

2020 VISION



**Presented for consideration of the
Manitoba Kindergarten to Grade 12 Education Review Commission**

2019

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INTRODUCTION

There is no greater investment that a people or a province can make than in preparing a way for the future of their children. Among all of the resources and infrastructure that are necessary for Manitoba to thrive and flourish in the years to come, the education of our children is not only one of the most integral, it is in fact one of the most vital.

As Manitoba prepares to enter the second decade of the 21st century, our province stands ready to seize hold of the promise and potential that lie ahead. The title of this report reflects this reality. While the Year 2020 will usher in new and immediate directions for education, given the important work and recommendations that you as commissioners shall soon undertake, our vision must also be informed by a more distant horizon that is not so distant for our students.

Our vision must remain focused on the reality that every newborn that is born today and tomorrow will become citizens of that very same generation that will see our province through to the dawn of the 22nd century– the year 2100 and beyond. Our vision must therefore remain vested in the appreciation that these are not just students in classrooms who are destined for one culminating graduation ceremony at the end of the thirteen years they will spend in public education.

These students are our babies, the most precious resource we have. Our classrooms are the multitude of experiences that will help to shape their perception and prepare them for the future. Their anticipated graduation ceremony is not the end but rather, is just the beginning of their lives and of their educational journeys. Across each of the thirteen years that we have with them, the education that they receive must anticipate the many dimensions of a world that they stand to inherit.

Most assuredly, across their lifetime, this is a world that will look much different than the one which we understand and recognize today. An age where science-fiction shall become science fact. Where norms, values and interests shall be renewed but also redefined. Where the boundaries between what is public and private, and between the virtual and real, may become increasingly blurred. It is also a world where the means of distributing social, political and economic goods may be redefined, even as the means of production and the sustainment of our ecology, economy and humanity are equally transformed.

The challenges before us are significant but not insurmountable. Manitoba has its own set of distinct social, cultural, economic, and demographic circumstances that shape who we are and what we will become. Combined or on their own, they serve to define the lower and upper limits of what is possible when it comes to the education of our children. At the same time, the opportunities before us are ample and achievable. By setting and addressing priorities and establishing clear strategies for growth and development based on proven evidence and results, we shall continue to raise and augment the limits of what is possible.

The Manitoba School Boards Association believes that change is vital and is necessary. Change is not something that we ought to shy away from but rather, is a real substance to be embraced. To do so, we believe that Manitoba must continue to build on those strongest foundations that have defined our common heritage and experience as a people, based on democracy, equity, accommodation, accessibility, inclusion, achievement and responsibility– the latter both in terms of public contribution but also of accountability. Lest we forget the lessons of

the past that remind us of the consequences of removing any one of these foundations. And lest we forget that at all times, education ought never be rendered subservient to political means and ends, but rather that political realities should always be made subservient to educational means and ends.

In embarking on our presentation, the Manitoba School Boards Association has asked itself two significant questions. Both lead us toward sober reflection and self-assessment. In advance of this most important review of public education, the timeless question “what is education for?” has remained foremost among our guiding inquiries. The second question however, is equally as important: “are we worthy of our students?”

Across the collective experience of the centuries-old public educational experiment, responding to the question “what is education for?” has become a cyclical exercise in self-definition, giving rise to changes in teaching and learning methods, subject foci, and structures and systems that have been designed for one core objective: to produce the workers and citizens of the future. Individuals who, as members of society writ large, will use, share and continue to develop their capacity and potential for lasting benefit and advantage.

The second question “are we worthy of our students?” orients these means and ends within a evaluatory framework that seeks to understand if the means and ends themselves continue to provide the lasting benefit and advantage for all students that is intended. Are we in fact providing “a good” for those who depend on our programs, supports and services through public education? Is this “good” the best that we can deliver? How might the methods, subjects, structures and systems change for continuous quality and enhancement?

It is our hope that the review commissioners, our constituents, our students and their families, and every person who is a shareholder and a dependent of public education in Manitoba, will receive insight from our responses to both of these questions, as presented in the report that follows.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On behalf of our 38 school board members, representing over 188,000 students and 31,000 employees, we are pleased to have the opportunity to contribute information and analysis to the important work before the K-12 Education Review Commission.

The task before the Commission is significant and so too is responding to each of the six focus areas that will inform this work. While the Manitoba School Boards Association has provided greater detail and analysis throughout this report, the following provides a summary of our recommendations under each focus area.

1. LONG-TERM VISION

Important questions asked by the Commission

- What should the goals and purpose of K to 12 education be in a rapidly changing world?
- What are the strengths and weaknesses of the current system?
- What are the most important things for students to gain from their K to 12 education?
- What could our system do better to help students achieve these important goals?

Response of the Manitoba School Boards Association:

High quality, equity, and responsiveness are important parts of the vision

It has always been our vision as school boards to provide every student with access to high quality and equitable educational opportunities that will help fulfill their promise and potential as citizens, as workers, and as human beings. For this purpose, MSBA believes in a school system that is agile, flexible and responsive to local needs and circumstances. We believe that Manitoba's current school divisions are appropriately structured and positioned to serve these key goals.

As we prepare for the 80 year period leading into the 22nd century, we have taken stock of the important demographic, social, cultural and economic trends that will inform our future.

Increased demands, programs and investments due to population growth

If current population growth holds, it is foreseen that Manitoba's population will double over the next 80 years. Enrolment will also double, requiring the ongoing enhancement and expansion of education opportunities for all students. For MSBA, the ongoing needs and requirements of our schools will mean that resourcing and investments will require maintenance to keep pace with such change.

Maintaining balance between urban, rural and northern education remains prime

It must be recognized that Manitoba's population is distributed unequally across all school divisions. By the year 2030, as Winnipeg approaches one million residents, rural and northern

communities shall also continue to thrive, with increases in population becoming evident across all corners of our province.

Recommendation 1

That the Commission construct its long-term vision for public education using reliable projections of population growth, by way of supporting the resources necessary to respond, adapt to and sustain educational demands across urban, rural and northern communities.

Addressing needs of Aboriginal and Indigenous and as newcomer and refugee communities

Important drivers of population growth deserve special recognition. Our Aboriginal and Indigenous communities, as well as newcomer and refugee populations, shall represent the fastest growing and youngest segments of our population. Providing these communities with expanded access to equitable programming, leading to their full inclusion as citizens, means maintaining and growing the programs, supports and services that are tailored to their needs.

For Aboriginal and Indigenous communities, that public education shall represent one of the principal avenues for fulfillment of the important calls to action issued by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, signifies that focus must be placed on the establishment of more specialized resources to assist school divisions in achieving these overarching goals.

For newcomer and refugee students, navigating the daunting world of change and inclusion, while overcoming language barriers and cultural learning, remains equally as important. Provision of enhanced English as an Additional Language programming shall be prime. Providing life and work-focused skills for emigrant students coming to Manitoba in their senior years remains critical.

Recommendation 2

That the Commission recognize the need for programming, supports and services that will assist Aboriginal and Indigenous communities, as well as newcomer and refugee communities, to promote their ongoing integration and inclusion within public education and in preparation for labour market entry.

MSBA would note that providing opportunities for these communities to share perspectives and inform strategies for responding to student needs, has led to the implementation of programming, supports and services that have met with improved student success. We have learned, through our ongoing outreach and engagement, that the communities from which our students come, can inform the best strategies and approaches concerning what will work with their students. We have therefore striven to remain responsive to what they have identified for us in the past and we shall continue to do so into the future.

Supporting language and cultural realities

In terms of Manitoba's linguistic heritage, we have witnessed some important trends over the past decade. Even as Manitoba's Francophone minority community continues to grow opportunities for constitutionally protected and local access to French Language 1 (FL1) programming, demand for French Language 2 (FL2) programming has dramatically expanded across the province. All signs are that this demand shall remain sustained into the future. It is therefore incumbent on all education partners to strengthen current capacity to deliver French language programs that also provide students with access to the significant cultural dimensions of such education.

Recommendation 3

That the Commission's long-term vision for public education embrace the importance of opportunities for continued excellence through provision of FL1 and FL2 programming, supports and services– both to respond to the constitutional rights of the Francophone minority language community in Manitoba and also to meet parental and student demand for French language education at the FL2 level, including basic and immersion programs.

We must also recognize that language use patterns across Manitoba are changing, with Tagalog now representing the second most used language in Winnipeg and with German increasing in use across rural Manitoba. To what extent these languages may become more pronounced heritage languages for instructional purposes remains to be seen over the next 80 years. Our experience would suggest that demand for education according to mother tongue and through language programming has remained a reality for Manitoba's education system.

Lifelong learning

Lastly, school boards have always maintained focus on meeting the needs of Manitoba communities through educational opportunities that prepare students for the world beyond our classrooms. The Commission has asked what skills, knowledge and competencies students require in order to succeed in life following graduation. This question has always remained one of the key drivers of program creation within our system of public education. Responding to the needs and demands of our economy remains informed by the skills required of our labour market. In this respect, Manitoba's economy has remained one of the most diversified in Canada, featuring many different sectors of industry.

According to current projections through to 2024, just under a third of all jobs will require a university education in Manitoba, while close to 30 percent will require college or apprenticeship training. Another 30 percent will require secondary graduation with some combination of occupation specific training, and the final 10 percent shall require on-the-job training. This occupation-specific and on-the-job training will likely also take place in post-secondary contexts as colleges and vocational institutes adapt to remain responsive to needs.

In view of these realities, Manitoba schools have always focused on ensuring that all students will be prepared for lifelong learning. Our goal is that they be equipped with the requisite and

essential skills that will enable them to continue to post-secondary education or non-formal training. According to available resources, we make every effort to provide students with access to apprenticeships, work experiences, career preparation experiences, and dual credit courses. Opportunities that will enable our students to begin post-secondary or career-focused training, even starting in high school.

At the same time, we remain conscious that the labour market can and does change, sometimes very rapidly, and so our overall objective is to ensure that students come to the workforce with the resilience and adaptability to respond to any career requirement. Our final recommendation under long-term vision therefore speaks to these realities

Recommendation 4

That the Commission's long term vision recognize the importance of maintaining focus on and response to work relevant experience (through high school apprenticeships, work practica, career preparation and other student experiences), as well as through resources for the expansion of dual credit courses and community connectors. This recognition will help to promote ongoing alignment between secondary and post-secondary sectors of study and training while also providing even greater opportunities for student preparedness beyond high school.

2. STUDENT LEARNING

Important questions asked by the Commission

- What are the conditions required to achieve excellence in student achievement and outcomes in Manitoba?
- Who is ultimately responsible for student success?

Response of the Manitoba School Boards Association:

The significant influence of poverty

Poverty as a factor remains one of Manitoba's most significant obstacles in terms of progress and improvement in educational attainment and achievement. It also consumes the greatest time and effort of those who work in public education today. If we look to Manitoba's adjusted overall scores and interprovincial rank by socio-economic status on the latest Pan-Canadian Assessment Programs, this provides just one example of the ongoing influence of poverty.

That poverty plays a role across most other indicators of student learning also holds: whether in terms of graduation rates, attendance rates, or provincial assessment results, the factor of poverty transcends all categories.

Need to support and expand proven programs, supports and services

While eradicating poverty remains a laudable goal for the public, private and non-profit sectors, and cannot be addressed by schools alone, several meaningful local initiatives have demonstrated how the impacts of poverty can be better mitigated province-wide through public education for lasting change and improvement. These include:

- Expansion of the wrap-around supports that are made available through Manitoba's network of community schools, which embrace the concept of whole student learning in partnership with families (which has become highly important especially for Indigenous and newcomer families);
- Expansion and resourcing for community hubs that connect education, social services, justice, health and youth serving organization providers for addressing the needs of high risk students;
- Implementation of divisional pupil transience strategies;
- Availability of after school and summer learning loss prevention programs;
- Deployment of time management strategies with focus on alternative recess and class-bell scheduling; and
- Sustainment of child nutrition programming to address the most critical impacts of poverty on our students.

These are just some of the many initiatives that school divisions have established for meaningful difference and impact. Such general enhancements to our schools and classrooms certainly deserve to be recognized, promoted and expanded in future.

Recommendation 5

That the Commission review successful programs that demonstrate evidence-based and proven results in addressing the impacts and risks of student poverty, to determine opportunities for possible expansion of such programs to all school divisions across the province in future.

Addressing early years literacy and numeracy

MSBA would also like to commend Manitoba Education's current focus on early years literacy and numeracy. MSBA fully supports the long-term targets established by Manitoba Education arising from the 2018 Literacy and Numeracy Summit and we would like to signal our partnership and commitment to allocating resources in order to address these objectives.

In this respect, we acknowledge that early years programs for public school entry are not universal or locally achievable for every school division. Nursery, pre-Kindergarten and even full-day Kindergarten programming, which help families to address poverty while also

augmenting early years literacy and numeracy skills, may be an important consideration for the Commission.

Recommendation 6

That the Commission consider opportunities for province-wide expansion of nursery, pre-Kindergarten and full-day Kindergarten programming for optimal early years impact.

Priority on inclusion and accessibility to promote equity

Alongside factors of poverty and early years intervention, school boards well understand that responding to our pupils' language and cultural backgrounds, and the need to promote accessibility and inclusion, also remain chief factors in overall student achievement, performance and success.

Manitoba demonstrates one of the highest prevalence rates of self-identified disability in Canada. While youth comprise five percent of this population, nearly a third describe their disability as severe or very severe. That Manitoba school boards stand committed to achieving ongoing inclusion, integration and accessibility for such students, remains a cornerstone of what we believe excellence and equity in student learning is all about.

Recommendation 7

That the Commission consider the importance of Manitoba's current commitment to integration, inclusion and accessibility for all students, staff and community members by way of promoting the ongoing delivery of equitable, effective and efficient programming, supports and services that serve to meet community needs.

Sharing of responsibilities and the importance of collaboration

Lastly, it is important that we signal our commitment to collaboration in order to successfully address student learning needs. While relationships between the Minister and Department of Education, school boards, senior administration, teachers, other staff, students and families each define shared responsibility for student learning in Manitoba, many other entities, including First Nations schools, independent schools, early learning and child care providers, and Adult Learning Centres, are all part of the bigger picture of ultimate responsibility for student learning and success.

MSBA would emphasize that each of these groups shares key responsibilities, which cannot be isolated from one another. The recent efforts by Healthy Child Manitoba and the Manitoba Centre for Health Policy to link databases under Structural Equation Models clearly

demonstrate the interdependence of systems from cradle to careers, even while the legal and regulatory frameworks that govern public education provide for shared responsibilities at every level.

Recommendation 8

That the Commission consider evidence-based models that demonstrate the interdependence and interrelationships between all significant providers of education and learning, when responding to the question of ultimate responsibility for student success and learning in Manitoba.

Within the collective efforts of school boards themselves, we would note that all school boards partner to offer programs, supports and services that serve to enhance equity for their region. This becomes especially important in instances where resources may not allow an individual school division to offer a program, support or service. This focus on collaboration serves to achieve balance in maintaining local autonomy while achieving greater efficiencies and equity.

The Red River Valley Technical Vocation Area is one great example of a program that has long been jointly offered by multiple divisions to address local need for student work experiences, while consortia such as the Manitoba Rural Learning Consortium stands as another great example of how appropriately resourced professional development collaborations can affect positive change for all students, through exemplary and collaborative practice.

As local school boards, MSBA understands that one size does not fit all when it comes to student learning and success. Every student has different needs according to their own individual circumstances. That public schools today provide a core program of study to all students, enhanced by local programs, supports and services to address specific community needs and requirements that ensure that every student's needs are affirmed, remains the ultimate responsibility of the public education system as a whole.

What therefore deserves our continuing focus in the immediate future, is the need to address poverty, as this factor largely accounts for why roughly two out of every ten students do not meet or exceed anticipated standards on assessment exams.

Recommendation 9

That the Commission extend consideration to the establishment of a formal, education-focused poverty reduction strategy, led by a working group composed of representatives from the Government of Manitoba, school divisions (school boards, senior administration and teachers), parents and students, to identify and collate promising practices and other initiatives, in order to enhance current response to poverty in the school context.

Measuring student achievement, performance and success

We would also posit that exploring student achievement, performance and success through a balanced lens of both input and outcome indicators and measures, with evidence informed by both formative and summative evaluations, will be key for promoting continuous improvement into the future.

Recommendation 10

That the Commission lend consideration to the establishment of an advisory committee that will be mandated to study alternate and enhanced measurement in student performance and success, in order to ensure that improvement is focused on measures and indicators reflective of both inputs and outputs, while also reflective of both summative and formative learning and evaluation.

3. TEACHING

Important questions asked by the Commission

- **How can teachers and school leaders become most effective?**
 - **What improvements could teachers make to better help students achieve their goals?**
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Response of the Manitoba School Boards Association:

Challenges in addressing teacher supply

As employing authorities within public education, school boards have long been focused on questions of capacity and supply of qualified teachers to meet needs across our province. In this role, it has always been the historical responsibility of all school boards to fill all vacant positions in order to optimize student learning. In terms of ensuring that our teachers and school leaders are able to effectively deliver educational opportunities at the school level through provision of qualified and diversified staff to address all required subject areas, we do conclude that larger issues regarding capacity and supply do require review.

In recent years, our membership has witnessed several continued trends:

- Availability of teacher candidates to fill available positions across Manitoba remains a challenge, even though the locations for teacher education are distributed province-wide, leading to sustained and inequitable demand for available teaching positions in urban or other more populated centres across the province.

- Vacancies in rural and northern contexts can be challenging to fill, particularly when open positions are related to a specific teachable subject area that may be in short supply.
- The ability of school boards to replace vacancies or fill positions in high demand teachable subject areas (including math, science, French, Technical-Vocational or Industrial Arts, and music) represents an ongoing challenge.
- In general, the teacher workforce has become increasingly gender-imbalanced, with women outnumbering male teachers. Larger questions of the linguistic, cultural and social diversity of the teacher workforce also deserve special consideration.
- Requirement for practica opportunities to meet demands and enhance supply can be challenging given teaching loads of experienced supervisors, and available school capacity to host a teacher candidate.

Review of human resource capacity

MSBA would posit the need for a province-wide review of teacher education capacity, as well as for other programs, including for para-educators, clinicians and educational assistants, that are designed to meet the human resource requirements of school divisions. Such review would serve to evaluate current capacity levels and supply outcomes; determine appropriate incentives for specialization in teachable subject areas that may be in short supply; examine quotas and promotional activities leading to admission to faculties and schools of education by way of promoting diversity in the future teacher workforce; and to explore opportunities for value-added non-formal learning opportunities that may equally serve to prepare teacher candidates for entry to the classroom (such as mental health first aid, anti-bullying programs, trauma-informed practice, wellness, and cultural competency courses). Strengthening the role of current faculty advisory structures involving external feedback would also be important to consider.

Recommendation 11

That the Commission consider recommendation for a province-wide review of education and training programs designed to respond to the human resource requirements of school divisions in Manitoba, to explore options for optimizing capacity and supply to meet provincial demand.

It is important to note that the above recommendation is submitted without any implied connotation concerning our current system of teacher education in Manitoba. Neither does it imply need for additional capacity. In general, supply is aligned with demand and vacancies have been filled through a combination of strategies that have long been used to good effect by education and training programs, faculties and schools of education, as well as school boards. MSBA and other education partners are frequently consulted by faculties of education, as well as by other education and training programs that strive to meet divisional human resource demand, in efforts to address capacity and supply.

As it has been nearly 22 years since the last significant review of teacher education was undertaken by Manitoba Education and Training, and over six years since all education-related

programs were studied, what such a review would achieve would be an opportunity to determine what initiatives might serve to address the now emergent trends noted above, to promote an undisrupted and enhanced supply of human resources to meet all needs in future. We know that innovative approaches to delivery of teacher education and other programming for para-educators and educational assistants are possible within current resources.

Review of clinician education and capacity

In order for instructional and non-instructional staff to support student learning, one of the most significant challenges in terms of human resources speaks to the supply and distribution of available clinicians to ensure that students receive the diagnostic, therapeutic and ongoing interventions they require for learning success, as well as for optimization of academic performance and achievement.

In this instance, education and training programs for clinicians are primarily concentrated in urban settings province-wide. This leads to challenges in distributing services of clinicians to rural and northern areas, as well as to fill vacancies to address local needs. Concentration of available third-party service providers in Winnipeg also presents challenges in equity and accessibility for parents and students in rural, remote and northern communities.

The good news is that a great deal of work has already been achieved to address wait times, promote earlier intervention and to also address the same questions when it comes to distribution of medical education and services in Manitoba. Application of these findings to the many clinician occupations upon which our students depend would only further help to address needs province-wide, while continuing to promote effective teaching based on the specific and identified interventions that students require.

Recommendation 12

That the Commission include a province-wide review of clinician capacity in Manitoba within the scope of the above human resource study, to explore options for optimizing clinician supply to meet provincial demand.

Class size

Beyond the immediate challenges associated with human resources, school boards have traditionally ensured that sufficient quantities of instructional and non-instructional staff are provided to address classroom needs, given the changing face of our schools today. Maintaining class sizes at levels that promote the ability of staff to focus on each student's learning requirements will be important for ensuring that balance is achieved between common and individualized instruction. Both elements are integral for ensuring that student achievement and performance are optimized.

In this respect, MSBA would like to highlight that while comparison of average provincial Pupil to Educator Ratios (PER) has typically been used as a basis for determining overall quality, the variability of such ratios at the local level does belie the realities faced by teachers province-wide. At current time in Manitoba, the largest divisional PER average is 14.4 and the

lowest is 10.7. Eleven school divisions fall above the provincial average (13.1) while 27 divisions fall below. In national comparative perspective, this wide range is reflective of many different realities.

Recommendation 13

That the Commission consider that Pupil to Educator Ratios are generally indicative of class size in each province, but that considerable intra-provincial variation does occur, according to class size management choices that reflect autonomy and community context at the local level.

Professional development

School boards have always made every attempt to provide staff with meaningful professional development opportunities that will promote renewal of their knowledge and skills to address changing needs. In this respect, we believe that the level of in-service provided during the course of the school year is sufficient to promote continuous development.

Leave, certification and pay structures have also remained responsive in terms of classification adjustments, merit increments and time allowances to incentivize teachers to undertake post-baccalaureate or graduate levels of study. The same holds true for non-instructional staff.

This said, in 2019, student needs are increasingly complex, even while knowledge continues to expand across all subjects. One size therefore does not fit all when it comes to the expanded knowledge and skills that may provide benefit to teachers and other classroom staff. Availability of local professional development can be a particular challenge in rural and northern contexts, which adds significantly to professional development budgets overall.

Recommendation 14

That the Commission extend consideration to the opportunity for the establishment of a specialized rural and northern technology grant, that will enable delivery of professional development as well as a wider array of secondary courses for pupils, to promote accessibility and equity to expanded learning opportunities.

Regulating the teaching profession

Some provinces have proposed or moved to establish professional regulatory colleges for teachers in an effort to promote new approaches for overall improvement. While this may be under consideration for Manitoba, it is the view of MSBA that such a structure may become duplicative and restrictive. It may also lead to situations where roles and responsibilities may

potentially become confused in terms of current structures for certification, discipline, and professional conduct.

Were the Commission to therefore entertain the prospect of establishing a college of teachers for Manitoba, MSBA would instead posit that alternative approaches be considered. Building upon existing advisory structures at the faculties and schools of education, and also upon current disciplinary, evaluation and feedback procedures at school divisions themselves, would better support the concept of continuous learning and improvement, without the costs associated with a formal regulatory framework and the duplication that would come with an ancillary regulatory structure.

Recommendation 15

That the Commission consider the establishment of a continuous competency framework led by representatives from the Department of Education, school boards, senior administrators, teachers and members representing the public interest, to support implementation of a non-disciplinary strategy for added value to the regular evaluation and feedback procedures that are currently mandated.

4. ACCOUNTABILITY FOR STUDENT LEARNING

Important questions asked by the Commission

- **How can the education system develop a stronger sense of shared accountability for student learning?**
- **Is the current system providing equitable learning outcomes for all students?**

Response of the Manitoba School Boards Association:

Shared accountability and responsibility

Truly, it takes a village to raise a child. Every individual who contributes to public education shares responsibility and accountability for student learning today. While there are many different groups that cooperate for shared outcome, proper identification of who is responsible for what component of the final product has always led Manitoba in the right direction: to a deeper appreciation and understanding of how each part contributes to the whole.

In this respect, MSBA would emphasize that Manitoba's system of public education has long addressed the many "silos" that do tend to divide each of the parts within the experience of other jurisdictions. Doing so has led to a very strong sense of shared accountability and responsibility among each partner in education. We have long and well understood that if we fail to work together, it is our students and communities who will suffer in the end.

Collaboration and cooperation in sharing of accountability

In recent years, to cite just a few examples of the important work that has been achieved and remains ongoing:

- MSBA, MASS and MASBO have collaborated in defining how each organization's membership can best lead together for optimal effectiveness as an administrative team.
- MSBA, MASS, MASBO, MAPC and MTS together produced a promising practices guide for promoting enhanced educational equity province-wide.
- MSBA, MASS and MTS have worked in collaboration to promote reconciliation and advance Indigenous education province-wide.
- MASS has taken the lead on behalf of education partners in developing a strategy for school mental health.
- MSBA and MASS served as co-chairs and MTS hosted a significant dialogue on better information-sharing across all relevant systems, for protection of children and community safety. This dialogue will support every system in moving forward with implementation of recent provincial enabling legislation in these respects.
- MSBA and MAPC co-produced a risk-focused fact sheet for parents in the aftermath of cannabis legalization and have plans to proceed with another fact sheet on human tissue and organ donation.

These are just a handful of the meaningful examples that we could provide, in terms of the collaboration that serves to define shared accountability within the day to day operations of public education. This does not include the many examples of such initiatives that exist outside of our formal membership associations that reflect ongoing collaboration and dialogue between our individual members.

The many advisory committees and councils that bring the Department of Education, other government ministries, and education partners together for frequent consultation, as well as inter-jurisdictional working groups at the federal, provincial, municipal and school board level, only represent an added dimension of sharing of responsibilities when it comes to public education in this province.

It therefore follows that if only one among us is responsible for the sum of the whole, then truly, the many parts that serve to achieve this sum would be required to deny or abdicate their own responsibilities. Manitoba can and should not allow that to happen.

Recommendation 16

That the Commission acknowledge that accountability and responsibility for student learning is in fact shared when it comes to public education in Manitoba and that therefore, enhancement to public education must appropriately contemplate the individual and interdependent roles and responsibilities of each part within this whole.

Achieving student equity under a shared accountability

One of the cornerstones of public education has always been a focus on equity. How best to achieve equity for all students and what programs, supports and services are required into the next century so that our students can optimize their full promise and potential, are indeed significant questions.

While indicators remain important benchmarks of progress, they are only one measure of what it means to learn and acquire knowledge, skill and competence on a student's journey beyond the classroom. Equally as important is the availability of wider data and information that will help renew focus on the process as well as the outcome of learning. This also becomes prime in terms of the key performance drivers of outcome-based measures that serve to define the relationships that exist between financial and non-financial resources, demographics, delivery modes and structures, instructional methods, educational opportunities and so many other key inputs.

Support for data management and integration by way of enhancing accountability

In this respect, MSBA would like to signal its support-in-principle for the important work that is currently being undertaken by the Government of Manitoba and Manitoba Education to adopt balanced scorecard and other integrated data management strategies, that will help all providers of public education to utilize such data for continuous improvement.

While Manitoba Education has already taken important steps to help frame existing data within the Continuous Improvement Framework, school divisions do find benefit in coming together with the Department of Education and other government ministries to interpret this data for operational application. Closing the gaps on data sources that have not yet been maximized will be very important for future monitoring, evaluation, strategic and other operational accountabilities. In this manner, we can together achieve a more genuine assessment of how equity can be enhanced locally and province-wide.

Recommendation 17

That the Commission support current data management strategies focused on achieving balance and identifying relationships between input, output, formative, summative, financial and non-financial measures, indicators and performance drivers, and with encouragement to continue efforts to link key databases relating to social, cultural, economic, academic and other educational indicators towards the establishment of a continuous framework of informed assessment and accountability.

By promoting such work, the Commission can support the ongoing creation of a made-in-Manitoba provincial assessment tool that will genuinely surpass all current tools used to measure student performance and progress. One that will also support a more integrated and therefore more authentic model for continuous achievement province-wide.

5. GOVERNANCE

Important questions asked by the Commission

- **What type of governance structures are needed to create a coordinated and relevant education system?**
- **Should there be changes to how schools, school divisions, school boards and the Department of Education and Training are organized?**
- **If so, what changes are needed?**
- **Should there be any changes to who does what and how decisions are made?**
- **If so, what changes?**

Response of the Manitoba School Boards Association:

Local autonomy remains important to public education governance

Respect for local autonomy has always played a significant role when it comes to the provision of public education in Manitoba. It is our unwavering belief that a system of local community-oriented school boards, corresponding to each local school division, remains the most appropriate model for promoting local voices making local choices for the betterment and advantage of Manitoba's education system.

MSBA has long defended the right of every local community to protect and maintain democratic representation through their local school board. To this end, we have recently taken steps to determine whether the principle of local autonomy continues to hold merit for our future as a province. Reliable and independent public opinion surveys, as well as feedback received from representatives of Manitoba's community of veterans, would suggest to us that support for continuation of our network of school boards remains strong province-wide and stems from principles of democracy, freedom and sacrifice that are a continued and common obligation.

Constitutional protections and right of representation

While for Manitoba's Francophone minority language community, constitutional guarantees serve to formally protect the right of this community to control local education for the sake of their children and population, MSBA would posit that such right also holds for the people of every community. By extending the right of local control to one community, there ought be no mistake that such a right was founded on the belief that majority communities already held and were able to exercise such a right. This in fact predates Canadian confederation as a cornerstone of our nation's, and indeed our province's, democratic heritage. Education belongs to every community. Community-led governance of education closely follows.

Recommendation 18

That the Commission recognize that the principle of local autonomy remains informative and instructive for the structuration of educational governance in Manitoba, with all community held rights pertaining thereto.

Recommendation 19

That the Commission respect the constitutional protection of Manitoba's Francophone minority language community to continued local governance through the Commission scolaire franco-manitobaine and further, that the Commission recognize that such guarantee and protection reflects the rights that were already held by majority language communities through their local school boards.

The three governance accountabilities of school boards

Governance comes with accountability. For every school board, this takes three forms: academic, financial and democratic. We recognize that improvements can always be undertaken towards even greater processes and outcomes related to all three. We recognize that considerable trust is vested in every school board to exercise good governance and proper allocation of community-held funds for the education of every child and for the benefit of every member of our community. We embrace the democratic mandate conferred on every school board through popular election, as this enables regular renewal of our system of local school governance.

In terms of academic accountability, our observations and recommendations under the preceding focus areas (long term vision, student learning, teaching and accountability for student success) represent our views on what requires continued support and also what changes can be made, subject to available resources, to ensure that Manitoba's students and their communities continue to benefit from public education into the next century. In terms of financial accountability, our observations and recommendations under the final focus area shall provide comment on every trustees' duties and obligations to the people of their community through investment of the revenues that are used to support public education.

Democratic accountability

In terms of democratic accountability, MSBA would like to provide the Commission with an overview of why we believe democratic accountability remains vibrant and effective in Manitoba. When it comes to Manitoba's current 38 school divisions, bigger is not better and centralizing decision-making in a manner that would remove local community voice and input from decision-making processes, and strain access by constituents to their local school board, would not be supported by MSBA. Proposals to establish a regional model of school board governance would neither receive our support. This does not reflect school boards' opposition

to change. It is rather a reflection of efficiency and how school boards are best able to remain responsive and serve their local community.

In terms of democratic and fiscal efficiency, it bears consideration that Manitoba has already downsized from 54 divisions twenty years ago, to the current 38 that we have today. Over the past fifty years, the total number of trustees has decreased 54 percent. Our combined operational expenditures as boards represents half a cent on every dollar invested in the operations of public education today. Increases to trustee remuneration have remained fixed at 0.2 percent year over year. Unlike other levels of elected governance, school trustees receive no campaign finance incentives and neither do they place burdens on Crown revenues through political donation tax credits. The average trustee invests more than 20 hours each month in support of the work of their school board and 10 percent of trustees invest more than 40 hours in exchange for the remuneration they receive.

Profile of local school trustees and representativeness

In the majority, Manitoba's trustees are parents or grandparents of children in the public schools to which they contribute leadership. They are the only gender equal level of elected official, where women maintain and represent the majority. A strong majority of trustees are working professionals who balance full-time employment with the duties incumbent on them as trustees, and an equally strong majority are holders of post-secondary credentials with considerable graduate-level education. Approximately a quarter of trustees are persons who represent important diversity categories, including Aboriginal and Indigenous peoples, newcomer communities, visible minorities, and persons with disabilities. Two out of ten are bilingual. That Manitoba's communities benefit from the strengths of these backgrounds and this level of community representation among the trusteeship, remains important.

The role of school boards in promoting educational choice for communities

MSBA has solicited many examples of how school board decisions have impacted delivery of programs, services and supports in a manner that is unique or distinct to meet needs in their own local communities. Our "This is Local Choice" series (Appendix B) defines why school boards matter and the difference that we make when it comes to educational opportunity and added value in delivery of educational services for all students. Education is not a one size fits all prospect. Communities have different needs and so do their students. This is where the local school board's accountability for academic outcomes remains important. In this respect, Manitoba's school boards have certainly delivered.

Growth requires consideration

In view of the current demands and pressures that exist across all divisions, and the demographic changes that are anticipated over the next century in Manitoba, we do not believe that further reductions to school boards, trustees or administrative costs will strengthen the public school system in Manitoba at this time. Special consideration must be extended to the added pressures that demographic growth will place on public education and the need for responsive education that increasingly meets community demand. We therefore do not believe that reducing our school system's governance or administrative capacity will serve to promote greater efficiency in the longer term.

What such capacity reductions would achieve would be to deprive local communities of strong community focus in the provision of public education. They would also reorient the focus of every individual who is responsible for delivery of programs, support and services to Manitoba students away from academic achievement and performance towards organizational restructuring and rebalance. As was true of the last school division amalgamation experience, it would also result in the same if not greater costs in delivery of public education.

Manitoba has learned all three of these lessons within the past two decades. We need not even look to the Canadian experience to inform our governance strategy moving forward, we need only look to our own past.

Do we require one school board for the City of Winnipeg? Is 297 trustees the right number to serve a province the size of Manitoba? Such questions, being of absolute importance to the future of public education in Manitoba, are addressed in greater detail in the comprehensive report that follows.

Electoral realities

In terms of school board elections, Manitoba's outcomes over the past three election cycles have revealed three major trends

- Approximately one third of trustees are new to their school board following each election;
- Approximately two thirds are returned incumbents;
- Approximately half are elected via democratic contest.

The above data demonstrates that, following each election, school boards return with sufficient balance of stable and new perspectives to achieve renewal of governance at the local level. Concerning acclamations and whether or not they are a legitimate form of democracy within the context of province-wide school board and municipal elections, our response is also detailed in the accompanying report.

The full report also addresses the many methodologies and calculations that can be employed concerning the question of voter turnout. What we can say in summary is the following: that a strong majority of ballots cast for elected trustees serves to place those trustees in office does confer democratic legitimacy upon their trusteeship. However, so too does the absence of contest in communities where local school boards represent the friends, co-workers and neighbours of local townspeople. These represent candidates who are unanimously acclaimed when they present themselves for office and are most often unanimously replaced if ever they step down, through the acclamation of their peers. It also follows that boards that are entirely acclaimed one election cycle, may well become subject to intense electoral challenge the next. The same is valid the other way as well, where a board that will be subject to electoral contest, may be entirely acclaimed during the next election cycle.

For MSBA, each of these indicators serve to demonstrate that local democracy is in fact vibrant and dynamic in Manitoba and that citizens do take interest in our elections. This remains valid notwithstanding comparable lack of media coverage of school board elections and also in light of increasing disengagement of the electorate at all levels of democracy in

Canada. This equally remains valid notwithstanding the reality that school boards operations are and have always been non-partisan and that therefore, election cycles are not about defining political platforms and policies, insofar as they focus on who the best candidate is to hold the public's trust in relation to their education system.

If there are changes that can help further strengthen Manitoba's municipal and school boards elections, it would therefore be in the following recommendations:

Recommendation 20

That the Commission support the introduction of enabling legislation by the Government of Manitoba to establish electronic means of satisfying all candidacy and voting responsibilities during future municipal and school board elections.

Recommendation 21

That the Commission consider opportunities to extend voting rights to all persons who will merit representation through their taxation during the most recent four year election cycle, including persons whose identities have been confirmed on the Elections Manitoba permanent voters registry and Permanent Residents whose citizenship applications remain in process.

Recommendation 22

That the Commission support the introduction of legislation or regulation that shall provide gratis media coverage for school board candidates, in order to promote appropriate public awareness and information concerning school board elections prior to the conclusion of each election.

Recommendation 23

That the Commission support amendment to The Municipal and School Board Elections Act, in order to mandate placement of election polling stations in population centres that will enable greater proximity and accessibility for voters on each local registry and further, that municipal and school board ballots be consolidated into one single ballot for each community and at each polling station.

The importance of shared services through the Manitoba School Boards Association

The Commission has inquired about changes to entities other than school boards by way of examining the bigger question of governance. We have two concluding areas for address in this respect.

The first concerns the role of our association itself. Over the past 110 years of its operation, MSBA has developed a shared services model that has benefitted all school divisions through the efficient delivery of several significant shared programs, services and supports.

The Manitoba Schools Insurance Program (MSIP), our defined contribution Pension Plan for Non-Teaching Employees, the Manitoba Universal Standards Trust fund, the Health and Dental Benefits Trust, along with delivery of professional development, board governance and strategic planning supports for school boards, coordination of labour relations services, risk management services, and other program administration (including for Safe Grad, Teens Against Distracted Driving and the Child Nutrition Council), has provided a single coordinated approach for addressing critical needs across all of our school board members.

It is important that MSBA remain strong into the future, in order to promote the ability of school boards to remain focused on their local communities while meeting other obligations related to their roles and responsibilities. In this respect, exclusion of MSIP fees and rebates from existing administrative cost calculations would ensure that MSBA programs, services and supports can be maintained at current efficiencies, to provide continued shared service to all school boards.

Recommendation 24

That the Commission support exclusion of all fees and rebates associated with maintaining coverage under the Manitoba Schools Insurance Program, from calculation of administrative cost ceilings.

MSBA also believes that the time is appropriate for Manitoba to also proceed with the amendments necessary to ensure the full participation of Aboriginal and Indigenous communities across Manitoba, in the rights and benefits to which they are entitled.

In respect of our association's programs, services and supports, these can be achieved at a much reduced expense overall for Aboriginal and Indigenous education providers than were they to seek to implement such programs, supports and services on a stand-alone basis.

Recommendation 25

That the Commission support advocacy by the Manitoba School Boards Association to amend our statutory membership criteria, in order to provide services and programming to First Nations, Métis and Inuit education providers.

Considering the role of school leaders and principals

Lastly, In terms of prospects for change to the current governance and administrative structures of public education, MSBA believes that it is important to examine the role of school leaders or principals within education governance, administration and management structures. However, to this end, as MSBA maintains no official policy, we would strongly encourage the Commission to inquire with our members, as well as with members of the Manitoba Association of School Superintendents, and also with members of the Council of School Leaders, concerning the role and responsibilities of principals within the overall context of governance, administration and management. In this manner, the Commission can consult directly with our membership and other partners to obtain a balance of perspectives on this important issue to inform its review. This said, we appreciate that it is the view of many of our individual members that principals remain important instructional leaders and in many cases providers within schools, while also providing important leadership to teacher colleagues.

6. FUNDING

Important questions asked by the Commission

- **What actions are required to ensure that the education system is sustainable and provides equitable learning opportunities for all children and youth?**
- **Is the education system currently properly funded and sustainable?**

Response of the Manitoba School Boards Association:

Need for a Provincial Tax Commission

The Commission has asked whether funding to support public education remains sustainable. Two years ago, MSBA made the same inquiry. Our objective was to engage an independent council of experts, a roundtable that became known as the Council on Local Education Funding, to study options for doing things differently when it comes to that portion of education revenue that comes from school tax.

MSBA laid several options before this independent panel. Comprised of representatives from education, agricultural production, business, real estate, municipal government, and the public interest, the Council considered several options. Among many others, such options included moving to a provincial or regional mill rates, adjusting portioned assessment, offsetting the major portion of school taxes through increased provincial funding, the current system of education-related tax credits, and regional assessment models.

At the close of the Council's deliberations, one sole recommendation emerged: that the Province of Manitoba should move to establish a tax commission that will examine all taxes in this province, not just those that are used to support our students and schools. Such a review would be appropriate for determining the overall sustainability of tax-generated revenues for every citizen. It was felt by the experts on this Council that the time was long past due for such a

comprehensive review of taxation. We therefore advance this recommendation for consideration of the K-12 Education Review Commission:

Recommendation 26

That the Commission recommend that the Government of Manitoba establish a comprehensive tax commission to study taxation in general in our province, inclusive of representation from school boards, municipal government, and other public interest representatives. It is further recommended that such a tax commission be established at the Government's earliest possible opportunity.

Initiatives being undertaken by MSBA to raise public and ratepayer awareness

Many positive and constructive comments were received from the experts who informed these discussions. MSBA is in process of operationalizing some of these options, including working with municipalities to clarify what portion of the local tax bill is school-related versus municipal-related and to also construct an accessible, online calculator that will enable all citizens to receive a succinct overview of how their school taxes are invested for the benefit of students and people in their community.

Sustainability and adequacy of operational funding

In terms of the question of operational funding and whether such funding remains adequate and sustainable to address student equity and educational requirements, MSBA has long been of the perspective, shared by its partners the Association of Manitoba Municipalities and the Manitoba Chambers of Commerce, that a move towards 80 percent provincially subsidized operating would be desirable.

Achieving such an adjustment would serve to offset the revenues that do come from education levies. This proposal to move from 60 percent provincial grant funding to 80 percent speaks directly to the question of sustainability and so we would recommend that the Commission consider this as part of its deliberations.

We remain fully cognizant of the important and current challenges before the Government of Manitoba in addressing deficit and debt reduction priorities and have offered our support and assistance in helping the Government to meet these targets. Notwithstanding, we are of the

Recommendation 27

That the Commission recommend that the Government of Manitoba undertake a review of the education funding formula at the earliest possible opportunity, with focus on enhancing student and fiscal equity and guided by the principle of promoting investment of a greater share of provincial revenues to offset local taxes.

shared perspective with community partners that increasing the provincial share of funding remains a compelling public policy objective.

The question of centralized funding

MSBA does not believe that a move towards centralized funding, as has occurred in most every other province with the exception of Quebec and Manitoba, will serve the best interests of students or our communities. Over the past sixty years, there has always been consensus that, in order to local school boards to continue to meet local needs, some portion of fiscal autonomy remains desirable.

For us, achieving an 80 percent provincial and 20 percent local share would serve to realize this priority. The examples of local programs, supports and services that we have outlined under the preceding focus area remain dependent on localized opportunity and decision to allocate resources to address the distinct needs that exist across every community.

Recommendation 28

That the Commission consider the importance of school board retention of fiscal autonomy and revenue capacity, in order to address distinctive educational needs at a local level.

General consequences of Inflation

MSBA has always advocated for funding that keeps pace with inflationary pressures to meet daily classroom needs in support of core program requirements. We well recognize that inflation drives costs and determines the extent to which we are able to protect frontline services for the benefit of our students, staff and schools.

Over the past two decades however, there has been a widening of the difference between provincial investment as expressed in constant dollars (adjusted for inflation) and the actual amounts invested in current dollars. In real terms, what this means is that when it comes to our operations, the same level of service delivery has therefore remained largely the same, being gradually adjusted over time to keep pace with classroom and operational requirements, even while it costs more to do so.

While there is no remedy for how to lower actual costs given the dynamics of inflation in the local economy, it is important that the Commission be aware of this dynamic, as it influences public perceptions about the degree of investment that has been needed to continue operations. This dynamic also fuels a significant degree of misunderstanding. While many sources cite

Recommendation 29

That the Commission consider the important differences between actual and constant levels of investment in the public education system when determining how investments in public education have changed over time, as this can be used to inform and contextualise sustainability and adequacy of overall funding support.

runaway expenditures given significant year over year proportionate increases, the reality is that school boards province-wide have received funding that has remained largely adequate to keep pace with constant needs. In general, funding has remained stable over many decades, even while existing cost control measures have been directed to minimize inflationary impacts.

The Funding of Schools Program

In terms of the base, categorical and other funding that are provided by the Government of Manitoba to support core operations, MSBA would note that growth over time in these funding types has generally remained stable and adequate to provide foundational and therefore core support for those items that each grant is designed to address. The Government of Manitoba has also established new operating grants over time to remain responsive to emergent needs and requirements and has also achieved increased balance over the years between block and conditional funding support.

However, given the widening gulf between actual and constant investment, that taxation revenues have increasingly served to make up the difference in funding across all types of expenditures is noteworthy. As just one example, when it comes to EAL funding support for newcomer and refugee students, school boards currently cover approximately \$10M in additional expenditure for these supports through taxation revenues beyond what is provided through the grant received from the Department of Education and Training for this purpose. This same reality is evident in other grant areas as well.

Downloading of costs to the public education system from health, social service and justice budget portfolios has also increased expenditures in the delivery of services and added significantly to what a school is expected to provide in the 21st century. From social workers to school resource police officers to clinicians, as needs have changed so too have the costs associated with maintaining and expanding such services. In the face of such challenges, many school boards have simply accepted responsibility for offering such supports, notwithstanding historical reliance on other systems to provide such service.

Recommendation 30

That the Commission take into account the absorption by the public education system of programming, supports and services normally delivered under health, justice and social services portfolios, when examining sustainability of expenditures for public education in Manitoba.

In light of ongoing funding pressures, MSBA has developed a comprehensive policy statement on education funding that has informed our advocacy on this important topic. A copy of this policy can be found at Appendix D.

Capital infrastructure, assets and technology

Lastly, we do need the Commission to be aware of the importance of capital infrastructure and its role in delivering public education. At current time, based on a survey of our members,

MSBA would observe that the average age of our current schools tends to be 50 years or greater in Manitoba. Special investments made in the 1950s, 60s and 70s following the establishment of high school or collegiate divisions, along with general investments as required to accommodate the so-called baby boom generation during those years, served to address capital requirements at that time.

The general state of this infrastructure today has however, meant significantly increased maintenance and operating expenditures. It is important for the Commission to understand that whereas a 100 year old school today is a relatively rare structure, as we look ahead to the next century, the need for renewal of infrastructure that will approach the same anniversary will only accentuate. Retrofitting infrastructure to anticipate accessibility needs of students, staff and community members who access our buildings and properties for a host of purposes, will only add to capital pressures overall. Expenditures related to maintenance and operation of buildings will also foreseeably increase into the immediate future, given uncontrollable externalities such as hydro rate increases and the imposition of the federal carbon tax.

While our advocacy has been directed towards achieving improved understanding among the decision-makers responsible for such increases, it is MSBA's experience that other governments and entities choose to download costs onto the public school system, rather than supporting school boards in their task of responding to fiscal pressures and restraint. The impact is either a reduction to programs, supports and services for our students and communities, or the need to increase educational levies to address such pressures.

Expenditures associated with general asset renewal, including for general equipment and supplies and also for larger assets such as maintenance, operation and renewal of bus and vehicle fleets, remain significant. Efforts to establish common procurement initiatives to address asset renewal are ongoing and have helped to achieve greater efficiencies, even while replacement costs associated with aged assets can be considerable and as such are regularly deferred, posing safety concerns.

Technology and IT infrastructure also remains an added challenge, given an increasingly connected and automated world. Dependence on technology for educational applications and the need to equip students with increasing sophistication in those technological tools and applications that will ensure they are prepared for lifelong learning when entering the world of post-secondary education, training or the workforce, means that we cannot shortchange this key priority. MSBA foresees that such needs will only grow and never diminish. There are countless examples across Manitoba of how local school board priorities for funding IT infrastructure and connectivity have benefitted entire communities by providing greater connectivity and access to technology.

Consideration for a multi-year funding model

Addressing the level of investment that is needed to ensure that our public education system remains strong and that capacity keeps pace with all future needs and requirements represents one of the most daunting challenges for school boards and the Government of Manitoba. MSBA would posit that this challenge is and can be exacerbated by annualized funding that inhibits multilateral and long-term planning to address all needs.

In order to address needs even over the course of one decade, the reality of annual budget processes does tend toward meeting only immediate needs year over year. This occurs in

spite of our best efforts to focus on investing in those items that will ensure we are able to promote equity and accessibility, remain responsive, agile and flexible, and deliver high quality programs, services and supports.

