

Manitoba's Commission on K-12 Education
470 - 800 Portage Avenue, Winnipeg, MB R3G 0N4
E: K12educationcommission@gov.mb.ca F: 204.945.0221

**PUBLIC CONSULTATION WRITTEN SUBMISSION
MANITOBA'S COMMISSION ON KINDERGARTEN TO GRADE 12 EDUCATION**

Introduction

The Interlake School Division (ISD) believes that students are the heart of education and changes to the education system in Manitoba should focus on improving student outcomes. The ISD also believes that locally elected boards of education are the most effective way to represent local voice because they understand and support the unique characteristics of their communities. Effective local governance is integral with and positively impacts the 6 focus areas of the review.

ISD Local Voices / Local Choices Initiatives and Successes

These are examples of initiatives and strengths which occurred within the ISD because the local board allocated resources based on the needs of local schools.

- Initiated capital funding for our \$2.1M fiber optic network, providing high speed internet access to all schools for curricular and programming resource delivery for students of all ages and learning abilities. Technology was identified as a high need by parents and community. The ISD was paying for internet services that were not meeting our needs. The best way to infuse technology in our schools was to finance fibre technology.
- Completed renovations to the Science Labs in Teulon Collegiate and Warren Collegiate in 2019, funded entirely at the local level and brought about through consultation with the PAC's of each school. The PACs made a presentation, science labs were identified as a need by the PACs, and the board recognized the school were lacking the facilities.
- Introduced and implemented a fully funded Junior Kindergarten program available in all Interlake communities for the 2018/2019 school year, setting up our communities' 4-year-olds to succeed.
- Considered and funded unique community-based programs as a result of community input, ensuring the long-term sustainability and increasing enrollment, of our smallest schools, as the heart and soul of their communities.
- Continued a long-standing commitment to the maintenance of staffing levels that allow for small class sizes, with low pupil teacher ratio (PTR), creating truly inclusive learning environments. This was achieved as a board initiative and hearing from parents and teachers concerns of class sizes.
- Delivered a proactive and deliberate approach to programming and course offerings and schedules, driven by parents and the community, ensuring sustainability and viability in larger schools within larger communities, including a thriving K-12 French Immersion Program.
- Initiated by parents, invested funds in the band and music programs in several communities, ensuring that equipment, sheet music, instruction, and instruments are in place to support student learning.
- Worked collaboratively with local municipalities and communities, including Joint Use and Community Use of School arrangements in Warren, Stonewall, and Teulon catchments, allowing access to our school facilities when they are not being used.
- Implemented ISD financial support to eliminate course fees for students in Grades 7-12, ensuring that all courses are accessible for all students.

- Implemented Balanced School Day, which directly impacted student learning by allowing concentrated blocks of time with scheduled activity and nutrition breaks, decreasing behavioral issues and increasing student physical activity.
- Improved program consistency by supporting divisional professional learning model, which provides opportunity for teachers to meet together in grade groups.
- Supported the ISD admin intern program, which was created to provide focused professional development for future school leaders from within our existing professional employ. In a small rural division like ISD where the majority of our public schools and all of our Hutterian schools have teaching principals, this program has proved extremely valuable.
- Achieved high school graduation rates that consistently surpass provincial averages and point to success for all groups (self-declared Indigenous, male, female, and children in care).

Specific Focus Areas of the Review

Focus area 1: Long-term vision - Continuous Improvement Plan (CIP)

ISD believes in long term planning and vision. Through a process of “Hearing. Planning. Doing” and community consultations, the ISD identified needs and the 2018-2022 Continuous Improvement Plan (CIP) was successfully developed.

Our vision statement is to “prepare today’s learner for tomorrow”, which commits to a goal and purpose of K to 12 education in a rapidly changing world. The CIP was proactively created with community, staff, and students within the Interlake School Division. It addresses the specific requirements for our students within our local cultural environment.

The specific needs of students, staff, and community are identified on a yearly basis and a professional learning plan is established to meet these needs, always with continuous improvement in teaching and learning for literacy, numeracy, and well-being as the goal.

The CIP guides our work as a division and provides a current focus on numeracy in Kindergarten through Grade 8 and on well-being in Grades 9 through 12.

Focus area 5: Governance - Strategic Governance Model

The ISD ensures strategies and tools are in place for student success. The ISD has recently moved to a new Strategic Governance Model, where Administration Procedures and Board policies have been separated. The administration procedures are overseen and implemented by the superintendent and the board policies are developed and implemented by the school trustees. Several strategic governance successes are outlined below.

- A decision-making matrix clearly outlines the areas of responsibilities for the Superintendent and the Board of Trustees, improving accountability and transparency through clear lines of authority and responsibility.
- The ISD encourages and facilitates local input and engagement in the education system during budget time, with Super PAC meetings, at meetings to showcase CIP including numeracy and wellness, and at board meetings where teachers and students showcase examples of how they are meeting the CIP plan.
- School boards are imperative in our rural communities as they are another point of contact, next to the teacher and principal, to discuss concerns about their children’s education and wellness. Trustees on the school board are known in the community and approachable to facilitate questions. This high-level interaction preserves and strengthens parent and community voice and is a benefit of local voices and local choices.
- The ISD Board of Trustee members have been reduced from 9 to 7, ensuring we are using local taxpayers’ money in the most effective way and achieving cost-containment by maximizing the use of resources.
- The ISD’s newly implemented governance system has achieved improved student outcomes through their Continuous Improvement Plan (CIP) and maintained and improved the quality of instruction for all students throughout the Interlake area.

