, greetings from the Dean of the Faculty of Education, introduction of the event organizers, an explanation of the format for the conversations, and an explanation of how the final report on the conversations would be compiled and communicated to the *Manitoba Commission on Kindergarten to Grade 12 Education*.

Sponsorship
The event was sponsored by the Manitoba Inclusive Education Professors' Roundtable with in-kind and financial support from the University of Manitoba, Faculty of Education. The members of the Roundtable are academic professors and instructors in the area of Inclusive Education at four Manitoban universities: Brandon University, Université de Saint-Boniface, University of Manitoba, and University of Winnipeg.

Invitation and Attendance
Invitations to the event in English (see Figure 1) and French (see Figure 2) were distributed widely by email. English and French posters (see Figures 3 and 4) also were distributed and posted at diverse locations.

Email invitations were sent to:

- all members of the Manitoba Inclusive Education Professors' Roundtable for redistribution at their respective institutions,
- individuals with disabilities known to the organizers,
- parents and other supporters of students with disabilities known to the organizers,
- students in PBDE and graduate programs (MEd, PhD) - most of whom are teachers, resource teachers, counsellors, administrators, and other educators or clinicians in Manitoba schools,
- recent graduates of graduate programs MEd, PhD) - most of whom are teachers, resource teachers, counsellors, administrators, and other educators or clinicians in Manitoba schools,
- contacts at the Manitoba First Nations Education Resource Center (MFNERC),
- contacts as the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs & E.A.G.L.E. Urban Transition Centre,
- contacts at a variety of disability advocacy and service organizations including the Winnipeg Optimal Health Early Years Sports Club (OHEYS), Canadian Multicultural Disability Center Inc. (CMDCI), KC Dyslexia Learning Centre and others, and
- The Manitoba Teachers' Society and its membership, Manitoba Association of School Superintendents (MASS), Manitoba School Boards Association (MSBA), Student Services Administrators of Manitoba (SSAAM),

Figure 1 English Invitation

Inclusive Education Consultation
Tuesday April 16, 2019
6:00 - 8:30 PM
Room 200, Faculty of Education, University of Manitoba

This consultation is an invitation to amplify voices representing lived experiences within education in Manitoba (pre-school, elementary, secondary and post-secondary). We are interested in the voices of those who have struggled to obtain (for themselves, their children, or their students) unfettered access, adequate supports, appropriate instruction, fair assessment, and inclusive social and academic opportunities in school. We hope to create a forum for those who have experienced (or know those who have experienced) exclusion, segregation, marginalization or devaluation at school. We also are interested in amplifying the voices of those who have had positive, inclusive educational experiences within education. We want to learn about your perspectives on how to understand, improve, and build upon inclusion in the education in Manitoba.

We plan to listen to and organize your ideas and submit them to the *Manitoba Commission on Kindergarten to Grade 12 Education*. While your words and ideas may be incorporated into the submission, they will be presented anonymously. At the consultation, you will meet in table groups to discuss the issues you deem important. There will be discussions in both English and French. There will be notetakers at each table and an opportunity for each table to present their ideas and listen to the ideas of others.

This event is sponsored by the Provincial Inclusive Education Professors' Roundtable, made up of inclusive education professors at Brandon University, Université de Saint-Boniface, the University of Manitoba and the University of Winnipeg.

Please feel free to extend this invitation to others interested in sharing their perspectives and improving education in Manitoba.

RSVP through Eventbrite

Figure 2 French Invitation

Consultation sur l'inclusion scolaire
Le mardi 16 avril 2019
18 h – 20 h 30
Université du Manitoba, Faculté d'éducation, Salle 200

Cette invitation à une consultation est une occasion pour ceux et celles qui ont vécu des expériences au sein de l'éducation au Manitoba (préscolaire, primaire, secondaire et postsecondaire) de faire entendre leur point de vue. Nous nous intéressons au point de vue de ceux et celles qui, à l'école, ont eu du mal à obtenir (pour eux-mêmes, leurs enfants ou leurs étudiants) un accès sans entrave, du soutien adéquat, un enseignement approprié, une évaluation juste et des opportunités sociales et scolaires inclusives. Nous espérons créer un forum pour ceux et celles qui ont vécu (ou qui connaissent ceux et celles qui ont vécu) l'exclusion, la ségrégation, la marginalisation ou la dévaluation à l'école. Nous souhaitons également entendre le point de vue de ceux qui ont eu des expériences éducatives positives et inclusives au sein de l'éducation. Nous voulons connaître votre opinion sur la façon de comprendre, d'améliorer et de faire avancer l'inclusion scolaire au Manitoba.