Such a funding model does not place blame on any single organization or individual. Rather, it reflects the way that things have always been done, and stems from the nature of public sector budgeting and investment processes. It is also a reflection of many additional realities, including changes arising from the four year election cycle, as well as based on national and provincial economic performance, and changes within key revenue sources.

Were it possible to adapt certain processes within the annual budget cycle to achieve multi-year investments that would be guaranteed over a longer period, this would certainly assist school boards in addressing system-wide priorities. Especially in terms of core program and capital infrastructure, achievement of a multi-year funding model has remained a desirable yet elusive opportunity for all school boards to date. In this respect, the relative stability of operational revenue sources, combined with the overall stability of operational investments, may position education for the adoption of a multi-year funding strategy.

Recommendation 31

That the Commission extend consideration to the overall capacity of school divisions to address short and long-term goals for public education in Manitoba, in relation to the current annualized funding model. Further, that the Commission support multi-year funding for core program and capital infrastructure by way of promoting achievement of a longer term vision focused on enhanced student achievement and equity.

Finally, MSBA would offer one general recommendation to the Commission that would not seem to correspond to any particular focus area. This recommendation would be that the Commission encourage the Government of Manitoba to provide for more regular review of Kindergarten to Grade 12 education, as a general means of enhancing opportunities to achieve shared vision, take stock of student learning and teaching, affirm accountabilities, confirm appropriate governance in public education, and review funding.

Such a recommendation was first tabled over sixty years ago by the Royal Commission on Education in 1957 but was never acted upon. Provision of a more regular opportunity to review public education would help inform future direction and provide significant guidance for consideration by the people and community of Manitoba. Given the importance of education to the vitality, success and well-being of our province, that a comprehensive review has not taken place sooner, is an important consideration for Government that transcends all focus areas.

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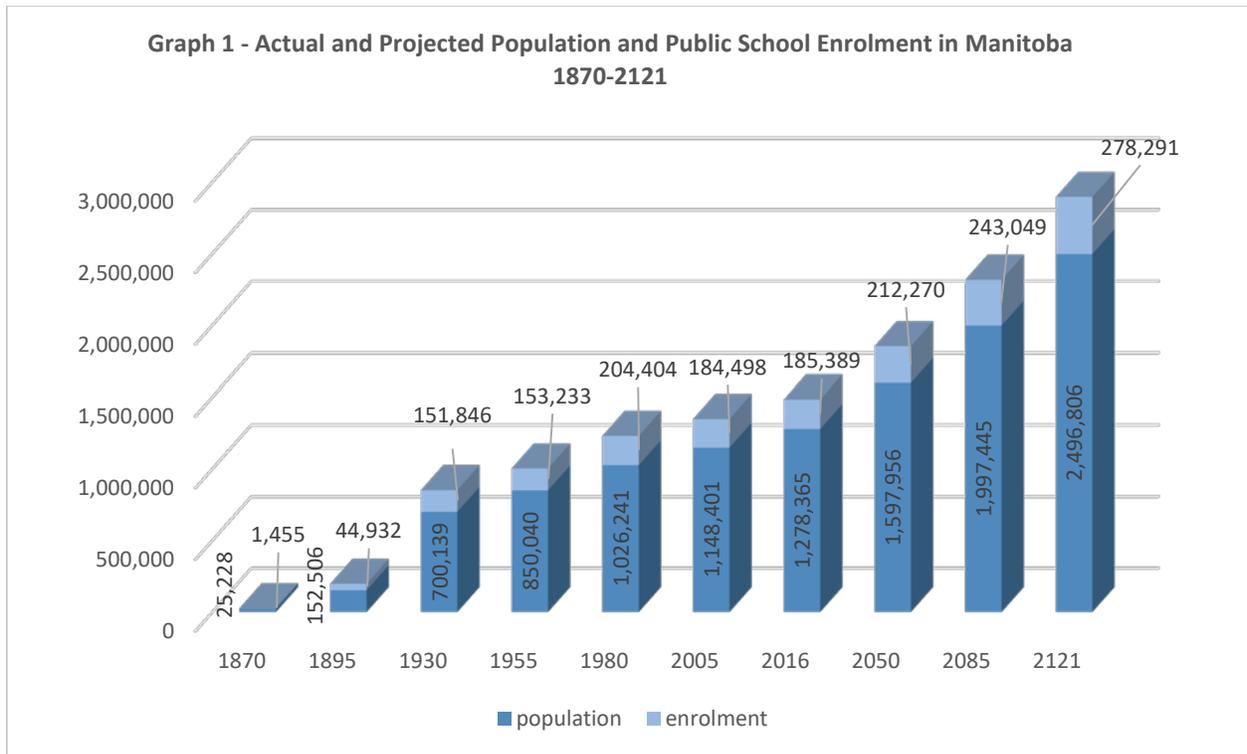
Observations, Options and Recommendations– Detailed Analysis

1. LONG-TERM VISION

As we prepare to celebrate Manitoba’s 150th anniversary in the year 2020, an important opportunity is presented to reexamine the realities, progress, achievements, outcomes and lessons learned from our shared history. We hope that these lessons will help us to acknowledge our strengths, evaluate our weaknesses, overcome our challenges, and take stock of our social, cultural, ecological and economic sustainability and well-being. This chapter submits analysis and commentary on several key demographic, economic, social and cultural trends and patterns that will be certain to impact the future of Manitoba. Doing so provides many valuable lenses through which to review the provision of public education in our province, through to the dawn of the next century.

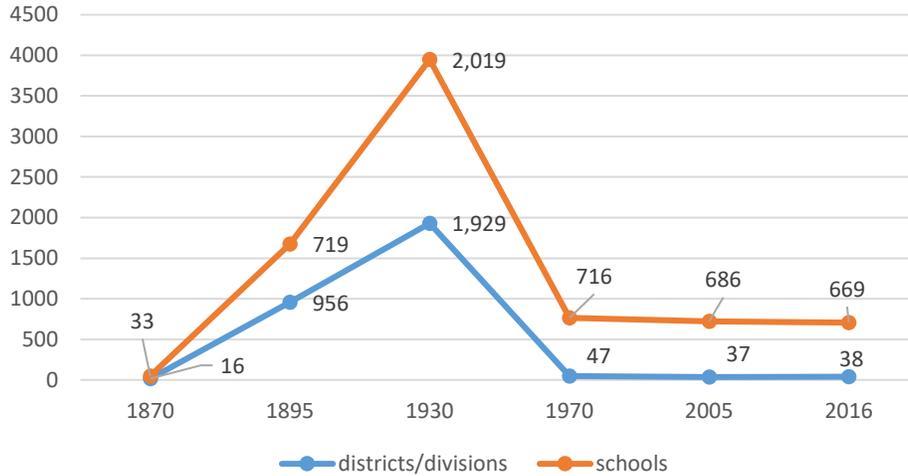
Our demographics

Manitoba has always been, and shall forever continue to be, enriched through the diversity and strength of its people. Looking to the future, it is important to examine historical patterns and trends that may be used to inform a reliable forecast of the many possibilities and opportunities that may lie ahead.



All data taken from Annual Reports of the Superintendent of the Protestant Schools, the Superintendent of Catholic Schools, the Department of Education, Statistics Canada Census, and Manitoba Education Enrolment Reports. While reported in quarter centuries (1870-2005), all data has been approximated on nearest available report to each quarter where applicable. Population forecasts for 2050 to 2121 are based on a 25 percent growth margin across each successive 35 year interval after 2016. Enrolment forecasts are conservatively based on proportionate representation of 14.5 percent of total population starting in 2016, even while it is not possible to predict forecasts with 100% accuracy over the 2016-2121 period.

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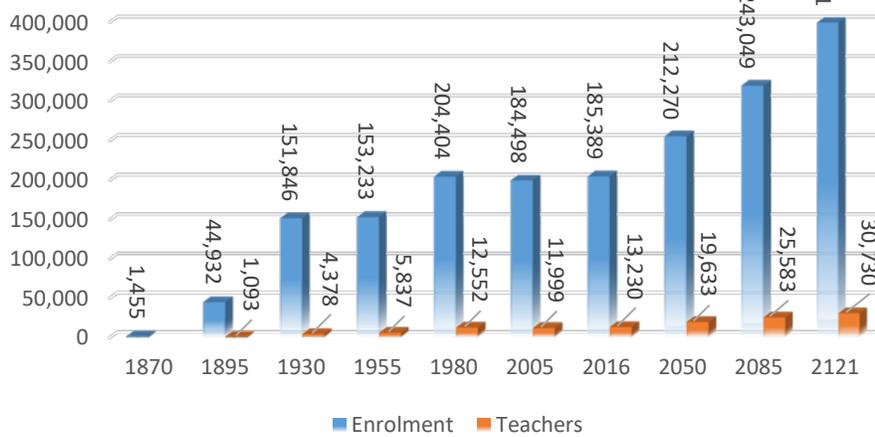


Table 1 – Actual and Projected Average Pupil to Teacher Ratio in Public Schools in Manitoba 1870-2121

	1870	1895	1930	1955	1980	2005	2016	2050	2085	2121
Pupil-Teacher Ratio		41.1	34.7	26.3	16.3	15.3	14/13	13	13	13

All data taken from Annual Reports of the Superintendent of the Protestant Schools, the Superintendent of Catholic Schools, the Department of Education, Manitoba Education Enrolment and Manitoba FRAME Reports. While reported in quarter centuries (1870-2005), all data has been approximated on nearest available report to each quarter where applicable. Enrolment forecasts are conservatively based on proportionate representation of 14.5 percent of total population starting in 2016, while teacher capacity forecasts are conservatively based on maintenance of a 13:1 Pupil to Teacher Ratio starting in 2016. It is not possible to predict forecasts with 100% accuracy over the 2016-2121 period.

As the data in Graphs 1, 2 and 3 demonstrate, several key components related to the provision of public education in Manitoba have experienced significant change over time. Enrolment levels, educational infrastructure (number of schools), school governance and administration (in terms of the number of divisions and districts), and levels of teaching staff, are just some of these key components. In general, changes have tended to reflect demands and pressures placed on education by demographic realities, while also being driven by urbanization; in-migration and settlement patterns; economic development; legal, regulatory and policy frameworks; and technological improvement, among other factors.

Serving the school-aged population

Over the past 150 years, the proportionate share of pupils registered and/or enrolled in Manitoba public schools, in relation to total population, has varied widely. Most of the dramatic variance in the earlier part of our history may be accounted for through attendance and non-attendance of the school-aged population during that period. During the latter half of the 20th century through to present, the proportionate share has remained largely unchanged. What has changed, as presented in Graph 1, is the total quantity of students that this represents.

Table 2 – Actual Portion of Population Represented by Public School Enrolment in Manitoba 1870-2016

	1870	1895	1930	1955	1980	2005	2016
%	5.76	29.46	21.68	18.02	19.91	16.06	14.5

All data taken from Annual Reports of the Superintendent of the Protestant Schools, the Superintendent of Catholic Schools, the Department of Education, Statistics Canada Census, and Manitoba Education Enrolment Reports.

Over time, public education capacity to accommodate the school-aged population has also changed. Manitoba’s public education system has kept pace with all significant policy and structural changes to education, given the introduction of more universal forms of early years education in the form of public nursery, pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten programs, as well as through the introduction of wider access to high school or collegiate level of education.

Revisions to the upper age limits for compulsory attendance, beginning in 1916, 1962 and 2011, from 14, to 16 to 18 years of age respectively, have also each tended to account for the largest singular increases in school population served across our sesquicentennial period. However, as seen in Table 2, such changes have not tended to impact the longer term proportionate share of the school-aged population.

Into the next century, the Manitoba School Boards Association foresees that a pupil’s educational journey, which now typically reflects 13 years of consecutive grade-level progression– the longest compulsory period of education in our history as a province– is not likely to change. What is more challenging to predict is whether additional decreases to the overall share of school-aged youth, which tends to reflect low birthrates and an aging population, will persist in future. While many sources have predicted a sustained period of decrease to Manitoba’s youth segment¹, we believe that any prediction must be realistic, practical and contextualized.

¹ Manitoba Bureau of Statistics (2016). *Manitoba schools: Historic and future enrolment 2014 to 2024*.

Into the longer-term future, while the overall population share of school-aged youth may continue to hold or even decrease from its present rate of 14.5 percent (based on 2016 census and enrolment figures), the volume or quantity of this segment, with attendant impacts on the overall level of school enrolment, is more likely to experience a steady increase. This would align with the relatively stable trend demonstrated over the past 35 years and would also remain more consistent with general population growth in Manitoba over time.

Therefore, when one looks to an eighty year horizon through to the year 2100, it can only be expected that growth to Manitoba's population, and therefore to its school-aged population, will continue to expand, consistent with positive increases established over the past 80 to 150 years. This shall place ongoing and greater demands upon provision of public education in our province, not less. In the end, it is important to acknowledge the key difference between the overall share that Manitoba's school-aged population represents, and the increase in volume that this share will represent over time. It is equally important to consider the future impact of population growth on enrolment in First Nations, as well as in private and independent schools.²

Growth, urbanization and the ongoing vitality of rural and northern Manitoba

Consistent with the above observations, we would note that overall growth in urban populations has continued to demonstrate significant increase in Manitoba, while proportionately, growth in rural and northern communities remains confined to a variety of local communities, and most significantly, in some communities where such “booms” did not exist even as recently as a decade ago. While economic shifts have influenced the ongoing “urbanization” of Manitoba, with disproportionate population distribution in very few centres, out-migration from First Nations reserve communities and immigration from newcomer populations have only accentuated preference for urban or more populated centres across our landscape.

While the population of Winnipeg and its surrounding metropolitan area currently accounts for 60.9 percent of the total provincial population³ with prediction to reach one million residents by the year 2030⁴, other, primarily rural communities, such as Brandon, Steinbach, Winkler and Virden, have also experienced significant growth. This consistently translates to growth in school enrolment in these districts. Other urbanized population centres such as Thompson, Portage la Prairie, Dauphin, The Pas, and Flin Flon have also experienced population stability and growth. As shown in Table 3, Winnipeg's larger share of the provincial population appears to hold true when it comes to public education enrolment, once urban shares of DSFM and

² Please note: the figures provided in Graph 1 and 3 as well as in Tables 1 and 2 reflect only public school enrolment. The reality remains that Manitoba's school-aged population is in fact larger, owing to that portion which is enrolled in First Nations, private or independent education. With nine out of every ten pupils in Manitoba currently enrolled in public education, this portion has been maintained within our projection scenarios. When population growth scenarios are adjusted to account for First Nations and independent school pupils, an actual doubling of total enrolment in Manitoba can be witnessed between the years 2016 and 2121.

³ Statistics Canada (2016). Data tables, 2016 census. Total population, Manitoba and Winnipeg.

⁴ City of Winnipeg (2018). Population for City of Winnipeg, Winnipeg region and the province of Manitoba from 1991 to current with 5 year forecast. Note: forecast to year 2022 based on Conference Board of Canada forecast for Winnipeg CMA demonstrates 5.82 percent growth between 2018 and 2022. Projection of 1,000,000 population for the Winnipeg Census Metropolitan Area by 2030 assumes that this growth trend shall hold.

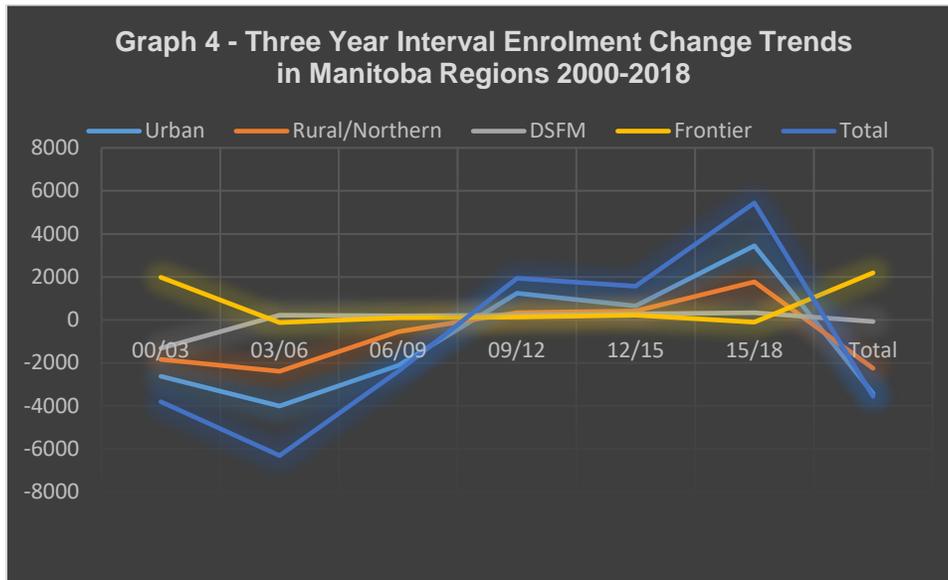
Frontier school populations are factored. However, it is noteworthy that, in spite of localized growth within the rural/northern region, both urban (Winnipeg) and rural/northern communities have experienced a net loss in student enrolment over the past generation (2000-2018).

Even while such changes occur, smaller communities in rural and northern regions of Manitoba continue to thrive and deserve special focus, resources and investment. As the past 150 years has taught us, what may be a populated population centre today may well be tomorrow’s “ghost town”, but this is far from the norm: more likely is a trend towards the revitalization and growth of smaller communities, as meaningful economic development and other local opportunities are realized. Maintaining strong public education presence in these communities therefore remains as compelling as for larger urban centres in Manitoba.

It is more than evident that, since the dawn of the millennium, the share of urban and rural/northern enrolment in Manitoba has been relatively stable. This necessitates the adoption of a strategy and vision for public education that affirms the importance of educational programming, supports and services both inside and outside of the perimeter highway.

Table 3 – Actual Share of Enrolment and Pupil Growth in Urban and Rural/Northern Regions of Manitoba 2000-2018

	% Share (2000)	% Share (2018)	Actual Pupil Change 00/18
Urban	53.73%	52.93%	-3,418
Rural/Northern	40.93%	40.51%	-2,246
DSFM	3.00%	3.02%	-80
Frontier	2.33%	3.53%	2,189
Total	100.00%	100.00%	-3,555



All data taken from Manitoba Education School Enrolment Reports, as at September 30 of each year. Urban category for the year 2000 includes Winnipeg, St James, Assiniboine South, Saint-Boniface, Fort Garry, Saint-Vital, River East, Seven Oaks, and Transcona-Springfield School Divisions. Urban category for the year 2018 includes Louis Riel, Pembina Trails, River East-Transcona, Seven Oaks, St. James-Assiniboia and Winnipeg School Divisions. Division scolaire franco-Manitobaine (DSFM) and Frontier School Divisions represented separately due to mixed urban/rural/northern locations of education delivery.

Reliable population estimates demonstrate steady growth worldwide as the global population achieves over 11.2 billion people by the dawn of the 22nd century, representing close to a doubling of the world's population.⁵ Closer to home, between 1870 and 2016, it can be seen that Manitoba's population has increased by a factor of nearly 5,067 percent, while over the past 35 years (1980-2016), this province has witnessed overall growth of approximately 25 percent (Graph 1). Into the future, should this growth trend hold, we can anticipate that by the year 2121, our provincial population may well stand at approximately 2.5 million people.⁶

This would effectively represent close to a doubling of Manitoba's current population, with all of the needs and requirements related thereto. While the share of school-aged population cannot be predicted with accuracy, it does stand to reason that current infrastructure, instructional and programming capacity as it relates to public education shall continue to expand and require ever-greening renewal with each successive generation. The foundations that we bequest to today's system of public education will therefore directly impact tomorrow's youth and the opportunity of education that we are able to provide to them.

This is posited by the Manitoba School Boards Association as a significant concern in the longer term, one that shapes our vision for public education starting in the year 2020. It is integral that distribution, supply and investment in the goods and services provided through public education keep pace with and remain responsive to such dramatic and impending demographic changes, even as questions of promoting equity, opportunity and quality remain prime. No one should be under any illusion that the needs related to such a school system will be any lesser into the future.

In this respect, we would look to the past as inspiration for the future. Throughout our 150 years as a province, the pace of total population change represented monumental and significant growth over each quarter century period. Throughout these periods, Manitoba has responded by creating new structures and systems to deliver and distribute the good of public education, even as the core tenets of that good have remained stable and strong.

The challenge ahead remains the overall volume of change that can be anticipated. While it has taken nearly 150 years for Manitoba to achieve its current population, the same pace of change will likely be realized in 2/3rds of the same timeframe over the next century. Whether Manitoba's historical experience with urbanization of its population shall continue to hold remains subject to speculation and hypothesis. That Winnipeg may outpace other communities as a destination for residence and settlement remains probable. That other concentrated population areas in rural and northern contexts shall continue to experience growth also follows. We would therefore encourage the Commission to consider these important trends, to help inform its long-term vision of public education in Manitoba.

Drivers of demographic growth

Two current drivers of provincial population growth are noteworthy given their impacts upon, and relationship to, the delivery of public education:

⁵ United Nations (2015). *World population prospects*. Accessed online: <https://www.un.org/en/development/desa/news/population/2015-report.html>

⁶ See Graph 1.

Trend 1– Manitoba’s provincial population growth is increasingly driven by elevated birthrates among Aboriginal and Indigenous Manitobans, signifying that Manitoba’s First Nations, Métis and Inuit populations continue to remain, on average, the fastest growing and youngest segments of the provincial population. Accordingly, these populations are a key demographic which stand to access both public education and programming for labour market entry in greater proportionate measure than the rest of the population.⁷

Trend 2– Growth is also driven by the continuing arrival of immigrant and refugee newcomers. This trend shall be influenced by global population growth patterns and predictions, likely translating into increasing pressures for Canada to accept greater numbers of such newcomers into the future and building upon Manitoba’s longstanding historical foundations as a destination for in-migration.⁸

These two trends have always shaped the provision of public education in Manitoba. Current predictions hold that they shall continue to do so for some time. The response of Manitoba’s system of education to both populations warrants considerable historical retrospective. That valuable lessons have been learned over the past 150 years of our co-existence must be applied to achieve greater inclusion and equity within public education through to the year 2100 and beyond. These are some of the most significant and compelling objectives that must lay the groundwork for the 21st and 22nd century public education system in Manitoba.

Aboriginal and Indigenous Manitobans

With respect to Aboriginal and Indigenous populations, Manitoba has made significant progress in terms of the establishment of curricular developments and programs, supports and services that, only a generation ago, were not featured or provided as part of public education.

Into the future, it will be very important for Manitoba to continue to explore the greater integration of Indigenous concepts and culturally relevant components into every aspect of its curricula and school practice. Especially in mathematics and the sciences (two subjects which are tested using national and international assessments), the adoption of so-called “indigenized” content and models for curricular delivery (resulting in the integration of Indigenous worldviews, content and ways of knowing and learning), have been used to promote greater academic relevance and student achievement in communities with higher proportions of Aboriginal and Indigenous learners.⁹

To date, with few exceptions, Manitoba has not pursued indigenization of curricula or teaching methods apart from the inclusion of relevant topics within the scope of social studies and history courses and the adoption of traditional practices in select school settings. While some

⁷ See generally the data and statistical reports published by Statistics Canada available online at: https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/en/subjects/aboriginal_peoples

⁸ See generally the data and statistical reports published by Immigration, Refugee and Citizenship Canada available online at: <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/corporate/reports-statistics/statistics-open-data.html>

⁹ Watt, J. (2009). *The Development of Indigenous Pathways Programs for Higher Math and Science Education in Manitoba: A Call to Action*. Presentation to the MERN Special Forum on Emergent Trends in Science and Mathematics Education, March 9, 2012.

efforts to implement Indigenous math and science have been pursued, these have not translated into widespread adoption or more permanent teaching practice. That it is important for all learners to see themselves reflected in the content of their classroom study does however, remain a compelling objective. In the end, adoption of culturally relevant classroom practices achieves benefit for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous students alike. These realities represent a considerable opportunity for all educational partners and Manitobans to reflect upon, by way of constructing our long-term vision for education in Manitoba.

No mistake should be made concerning the above observations. That Manitoba continues to stand as a national leader in the development and delivery of culturally sensitive curricula is one of this province's hallmarks of educational excellence. Manitoba remains well respected across the country for its leadership on Indigenous education in large part due to the sustained capacity and efforts of the Indigenous Inclusion Directorate of Manitoba Education and also through the focus of all educational partners in this province. While we celebrate our achievements, our long term vision must continue to be informed by additional opportunities to affect positive change.

Aside from the classroom, embracing Aboriginal and Indigenous identity must remain equally important across every school and divisional community. Starting in 2015, the Manitoba School Boards Association undertook a significant consultation effort designed to inform a meaningful action plan for promoting Aboriginal and Indigenous education. Informed by partner organizations including the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs, Manitoba Métis Federation, Manitoba Inuit Association, Manitoba First Nations Education Resource Centre and the Aboriginal Council of Winnipeg, this action plan addresses how school boards can establish supportive environments at the divisional level for greater inclusion and achievement.

We would strongly encourage the Commission to consult both our Discussion Paper and Final Report concerning the action plan, to verify what our communities believe is important for school boards to achieve when it comes to greater inclusion, achievement and reconciliation.¹⁰ Alongside of our education partners and in partnership with the Indigenous Inclusion Directorate, the action plan remains on track and provides considerable guidance for the future.

The work of the Collaborative Blueprint on Indigenous Education for Universities, Colleges and Public School Boards, a joint K-12 and post-secondary protocol signed in December, 2015 also deserves highlight here.¹¹ Through ongoing dialogue and partnership, public education providers remain committed to achieving greater equity across the educational spectrum, through this significant blueprint.

Much has been written on the comparison between Aboriginal and Indigenous student achievement and the achievement of the population at large through comparison of the non-Aboriginal and non-Indigenous populations. Much has also been written concerning the many challenges that exist within Aboriginal and Indigenous communities that continue to pose obstacles towards promoting greater well-being and success for those who are members of

¹⁰ Both documents are available online at: http://www.mbschoolboards.ca/Aboriginal_Indigenous_Ed.php

¹¹ Please consult: http://umanitoba.ca/admin/indigenous_connect/5851.html

these communities. MSBA believes that the Commission will receive no shortage of comment and analysis on such subjects.

That the experience for many Aboriginal and Indigenous learners and communities relative to education has been fraught with many wrongs and mistakes over the previous two centuries in Manitoba, is a gross understatement. To believe that any quick fix solution will overcome the impacts of this experience would deny the historical trajectory that has contributed to them and the historical trajectory that will help in overcoming them. To further believe that we have the knowledge that is requisite to identify the “problem” and provide the ‘solution”, without permanent and ongoing consultation with communities themselves, risks repeating the same colonial experience that has greatly contributed to the gaps and deficits that do exist.

Therefore, in an effort to reorient the conversation towards a more meaningful acknowledgement of our sacred responsibility and duty, one that is incumbent on all education partners, including the K-12 Education Review Commission, we posit that it remains of critical importance that each of us continue to undertake focused efforts on the establishment of increasingly favourable conditions for student learning and development, both within and outside of the classroom.

In the longer term, this will prove the only method and strategy that will work when it comes to addressing the gaps and deficits that do exist in Aboriginal and Indigenous academic performance and achievement relative to the whole population. By way of informing its long term vision, we would therefore invite the Commission to recognize the ongoing need for programming, supports and services that will assist Aboriginal and Indigenous communities to promote their ongoing integration and inclusion within public education and in preparation for labour market entry.

In the above respect, to help inform the provision of programs, services and supports that will be necessary to achieve greater success, we would also invite the Commission to consult the seminal report of the Auditor General of Manitoba in 2016¹², the Final Report of the Task Force for Improving Educational Outcomes for Children in Care¹³, the Calls to Action issued by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada¹⁴, and the multi-stakeholder “Here and Now” initiative in identifying the wrap around supports necessary to prevent youth homelessness.¹⁵ Ongoing commitment to honour Jordan’s Principle by way of ensuring equality of access to programming, supports and services will also provide guidance for joint federal-provincial cooperation in meeting local needs.¹⁶

¹² Auditor General of Manitoba. (2016). *Improving educational outcomes for Kindergarten to Grade 12 Aboriginal Students*. Winnipeg. Accessed online- http://www.oag.mb.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/AB_ED_K_to_12_OAG_2016_WEB.pdf

¹³ Lamoureux, K. (2016). *Manitoba task force on educational outcomes of children in care: Report for the Minister of Education and Advanced Learning and the Minister of Family Services*. Winnipeg. Accessed online - https://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/edu/docs/ed_outcomes_report.pdf

¹⁴ Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. (2015). *Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada calls to action*. Accessed online- http://trc.ca/assets/pdf/Calls_to_Action_English2.pdf

¹⁵ Here and Now. (2018). *Here and now: The Winnipeg plan to end youth homelessness*. Accessed online - <http://www.hereandnowwinnipeg.ca/>

¹⁶ <https://manitobachiefs.com/policy-sectors/jordans-principle/>

These documents provide strategic guidance for the future. It is critical that all educational stakeholders strive to work towards implementation of their recommendations. Equally important are the findings that emerged during the Aboriginal Education Roundtables convened by Manitoba Education in December, 2017 as well as the more recent Indigenous Inclusion Consultations that took place in February, 2019. While a major focus of the 2016 Auditor General report centered on the Aboriginal Education and Employment Action Plan, MSBA would posit that continuation of interdepartmental collaboration in identifying investments directed towards the many priorities, goals and objectives that were included under this plan could not be of greater importance for harmonizing efforts towards a more coordinated approach.

Newcomers to Manitoba

The needs and requirements of newcomer and refugee communities in our province are highly complex and deserving of a multilateral strategy. Public education can contribute greatly to the settlement, integration and inclusion of students but true success will depend on the ongoing delivery of external initiatives that meet all needs. From the development of additional language skills to acculturation, public schools are well positioned to help ease the transition for students arriving in a new homeland.

The recent work of groups such as the Newcomer Education Coalition have made important strides in raising awareness and promoting greater understanding of the specific needs that newcomer communities have relative to public education. As stated on its website, the Newcomer Education Coalition is made up of partner organizations that work directly with newcomer youth and families, working to create welcoming, inclusive, and equitable schools where all students are respected and can have the opportunity to flourish and achieve their social and educational goals in culturally proficient, safe, and supportive environments.

The Coalition also works with various stakeholders including community groups, settlement agencies, educational institutions, ethno-cultural communities, health and social service agencies, and government to improve the educational outcomes of newcomer children and youth in the K-12 school system in Manitoba.

We would strongly recommend that the Commission consult the important report produced by the Coalition entitled *Manitoba Newcomer Youth Gatherings 2015 Summary Report*.¹⁷ The summary report contains 11 specific recommendations that have served to provide greater compass to the work of school divisions in responding to the needs of newcomer students and their families.

Additional work by the Coalition to identify the particular needs of newcomer and refugee youth with interrupted schooling and/or who arrive in Manitoba in their senior years of high school, as well as research on promoting the involvement of refugee parents in the education of their children, also provide considerable perspective and insight for key decision-makers.¹⁸

¹⁷ Newcomer Education Coalition. (2015). *Manitoba newcomer youth gatherings 2015 summary report*. Winnipeg. The report remains accessible online at:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B2s2GTBZOEBfeHd3aTNwT3RNdGM/view>

¹⁸ Ennab, F. (2017). *Being involved in uninvolved contexts: refugee parent involvement in children's education*. <https://www.policyalternatives.ca/publications/reports/being-involved-uninvolved-contexts>

Ensuring appropriate resourcing to meet the needs of youth from newcomer communities remains important for public education. At present time, the needs that present in our schools far exceed the availability of resources. While Manitoba Education has made efforts to address accentuated requirements through increased grant funding, given arrivals of refugee children from Syria and other war-affected regions, it has increasingly fallen to local revenues to cover the gap in such basic and essential services as additional language programming.

In view of the repatriation of settlement services by the Federal Government in 2012, that the provision of services to support students now involves many different layers of government has presented new complexities in ensuring wrap-around services for students and their families. Changes to eligibility criteria for settlement programming has also resulted in certain disadvantages for families that require extension of services. That such matters regarding settlement funding fall outside of provincial jurisdiction, must be noted.

In tabling the above commentary, MSBA also wishes to clarify that the needs of newcomer children are very diverse. While challenges remain concerning newcomers who arrive as refugees or from contexts where interrupted schooling may exist, families admitted to Manitoba under the Provincial Nominee program or under other economic categories tend to demonstrate greater integration and academic success within public education. For these youth, the longitudinal reality has been that they also do tend to outpace their Canadian peers academically, given parental support for learning achievement and the significant value that such families place on educational success.

For most newcomer families, access to public education in Manitoba is viewed as one of the greatest and most tangible benefits of residency and eventually, of citizenship. More than most communities in our province, newcomers situate Manitoba's public education system within its rightful and broader global context: as a province that contributes to Canada's overall standing on international assessments and therefore remains a destination of choice given that, of all the nations of the world, Canada remains the only English-speaking nation in the top ten on global rankings.

By way of informing its long term vision, we would therefore again invite the Commission to recognize the ongoing need for programming, supports and services that will assist newcomer communities to promote their ongoing integration and inclusion within public education and in preparation for labour market entry.

Consultations recently undertaken by Manitoba Education through the Roundtable on Newcomer Education in February, 2017 and the follow-on consultation focused on newcomer student well-being and support in April, 2017 will provide significant guidance in how best to implement the above recommendation, as based on the important priorities and recommendations that were shared by many stakeholders during these sessions.

Linguistic heritage and use

Language is more than simply a means for communication. For many, it is also a way of being and a way of knowing. Far more than oral expression, it becomes the vehicle for self-expression and identity. While English and French remain the most spoken languages for instruction in Manitoba, the reality is that a variety of languages are offered in schools in Manitoba.

According to Manitoba Education and Training¹⁹, at current time, languages offered in Manitoba schools include Cree, Filipino, German, Hebrew, Japanese, Mandarin, Ojibwe, Portuguese, Spanish and Ukrainian. German is the language with the highest overall enrolment followed by Spanish. Within the City of Winnipeg, Spanish is the most popular language followed by Ojibwe, Filipino, Japanese and Cree. While most courses are offered during the regular school day, some school divisions offer before and after school programming in Heritage/International languages.

Since 1979 Manitoba's *Public Schools Act* has provided for instruction in Languages other than English or French for up to 50 percent of the school day. These are commonly referred to as "Bilingual Heritage" Language Programs. From Kindergarten to Grade 6 (K-6), select subjects, including Language Arts, Social Studies, Art and Physical Education may be taught in the target Heritage/International Language.

Approximately 1,587 students are enrolled in bilingual programming in K-6, with 250 students in "enhanced" programming in Grades 7 to Grade 12. In addition, approximately 150-200 students each year elect to enroll in Independent Study courses in German, Spanish or Ukrainian.

School divisions in Manitoba that offer Bilingual Programming are as follows:

Table 4 - Manitoba School Divisions offering Bilingual Programming

Programming	School Division
English-German	River East Transcona
English-Hebrew	Winnipeg, Seven Oaks
English-Ukrainian	Winnipeg, River East Transcona, Sunrise, Seven Oaks, Lord Selkirk, Mountain View

Source: Manitoba Education and Training (2019) "International and heritage languages"

That public education in Manitoba retains significant capacity to further student learning for global impact through its language programs will be important to provide students with the foundations they require to emerge from our schools conversant with many cultures and peoples.

As greater numbers of newcomers arrive in our province in the century ahead, and with the realities of greater focus on and promotion of Indigenous languages in view of the calls to

¹⁹ See Manitoba Education and Training. (2019). "International and heritage languages". Accessed online at: <https://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/cur/languages/index.html>

action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada²⁰ as well as through school board efforts to ensure that Manitoba's Indigenous languages will not be extinguished, MSBA foresees that delivery of multiple language programming in Manitoba schools will be a certain reality for the future.

Of all of the languages provided in our schools however, French remains the language for which greatest demand exists in Manitoba, through both French Language 1 (FL1) programs for members of Manitoba's constitutionally protected minority language community (delivered exclusively through the Division scolaire franco-manitobaine) and also through French Language 2 (FL2) programming to provide immersion. Demand for basic French courses also remains high.

In respect of French language programming, Manitoba has always emerged as a national leader. With the creation of some of the very first French Immersion programs in Canada occurring in Winnipeg in 1974, the popularity of such programs among parents and students has only continued to grow. This reflects Manitoba's demographic reality, where French remained for many years the second most spoken language in our province, while also reflective of efforts to promote greater national unity through bilingual and bicultural education programming outside of Quebec.

Table 5 – First Official Language Spoken in Manitoba 2016²¹

Mother tongue (10)	First official language spoken (7)						Official language minority (number) ¹	Official language minority (percentage) ²
	Total - First official language spoken	English	French	English and French	Neither English nor French	Official language minority (number) ¹		
Total - Mother tongue	1,261,620	1,203,025	39,205	3,545	15,845	40,975	3.2	
English	900,605	900,575	30	0	0	30	0.0	
French	40,525	3,030	37,495	0	0	37,495	92.5	
Non-official language	288,990	269,750	810	2,575	15,840	2,100	0.7	
Aboriginal	29,705	29,330	15	35	315	35	0.1	
Non-Aboriginal	259,280	240,420	790	2,545	15,525	2,065	0.8	
English and French	4,365	3,300	270	800	0	665	15.2	
English and non-official language	25,965	25,960	5	0	0	5	0.0	
French and non-official language	695	125	570	0	0	570	82.0	
English, French and non-official language	475	280	30	165	0	110	23.2	

The current realities associated with French language education in Manitoba have resulted in nearly 13 percent of all pupils being enrolled in FL1 or FL2 programming in our schools. The French Immersion program exists in 22 of 38 school divisions in Manitoba. This includes all six school divisions in Winnipeg, eleven rural school divisions and five northern school divisions. In total, out of 660 schools across Manitoba, there are 107 French Immersion schools of which 38

²⁰ Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. (2015). *Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada calls to action*. Accessed online- http://trc.ca/assets/pdf/Calls_to_Action_English2.pdf

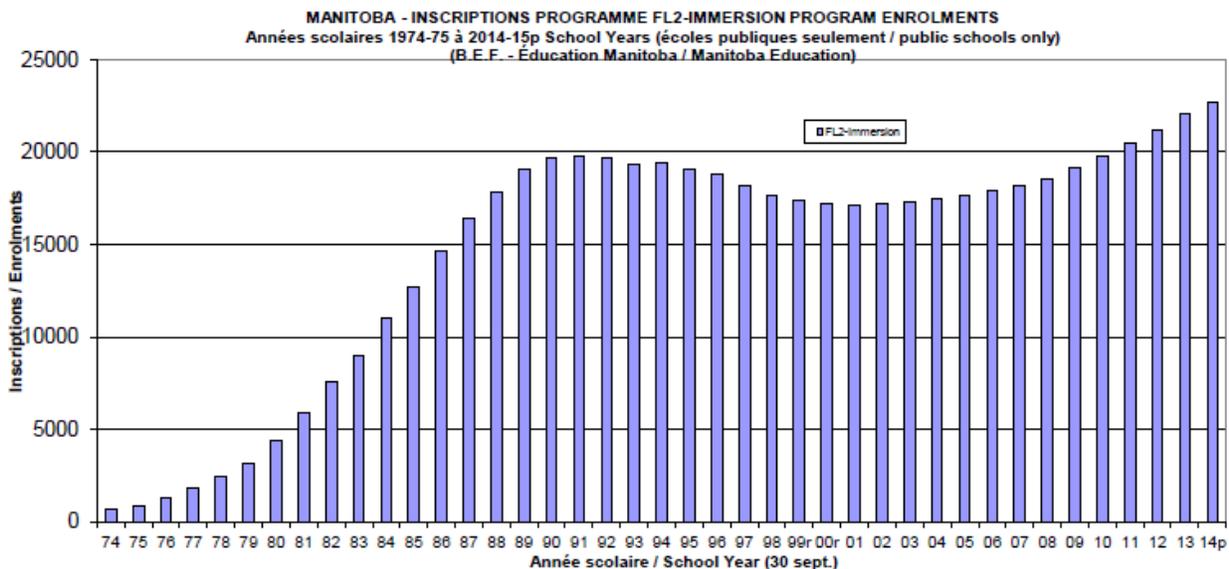
²¹ Data sourced from Statistics Canada. (2016). *Population census data – linguistic characteristics of Canadians*. Accessed online - <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/rt-td/lang-eng.cfm>

are single track and 69 are dual track. A further 23 schools deliver FL1 programming under the auspices of the DSFM.

While every effort is made to sustain this level access to French language programming, school boards have increasingly encountered challenges in doing so, reflecting difficulties associated with replacement and expansion of staffing. Based on the outcomes of the most recent 2015 French Language Education Review²² undertaken by the Bureau de l'Éducation Française (BEF), out of 102 FL2 schools surveyed, 90 schools responded that hiring of qualified teachers posed a challenge. Eighty-seven schools felt that the same challenge extended to guidance counsellors, while 81 identified challenges for resource teachers. Eighty schools felt it was a challenge to hire librarians and 92 expressed challenge in hiring educational assistants.

The most frequent reasons cited for the existence of such challenges were a limited number of qualified applicants (70 schools) followed by difficulties recruiting to rural settings (24 schools), the ongoing need for bilingual and trained educational assistants (22 schools) and difficulty in finding specialist personnel who are bilingual (18 schools) in areas such as guidance, resource, librarian, physical education, and music. It is also noteworthy that of all subject areas at the senior high level, math and science demonstrated the greatest difficulties in terms of schools recruiting qualified bilingual teachers. MSBA would strongly encourage the Commission to consult the findings of the French Language Education Review in order to inform the development of its long-term vision for education. We would also encourage that the BEF undertake regular five year updates to the French Language Education Review, by way of assisting education partners in maintaining an informed provincial perspective regarding the challenges of personnel recruitment and retention.

Graph 5 – FL2 Enrolments in Manitoba 1974-2014



For school boards across Manitoba, one of the most significant challenges for the future will be the sustainment of FL1 and FL2 programming based on projected enrolment demand, as well

²² BEF. (2015). *French language education review*. Winnipeg.

as replacement and expansion rates related to existing personnel. To this end, MSBA was pleased to submit several key recommendations to the BEF based on its earliest consultations concerning this important challenge.²³

Going forward, most education partners have agreed that the most desirable means of responding to this challenge is to support the ongoing establishment of strong local education and training capacity to meet needs. To this end, MSBA believes that the subject of French teacher and support personnel could become one of the cornerstones of a more comprehensive review of teacher education capacity and supply in Manitoba, as we will recommend under the Commission's third focus area (teaching).

In the interim, we would recommend that the Commission's long-term vision for public education embrace the importance of opportunities for continued excellence through provision of FL1 and FL2 programming, supports and services— both to respond to the constitutional rights of the Francophone minority language community in Manitoba and also to meet parental and student demand for French language education at the FL2 level, including basic programs.

Given the importance of supporting and promoting the constitutional rights afforded to all *ayants droits* who are eligible to receive exclusive education in the French language within Manitoba's francophone minority language community and, in view of the desirability of enhancing bilingualism in English and French across Manitoba communities to enhance employability, income generation, and opportunity for our students, such a recommendation is, from our perspective, a cornerstone of long-term vision and planning for public education in Manitoba.

Economic realities and the labour market in Manitoba

Education has always been designed to prepare young people for life and entry to the world beyond the classroom. While equipping students with a combination of social, citizenship and life skills is certainly part of the bigger picture of education, preparing them for success in vocation and career is equally as important.

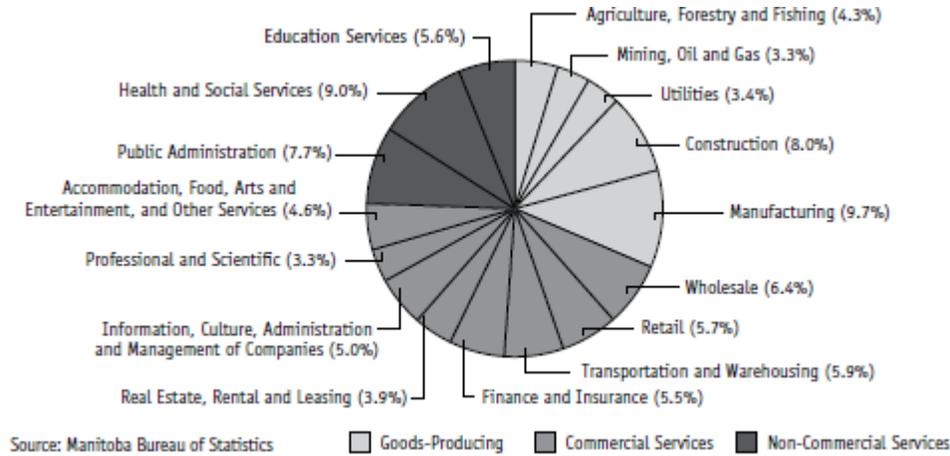
In the past, Manitoba school boards have made significant efforts to include and provide opportunities for vocational and technical education that will help ease transitions for students continuing on to college and career in the same measure as programs designed to prepare them for entry to university. The establishment of regional secondary schools throughout the 1960s and 70s was a direct response to the simultaneous creation of a CÉGEP model in Quebec.

Today, school boards recognize that offering students a world of choices when it comes to programming and courses could not be more important. In terms of responding to industry and labour market needs, Manitoba's students benefit from a wide array of options, including work placements, internships, high school apprenticeship programming, technical-vocational education, technology and IT education, industrial arts, business education, and even specialization in certain industries such as health care, child care, tourism, mining, culinary

²³ MSBA. (2015). *Brief to the Bureau de l'éducation française concerning the enhancement of french language teacher supply in Manitoba*

arts and food preparation, and hospitality- to name some of the most popular choices in schools today.²⁴

Graph 6 – Manitoba GDP by Industry Shares 2017



Source: Manitoba Finance, (2019). *Getting the job done: Budget 2019 – Budget and budget papers*. Accessible online at: https://www.gov.mb.ca/asset_library/en/budget2019/budget.pdf

Many, if not all of these subject options and programs, are directly designed to achieve synergy with the needs of Manitoba industry, as demonstrated in Graph 6. The ability of school divisions to employ career development coordinators and community connectors to help further development of work relevant opportunities has been shown to make a difference in what can be achieved by each division.

At the same time, we believe that it remains important for students to also receive strong foundations in arts, mathematics, natural and social sciences, physical education, and languages (if chosen), in order to ensure that they are prepared for both university as well as for college and career. Those students who wish to receive advanced post-secondary credits can even do so through dual credit options where these are initiated by their school or through stand-alone application, as well as through participation in International Baccalaureate programs.

While Manitoba Education plays a fundamental role by approving curriculum and responding to school division requests for locally initiated courses and programs, equally fundamental is the role played by local business and industry. While many relationships exist between school divisions and local chambers of commerce to enhance responsiveness of classrooms to local economies, at the provincial level, MSBA also participates in meaningful dialogue with an array of partners to help achieve greater alignment between the needs of business and industry and the outcomes of public education in Manitoba.

This includes previous and ongoing roles with the Manitoba Employers Council and the Manitoba Chambers of Commerce Workforce Development Planning Committee. Important

²⁴ See Manitoba Education. (2019). *Subject table handbook*. Accessed online at: <https://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/docs/policy/sth/>

discussions have also occurred with the Premier’s Advisory Council on Workforce Development and also with sector councils such as Manitoba Manufacturers and Exporters, the Biomedical Association of Manitoba, and the Northern Manitoba Sector Council. Linkages between public schools and post-secondary education also remain significant for promoting seamless pathways from high school to university and college through avenues such as Red River College’s Strategic Council. Relationships between public education and professional regulators also help to inform how secondary education can contribute to workforce needs.

As educational services account for 5.6 percent of Manitoba’s overall GDP by Industry Share (see Graph 6) MSBA is also available to identify meaningful employment opportunities for members of the community relative to public education. A most recent example was our participation (May, 2019) in the Executrek program hosted by the Canadian Forces Liaison Council, to promote career options and choices for members of Canada’s Armed Forces Reserve.

School boards are also aware that essential skills preparation is vital to any career choice that may be made by our students and we commend the work that has been recently undertaken by Manitoba Education and Essential Skills Manitoba to ensure that all essential skill areas have been fully integrated through subject curricula.

Extra-curricular programming in support of life and career readiness is equally foundational to student success and through programming such as Drivers Education (offered across Manitoba by school divisions in partnership with Manitoba Public Insurance), and also through the Teens Against Distracted Driving program offered by MSBA also in partnership with MPI. We can continue to ensure that graduates are fully prepared to respond to the basic skills that employers have identified across all sectors. Given challenges in accessing quality Drivers Education in some communities in Manitoba, the role of our school staff and volunteers in delivering this added value to communities could not be more important.