Joint Meeting ISD School Board and SuperPAC

The ISD school trustees and administration met with the ISD parent councils for a joint meeting for a presentation and Q&A session. The PAC representatives provided valuable feedback regarding the 6 focus areas of the K-12 public education review.

Parent Advisory Councils deliver a strong clear voice for their children’s education within their community and appreciate collaborating at a local level. Please see Appendix “A” for comments on the 6 focus areas.

Conclusion

The ISD provides public education that is reflective of the communities in which our public schools reside. Through transparent and fiscally responsible governance of locally levied and provincial funding, the ISD Board of Trustees maintains a strong focus on our Vision: “Preparing Today’s Learner for Tomorrow.”

The ISD strongly advocates for elected school board governance and believes students are the heart of the education system and should be the key focus of board members, staff, and the Minister of Education. The ISD clearly demonstrates their commitment on improving student outcomes.

The ISD ensures that the schools and programming reflect what our community wants and needs. Schools in our communities look different from schools in other parts of the province. Those differences result from choices our school board has made on behalf of their community, creating grassroots democracy. Schools belong to local communities. This submission is demonstrative of the strong collaboration that exists between the board of trustees, the senior admin team, and our local school communities.

Respectfully,

Fran Frederickson

Alan Campbell

Fran Frederickson, ISD Board Chair
Alan Campbell, ISD Board Vice-Chair
On behalf of the ISD Board of Trustees

APPENDIX A

JOINT ISD SCHOOL BOARD / SUPERPAC MEETING COMMENTS

May 22, 2019

**ISD Board of Trustees / Super PAC Meeting
Wednesday, May 22nd, 2019**

Focus Area 1: Long Term Vision

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

- Make sure everyone's educational needs are met. ie) one teacher - versus not enough help to meet class size. Smaller class sizes or more teachers
- Smaller classes = multilevel learning + easier learning to do more 1-on-1.
- How can we implement strategy to increase staff plus meet goals of their school / community
- Schools to learn from each other to see what works for each other in each school
- Small classroom sizes in all grades
- More assistance
- Peer support
- Differential teaching
- Need to address the needs of the community
- Need to create students who want to learn and know how to access the tools to learn
- Resourcefulness, critical thinking
- Balance between retention and understanding the why of learning (IE) basic math facts
- Kids need to be able to make a decision and have confidence in themselves to support their decision
- Good analytical skills, critical thinking skills, and a good moral compass all around
- Real life skills ex) HomeEc, budget skills
- Students need to learn how to learn
- Students need to be resilient and adaptable
- Multilevel learning environments meeting children where they are developmentally (not only based on age)
- Technology, coding, problem solving are important
- Collaborative, problem solving, communication skills important as students grew up in an ever-increasing technological world
- Continue need for numeracy and literacy

Focus Area 2: Student Learning

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

- Smaller class sizes
- More teachers
- Up-to-date textbooks / computers
- Up to date schools: example) received new science labs in our schools. Thank you to ISD board for listening
- Rural schools should be given the same opportunities as City Schools
- Multilevel
- Use more technology
- Up-to-date textbooks
- Small class sizes
- More support staff to assist with enabling inclusive classrooms
- Up-to-date teacher training
- Safe schools ex)
 - good structures of buildings,
 - health and safety training (CPR),
 - inclusiveness of all genders, LGBTQ, transgender
- Reduction in poverty
- Access to health services (mental and physical)
- Access to nutrition for students that don't have consistent access
- We have questions regarding how excellence and student achievement is measured?
- Students need to have a calm, a safe classroom to learn
- Teachers need to be supported and have good mental health
- Environment in classroom needs to be transformed

- Is the current curriculum what we need as Manitoban's?
- Support parents as new initiatives are taught (for example new math and unable to help their kids with homework)
- Physical literacy supported by trained Phys Ed specialists
- Having course options in high school for students were not academically strong - teaching employable skills

Focus Area 3: Teaching

How can teachers and school leaders become most effective?

- Teach courses they have studied for ie) math or physics.
- Physical education teacher for all schools.
- Grade 12 Advanced Placement (AP) and International Baccalaureate (IB).
- Move kids up to another grade level if they are ready
- Proper funding
- Professional development
- Staff presentations to staff members ie) sending one staff member to PD instead of 4 or 5
- University training for new teachers - improvements to those programs
- Less clerical tasks for classroom teachers ie) handling money, book orders, forms
- Use of technology ie) Remind App for teachers to communicate to parents
- Keeping small class sizes
- More support staff to assist with enabling inclusive classrooms
- Reading recovery, guidance counselors, resource therapy
- The Manitoba report card is such a huge undertaking for teachers. Can this be made simpler to not exhaust and overwhelmed teachers?
- Instead of a report card - meeting with the teacher (without your child) would be better
- Teachers having enough time to connect with students to create an emotional connection
- Co-teaching with 2 teachers in a multilevel room (like in the Scandinavian countries)
- Are we over assessing our children? Do they need more time learning?

Focus Area 4: Accountability for student learning

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

- All ethnics should be taught.
- Accountability for students to hand in assignments on time.
- Students having to hand in assignment and if over by due date phone call the parents. If more than one week if you don't hand in then you get a 0 .
- How well are EA's supported?
- Do clinicians, teachers, EA's, and administrators get a chance to collaborate together?
- More EA PD

Focus Area 5: Governance

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

- Local representation
- Needs of each region in our province are vast and varied
- Our PAC really likes having a local board that we elect that we can discuss school issues with

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?

- Health [funding] should be put under health not school division.
- Continue and keep clinicians (psychologists, physiotherapist, OTs, social workers, etc). Continue and stay with the education system as they can collaborate directly with teachers and help students with different abilities access school and curriculum