Nous envisageons de recueillir, d'organiser et de soumettre vos idées à la Commission manitobaine sur l'éducation de la maternelle à la 12e année sous forme de soumission. Vos idées seront intégrées à la soumission, mais elles seront présentées de manière anonyme. Lors de la consultation, vous serez invités à vous regrouper pour discuter des questions que vous jugez importantes. Il y aura des discussions en anglais et en français. Il y aura des preneurs de notes à chaque table et il sera possible pour tous de présenter ses idées et d'écouter celles des autres.

Cet événement est parrainé par la table ronde provinciale des professeurs d'éducation inclusive, composée de professeurs d'éducation inclusive de l'Université de Brandon, de l'Université de Saint-Boniface, de l'Université du Manitoba et de l'Université de Winnipeg.

N'hésitez pas à partager cette invitation à d'autres personnes intéressées à faire entendre leurs points de vue sur l'amélioration de l'éducation au Manitoba.

RSVP par Eventbrite

Figure 3 English Poster

Strengthening Inclusion in Manitoba Schools: Join the Conversation

April 16th 6:00 PM – 8:30 PM Room 200
Faculty of Education University of Manitoba

In response to the Manitoba Commission on Kindergarten to Grade 12 Education we are providing a forum to amplify the voices of those who value inclusive education and want it to remain a priority in our province.

You are invited to participate in table conversations (in French and English) to share your perspectives on how maintain, improve, and strengthen inclusion in Manitoba's schools.

Ideas will be recorded, compiled and submitted to the Manitoba Commission on Kindergarten to Grade 12 Education.

Light refreshment will be served.

Register through Eventbrite

Additional details:

This event is hosted by the Provincial Inclusive Education Professors' Roundtable from the University of Manitoba, University of Winnipeg. Brandon University, and Université de Saint-Boniface

Figure 4 French Poster

CONSOLIDER L'INCLUSION SCOLAIRE

Mardi 16 avril 2019, salle 200, 18 h – 20 h 30
Université du Manitoba, Faculté d'éducation

Joignez-vous à la discussion

En réponse à la Commission manitobaine sur l'éducation de la maternelle à la 12e année, nous souhaitons offrir un forum pour ceux et celles pour qui l'inclusion scolaire est une priorité au Manitoba.

Vous êtes invités à des petits groupes de discussion (en français ou en anglais) pour nous faire connaître votre opinion sur la façon de comprendre, d'améliorer et de faire avancer l'inclusion scolaire au Manitoba.

Toutes les suggestions recueillies seront enregistrées, compilées puis remises à la commission. Des boissons seront servies.

Cet événement est parrainé par la table ronde provinciale des professeurs d'éducation inclusive, composée de professeurs d'éducation inclusive de l'Université de Brandon, de l'Université de Saint-Boniface, de l'Université du Manitoba et de l'Université de Winnipeg.

Organization of Conversation Circles

Prior to the event, the organizers contacted future attendees through the online reservation system and asked each of them to indicate, in a few words, what inclusive education topic they thought was most important. Similar topics were grouped together as themes and used to organize conversation circles at the event. The themes of the nine conversation circles are listed below with the attendees' related topic suggestions listed below each theme.

1. Support for Classroom Teachers in Inclusive Classrooms/Schools
   "how to best support teachers"
   "role of the classroom teacher"
   "support to classroom teachers"
   "more inclusive education training for teachers"
   "increase number of educational assistants"
   "what does it mean to be an inclusive school division?"

2. Inclusion in the Senior Years - Transition Planning
   "inclusion in Senior Years"
   "Senior Years inclusion
   "intersections of multiple identities"
   "transitioning students (18+) to community, life and work"
   "inclusion in and out of classroom"
   "High School inclusion and transitions to adulthood"
   "transition to adulthood and how that should and could be made better for student with disabilities and their families"

3. Inclusion in Pre-School, Early and Middle Years - Inclusive Classrooms and Pedagogy
   "transition to school from preschool programs"
   "strengthen our capacity to provide meaningful involvement and equal access"
   "strengthen our capacity to provide meaningful programming and equal access"
   "positive behaviour support"
   "building inclusive classrooms using Universal Design for Learning"
   "strengthening inclusion in schools"
   "improvement, and strengthening inclusion in Manitoba's schools"

4. Embracing and Celebrating Diversity
   "diversity as a gift, not a burden in schools"
   "embracing and celebrating diversity in the classroom, school, and community"
   "circle of support – inclusion for all learners/community"
   "resisting the forces of separating and sorting abilities in schools"
   "meeting all the diverse needs in classrooms"

5. Accessible and Meaningful Curricula for All

"for those students that do not qualify for course modifications – which can make curriculum "accessible" – but that continue to be unsuccessful, how can we make the curriculum accessible?"