In view of the importance of each of these programs, we would therefore recommend that the Commission’s long term vision recognize the importance of maintaining focus on and response to work relevant experience (through high school apprenticeships, work practica, career preparation and other student experiences), as well as through resources for the expansion of dual credit courses and community connectors. This recognition will help to promote ongoing alignment between secondary and post-secondary sectors of study and training, while also providing even greater opportunities for student preparedness beyond high school.

One of the most significant challenges in the ability of school divisions to remain responsive to local economic labour force needs concerns the rapidly changing face of our economy and labour market. While the economy in Manitoba has remained relatively stable over more extended periods of time than is true for other provinces²⁵, meeting local labour market demands is and always shall remain subject to the need for ongoing monitoring, adaptability and flexibility to respond to changing realities and circumstances. Remaining apprised of

²⁵ See the extensive commentary provided in Manitoba Finance. (2019). *Getting the job done: Budget 2019 – Budget and budget papers*. Accessible online at: https://www.gov.mb.ca/asset_library/en/budget2019/budget.pdf

changes is also facilitated where regular and standing consultative and advisory mechanisms are established to ensure that information is shared with the public education system.

In this respect, MSBA would note that many of the formal advisory structures and mechanisms that served to provide our association with opportunity to receive information regarding labour market demand and requirements relative to the Province of Manitoba, have recently been discontinued given focus on streamlining of agencies, boards and commissions. This said, we do trust that our presence within the educational and economic communities of Manitoba will assure all partners and stakeholders that we are willing to facilitate or disseminate any information that they may feel necessary to promote ongoing alignment between public education, the economy and our labour market. The inclusion of MSBA and other education partners on an ongoing basis to provide feedback relative to major planning exercises, such as have recently been undertaken by Apprenticeship Manitoba,²⁶ further support alignment and integration for optimal labour market impact.

In terms of ensuring that students are being prepared to enter a market that will help to fuel the sustainment of Manitoba’s economic sectors, MSBA and its member school boards regularly take stock of occupational forecasts and other labour market information,²⁷ most of which is produced by the federal and provincial governments. In this respect, several important trends have been identified for the immediate future. According to Manitoba Labour Market Information (LMI) Branch,²⁸ overall, Manitoba’s labour market is expected to remain balanced over the projection period from 2018-2024, with the overall supply for labour adequate to meet labour demand. However, labour shortages or surpluses may exist for individual occupations and in some regions of the province. In each year from 2017 to 2023, it has also been forecasted that labour supply will exceed labour demand by an average of 6,400 workers.

Table 6 – Labour Market Demand and Supply indicators in Manitoba 2018-2024

Variable	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Labour Force Demand	680,300	690,100	699,200	708,100	716,100	724,600	731,600
Labour Force Supply	687,100	695,900	705,300	714,100	722,500	730,900	738,600
Excess Supply	-6,800	-5,800	-6,100	-6,100	-6,400	-6,300	-7,000

While total labour supply growth will outpace total labour demand growth by 200 workers, the unemployment rate is expected remain fairly consistent over the forecast period. Overall, the unemployment rate is forecasted to decline from 5.3 per cent in 2018 to 5.2 per cent over the next 5 years, before rising to 5.3 per cent again in 2024.

²⁶ Manitoba Apprenticeship. (2017). *Manitoba apprenticeship and certification board strategic plan 2018-2023*. https://www.gov.mb.ca/wd/apprenticeship/pdfpubs/pubs/board/stratplan/acb_strategic_plan_2018_2023.pdf

²⁷ See Manitoba Labour Market Information Branch. (2018). *Occupational forecasts 2018-2024*. Winnipeg. Accessible online - <https://www.gov.mb.ca/jec/lmi/forecasts.html>

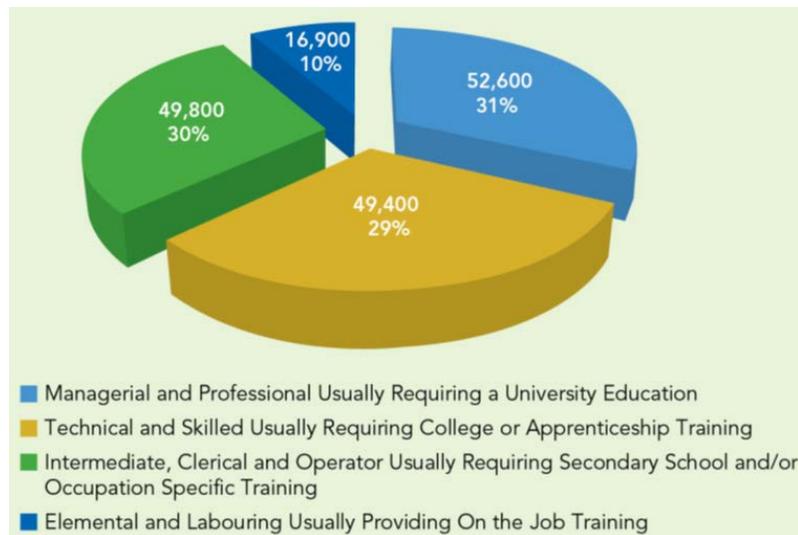
²⁸ See Manitoba Labour Market Information Branch. (2018). *Occupational forecasts 2018-2024*. Winnipeg. Accessible online - <https://www.gov.mb.ca/jec/lmi/forecasts.html>

Also important to consider is distribution of the workforce in Manitoba. Based on LMI information, MSBA would note that 61 per cent of Manitobans in the labour force live in Winnipeg. In 2016, Winnipeg’s labour force comprised of 411,200 people and between 2012 and 2016, the labour force and employment in Winnipeg increased by 4.3 percent and 3.3 percent respectively.

The Southeast region experienced the highest percentage growth in labour force. Between 2012 and 2016, the labour force in the region increased by 7.8 percent. Employment growth was also strongest in this region with 7.5 percent. Both labour force and employment decreased in the Southwest, Interlake and Parklands and North regions of the province in the past five years, while the Central region saw modest increases in both. In 2015, the Southeast had the highest labour force participation rate in Manitoba (69.5 percent), followed by the Winnipeg and Parklands & North regions with 68.2 percent. The Central region had the lowest unemployment rates in Manitoba (4.1 percent) in 2016, while Winnipeg had the highest unemployment rate (6.8 percent). Manitoba’s unemployment rate was at 6.1 percent.

While much is therefore available concerning current and forecasted labour market occupational trends, one item of note that the Commission should be aware of, concerns Manitoba job openings by skill level. This directly speaks to the role and responsibilities of public education in maintaining response to the needs of our labour market.

Graph 7 – Manitoba Job Openings by Skill Level 2018-2024²⁹



According to current projections through to 2024, just under a third of all jobs will require a university education in Manitoba, while close to 30 percent will require college or apprenticeship training. Another 30 percent will require secondary graduation with some combination of occupation specific training, and the final 10 percent shall require on-the-job

²⁹ Source: Manitoba Labour Market Information Branch. (2018). *Occupational forecasts 2018-2024*. Winnipeg. Accessible online - <https://www.gov.mb.ca/jec/lmi/forecasts.html>

training. This occupation-specific and on-the-job training will likely also take place in post-secondary contexts as colleges and vocational institutes adapt to remain responsive to needs.

In view of these realities, Manitoba schools shall retain their focus on ensuring that all students will be prepared for lifelong learning. Our goal is that they be equipped with the requisite and essential skills that will enable them to continue to post-secondary education or non-formal training. According to available resources, we have and shall continue to make every effort to provide students with access to a wide array of preparatory and readiness programming, including apprenticeships, work experiences, career preparation experiences, and dual credit courses. These opportunities will continue to enable our students to begin post-secondary or career-focused training even starting in high school.

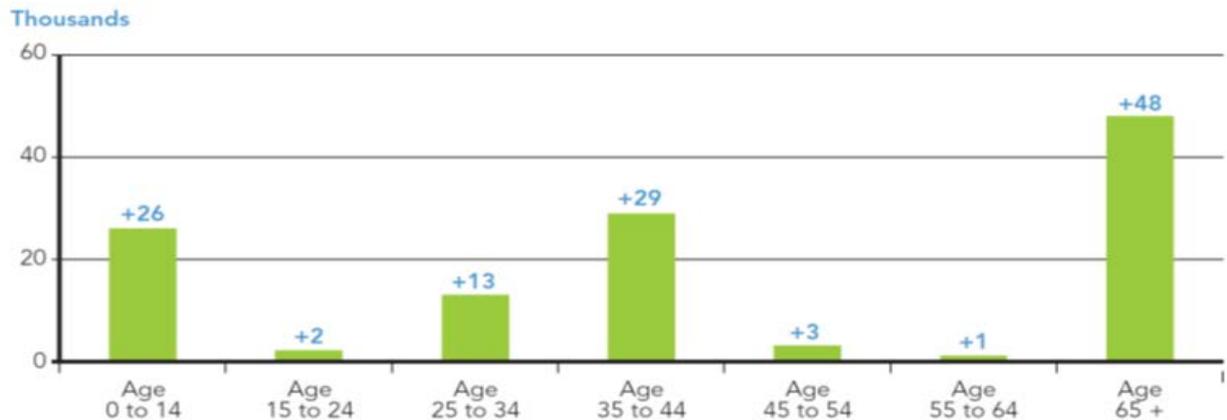
This focus on lifelong learning skills could not be more important for achieving alignment between public education offerings and economic need. As is rightly stated by LMI Branch, as the economy changes, so too do the macro-economic assumptions and data that serve to inform forecasts and projections. The key is ensuring that projections are updated regularly with the best data available at the time, even while all students remain equipped and prepared with the skills they require to succeed.

In closing, each of the above observations must be situated within one critical frame of reference. This concerns the need for every actor in public education and indeed in education writ large in Manitoba, to appreciate the long term challenges that our province will face given intergenerational dynamics as they relate to the labour market.

As is shown in Graph 8 below, Manitoba will very shortly encounter a situation where those of the baby boom generation begin to retire and require replacement. When one looks to the “supply chain” of younger Manitobans who are available to meet this replacement and retirement demand, it is evident that every single student will count to sustain Manitoba’s economic vitality. Manitoba’s population is now currently younger than ever before and while birthrates have been increasingly steadily over the past two decades, combined with immigration to offset population decline due to age, Manitoba can little afford the loss of any active contributor to our economy by failing to address the important social or economic challenges that many still face.

In this respect, education remains vital and essential to addressing these challenges. The future requires that public education remain focused and strong to provide the right capacity for our students and staff to rise to this occasion.

Graph 8 – Manitoba Age Distribution Change 2017-2024³⁰



Some concluding thoughts on long-term vision

Why has the Manitoba School Boards Association vested so much effort in analyzing and commenting on the demographic, social, cultural and economic realities and dynamics of our province? The answer is quite straightforward. We feel that it is important to establish a long term vision for the future based on our current trajectory as a province and as a school system. This includes an account of where we have come from and what factors and influences will likely shape public education into the next century.

At present time, public schools have become the “be all and end all” for most of the pupils who pass through our doors each day. Over the past 150 years of our unique experiment in Manitoba, public education has experienced several profound changes. From basics to sophistication. From exclusion to inclusion. From colonialism to sovereignty through to reconciliation. From adult-led teaching to student-led learning. From face-to-face to distance education and now peer-to-peer learning. From the time of the one room school-house that characterized much of our early history as a province, to multi-million dollar school facilities that now promote enhanced learning through the very spaces they provide, our concept of the school has been transformed. The subject areas and programs options available to students have blossomed into areas heretofore unimaginable just half a century ago.

What will the future hold for the people and communities of Manitoba?

From MSBA’s perspective, our best and informed guess, based on the preceding analysis, is that the core features of Manitoba’s public education system will remain much the same, albeit enhanced by the increasing use of technologies³¹ and increasing adaptation of learning spaces to reflect pressures and demands based on the social, economic and cultural changes that our province may experience.

³⁰ Source: Manitoba Labour Market Information Branch. (2018). *Occupational forecasts 2018-2024*. Winnipeg. Accessible online - <https://www.gov.mb.ca/jec/lmi/forecasts.html>

³¹ The very first holographic professors have recently been introduced in a business college in London, as just one example. See generally <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/technology/2018/11/02/students-taught-holograms-imperial-college-london/>

The face of Manitoba’s classrooms will certainly change given the drivers of our demographic growth as realized through Indigenous and newcomer Canadians, while language use for instructional purposes will remain focused on the duality of English and French, with growing response to meet the realities of heritage communities and also to achieve reconciliation with Manitoba’s Indigenous students. Our economy will retain significant features of the agrarian, industrial and knowledge-based economies, even while embracing a global market that has now shifted to the so-called “augmented economy”, one where creativity, agility, adaptability and cognitive augmentation will be increasingly valued across all industries.³²

That such change and transformation shall continue to be felt by our children, and also by their own children and grandchildren ought to be carefully considered and anticipated as the foundations of public education are presently reviewed. In these respects, the time is long past due to re-envision the kinds of changes that will undergird a truly future system of public education for all Manitobans.

If there is one last observation that MSBA would offer to the Commission as it envisions education for the future, it would be that certain beliefs, values, principles and objectives shall remain valid across every generation, notwithstanding changes in attitudes, behaviours and expectations. These we have captured in MSBA’s Beliefs and Principles of Public Education, as provided in Appendix A. We encourage the Commission to consider the important role that these principles will continue to play in shaping systemic and organizational culture for the success of public education.

³² Taylor, J. (2019). *Keynote presentation, annual congress of the National School Boards Association, March 31, 2019, Philadelphia, PA.*

2. STUDENT LEARNING

As the ultimate object of public education, there is no greater topic than student learning. While much can be highlighted under this section, MSBA will focus its commentary on four principal topics: the significant influence of poverty upon student learning; the importance of inclusion, accessibility and equity for all students; sharing of responsibilities and collaboration; and measuring student achievement, performance and success. We will end this chapter with some additional thoughts and ideas for consideration by the K-12 Education Review Commission.

The significant influence of poverty upon student learning

In concert with our member school boards, MSBA remains firmly committed to supporting the objective of the Manitoba Government to become the most improved province in Canada, relative to its education system. To do so, we must acknowledge the criticality of poverty as it impacts student learning across our communities. In this particular respect, we would like to commend the work of the department in establishing greater structural relationships between Healthy Child Manitoba (HCM) and the Schools Programs Division (SPD) of Manitoba Education and Training.

It has been our experience to date that with ongoing coordination between HCM and SPD, appropriate expertise and capacity will continue to bear positive impacts for greater coordination and action. This capacity and leadership will increasingly lead to the ongoing development and implementation of government initiatives and programs that are built upon much wider research, analysis and quantitative data.

As such initiatives and programs proceed, receipt of ongoing feedback from educational partners will prove important. Metrics can be used to paint part of the picture of what occurs on the frontline relative to our students and classrooms, but does often require a qualitative dimension, with verification, to promote accuracy and reliability.³³ Anecdotes from the field can be just as useful as the information that is shared through annual reports, in order to ensure that the human dimension of data is appropriately contextualized.³⁴

Why have we focused on the importance of joint HCM and SPD collaboration to start this focus on poverty? The answer lies in the reality that through the work that has been achieved to date, all education partners have gained increased appreciation for the significant influence that poverty exerts on our students, reinforced by concrete evidence of the same. We trust that the Commission will be both well served and well informed by the important findings that HCM and SPD have recently undertaken in terms of measurement of the impacts of poverty on our students.

That poverty exists among and affects Manitoba's children has been a longitudinal reality for all educators. Variably, the data changes year over year but with one important finding overall: that Manitoba experiences child poverty in greater measure than most other provinces of Canada.

³³ Muller, J. (2018). *The tyranny of metrics*. Princeton University Press. Princeton, NJ.

³⁴ O'Neil, C. (2016). *Weapons of math destruction: How big data increases inequality and threatens democracy*. Crown. New York.

Table 7 – Low Income in Manitoba, Statistics Canada 2016 Market Basket Measure

Population Group	Manitobans Living in Poverty in 2016	
	Rate, Per Cent	Number
Manitobans	9.4%	115,000
Persons in Single-Parent Families	36.9%	22,000
Persons in Youth-Led Families	35.9%	18,000
Single Individuals (non-elderly)	30.1%	36,000
Indigenous Persons (off reserve)	23.2%	23,000
Persons with Disabilities	13.2%	35,000
Children	11.9%	32,000
Seniors	2.5%	5,000

Table reproduced from Manitoba Poverty Reduction Strategy (2019). *Pathways to a Better Future: Manitoba's Poverty Reduction Strategy*, p. 22 Accessible online at: <https://www.gov.mb.ca/povertyreduction/>

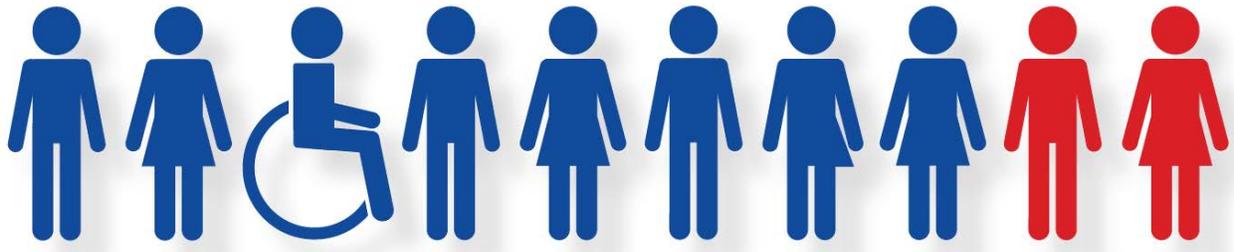
How this translates into student learning outcomes and performance can be seen through adjusted scores for socio-economic status (SES) on Canada's foremost national assessment instruments for literacy, numeracy and science: the Student Achievement Indicators Program (SAIP), which was administered between 1993 and 2007, and the Pan-Canadian Assessment Program (PCAP) which has been administered ever since 2007.

Table 8 –SES Adjusted Overall Score on SAIP and PCAP 2003-2015

Year of Testing Result	MB adjusted overall rank (SES)
2003	3
2006	4
2009	8
2012	10
2015	7

The above data stands in stark contrast to the unadjusted scores, which typically place Manitoba at or near the bottom of provincial rankings on these assessments. What this data reveals is the reality that poverty does impact our students' standing and detrimentally so. When the data is adjusted to account for socio-economic status, Manitoba is placed much closer to the Canadian average than would otherwise be the case. While eight out of ten students in Manitoba typically perform at or above the expected grade level achievement and

performance in all three of literacy, numeracy and science, the two out of ten students who do not do so are largely accounted for due to factors of poverty, as well as newcomer status.



In response to this context, Manitoba's public schools have responded using many innovative approaches designed to mitigate the impacts of poverty. This has included the following:

- Expansion of the wrap-around supports that are made available through Manitoba's network of community schools, which embrace the concept of whole student learning in partnership with families (which has become highly important especially for Aboriginal and Indigenous and newcomer families);
- Expansion and resourcing for community hubs that connect education, social services, justice, health and youth serving organization providers for addressing the needs of high risk students;
- Implementation of divisional pupil transience strategies;
- Availability of after school programming;
- Availability of summer learning loss prevention programs;
- Deployment of time management strategies with focus on alternative recess and class-bell scheduling; and
- Sustainment of child nutrition programming to address the most critical impacts of poverty on our students.

These are just some of the many initiatives that school divisions have established for meaningful difference and impact. Such general enhancements to our schools and classrooms certainly deserve to be recognized, promoted and expanded in future.

We would therefore strongly recommend that the Commission review these and other successful programs that have demonstrate evidence-based, local and proven results in addressing the impacts and risks of student poverty, to determine opportunities for possible expansion of such programs to all school divisions across the province in future.

Are there additional methods for promoting greater achievement in Manitoba's public education context in response to poverty? According to most of the leading authorities on this subject, Manitoba is already engaged in practices that will lead to greater improvement over

time. As an example, many school districts in the United States are embarking on initiatives designed to implement the “five powerful classroom practices for disrupting poverty”.³⁵

These practices include building caring relationships and advocating for students; holding high expectations and providing needed support; committing to equity; accepting professional accountability for learning; and having the courage and will to take action. Commissioners would be very hard pressed to find any member of Manitoba’s education partners who are not committed to each of these five practices and are already implementing them, according to their shared areas of responsibility.

The same authors of the five powerful classroom practices also remain in vogue with their guide on turning high poverty schools into high-performing schools.³⁶ What this guide recommends is greater focus on building leadership capacity; fostering healthy, safe, and supportive learning environments; focus on student, professional and system learning; and asking two important questions. The first “can high poverty-high performing schools sustain themselves”? The second “can their success be taken to scale”?

Here again, Manitoba has learned important lessons based on its community schools initiative. As the initial piloted community schools demonstrated increasing success, greater numbers of community schools were established to replicate these successes in communities with demonstrated need. In the same vein, the ongoing expansion of community hub models province-wide, with provincial funding, are also demonstrating success for the most at risk students by uniting multiple service providers in collaborative efforts to break existing silos and jurisdictional barriers. We know that summer learning loss prevention programs work and provide a viable and cost-effective substitute for year round school models, even as after school program expansion remains important for providing students in need with ongoing tutoring, mentorship and activities designed to mitigate poverty during the school year.

In partnership with MASS and MASBO, MSBA has promoted joint leadership and collaborative action for achieving greater systemic outcomes through such initiatives as its *Leading Together Resource Guide for School Boards, Superintendents and Secretary-Treasurers*.³⁷ In collaboration with MASS and Manitoba Education, MSBA also recently co-chaired a significant forum that brought multiple partners together from the education, health, justice, social services and youth serving sectors, to address information sharing for child protection. The final report of this forum will be published in June, 2019.³⁸

In order to address the most extreme forms of poverty, our association also coordinates issuance of grants on behalf of the Child Nutrition Council of Manitoba (CNCM), an important organization that is responsible for \$1 million in funding through an annual average of 488 grants to help sustain meal programs so that students can focus on learning rather than an empty stomach. As similar Headstart programming has long proven, addressing a student’s

³⁵ Budge, K and Parrett, W. (2018). *Disrupting poverty: Five powerful classroom practices*. ASCD. Alexandria, VA.

³⁶ Budge, K. and Parrett, W. (2012). *Turning high poverty schools into high-performing schools*. ASCD. Alexandria, VA.

³⁷ MSBA, MASS, and MASBO. (2015). *Leading together: A resource guide for school boards, superintendents and secretary-treasurers*. Winnipeg. Accessible online-
https://www.mbschoolboards.ca/documents/LeadingTogether_ResourceGuide_2015.pdf

³⁸ This Breaking Barriers Forum was convened on January 23, 2019.

personal hierarchy of needs begins with the most basic physical dimensions of their well-being and safety.

While \$1 million may appear to be a substantial sum in addressing nutritional programming for the most impoverished students, rising inflation and increases to food prices have meant that what the CNCM used to be able to achieve for this same level of funding has decreased over the past several years. We have articulated this concern to Manitoba Finance through our most recent pre-budget briefing to the Minister and do trust that due consideration will be extended to this request given the significant relationship between meal programs and student achievement.³⁹ The reality for some students in Manitoba is that these school meals may not be just another meal in their daily staple— sometimes these may be their only meal.

Time management as a factor in addressing poverty remains important and as mentioned, several schools in Manitoba have also piloted initiatives to determine whether alternative recess and class bell scheduling can have an impact on student achievement, particularly in high poverty contexts.

In this respect, what the K-12 Review Commission should consider are the important lessons learned in managing time for academic improvement. A considerable amount of research on this subject has for instance, been undertaken by Dr. Timothy Shanahan, former superintendent of Chicago public schools and now professor emeritus of the University of Illinois at Chicago. Shanahan's work across the decades of his experience are informative for addressing all contexts of poverty: while he concedes that schools will never have control over parental income, nor will they ever have control over parental educational attainment, what they can control is contact time between teachers and students.⁴⁰

In this respect, it is important to consider the total number of days in the school year (which is established outside of the authority of school boards) as one means of achieving greater contact time. Within the authority of school boards, bell to bell scheduling (being ready for teaching right at the start of each class through to the very end of each class) with focus on managing end of day routines and washroom breaks, especially for the earliest years (K-3), can add significantly to the amount and quality of instruction that a student will receive in school.

Based on Shanahan's experience, by achieving efficiency in washroom periods and home-time preparation alone, learning can be increased by up to two additional weeks of learning during the school year. This can sometimes result in advancement of learning among students by an entire grade level. Shanahan would also highlight international experiences adding days to the school year, with evidence that this has borne impacts especially for top achieving Asia-Pacific nations. As stated earlier however, it is our perspective that expansion of summer learning loss programming in more selective high poverty communities, has been used to achieve the same impacts in the Manitoba context, without significantly added expenditure.

³⁹ MSBA. (2019). *2019 Pre-Budget briefing to the Honourable Scott Fielding, Minister of Finance*. Winnipeg. Accessible online-

⁴⁰ See generally Shanahan, T. personal website. Accessible online at – www.shanahanonliteracy.com

We would note that The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation is also currently funding research on the impacts on class bell scheduling at the senior years of education.⁴¹ This research has demonstrated that one of the most significant learning tools at the disposal of schools today is the class scheduling software that they use. Using class bell scheduling to promote cohort based learning, permitting students to move as a peer group and for teachers to build upon one another's work in harmony, while also providing important optional periods in which students can pursue dual credit courses via distance education for greater access to post-secondary education starting in high school, each have positive impacts on student learning in high poverty contexts.

While it is difficult to transplant what might have worked in one jurisdiction into another, Manitoba certainly has learned from the rich experience of its neighbours. One of the most striking differences that requires careful distinction in this province however, relates to the reality of poverty in Manitoba as it affects Aboriginal and Indigenous communities. What we do wish to highlight in this respect is that many of the most significant challenges experienced by Manitoba's Aboriginal and Indigenous communities must be situated within the overarching context of poverty.

This is attributable to the reality that impoverishment of Aboriginal and Indigenous communities is most often a reflection of race, ancestry and historical experience, even while the many challenges and issues that do surface among Indigenous students in a school context concerning intergenerational trauma, toxic stress, lower social and health determinants, and overall economic conditions, are phenomena that also tend to reflect the common experience of non-Indigenous students in low-income circumstances.

As we earlier commented under the focus area on long-term vision, that Aboriginal and Indigenous communities are one of two key drivers of demographic growth in the Manitoba context is a reality that deserves special focus, capacity and resource. The many plans and recommendations that have been tabled in those documents which we have cited under that section, therefore remain of equal importance for addressing poverty.

The establishment of strong programming, supports and services that affirm the identity, culture and language of Aboriginal and Indigenous students and their families will contribute to improving educational outcomes across Manitoba as a whole. Focus on the greater implementation of Trauma-Informed Practice, as was specifically recommended by Lamoureux (2016) will also equip educators with the skills they require to competently and sensitively confront each challenge head on.⁴²

Finally, MSBA would like to commend the Government of Manitoba for renewing focus on addressing poverty through a multi-sectoral lens. The recent release of the *Pathways to a Better Future* poverty reduction strategy⁴³ will help re-engage partners in common purpose and we applaud the inclusion of focus on supports for children and youth and promoting economic inclusion through employment, education and training. As the K-12 Review is itself one of the

⁴¹ See the website of the Unlocking time project. Accessible online at- <https://unlockingtime.org/>

⁴² See also NSBA. (2019). *Adverse childhood experiences: The school board's role in building connections and support for students*. Alexandria, VA.

⁴³ Manitoba Poverty Reduction Strategy (2019). *Pathways to a Better Future: Manitoba's Poverty Reduction Strategy*. Accessible online at: <https://www.gov.mb.ca/povertyreduction/>

initiatives that has been designed to respond to poverty under the strategy, we trust that the information we have provided in this report will be of support and assistance to the Commission as it formulates poverty-reduction focused recommendations for the consideration of the Government.

If there is one specific recommendation that we would like to advance under this section, it would be that the Commission extend consideration to the establishment of a formal, education-focused poverty reduction strategy, led by a working group composed of representatives from the Government of Manitoba, school divisions (school boards, senior administration and teachers), parents and students, to identify and collate promising practices and other initiatives, in order to enhance current response to poverty across all school contexts.

We believe that through ongoing and continued dialogue and collaboration, all partners can come together to identify education-targeted resources for meaningful change and improvement.

The importance of inclusion, accessibility and equity for all students

Every school board in Manitoba embraces the principles of inclusion, accessibility and equity towards providing positive student learning experiences that, to the extent possible, reflect a common and mainstreamed learning experience, according to principles of reasonable accommodation and existing resources.

Together, we make every effort to ensure that students across our province are provided with the same core program of education, one that is reflective of the best quality possible, using the best resources possible, even while programming, supports and services may vary from division to division to reflect the unique and distinctive character of each of our communities. In this manner, a common student learning experience is supported by ensuring that every student is able to pursue the same core subject content as every other student in Manitoba, a reality that is supported by the central roles and responsibilities of Manitoba Education in establishing curricular content, standards and outcomes for each approved subject.

Where distinctive programs, supports and services have been deployed by school divisions to meet local needs, or where differentiated curricular formats and delivery are used in a select context, these do not disadvantage students in one part of the province versus another insofar as they are a response to individual needs that are particular to each learner.

The reality in Manitoba is that the largest majority of the programs, supports and services that do differ from those offered in a neighbouring division are not simply “nice to have’s”. They are in fact aimed at achieving greater equity for students according to the particular circumstances of each community. School boards are not profligate in their investment of community resources for benefit of students and staff. Every program, support and service has been established because there is a compelling reason to do so and because we seek to promote student learning that will serve to prepare our students for the great world beyond.

We would invite the Commission to review several meaningful examples of such programs, supports and services at Appendix B. Our “This is Local Choice” series, features many of the

local hallmarks of which each school board is proud. These programs highlight the difference and impact that local school boards have across Manitoba.

In the end, we believe that if every school division in Manitoba looked the same, had the same culture, and offered the exact same programming in support of student learning, then it would be the case that school boards have failed in their area of specific responsibility: to represent the interests and diversity that exists within their community in the delivery of public education.⁴⁴

No two communities in Manitoba are alike. While they may share the same fundamental characteristics, it is their unique identity that sets them apart. This tends to reflect the inherently human dimension of student learning at the individual and collective levels of each division.

A great deal of work has also been achieved to promote equity across every school division by examining policy and governance frameworks. As recently as 2016, MSBA partnered with MASS, MASBO, MTS, the University of Manitoba, the Social Planning Council of Winnipeg, and Manitoba Education to conduct a study to specifically evaluate equity. The resulting effort, *Toward Equity in Education*, sought to identify practices that school divisions could use to enhance focus on achieving greater equity.⁴⁵

The final report contains 21 statements, or indicators of equity related practices, that school divisions can pursue in order to support educational equity across the province. The indicators are grouped into five main areas: our board, our parents and community, our teachers, teaching and learning, and our students. Each of these 21 statements includes information about how divisions interpret their equity practices, with concrete ideas for strengthening those practices across the province. We would encourage the integration of these findings in the work of the Commission.

At the national level, in partnership with the Canadian School Boards Association (CSBA), MSBA also took the lead in coordinating a preceding study, the outcome of which was the establishment of a national Poverty Intervention Profile for Canadian school boards.⁴⁶

Our discussion of equity deserves mention of two specific dimensions that we wished to raise with the Commission, early years literacy and numeracy as well as children with special needs and exceptionalities. We therefore turn to each of these by way of closing our discussion on inclusion, accessibility and equity.

Early Years Literacy and Numeracy

MSBA fully supports the long-term targets established by Manitoba Education arising from the Literacy and Numeracy Summit⁴⁷ and we would like to signal our partnership and commitment to allocating resources in order to address these objectives.

⁴⁴ See also Rice, P. (2019). *Equity, from the boardroom to the classroom: transforming districts into professional learning organizations*. Rowman and Littlefield. Lanham, Maryland.

⁴⁵ Wiens, J. (2016) *Towards equity in education*. Accessible online at- <http://www.mbschoolboards.ca/publications.php>

⁴⁶ CSBA. (1999). *Poverty intervention profile: Partners in action*. Ottawa.

⁴⁷ See page 16 in Manitoba Education. (2019). *Literacy and numeracy in Manitoba: Setting the context*. Winnipeg. Accessible online at- <https://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/educationreview/docs/setting-the-context.pdf>

MSBA would also like to commend Manitoba Education's current focus on early years literacy and numeracy. We believe that by promoting innovation and strengthening relationships across the educational spectrum, from cradle to career, that our students will be well served.

According to the much cited study by Hart and Risley (2003),⁴⁸ that the youngest children experiencing poverty experience a possible differential in vocabulary exposure of 30 million words has become the subject of much debate and controversy. Irrespective of where one stands on this issue, the reality remains that children, especially those in poverty, do benefit from earlier exposure to school.

As shown in Table 9, that there is a significant difference in the number of children who are enrolled in earlier years programming such as nursery, pre-Kindergarten programming and those who are enrolled in Kindergarten and Grade 1, serves to showcase this difference.

While Table 9 highlights the realities of the 2018 enrolment year only, the same trend is evident through longitudinal tracking of enrolment in Manitoba going back to the year 2000.⁴⁹ In general, there are 13,000 to 14,000 pupils enrolled in each cohort of Kindergarten to Grade 11 in Manitoba, while this number falls to just under 2,000 for school experiences occurring earlier than Kindergarten within the public school system (nursery/pre-school). In real terms, this signifies that anywhere from 11,000 to 12,000 pupils do not receive any exposure to a school setting prior to their enrolment in Kindergarten (depending on how many students there are in each age cohort but reflective of the general 13-14,000 pupil per grade level trend that has now been established over time).

In this respect, we acknowledge that the compulsory minimum age for starting enrolment remains fixed at seven years of age in Manitoba. Whether a student is enrolled earlier depends upon parental decision and choice. However, equally compelling is the reality that early years programs for public school entry are not universal or locally achievable for every school division. Promoting nursery/pre-school, pre-Kindergarten and even full-day Kindergarten programming, which help families to address poverty while also augmenting early years literacy and numeracy skills, may be an important consideration for the Commission.

We would therefore recommend that the Commission do consider opportunities for expanding nursery, pre-Kindergarten and full-day Kindergarten programming for optimal early years impact.

It is the perspective of MSBA that enhancing these programs would serve to promote the Government's rightful focus on early years literacy and numeracy and would come with strong impact in preparing children for entry to school. This is an important consideration for ensuring that Kindergarten and Grade 1 are devoted to forming the academic foundations that will carry each pupil through the consecutive grade levels, rather than introducing basic concepts and skills designed to catch many students up to the expected requirements of those levels.

⁴⁸ Hart, B., and Risley, T. (2003). The Early Catastrophe. The 30 Million Word Gap. *American Educator*, 27:1 (Spring, 2003). 4-9.

⁴⁹ Manitoba Education Enrolment Reports. Accessible online - https://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/finance/sch_enrol/index.html

Table 9 – Provincial Enrolment Summary - September, 2018

PROVINCIAL ENROLMENT SUMMARY SEPTEMBER 30, 2018																	
SCHOOLS	Total Schools	SE	N	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	TOTAL
PUBLIC SCHOOLS																	
SCHOOL DIVISIONS	687	692	1,960	13,786	14,033	13,852	13,814	14,089	13,993	13,917	13,389	13,014	13,421	13,887	14,087	16,863	184,797
SPECIAL REVENUE DISTRICT	2		17	11	13	19	8	9	13	16	14	17	11	16	19	21	204
TOTAL PUBLIC SCHOOLS	689	692	1,977	13,797	14,046	13,871	13,822	14,098	14,006	13,933	13,403	13,031	13,432	13,903	14,106	16,884	185,001
DIVISION ADMINISTERED FIRST NATIONS SCHOOLS ¹	10		246	285	281	267	286	304	299	289	307	296	299	229	160	195	3,743
TOTAL PUBLIC AND DIVISION ADMINISTERED FIRST NATIONS SCHOOLS	699	692	2,223	14,082	14,327	14,138	14,108	14,402	14,305	14,222	13,710	13,327	13,731	14,132	14,266	17,079	188,744
INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS																	
FUNDED SCHOOLS	62		453	1,090	1,089	996	1,076	1,066	1,066	1,057	1,070	1,056	1,116	1,164	1,056	1,119	14,474
NON-FUNDED SCHOOLS	49		40	226	226	180	173	177	179	179	178	131	80	52	49	1,870	
TOTAL INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS	111		453	1,130	1,315	1,222	1,256	1,239	1,243	1,236	1,249	1,234	1,247	1,244	1,108	1,168	16,344
TOTAL PUBLIC, INDEPENDENT AND DIVISION ADMINISTERED FIRST NATIONS SCHOOLS	810	692	2,676	15,212	15,642	15,360	15,364	15,641	15,548	15,458	14,959	14,561	14,978	15,376	15,374	18,247	205,088
HOMESCHOOLS	1,569	2	100	274	366	361	372	364	348	334	337	252	238	199	161	3,708	
PROVINCIAL TOTAL	2,379	694	2,676	15,312	15,916	15,726	15,725	16,013	15,912	15,806	15,293	14,898	15,230	15,614	15,573	18,408	208,796

¹ First Nations schools administered under educational agreements with school divisions: Frontier School Division (page 12) and Park West School Division (page 18).

SE - Pupils enrolled and taught in special ungraded classes.
N - NURSERY
K - KINDERGARTEN

Special Needs and Students with Exceptionality

In terms of inclusion and accessibility, MSBA affirms the provisions and ongoing application of *The Public Schools Amendment Act (Appropriate Educational Programming)*⁵⁰ and Manitoba Education’s Philosophy of Inclusion⁵¹ to respond to special needs and exceptional children.

MSBA and its member boards also remain committed to operationalizing the requirements and standards provided under the *Manitoba Human Rights Code*⁵² as well as the provisions and regulations of *The Accessibility for Manitobans Act*.⁵³ Recently, the independent review of the AMA (Pruden, 2018), acknowledged the special efforts that all school divisions make to ensure equitable education and accessibility for students, staff and community members.⁵⁴

Manitoba demonstrates one of the highest prevalence rates of self-identified disability in Canada (see Graph 9). While youth comprise nearly five percent of this population, nearly a third describe their disability as severe or very severe. That Manitoba school boards stand committed to achieving ongoing inclusion, integration and accessibility for such students, remains a cornerstone of what we believe excellence and equity in student learning is all about.

⁵⁰ Accessible online at - <https://web2.gov.mb.ca/bills/38-2/b013e.php>

⁵¹ Accessible online at - <https://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/specedu/aep/inclusion.html>

⁵² Accessible online at - <https://web2.gov.mb.ca/laws/statutes/ccsm/h175e.php>

⁵³ Accessible online at - <https://web2.gov.mb.ca/laws/statutes/ccsm/a001-7e.php>

⁵⁴ Pruden, T. (2018). *Independent report on the effectiveness of the implementation of the accessibility for Manitobans act*. Winnipeg. Accessed online– <http://accessibilitymb.ca/ama-review.html>

Ensuring that the public education system remains equitable and responsive for special needs students has always been one of the most important characteristics of schools across Manitoba. Most frequently encountered types of disabilities include but are not limited to:

- vision
- hearing
- physical
- intellectual
- developmental
- learning
- mental health
- speech or language
- deaf-blind
- chronic pain⁵⁵

In terms of mental health, the Mental Health Commission of Canada has recently indicated that one of out every four school-aged youth suffer from some form of existing mental health problem or illness.⁵⁶ These range from depression and anxiety to eating disorders and substance abuse. Incidence of suicide and suicidal intentions among youth also deserves special attention. Mental health disorders therefore represent the most common and prevalent disabilities among youth today. This comes with significant implications for students and schools.

The Commission also notes that 70 percent of mental illnesses in adults have their onset during adolescence or childhood and 70 percent of childhood cases of mental health problems can be solved through early diagnosis and interventions. School divisions across the province are therefore engaging in important work to provide core services, while also engaging in broader efforts to destigmatize mental health and to promote ongoing dialogue among students, staff and communities in order to promote greater well-being, safety and response.

Last year, in partnership with the Canadian Mental Health Association (Manitoba Chapter) and a Winnipeg City Councillor (Brian Mayes), MSBA established a unique scholarship to recognize the countless efforts that are undertaken by students across Manitoba, through individual or team-based learning, outreach and extra-curricular projects, to address mental health in their school or wider communities. We continue to stand in awe of the giftings that our students bring to this important conversation and the important achievements that they and staff at our schools are accomplishing, for normalization of this conversation.

Addictions and substance abuse are important dimensions of mental health and well-being and it is becoming increasingly apparent that Manitoba also now faces a considerable opioid and methamphetamine crisis that further endangers and frustrates school board efforts to promote substance free lifestyles for the advantage of our students and the communities in which they live. Access to substance abuse and addictions services for our students could not be more important than at current time, including for the general purpose of promoting awareness and abstinence from legalized substances including alcohol, tobacco and more

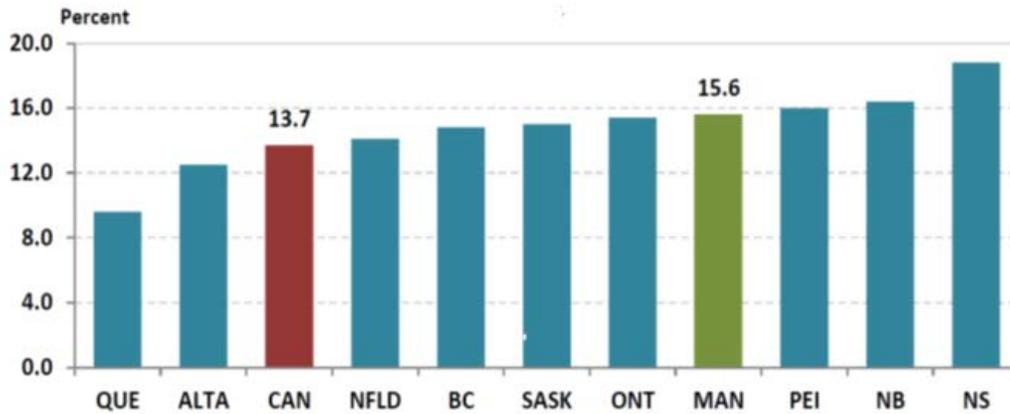
⁵⁵ These categories are defined by Barrier-Free Manitoba. See generally <http://barrierfreemb.com/disabilitiesinmb>

⁵⁶ See generally Mental Health Commission of Canada – <https://www.mentalhealthcommission.ca/English>

recently, cannabis. It is critical that the K-12 Commission lend consideration to the importance of maintaining and strengthening mental health supports to address needs.

Planning for the future needs of our student population is challenging given changes in incidence rates across each type of disability as well as in view of prevalence and severity. The following data produced by Statistics Canada based on the Canadian Survey on Disability does provide a general indication of what Manitoba can anticipate going into the next 15 years.

Graph 9 – Prevalence of Disability in Canada, 2012⁵⁷



Source: Statistics Canada Canadian Survey on Disability 2012

In 2012, of those reporting a disability, 4.7 percent were 15 to 24 years, and 30.3 percent of Manitobans living with disabilities aged 15 to 24 years reported their disability was Severe or Very Severe (see Graph 10).

Based on our collective experience, we know that early intervention is key in providing the tailored programs, supports and services that each student with an exceptionality requires. MSBA would like to congratulate Manitoba Education on adopting greater flexibility through block funding in support of special needs, even while allowing for specific applications in instances where a student's needs and requirements may be greater than resources would provide (most often at Level 3 funding). While the needs that exist at any given time are greater than resources allow, this flexibility in permitting divisional staff to allocate funds without the former administrative requirements, has provided greater benefit to releasing them so that they can deliver service in support of student learning.

From the school board standpoint, responding to special needs and exceptionalities depends on funding but also on qualified human resources. In this respect, Manitoba benefits from high quality guidance counsellors, resources teachers, clinicians and student services teams.

MSBA's collaborative efforts with organizations such as the Manitoba School Counsellors Association (MSCA) and the Student Services Administrators Association of Manitoba (SSAAM) over the course of several years has proven important for defining common

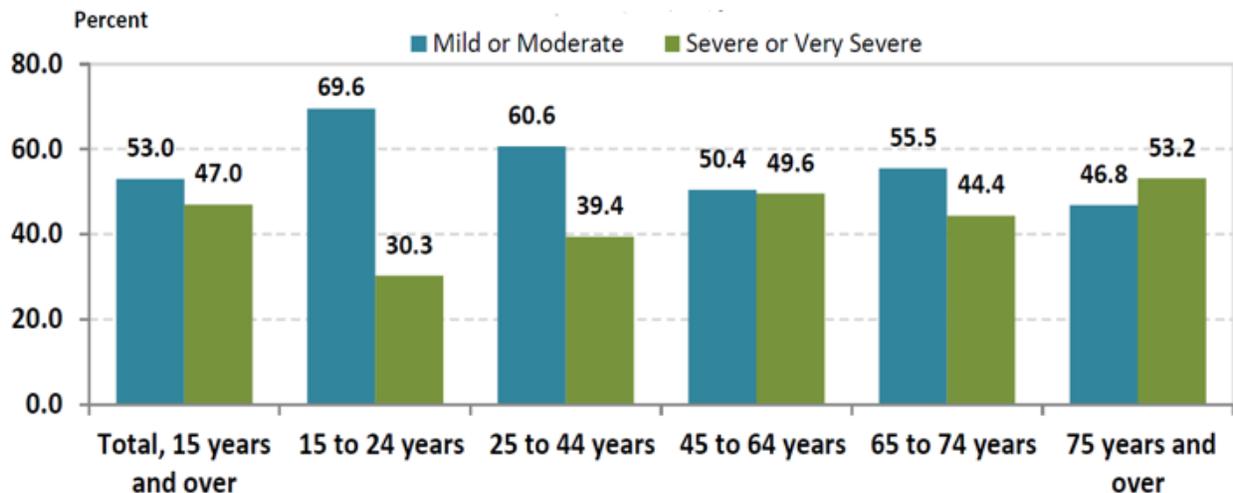
⁵⁷ Source: Manitoba Bureau of Statistics (2015). *Disability in Manitoba: 212-2036*. Accessed online at: https://www.gov.mb.ca/mbs/reports/pubs/demographic_impacts_2015/mbs_demo_impact_2015_c5_disability.pdf

expectations and purpose in addressing needs. Meeting demand can be challenging, especially given interface between school teams and external service providers.

However, that Manitoba public schools do strive to address every need that presents, not only for students but also for staff who require accessible accommodation, and for members of the community who utilize school infrastructure (whether through outdoor spaces including play structures or indoor spaces through community use of schools) remains a challenge within our everyday reality.

From the student learning side of the equation, equity demands equality in terms of access to services and the environment differs greatly across Manitoba, geographically. As most external service providers are located in Winnipeg, access to early intervention services by staff and parents of students with needs and exceptionalities in rural, remote and northern communities can prove especially challenging.

Graph 10 – Severity of Disability By Age in Manitoba, 2012⁵⁸



Source: Statistics Canada Canadian Survey on Disability 2012

Provision of vital interpretation services for deaf students for instance, remains an ongoing issue province-wide given shortages of qualified interpretation staff to meet demand. Ability of staff to access personnel who are capable and qualified to interpret diagnostic and intervention information received from key service providers such as the Manitoba Adolescent Treatment Centre, also remains a challenge.

The ability to recruit and retain clinicians to respond to pupil needs is proving increasingly challenging province-wide. In terms of students enrolled in FL1 programming who have the right to receive such service in French, as well as for FL2 students who deserve the extension of bilingual and bicultural education in all aspects of their education, we have already

⁵⁸ Source: Manitoba Bureau of Statistics (2015). *Disability in Manitoba: 2012-2036*. Accessed online at: https://www.gov.mb.ca/mbs/reports/pubs/demographic_impacts_2015/mbs_demo_impact_2015_c5_disability.pdf

described many of the challenges faced under focus area 1 on long term vision. We will therefore recommend to the Commission (under focus area 3 on teaching) that a review be undertaken of clinician capacity and supply in Manitoba for this very reason.

In advance of our preparation for this present submission, MSBA was pleased to take part in the Roundtable Forum on Inclusion that was organized by Faculty of Education professors. Many excellent observations and recommendations have been made arising from that roundtable, and so we will also defer to that report, as well as to the excellent submission provided by our colleagues at SSAAM. Both reports furnish additional insight and perspective from the frontline perspective and provide meaningful recommendations that will serve to enhance inclusion and achieve equity for students with special needs and exceptionalities across Manitoba.

In the interim, we would therefore simply recommend that the Commission consider the importance of Manitoba's current commitment to integration, inclusion and accessibility for all students, staff and community members, by way of promoting the ongoing delivery of equitable, effective and efficient programming, supports and services that serve to meet community needs.

Sharing of responsibilities and collaboration

Another dimension of addressing equity in public education is realized through the sharing of responsibilities and collaboration in education. The Commission has inquired as to who is ultimately responsible for student learning in Manitoba. In this respect, relationships as exist between the Minister and Department of Education, school boards, senior administration, teachers, other staff, students and families each define shared responsibility for student learning in Manitoba. Many other entities, including First Nations schools, independent schools, early learning and child care providers and Adult Learning Centres, are also a part of the bigger picture of ultimate responsibility for student learning and success.

MSBA would emphasize that each of these groups shares key responsibilities, which cannot be isolated from one another. The recent efforts by Healthy Child Manitoba and the Manitoba Centre for Health Policy to link databases using Early Childhood Development Instrument (EDI) data⁵⁹ and also under Structural Equation Models (SEM)⁶⁰ clearly demonstrate the interdependence of systems from cradle to careers, even while the formal legal and regulatory frameworks that govern public education provide for shared responsibilities at every level of education.

We therefore recommend that the Commission consider evidence-based models that demonstrate the interdependence and interrelationships between all significant providers of

⁵⁹ Santos R, Brownell M, Ekuma O, Mayer T, Soodeen R-A. *The Early Development Instrument (EDI) in Manitoba: Linking Socioeconomic Adversity and Biological Vulnerability at Birth to Children's Outcomes at Age 5*. Winnipeg, MB: Manitoba Centre for Health Policy, 2012. Accessible online at - http://mchp-appserv.cpe.umanitoba.ca/reference/MCHP_EDI_Report_WEB.pdf

⁶⁰ Brownell M, Chartier M, Santos R, Ekuma O, Au W, Sarkar J, MacWilliam L, Burland E, Koseva I, Guenette W. *How are Manitoba's Children Doing?* Winnipeg, MB: Manitoba Centre for Health Policy, 2012. Accessible online at - http://mchp-appserv.cpe.umanitoba.ca/reference//mb_kids_report_WEB.pdf

education and learning, such as are evident under SEM and EDI, when responding to the question of ultimate responsibility for student success and learning in Manitoba.

Within the collective efforts of school boards themselves, we would note that all school divisions in Manitoba partner to offer programs, supports and services that serve to enhance equity for their region. This becomes especially important in instances where resources may not allow an individual school division to offer a program, support or service, based on local tax assessment base or other factors, such as distribution and access to human resources.

As an example of the degree to which this works, there are some instances where school divisions have partnered to offer contracts to clinicians who will serve to address student learning needs across divisional boundaries. This focus on collaboration serves to achieve balance in maintaining local autonomy while achieving efficiencies and greater equity.

The Red River Valley Technical Vocation Area is another great example, this time of a program that has long been jointly offered by multiple divisions to address local need for student work experiences, by optimizing local access to regional placements to facilitate high school apprenticeship programming. To optimize professional development opportunities for teachers, consortia such as the Manitoba Rural Learning Consortium, stand as another great example of how appropriately resourced collaborations can affect positive change for all students, through enhancement of access to professional development and coordinated practice across several school divisions.

We would also be remiss if we did not highlight the degree of collaboration that exists with our First Nations community partners, as well as with Independent Schools, early learning and child care centres and Adult Learning Centres. Tuition and local education agreements between public school boards and First Nations education authorities; shared use agreements for access to clinician resources, gymnasiums, shops spaces, and science labs with Independent Schools; and lease-hold arrangements with early learning and child care centres, are staples of the daily operation of public school boards in Manitoba. That many ALCs are directly operated by school divisions helps to build synergies in meeting high school graduation targets, even if non-sequential fashion.

The enduring reality for Manitoba system of public education is of a multi-partner collaborative framework in all aspects of the programs, services and supports that we provide. This extends even to the aforementioned entities, which are not commonly viewed as being part of K-12 “public” education. Together, they each contribute to and enhance student learning in Manitoba.

Across our regional structure, MSBA also witnesses the extent of school board collaboration through our own resolutions process, whereby each region collectively puts forward policy resolutions for consideration, typically reflective of local circumstances that impact all boards in that region.

As an association comprised of local school boards, MSBA understands that one size does not fit all when it comes to student learning and success. Every student has different needs according to their own individual circumstances. That public schools today provide a core program of study to all students, enhanced by local programs, supports and services to address specific community needs and requirements, ensures that every student’s needs are

affirmed while achieving equity in the face of important geographic and human resource challenges. This therefore remains the ultimate responsibility of the public education system as a whole.

What MSBA would therefore posit, as deserving of our continuing focus in the immediate future, is the need to address poverty, as this factor largely accounts for why roughly two out of every ten students do not meet or exceed anticipated standards on assessment exams. If Manitoba's public education partners are to develop a stronger sense of shared responsibility in any single area of focus, it can be well directed towards uniting to an increasing degree in the future for address and redress of the impacts that poverty plays in the lives of those students who it affects.

We would therefore again recommend that the Commission extend consideration to the establishment of a formal, education-focused poverty reduction strategy, led by a working group composed of representatives from the Government of Manitoba, school divisions (school boards, senior administration and teachers), parents and students, to identify and collate promising practices and other initiatives, in order to enhance current response to poverty across all school contexts.

Measuring student achievement, performance and success

We would also posit that our sharing of responsibility can be further enhanced by continuing to explore student achievement, performance and success. Given the importance of informing practice and continuous improvement in student learning through strong evidence-based measures, MSBA believes that a balanced lens of both input and outcome indicators and measures, with evidence informed by both formative and summative evaluations, will be key for promoting continuous improvement into the future.

We therefore recommend that the Commission lend consideration to the establishment of an advisory committee that will be mandated to study alternate and enhanced measurement in student performance and success, in order to ensure that improvement is focused on both input and output measures and indicators as well as summative and formative learning and evaluation.

The above recommendation is submitted on the cusp of Manitoba Education calling all partners together to engage in consultation concerning data management. For many years, the promise and potential of a strengthened data management strategy have remain unfulfilled due to significant under-resourcing and lack of sustained focus. To that end, the opportunity to turn this dialogue into a more permanent and iterative feedback loop can help sustain our ultimate responsibility for informing practice based on a variety of measures. It can also promote greater synergy, harmony and alignment between all education partners through shared data reporting, analysis, interpretation and application.

In this respect, MSBA would like to address six of the specific measures and instruments that have often been used to inform continuous improvement in the area of student learning. These include: educational attainment as produced by Statistics Canada (and by extension the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development or OECD), the Pan-Canadian Assessment Program administered by the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada; the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) administered by the OECD;

Manitoba's three year interval measures, which culminate in the Grade 12 provincial examinations; secondary graduation and overall attendance rates.

MSBA would note that with the exception of overall attendance, the remaining performance measures tend to be viewed through outcomes-based and summative frames of reference. As such, while they do tell an important story concerning Manitoba's student performance in the local, national and global context, they do not serve to tell the whole story. This is why it remains our perspective that input and formative evaluation measures are also necessary to evaluate public education.

Increasing the use of provincial report card data to inform practice will also help to promote focus on formative assessment. This will prove important for building public confidence and understanding in the longer term by providing a more holistic perspective on education. It will also demonstrate where improvements can be made during the process of student learning, to affect and influence the outcomes of that learning.

We would also posit that how success is measured for Indigenous students remains an important question, especially given differing perspectives between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities regarding the objects, quality, and outcomes of education.⁶¹

With the exception of educational attainment, graduation and attendance rates, we would further note that each of the following measures and assessments also maintain focus on selective subject areas to the exclusion of the broader offerings and programming that are offered within public education.

While we appreciate that this reflects the value that public policy places on certain subject matters over others, there is significant difference of perspective on what counts when it comes to the outcomes of the educational experience for every student. There is also a significant difference in terms of how the diversity of the educational experience helps prepare students for life beyond the grade-level classroom.

The above commentary is not in any way intended to reflect disagreement or discord on the part of MSBA with the measures and assessments that do tend to be chosen and referenced when reviewing student learning. What we do trust this commentary will serve is to reorient the dialogue towards a strengthened assessment and performance framework, leading to even greater improvement in the future.

Educational attainment

Educational attainment data provides a snapshot of the demographic profile for each province and territory according to highest level of education achieved across those surveyed on the national census. While it is possible to infer that the largest portion of the population reflected in this data are those who have been at some point enrolled in public education, the realities are much different.

⁶¹ Canadian Council on Learning. (2007). *Redefining how success is measured in First Nations, Inuit and Métis learning*. Toronto. Accessed online - https://www.afn.ca/uploads/files/education/5._2007_redefining_how_success_is_measured_en.pdf

As a picture of the entire population, educational attainment datasets include Aboriginal and Indigenous persons who have attended First Nations schools that are not part of the provincial public school system, newcomer Canadians who are either admitted as highly credentialed nominees based on economic categories or who are the dependents of such nominees and/or who are refugees (many of whom have experienced interrupted schooling or do not hold formal credentials upon their admittance to Canada) as well as in-migration from other provinces.

The Canada West Foundation (CWF) points to rurality within western provinces as another contributing factor for why educational attainment in the western provinces can demonstrate at times higher than typical rates of non-secondary completion, while also providing several useful recommendations for how this factor of rurality might be addressed.⁶² At the time that the CWF issued these recommendations a decade ago, western provinces did indeed lag behind other provinces, a situation that, as seen in Table 10, has now evened out over time, indication of the degree to which educational attainment can be improved even within one generation.

Table 10 - 2016 Census: proportion of population aged 25 to 64 by highest level of educational attainment, Canada, provinces and territories⁶³

Geographic name	Total - Highest certificate, diploma or degree ¹	No certificate, diploma or degree	Secondary (high) school diploma or equivalency certificate ²	Apprenticeship or trades certificate or diploma ³ ⁴	College, CEGEP or other non-university certificate or diploma	University certificate or diploma below bachelor level	University certificate, diploma or degree at bachelor level or above ⁵
♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦
Canada	100.0	11.5	23.7	10.8	22.4	3.1	28.5
Newfoundland and Labrador	100.0	15.7	22.7	12.5	28.5	2.3	18.3
Prince Edward Island	100.0	12.0	25.1	8.4	28.2	2.5	23.7
Nova Scotia	100.0	12.2	23.5	10.6	25.9	2.3	25.5
New Brunswick	100.0	13.9	28.5	9.4	26.1	1.9	20.2
Quebec	100.0	13.3	18.5	19.8	19.0	3.8	25.5
Ontario	100.0	10.4	24.5	6.2	24.7	2.4	31.9
Manitoba	100.0	14.4	27.9	8.2	21.1	3.2	25.2
Saskatchewan	100.0	12.2	29.7	11.8	20.3	3.4	22.5
Alberta	100.0	10.8	25.2	10.6	22.0	3.2	28.2
British Columbia	100.0	9.6	26.5	9.1	20.9	3.9	29.9
Yukon	100.0	10.7	20.9	11.4	23.7	3.2	30.1
Northwest Territories	100.0	20.5	19.4	11.1	21.7	2.8	24.5
Nunavut	100.0	41.0	14.6	9.6	19.3	1.2	14.3

⁶² Chisholm, M. (2009). Boosting Educational Attainment in Western Canada. Accessed online- <https://cwf.ca/research/publications/boosting-educational-attainment-in-western-canada/>

⁶³ Statistics Canada. (2016). Population census data -proportion of population aged 25 to 64 by highest level of educational attainment, Canada, provinces and territories. Accessed online- <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/dp-pd/hltfst/edu-sco/Table.cfm?Lang=E&T=11&Geo=00&View=2&Age=2>

The Lind Initiative also demonstrates again the important role that socio-economic status and income level play in educational attainment.⁶⁴

The overall degree of variation between provinces and territories is therefore reflective of a complex interplay of demographic factors. While it is possible to use this data to determine how many people in each province have achieved what level of education, this data does not provide reasons for this educational attainment, nor does it define roles or assign responsibilities for these attainment levels. Some would even argue that when it comes to Canada's overall standing relative to other OECD countries (where Canada is often the world leader in educational attainment) that there is still room for improvement.⁶⁵

What the most recent data does tell us is that Manitoba demonstrates lower secondary school completion than is true of other provinces. This is of concern to all educational partners, even while standing on post-secondary completion does tend to remain competitive with other Canadian provinces.

Maintaining focus on addressing the needs of Aboriginal and Indigenous Canadians by way of promoting enhanced graduation from the public as well as the First Nations school systems⁶⁶, as well as by responding to the needs of newcomers, refugees and other Canadians who do not arrive with a secondary credential, Manitoba can augment its educational attainment significantly into the future. We believe that consideration by the Commission of the many recommendations that MSBA has included will serve to increase educational attainment at the secondary level into the future.

We would also observe that the expansion of both the compulsory maximum age of attendance to 18 years of age for secondary studies in Manitoba starting in 2011, with ongoing increases in student aid and assistance to facilitate transition to post-secondary education, will both prove important in the longer term, by way of enhancing attainment focused on secondary completion.⁶⁷

Opportunities to administer early leavers surveys at the secondary level, as have been undertaken in the past by Manitoba Education for the post-secondary level, may also help shed new perspective on reasons for "drop-out" prior to completion of secondary studies. Such a survey, modernized to reflect the experience of contemporary students, could prove informative for evidence-based improvement.

⁶⁴ Bryce, R., Iglesias, B., Pullman, A. and Rogova, A. (2016). Inequality explained: The hidden gaps in Canada's education system. Accessed online- <https://www.opencanada.org/features/inequality-explained-hidden-gaps-canadas-education-system/>

⁶⁵ Parkin, A. (2015). A Fresh Look at Educational Attainment: How Canada Can Be Number One and Still Have Room to Grow, *Academica Forum* (24 November 2015). Accessed online at- <https://forum.academica.ca/forum/a-fresh-look-at-educational-attainment>

⁶⁶ Gordon, C. and White, J. (2014). Indigenous educational attainment in Canada, *The International Indigenous Policy Journal* (5:3). Retrieved from: <https://ir.lib.uwo.ca/iipj>

⁶⁷ Berger, J., Mott, A. and Parkin, A. (Eds.). (2009). *The price of knowledge: Access and student finance in Canada*. York University. Toronto.

The Pan-Canadian Assessment Program (PCAP)

Every three years, starting in 2007, Canadian students in Grade 8 participate in writing a paper-based national test that is designed to measure how these students perform, in reading, math and science. The total time required to complete the test is 90 minutes for the cognitive or performance-based subject matter questions, with an additional 30 minutes for additional questions that help to provide information concerning their background context.

As Commissioners will know, this test has been created by the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (or CMEC) and is written by students across Canada's ten provinces in both majority and minority language schools (English and French).

For the latest test, written in spring, 2016, approximately 27,000 Grade 8 students participated across 1,500 schools nationwide. The test is not written by students in Canada's northern territories and students enrolled in federally funded First Nations schools do not write the test either. The major focus subject tested by PCAP in 2016 was reading, with minor subject focus on science and mathematics. Every three years, the major and minor focus areas rotate among these three subject matters.

In Manitoba, 2,600 Grade 8 students (out of an approximate total of 13,000 students) in 163 schools participated in writing the test. Manitoba's students' overall test performance places our province in close proximity to the average abilities of all other students nationwide, as based on the CMEC "mean" or average score. The 2016 PCAP test shows that this fact remains true across reading, science, and mathematics. In terms of average score, Manitoba's Grade 8 students achieved an overall average (or "mean") score of 487 in reading, a score of 479 in mathematics, and a score of 491 in science.

These scores tell us about the general level of skill or ability of our students, and explain how much they know and what they can do in each of the tested subject areas. Each score indicates that on average, Manitoba students are able to perform according to Level 2 or 3. This further indicates that they are able to achieve at the expected level of achievement for their grade level in a certain subject area. PCAP also tells us that in terms of the major focus area (reading): 83 percent or over eight out of ten Manitoba students, perform at or above the normally expected level of proficiency for this subject matter (see Graph 11 on the next page, as reproduced from page 18 of the PCAP Report). This overall result tends to reflect the situation across all of Canada, with minor variance between Levels 2 and 3 achievement.

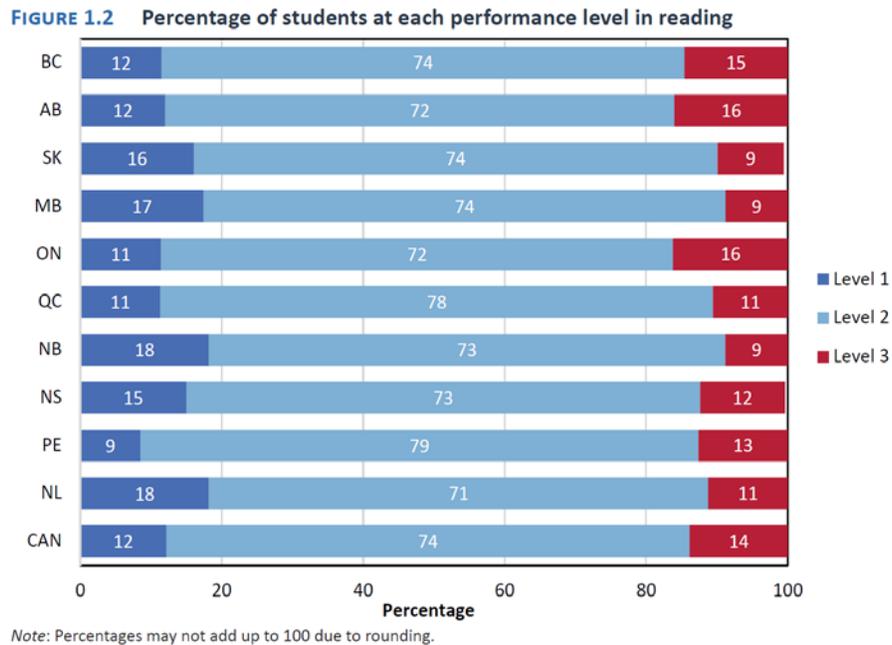
To obtain a better understanding of what each of the reading scores mean as defined by the CMEC, we invite the Commissioners to consult Tables 1.2, 1.3 and 1.4 of the Report (interpretation of reading scores). Definition of scores for mathematics and science can be found across the 2007, 2010, and 2013 PCAP Reports.⁶⁸

Unlike most tests, PCAP is not based on traditional "grading" scales (for example, letter grade scales based on "A, B, C, D, F", or 100 point scales based on percentages). Instead, the scores achieved by Manitoba's students tend to reflect their overall knowledge and skill. Therefore,

⁶⁸ These reports are all accessible at: [https://cmec.ca/240/Pan-canadian_Assessment_Program_\(PCAP\).html](https://cmec.ca/240/Pan-canadian_Assessment_Program_(PCAP).html)

PCAP addresses positive or negative differences in proficiency and achievement over time, as compared to earlier test results.

Graph 11 – Percentage of Students at each Performance Level in Reading, PCAP 2016



Put another way, there are no “right” or “wrong” scores on PCAP tests. The way that students answer questions on the test show us how much a student knows or what they can do, according to their overall level of ability or proficiency. The scores also show us where we need to focus so that, as a public school system, we can help students build upon their existing skills and proficiency by the time they graduate from high school.

Finally, because PCAP serves as a benchmark for us to measure outcomes in subject matter areas over the span of time, we can learn whether our achievement reflects positive differences over time, steady results, or negative change. This then in turn helps us as a school system to know where to increase classroom efforts for even greater achievement in the future.

In these respects, according to the Report of PCAP, a positive change in reading overall was found in British Columbia, Manitoba, Quebec, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and PEI, while in mathematics, significant improvements in achievement between 2010 and 2016 occurred overall in Canada and in all provinces except Ontario, where results remained stable over time.

For the PCAP 2016 Science Assessment, Canadian students registered higher scores over time, compared to the baseline year of 2013. Manitoba, Quebec, and New Brunswick showed gains in science in both the anglophone and francophone school systems, and more than half of the provinces showed gains for girls. Achievement improved over time for boys in Manitoba, Quebec, New Brunswick, and Prince Edward Island. Please see page 151 and 152 of the 2016 PCAP Report for these and other concluding observations.

The results and outcomes that are achieved by Manitoba's students on PCAP tests have often been used for a variety of different purposes, one of which involves comparing Manitoba's students with those in other provinces. While mean scores can be rank-ordered in such manner as to categorize results in ascending or descending order, from the highest to lowest score achieved, doing so also deserves greater contextualization, in terms of how many students within each jurisdiction meet or exceed the expected level of performance for their grade level, and other important background factors, such as socioeconomic status.

The latter factor can influence test score outcomes by a factor of up to 40 percent. This increases to 60 percent difference when both family background (including socioeconomic status) and school context are considered when calculating each province's outcome.

Table 11 - PCAP 2016 Achievement Scores by Province

Province	Reading	Math	Science
British Columbia	509	494	505
Alberta	510	505	518
Saskatchewan	491	483	491
Manitoba	487	479	491
Ontario	512	508	510
Quebec	503	541	507
New Brunswick	489	498	500
Nova Scotia	498	497	499
Prince Edward Island	513	503	516
Newfoundland and Labrador	491	490	501
Canada	507	511	508

PLEASE NOTE: Results in this Table are referenced from analyses (including greater detail and context) contained in Tables 1.9, 2.1 and 3.1 on pages 23, 36 and 45 of the 2016 PCAP Report.

Situated in the context of how many Manitoba students perform according to Level 2 and expectations in reading, mathematics and science (viewed longitudinally across PCAP tests), it remains true that over eight out of ten students continue to meet or exceed these standards, again reflecting a national trend.

There is a lot of valuable information that PCAP 2016 tells us, based on Canada's and also Manitoba's scores in reading, mathematics and science. Results are further analysed in terms of gender and also by enrolment of students in majority or minority language schools. As the major subject focus for the 2016 test was reading, it is also possible to review results in terms of four critical proficiencies related to this subject area, including understanding, interpreting, and responding (personally and critically) to texts. For information on Manitoba specific results under PCAP 2016, please see pages 81-90 of the Report.

That our students’ overall abilities help to place Manitoba Grade 8 students on a competitive standing with their national peers, in all three of the subject areas (reading, mathematics and science) that were tested by PCAP in 2016 deserves highlight.

While Manitoba remains below the Canadian average in all three subject areas according to the mean scores set by PCAP, the overall margin of difference between the top performing and last performing jurisdiction remains insignificant, when situated in the context of our students’ performance according to standard expectations at Level 2 and 3 proficiency.

It is reasonable to expect that across Canada and in Manitoba, our students’ abilities in reading, mathematics and science will change across PCAP tests. Where positive differences are noted, this reflects improvement between one test and another and generally reflects positive changes to each province’s school system in terms of teaching and learning. In this respect, PCAP concludes that Manitoba has experienced positive change over time in terms of reading, mathematics and science (see Tables 1.19, 2.6 and 3.6 on pages 32, 41 and 49 in the PCAP 2016 Report).

As shared under our discussion concerning the influence of poverty on student learning (see Table 8), Manitoba’s adjusted scores in each of the last five assessments, when adjusted to account for socio-economic status informs us of the need to sustain programming designed to address and mitigate poverty for the academic advantage of our pupils. Multiple sources confirm this, as again, research by the Manitoba Centre for Health Policy under the Structural Equation Model demonstrates that family situation and poverty remain the greatest drivers of student achievement overall.

Manitoba’s adjusted results, when factors of first and second generation newcomer status are also accounted for on PCAP, might also be of further interest.

Table 12 –First/Second Generation Newcomer Adjusted Overall Score on PCAP 2006-15

Year of Testing Result	MB adjusted overall rank
2006	5
2009	4
2012	4
2015	4

What these adjusted scores tend to demonstrate is the important influence of family situation on student performance. When situated in the context of this important variable, Manitoba’s overall provincial standing is again adjusted from at or near the final rank across Canadian provinces, to a much more elevated position.

Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA)

Another assessment that is administered to Manitoba’s students has occurred every three years, starting in 1997. A sample of 15 year old Canadian students participate in this Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), a global test that is designed to measure what these students know and can do, in reading, math and science. The test has been created by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (or OECD) and

most recently included over 500,000 students across 72 nations.⁶⁹ In the latest test, written in 2015, approximately 20,000 Canadian students participated across 726 schools in Canada's ten provinces. The test is not written by students in Canada's northern territories and students enrolled in federally funded First Nations schools do not write the test either.⁷⁰ The major subject tested by PISA in 2015 was science, with other test questions focused on reading and mathematics.⁷¹

It is important to know that PISA has been designed to test students' overall abilities on a national scale, that is to say, based on the country in which they live. In this respect, it is significant that our students' overall abilities help to place Canada among the top ten nations in the world, in all three of the subject areas that were tested by PISA in 2015. In general, Canada stands beside Singapore, Japan, China (Hong Kong, Macao, and mainland China), Taiwan, Vietnam, Korea, Ireland, Switzerland, Estonia and Finland in the "top ten" across the science, reading and mathematics subjects.⁷² It is notably that, in a world economy that has increasingly relied on English as the principal means for communication, Canada is the only English-speaking nation that remains part of the OECD top ten.

Because Manitoba is one of the ten provinces whose scores are used to determine Canada's overall standing in the world, Manitoba's overall contribution to the 2015 Canadian results is based on our sample size, representing approximately 11.6 per cent of the total number of students in Canada who wrote PISA in 2015.⁷³ Because of the sample size, it is also possible to analyze PISA outcomes by province.

In Manitoba, approximately 2,300 students wrote the test, across 85 different schools province-wide.⁷⁴ Manitoba's students' skills and abilities places our province at, above or near the average abilities of all other students worldwide, as based on the OECD average score. The 2015 PISA test shows that this fact remains true across science, reading and mathematics.⁷⁵ In terms of average score, Manitoba's 15 year olds achieved an average (or "mean") score of 499 in science, a score of 498 in reading, and a score of 489 in mathematics.⁷⁶

These scores tell us about the general level of skill or ability of our students, and explain how much they know and what they can do in each of the tested subject areas. To obtain a better understanding of what each of these scores mean, as defined by the OECD, please consult the OECD report *PISA Results 2015: Volume 1*.⁷⁷

⁶⁹ See "PISA 2015 FAQ" (Council of Ministers of Education, Canada), page 3.

⁷⁰ See "Table A.2" in *Measuring up: Canadian results of the OECD PISA study– the performance of Canada's youth in science, reading and mathematics–2015 first results for Canadians aged 15* (Council of Ministers of Education, Canada) page 51.

⁷¹ See "PISA 2015 FAQ", page 3.

⁷² See "Figure 1.2" (page 20), "Figure 2.1" (page 33), and "Figure 2.2" (page 34) in *Measuring up*.

⁷³ See "Table A.2" in *Measuring up*, page 51.

⁷⁴ See "Table A.2" in *Measuring up*, page 51.

⁷⁵ See "Figure 1.2" (page 20), "Figure 2.1" (page 33), and "Figure 2.2" (page 34) in *Measuring up*.

⁷⁶ See "Figure 1.2" (page 20), "Figure 2.1" (page 33), and "Figure 2.2" (page 34) in *Measuring up*.

⁷⁷ See "Figure 1.2.6" (page 60) for science and "Figure 1.4.7" (page 162) for mathematics. For reading scores, please see "Figure 1.2. 12" (page 47) in *PISA 2009 results: what students know and can do– Volume 1* (OECD).

The scores obtained by Manitoba students relate to broad categories of general proficiency or ability, on a scale of 1 to 6 (where 3 is the medium or average level of proficiency and 6 is the highest level of proficiency that can be achieved by a student). Using this scale, what PISA 2015 tells us is that in Manitoba, over half (58 per cent) of our students have ability and proficiency that corresponds to Level 3 through to 6, with almost a third (27 per cent) corresponding to Level 5 and 6 in the major subject area, which was science.⁷⁸

Like PCAP, PISA is not based on traditional “grading” scales (for example, letter grade scales based on “A, B, C, D, F”, or 100 point scales based on percentages). Instead, the scores achieved by Manitoba’s students tend to reflect their overall knowledge and skill. The test is designed to determine how much students “know” and “can do”. The test does not determine “how well” they perform, which is what a traditional grade scale tells us. PISA is thus not focused on how well students know the subject or how well they can perform but rather what they know and how they can do. The distinction is slight but is nevertheless very important.

Put another way, there are no “right” or “wrong” scores on a PISA test. The way that students answer questions on the test show us how much a student knows or what they can do, according to their overall level of ability or proficiency. The scores also show us where we need to focus so that, as a public school system, we can help students build upon their existing skills and proficiency by the time they graduate from high school.

The results and outcomes that are achieved by Manitoba’s students on national and international tests have often been used for a variety of different purposes, one of which involves comparing Manitoba’s students with those in other provinces, as well as those in other countries. However, for many different reasons, using the PISA test and its scores to compare one group of students to others is very difficult.

It is important to understand that across all of the nations of the world, the PISA test is written in the specific language of each nation. It is also important to understand that there can be up to four different tests that are used to measure students’ abilities in each of the major subject areas (science, mathematics and reading).

In practical terms, what this means is that students writing PISA do not write the exact same test, even in the same subject area. In Canada, even when they do write the same test, this may or may not be in the same language, depending on what program they are taking (whether English and French Immersion, or Francophone).

In many nations and across Canada’s many provinces, some students also do not write the PISA test due to their physical or intellectual disabilities. Some students do not write the test due to language abilities (in the case of newcomer or refugee students). How such students are chosen for exemption, and the number of students who do not write the test because of their abilities, is also very different across the many nations and Canadian provinces that participate in the PISA test. In Canada, the total exemption rate in 2015 ranged as high as 14 percent in PEI and as low as 4 percent in Quebec. Manitoba’s exemption rate was eight percent.⁷⁹

⁷⁸ See “Figure 1.1” (page 18) in *“Measuring up”*.

⁷⁹ Figures rounded. See “Table A.1b” (page 48) in *“Measuring up”*.

When measuring students' abilities, PISA makes every effort to account for such differences. Doing so however, remains a significant challenge.⁸⁰

There is much valuable information that PISA 2015 provides, based on Canada's and also Manitoba's scores in science, mathematics and reading. However, it is important to understand that what this tells us is based on a particular "snapshot in time". PISA was not designed as a traditional benchmark test. Those who do wish to use PISA to compare student proficiency across a select time or period, must take several factors in account.

As a test that is written every three years, it is generally possible to see how the skills and abilities of 15 year olds might change over time, in the same subject areas. However, it is important to understand that the same group of students do not write the test every three years. PISA does not measure how the same group of students' skills and abilities in a certain subject area may have changed by the time they complete high school. Instead, only students who are 15 years of age, every three years, write each test.

It is also important to understand that every three years, PISA focuses on one major subject area and two other minor subject areas, but these do not stay the same. That means that in 2015, most of the test questions were on science, with some questions on reading and mathematics. In previous years however, most of the test questions were on mathematics (2012) and reading (2009). In 2018, PISA will focus on another major subject, while science will become a minor subject focus. The major and minor subject focus of the test changes every three years according to a fixed schedule, so it is not the exact same test that different groups of 15 years olds write every three years.⁸¹

It is also important to understand that what PISA scores mean does not stay the same from one test to another. According to the OECD itself, the scores are "revisited and updated" and reflect "revisions to the framework" and "new tasks" for each time the test is written.⁸²

Our students' overall abilities help to place Canada among the top ten nations in the world, in all three of the subject areas (science, reading and mathematics) that were tested by PISA in 2015. Manitoba's contribution to this result remains important.

In Manitoba, our students' skills and abilities places our province at, above or near the average abilities of all other students worldwide, as based on the OECD average score. The 2015 PISA test shows that this fact remains true across science, reading and mathematics.

It is reasonable to expect that in Canada and in Manitoba, students' abilities in science, mathematics and reading will change across PISA tests. This is because PISA is not intended to serve as a benchmark. The results and outcomes in select subject areas across several years provide some valuable information, but mainly about a select group of students at any given time.

⁸⁰ For some important context on PISA, see generally Wilby, P. (2013). "The OECD's Pisa delivery man", *the Guardian*, November 26, 2013. Accessed online- <https://www.theguardian.com/education/2013/nov/26/pisa-international-student-tests-oecd>

⁸¹ See "PISA 2015 FAQ", page 7.

⁸² See top of page 147 in *PISA Results 2015: Volume 1*.

Grade 12 Provincial Examinations

Starting in 2019, Manitoba Education discontinued its twenty year practice of reporting only provincial level data concerning Grade 12 examinations, which are administered in English, French, and Mathematics. The new reporting framework provides division-level data and MSBA understands that consideration will be also extended to issuing further segregate data corresponding to school-level realities.⁸³

While provincial-level data served to reinforce the collective outcome of student performance immediately prior to each pupil's graduation in each of the tested subject areas, divisional data does provide the public and also educational partners working for the improvement of student outcomes, with greater insight into more localized performance.

MSBA would however, encourage that important caution be taken in respect of the release of school level data, as the overall sample size that correspond to each school will differ based on each school's local population and enrolment level in Grade 12. This can inadvertently misrepresent or skew results, particularly within a longitudinal context. It can also become challenging to interpret such results, thereby defeating the intended use of the data for purposes of continuous improvement.

We would also note that according to current reporting of both provincial and divisional level data, several important year over year anomalies are reported to public audiences without accompanying interpretational or analytical explanation. In certain instances, wide variation and/or fluctuation in outcomes can change significantly between one year of testing and another, which raises important questions that must be answered if the outcomes of such tests are to fulfil our commitment to using such assessment to promote public confidence and ameliorate practice.

It must equally be noted that current reporting tends to focus on average outcomes per subject for each Grade 12 cohort at the divisional and provincial levels. We would encourage that median scores be considered, by way of determining what portion of students achieve at or above the median score and what portion of students perform below this score. While average calculations do promote perspective on the general performance of each cohort, median scores would serve to provide even greater perspective.

In the future, MSBA remains willing to work with its members, as well as with all education partners, to ensure that the reporting of all data produced as a result of Grade 12 provincial examinations remains contextualized for public understanding, with sufficient explanation of year over year anomalies where these may be evident.

Finally, MSBA would note that in this context, it remains important to inform continuous improvement based on each of the three year interval assessments. While much commentary focuses on the final result based on Grade 12 examination outcomes, these results speak to realities for those pupils who have already left our schools. While they can serve to promote improvement in future years, enhancing understanding of assessment results at earlier grade

⁸³ See Manitoba Education. (2019). Assessment and evaluation. Website accessed at- <https://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/assess/index.html>

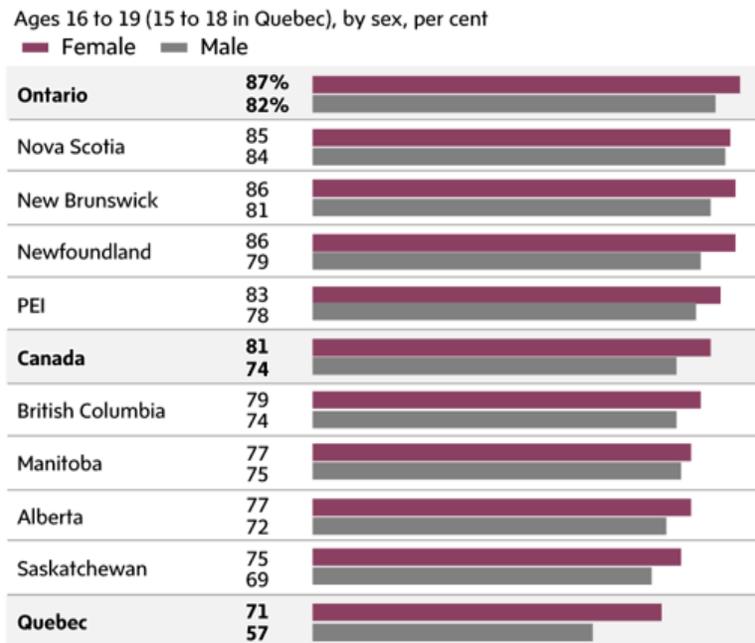
levels, when students can benefit from more immediate learning interventions, remains important.

Graduation and attendance rates

While graduation does serve to inform the educational attainment data on which we have already provided comment, it goes without saying that school boards, and the educational teams that serve under them, make every effort to promote universal graduation across Manitoba. In terms of attendance, the same remains true. We well understand the importance of optimizing attendance, to ensure that every minute of instruction counts. This is why increasingly across Manitoba, student discipline, where it is necessary, attempts to avoid expulsion or suspension, as these measures are disruptive to student learning and often fail to address the root causes of behavioural challenges.

In terms of promoting greater attendance and graduation, we acknowledge that, while there are instances where students can be accommodated through adapted or specialized instruction or differentiated learning, these respond to select instances only involving non-attendance or non-graduation and may not reflect the variety of reasons why students either do not attend school or do not graduate in a sequential manner.

Graph 12 – Graduation Rates in Public Secondary Education, 2015⁸⁴



Compelling life circumstances can present in certain instances (death of loved ones, illness or impairment, extended family travel, support by students to address family poverty through income generation), even while attendance does require careful contextualization in terms of the reasons why certain students remain outliers in terms of absence combined with superior

⁸⁴ Graph reproduced from The Globe and Mail, May 2, 2018: Quebec public-school graduation rates slip behind other provinces: study. Original source: The Institut du Québec.

academic achievement, while others demonstrate increased attendance with poor academic achievement. Addressing school-related reasons for chronic absenteeism, especially when these may be related to factors such as bullying or peer pressure must remain our primary focus. MSBA is encouraged by the work of Manitoba Education through its present research and study of these dynamics and we are of the perspective that the outcomes of this research will provide solid evidence upon which we can increasingly perfect practice and achieve improvement.

In terms of graduation, we would repeat our comments from educational attainment. What the most recent data tells us is that Manitoba demonstrates lower secondary school completion than is true of some other provinces (see Table 10 and Graph 12). This is of concern to all educational partners, even while standing on post-secondary completion does tend to remain competitive with other Canadian provinces.

By maintaining focus on addressing the needs of Aboriginal and Indigenous Canadians in order to promote enhanced graduation from the public as well as the First Nations school systems⁸⁵, as well as by responding to the needs of newcomer and refugee Canadians who arrive during their school-aged years, Manitoba can augment secondary completion significantly into the future. We believe that consideration by the Commission of the recommendations that MSBA has included will serve to increase graduation at the secondary level into the future.

The Office of the Auditor General (OAG) of Manitoba observed that there are many factors which lie beyond the control of public education and which remain at play in determining the full extent to which meaningful interventions can be provided towards greater graduation for Aboriginal and Indigenous Manitobans. MSBA believes that by sustaining focus on the many recommendations that were tabled in the final report of the OAG for improving educational outcomes for Aboriginal and Indigenous students, we can together establish a more supportive environment for graduation. We would also note that many of these important recommendations are already well underway and will continue to be strengthened and addressed into the future.⁸⁶

In respect of graduation and preparedness among First Nations students, MSBA would also praise the work of the Peguis and Fisher River First Nations communities in their development of Transition Year programs that students must complete, in order to receive band funding to continue with to post-secondary studies. The evidence coming out of these Transition Year programs have shown that First Nations students who do complete them not only receive greater support and preparation as part of high school graduation but do not generally experience the same retention and achievement challenges as those students who did not complete such programming. Establishment of Transition Year programs for First Nations students as part of graduation from the non-public education system would be important to consider, even while we acknowledge that this tends to fall outside of provincial authority.

⁸⁵ Gordon, C. and White, J. (2014). Indigenous educational attainment in Canada, *The International Indigenous Policy Journal* (5:3). Retrieved from: <https://ir.lib.uwo.ca/iipj>

⁸⁶ OAG. (2016). *Improving educational outcomes for Kindergarten to Grade 12 Aboriginal students*. Winnipeg. Accessed online - http://www.oag.mb.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/AB_ED_K_to_12_OAG_2016_WEB.pdf

As per our earlier observation, we would posit that in general, the expansion of both the compulsory maximum age of attendance to 18 years of age for secondary studies in Manitoba starting in 2011, with ongoing increases in student aid and assistance to facilitate transition to post-secondary education, will both prove important in the longer term, by way of contributing to secondary completion.⁸⁷

And in closing, we would also again suggest that opportunities to administer early leavers surveys at the secondary level, as have been undertaken in the past by Manitoba Education for the post-secondary level, may also help shed new perspective on reasons for “drop-out” prior to completion of secondary studies. Such a survey, modernized to reflect the experience of contemporary students, could prove informative for evidence-based improvement.

Closing thoughts on student learning

Since 1870, the subjects, courses and learning programs that are available to students in Manitoba have dramatically increased. In 1884 as an example, the curriculum was comprised of just eleven subjects: writing, reading, arithmetic, grammar, spelling, composition, geography, history, hygiene, morals, and bookkeeping.⁸⁸ What great expectations our communities have had for public education in the years since!

Today’s Subject Table handbook provides greater flexibility than has been true of earlier periods in our educational history, in terms of the number of subjects that are featured as part of the standing provincial curriculum, and also in terms of the diversity of offerings that may be initiated by schools and students themselves.

As noted under “long term vision”, responsibility for approving all such experiences resides with Manitoba Education and Training, even as school boards, informed by their administrative and instructional professionals, and responding to the needs of their communities, have striven to develop value-added features that enhance the student learning experience overall.

What is valued by public policy makers nation-wide, in terms of formal assessment, has tended to focus on four core subjects: literacy (English and French), numeracy (mathematics) and the natural sciences. Measurement and assessment of student learning in other offerings that school divisions provide for the benefit of students is not undertaken, even while many of these serve to stimulate student learning in a variety of domains and also prepare them for meaningful lives and careers.

Over time, the concept of one “literacy” has also tended to embrace a new concept of multiple literacies. Literacy defined according to its traditional linguistic dimension is now only one among many, including financial, digital, career, physical and health literacies.

Today’s augmented economy means that many leading thinkers and faculties and schools of education globally,⁸⁹ have increasingly promoted focus on essential skills and also ensuring

⁸⁷ Berger, J., Mott, A. and Parkin, A. (Eds.). (2009). *The price of knowledge: Access and student finance in Canada*. York University. Toronto.

⁸⁸ Manitoba Education. (1884) *Annual Report*. Winnipeg

⁸⁹ See Harvard University’s Initiative for Teaching and Learning <https://hilt.harvard.edu/about-hilt/> as well as the work of Tony Wagner formerly of Harvard’s innovation lab- personal website accessible at:

that students learn to learn. Helping children to make mistakes and to learn from these mistakes is an important part of this learning process.⁹⁰

Developing a spirit of inquiry, stimulating creativity and innovation, instilling entrepreneurship—these are the new skill-sets required for the future. Equipping students with resilience, adaptability and augmented cognition have also become the new deliverables for education. And all of this, in addition to prescribed learning outcomes and the continuing focus on academic domains that have been studied since this province was founded a century and half ago.

It follows from this comprehensive spectrum of education that the lasting object of today's public education system is to address the needs of the whole child, body, mind and spirit. This also means embracing the important cultural realities of each child's development,⁹¹ while anticipating future realities and responding to current circumstances that remain in constant flux development. That these mandates tend to be overlooked through exclusive focus on only four subject areas, therefore deserves special consideration.

The outcomes of Manitoba's performance assessments demonstrate that Manitoba has room for improvement. Yet, in pursuing such improvement, we must remain mindful as a province of the degree to which poverty exerts its influence on our students and their learning. Denial of this reality would divorce a noteworthy portion of our students from their family and community contexts. Students cannot be treated as units of production in isolation of these complex realities. To do so would essentially deny the human element of student learning.

Educational philosophy remains foundational to the student learning experience. Those versed in curricular design and development appreciate that our overall approach to student learning has transformed over time in an evolutionary way, retaining features of former philosophical constructs while including new concepts and methods. The three major schools of teaching and curriculum: behavioural, cognitive, and social-constructivist, remain important to inform how teaching and learning happen.⁹²

Classrooms look much different today than they did in the past. Many of our strongest critics believe that returning to the past for guidance, or simplifying what students learn by eliminating what they deem to be non-essential subjects, will somehow help improve education in Manitoba. We would note however, that many aspects of student learning are different than they were in the past.

In the past, students with special needs and other exceptionalities were once excluded from mainstream learning; some students were characterized as more gifted and talented than their peers, rather than appreciate the gifts and talents of every student; some expressions of human identity, culture and diversity were denied or even worse, punished.

<http://www.tonywagner.com/> and also the work of Sir Ken Robinson – personal website accessible at:
<http://sirkenrobinson.com/>

⁹⁰ Wagner, T. and Dintersmith, T. (2015). *Most likely to succeed: Preparing our kids for the innovation era*. Scribner, New York.

⁹¹ Rogoff, B. (2003). *The cultural nature of human development*. Oxford University Press. Oxford, UK.

⁹² Ornstein, A. and Hunkins, F. (2013). *Curriculum foundations, principles and issues*. Sixth Ed. Pearson. Boston/

This is by no means a criticism of those who were charged with responsibility for delivering education in the past. Things were done differently then, just as things now are done differently. This reflects social progress and also the shaping of values and norms over time. Now is not the time to repeat mistakes of the past. Now is a time to build for a brighter future.

Given the importance that many in our community place on what is being currently delivered to our students, public education as a whole would quickly receive equal criticism if any movement towards taking away programs, courses and subjects would ever be considered.

Additional criticisms come from those who believe that public education fails to address the so-called “skills gap” (in terms of mismatch and supply). The reality however, as we have shown throughout this report, is that Manitoba prepares record numbers of students for career and vocation according to the occupational areas of greatest demand, and even as the latest occupational forecasts inform us that we are to prepare our students for lifelong learning and post-secondary opportunities to fill the needs that exist in our labour market.

Some posit that part of the “skills gap” reflects a lack of motivation and dependability across the current generation. Our perspective from the frontline however, is that our students increasingly balance secondary and also post-secondary studies through core and optional course-work and dual credit opportunities, while completing internships and work placements, and while assuming increasingly adult roles. How then, to reconcile these two very different perspectives?

Media headlines frequently situate Manitoba in last place, even though our students are among the world’s leaders in academic performance. Many point to other nations, particularly in northern Europe, for guidance in developing learning, even though Canada remains the top English-speaking nation in terms of educational attainment. Even though global life expectancy and happiness measures tend to confirm that our national standing in these social outcomes remains much more elevated than it does in Scandinavia.

Alignment between new ways of knowing and doing do not always receive widespread acceptance. Together with Manitoba Education, we introduce concepts such as “the new math”, designed to achieve the same results more efficiently but our students are then challenged in higher education contexts because they perform mathematical operations that are more reflective of the era of Artificial Intelligence than the age of Archimedes.

MSBA means no disrespect to those who would critique our system of education and who may hold the above beliefs. Neither do we dismiss the right of others to hold their opinion. What we do feel is necessary for the Commission to consider however, is the need for situated context of student learning. Manitoba stands at an important crossroads. Decisions made in this Manitoba of the 21st century will shape the lives and prospects of those born today. It is they who will see this province through to the dawn of the 22nd century.

Deficit lenses applied to student learning for the purpose of continuous improvement will help us appreciate where we can continue to provide positive results and outcomes for those we serve, including our students, families and communities. Yet, in the same measure, capital lenses must also be applied in order to truly appreciate how the opportunities before us can address our challenges and how our strengths can be optimized to overcome the same. Our conclusion from using both sets of lenses is that we must strive to do better– while being still appreciative that our current system of public education truly remains one of the world’s best.

To conclude this chapter, we would like to acknowledge the important work that Manitoba Education has embarked upon by collaborating with the North Forge Technology Exchange. To foster innovation in student learning at the earliest years of our students' lives through the open challenge for innovation in early years' literacy and numeracy, reflects the very best practices that will contribute to the advancement of student learning in Manitoba. As has been shown through the finalists of this competition, that Manitoba's public education system is able to contribute valuable expertise remains noteworthy. MSBA was very pleased to promote this opportunity among its membership.

In this particular respect, Dr. Timothy Shanahan offers some valuable insight to guide future practice. When it comes to student learning, "if there is something you know as you know based on solid research, make the decision to support that. If there is something that has not been proven, allow the frontline to experiment and confirm."⁹³

By enabling opportunities for greater innovation and experimentation, in collaboration with many partners and community members, MSBA believes that we can together enhance student learning for our continued improvement and benefit into the future.

⁹³ Shanahan, T., Remarks delivered March 30, 2019, Annual Congress of the National Schools Boards Association, Philadelphia, PA.

3. TEACHING

Within Manitoba's system of public education, expertise in the art and methods of teaching tend to fall not to the local school board but rather, reflects the delegation of responsibility that each board entrusts to their divisional administration, instructional and non-instructional staff.

In this chapter, the Manitoba School Boards Association will therefore focus not upon the art or methods for teaching. Rather, we shall focus on the singular dimension of school board responsibilities when it comes to enhancing teaching and instructional program delivery—human resource management.

Four broad themes will frame our discussion of this focus area: the need for a modernized review of human resource capacity and supply; class size management; professional development; and regulation of the teaching profession.

Review of Human Resource Capacity

As employing authorities within public education, school boards have long maintained focus on questions of capacity and supply of qualified teachers to meet needs across our province. In this role, it has always been the historical responsibility of all school boards to fill all vacant positions in order to optimize student learning. In terms of ensuring that our teachers and school leaders are effectively positioned to deliver educational opportunities at the school level, through the employment of qualified and diversified staff to address all required subject areas, it is our conclusion that larger issues regarding capacity and supply require review.