6. Inclusion in a Dual Track (French/English) Setting
"inclusion in a dual track setting"
"inclusion in a dual track school"
"French/English dual-track inclusion dynamics"
"inclusion in immersion"
"supporting French immersion students with language disorders"

7. Meaningful Inclusion of All Learners - Indigenous Students
"inclusive practices with Indigenous communities"
" inclusion of ethnic minorities (particularly Indigenous) in the classroom"

8. Meaningful Inclusion of all Learners – Students with Learning Disabilities, Developmental Disabilities and Intellectual Disabilities
"what does inclusion look like when working with our most vulnerable young students - violence and trauma impacting classroom life, both staff and students well-being?"
"inclusive education for persons with intellectual disabilities"
"supporting students with severe behavioural needs in elementary"
"supporting integrated students with ASD at the elementary level"
"programming for kids who do not spend the majority of the day in classroom. Who should the teacher be? What qualifications should the EAs have?'
"literacy with a focus on Dyslexia"
"supports needed for successful inclusion"

9. Strengthening Inclusion - Open Conversation

Conversation Circles

The attendees were invited to join the conversation circle of their choice. At each conversation circle, they were welcomed by two facilitators. One was a Graphic Facilitator. His or her job was to capture the ideas of the group on chart paper through drawings, symbols and words using colorful markers. He or she was partnered with a Conversation Facilitator who stimulated conversations and recorded ideas in words on another chart. The facilitators were asked to follow the guidelines below.

- As much as possible, please use the words of the participants (rather than your own interpretation of them).
- From time to time, go around the group and invite everyone, especially those who have contributed least, to participate.

- Please reinforce participation (That's interesting! Thanks for sharing! Have I written down what you meant correctly? etc.) but do not judge or evaluate ideas.
- Follow the five Ds this is plural and not possessive to guide the stages of the conversation about your conversation circle's theme, allowing 15 minutes for each D:

> Discover (What's working well? Can you provide an example? Why is it effective? Why is it important for it to be maintained? Who benefits?)
> Difficulties/Dilemmas (What's getting in the way? What are the barriers that students/teachers/families/communities have experienced? How do these barriers affect students, teachers, families/communities?)
> Dream (What is the desired state? What would we like to see? Why is important to attain this desired state? Who will benefit? How will they benefit?)
> Design (How can we get there? What needs to happen to make the dream a reality? Who are the key stakeholders that can contribute to making the change a reality?)
> Deliver (What do we want to share? What resonates with you? What are our key themes?)

- Wrap up the conversation at 7:45 pm. You will be asked for a 3-5 minute (time limit strictly enforced) summary of the key themes discussed by your group. The group can help craft that summary.

Figure 5 Schedule and Structure of Conversations

Time	Activity	Time
6:00 -6:20	Welcome/Introductions Participants go to conversation circles (there are 9)	15 minutes
6:20 – 6:30	**Setting the Stage:** When participants assemble at your conversation circle we ask that, the conversation facilitator and graphic facilitator introduce themselves and provide a brief statement about their background. We then ask you state/introduce the topic to be discussed and the 5 D format that will be followed. Please mention the time allotted to each step (Each D) in the process.	10 minutes
6:30-6:45	1. **Discover** –What's working well? Can you provide an example? Why is it effective? Why is it important for it to be maintained? Who benefits?	15 minutes
6:45– 7:00	2. **Difficulties/Dilemmas** –What's getting in the way? What are the barriers that students/teachers/families/communities have experienced? How do these barriers affect students, teachers, families/communities?	15 minutes

7:00 – 7:15	3. **Dream** – What is the desired state? What would we like to see? Why is important to attain this desired state? Who will benefit? How will they benefit?	15 minutes
7:15 – 7:30	4. **Design** –How can we get there? What needs to happen to make the dream a reality? Who are the key stakeholders that can contribute to making the change a reality?	15 minutes
7:30 – 7:45	**Deliver** –With your group, create a 1 minute summary of the key themes discussed. Ask your group, What do we want to share? What resonates with you? What are our key themes?" Invite participants to sign the graphic only if they would like to do so (this is **<u>entirely</u>** voluntary).	15 minutes
7:45 – 8:20	**Deliver – Whole Group Sharing** – As the conversation facilitator, we ask that you share a **1-3** minute summary of the key themes discussed with your group. We will circulate with a microphone.	35 minutes
8:20 – 8:25	**Concluding Remarks**	

Report

The ideas presented at each conversation were recorded by the facilitators. Those records were collected and organized into emergent themes by an office assistant financed by the Public Engagement Fund at the University of Manitoba Faculty of Education. The records and emergent themes were further analyzed by two Manitoba Inclusive Education Professors' Roundtable professors and organized to fit the submission format requested by the *Manitoba Commission on Kindergarten to Grade 12 Education*. The first draft of that submission was circulated for review to members of the Manitoba Inclusive Education Professors' Roundtable. The summary of the ideas shared and recommendations are as faithful a synthesis of the ideas of those of the participants as the authors could achieve. After revision, the submission was posted on the University of Manitoba, Faculty of Education website and submitted to the *Manitoba Commission on Kindergarten to Grade 12 Education.*