In recent years, our membership has witnessed several continued trends:

- Availability of teacher candidates to fill available positions across Manitoba remains a challenge. Even though the locations for teacher education are distributed province-wide, sustained and inequitable demand for available teaching positions in urban or other more populated centres across the province remains evident.
- Vacancies in rural and northern contexts can be challenging to fill, particularly when open positions are related to a specific teachable subject area that may be in short supply. Every effort to provide alternative teaching staff is undertaken to respond to such situations, even though programs or offerings may be suspended if qualified teaching professionals are not found. In situations where non-instructional staff or specialists prove difficult to fill in neighbouring divisions due to regional or geographic circumstances, school divisions have often partnered in offering contracts to employees who can deliver supports and services across multi-divisional catchments.
- In general, the ability of school boards to replace vacancies or fill positions in high demand teachable subject areas (including math, science, French, Technical-Vocational or Industrial Arts, business education, teacher librarians, guidance and resource, and music) represents an ongoing challenge. Our commentary on the need for French teachers and other divisional and school staff under the focus area on “long term vision”, describes particular challenges in delivery of FL1, FL2 and basic French programs.

- In general, the teacher workforce has also become increasingly gender-imbalanced, with women far outnumbering male teachers.⁹⁴ Larger questions of the linguistic, cultural and social diversity of the teacher and non-instructional workforce also deserve special consideration. Questions of achieving a representative workforce that reflect the backgrounds of students and communities remain important in the context of academic improvement.
- Requirements for practica opportunities to meet demands and enhance supply can be challenging given existing teaching loads of more experienced supervisors, along with available school capacity to host a teacher candidate. Enhancing the practicum experience for novice teachers remains an important consideration, even through to their first years in the classroom through the provision of ongoing mentorship and support. Supporting rural and northern practica remain compelling objectives.
- Throughput, retention and general supply of teacher candidates and non-instructional professionals warrants ongoing strategies, to determine how best to support candidates as they complete their post-secondary study.

In general, MSBA would therefore posit the need for a province-wide review of teacher education capacity, as well as for other education-related training programs. This would include para-educators, educational assistants and clinicians. Each of these professionals are important in responding to the human resource and student learning requirements of school divisions.

Such a review would serve to:

- evaluate current capacity levels and supply outcomes;
- determine appropriate incentives for specialization in teachable subject areas that may be in short supply;
- examine quotas, promotional activities, and admission to faculties and schools of education by way of promoting diversity; and
- explore opportunities for value-added non-formal learning opportunities that may enhance preparation of candidates for entry to the classroom. This may include mental health first aid, anti-bullying programs, identification and intervention in situations of abuse, trauma-informed practice, violence intervention, personal wellness and well-being, and cultural competency courses– to name some of the current needs that tend to exist beyond the formal curricula of education-related training programs.
- Strengthening the role of current advisory structures involving external feedback from partners, including school boards, would also be important to consider.

It is important to note that the above recommendation is submitted without any implied connotation concerning our current system of teacher education in Manitoba. We neither believe that this recommendation implies a need for additional seat capacity in teacher education.

⁹⁴ Statistics Canada. (2016). "Back to School... By the Numbers webpage. Accessible online- https://www.statcan.gc.ca/eng/dai/smr08/2016/smr08_210_2016

In general, supply is aligned with demand and vacancies have been filled through a combination of strategies that have long been used to good effect. MSBA and other education partners are frequently consulted by faculties of education, that strive to address overall capacity and supply.

As it has been nearly 22 years since the last system-wide review of teacher education was undertaken by the Government of Manitoba⁹⁵, and over six years since all education-related programs were last studied in order to provide an overview of education sector human resources,⁹⁶ the time would seem due for an opportunity to review education sector human resource capacity and supply.

In submitting this recommendation, MSBA would like to acknowledge the significant efforts that continue to be made by our partners at the post-secondary level. Recent amendments to the University of Manitoba's delivery of Bachelor of Education programming to enhance music as a teachable subject is but one example. Red River College's recent focus on enhancing its business, vocational and industrial arts teacher programming to help achieve greater capacity and supply, in partnership with University of Winnipeg, is another great example of how institutions continue to address the needs of school divisions.

While Manitoba's Faculties of Education and post-secondary institutions have undertaken several responsive efforts, many of which continue to operate with success, there are certain initiatives that regrettably did not receive wider support, which we feel would provide benefit to meeting important supply needs. A review could therefore equally address areas for future program development, in a manner that examines areas of greatest need.

As a specific example, we would cite the pilot development of an Internationally Educated Teacher (IET) program by the University of Manitoba (UM) Faculty of Education in 2011. This was one such program that had been specifically designed to promote greater diversity and representativeness of the teacher workforce in Manitoba, while also responding to compelling economic objectives of aligning newcomers with viable employment opportunities.

Priorities in labour and immigration policy, which at the time focused only upon the realities of a general teacher workforce surplus, led to the discontinuance of this important pilot program.⁹⁷ While a program for Internationally Educated Teachers was eventually established, the process involved in developing such a program was instructive in how administrative and structural processes might be amended to promote greater flexibility and facilitate such innovation at the ground-level.

At the University of Winnipeg (UW), the development of a program proposal designed to establish what was known as the Indigenous Teacher Education Model (ITEM) also consumed great focus and resources on the part of the faculty, with no ultimate realization of this program

⁹⁵ This study was undertaken by the former Council on Post-Secondary Education (COPSE) as one of its very first initiatives in 1997/98.

⁹⁶ COPSE undertook to construct sectoral overviews of the health, trades and education sectors prior to its disestablishment in 2012/13.

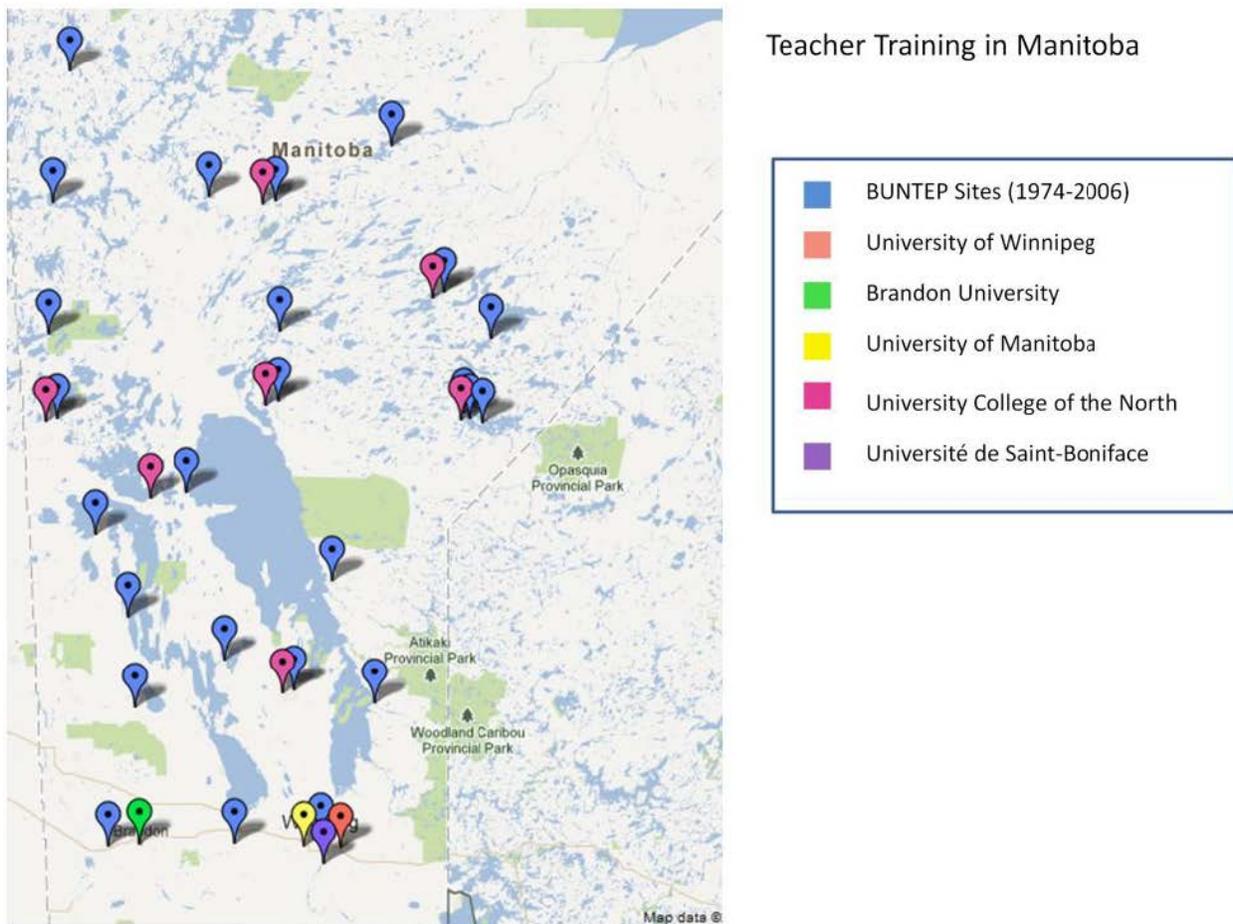
⁹⁷ To fill the gap left by discontinuance of the UM IET pilot program, the University of Winnipeg developed the Internationally Trained Education Program (ITEP) as part of its ACCESS programs.

model. A compromise was achieved when ITEM was delivered as a post-baccalaureate offering but the original proposal sought to achieve a more robust baccalaureate option.

Identifying opportunities to develop distinctive teachable subject specializations that meet student needs across the K-12 and post-secondary systems might also come into focus under a comprehensive human resources review. As an example of this, MSBA would highlight that the University of Winnipeg had once pioneered the development of an innovative Bachelor of Science program in Indigenous Knowledge of Science. Following the successful navigation of this unique program proposal through all required approval processes at the institutional and government levels, it was therefore most regrettable when this program could not find the funding or faculty resources necessary to launch the program.

To say that such a program would have led to the introduction of qualified teachers to respond to the important task of delivering responsive and culturally appropriate learning in science for Indigenous students, closely follows.

Graph 13 – Locations of Teacher Education in Manitoba, 2013



Programming designed to provide existing instructional staff with greater concentration on priority areas would also be important to include in the review. The development by the UW Faculty of Education of a Master of Education program in Talent Development with Vulnerable

Youth is an example of a program that regrettably was not eventually established. As we have discussed under the focus area on student learning, that such a program could have equipped teachers with even greater skills for meeting this target population's needs would have followed.

Consideration for expansion of ACCESS teacher education programs also merits some focus. These programs provide critical support for Aboriginal and Indigenous students, as well as persons from low-income backgrounds and those with disabilities, to realize their aspirations of becoming teachers.

Combined with the establishment of quotas to promote admission of diverse candidates from select cultural backgrounds and also to promote undergraduate teaching subjects in high demand, can serve to achieved increased efficiencies in targeting a more representative teacher workforce, while also responding to the subject specialization shortages that school divisions frequently encounter in high demand subject areas.

Table 13 – Overview of Instructional and Non-Instructional Education Programs, 2013

Education Overview		UM	UW	BU	USB	UCN	RRC	ACC	ETP
Diploma / Certificate	Education Assistant Certificate	.	.	.	.	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Early Childhood Education Diploma	.	.	.	.	✓	✓	✓	✓
Post Diploma Level	Technical Vocation Teacher Education	.	.	.	.	.	✓ (UW)	.	.
Bachelor	Bachelor of Education	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	.	.	.
	B.Mus./B.Ed.	.	.	✓	.	.	.	.	.
	BED-IS	.	.	.	.	✓	.	.	.
Post Basic Level	Business /Technology Teacher Education (AD) / (INT)	.	.	.	.	.	✓ (UW)	.	.
	Business /Technology Teacher Education (Accel)	.	.	.	.	.	✓ (UW)	.	.
	Industrial Arts/Technology Teacher Education (AD) / (INT)	.	.	.	.	.	✓ (UW)	.	.
	Industrial Arts/Technology Teacher Education (Accel)	.	.	.	.	.	✓ (UW)	.	.
	Post-Bacc. Certificate	✓	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
Post-Bacc. Diploma	✓	✓	✓	✓	.	.	.	.
Graduate Level	Master's in Education	✓	.	✓	✓	.	.	.	.
	Ph.D. Education	✓	.	.	.	.	.	.	.

(J) Joint Program with University of Winnipeg Faculty of Education

Given the calls to action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, focus on Aboriginal and Indigenous languages at all levels of education could not be more important than at current time. In this respect (and preceding the issuance of such calls to action), University College of the North launched a Certificate program in the Teaching of Aboriginal Languages that continues to be offered on a contract basis, strengthening capacity in an area of critical priority. This is an example of a program that provides critical capacity to address universal needs. Expanding such program to other sites across the province to enhance accessibility might be an important consideration.

As several Indigenous languages across Canada remain in danger of extinguishment, timeliness in delivering such programming does remain critical. In cases such as this, every second counts.⁹⁸

The above examples bear important consideration as part of a general review. What Manitoba currently has, especially in terms of teacher education, remains very strong. Ongoing delivery of Bachelor of Education programming province-wide, through most every public post-secondary institution, and often in distributed or community-based formats, does generally respond to urban, rural and northern requirements.

Agreement among the Council of Deans of Education of Manitoba to establish niche programming or focus in each Faculty of Education, has served to avoid duplication of capacity province-wide. This has been achieved without need for formal provincial direction or intervention.

Ongoing delivery of a complement of undergraduate teacher education according to multiple formats in terms of after-degree and integrated options, as well as the provision of limited bridge and gap training for educational assistant to pursue teaching careers, promotes a wider access to applicants from many backgrounds. Post-baccalaureate programming and graduate level education assists instructional staff in realizing important opportunities for ongoing specialization.

Therefore, much deserves to be celebrated in terms of capacity and supply even while much can be achieved towards strengthening and supporting this capacity. Our approach is one rooted in optimizing human capital, rather than responding to any perceived programmatic deficit.

How do we move forward to strengthen our capacity for human resources according to each of the above realities? MSBA would like to highlight some important data for consideration of the K-12 Commission, arising from the 2013 education sector overview that was compiled by the former Council on Post-Secondary Education.⁹⁹ We believe that this data serves to highlight why conducting such a review, focused on the ultimate objective of enhancing teaching and learning, remains important at current time.

While the data in Graph 14 is recent only to 2013, it demonstrates many important realities concerning alignment of teacher education outcomes with demand. One of the most significant ongoing challenges in this regard, concerns the overall portion of surplus graduates. Graph 15 also demonstrates the dynamics of employment, unemployment and teachers on substitute lists maintained by school divisions, data which further informs why this teacher surplus must be addressed to promote greater alignment between supply and demand.

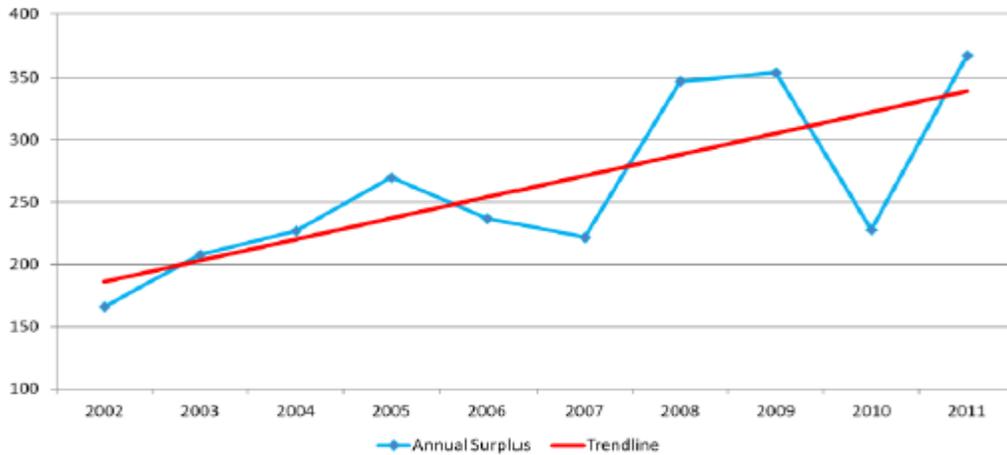
The modeling represented in Graph 14 provides valuable insight by demonstrating important differences between teacher graduate supply and overall workforce vacancies. Substitute

⁹⁸ In this respect, MSBA also acknowledges the important work of First Nations communities themselves in leading the development of educational resources to support teaching, according to the local languages of their communities, and with important support for teachers being provided as well through Aboriginal Languages of Manitoba.

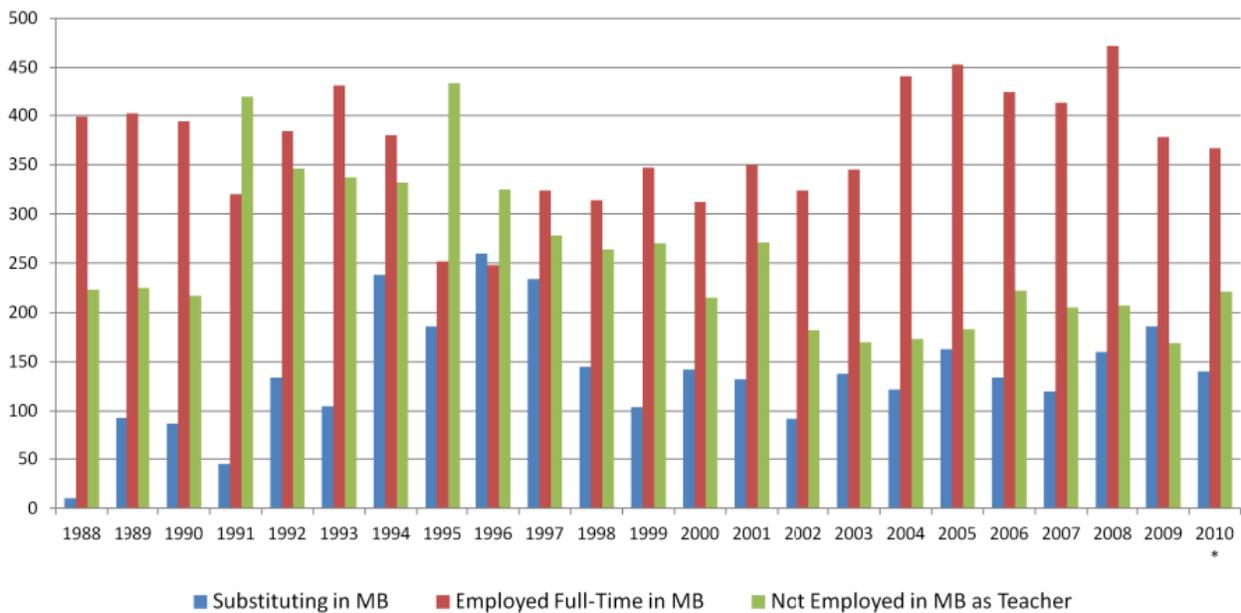
⁹⁹ COPSE. (2013). *Education sector overview – preliminary findings*. Winnipeg.

teaching or even unemployment among first year teacher graduates, during periods where vacancies remain challenging to fill in rural and northern communities, must be considered. The Council on Post-Secondary Education found that this surplus could largely be accounted for by the differential between overall teacher education output and retirement and replacement rates within the existing teacher workforce.

Graph 14 – Teacher Surplus in Manitoba, Annual and Trendline, 2002-2011



Graph 15 – Overview of Teacher Employment, Substitute Employment and Unemployment, First Year Following Graduation, 1988-2010



Once again however, this data also reflects the most recent data available, as of 2013. We would suggest that if this data were to be updated and shared on a standing basis with school boards as employers, as well as with teacher education providers, the results would prove

extremely valuable for informing ongoing alignment towards addressing more targeted needs and developing strategies for distribution of human resource capacity. As much of this data is already compiled internally by Manitoba Education and Training or can readily be obtained from the department, post-secondary institutions and school divisions, undertaking a review would not represent a considerable effort and would come with much advantage.

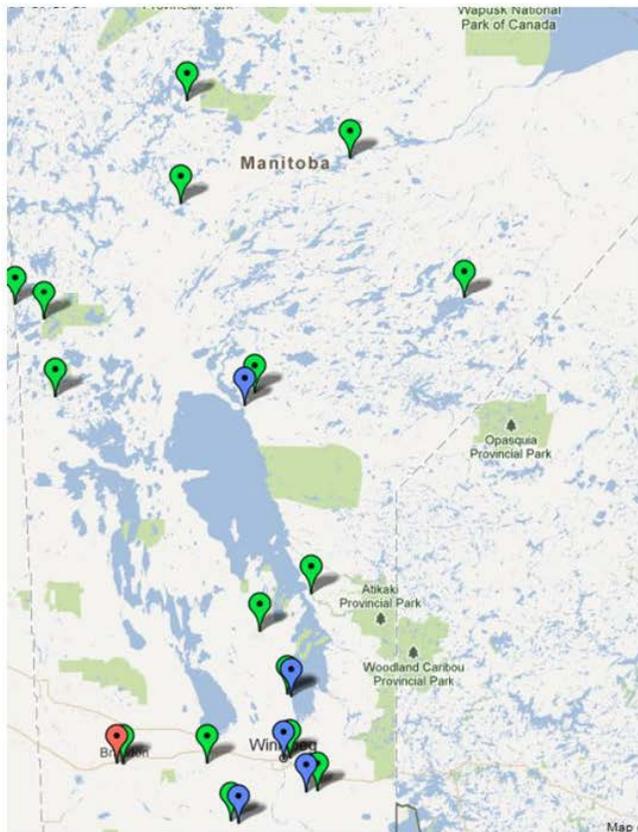
Review of non-instructional capacity and supply

In order for instructional staff to effectively support student learning, one of the most significant challenges in terms of human resources speaks to the supply and distribution of available non-instructional staff. Non-instructional staff help to maximize learning opportunities for all students by ensuring that students receive the day to day support that they require in the classroom.

While teacher education has received considerable attention and focus over many years, non-instructional capacity has received far lesser attention, in terms of strategic planning at a provincial level to address capacity and supply needs.

While every post-secondary provider of educational assistant programming undertakes its own assessment of needs to address capacity, MSBA believes that the time is long overdue for a more comprehensive review of non-instructional capacity and supply.

Graph 16 – Locations of Education Assistant Training in Manitoba, 2006-2011



Educational Assistant Training in Manitoba 2006-2011



*Churchill, MB has a Continuing Education, Educational Assistant program, however the community is not visible on this map.

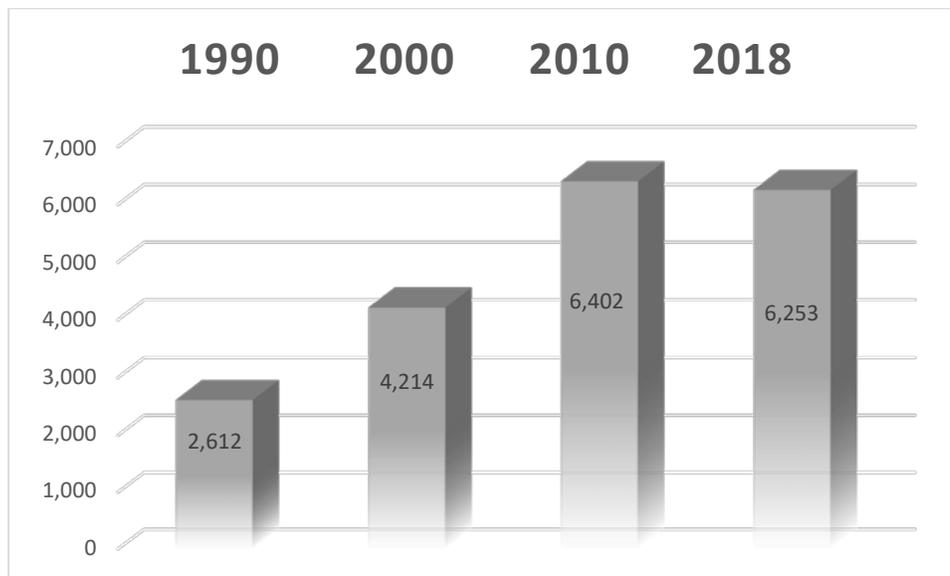
For some time in Manitoba, alignment between the overall size of the educational assistant workforce, and formal training capacity to respond to the skill, knowledge and competency of this workforce, has been a challenge. Table 14 demonstrates overall training capacity and graduation across a five year period from 2006-2011. Graph 17 however, demonstrates the magnitude of the workforce. One can see that, even when based on a workforce of 6,402 EAs in 2010, provincial training supply over the five year period from 2006-2011 represented 2.9 percent of total positions (with requirement to adjust according to the UM and UW continuing education supply, as noted).

Table 14 – Five Year Average Enrolment and Graduation from Educational Assistant Programs, 2006-2011

Education Assistant (EA) - Education Overview		UM	UW	BU	USB	UCN	RRC	ACC	ETP
BASE	EA Certificate	.	.	.	.	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Enrolment (FTE) (5 year Avg. 2006/07 to 2010/11)	.	.	.	.	8	49	12	4
	Grads (5 year Avg. 2006/07 to 2010/11)	.	.	.	.	4	55	18	1
	ConEd Grads (5 year Avg. 2006/07 to 2010/11)					3	98	6	n/a
	Total Grads (5 year Avg. 2006/07 to 2010/11)					7	153	24	1

•Note: UW and UM have an Educational Assistance program via Continuing Education, however universities do not report statistics on their Continuing Education offerings.

Graph 17 – Educational Assistant Workforce (Rounded), 1990-2018¹⁰⁰



Educational assistants perform critical duties by supporting student learning for those pupils who have greatest need, or who may be at risk of not meeting educational attainment within public education. MSBA believes that sustainability of this workforce, reflects a general need for greater training and professional development capacity province-wide.

¹⁰⁰ Data sourced from MSBA. (2019). *Survey of compensation for school board office employees*. Winnipeg.

As Graph 16 demonstrates, non-instructional training capacity has been distributed province-wide in the past, even while many of these site-based locations reflect cohort-based offerings that are delivered through contract and continuing education operations of post-secondary providers. This leads to significant fluctuation in distribution of program delivery sites.

While the advantage of contract and continuing education training remains in the degree of flexibility and responsiveness that institutions can use to address community needs, a move towards establishing permanent, base-funded programs with common curricular standards and learning outcomes, would help to support a more qualified supply over time.

As part of the recommended comprehensive review of human resource capacity and supply, MSBA would therefore suggest consideration for the development of an advisory committee related to para-educator and educational assistant training, including school division representation, to renew focus and promote shared understanding concerning the skills and competencies provided under formal training qualifications. We would also advocate for the establishment of base-funded programs that can help achieve regularity of supply, as well as greater standardization and coherence of curricular content and outcomes.

In the context of improving teaching and learning, improving capacity and supply for educational assistants would make a substantial contribution to enhancing student performance and achievement at both the local and provincial level. Most often, where they are specifically trained, educational assistants serve to address the needs of those students with the most critical special needs and exceptionalities. Other educational assistants may not present such qualification. This represents significant untapped potential towards even greater student outcomes.

We would like to close this discussion on human resource capacity and supply by emphasizing the importance of including clinicians under such a review. These professionals perform significant responsibilities and roles in providing diagnostic, therapeutic and intervention support, each of which remains key to student learning success by enhancing academic performance and achievement.

In this instance, education and training programs for clinicians are primarily concentrated in urban settings province-wide, with the large majority in Winnipeg. This leads to challenges in distributing services of clinicians to rural and northern areas, as well as to fill vacancies to address local needs. Competitive employment demand from the health sector to meet allied professional needs, as well as the attraction of private practice, further constrains the ability of school divisions to recruit and retain clinicians to address student needs. Concentration of available third-party service providers in Winnipeg also presents challenges in equity and accessibility for parents and students, particularly in rural and northern communities.

The good news is that a great deal of work has already been achieved to address wait times, promote earlier intervention, and to also address the same questions when it comes to distribution, recruitment and retention of medical education and service providers in Manitoba.¹⁰¹ Application of these findings to the many clinician occupations upon which our students depend, would only further help to address needs province-wide. Their wider

¹⁰¹ See generally Horne, J. and Klass, D. (2012). *Report of the Brandon medical education study*. Winnipeg. Accessible online - https://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/ald/pdf/brandon_medical_education.pdf

availability can serve to promote effective teaching based on the specific and identified interventions that students require outside of the classroom.

Finally, we would note that larger questions concerning who pays for what, where and how, do remain important to defining sustainability and mandate. We shall address the question of school board absorption of programming, supports and services in clinician-based practice under the final focus area of this report, dedicated to funding. In the interim, we would note that increasingly, school boards have been required to absorb such program, service and support costs on behalf of other provincially-funded portfolios, including health, social services and justice. This has occurred to a greater degree than ever before in Manitoba's history.

This question therefore does deserve address but within the context of ensuring that supply of human resources remains adequate and sustainable to meet our students' needs. We would not advocate that employment of clinicians by school divisions be discontinued outright, in favour of exclusive delivery of such services through the health sector. From our perspective, this would mean that the health sector would be required to address clinician program and service demands according to its existing capacity. Were this to occur, students, families and communities across Manitoba would quickly become disadvantaged. Access by students to capacity in the healthcare sector is in fact the single-most reason for expansion and recruitment of clinician services by school divisions.

In terms of support for non-school funded clinician services, increased public funding designed to serve greater community needs, with focus on children and youth, remains desirable in the longer term. In this respect, MSBA would like to recognize efforts through the Government of Manitoba's recent investment in support for the Children's Therapy Initiative (CTI).

This funding will help to address preschool therapy services through early interventions, before a child arrives in school. This will make a significant difference by helping to reduce wait-times for psychology, physiotherapy, occupational therapy, audiology, speech and language pathology and other clinician services. Such funding to support community health services addresses mutual needs without diffusing efforts to achieve the same across school divisions. MSBA believes that expansion of such an approach would help to better address clinician capacity and supply. Into the future, consideration for distributed delivery approaches, beyond Winnipeg, can also make an important difference.

Finally, we would note that opportunities to allocate a portion of newly generated tax revenues generated from cannabis sales, to support an overall review of clinician services within the context of expanding province-wide mental health and addiction services, would also be important. That a review of clinician services to address global population needs in the face of addictions in our communities is compelling, Doing so would at the same time bring equal benefit to the school-aged population.

Class Size Management

Maintaining class sizes at levels that promote the ability of staff to focus on each student's learning requirements will be important for ensuring that balance is achieved between common and individualized instruction. Both elements are integral for ensuring that student achievement and performance are optimized.

MSBA appreciates that there are many factors that serve to inform what level of class size is effective, informed by socio-economic status, teaching and grade level.¹⁰² Cost effectiveness in maintaining manageable class sizes also becomes an important consideration.¹⁰³ School boards have always attempted to strike a careful balance between maintaining appropriate class sizes and meeting needs. We have done so according to each community's requirements.

Graph 3 - Actual and Projected Pupil to Teacher Ratios in Manitoba Public Schools 1870-2121

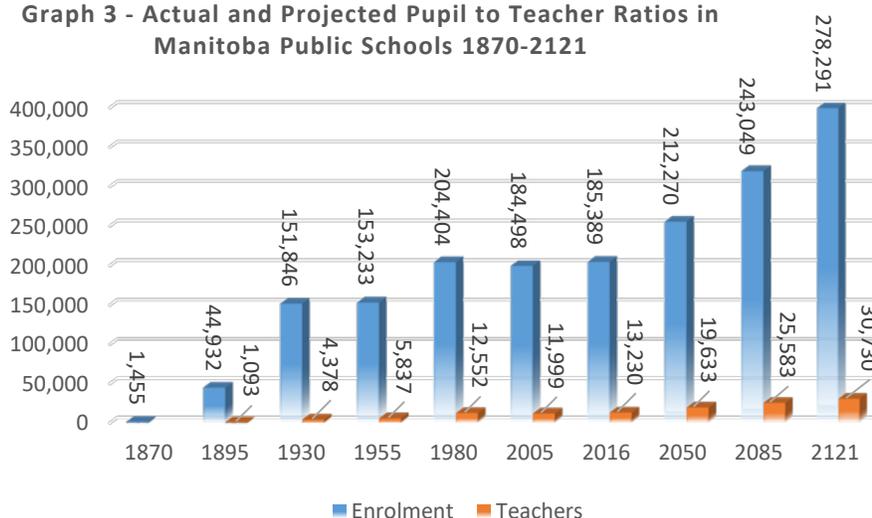


Table 1 – Actual and Projected Average Pupil to Teacher Ratio in Public Schools in Manitoba 1870-2121

	1895	1930	1955	1980	2005	2016	2050	2085	2121
Pupil-Teacher Ratio	41.1	34.7	26.3	16.3	15.3	14/13	13	13	13

All data taken from Annual Reports of the Superintendent of the Protestant Schools, the Superintendent of Catholic Schools, the Department of Education, Manitoba Education Enrolment and Manitoba FRAME Reports. While reported in quarter centuries (1870-2005), all data has been approximated on nearest available report to each quarter where applicable. Enrolment forecasts are conservatively based on proportionate representation of 16 percent of total population starting in 2016, while teacher capacity forecasts are conservatively based on maintenance of a 13:1 Pupil to Teacher Ratio starting in 2016. It is not possible to predict forecasts with 100% accuracy over the 2016-2121 period. Such data also does not consider the needs of Independent or First Nations Schools.

Going forward, it is important to return to our projections concerning enrolment and teacher growth through to 2121 (Graph 3 and Table 1). While such projections reflect baseline trending founded on observations of Manitoba's past rate of growth, we would note that important changes to the Pupil to Educator Ratio would have an impact on these projections.

The above projections have been informed by current national comparators of average Pupil to Educator Ratios (PERs) in Canada. Based on the most recent available data, most

¹⁰² See Manitoba Education. (2002). *Final report of the Commission on Class Size and Composition*. Winnipeg.; Blatchford, P. (2015). "The class sizes debate is tired and asks the wrong questions", *The Guardian*. <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2015/feb/13/class-size-debate-asks-wrong-question-simplistic>
¹⁰³ See Chingos, M. and Whitehurst, G. (2011). "Class Size: What Research Says and What it Means for State Policy". Brookings Institute. Washington DC. Accessed online - <https://www.brookings.edu/research/class-size-what-research-says-and-what-it-means-for-state-policy/>

provinces demonstrate averages that fall between 13 and 14 pupils per educator, even while the national average is significantly lowered by select provinces that maintain very low PERs overall.

In this respect, MSBA would like to highlight that while comparison of average PERs has typically been used as a basis for determining overall quality of instruction or to assess public investment in instructional resourcing, the variability of such ratios across provinces, and also at the local level, must be taken into careful consideration. This would help to contextualize and better understand classroom sizes province-wide.

Table 15 – Canadian Pupil to Educator Ratios, 2011/12 and 2016/17¹⁰⁴

	2011/12	2016/17	5 Year Change
Canada	12.0	11.8	-0.3%
Newfoundland	8.9	9.2	0.3%
Prince Edward Island	11.8	12.4	0.6%
Nova Scotia	13.2	12.7	-0.5%
New Brunswick	13.4	13.0	-0.3%
Quebec	8.9	9.0	0.1%
Ontario	12.6	11.8	-0.8%
Manitoba	13.7	13.0	-0.7%
Saskatchewan	13.3	13.9	0.5%
Alberta	12.9	13.8	0.9%
British Columbia	15.4	15.2	-0.2%
Yukon	9.2	6.1	-3.1%
Northwest Territories	13.5	12.9	-0.6%
Nunavut	13.4	11.6	-1.8%

It follows that at current time in Manitoba, the largest divisional PER average is 14.4 and the lowest is 10.7 for every one educator (see Table 16 below). This is not immediately evident when examining Manitoba's provincial PER average as per Table 15. Eleven school divisions fall above the provincial average, while 27 divisions fall below. This wide range is reflective of many different realities but mainly reflects how each school division has chosen to structure classroom teaching to satisfy each community's specific needs.

MSBA makes no recommendations regarding class size given our advocacy for local autonomy in responding to community needs according to available resources. It is important to us that public policy avoid imposing mandates that do not come with sufficient funding, as this may compromise alternative options and programming, supports and services that are designed to achieve the same outcomes as class size. What we therefore recommend that the K-12 Review Commission consider, is that Pupil to Educator Ratios are generally indicative of class size in each province, but that important variation does occur, for a host of different reasons that are informed by realities at the local level.

¹⁰⁴ Statistics Canada data.

Table 16 – Pupil to Educator Ratios by Division/District in Manitoba, 2016/17

DIVISION / DISTRICT	2016/17
BEAUTIFUL PLAINS	13.9
BORDER LAND	11.1
BRANDON	12.8
DSFM	11.9
EVERGREEN	12.3
FLIN FLON	11.4
FORT LA BOSSE	12.4
FRONTIER	11.8
GARDEN VALLEY	15.0
HANOVER	14.4
INTERLAKE	11.8
KELSEY	12.9
LAKESHORE	11.8
LORD SELKIRK	11.6
LOUIS RIEL	13.8
MOUNTAIN VIEW	12.9
MYSTERY LAKE	11.8
PARK WEST	11.2
PEMBINA TRAILS	14.2
PINE CREEK	11.0
PORTAGE LA PRAIRIE	12.9
PRAIRIE ROSE	11.7
PRAIRIE SPIRIT	12.5
RED RIVER VALLEY	12.2
RIVER EAST TRANSCONA	13.6
ROLLING RIVER	12.1
SEINE RIVER	13.8
SEVEN OAKS	13.6
SOUTHWEST HORIZON	11.5
ST. JAMES-ASSINIBOIA	13.5
SUNRISE	12.1
SWAN VALLEY	12.0
TURTLE MOUNTAIN	12.0
TURTLE RIVER	10.8
WESTERN	13.7
WINNIPEG	13.5
PROVINCE	13.1

Some might suggest that quality of instruction or challenges in equity account for this variance. We would observe however, that there is absolutely no co-relationship between PERs and those school divisions with the largest property assessment bases in Manitoba. Manitoba's local PERs demonstrate co-relationships between the many other variables that, independent research has confirmed, bear significant influence on pupil performance and achievement. Where and how each variable factors into such co-relationships for each school division reflects each community's student learning context. It does not inform quality or equity.

Professional Development

School boards have always made every attempt to provide staff with meaningful professional development opportunities that will promote renewal of their knowledge and skills to address changing needs. We believe that the level of in-service provided during the course of the school year, now totalling five days of common in-service province-wide, as well as an additional five administrative days that can be used for a variety of purposes relating to school planning and preparation, remains sufficient to promote continuous development.

Leave, certification and pay structures have also remained responsive, in terms of classification adjustments, merit increments and time allowances to incentivize teachers to undertake post-baccalaureate or graduate levels of study.

This said, in 2019, student needs are increasingly complex, even while knowledge continues to expand across all subject areas. One size therefore does not fit all when it comes to the expanded knowledge and skills that may provide benefit to teachers.¹⁰⁵ Availability of local professional development can be a particular challenge in rural and northern contexts, which adds significantly to professional development budgets overall.

In terms of this rural and northern context, MSBA would therefore recommend that the Commission extend consideration to the establishment of a specialized rural and northern technology grant, that will enable delivery of professional development for staff, as well as a wider array of secondary courses for pupils. This limited funding would help to promote accessibility to expanded learning opportunities.

Renewal of technology infrastructure to support distance learning remains important across rural, remote and northern communities in Manitoba. This said, investment in renewal and expansion of this technology can be expensive. The technological backbone required to deploy innovative delivery modalities such as by using Cisco telepresence infrastructure, a platform which creates virtual meeting rooms, can be hundreds of thousands of dollars.

Expansion of the services that are delivered by the Manitoba Rural Learning Consortium to additional regions is an equal consideration, given the efficiencies that this consortium have demonstrated in delivering quality professional development for staff in under-served communities. We applaud the Government of Manitoba's recent decision to renew funding in support of this important mechanism for rural and northern professional development. We would also encourage that further consideration be extended to additional opportunities for expansion of mRLC's reach to serve an additional number of remote and northern communities.

Finally, MSBA remains aware that there are many different approaches to providing professional development during the school year. While it is possible to conceptualize consolidation of all professional development into a one work-week block, where this would

¹⁰⁵ MSBA would also to this end suggest that consideration be extended to the possibility of mandating teachers who have been more than five years on leave or away from the classroom to undertake professional development designed to ensure a successful transition and return to employment, given the increasing and expanded skills and competencies that are required over such an extended period. See generally MSBA (2016). *Manual of policies and beliefs*. Winnipeg. p. 25. Accessible online- https://www.mbschoolboards.ca/documents/manualPolicies_Beliefs_%20May%202016.pdf

occur during the year would be important to consider. If, as some suggest, this consolidated block ought to occur at the conclusion of the summer break or during some other period within the school year, this would necessitate delay of the commencement of the school year or potentially require instructional time to be addressed some other way.

With only so many days established for the school year, the current approach of distributing in-service and administration days throughout the school calendar is intended to respond to the needs of working parents and guardians by limiting required child care and/or time off from work during a single day (as opposed to five day) period. It also supports employers by releasing those employees who are parents for one day periods throughout the year without the prospect for an entire week away from work.

MSBA would also note that spreading in-service days throughout the school year also helps to establish school cultures where professional development occurs regularly and progressively without being relegated to a single “learning period”.

Placing a five day in-service block during the middle of the school year would, we suggest, prove disruptive to student learning in view of the importance of time management during the school year. Planning for delivery of quality professional development for such a block during the summer (in August for instance) or even prior to summer break (in time for the end of June) would also prove challenging given availability of resources and focus during such periods on classroom preparations for the start and end of the school year.

School boards are not averse to change. If such proposal were to receive consideration by the Commission, we would look to our partners to inform opportunities for such a model, within the context of current collective agreement structures and class scheduling.

Regulation of the Teaching Profession

Some provinces have proposed or moved to establish regulatory professional colleges for teachers. While this may also be under consideration for Manitoba, it is the view of MSBA that such a structure may become duplicative and restrictive. It may also lead to situations where roles and responsibilities may potentially become confused in terms of current structures for certification, discipline, and professional conduct.

MSBA would instead submit that alternative approaches be considered. Building upon existing advisory structures at the faculties and schools of education, and also upon current disciplinary, evaluation and feedback procedures at school divisions themselves, would better support the concept of ongoing teacher professionalization. This would also be achieved without the costs associated with a formal regulatory framework. It would further avoid prospects for duplication as would come with an external regulatory structure.

The question of cost is an important one when it comes to regulation and remains important in terms of value for money. In Ontario for instance, according to the Ontario College of Teachers' latest audited financial statements, college operations represented \$42.3 million in 2017.¹⁰⁶ As shown by using the data in Table 17, this represents investment of \$249.46 per teacher in Ontario. If this same measure were to be applied to Manitoba, such a College could cost

¹⁰⁶ OCT. (2017). *Balance Sheet*. Accessible online at- <https://reports2017.oct.ca/Finances/Balance-Sheet>

upwards of \$3.5 million at a time when the province is seeking to achieve fiscal efficiencies and promote economic growth.

Table 17 – Pan Canadian Overview of Full and Part-Time Educators, 2011/12 and 2016/17¹⁰⁷

	2011/12	2016/17	5 Year Change
Canada	393,309	408,807	3.9%
Newfoundland	7,605	7,161	-5.8%
Prince Edward Island	1,764	1,611	-8.7%
Nova Scotia	9,501	9,333	-1.8%
New Brunswick	7,683	7,515	-2.2%
Quebec	97,149	100,812	3.8%
Ontario	161,523	169,572	5.0%
Manitoba	13,065	14,097	7.9%
Saskatchewan	12,426	12,918	4.0%
Alberta	44,643	47,289	5.9%
British Columbia	36,108	36,111	0.0%
Yukon	546	879	61.0%
Northwest Territories	630	645	2.4%
Nunavut	666	864	29.7%

One has to equally inquire as to whether such expense represents good value, given that the traditional roles and responsibilities that are historically performed by such regulatory colleges are already part of existing operations in public education. We would encourage that such investment be directed towards student learning and teaching, rather than regulation.

It is important to consider the traditional roles of a regulator: promotion of discipline and compliance with codes of professional conduct, professionalization through standardization and quality review of training programs, registration for practice, and continuous competency improvement, are some of the most important roles that regulatory colleges perform.

In terms of the disciplinary role, we are of the perspective that such a role would be minimal, given that Manitoba maintains among the lowest teacher certificate revocations country-wide, a statistic that is also reflective of disciplinary requirements in general in our province compared to others.¹⁰⁸ Based on recent media reports, that Nova Scotia 's disciplinary context is vastly different from that of Manitoba may have well warranted the establishment of a regulatory college in that province. However, in our province, complaints concerning teachers, when very seldomly they are brought forward, are addressed fairly and expediently within the existing structures of school boards and their senior administrative teams.

Registration of new members, as is often performed by a regulatory college, would also seem unwarranted in a province such as Manitoba, where, as shown in Table 17, growth of the teaching profession was 1,032 teachers. By contrast it would seem more compelling for Ontario to justify transitioning certification responsibilities to an independent regulator, due to the

¹⁰⁷ Statistics Canada data.

¹⁰⁸ Julian, J. (2016). "Nova Scotia revokes teacher licenses at high rate– secretly". Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, April 8, 2016. Accessed online- <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/nova-scotia/marketplace-teachers-discipline-education-1.3525956>

realities that in that province, growth in actual numbers to the teaching workforce over the same period was nearly eight times as much as in Manitoba.

We would also observe that creating an informal and low-cost committee structure, such as the former Teacher Education Certification Committee (TECC), would also help to achieve standardization across teacher education programs, as is normally delegated to professional regulators.

In terms of promoting the ongoing professionalization of teaching in Manitoba, it is therefore our perspective that the creation of a college to regulate teachers would prove cost-prohibitive and establish greater, not lesser administrative hierarchies in most every aspect that is related to registration, conduct, discipline and program review.

From MSBA's perspective, should an entity such as TECC be re-established for the purpose of approving standardization in teacher education programs, the only additional duty that regulators do often undertake, would be the implementation of a continuing competency framework. As the Commission may be aware, such continuous competency frameworks are regular features of professional regulators around the world and aim to promote greater focus on continuous learning and competency improvement.

In consideration of a similar approach, MSBA would suggest that such a mechanism could be achieved and also at very minimal cost. Many professionals who are subject to continuous competency feel that it helps foster greater personal and professional insight for practice, thereby enhancing the regular on-the-job evaluations that they receive.¹⁰⁹ Continuing competency committees can also help further professional development by providing readings, online modules and other materials that enhance a professional's daily practice.

We therefore recommend that the Commission consider the establishment of a continuous competency framework, led by representatives from the Department of Education, school boards, senior administrators, teachers and members representing the public interest, to implement a non-disciplinary strategy for added value by fostering professional insight alongside of those perspectives that are normally included within the regular evaluation and feedback procedures that are currently mandated.

Some concluding thoughts and ideas on teaching

What is education for? As outlined in our introduction to this report, this has remained the enduring question that has always guided the development of education and its improvement over the centuries. In the preceding three focus areas, MSBA has laid out its response to this inquiry. In sum, that the needs of our future as a province will continue to depend upon our response to our students and communities, and our ability to meet their many needs and requirements, will remain dependent upon our affirmation of those pillars that we feel remain important for setting a clear course for the future.

It shall also remain dependent on our ability to adapt to individual and collective student learning needs by recognizing and responding to the wider determinants that inform this reality. This in

¹⁰⁹ See generally Vernon, R., Chiarella, M., and Papps, E. (October, 2018). "Investigating the relationship between continuing competence and insight in nursing and midwifery practice". *Journal of Nursing Regulation* (9:3), 37.

turn depends upon our ability to achieve greater alignment when it comes to development of our internal capacity to supply the inputs that will serve to improve our outputs.

In the latter respect, the above observations on teaching will, we trust, provide the Commission with much to consider.

Our focus has been stated in terms of opportunities for expanding the education and training of our human resources, promoting ongoing professional development in an equitable manner that serves all regions of our province, enabling local autonomy by structuring classrooms for academic achievement according to local needs, and the importance of acknowledging those structures that are currently in place— as well as those structures that can be further considered— to respond to key regulatory objectives.

The decisions that are made when laying the foundations for teacher education and training capacity quite literally lay the foundations for our collective future as a province. They serve to determine whether or not languages will survive and thrive into the 22nd century, or whether they might be extinguished within one generation. They determine whether a newly arrived immigrant to Manitoba, trained abroad as a teacher, will be able to pursue the pathway towards a meaningful career affecting our young people or whether they end up in jobs that minimize their talent and capacity. And these are but just two examples.

As we stated before, there is truly no ordinary day when it comes to the duties and responsibilities of our schools. And for our staff, this remains equally as valid. No group of educators in the history of the world were expected to do what today's educators are expected to do.¹¹⁰ As a society, we have continued to add to the subject content expertise and other operational and professional requirements of our staff, without any significant adjustments to the school year or school day in which to accommodate these. We must therefore strive to facilitate that which we entrust to our staff, for this remains the key driver of our students' success.

We must ensure that staff receive excellent quality foundations upon which to build. We must guarantee that they are equipped to respond to the modern day school environment. We must provide them with ongoing opportunities in which they themselves can continue to learn, grow and develop as professionals, in recognition that their own process of lifelong learning and career adaptation remains a determinant of classroom success. This reflects the best practice of the world's high-performance school systems, among which Canada already stands as an example to others.¹¹¹

To promote their focus on our students, we must ensure that our staff are properly led and directed, with flexibility and the ability to innovate, towards promoting genuine and improved learning. This will prove essential to our sustainment as a society and as a province.¹¹²

¹¹⁰ Vollmer, J. (2010). *Schools cannot do it alone: Building public support for America's public schools*. Enlightenment Press,

¹¹¹ Tucker, M. (2019). *Leading high-performance school systems: Lessons from the world's best*. ASCD, Alexandria, VA.; Tucker, M. (Ed.). (2016). *Surpassing Shanghai: An agenda for American education built on the world's leading systems*. Sixth ed. Harvard Education Press, Cambridge, MA.

¹¹² Socol, I., Moran, P. and Ratliff, C. (2018). *Timeless learning: How imagination, observation, and zero-based thinking change schools*. Jossey-Bass. San Francisco.

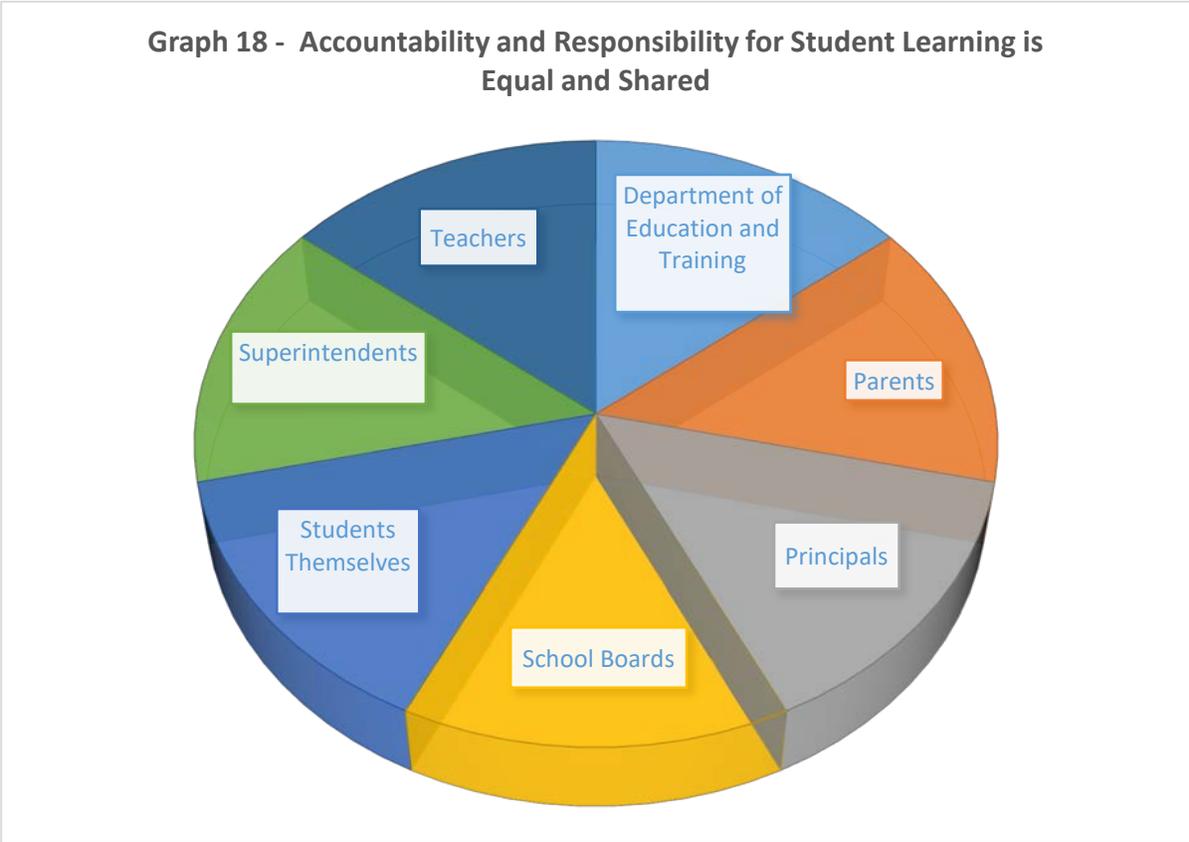
In closing, we would note that the value that a society places on the education of its children reflects the very future of that society. It is our view that the value we place on those who provide this education must also reflect what is rightly due but also what can be afforded by the people of our community. Achieving the right balance into the future will be important. In view of the particular challenges that we face as a province, the cost of not doing so would be much greater.

4. ACCOUNTABILITY FOR STUDENT LEARNING

Equal and shared accountability and responsibility

Truly, it takes a village to raise a child.¹¹³ The Manitoba School Boards Association’s perspective is and always has been that responsibilities and accountabilities for student success are equal and are shared in Manitoba. Throughout our history, independent reviews of public education in Manitoba have confirmed that there is a very strong responsibility and accountability on the part of the Government of Manitoba for leading the ongoing provision of public education. However, this has always been contextualized by respect for, and promotion of, the principles of student equity, fiscal equity, local autonomy, and general accountability.

In the past, Manitoba’s commitment to upholding and protecting these principles has been a guidepost for the continued delivery of public education in Manitoba. For reasons that we will share in this chapter, we believe that they still hold true today. In terms of accountability specifically focused on student learning, we are of the perspective that accountability and responsibility for student learning is equal and is shared.



¹¹³ African proverb.

Graph 18 addresses our view of accountability according to the seven specific groups that have been identified by the K-12 Review Commission through its public survey. While this survey asks respondents to indicate which of the seven are ultimately responsible for student learning and success, our enduring reality has been that many relationships between each group serve to define accountability. Manitoba's structure of accountability is interdependent on each group assuming its assigned roles and responsibilities towards student learning. If one group fails to meet these roles and responsibilities, then it becomes very difficult for the others to do so as well.

Depending upon the view that one takes, whether one group is a little bit more responsible than another is subject to great conjecture. According to globally recognized education experts such as Sir Ken Robinson for instance, the entire outcome of education is dependent upon one important relationship, that which exists between a student and their teacher. Learning cannot occur without a student and neither can it occur without a teacher, just as a theatrical production cannot take place unless there is both an actor and an audience. More than any other, this relationship therefore remains the cornerstone of all education, regardless of in which context it may occur.¹¹⁴

While there are certain skills and knowledge that students can acquire on their own or through their community, the historical foundations of public education were designed to respond to subject areas that students would likely not be able to access independently of such formal educational structures. Leading the movement to establish them were members of communities, who believed that they could together provide the good of education to students within each community. Hence the birth of the local school board. We will further describe this important history and how it has informed current practice under the next focus area on governance.

Given the importance of education as a public good, governments around the world increasingly assumed an interest in the effectiveness of education for addressing broader social needs. The identification of a strong role for the state in education became more pronounced and stand-alone structures such as Departments of Education were created, to exercise broader social and financial accountability for the outcome of education.

Under the joint auspices of school boards and governments, administrative and operational structures became more formalized over time. Historically, the only role of the local school board was to organize each community's resources collectively for the construction of a school and the hire of a teacher. With the passage of time this role expanded, simultaneous to the expansion of local educational structures to deliver multiple subjects and multiple grade levels to an ever increasing diversity of students.

School boards hired superintendents and other administrators to lead the operations of increasingly sophisticated "divisional or district" structures. To them, school boards delegated responsibility for developing coordinated planning to ensure alignment between community interests and student outcomes. As schools morphed from one room structures to multi-grade facilities with many classrooms and other infrastructural features (such as gymnasias, science

¹¹⁴ Robinson, K. (2019). Keynote address to the plenary session of the annual congress of the National School Boards Association, March 30, 2019, Philadelphia, PA.

laboratories and trades workshops), principals were also hired to provide frontline leadership to those who were employed to deliver education within those school facilities.

And parents remained those who would make the decision to either continue to school their children at home, as had occurred prior to the introduction of public education, or to send their children to the local public school to receive instruction. This is a choice which today has remained for nine out of every ten parents in Manitoba. Parents were also those who, on the homefront, would decide what kinds of values, extra-curricular initiatives and knowledge were desirable for their children and would therefore be shared with them outside of the school.

It is therefore very challenging to identify which group within such a system might be identified as bearing “ultimate responsibility” for student learning, given the important interplay, roles and responsibilities that exist between each of them. It also follows that if only one among these is responsible for the sum of the whole, then truly, the many parts that serve to achieve this sum would be required to deny or abdicate their own responsibilities for student learning. Manitoba can and should not allow that to happen.

Table 18 attempts to expand upon this narrative by describing some of the contemporary roles, responsibilities and accountabilities that distinguish each of the groups from one another in Manitoba. It exclusively addresses the relationships and specific roles of each of seven groups that have received focus under the current review.

MSBA would however, respectfully posit that student success in the contemporary context is a much more complex reality, involving several other entities. Each of these entities share equal and interdependent accountability for student success, given relationships among them. Whether these entities are primary or secondary in terms of influence on student learning, depends on the circumstances that emerge at any given time.

We cannot say for instance, that a university or college is secondary to the success of a high school student, if that student tours a campus or completes a dual credit course and this awakens their desire to succeed in school and to continue on to higher education. The same would be true if a student receives a vision of their future from participating in one of the many non-formal programs that are offered by our post-secondary partners to students in K-12 during the summer months.

Adult Learning Centres become primary partners by offering completion options to those students who, for a variety of reasons, do not complete secondary education sequentially. This remains key to promoting enhanced educational attainment in Manitoba. Early Learning and Child Care Centres provide primary supports in pre-school preparedness, enabling Kindergarten teachers to focus on curricular outcomes rather than remediation. As described under the preceding focus area on teaching, Faculties of Education and training programs for non-instructional staff could not be more important to supporting student success and achievement, through their supply of qualified employees able to respond to the needs of each classroom. To attempt to describe the many relationships and possibilities that do exist and which inform this concept of shared accountability for student learning, is therefore a feat beyond the scope of this report.

Table 18 – Student Success: A Story of Shared and Equal Responsibility

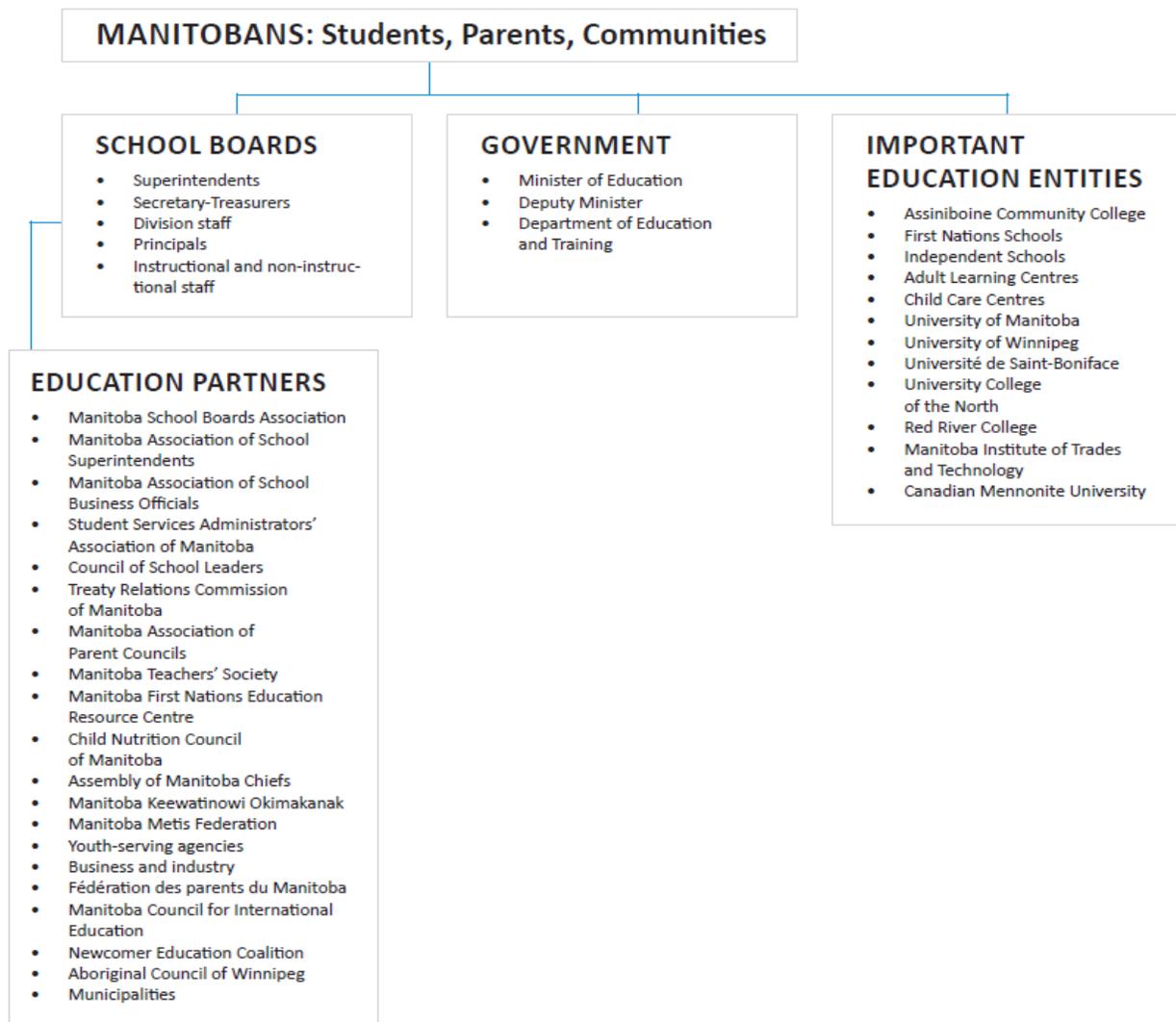
Students Themselves	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> attend school in order to participate in the learning opportunities that are provided in each class. complete required reading, assignments, projects and other work as provided by their teachers. write tests and exams designed to see how well they performing in their classes, in order to help the Department of Education and Training, principals, school boards, superintendents, and teachers to provide improved education to meet students’ needs.
Parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> decide whether or not their child attends public school or whether they receive education through other means. serve as the best advocates for the needs of their children, inside and outside of school. provide important learning opportunities for their children outside of school, according to each family’s means and ability. provide important social, emotional, cultural and financial support to help shape each child’s future.
Teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> are certified professionals with relevant post-secondary education who work as part of a school team, including one on one with each student, and also with their classrooms, to meet learning needs and requirements. design and develop class content and provide instruction to inspire and help every student to learn. identify and monitor learning needs and opportunities for every student through delivery of programs, supports and services, as well as through tests and exams.
Principals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> serve as the immediate supervisor for each member of the school team, including teachers and other classroom staff. lead the development and delivery of school plans and supports to help meet every student’s needs within each classroom. make requests to senior administrators for funding support or programming to help meet needs in every school.
Superintendents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> define, with their school board, a strategic vision and plan that supports all aspects of education in the each school division. monitor and evaluate general student success across their school division and identify opportunities and needs within each school division for improvement of student success. provide specific direction and guidance to principals and school teams on the delivery of programs, supports and services to every student.
School boards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> are democratically elected by each local community to advocate for the needs of each community relative to public education through strategic vision, budgeting and general policy frameworks. provide 29 cents out of every dollar of the funding that is required to provide public education in Manitoba, through school tax and collection of funds from other sources. employ all staff in every school division, and provide general direction to superintendents to deliver educational programs, supports and services throughout each school division.
The Department of Education and Training (Government of Manitoba)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> provides 71 cents out of every dollar of the funding that is required to provide public education in Manitoba. This funding comes from taxes collected by the province. provides guidelines, including learning goals and objectives, for each course that is delivered to Manitoba’s students (through the curriculum). provides tests and exams on important subjects, such as English, French, math and science, in order to see how students perform on these subjects provincially, nationally and globally.

Graphs 19 and 20 attempt to highlight the many different perspectives that can be adopted concerning how many different entities operate together, towards defining accountability for student learning. While Graph 19 captures the more hierarchical view of education, according to the formal reporting structures that currently exist for school boards and government, it must be noted that overall accountability on the part of every entity remains one under which

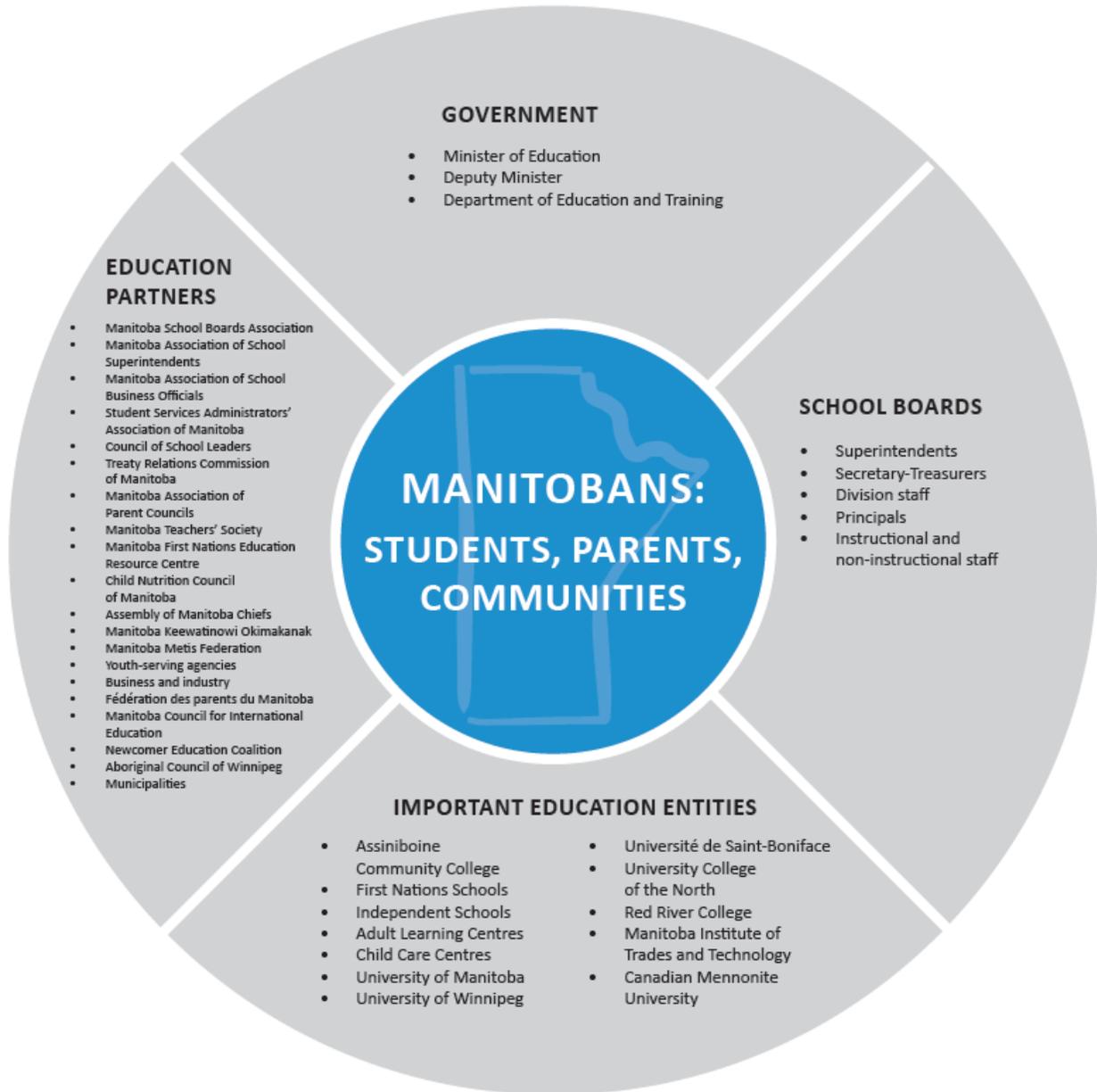
students, parents and communities should always remain at the very summit of our collective focus. Graph 20 portrays a concept that many in public education also subscribe to, one where students, parents and communities remain at the centre of everything that we do.

Irrespective of which model or view one chooses to subscribe to, reporting structures continue to exist according to each area of responsibility. Each however, exercises a supporting role that remains harmoniously situated in support of Manitobans. Once again, MSBA would suggest that the roles that each group plays are equal and shared when it comes to educational success.

Graph 19- Linear Model of Interdependent Accountability in Manitoba



Graph 20 – Circular Model of Interdependent Accountability in Manitoba



The above concepts describe education partners and other important education entities, each of which bear their own special relationship and accountability for education in Manitoba. None of these organizations are situated in any particular order or hierarchy. Each of these partners and entities, in their own ways, help support the core mandate of student learning and success. From municipalities, whose role in public education funding remains important to the operational sustainment of K-12 education, to entire systems of K-12 education that are not part of the public education system (such as First Nations schools and Independent schools), each has a very important role.

Should the Commission be interested in learning more concerning any one of these entities and the roles, responsibilities or contribution that they make to public education, MSBA remains available to provide additional detail.

The Commission has inquired as to how relationships that promote student learning can be enhanced, with the intention of strengthening a sense of shared accountability.

As we have highlighted throughout this report, the distinctive realities related to First Nations, as well as private and independent schools, do contribute to Manitoba's overall educational outcomes, whether or not students learning in these systems are formally measured and assessed using the same tools and instruments.

It is also an enduring reality that each of these distinctive school "systems" contribute pupils regularly to one another through continued mobility across all three systems, with the largest destination being the public school system (90.39 percent of all students).¹¹⁵ As we have described under our explanation of educational attainment measures under the focus area on student learning, that overall attainment is informed by every individual and therefore by every student in Manitoba, regardless of which of these "systems" of education they are enrolled, is deserving of particular consideration.

In this respect, it should equally be noted that the ongoing provision of select programs, supports and services to First Nations and Independent schools by public education, either through integrated or ancillary delivery models, also remains a regular feature of our current system of public education. Strengthening relationships and accountabilities between all three "systems" to achieve greater coordination and broader focus on shared outcome would, we feel, build capacity for the greater educational success for every student, not just those who are enrolled in K-12 public education.

We would also note that, in terms of Manitoba's Funded and Non-Funded Independent schools, a majority of these schools remain destinations of choice that are attributable to faith-based or faith-informed reasons on the part of parents.¹¹⁶ As such, competition between public and independent schools largely does not exist in Manitoba, which provides a significant opportunity for coordination according to the specialization of each sector.

A great example of this occurs regularly by means of the Steering Committee related to the Collaborative Blueprint for Indigenous education, where public, post-secondary and independent schools, as well as Indigenous community partners, regularly meet to share promising practices and learn from one another's experience in a non-competitive manner and with collaborative purpose.¹¹⁷ Strengthening such relationships through regular opportunities for dialogue, planning and strategy-making, can help to deepen sharing of responsibilities and help promote shared accountability for outcomes.

¹¹⁵ See Table 9, as reproduced from Manitoba Education. (2018). *Enrolment report, September 30, 2018*. p. 5. Accessed online - https://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/finance/sch_enrol/enrolment_2018.pdf

¹¹⁶ Of Funded Independent Schools in Manitoba, 46 are readily identified as faith-informed academies. We would note that Non-Funded Independent schools also demonstrate a majority focus on faith-informed learning. See Manitoba Education. (2018). *Schools in Manitoba, Écoles du Manitoba, 2018/19*. pp. 56-62. Accessed online- https://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/schools/2019_mb_schools_book.pdf

¹¹⁷ See note 11.

In the same measure, that education is a cradle to career prospect means that significant partnerships between public schools, post-secondary partners, early learning and child care providers and adult learning and literacy providers, must also continue to develop their shared accountability for student learning.

As discussed earlier, this is supported by empirical and quantitative evidence through, among others, Structural Equation Models.¹¹⁸ Such models confirm the strong co-variate relationships that serve to demonstrate the criticality of each entities' influence and impact at every stage of childhood development.

Strengthening cradle to careers planning and coherence would therefore represent another important means of deepening the sense of shared responsibility and accountability for student learning that many organizations embrace as part of their core mandate.

In terms of membership-focused associations in public education, the opportunity for associations to join together in common purpose can and regularly does contribute to enhancing student learning through initiatives that directly or indirectly support this objective. In recent years, to cite just a few examples of the important work that has been achieved and remains ongoing:

- MSBA, MASS and MASBO have collaborated in defining how each organization's membership can best lead together for optimal effectiveness as an administrative team.¹¹⁹
- MSBA, MASS, MASBO, MAPC and MTS together produced a promising practices guide for promoting enhanced educational equity province-wide.¹²⁰
- MSBA, MASS and MTS have worked in collaboration to promote reconciliation and advance Indigenous education province-wide.¹²¹
- MASS has taken the lead on behalf of education partners in developing a strategy for school mental health.¹²²
- MSBA and MASS served as co-chairs and MTS hosted a significant dialogue on better information-sharing across all relevant systems, for protection of children and

¹¹⁸ See note 60.

¹¹⁹ MSBA. (2015). *Leading together: A resource guide for school boards, superintendents and secretary-treasurers*. Winnipeg. Accessible online-

https://www.mbschoolboards.ca/documents/LeadingTogether_ResourceGuide_2015.pdf

¹²⁰ Wiens, J. (2016) *Towards equity in education*. Accessible online at-

<http://www.mbschoolboards.ca/publications.php>

¹²¹ See MSBA. (2015). *Summary of Day Three of the Aboriginal Leadership Development Institute* (hosted by the Emamawi partners). accessible online at -

<http://www.mbschoolboards.ca/documents/trusteeEducation/abEdWorldCafé.pdf><http://www.mbschoolboards.ca/documents/trusteeEducation/abEdWorldCafé.pdf>; see also MSBA. (2016). Final report of the Aboriginal and Indigenous education action planning committee, priority on strengthening board capacity and proficiency in

Aboriginal and Indigenous matters, p. 3. Accessible online -

<http://www.mbschoolboards.ca/documents/finalReportAbEdAction2016.pdf>

¹²² MASS. (2018). *MASS priorities 2018/19*. Accessible online- <http://mass.mb.ca/about/>

community safety. This dialogue will support every system in moving forward with implementation of recent provincial enabling legislation in these respects.¹²³

- MSBA and MAPC co-produced a risk-focused fact sheet for parents in the aftermath of cannabis legalization and have plans to proceed with another fact sheet on human tissue and organ donation. The *Talking to Kids about Cannabis* fact sheet was also translated into French and Tagalog (Filipino) by MSBA and MAPC, in an effort to promote greater equity for parents concerning this significant topic.¹²⁴
- MSBA, MASS and SSAAM jointly hosted a professional development day for trustees, superintendents and student service administrators on inclusion, accommodation and accessibility for students with special needs and exceptionalities. This PD day was designed to promote collaborative efforts to prepare for meaningful input in advance of the provincial task force on special needs funding.

These are just a handful of the meaningful examples that we could provide, in terms of the collaboration that exists. Such partnerships serve to define shared accountability over the day to day operations of public education, not to mention the many examples of such initiatives that exist outside of our formal membership associations and which reflect ongoing collaboration and dialogue between our individual members.

The many advisory committees and councils that bring the Department of Education, other government ministries, and education partners together for frequent consultation, as well as inter-jurisdictional working groups at the federal, provincial, municipal and school board level, only represent an added dimension of sharing of responsibilities when it comes to public education in this province. MSBA alone is represented on 25 such entities, a reality that serves to promote ongoing coherence and achieve integration through collaboration towards shared purpose.

The aforementioned realities described in this chapter represent the longstanding commitment that exists across Manitoba for joint promotion of student learning and success. In view of the extent to which responsibility and accountability is already shared and, in anticipation of future opportunities and prospects for enhancing coherence and alignment, we therefore recommend that the Commission acknowledge that accountability and responsibility for student learning is in fact shared when it comes to public education in Manitoba and that therefore, enhancement to public education must appropriately contemplate the individual and interdependent roles and responsibilities of each part within this whole.

Leading Together

In recent years, MSBA has taken special steps to promote the concept of “leading together” in order to enhance the collaborative outcomes of relationships between school boards, superintendents and secretary-treasurers. As mentioned earlier in this report, in partnership

¹²³ As noted under the focus area on student learning, the final report from this “Breaking Barriers Forum” will be finalized in June, 2019.

¹²⁴ MSBA and MAPC. (2018). *Talking to kids about cannabis*. Accessible online-
http://www.mbschoolboards.ca/documents/services/riskManagement/studentSafety/Cannabis%20Fact%20Sheet_2.pdf

with MASS and MASBO, MSBA has produced *Leading Together*, an important resource guide designed to enhance the relationships and accountabilities for student learning that are evident in the school board-superintendent-secretary treasurer relationship. This is of particular importance given that all three comprise the senior governance and administrative team of each school division.¹²⁵

The initial version of the resource document addressed only the role of the superintendent as positional leader and chief executive officer within public school divisions in Manitoba. The second iteration was grounded in the concept of shared leadership and effective working relationships between boards of trustees and superintendents in a culture of mutual responsibility and accountability for student success. In an era of increasingly distributed leadership in education settings, our third edition of the resource guide also encompassed the role of divisional secretary-treasurers as key members of senior school division leadership teams.

The manual has been developed to assist school boards, superintendents and secretary-treasurers to establish and maintain the effective working relationships needed to serve the evolving educational needs of children and communities within their jurisdictions.

As chief executive officer of the school division, the superintendent is both its primary educational leader and the most senior operations manager. In these capacities, the superintendent works closely with, and reports directly to, the elected school board. The quality of the board-superintendent working relationship is therefore a critical element that defines the success of the school division. This document addresses the foundations of the board-superintendent relationship, and includes practical advice for recruitment, selection and leadership succession planning. Some of the information in this manual may apply to assistant superintendents who support the executive role of the superintendent.

The secretary-treasurer is generally the chief financial officer of the school division and in most instances, reports directly to the superintendent. As a member of the senior management team, the secretary-treasurer works closely with the school board and the superintendent in the establishment of financial and operational plans consistent with the goals and objectives of the school division and the requirements of the provincial ministry of education.

In Manitoba, there are a small number of dual administrative structures wherein the secretary-treasurer reports directly to the board of trustees rather than to the superintendent. Whether the administrative structure is unitary or dual, the secretary-treasurer's role in today's school divisions often extends beyond financial matters to include oversight of non-instructional services and staffing components, facilities, transportation, purchasing, and information management systems. This broad scope of responsibilities requires that the secretary-treasurer work closely and communicate regularly with both the superintendent and the school board to ensure the alignment of divisional services and supports with the intended educational outcomes for students in the school division.

¹²⁵ MSBA, MASS and MASBO. (2015). *Leading together: A resource guide for school boards, superintendents and secretary-treasurers*. Winnipeg. Accessible online-
https://www.mbschoolboards.ca/documents/LeadingTogether_ResourceGuide_2015.pdf

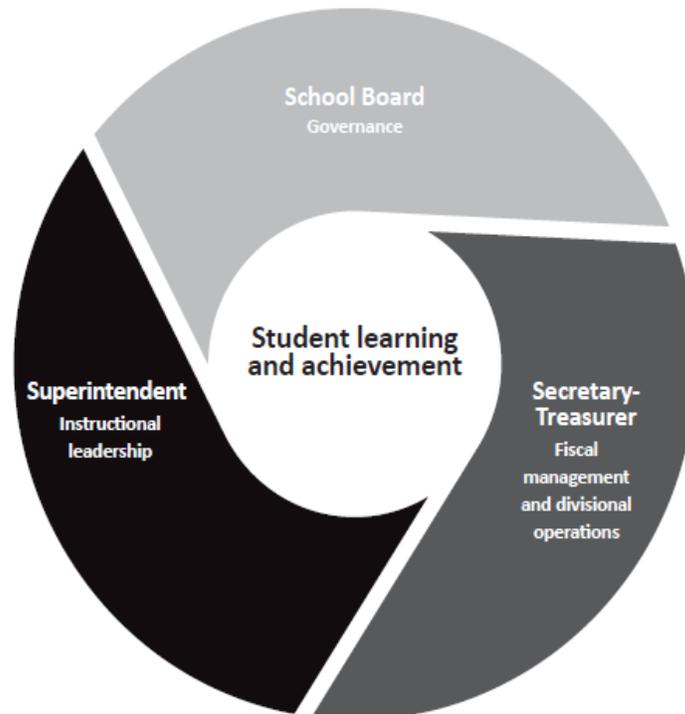
As is clearly communicated in the resource manual:

Traditional views that base leadership on positional authority no longer support the needs or the realities of modern public education systems. Given the scope of complexity of the public education mandate, engaging all participants in leadership – trustees, administrators, teachers, parents and students – is the emerging norm in a school division or district.

Shared leadership is critically important to ensure that school divisions meet their legal and moral obligations to students, to communities and to provincial authorities. Effective board and senior administration partnerships are characterized by high levels of trust and “*values the contribution of each member, builds teams...and supports all actions which are taken in common good.*”¹²⁶

The issue is not so much about who will lead and who will follow, but about... how the tasks will be shared and distributed. Effective mutual leadership will involve close liaison, dialogue and influence, by both boards and by their chief executives, around the primary responsibilities of each.¹²⁷

Graph 21– Mutuality of School Division Leadership¹²⁸



MSBA has also taken steps to further optimize school board-superintendent-secretary-treasurer relationships through the ongoing development of MSBA's Effective and Efficient Governance (E2G) Framework, as well as through ongoing distributed (webinar format) professional development modules for boards, superintendents and secretary-treasurers, on a

¹²⁶ McGettrick, B. (2005). *Towards a framework of professional teaching standards*. The Higher Education Academy, Bristol, UK.

¹²⁷ Dr Vernon J. Storey, as cited in *Leading Together*, supra note 123, p. 2.

¹²⁸ Graph reproduced from *Leading Together*, supra note 123, p. 2.

variety of topics that will serve to promote focus on shared accountability, teamwork and collaboration, all geared towards promoting greater student achievement and success within each division.

Below is a comprehensive list of the many webinars and modules that MSBA has recently delivered¹²⁹:

Governance

- [Nurturing Governance Capacity](#) (Recorded - March 27, 2019)
- [Governance Pitfalls & Politics](#) (Recorded - May 1, 2019)
- [Repairing the Board-Superintendent Relationship](#) (Recorded - May 22, 2019)

Superintendent Series

- [Improving Superintendent Evaluation](#) (Resource: [Leading Together](#))
- [Fierce Conversations](#) (Part 2) (Resource: [The 7 Principles of Fierce Conversations](#))
- [Fierce Conversations](#) (Part 1)
- [Effective Board-Admin Retreat](#) (Resources: [Checklist](#))
- [Leading the Strategic Planning Process](#) (Resources: [Steps](#) | [Framework](#) | [Focus Group](#))
- [Supporting a Culture of Continuous Change and Improvement](#) (Resources: [Creating a Culture of Change](#) | [Placemat](#))

E2G Series

- [Monitoring, Reporting & Evaluations](#) (Resources: [Discussion guide](#))
- [Ensuring Appropriate Staffing Expertise & Levels](#) (Resources: [Questions to start the discussion](#))
- [Code of Conduct](#) (Resources: [Template](#) | [Scenarios](#))
- [Conflict of Interest](#) (Resources: [Test Questions](#) | [Policy Development](#) | [Scenarios](#))
- [Balancing Education and Fiscal Responsibilities](#) (Contact the association for related resources)
- [Learning & Achievement for All](#) (Resources: [Leadership for Student Learning](#))
- [Getting from Here to There](#)
- [Community Engagement](#)

Individual Webinars

- [The Science of Decision-Making](#) (Resources: [Executive Summary template](#))
- [How Does Your Board Measure Up? - Alignment of Policies & Reporting](#) (Resources: [Alignment of Policy](#))
- [Progress in Action - Change Management](#) (Resources: [Assessment and Plan](#))
- [Understanding, Preventing and Responding to Bullying: Parent Webinar](#) [Guest presenter, Dr. Mary Hall]
- [Communication & Branding](#) (Resources: [Plan Outline](#) | [Plan Template](#))

¹²⁹ All webinars accessible at- <http://www.mbschoolboards.ca/webinars.php>. Further resources for trustees are also available at our page on "trustee education" at- <http://www.mbschoolboards.ca/trusteeEducation.php>

- [Creating Safe Schools](#) [Guest presenter, Dr. Mary Hall]
- [Share the Sandbox!](#)
- [Hiring: It's a 2-way Street](#)
- [Leadership for Learning](#) (Resources: [Questions](#))
- [Asking the 'Right' Question](#) (Resources: [Executive Summary](#))
- [Overcoming Decision-Impairment](#) (Resources: [Spectrum Profile](#) | [Questions to assess issue](#))
- [Getting Your House in Order](#) (Resources: [Summary](#))
- [Boosting Your Voter Turnout](#) (Resources: [Community Partnerships](#) | [Constituency Analysis Grid](#))

Into the future, MSBA has embarked on a new initiative, E3G which continues our focus on enhancing the E2G framework through ongoing delivery of professional development, with additional modules and topics that will serve to promote ongoing, effective and balanced relationships between school boards, superintendents and secretary-treasurers.

In this respect, the question of mandatory professional development as is mandated by some other provinces in Canada and also in many American states for school board trustees, is an important one.

Based on the experience of MSBA, that our trustees have the ability to access the above modules at any time serves to promote ongoing opportunities for engagement in professional development and access to the tools necessary for enhancing relationships and strengthening accountability. MSBA would also highlight the reality that many trustees already devote significant time to the operational requirements of their school board (see our commentary under the focus area on governance).

Mandating attendance at professional development events or completion of related modules may counterintuitively detract from the overall achievement of student learning and success by compelling school board investment of time in professional development that would otherwise be invested in working towards division-level planning and decision-making. Each of these contributes to the betterment of student success locally.

Achieving appropriate balance is therefore critical. The enduring reality of the trusteeship is that trustees do not serve on a full-time basis and many balance daily work, family and other commitments. In spite of this, many already devote between 20 to 40 additional hours each month to the work of their school board (see Appendix C).

Based on MSBA's longitudinal experience delivering professional development, we would observe that all newly elected trustees are strongly encouraged to attend the important new trustee orientation sessions that MSBA hosts following each election. Our experience has been that with very few exceptions, all newly elected trustees attend this orientation. MSBA actively promotes the above modules throughout the year and these are then accessed hundreds of times, as monitored through our web hosting service.

Combined with the workshops that are offered by education partners, including MSBA, through their annual conventions and professional development days, we would also observe that many trustees, superintendents and secretary-treasurers mutually attend these events together as a team, which also helps to build team culture and build unity of vision and focus.

The greatest portion of this focus remains on student learning and success. In 2018 alone, 373 persons (mainly trustees but also including many superintendents and secretary-treasurers) registered to attend our professional development events, and the above online modules were as we have mentioned, accessed hundreds of times by trustees, superintendents, secretary-treasurers and also by other members of the school and public communities.

We are therefore of the perspective that the ongoing ability for trustees, superintendents and secretary-treasurers to learn together as a team through such opportunities, is a more important and constructive approach that must be considered for strengthening relationships for promoting greater accountability overall.¹³⁰ We believe that this reflects best practice for improving school board effectiveness overall, while promoting balanced governance approaches that serve to better address needs of students and communities.¹³¹

Data Management

As we have shared elsewhere in this report, MSBA is also looking forward to participating in many future opportunities for meaningful dialogue with our partners, and also with Manitoba Education and Training, concerning enhancement to data collection, analysis and interpretation, and reporting. In this respect, we would like to close this chapter with comment on two distinctive initiatives. We believe that these will significantly serve to promote shared accountability for student learning into the future: the framework for continuous improvement and department-wide adoption of balanced scorecard approaches for achieving integration and alignment.

Framework for Continuous Improvement

One of the cornerstones of public education has always been a focus achieving greater equity and student performance through continuous improvement. How best to achieve equity for all students and how to inform ongoing improvement of programs, supports and services using concrete evidence and data, to help our students optimize their full promise and potential, are indeed significant questions.

While indicators and data remain important for describing and benchmarking progress,¹³² they must be analyzed and interpreted, as well as contextualized, to help inform practice, guide planning and align resources where they are needed the most. While school divisions continue, as described in the preceding focus areas, to appropriately direct resources to support the most important improvements towards student learning and success (through programming designed to mitigate challenges and address critical needs), evaluation of such

¹³⁰ We would also highlight the reality that no other level of elected governance in Manitoba requires officials to complete mandatory professional development following election to office, in spite of the same realities and context of relationship, accountability and social outcomes for which these officials are responsible.

¹³¹ See generally Alsbury, T. and Gore, P. (Eds.). (2018). *Improving school board effectiveness: A balanced governance approach*. Harvard University Press. Cambridge, MA.

¹³² For greater detail, see our discussion of several indicators and measures under the focus area on student learning, including educational attainment, graduation and attendance, provincial three year interval assessment outcomes, and PCAP and PISA outcomes.

programming can be informed by approaches such as the framework for continuous improvement.¹³³

MSBA would like to therefore signal its support for the continuation of this important initiative. We also wish to applaud the production and refinement of divisional reports that provide senior divisional decision-makers with access to heretofore unavailable comparative, interpretational and contextual information, to assist and support with planning and program delivery.

Focus on enhancement in accountability through reporting and feedback will also be expanded through such initiatives as the development of Individualized Education Plan Reports and grant-based planning and reporting. Study and review of best practices and models as used in other leading and high-performance school systems is also an important component of this work. We believe that, with the introduction of these data initiatives and products, school divisions can more meaningfully achieve alignment between the inputs and outputs, and also between the processes and outcomes that are related to student learning.

The availability of wider data and information has helped many school divisions to renew focus on achieving improvements, thereby strengthening our collective culture of improvement.

Balanced Scorecard

MSBA would also like to signal its support-in-principle for the important work that is currently being undertaken by the Government of Manitoba and Manitoba Education to adopt balanced scorecard and other integrated data management strategies. We believe that this initiative will further help all providers of public education to utilize such data for even greater continuous improvement, focused on strategic alignment and integration and coherence.

While it will prove important going forward for all education partners to develop capacity for understanding such a model and how it can be applied for greater improvement in a public education context, MSBA believes that the opportunities and possibilities that scorecards have brought to other public sector operations demonstrate the relevance of such a tool in the context of public education.¹³⁴

We would note that where balanced scorecards have been adopted by our post-secondary partners, such as occurred within the past decade at Assiniboine Community College, improvement has been witnessed overall, with sustainment of core programming, supports and services informed by evidence, and with ever-greening of mandate and deliverables to promote responsiveness, flexibility, adaptability and efficiency.

MSBA has recently reviewed key publications related to the adoption and implementation of balanced scorecard frameworks. We would like to signal our support for these important tools based on their ability to integrate key performance drivers among both input and outcome-based measures, while achieving alignment between financial and non-financial resources,

¹³³ For more detailed information, see Manitoba Education. (2019). K-12 Framework for continuous improvement. Website. Accessible online- <https://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/ssdp/framework.html>

¹³⁴ For specific analysis of the relevance of balanced scorecard approaches for promoting alignment in public sector contexts, see Olve, N-G., Roy, J. and Wetter, M. (2001). *Performance Drivers: A Practical Guide to Using the Balanced Scorecard*. John Wiley & Sons, New York.

demographics, delivery modes and structures, instructional methods, educational opportunities and so many other indicators, while also addressing important risks that may emerge.¹³⁵

We therefore look forward to working with Manitoba Education and other partners towards implementation of the balanced scorecard dashboard.

In view of the important work that is being planned and remains underway towards strengthened data and reporting, we would therefore recommend that the Commission support current data management strategies focused on achieving balance and identifying relationships between input, output, formative, summative, financial and non-financial measures, indicators and performance drivers, and with encouragement to continue efforts to link key databases relating to social, cultural, economic, academic and other educational indicators towards the establishment of a continuous framework of informed assessment and accountability.

We firmly believe that supporting these important initiatives will lead to greater shared accountability focused on improving student success and learning.

Closing thoughts on shared accountability

It is MSBA's view that accountability is and remains shared with the context of public education and especially, focus on student learning. As we trust this chapter has shown, we believe that there are many entities and partners who are important to promote accountability and deepen a sense of shared responsibility and accountability for student learning.

Through the many examples we have included, we have intended to connect the dots in terms of the many relationships, systems and realities that serve to promote our existing sense of shared accountability, even while we have offered some advice and suggestions for areas where our ability to foster ongoing dialogue, consultation and advisement can led to strengthened accountability and relationship.

In the above respect, we might expand that there are three distinct relationships that deserve special focus. The first is focused on K-12 education across the public and non-public systems of education; another is focused on cradle to careers from early learning and child care through to post-secondary providers; and the third focuses on workforce development, uniting K-12, post-secondary, business, industry and community partners. By strengthening dialogue and relationship across all three of these, MSBA would submit that we can together deepen and promote shared accountability for student learning.

While education partners have the capacity to undertake such dialogue and to establish such structures themselves, participation of government at the table as an active partner does

¹³⁵ Suggested readings include: Kaplan, R. and Norton, D. (1996). *The Balanced Scorecard: Translating Strategy into Action*. Harvard Business Press, Cambridge, MA.; Kaplan, R. and Norton, D. (2000). *The Strategy-Focused Organization: How Balanced Scorecard Companies Thrive in the New Business Environment*. Harvard Business School Press, Cambridge, MA.; Kaplan, R. and Norton, D. (2006). *Alignment: Using the Balanced Scorecard to Create Corporate Synergies*, Harvard Business Press, Cambridge, MA.; Pangarkar, A. and Kirkwood, T. (2009). *The Trainer's Balanced Scorecard: A Complete Resource for Linking Learning to Organizational Strategy*. John Wiley & Sons, New York; Jones, P. (2018). Balanced scorecards do manage risk – it depends on the class of risk. Accessible online- <https://www.excitant.co.uk/balanced-scorecards-do-manage-risk-it-depends-on-the-class-of-risk/>

remain important to achieving alignment and coherence across the entire educational system, especially given the significant public funding and accountability frameworks that remain in place.

School divisions also find benefit in coming together with the Department of Education and other government ministries to interpret data for operational application, as well as to develop capacity for practical and operational application. This is essential to the realization of equity and also promotes the concept of school boards and school divisions as professional learning organizations.¹³⁶

By working together to close the gaps on data sources and by maximizing the important prospects and opportunities that can be achieved once the balanced scorecard is deployed for public education, MSBA believes that the public education system as a whole can be improved and we can deepen accountabilities. In light of the intention of the Department to develop real-time reporting systems and to strengthen the overall modernization of information systems to promote these systems as effective decision-making enablers, a more genuine assessment of how equity can be enhanced province-wide and also according to local dimensions, can be achieved.

By promoting such work, the Commission can support the ongoing creation of a made-in-Manitoba framework for provincial assessment that will genuinely surpass all current tools used to measure student performance and progress. One that will also support a more integrated and therefore more authentic model for continuous achievement province-wide.

MSBA very much looks forward to a future that is informed by the above realities.

¹³⁶ Rice, P. (2019). *Equity, from the boardroom to the classroom: Transforming districts into professional learning organizations*. Rowman and Littlefield. Lanham, Maryland.

5. GOVERNANCE

Are school boards in Manitoba worthy of our children? Are we worthy of our communities? As stated in the introduction, these are some of the most important questions that we have reflected upon in the context of this review. The following chapter contextualizes governance through these important lenses. We will provide an overview of the historical foundations and continued relevance of local autonomy in public education; describe educational governance and its outcomes relative to school boards at current time; and conclude with analysis of the value, efficiency and effectiveness of local voice and local choice– community democracy in action.

Historical background

Since 1872, Manitoba's legislative framework for educational governance has provided for establishment of each local school board.¹³⁷ While the rights, authorities and responsibilities of school boards have flowed from provincial statutory authority since that time, it is important to recognize that local autonomy for provision of education pre-dated this province's entry to Canadian Confederation by several decades. From an Aboriginal and Indigenous perspective, the education of children was in fact a whole of community approach, dating back several thousand years.