Territorial Acknowledgement

The University of Manitoba campuses are located on original lands of Anishinaabeg, Cree, Oji-Cree, Dakota, and Dene peoples, and on the homeland of the Métis Nation. We respect the Treaties that were made on these territories, we acknowledge the harms and mistakes of the past, and we dedicate ourselves to move forward in partnership with Indigenous communities in a spirit of reconciliation and collaboration.

Facilitators and Participants

Graphic Facilitators
Rick Freeze
Kendra Gowler
Linda Gingera
Lori Hunter
Anita Maharaj
Kerry Peterson
Sharmila Sukhan
Elaine Solinski
Andrea Sward

Conversation Facilitators:
Marie-Elaine Desmarais
Lesley Eblie-Trudel
Amy Farrell-Morneau
Trevi Freeze
Darlene Gerrior
James Kelm
Dale Kendel
Laura Sokal
Shannon Timlick
John VanWalleghem

Participants

Cheryl	Hoffmann
Arlene	Reid
Kathy	Collis
Megan	Schroeder
Laura	Jack
Sandra	Goff
Roberta	Kula
Sandra	Goff
Joyce	Douglas
Aaron	Beckman
Joni	Wilson
Darlene	Curci
Josh	Watt
Samuel	Unrau
Jeff	Levesque
Michelle	Fuchs
Tricia	Bailey Sauve

Tannis	NishibataChan
Sari	Rosenberg
Christine	Wigglesworth
Reynold	Fast
Fatumah	Mbabaali
Michelle	Shmyr-Becker
Lia	Gervino
Carolyn	Kornelsen
Karen	Hiscott
Patricia	Roadley
Buffie	Stewart
Kathy	Tang
Cheryl	Smith
Alexandra	Bancroft
Elaine	Solinski
Brian	O'Leary
Cynthia	Penner
Dale	Christiuk
Lorelei	Bunkowsky
Leslie	Norrie
Sandra	Voyer
Jerald	Wake
Rachel	Otto
Annette	Greene
Kimberly	Embleton
Heidi	Garcia
Laura	Molgat
Jane	Friesen
Lars	Feilberg
Sarah	Melo
Melissa	Critch
Kimberly	Merasty
Susan	Kurbis
Kayla	BishopMalapad
Cindy	Nachtigall
Judith	Walker
Janet	Lee
Julie	Fisher
Kathleen	McMillan
Betty	Klassen
Kerri	Pruden
Jordan	Laidlaw
Shaun	Bright

Michael	Baker
Abdelhady	Elnagar
Seonghwi	Bang
Janet	Walker
Jody	Friesen
Jeannie	Kerr
Louise	Duncan
Jane	Mychasiw
Jennifer	Paszkat
Chantal Shivanna	Ramraj
Sara	Tham
Amanda	Huang
Laura	Patton
Veronica	Green
Susan	Schmidt
Rodney	Kehler
Anne	Kresta
Janique	Kuffel
Terry	Hass-Speirs
Lee Anne	Block
Martina	Vergata
Joyce	Douglas
Jennifer	McGowan
Jan	Lankester
Audrey	Laviolette
Cindy	Calthorpe
Teresa	Rogers
Geri	Harder-Robson
Ross	Meacham
Paul	Olson
Marlo	Kozak
Juliana	Oyaide
Sara	Christle
Robin	Stacey
Janet	Lee
Heather	Poirier
Cyndy	Jones
Audra	Latschislaw
Chantal	Desmarais
Sarah	Negus
Monique	Curci
Jennifer	Bracken
Barb	Isaac

Rachel	Smith
Brian	Wood
Sheri-Lynn	Skwarchuk
Trena	Levesque
Kersten	Cadotte
Elysse	Kuldys
Lori	Hunter
Alicia	Lazaridis
Kathryn	Penner
Mary-Ann	Updike
Fred	Kelesask
Wendy	Novotny
Tracie	McDonald
Tannis	Esquival

Figure 6 Photos of Event

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Manitoba Inclusive Education Professors Roundtable - collaborated in planning and hosting the event, and submitting the report to the *Manitoba Commission on Kindergarten to Grade 12 Education*.

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Alison Wells-Dyck - assisted in organizing the event, timing the conversations at the event, whole group sharing process, and taking photographs of the images that were drawn by the graphic facilitators, as well as writing the submission to the *Manitoba Commission on Kindergarten to Grade 12 Education*.