In the earlier part of the 19th century, with the arrival of European settlement to Manitoba, the main responsibility for provision of education at all levels was vested in ecclesiastical authorities. It was not until the mid-19th century and the birth of the concept of the common, or public school, that governance and provision for the good of education gradually assumed an important civic and non-denominational character. As outlined by the founder of modern public education, Horace Mann, as early as 1838 in the *Common School Journal*, public education was premised on six main principles:

1. the public should no longer remain ignorant;
2. that such education should be paid for, controlled, and sustained by an interested public;
3. that this education will be best provided in schools that embrace children from a variety of backgrounds;
4. that this education must be non-sectarian;
5. that this education must be taught using the tenets of a free society; and
6. that education should be provided by well-trained, professional teachers.

North of the American border, Canada itself adopted such a system of public education as early as 1840. According to the earliest legislative reference from Canadian authorities, school boards were provided in the *Education Act* (1841) following the *Act of Union* (1840)¹³⁸ that created the Province of Canada. That this union remained fragile, and served to maintain clear divisions between Lower and Upper Canada (modern day Quebec and Ontario) following the rebellion that demanded equal and fair representation for all subjects of the British North American colonies in 1837, can be readily understood through study of this historical period.

Through our nation's earliest quest for representative governance, it can only be concluded that the objective of providing for school boards so soon following the *Act of Union* (1840) was to

¹³⁷ *The Schools Act, 1872* (Manitoba).

¹³⁸ *The British North America Act, 1840* (3 & 4 Victoria, c.35).

ensure that the people of both “colonies” within a united Canada had due representation and autonomy. When it came to the promotion and preservation of their respective cultural, religious and linguistic traditions, these rights would be guaranteed through the provision of education according to local governance.¹³⁹ In their own way, school boards were therefore recognized and included as necessary institutions in order to safeguard the principle of fair and representative government for all Canadians.

Today, the *Act of Union* is considered to be quasi-constitutional in terms of its application and has been recognized as one of Canada’s most important pre-Confederation constitutional documents. Through to the establishment of Confederation in 1867 and the right of British North American colonies such as Manitoba to request sovereign entry to such a Confederation, that education and therefore school boards were included within provincial authority under the division of powers at Confederation, also reflects the continuing principle of local determination.

While a great deal has been written concerning provincial authorities for education, as vested in *The Constitution Act, 1867*,¹⁴⁰ far less has been given to an appreciation for this pre-Confederation role and purpose of the local school board within the Canadian experience. That school boards today have continued to draw upon this rich heritage, as agents of representative democracy and community voice, reflective of the very best traditions of both the American and British traditions of governance, deserves special consideration as we look to the next century.

The continuing principle of local autonomy in public education

That our communities have continued to base the provision of public education in part upon local democratic representation, and have continued to exercise their right of local autonomy when making decisions and choices over public education, are realities that all Manitobans must carefully reflect upon. These rights are vested in them alone.

Through provincial practice and historical developments, the principle of local autonomy has been recognized and affirmed on many important occasions. Even today, the very preamble to the current *Public Schools Act* speaks to this reality when it specifies that:

democratic local school divisions and districts play an important role in providing public education that is responsive to local needs and conditions¹⁴¹

The shared nature of both provincial and local governance over the provision and delivery of public education is further affirmed when the same preamble specifies that

the Province of Manitoba and school divisions and districts share responsibility for the financing of the public schools¹⁴²

In the latter half of the 20th century through to the present day, this respect for local autonomy has taken many forms. Starting in 1959, the Government of Manitoba acknowledged the

¹³⁹ MacLeod, R. and Poutanen, M. (2015). Entry on “Rural protestant schools”, *l’atlas historique du Québec*. Accessible online- <https://atlas.cieq.ca/l-ecole/rural-protestant-schools.html>

¹⁴⁰ *The Constitution Act, 1867*, 30 & 31 Victoria (U.K.), c. 3.

¹⁴¹ *The Public Schools Act* (Manitoba). C.C.S.M. c. P250, preamble.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*

democratic principle and foundations of local school divisions to an extent such that referenda were required to be ratified by local communities in order to approve the consolidation and establishment of modern high school districts and union school districts across Manitoba. This in fact became a necessary precursor to the establishment of the contemporary school division as a structure for local educational governance today. It followed that any community that did not ratify local consolidation referenda were permitted to retain their local school district.

Two years earlier, the Royal Commission on Education also considered the then movement towards possible unification of municipal and school board autonomies into the same system of local governance, but opted not to so proceed. As elaborated in the Commission's final report

The local school board would be appointed by the Municipal Council; it would consist of two aldermen, and five citizen members. If adopted, this feature of the [Metropolitan] Plan would mean almost complete dominance of the school board by the Municipal Council, thus abolishing the traditional independence of the school board from the Municipal Council. Public education would become one of many functions of a Council elected primarily to care for municipal services.

The Metropolitan Plan not only deprives the local school board of its independence, it also relieves it of most of its authority and responsibility. Local boards will become caretaker committees, and since citizens of high calibre will not spend their time on matters of little consequence, education will suffer.¹⁴³

The Commission further recommended

That school boards should continue to be elected, not appointed, and that these boards should be under the jurisdiction of the Minister of Education alone, not also under the Minister of Municipal Affairs.¹⁴⁴

The Manitoba School Boards Association would note that, while consolidation of municipal and school board governance under one local council may now seem to be an extra-ordinary proposal, many models of educational governance, particularly in the United States, in fact do provide for such a model and have their roots in that same time period. Such models were largely developed as a measure to protect the raising of local revenues, as requisite to provide for local autonomy of municipal as well as educational programs and services.

In 1983, the Education Finance Review Commission further acknowledged that

any government which intends to preserve local autonomy will permit school boards a voice in the expenditure of provincial funds assigned to education. Some portion of any provincial grant will almost certainly go to divisions without strings attached. The Province may leave some room for a local levy. It will also try to ensure that the principle of decentralized decision-making is not subverted by the centralized system of raising revenues and dispersing grants.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴³ Manitoba Royal Commission on Education (1957). *Report of the Manitoba Royal Commission on Education*. Winnipeg. pp. 274-275.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 275.

¹⁴⁵ Education Finance Review Commission. (1983). *Enhancing equity in Manitoba schools: The report of the education finance review*. Winnipeg., p. 8.

Into more recent times, the concept of local autonomy has only continued to evolve. One of the most significant developments came with the decision by the Supreme Court of Canada in 1993 affirming the right of Manitoba's Francophone linguistic minority community to control of education for their children, following decades of government denial of the same right.¹⁴⁶

While the Court made no comment or judgment on the rights of majority communities to the same control, this was likely more reflective of the reality that, in exercising its own duty to protect democracy, the Court did not envision that the right of majority language communities to exercise control in the matter of the education of their children would ever be subject to challenge. What is implicit in the Supreme Court Decision of 1993 in reference to Manitoba, from our perspective, is the simple principle that what is good for one community must be good for all communities. In extending the right of control over education to minority language communities in Canada under constitutional protection, this was understood as being an extension to those minority communities of the same rights enjoyed and held by the majority.¹⁴⁷

The recent findings and calls to action issued by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada concerning Indian Residential Schools equally reflect such a principle. In the Commission's reports, the impacts of the Indigenous community's loss of voice, decision and right to educate their own children is painfully described for the sake of our collective posterity, with the object of informing future decision-making.¹⁴⁸ The very concept of reconciliation is founded on the notion that the wrongs and mistakes of the past ought to be addressed, with community educational rights fully restored. That such a lesson need be applied regularly and consistently into the 21st century for all communities is, once again from our perspective, a "given".

When it comes to educational governance in every instance throughout our modern period, the principle of local autonomy has continued to serve as one of the most significant foundations and pillars upon which the good of public education is provided to all Manitobans. This occurs in tandem with shared governance by the Provincial government of those areas of responsibility, especially in terms of funding and curriculum, which either itself or the Minister of Education have retained. In developing our vision for public education into the next century, we wanted to

¹⁴⁶ *Reference re Public Schools Act (Man.)*, s. 79(3), (4) and (7), [1993] 1 SCR 839.

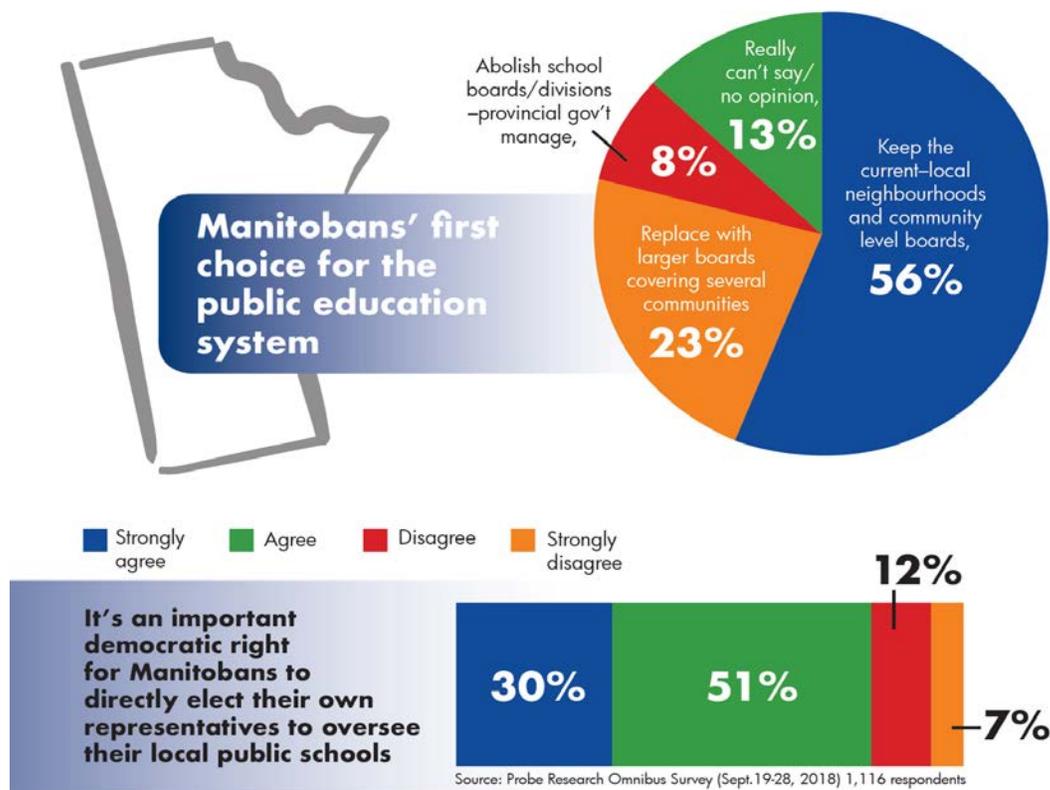
¹⁴⁷ It is important to understand the particular nature of linguistic minority control of education. In the context of the current K-12 Education Review, MSBA would remind the Commission that, as stated in the Supreme Court's decision, *supra*, "Arrangements and structures which are prejudicial, hamper, or simply are not responsive to the needs of the minority, must be avoided." We would also include the Court's citation of Twaddle C. J. as follows "furthermore that the [school] facilities should be, as far as is reasonably possible, distinct from those in which English-language education is offered. I do not question the importance of milieu in education. In the playground and in extra-curricular activities, as well as in the classroom, French-speaking pupils should be immersed in French. The facility should be administered and operated in that language, right down to the posters on the wall." The Court's answer to the final question of reference was in effect, "...The number of potential French-language students warrants the establishment of an independent French-language school board in Manitoba under the exclusive management and control of the French-language minority." From MSBA's perspective the *Reference* remains valid in considering any alternative proposal for structuration of Francophone education in Manitoba. Combining FL1 and FL2 programming for example, would constitute an important infringement of the rights that were extended to and guaranteed for the French minority language community of Manitoba under the *Reference*.

¹⁴⁸ All reports accessible online- <http://nctr.ca/reports.php>

know however, whether such a principle retains its relevance and coherence, or whether it has become outdated and antiquated in view of our mandate and responsibility to serve the needs of Manitoba into the next century. To this end, our Association undertook two special initiatives.

The first took the form of a public opinion poll which we contracted to Probe Research. As an independent research firm, our association has always appreciated the objectivity and scientific approach that Probe applies to each of its polls. Their enduring commitment to professional ethics and integrity also serves to avoid introducing bias or skewing results in a given direction. In late September 2018, Probe therefore asked two important questions to a representative sample of 1,116 Manitobans as follows: 1) What would be your first choice for the public education system of Manitoba? 2) Do you believe that it's an important democratic right for Manitobans to directly elect their own representatives to oversee their local public schools?

Graph 21 and 22- Outcomes of Probe Research Poll: Manitobans' First Choice for Public Education System/Views on Democratic Rights In Relation to School Boards, Sept. 2018



These results require very little interpretation or analytical comment on our part. Based on the first question “what is your first choice for the public education system in Manitoba?” most Manitobans, 56 percent, indicated that their preference was to keep local school boards to serve the needs of public education each community or, in Winnipeg, in each neighbourhood, the same way that school boards currently serve their communities. That some Manitoban's also favour change is evident from the results: 23 percent indicated that they would prefer to see

consolidation among current school boards, into larger governing and administrative units. Only eight percent of Manitobans indicated that their choice would be to abolish school boards and have the Provincial Government exercise unilateral authority for public education and, as is a typical feature of all public opinion surveys, the final portion of respondents registered no opinion or couldn't say which of these choices they preferred.

On the second question, which speaks to the democratic foundation of local autonomy, 81 percent of Manitobans agreed that electing school boards remains an important democratic right, while 19 percent disagreed.

Graph 23– Manitoba Veterans Who informed the Veteran’s Voice Series, November, 2018



The second major initiative undertaken by the Manitoba School Boards Association occurred in commemoration of the 100th anniversary of the armistice ending the First World War. Titled the “Veterans’ Voice” series, this initiative provided us with an opportunity to consult with eight servicemen and women representing each surviving generation of veterans, from the Second World War, to Korea, to Cold War and peacekeeping through to Afghanistan. During the course of our interviews, we came to appreciate that the legacy for which these veterans fought included the defence and protection of our principle of local autonomy.

In each major conflict since the First World War, Manitobans have borne the horrors of war in order to confront some of the most extreme forms of government centralization that the world has yet witnessed. From the veterans’ perspective, an affront to democracy, anywhere and in any form, is an affront to democracy anywhere. And from their perspective, democracy at any level, local, provincial or federal, remains a real substance to be cherished and protected by all citizens. The right of their community to have a voice and a choice in the future of their system of education remains paramount. It was indeed reflective of their reason for serving.

Given the context for our project, the veterans we interviewed addressed the concept of the torch that has been thrown from each generation to the next, to hold high the defence of freedom and also of democracy. Whether it was the testimony that we received from Manitoba's last surviving veteran of the Battle of Hong Kong, Mr. George Peterson, or the confidence we received from one of only three local survivors of the Battle of Kapyong, Mr. Ron Shepard, these veterans underscored the importance of good governance at the local level. They also issued us an important challenge for the future.

Pilot Officer James Magill, one of Manitoba's remaining recipients of the Distinguished Flying Cross from World War Two and recipient of the French Legion of Honour, shared with us that from his perspective, Manitobans' ability to elect their local school trustees remains one of his fellow citizens' vital rights. In the context of the sum of all that our veterans have stood for across every generation, their sacrifice and that of their comrades, Mr. Magill concluded his interview with one final lesson that remains instructive for all of us: "when it comes to that torch, it is up to you now".

Lest we forget.

We would encourage all Commissioners to peruse the interviews and videos that were prepared under MSBA's Veteran's Voice Series.¹⁴⁹ It represents a very emotional and poignant reminder of why we must strive to protect the important national, provincial and local institutions that have served Canada and its communities well, making Canada a world leader in so many areas, including its system of education. What we have inherited, has come with a significant price.

That local autonomy in education governance comes with very clear historical purpose and that this principle deserves special protection and particular respect stemming from our collective experience as a country and as a province, are therefore key observations that we would present for the Commission's consideration. While it is always important to re-examine governance structures towards continuous improvement and enhancement, the importance of retaining and promoting the democratic governance of public education ought never be in question. Neither should local autonomy be in question, based on the continuing support for this principle among this current generation of Manitobans.

We would note that our own respect for local autonomy is such that we at the Manitoba School Boards Association have always espoused that the consolidation of school districts in fact remains the right of each community if they so choose. Therefore, if the people of a community wish to restructure local education governance to cover a wider geographic region, then that ought to remain their sole right to decide.¹⁵⁰

MSBA would therefore recommend that the Commission recognize that the principle of local autonomy remains informative and instructive for the structuration of educational governance in Manitoba, with all community held rights pertaining thereto.

¹⁴⁹ See MSBA. (2018). "The Veteran's Voice" Accessible online- <http://www.mbschoolboards.ca/veteransVoice.php>

¹⁵⁰ MSBA. (2016). *Manual of policies and beliefs*. Winnipeg. Accessible online- https://www.mbschoolboards.ca/documents/manualPolicies_Beliefs_%20May%202016.pdf

Based on our analysis and commentary above, we further recommend that the Commission respect the constitutional protection of Manitoba's Francophone minority language community to continued local governance through the Commission scolaire franco-manitobaine and further, that the K-12 Review Commission recognize that such guarantee and protection reflects the rights that were already held by majority language communities through their local school boards.

School board governance in Manitoba today

Every community has the opportunity to connect to its local school board in Manitoba. And in turn, every local school board has the opportunity to connect with every community in Manitoba. Governance at the school board level is indeed a two-way relationship. Engagement of citizens and communities is a staple of what school boards do in Manitoba. Citizen participation in the decision-making and local budget development process, as parents, as ratepayers, and as citizens remains essential and is strongly encouraged and facilitated.

From the outreach and communications that each school division sends to constituents, to opportunities for citizen, parent and student engagement in the core work of each board including open invitation to attend board meetings, helping to inform the development of the annual budget, or even through consultations on a number of subjects, our mandate as school boards is multi-dimensional. Many boards also produce annual reports to their communities as a way of keeping citizens informed. Truly these many avenues serve to promote three key areas of focus:

Academic– To promote the needs and requirements of all students and to engage them for success and achievement.

Democratic– To represent the interests and to promote benefits through education for the sake of our communities.

Financial– To allocate public funds to education as a trust on behalf of each community.

To date, we have devoted considerable attention under this report to academic accountability across each school board. The next chapter, focusing on “funding” will describe accountability under the financial aspect of what boards do. The remaining portion of this present chapter will therefore be devoted to democratic accountability, within the broader scope of governance.

With school board elections occurring in tandem with municipal elections every four years in Manitoba, our association has received frequent opportunity to take stock of the overall health of local democracy in our province.

Table 19– Manitoba School Board Election Outcomes 2010-2018¹⁵¹

	2010	2014	2018
Total Seats			
	315	310	297
Candidates			
	424	443	403
Elected			
Incumbent	87	98	96
New	71	64	48
Sub-total	158	162	144
Acclaimed			
Incumbent	111	101	107
New	14	34	35
Sub-total	143	135	144
Appointed			
	14	13	11
Total Boards Uniquely Acclaimed/Appointed (of 37)			
	11	9	6

2010 elections statistical overview

In 2010, out of a total of 315 trustee positions, 158 (50.2 percent) were elected via democratic contest. Of these elected trustees, 87 were incumbents and 71 were new trustees.

In terms of trustees whose candidacy was not opposed by other candidates in 2010, again out of a total of 315 trustee positions, 143 (45.4 percent) were elected via acclamation. Of these trustees, 111 were incumbents and 32 were new trustees.

A total of 424 candidates ran in the 2010 elections, including both contested and uncontested races.

Of the 315 available trustee positions, 14 (4.4 percent) were vacant following the 2010 elections and were therefore filled by local appointment pursuant to section 26(6) of *The Public Schools Act*.

Out of a total of 37 school boards¹⁵², 11 boards were entirely acclaimed and/or filled pursuant to section 26(6) of *The Public Schools Act* in 2010. These included Beautiful Plains, Flin Flon, Fort la Bosse, Interlake, Kelsey, Prairie Spirit, Red River Valley, Rolling River, Swan Valley, Turtle Mountain, and Whiteshell School Boards.

2014 elections statistical overview

In 2014, out of a total of 310 trustee positions, 162 (52.3 percent) were elected via democratic contest. Of these elected trustees, 98 were incumbents and 64 were new trustees.

¹⁵¹ All results reported to MSBA from local returning officers or available via the City of Winnipeg Clerk's Office.

¹⁵² While there are now 38 public school boards in Manitoba, in 2010 there were a total of 37.

In terms of trustees whose candidacy was not opposed by other candidates in 2014, again out of a total of 310 trustee positions, 135 (43.5 percent) were elected via acclamation. Of these trustees, 101 were incumbents and 34 were new trustees.

A total of 443 candidates ran in the 2014 elections, including both contested and uncontested races. Of the 310 available trustee positions, 13 (4.2 percent) were vacant following the 2014 elections and were therefore filled by appointment pursuant to section 26(6) of *The Public Schools Act*.

Out of a total of 37 school boards whose trustees are chosen via the democratic process¹⁵³, nine boards were entirely acclaimed and/or filled pursuant to section 26(6) of *The Public Schools Act* in 2014. These included Flin Flon, Fort la Bosse, Garden Valley, Kelsey, Lakeshore, Portage la Prairie, Prairie Spirit, Western and Whiteshell School Boards.

2018 elections statistical overview

In 2018, out of a total of 297 trustee positions, 144 (48.5 per cent) were elected via democratic contest. Of these elected trustees, 96 were incumbents and 48 were new trustees.

In terms of trustees whose candidacy was not opposed by other candidates in 2018, again out of a total of 297 trustee positions, 142 (47.8 percent) were elected via acclamation. Of these trustees, 107 were incumbents and 35 were new trustees.

A total of 403 candidates ran in the election in the 2018 elections, including both contested and uncontested races. Of the available 297 available trustee positions, 11 (3.7 percent) were vacant following the 2018 elections and were therefore filled by appointment pursuant to section 26(6) of *The Public Schools Act*.

Out of Manitoba's 37 boards whose trustees are chosen via the democratic process, six were entirely acclaimed and/or filled pursuant to section 26(6) of *The Public Schools Act* in 2018. These included Garden Valley, Park West, Portage-la-Prairie, Turtle River, Western and Whiteshell School Boards.

By-elections

MSBA would also note that during the 2010-2018 period, a few instances occurred where by-elections were held to fill trustee offices. This occurred where such seats became vacant between regular municipal-school board election cycles. As very few such instances occur, we believe that details regarding such elections remain ancillary to focus of regular election cycles. However, should the Commission be interested in by-elections and their outcomes, MSBA would strive to provide any data that might be available.

Interpretive and contextual observations regarding the above school board elections

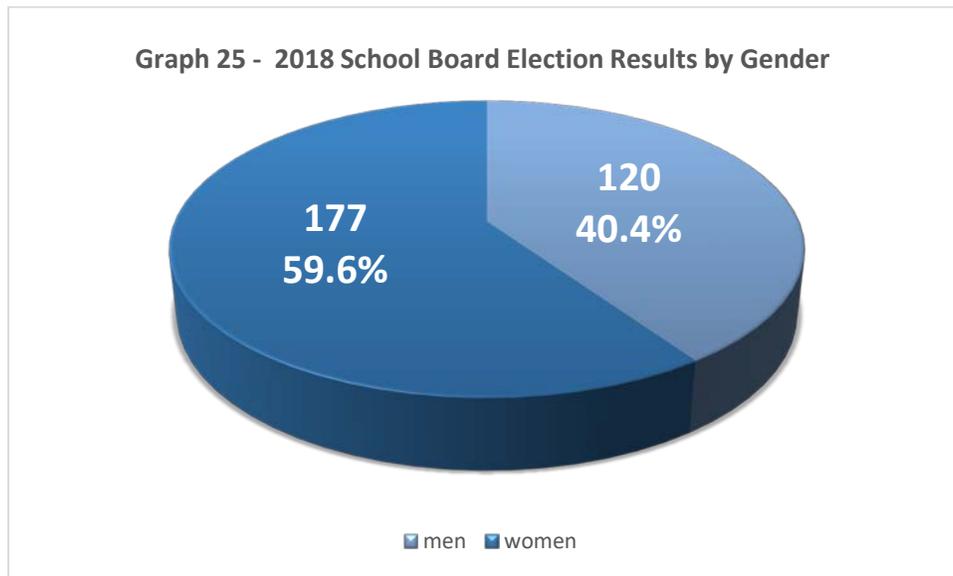
Over the previous three election cycles, school trustees were, in the majority or near majority, elected by democratic contest. Between 2010 and 2018, a greater number of candidates sought

¹⁵³ While there are now 38 public school boards in Manitoba, the board of governors of The Manitoba Institute of Trades and technology is deemed to be a public school board under *The Public Schools Act*, while *The MITT Act* provides for appointment of these board members in keeping with the same model as exists for all other public post-secondary institutions in Manitoba.

election to a lesser number of trustee offices¹⁵⁴ and the total number of vacancies following each election has continued to decline. The total number of boards that were entirely elected through acclamation and/or by filling vacancies pursuant to section 26(6) of *The Public Schools Act* has also declined.

In 2010, 37.14 percent of trustees were new to their school boards. In 2014, 35.8 percent of trustees brought new faces to the boardroom table. And in 2018, 30.97 percent were new.

On a demographic level, 2014 also came with a significant electoral outcome, in that women represented the majority of school trustees for the very first time in the history of our province, with 52.25 percent of all trustees being women. In 2018, this trend continued, with 59.6 percent of all trustees being women.



In the context of both Manitoba’s but also of Canada’s experience with the enfranchisement of women through political candidacy and eligibility to hold office, as well as through voting rights, Manitoba’s women trustees represent a special history and story. It is one that every Manitoban and indeed, every Canadian deserves to recognize and understand.

With 2016 having been declared as the “Year of Women Trustees” in Manitoba, and with unanimous support for this declaration from every political party with standing at the Manitoba Legislative Assembly, the opportunity to share this important story with Manitobans remains cogent, given that it has laid the very foundations for the political involvement of women across all levels of representative democracy.

The changes that have occurred during the course of the past three school board elections in Manitoba may not be altogether significant from a quantitative perspective, but they do demonstrate several significant qualitative realities that can and ought to inform an understanding of relevant trends and patterns of local democracy at the school board level in Manitoba. The important role of women is only one of these realities.

¹⁵⁴ Between 2010 and 2018, the total number of trustee offices in Manitoba was reduced by 18.

Graph 26– Year of Women Trustees Commemorative Webpage, 2016¹⁵⁵

Manitoba Women Trustees

Board Table to Broadway

Did you know?

Did you know that 3 woman trustees went on to serve as Manitoba's Minister of Education?

[Nancy Allan](#)



(2009 to 2013)

[Linda McIntosh](#)



1995 to 1999

[Maureen Hemphill](#)



1981 to 1986

[Proclamation by Province of Manitoba](#)

[Province Celebrates Role of Women School Trustees](#) (News Release)

[Statement from the Progressive Conservative Party of Manitoba](#)
[Statement from Liberal Party of Manitoba](#)

Sharing Their Stories

Some of our historic firsts

Women were able to serve as school trustees in Manitoba from 1890, even though they didn't gain the vote until 1916. The outcomes of their dedication and commitment remain testament to the power of community voice in school governance. We have collected some of the [names and stories](#) of these political pioneers. Watch [video](#) of our celebration honouring women trustees held in conjunction with 100th anniversary of women's vote.

Women of Distinction



[Marie-Antoinette Lemaire](#)
Early Franco-Manitobaine



[Inez Stevenson](#)
First African-Caribbean



[Rose Cherniak Alcin](#)
First Jewish



[Linda Ballantyne](#)
First First Nations Chair



[Mary Dyma](#)
First Ukrainian



[Kristjana Thordarson](#)
First Icelandic



[Nina Partrick](#)
Executive Secretary, MSTA



[Margaret Manns](#)
First Life Member, MSTA

¹⁵⁵ MSBA. (2016). "Manitoba Women Trustees" webpage. Accessible online-
<http://www.mbschoolboards.ca/womenTrustees.php>

One of the other significant trends concerns acclamations. While many analysts and commentators make the common interpretive mistake of declaring all acclaimed offices as anti-democratic, the realities of political election in smaller communities, especially in contexts such as Manitoba with a disproportionate distribution of population between urban, rural and northern/remote contexts, means that candidates seeking the office of trustee will often be known and recognized by smaller local communities or constituencies and shall remain uncontested if the community takes the perspective that such a candidate ought to hold the office sought.

It is equally important to determine if acclamations become an established or long-term pattern within a given community (which has often been interpreted as a symptom of electoral apathy and disengagement on the part of voters and constituents) or whether acclamations share the ballot with electoral contests. As seen from those boards whose trustees were entirely acclaimed and/or appointed due to vacancy across the previous three election cycles, very few boards remain entirely acclaimed.

It is the long term experience of the Manitoba School Boards Association that boards and/or trustees who have been elected by acclamation can be and often are replaced by democratic contest when communities are motivated to do so, with the most frequent catalyst for change being a significant leadership or policy issue. Due to this reality, it is appropriate to interpret acclamations as a significant component of the democratic experience of communities and especially in rural and northern/remote contexts. Candidates who do accede to office in this way, whether at the school board, municipal, provincial or federal level of government, are therefore referred to as having “been elected through acclamation” as follows from the long-established Canadian parliamentary and democratic principle of the consent of the governed. Acclamation to office has been a feature of Canadian democracy since our country was founded nearly 153 years ago.

Acclamation in the local government context must also be interpreted in light of the non-partisan nature of school boards in Manitoba. Candidates for the office of trustee do not expressly seek election based on partisan affiliation. This means that partisan contests involving multiple political parties fielding multiple candidates to seek the same office does not occur at the school board level. Partisan contests are not institutionalized at the school board level but if they were, then multiple candidates would contest each available office according to partisan political platforms. Candidates will be more frequently be opposed by another candidate only when, as mentioned, significant leadership or policy issues arise and a democratic contest is warranted. When such contests do happen, school trustees do continue to garner significant levels of democratic, community and local engagement in respect of the exercise of each community's voting rights.

A final contextual observation that we would highlight based on the realities of the 2010, 2014 and 2018 election outcomes data, speaks to the proportionate turnover of school boards, which is almost always approximates one third following each election. Based on global democratic trends and patterns, that two thirds of all school trustees remain incumbent following each election, and with one third being new to office, is a concrete demonstration of the principle of democratic renewal and *alternance*. This concept speaks to the health of a democracy, where stability is provided by the total proportion of incumbents remaining in office, and where vitality and vibrancy is promoted by the total proportion of new candidates both seeking and then

acceding to elected offices. Clearly, based on candidate turnover data, Manitoba's local democratic foundations remain strong in this respect.

Observations regarding voter participation and turnout rates

In Manitoba, according to provisions made under *The Municipal Councils and School Boards Elections Act*,¹⁵⁶ every local authority (municipal council or school board) is responsible for maintaining its own local voters list and are also responsible for maintaining data related to outcomes. As such, MSBA does not collect information regarding voter enumeration or registration as part of our standing data collection concerning school board elections.

What we do know from electoral outcomes, is that a high proportion of votes cast for successful trustee candidates serves to confer both a significant democratic mandate, as well as electoral legitimacy, upon the office and work of these trustees. Unfortunately, MSBA does not have access to the vote count data for all election cycles, given diffusion of this data across several different sources.

In 2014 however, based on the hosting of a joint municipal-school board election results virtual platform,¹⁵⁷ we observed a total of 491,368 votes cast for school board candidates province-wide.¹⁵⁸ Of these school board votes, 64.11 percent were cast in favour of trustees who were subsequently elected to their office. The realities of the 2018 elections demonstrate similar results given that in certain districts, the number of votes cast for school board candidates exceeded the total number of votes cast for their municipal counterparts.

It is important to consider that one cannot draw ready interpretations from vote count data in terms of absolute voter participation or turnout.

This is due to the reality that across the province, a single voter can cast multiple votes using a single ballot depending upon how many trustees stand to be elected in their ward. Another consideration is that electors of trustees for la Division scolaire franco-manitobaine (DSFM) are also eligible to vote in their local school board elections. The three-tier electoral process that governs the election of trustees of Frontier School Division also presents a further challenge in terms of calculating turnout or participation rates by unique voter, given the need to obtain an accurate count of votes and ballots cast at each tier of voting. All three of these realities therefore present a significant challenge when determining an overall voter participation or turnout rate, either at the local community level or province-wide.

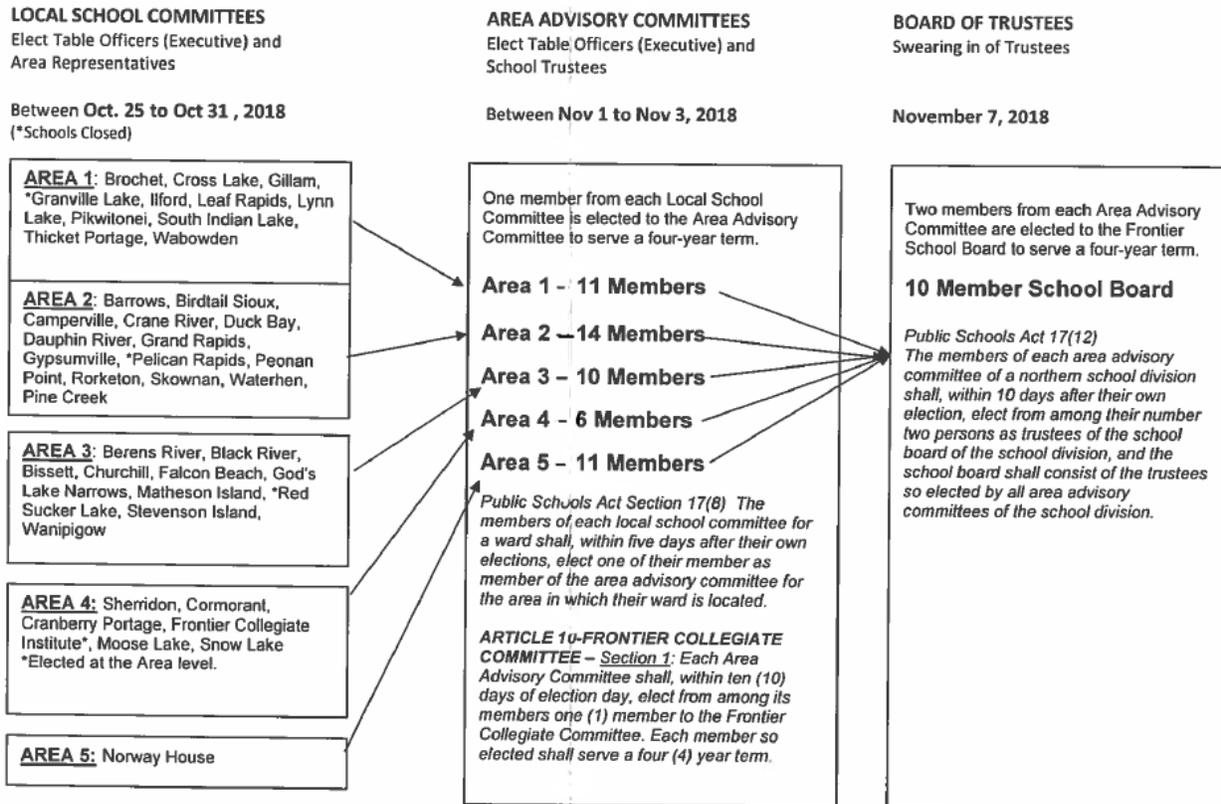
Another significant challenge in determining turnout and participation concerns the administration of advance versus Election Day polls in several communities, as well as the common practice whereby school boards will often partner with municipal councils for purposes of conducting an election, according to sections 8, 9, and 10 of *The Municipal Councils and School Boards Elections Act*.

¹⁵⁶ *The Municipal Councils and School Boards Elections Act*. (C.C.S.M. c. M257). Accessible online at- <https://web2.gov.mb.ca/laws/statutes/ccsm/m257e.php>

¹⁵⁷ Through the former Manitoba Votes website.

¹⁵⁸ Please note that this count represents votes and not ballots, as this is an important distinction. This total does not include votes cast for candidates in the Frontier School Division.

Graph 27– 2018 Frontier School Board Tiered Election Process



In many instances, advance polls may not be recorded on a local basis and the geographic circumstances represented by contiguous electoral boundaries and constituencies across the 37 local school board authorities and 137 local municipal authorities do not enable ready assessment of voter participation and turnout. As each authority is responsible for maintaining its own voters list and because of partnerships in conducting elections under *The Municipal Councils and School Boards Elections Act*, recording of voter information is not coordinated or centralized across Manitoba’s 174 “local authorities” during elections.

The Manitoba School Boards Association would also underscore that overall definition or determination of voter participation and turnout can also become subject to multiple methodologies and interpretations.

As an example, during the 2016 Provincial General Election, a total of 201,573 ballots were cast for the Government. According to Elections Manitoba, this would proportionately represent 26.08 percent of the total number of registered voters (n=772,877) who were eligible to vote. However, given that 57.42 percent (n=443,861) of these total registered voters actually chose to exercise their franchise in 2016, if one uses this basis as a method of calculation, then the Government received 45.41 percent of all ballots actually cast.

Statistics Canada population estimates data may also be used to determine the total number of persons in Manitoba who have attained voting age as of a certain date. Using this measure, the total number of votes cast for the Government in 2016 would represent approximately 19.6

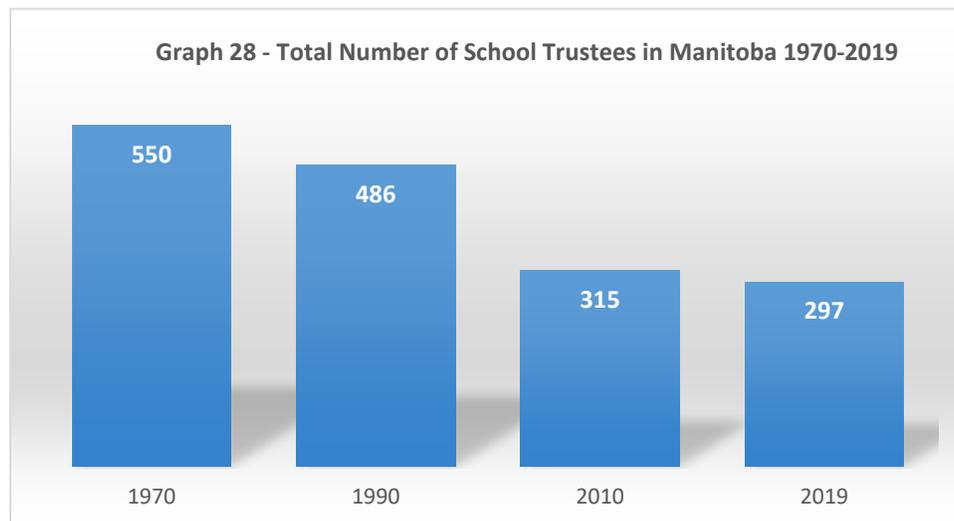
percent of the total population of those who are qualified to vote in this province (n=1,029,343)¹⁵⁹ as based on the age of majority alone, notwithstanding whether such qualified voters are enumerated or registered by Elections Manitoba.

For MSBA, such facts therefore remain entirely subjective and dependent upon the particular definition or method of calculation that might be utilized for determining an actual voter participation or turnout rate. Given such wide possibilities for definition and calculation, arriving at a ready interpretation or substantive meaning is even more of a challenge.

We therefore do not believe that participation and turnout rates can inform a reasonable dialogue concerning the democratic legitimacy achieved by those who are in fact elected to office, according to the time honoured traditions of the first past the post model of parliamentary elections in Manitoba. That a candidate is elected to serve the people of their community has everything to do with the consent, enfranchisement and voting decisions made by the governed, all of which interplay as overall indicators of the community's right to choose those who govern on their behalf.

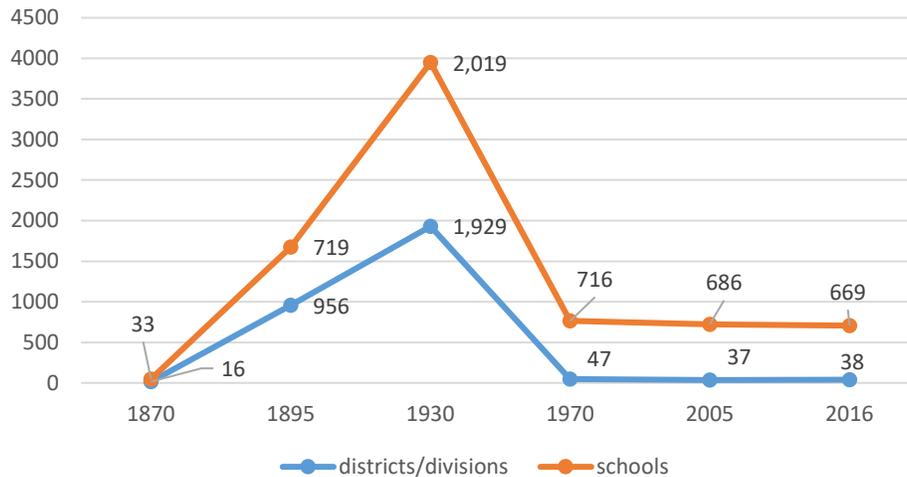
Responding to the question of “how many”?

Several important questions have been asked in the context of the present review, beyond the formal questions that have been tabled by the Commission itself concerning governance. MSBA believes that these important questions deserve appropriate and informed responses. Are 297 school trustees the right number to serve a province the size of Manitoba? Should there be one school board to serve Winnipeg? We will respond to both questions by asking an equally important question: whether 37 elected school boards are the right number to serve a province the size of Manitoba? Our answers to these many questions follow.



¹⁵⁹ As per 2011 Census data, age categories of 15 years of age and greater as at that time.

Graph 2 - Actual Change in Number of Units 1870-2016



When it comes to democratic representation at any level, a response to the “right” number to serve a particular community or geographic region must reside with the people themselves. MSBA has not found any independent or objective guidelines that can be used to inform what the “right” number should be when it comes to democratic representation at any level. Given our historical experience as a province, it would appear that the answer to these questions has also depended upon the perspective taken by Manitoba’s people and communities.

As shown in Graph 28, over the previous fifty years, the total number of trustees has declined by 54 percent. The total number of school districts has also declined from a peak of 2,019 in 1930 to the 38 public school boards that exist today, an overall reduction of 1,882 percent.

What accounts for these reductions? In historical context, many occurred due to changes in provincial policy, as well as through local choices in the exercise of autonomy, as discussed earlier in this chapter. MSBA has found that the best accounts for the changes that have taken place over time may be found in two doctoral dissertations written by local experts on the historical development of education in Manitoba.¹⁶⁰

According to the earlier of these accounts, the establishment of high school districts during the 1950s led to the consolidation of many small districts given the introduction, for the very first time, of universal access to secondary study (collegiate level education) in Manitoba. As also discussed earlier in this chapter, while this decision was driven by public policy at the provincial

¹⁶⁰ Wilson, K. (1967). *The development of education in Manitoba*. A thesis submitted to College of Education, Michigan State University, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy; Yeo, D. (2008). *School district/division amalgamation in Manitoba: A case study of a public policy decision*. A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Education, University of Manitoba, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. Accessible online - <https://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/obj/s4/f2/dsk3/MWU/TC-MWU-3030.pdf>

level, the local autonomy of each community served to inform where these changes occurred, through the exercise of direct democracy via referenda.

According to the most recent account, the continuing reductions to school districts and divisions, which occurred in the 2000s, reflect an arbitrary public policy decision to reduce school divisions by one third province-wide. Apart from a broad political commitment to doing so, it would appear that there was little to no evidence concerning the advantages or benefits of doing so. That this was in fact the case was observed as early as 2003¹⁶¹ and was also later confirmed by a further independent study in 2005, which found that

upward wage harmonization and the equalization of working conditions were largely responsible for substantial increases in personnel costs in amalgamated school divisions

and concluded that

the time and energy spent on the amalgamation process would have been better directed towards meaningful education reform.¹⁶²

Notwithstanding the collective experience of school boards to date, MSBA has sought to determine whether objective measures might serve to inform the exercise of local autonomy and community-based democracy by the people of Manitoba, into our modern context.

Whether one looks to the ratio of constituents served for each elected official, or the geographic region covered, or the amount of public monies that are spent by each level of elected official, or the scope of overall roles and duties, finding a satisfactory answer to “how many” trustees are appropriate to serve Manitobans remains non-definitive.

In terms of each factor or variable (geography, constituency base, expenditures used to support democratic institutions), we would note that the use of averages tends to obscure realities because Manitoba remains a territory of significant proportion and dimension. As such, average or ratio measures do not indicate the realities for each person who is elected to office in a given community.

As an example, it would be very difficult to capture the comparative realities for a trustee serving Frontier School Division, with its rightful claim to the largest geographic catchment area in Manitoba, compared to another school division of much lesser geographic area. Distribution of population in Manitoba, with nearly 60 percent of all residents concentrated in Winnipeg, represents another important reality.

From the perspective of MSBA, minimum and maximum values at either end of the “average” do serve to inform the overall picture of what school board governance in Manitoba looks like and because of them, we would discount using average measures for any form of comparative value when it comes to how many constituents and what territory trustees serve. Variance in the

¹⁶¹ Frontier Centre for Public Policy (2003). *Backgrounder: Amalgamating school boards not an answer*. This research found virtually no correlation between school board size and per-pupil expenditures. Accessible online - <https://fcpp.org/2003/03/28/amalgamating-school-boards-not-an-answer/>

¹⁶² Owens, D. (2005). *Manitoba's school board amalgamations—before and after*. Winnipeg. Frontier Centre for Public Policy. Accessible online - <https://fcpp.org/pdf/FB036AmalgamationCostSavingsIllusory.pdf>

number of trustees per board also skew the extent to which average measures would be reliable indicators of anything related to school boards, in terms of serving constituencies.

Table 20 – Average Measures of Constituent Load and Operating Cost per Elected Official in Manitoba, 2018¹⁶³

Type of elected official	Total number elected	Average constituent load	Average geographic area served	Average operating costs
Member of Parliament	14	96,582.4	varies	\$1,500,000
Member of Legislative Assembly	57	23,722	varies	\$622,807.01
Municipal Official	998	599.7	varies	varies
Winnipeg City Council	16	50,246.6	30.93 km ²	\$325,000
Rural/Northern School Trustee	243	2,462.9	varies	\$37,333.52
Winnipeg Region School Trustee	54	13,957.4	8.59 km ²	

Given the lack of an independent and reliable standard for determining an appropriate level of democratic representation to serve our communities, MSBA would suggest that historically, given the North American experience, determining whether or not the total number of school districts or trustees ought to change has tended to be informed by several important guidelines as follows:

- 1) Are the finances of a school district sustainable toward offering a comprehensive education to students in their catchment, such that the joining together of resources across two or more school districts would achieve greater fiscal efficiency or ratepayer equity?
- 2) Are enrolments in a school division sustainable to support continuation of an independent governance, administrative and academic structure?

¹⁶³ Table 20 attempts to demonstrate why average measures are difficult to construct and also to utilize in terms of informing guidelines for democratic representation in Manitoba. In terms of the data presented in this table, constituent load is based on Statistics Canada 2018 Population Data (demonstrating total population of 1,352,200 in Manitoba, 753,700 for Winnipeg and 598,500 in rural/northern Manitoba) while operating costs are constructed using a variety of 2018 and 2019 budget estimates documents (Canada, Treasury Board. (2018). *2018-19 Estimates: parts I and II - the government expenditure plan and main estimates*; Manitoba Finance. (2019). *Getting the Job Done: Estimates of Expenditure*; 2019; City of Winnipeg. (2018). *2018 Adopted budget: Operating and capital, volume 2., adopted by Council – December 12, 2017*. Winnipeg; and Manitoba Education. (2018). *FRAME 2018 Estimate*. Winnipeg; and Manitoba Municipal Relations. (2016). *Consolidated municipal expenditures by major service and Municipal expenditures on general government services*, the latter of which demonstrates that proportionate expenditure on administrative operations can widely vary between municipalities). It is also important to note that while there are 16 elected to city council, only 15 have ward-based constituency responsibilities and therefore, all numbers have been divided by 15 under this category. Operating costs for City of Winnipeg do however, reflect Mayor and Council. These measures are posited here to inform a general overview of the realities concerning the wide variation that does exist between elected officials, in terms of several different variables. This information and data is provided for general interest of readers, by way of informing general context concerning Manitoba's democratic institutions.

- 3) Would the merger of two separate and distinctive organizational cultures across school districts result in synergies, or create obstacles and possible disruption to effectiveness in terms of operations and outcomes?
- 4) Is there evidence that the educational experience of students and that the outcomes of the education that can be provided would be enhanced by the joining together of two or more school districts?
- 5) Will harmonization of policy, technical agreements and other instruments pose significant challenges to consolidation, or result in any growth to overall expenditures under a successor entity?
- 6) Is it possible to achieve the perceived benefits of collaboration, cooperation, resource sharing, and common purpose, apart from a structural consolidation?
- 7) Would a consolidation come with the necessary buy-in and support from the people and community that a school district serves?

These are indeed significant questions and perhaps more cogent to the contemporary context of Manitoba, in terms of any future prospects for change to governance at the school board level. The question is therefore not how many school trustees are needed to serve our communities or whether one region would be best served by consolidating all of the autonomous divisional structures that lie within it. The reality is that it is the seven questions above that must be asked, in unison, to inform whether the 37 boards that Manitoba currently maintains continue to “make sense”.

Based on our assessment of these questions as they relate to the current 37 elected school boards of Manitoba, MSBA would strongly encourage the Commission to consider what compelling evidence could be offered to mandate the reduction of any boards, through any approach that does not reflect a commitment to local autonomy.

As we have stated at the beginning of this chapter, MSBA believes in local autonomy and that it remains relevant to inform the future of governance in this province. Our association’s respect for this principle is such that we support grassroots efforts to undertake change if this is what the people of a given community wish for their community. Based on this province’s most recent experience reducing boards and the contemporary experience of our Canadian peers, we would posit that bigger is not better and, in terms of efficiencies, neither are there any savings to be found through larger governance units. Manitoba has lived through this experience before and it has done so very recently. We have learned many valuable lessons from this experience. Given current consideration for improving student learning and achievement, Manitoba must reflect very carefully upon whether it wishes to relive its recent past.

Value, efficiency and effectiveness of local voice and local choice– community democracy in action

MSBA stands firmly committed to local autonomy. We believe that such right to local autonomy holds for every community, whether majority or minority. Education belongs to every community. Community-led governance closely follows.

Governance comes with accountability. In the context of the democratic outcomes described earlier, and in recognition of the Province of Manitoba’s longstanding respect for the principle of

local autonomy, we believe that centralizing decision-making would remove this local accountability. It would reduce local community voice, diminish input in decision-making processes, and strain access by constituents to decision-makers. We believe that a regional model of school board governance would achieve the same.

As we have shown through the data provided, Manitoba has downsized from 54 divisions twenty years ago, to the current 38. Over the past fifty years, total numbers of trustees have decreased 54 percent. In view of projected demographic growth in Manitoba and the need to maintain standards of efficiency and excellence in responding to community needs, we would invite the Commission to reflect very carefully on these realities.

School boards are not opposed to change. In tabling these observations, we would like the Commissioners to understand that our sole interest remains vested in ensuring that educational governance supports efficiency and responsiveness for the people of Manitoba.

We are also concerned about value for money.

As Table 20 has indicated, when operating costs are compared at all levels of democratically elected governance in Manitoba, school board costs are lowest. This is reflective of the overall scope of responsibility (trustees do not serve on a full-time basis in Manitoba), as well as the reality that administrative costs are contained through established limits prescribed by regulation.¹⁶⁴

Because of this reality, combined operational expenditures as school boards represents half a cent on every dollar invested in the operations of public education.¹⁶⁵ Table 21 demonstrates this fact based on data published annually by Manitoba Education and Training.

Table 21 – Board of Trustees Aggregate Expenditures, FRAME (Function 500), 1997-2018

	1997	2000	2003	2006	2009	2012	2015	2018
Board of Trustees								
Amount	6,402,276	7,078,438	6,786,107	8,036,890	8,251,408	8,800,662	10,200,592	11,088,058
%	0.6	0.6	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.4	0.5	0.5

As demonstrated in Table 22, increases to trustee remuneration have also remained contained at 0.2 percent between 2003 and 2018.

Table 22 – Aggregate Trustee Remuneration, FRAME 1997-2018

	1997	2000	2003	2006	2009	2012	2015	2018
Trustees Remuneration	2,921,348	3,130,834	2,877,273	3,096,611	3,355,396	3,769,978	4,023,450	4,000,598
%		0.3	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2

In terms of what Manitobans receive in exchange for this investment, we would note the democratic outcomes that have been summarized earlier. This data does however, tend to obscure the qualitative realities of who is elected to the office of trustee and how they represent the people of our communities.

¹⁶⁴ *Administrative cost control regulation*, M.R. 93/2014. Accessible online-
<http://web2.gov.mb.ca/laws/regs/annual/2014/093.pdf>

¹⁶⁵ See also Graph under the focus area on “funding”.

Under Appendix C, the preliminary results of our quadrennial trustee profile survey have been included for consideration by the Commissioners. Based on preliminary results, what this data demonstrates are the following facts:

- The majority of trustees are parents or grandparents of children in schools,
- A majority are working professionals who balance full-time employment with their duties as trustees, and
- A majority hold post-secondary credentials.
- As we have demonstrated through Graph 25, school boards also remain the only level of elected governance where women hold a majority. Graph 26 demonstrates the long and rich heritage of this important reality of the trusteeship in Manitoba.
- Approximately a quarter of trustees represent important diversity categories, including:
 - Indigenous peoples,
 - Newcomer communities,
 - Visible minorities, and
 - Persons with disabilities.
 - Twenty percent are bilingual.

Based on this data and so many more contributions that trustees make based on their time commitments, reasons for service, and personal attributes (as described above), MSBA believes that communities benefit from this strength and level of representation among school trustees.

As we have demonstrated through our commentary on long term vision, student learning, teaching and accountability for student success, school board decisions strive to enhance delivery of programs, services and supports that meet local community needs.

We would strongly encourage the Commissioners to review our association's "This is Local Choice" series (Appendix B). This important overview of local programs, supports and services provide concrete examples illustrating why school boards matter, through the rich programmatic diversity that serves to enhance the student learning experience across our school divisions.

We would note that it is the responsibility and indeed the accountability of boards to the people of their communities, that boards remain engaged in ongoing dialogue with communities, in search of further changes that will benefit local students.

In view of these significant contributions and achievements, it is our perspective that further reductions to school boards or administrative costs will not strengthen public education, nor serve to promote greater efficiency. They would however, deprive communities of a local focus in the provision of public education. Focus would shift away from student learning and success, towards organizational restructuring and rebalancing. Costs would be maintained if not increased, and the strong program, support and service collaborations that currently exist would become at risk.

The final question that we as an association would then posit, as an alternative to structural change, is the following: how can we improve governance at the school board level? In this respect, we offer four distinct recommendations to the Commission, focused on the democratic reality of Manitoba's school boards.

We recommend that the Commission support the introduction of enabling legislation by the Government of Manitoba to establish electronic means of satisfying all candidacy and voting responsibilities during future municipal and school board elections.

We recommend that the Commission consider opportunities to extend voting rights to all persons who will merit representation through their taxation during the most recent four year election cycle, including persons whose identities have been confirmed on the Elections Manitoba permanent voters registry and Permanent Residents whose citizenship applications remain in process.

We further recommend that the Commission support the introduction of legislation or regulation that shall provide gratis media coverage for school board candidates, in order to promote appropriate public awareness and information concerning school board elections prior to the conclusion of each election.

Finally, we recommend that the Commission support amendment to The Municipal and School Board Elections Act, in order to mandate placement of election polling stations in population centres that will enable greater proximity and accessibility for voters on each local registry and further, that municipal and school board ballots be consolidated into one single ballot for each community and at each polling station.

A great deal of work continues worldwide to address the questions of how democratic systems of governance can enhance citizen engagement and participation in the electoral process, and thereby strengthen democracy as a whole.¹⁶⁶

In the Canadian context, federal, provincial and local governments have each focused on the important dimensions of age requirements, eligibility criteria, mandatory or obligatory voting and enforcement, electronic and online voting, reconfiguration of polling stations and ballots and, for those democratic entities that receive tax credits for campaign contributions (which school boards in Manitoba do not), the questions of accountability for campaign finance, publicity, advertising and fundraising limits.

As school boards, we can look across the country to inform our own model of local governance and distribution of resources but Manitoba has always chosen its own path forward when it comes to its system of governance. The question is not how to we become more like another province, but rather how can continue to focus on becoming what our province needs and requires?

In this respect, we believe that the above enhancements to the local democratic process would serve the province's longer-term interests. The four recommendations we have tabled above

¹⁶⁶ Canada House of Commons. (2016). *Strengthening democracy in Canada: principles, process and public engagement for electoral reform*. Ottawa. Queen's Printer. Accessible online- <http://www.cpcml.ca/publications2016/161201ReportSpecialCtteenElectoralReform.pdf>; Fukuyama, F. (2014). *Political order and political decay: From the industrial revolution to the globalization of democracy*. Farrar, Strauss & Giroux, New York.; Institute for Research on Public Policy. (2006). *Strengthening Canadian democracy*. Accessible online- <https://irpp.org/research/strengthening-canadian-democracy/>; Savoie, D. (2015). *What is government good at? A Canadian answer*. McGill-Queen's University Press. Montreal & Kingston.

reflect important considerations that have been addressed in exhaustive detail through other reports, studies and commissions.

Each of these reports or initiatives have concretely described the general state of citizen disengagement and access to information at all levels of government. Many serve to explain important contemporary shifts in civic participation writ large in the developed world. A great deal has also been written concerning the impacts of technology on the public sphere of life and how social media has increasingly replaced civic mediums as the expression of citizen engagement.

The data that we have provided for consideration of the Commission demonstrates that in the Manitoba context writ large, questions of how to promote voter participation and accessibility exist at both the local and provincial levels. The larger question of democratic reform, focused on voter participation and turnout, may therefore deserve greater focus in the context of political institutions and governance, including school boards.

While structurally, MSBA does not therefore advocate for any changes to school board governance, we do believe that the above recommendations are deserving of focus at all levels of democratically elected governance, including for our membership. Support by the Commission for these recommendations would optimize MSBA's previous advocacy, along with our partnered advocacy with the Association of Manitoba Municipalities, on the specific proposal to introduce electronic voting. This proposal acknowledges the recent success of, among others, Ontario and Nova Scotia's electronic franchise. We believe that it would help promote significant accessibility, engagement and participation of our electors.¹⁶⁷

The Commission has inquired about changes to entities other than school boards that may improve governance. We will therefore close by addressing three of these: the Manitoba School Boards Association itself, the role of parents and of parent councils, and the role of school leaders (commonly referred to as principals).

The Role of the Manitoba School Boards Association

Established in 1906 as the educational administration division of the Manitoba Educational Association, MSBA has undergone significant changes in the years since. As is stated within our Act, our current mandate is to promote and advance the cause of education in the province; to arouse and increase public interest in educational affairs; to engage in research and study of matters of educational policy; to promote efficiency and improvement in the fulfillment of the duties of trustees and the exercise of the powers of trustees under the laws of Manitoba; and to co-operate with The Department of Education and Training of the province and with other organizations in Canada or elsewhere having aims and objects the same as, or similar to, those of the association.¹⁶⁸

One aspect of the association's mandate that has also changed over time, concerns its role as provider of essential programs, services and supports designed to promote central efficiency in

¹⁶⁷ Berman, P. (2016). "Nova Scotia's e-voting underway ahead of municipal elections" CBC website, October 3, 2016. Accessible online- <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/nova-scotia/nova-scotia-s-e-voting-advance-voting-1.3789222>; Khoury, E. (2019). "Collecting the votes: Analysis of Ontario municipalities' experiences with various voting methods in 2018. *Municipal world* (Feb, 2019). 20.

¹⁶⁸ The Manitoba School Boards Association Act, R.S.M. 1990, c. 240., s. 4(a)-(e). Accessible online- <http://www.mbschoolboards.ca/documents/manitobaSchoolBoardsAssociationAct.pdf>

delivery of these benefits to all school boards. As we have indicated in the preceding focus area on shared accountability, our association offers specialized expertise in governance to support the work of all boards and senior divisional governing teams, through regular opportunities for professional development and learning. We convene two annual meetings that consist of both business and professional development components and are always available to provide advice and to assist boards with planning, decision-making and policy development and policy interpretation, to help strengthen governance at the local level.

We have already provided comment (under long term vision) on the important action plan, focused on Aboriginal and Indigenous Education, that our association continues to lead, which focuses on strengthening governance capacity and response to serve the needs of Manitoba's Aboriginal and Indigenous communities for greater impact and effectiveness.¹⁶⁹ We have also commented on the importance of our work constructing the effective and efficient governance (E2G) and now E3G frameworks, for improved governance outcomes across all school boards. We have equally described the many collaborative enterprises and initiatives that our association has undertaken with partners in Manitoba's community of education, to help strengthen shared accountability and foster continuous improvement across our respective memberships, in a variety of areas and topics.

What has not yet been addressed, are the many efficiencies that are achieved through our association's mandate and how the defining of a shared service model through MSBA has, over time, represented one of this country's greatest structures for single-point access and delivery of core and legal requirements as necessitated by the particular role of school boards. At current time, MSBA provides a greater number of tailored programs, supports and services than any other provincial school board association in Canada.

Table 23 – Pan-Canadian Overview of Services Provided by School Board Associations, 2018.¹⁷⁰

Services	BCSTA	ASBA	SSBA	MSBA	OPSB	OCSTA	FCSQ	QESBA	NB	NS	NLSBA	PEI	YUKON	N.W.T.	NUNAVUT
Advocacy	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes			Yes				
Media/Communications Services	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes			No				
Professional Development/ Advisement on Governance	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes			Yes				
Insurance for Boards	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No			No				
Labour Relations	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes			No				
Legal Services	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No			No				
Pension Management	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	No			No				

In addition to those services listed above, MSBA also provides risk management (including safety inspections of school facilities), health and dental plan benefits for teaching and non-

¹⁶⁹ See "long term vision" under this report.

¹⁷⁰ Reproduced from CSBA. (2018). *Cross country overview*. Montreal., p. 4.

teaching employees, life insurance and other coverage for employees; and also administer several key programs, including financial administration for the Child Nutrition Council of Manitoba, the Teens Against Distracted Driving and Safe Grad programs. It also bears highlight that the pension management referred to under Table 23 relates to our non-teaching pension plan, which serves close to 11,000 deferred and active members.

We would observe that, in view of financial management related to public education, maintenance of a strong schools insurance program is of key benefit to all school boards. The bulk purchase rates that are available to school boards under our common coverage framework reduces costs substantially for all.

As efficiencies increase to administrative cost limits as set under provincial regulation, exemption of school insurance-related fees and rebates would support the ongoing operations of MSBA into the future by avoiding a “lose-lose” scenario for both the association and its members. As school boards examine opportunities for greater cost savings, the services provided by our association have similarly been impacted. MSBA has kept pace with proportionate reductions to administrative costs, a reflection of the membership fees that drive our sustainability. Were schools insurance fees and rebates to receive exemption, this would assist MSBA and school boards to support the ongoing delivery of centralized and shared services through our association, without impacting the benefits and advantages that have come from such a model.

With the establishment of the federally-funded Manitoba First Nations School System in 2017, as we have in the past, we would also signal our association’s readiness to amend *The Manitoba School Boards Association Act*, in order to enable the MFNSS to join our association as a full member. This would ensure that the MFNSS is able to benefit from the full scope of programs, supports and services that our association provides to its regular membership.

With much at stake in the success of MFNSS, given the recent federal commitment of equal funding for First Nations students on a pilot basis and, with all provinces looking to Manitoba to establish the example for how such federally-funded school divisions will be integrated or associated with the public education system, the time is appropriate for Manitoba to proceed with the amendments necessary to ensure the full participation of First Nations communities across Manitoba, in the rights and benefits to which they are entitled.

In respect of our association’s programs, services and supports, these can be achieved at a much reduced expense overall for MFNSS than were they to seek to implement such programs, supports and services on a stand-alone basis.

To strengthen the shared services that are provided through the Manitoba School Boards Association and help support the MFNSS in its critical mandate on to address needs for First Nations schools, we therefore recommend that the Commission support future exclusion of all fees and rebates associated with maintaining coverage under the Manitoba Schools Insurance Program, from calculation of administrative cost ceilings.

We also recommend that the Commission support advocacy by the Manitoba School Boards Association to amend our statutory membership criteria, in order to provide services and programming to First Nations, Métis and Inuit education providers.

A Question of Parents

The Commission has inquired as to the role of school-home communications and how relationships can be strengthened at the local level in terms of parental engagement. MSBA would comment that the role of parents is one of the most integral relative to the public education. As we have outlined under the last focus area on shared accountability, it remains the parent who entrusts their children to public schools for their education and we honour and respect these choices for the 90 percent of all parents province-wide who have entrusted their children's future to public education.

To this end, several key facets of the school board-parent relationship are enshrined within the legislative and regulatory framework that governs public education. These define the important roles and relationships of parent councils and local advisory committees. Quite aside from these formal advisory, consultative and feedback processes, trustees appreciate and respond to parental concerns because they themselves are, in largest measure, parents and grandparents of children in our public schools. Forty-one percent of trustees are currently parents of students in school. A further 20.7 percent have children who have already graduated. 18.7 percent of all trustees are grandparents of current pupils (see Appendix C, Q2).

We also acknowledge that, as very few parents actually participate in the work of their local parent council relative to the total parental population, it becomes important to determine how best to promote ongoing communications with all homes and to also proactively solicit feedback from parents when important decisions are being taken as part of the decision-making process.

To this end, many school boards have, subject to privacy legislation, collected home contacts for sending of electronic communications of greatest importance. Traditional paper-based newsletters sent "home in the backpack" are also used to correspond with parents and guardians. Trustee contact information is readily available on the board websites of each school division so that two-way relationship and communication can also be enabled. In many cases, this includes direct contact information so that, for any parents seeking response or assistance from their local school board, doing so is literally an email or phone call away.

In recent years, many proposals have been made concerning parent councils. Some provinces have, at times, questioned whether it is the parent council that ought to play a greater role in governance of public education. We would contend that there are very important and distinctive differences between school boards and parent councils. If a parent is interested in the governance of their local school division by joining the school board, then they have the ability to run as a candidate in school board elections. Following the latest elections, as our most recent trustee profile survey has found, a vast majority (59.7 percent) of trustees have some vested interest in school governance because they themselves are parents or grandparents of children who remain in school.

Proposals to replace school boards with parent councils also begs larger questions of the interests and fairness of decisions that would be made from a parent-only governance model, in relation to the wider community's interests in the purpose, objectives and outcomes of public education. Q5 of our survey demonstrates that of all trustees, the vast majority are also employed and in a variety of positions, including in professional occupations (34.2 percent) as entrepreneurs (15.1 percent), as management (8.3 percent), or as support staff (6.7 percent).

What this data demonstrates is a clear relationship between the diversity of Manitoba's communities and how that translates into local representation at the school board level. Loss of community voice in the governance of public education would not protect or enhance the greater interests of our communities. While parents are an important part of this community and their role in governance critical to success, their voice is indeed clearly heard at the boardroom table through the formal processes that do exist, as well as through their compatriots who sit as trustees. In terms of trustees who represent public interests at large, that these representatives help to foster response to other needs within the community is an important role. It is one that, from our perspective, should not be lost.

Those parents who choose to assume governance roles are able to do so at the divisional level through the school board, while those who choose to address needs at the local school that their child attends can do so through their parent council. We believe that maintaining this distinction is very important and also speaks to effectiveness and efficiency of governance in terms of the available time commitment that both sets of parents are able to devote to the distinctive mandates of each, according to what they have “signed up for”.

Over the many years of its existence, MSBA has partnered with the Manitoba Association of Parent Councils in many meaningful ways. We have together produced the first of two fact sheets on cannabis use among students (the other remains in production and addresses human organ and tissue donation) to promote the important education role of parents relative to their family's values and beliefs in the home. We also support MAPC's constructive approach to providing support for parents in addressing concerns relative to the education of their children and in promoting the role of the parent as advocates for their children's needs.¹⁷¹ For the Commission scolaire franco-manitobaine, the same relationship exists relative to the Fédération des parents du Manitoba.

In the context of governance, MSBA therefore remains of the perspective that the processes, roles and relationships that have been achieved between school boards and parents over several decades, remain informative to the ongoing success of educational governance in Manitoba. For all of the above reasons, we would advocate that these continue to be strengthened, according to the respective focus of school boards, parent councils, and local advisory committees. Based on the current practice of school boards, we would also signal the equal importance of enhancing ongoing communications between both “home and school” and “home and school division”, in order to ensure that all parents remain apprised of developments and decision-making relative to their children and their schools, with meaningful opportunities to remain engaged and participate.

A Question of Principals

Lastly, In terms of prospects for change to the current governance and administrative structures of public education, MSBA believes that it is important to examine the role of school leaders or principals within education governance, administration and management structures. However, to this end, as MSBA maintains no official policy, we would strongly encourage the Commission

¹⁷¹ One of the most useful resources, among all of the useful resources produced by MAPC, is the Empowering parents: A guide to addressing concerns in Manitoba schools. MSBA regularly utilizes this manual for supporting parents in their role as advocates. Accessible online- <https://mapc.mb.ca/files/Empowering-Parents-Guide-2018.pdf>

to inquire with our members, as well as with members of the Manitoba Association of School Superintendents, and also with members of the Council of School Leaders, concerning the role and responsibilities of principals within the overall context of governance, administration and management.

In this manner, the Commission can consult directly with our membership and other partners to obtain a balance of perspectives on this important issue and inform its review. This said, we appreciate that it is the view of many of our individual members that principals remain important instructional leaders within schools, providing important leadership to their instructional and non-instructional colleagues and in many instances themselves providing instruction.

Final thoughts on governance

From Waskada to Whiteshell through to Winnipeg and Wahpusk, school boards across Manitoba strive to improve governance and education outcomes at their local level for the betterment of the communities that they serve. This hearkens back to a rich heritage of local autonomy and democracy in Canada. It is one that in fact remains sacred, given the high price that has been paid to protect and defend it in the past by our mothers, fathers, grandfathers and grandmothers.

Lest we ever forget that our democratic institutions, and local representation at any level in this province— federal, provincial or local— are important legacies that have been purchased by the names of those who are inscribed in Canada’s Books of Remembrance, as well as through the memories, condemnation and weariness borne by those who have indeed grown old, and yet remain to testify as to the reasons why they stood on guard for their country. Reasons which include the protection of local autonomy.

Lest we forget as well, the long struggle for representative democracy for the people of our minority language and Indigenous communities, who have only very recently have been able to build upon the important foundations passed down through their many generations, for restoration of community voice and choice in the education of their children.

We have asked the question of whether we are worthy of our students? Are we equally worthy of the communities who we serve? Through the work of each local school board, focused on delivering student-centered and informed by community-centered outcomes through programs, services and supports that reflect the distinct character of each community, and their equally distinctive needs and requirements, we trust that the responses to these paramount inquiries is most certainly “yes!”

The data, analysis and commentary provided in this chapter has demonstrated many significant realities related to governance at the local school board level. Democracy remains strong in terms of local election outcomes. They can be further enhanced using many of the same procedures and amendments that other governments have proposed or recommended, to address the ongoing challenge of civic participation and engagement at all elected levels in Canada— and also globally.

Important questions have been raised in the context of the Commission’s review and they do deserve response. Absent the existence of independent and reliable indicators or other measures that would serve to inform what an appropriate level of democratic representation

would look like at any level in our communities—let alone for school boards— we therefore posit several additional questions for consideration. These deserve a clear and evidence-based response before any structural changes are considered, beyond those significant reductions that have already taken place to school board governance over the past several decades.

We believe that these are questions must be answered however, by the people of each community that school boards currently serve. It is to them, and to the exercise of their local autonomy and their democratic right, that the answer belongs. It is from them that the answer must come.

Local voices and local choices still matter to communities and they still matter to the outcomes of public education. Education belongs to communities because that remains their good and their right.

Governance of education, which has always reflected sharing of accountability along with collaborative efforts between many entities to enhance responsibility towards greater improvement, has made Manitoba one of the world's leading systems of public education. Our current model of governance remains equally strong to help position this province for the significant change that it is about to face over the next century. Changes that we have described in this report.

No builder removes the foundations upon which an excellent structure is built, in order to expand its scope and capacity. Instead, the key to building more, is to strengthen these foundations, so that they can continue to support their structure for even greater excellence in years to come.

School boards are needed for a variety of reasons. Primarily, they are the best catalyst to ensure local control of education. In other words, school boards give the local community a voice concerning the aims of public education. Specifically, school boards keep the public in public schools, have a positive impact on student achievement, function as trustees over district resources, and serve as advocates for public schools.

As a democratic country, we have valued citizen oversight to assist us in making decisions for the greater good rather than making decisions predicated on self-interests. School boards are unique because they can balance individual rights and community values better than decisions made... behind closed doors. In short, school boards allow the community to stay connected to schools.

School boards have a positive impact on student achievement. School boards ensure that districts are governed effectively and that those who oversee the day-to-day operations are held accountable for student achievement. Although school boards are not responsible for the day-to-day management of their schools, their decisions and actions create the environments that enable district efforts to improve.

School boards serve as trustees over district resources. School boards ensure that taxpayer dollars are carefully and appropriately spent. Primarily, the school board approves the budget, which identifies the parameters of district spending and ensures that there is a clear alignment between the budget and district ends. School boards are also advocates for public education, having been created for the sole purpose of representing the welfare of students.

In order... to remain great, we must not forget about our democratic values. As a diverse country, we have cherished citizen oversight to promote the common good. School boards are a shining example of how men and women from the community come together to govern on behalf of the

community and to promote the common good. If the role of the school board continues to diminish, many citizens will be disenfranchised concerning the aims of public education, ultimately leaving a system of haves and have-nots.¹⁷²

Local voices making local choices in the cause of public education through local school boards have always benefitted the people and province of Manitoba. On the question of governance, we therefore trust that the K-12 Education Review Commission will make the right recommendations concerning governance, for the continued benefit of our people and our province. We further trust that the Government of Manitoba will make the right decisions, for the continued benefit of our people and our province, once these recommendations are received.

Finally, MSBA would offer one general recommendation to the Commission that would not seem to correspond to any particular focus area. This recommendation would be that the Commission encourage the Government of Manitoba to provide for more regular review of Kindergarten to Grade 12 education. We feel that this would enhance opportunities to achieve shared vision, take stock of student learning and teaching, affirm accountabilities, confirm appropriate governance in public education, and review funding.

Such a recommendation was first tabled over sixty years ago by the Royal Commission on Education in 1957 but was never acted upon. Provision for a more regular opportunity to review public education would help inform future direction and provide significant guidance for consideration by the people and community of Manitoba. Given the importance of education to the vitality, success and well-being of our province, that a comprehensive review has not taken place sooner is an important consideration for Government that would seem to transcend all focus areas, but may be appropriately situated in the context of governance.

¹⁷² Rice, P. (2014). *Vanishing school boards: Where school boards have gone, why we need them, and how we can bring them back*. Rowman & Littlefield. Lanham, MA., p. 99.

6. FUNDING

The problem of financing education has assumed major proportions in recent years. Public expenditure on education has been increasing with alarming rapidity, and all indications are that costs will continue to increase in the foreseeable future. Originally, the major burden of education finance fell on the local authorities whose responsibility it seemed to be, and who benefitted most directly. Control of education was vested in the Province which paid grants to assist in equalizing both educational costs and educational opportunities. But education can no longer be considered purely a local responsibility, nor can the benefits of education be considered any longer as purely local assets. Indeed, the increasing complexity of modern education as reflected in rising costs has made it impossible for local resources to continue to provide even a satisfactory basic program without greatly increased assistance from provincial resources.¹⁷³

While the above citation may have been prepared for this present report, it may be enlightening that this was in fact written just over sixty years ago, and was the opening statement of the Manitoba Royal Commission on Education (Macfarlane et al.) in 1957.

This was certainly not the first occasion on which the financial and structural circumstances surrounding delivery public education in Manitoba were examined by the provincial government under a formal review.¹⁷⁴

It would seem that each generation has featured renewed efforts to look at education funding and each remains instructive in terms of the magnitude of assessing the overall state of education funding in Manitoba.

We would therefore tend to concur with the terms of reference proposed for the current K-12 Review Commission, insofar as these have chosen to focus more on addressing the overall adequacy of funding to meet student learning, teaching, accountability and governance needs, than to engage in a restructuring or wholesale amendment to the educational finance model that currently exists.

This said, we do believe that review of the funding formula remains important, as well as the question of sustainability of local education revenues. We shall endeavour to provide as much comment as possible on these important subjects, as the future of public education in Manitoba does depend on a finance model that is adequate and sufficient to meet the needs of our students and classrooms. We also depend at the same time, on remaining affordable and sustainable for our communities. In our introduction, we spoke of the upper limits of what was possible in terms of the opportunities for strengthening our system of public education and overcoming its challenges. Funding remains one of the primary drivers that define these upper limits.

¹⁷³ Manitoba Royal Commission on Education (1957). *Report of the Manitoba Royal Commission on Education*, p. 1.

¹⁷⁴ The School Divisions Boundaries Commission (Monnin et al.) and the Greater Winnipeg Investigating Commission of 1959, the Royal Commission on Local Government Organization and Finance of 1964 (Michener), the Manitoba Local Government Boundaries Commission of 1970, the Manitoba Assessment Review Committee of 1980 (Weir), the Education Finance Review of 1983 (Nicholls et al.), and the Manitoba School Divisions/Districts Boundaries Review Commission (Norrie) of 1994, each examined and addressed the subject of education funding in their own way— most often by examining the structures associated with educational governance in our province.

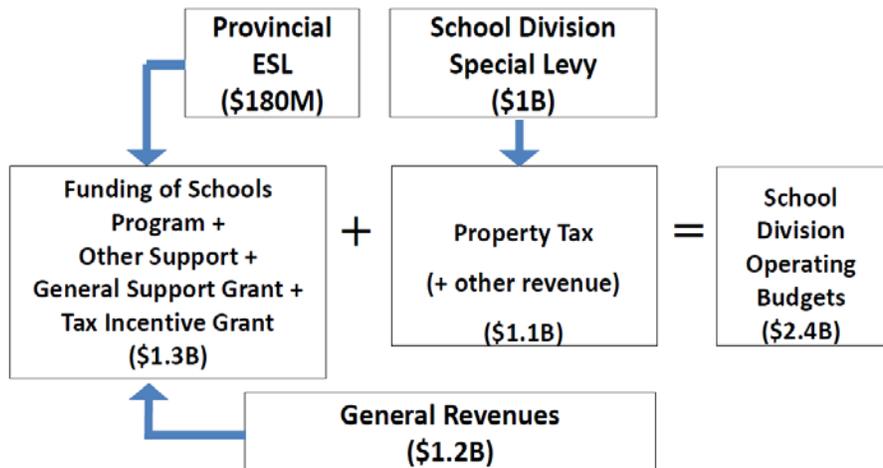
Manitoba’s current education funding model

Many outsiders looking in on the model by which education is currently financed in Manitoba, do not readily understand the many mechanisms, processes, inputs and outputs that serve to define how this model operates.

Many have suggested that simplifying the model remains a desirable objective. However, the reality of a system as diverse, complex and multi-faceted as education will, we suggest, always hold a level of complexity and sophistication that reflect the reality of administrative protocols and process. The reality is that the funding model that Manitoba currently has, works to address many of the needs that have been identified throughout this report.

While greater streamlining of how funds are flowed remains desirable, we must also acknowledge and recognize that education is delivered within a context of public (ie: government) finance. Balancing accountability requirements helps explain to citizens how monies collected from them are used for greater social benefit. This does require accountability frameworks to be applied to certain types of grants, to ensure that intended outcomes are being met. It does add complexity to what is already the second largest provincial funding portfolio.

Graph 29– Revenue Model for Public education Finance in Manitoba, 2017/18



As Graph 29 describes, there are three main revenue sources used to support public education in Manitoba at current time. In descending order, these consist of

- general revenues (taxes and fees collected by the Government of Manitoba from a variety of sources, which are then pooled in the Treasury’s central account and distributed to each budget portfolio based on the needs and requirements of each);
- local school tax (the special levy) which is collected by municipalities based on property values across each community; and
- provincial school tax (the education support levy or “ESL”, which is primarily collected from business and industry).

Graph 29 demonstrates what level of funding each source represents, as per the 2017/18 Budget Year. One can see that all three revenue sources inform the amount of money that is available to support education (through government funding of schools and other grants) and lead to the establishment of school division operating budgets designed to respond to reach pupil and community’s needs.

While the above model shows the basic revenue features of education finance, the following tables provide a general break-down of where this money is invested, how much of the total funding required comes from the Government of Manitoba, and how much comes from other sources, the majority of which come from school property taxes.

Tables 24 and 25– Provincial and School Board Contributions to Public Education Expenses, 2016/17

In hundreds of thousands of dollars

	<u>School Div Expenses</u>	<u>Provincial Contribution</u>		<u>\$ millions</u>
			Province – Operating, Capital, Pensions	\$1,869.1
			• General Revenues	\$1,388.4
			• Property Tax (ESL)	\$ 180.9
			• Teachers Pensions	\$ 299.8
• Operating costs	2,431.9	1,454.9	School Divisions	\$999.1
• Capital costs	136.6	114.4	• Property Tax	\$ 851.4
• Tax Credits		180.1	• Other Revenue	\$ 147.7
• Teacher Pensions	<u>299.8</u>	<u>299.8</u>		
Total	2,868.2	2,049.2		
Provincial Contribution		71.4%	Total	<u>\$2,868.2</u>

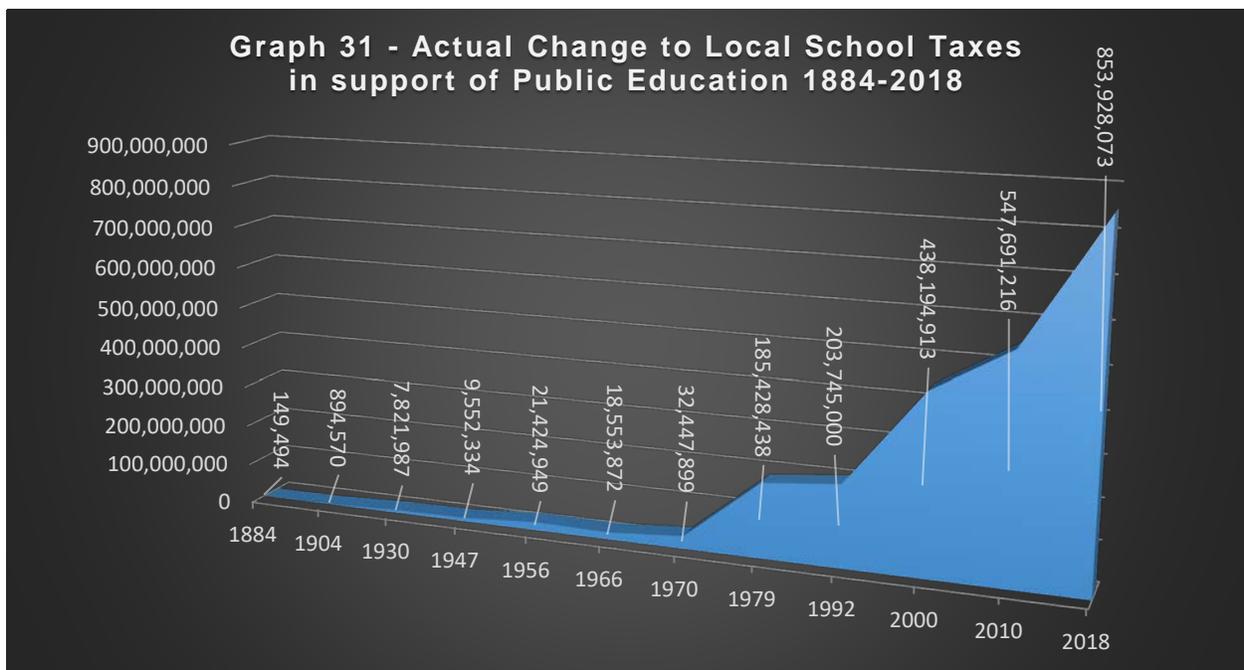
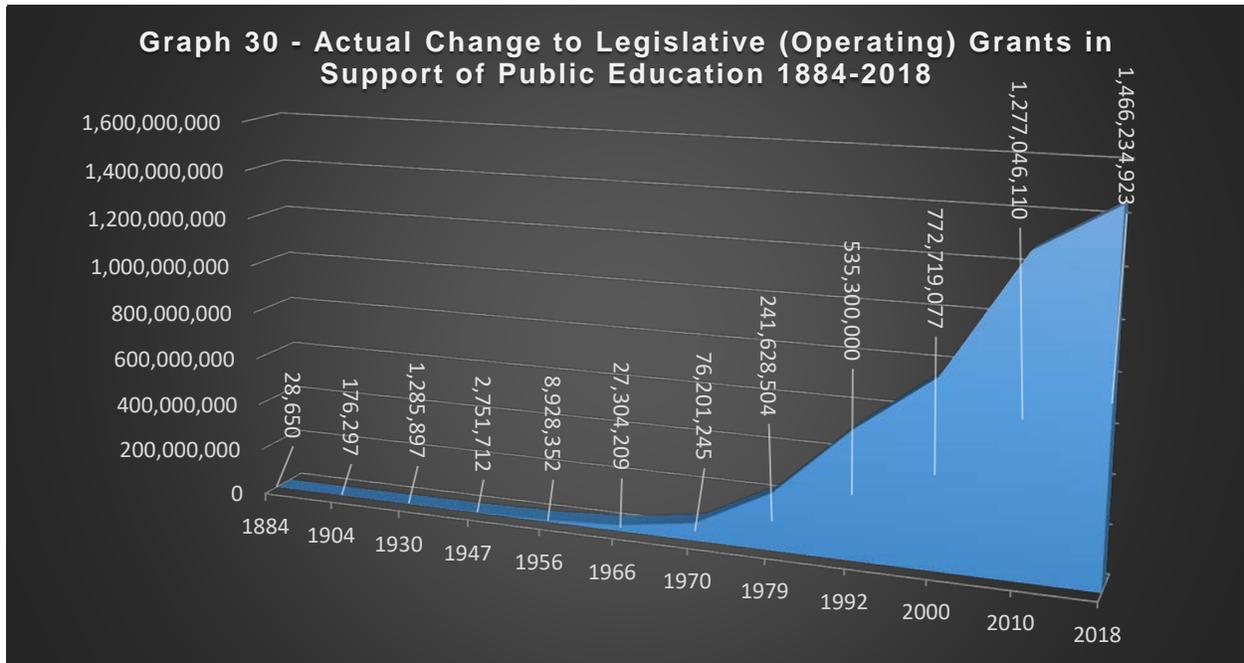
Based on the above information, one can see that at current time, the Government of Manitoba, through its provincial contribution to public education, provides 71.4 percent of the total \$2.8 billion revenues that are needed to bear costs related to education in 2018/19. This includes funding of capital infrastructure expenses, teacher pensions, and tax credits that are applied to most property owners’ tax bills.

There are many valid historical reasons why the Government of Manitoba remains responsible for 100 percent funding of capital, teacher pensions and tax credits. That responsibility for each of these investment areas was assumed by the provincial government reflects a variety of contexts:

- As far back as 1870, funding for school buildings was always provided for provincially, within the grants that were given to school boards to respond to local community needs.
- The provincial government assumed management of the Teachers Retirement Allowance Fund (TRAF) in 1966, given school board capacity to address the liabilities association with a defined benefit pension plan.
- Funding for tax credits has important historical roots that we shall explain later in this chapter but in general, were intended to offset local school tax using general revenues.

Typically, when focus is placed on questions of sustainability of funding to address education needs, and the adaptability, adequacy and flexibility of funding in meeting those needs, the

responses fall to the area of operating expenditures. As shown in Tables 24 and 25, these operating expenses currently total \$2.4 billion, with 59.8 percent borne by provincial revenues and 40.2 percent met through other funding sources, primarily through school taxation.



Graphs 30 and 31 describe changes to provincial operating grants and local school taxation over a longer frame of reference. Based on Graph 30, it is observed that overall growth to provincial (legislative) grants since the earliest recording of it in the annual reports of the

Department of Education (1884) has been 3,431 percent. Half of this change occurred from 1884 through to 1956 (a 72 year span). The other half occurred between 1956 and present (a 62 year span). This means that the pace of growth has accelerated in modern times, mainly attributable to inflation, but also a recognition of increasing provincial responsibilities for instructional expenditures.

In terms of the local school tax, as shown in Graph 31, growth has been 3,157 percent over the same timeframe, with the greatest raising of local revenues (approximately half of this amount) occurring from 1884 to 1947 (a 63 year span) and with the modern half occurring over a 72 year span. Overall then, growth in local school taxation has decelerated into the modern period. Notwithstanding, local school taxes have increased by 280 percent since the year 2000, an average increase of 15 percent each year.

This combination of growth to both of Manitoba's primary revenue sources leads to the approximate 60/40 split that we have already observed, in support of education operating. In the larger Canadian context, this share of operating across provincial and local property tax revenues has placed Manitoba in a different league than most other provinces, as demonstrated in Table 26.

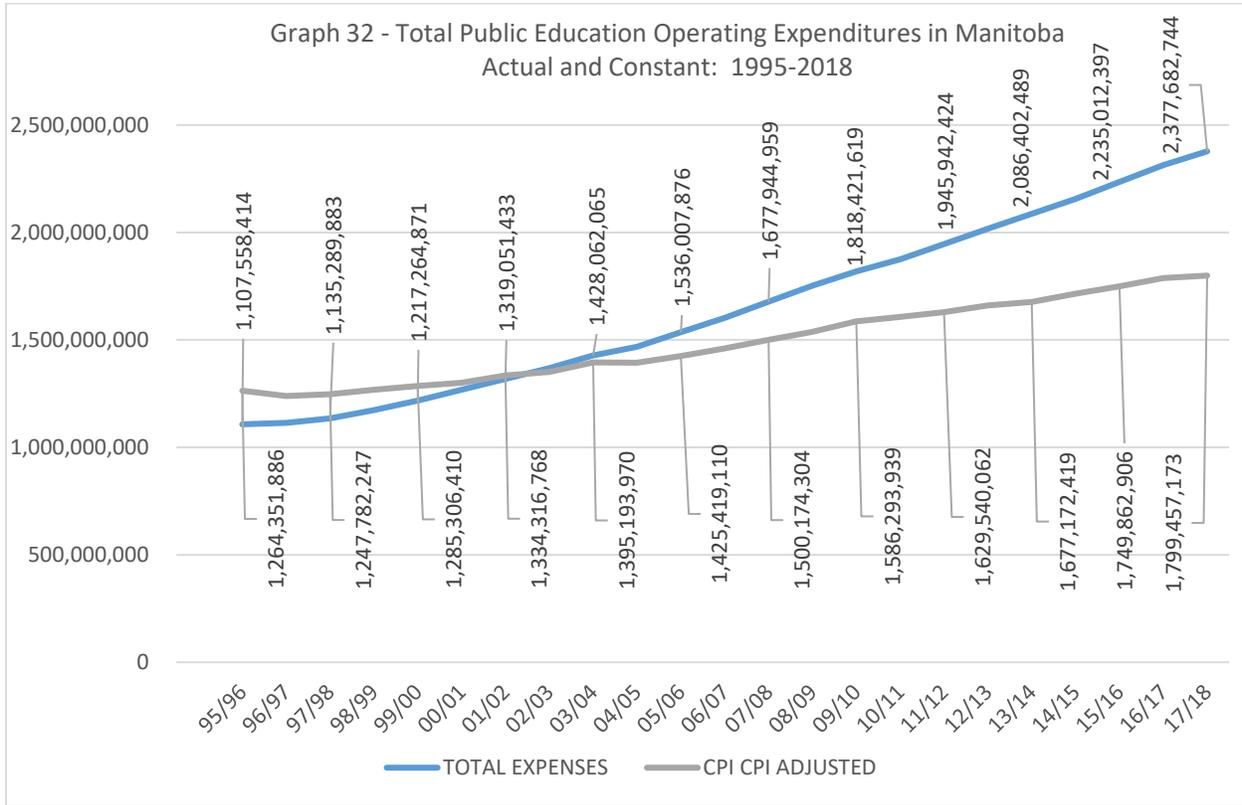
Table 26– Pan-Canadian Overview of Proportionate Share of Local and Provincial Revenues, 2016¹⁷⁵

	Property Taxation	Prov Gov Sources	Other Sources
Canada	26%	68%	7%
Newfoundland	0%	100%	0%
Prince Edward Island	0%	99%	1%
Nova Scotia	20%	73%	7%
New Brunswick	0%	100%	0%
Quebec	18%	74%	9%
Ontario	27%	68%	5%
Manitoba	38%	55%	6%
Saskatchewan	29%	65%	7%
Alberta	33%	59%	8%
British Columbia	33%	57%	10%
Yukon	0%	96%	4%
Northwest Territories	6%	85%	9%

This is reflective of the fact that in some other provinces, movement towards funding of education operating using only general revenues has shifted the collection authorities for school property taxes from local school boards to provincial governments. Manitoba remains, alongside of Quebec, the only two provinces where local educational entities continue to exercise tax collection authority. In other provinces, property taxes are collected by the provincial government. This said, as Table 26 demonstrates, that property tax continues to be collected in seven of Canada's ten provinces is an enduring reality of education finance

¹⁷⁵ Statistics Canada data.

nationally. Greater centralization of tax collection authority does not lessen reliance on property taxation for funding education.



FRAME Budget 1995/96 to 2017/18.

As stated earlier, inflation has driven provincial expenditures on education. The extent to which it does so, and thereby influences the general availability of funding to support education operating, does warrant additional consideration. Graph 32 demonstrates how inflationary adjustments over time have impacted the availability of additional revenues to address demand across public education. Between 1995/96 and 2017/18, investments in public education have continued to grow, in order to meet system demand.

Beginning around 2002/03 however, funding in support of operating started to grow at a greater pace overall (reflected in terms of “total expenses”). However, the total amount of funding necessary to meet needs has also significantly increased (reflected in terms of “CPI adjusted”). Growth to operating by over \$1 billion between 2002/03 and 2017/18 has, as shown in Graph 32, been largely consumed by inflationary adjustments. This means that the ability of public education to sustain operations for the advantage of our students and communities is, and foreseeably will continue to be, challenged by the rate of inflation.

In sum, it is costing a lot more to offer many of the same programs, supports and services. This deserves particular focus, as many commentators believe that growth in funding to support public education has become subject to “run-away costs”, at rates in excess of inflation. The danger of such commentary is the mistaken belief that school divisions are

unnecessarily directing funding to support of what these commentators perceive to be a greater number of “unnecessary” programs and services. As reflected in Graph 32 however, much of the growth to education costs that Manitoba has experienced is directed at inflation, even while constant investment is much lesser than actual growth would suggest. In 2018, the difference that this represents in real terms is over half a billion dollars (\$578.2 million).

In spite of the challenge of responding to the complexities of our classrooms, staff and communities in times of increasing inflation, overall investment in education has remained relatively stable and comparable to other jurisdictions over time.

In Manitoba, the proportionate investment by the provincial government in education funding has also remained highly stable over time. In 1919, the province invested 15.4 percent of its total budget in support of education. As of 2018, this has grown to 21 percent, a 5.6 percent difference overall.¹⁷⁶ The relative stability of provincial budget investment levels in education reflects the reality that, as the provincial Gross Domestic Product has grown over time, this does provide Manitoba with the advantage of maintaining what are largely unchanged funding levels to support key portfolios, including education. Is this of concern? In the Canadian context, what this stability of funding has led to, is comparability when investments are expressed in terms of per pupil funding.

Table 27– Pan-Canadian Overview of Per Pupil Funding, 2011 and 2016¹⁷⁷

	2011	2016	5 year % Change
Canada	10,268	11,388	10.9%
Newfoundland	10,139	11,071	9.2%
Prince Edward Island	9,498	11,080	16.7%
Nova Scotia	9,462	10,833	14.5%
New Brunswick	8,949	10,445	16.7%
Quebec	11,435	12,102	5.8%
Ontario	10,116	11,507	13.8%
Manitoba	10,394	12,102	16.4%
Saskatchewan	10,386	11,228	8.1%
Alberta	10,477	11,188	6.8%
British Columbia	8,723	9,654	10.7%
Yukon	18,417	21,241	15.3%
Northwest Territories	36,170	39,013	7.9%

If it were not the case that per pupil funding remained comparable to most other provinces, there would be cause for greater concern. However, that Manitoba is able to invest in its system of public education by way of maintaining comparability of funding, remains one of our province’s greatest strengths in terms of its current education finance model. What is of

¹⁷⁶ Figures taken from the annual reports of the Department of Education, 1919 and Manitoba Finance. (2019). *Getting the Job Done: Estimates of Expenditure*. The only time that funding was actually substantially less was in 1939 when the share of provincial investment in education fell to 11 percent, a reflection of the lingering impacts of the Great Depression over the preceding decade.

¹⁷⁷ Statistics Canada data.

concern is the ability for citizens to keep pace with the operational funding requirements at a local level, to help sustain this comparable per pupil funding level.

Need for a comprehensive tax commission

The K-12 Education Review Commission has asked whether funding to support public education remains sustainable. Two years ago, MSBA made the same inquiry. Our objective was to engage an independent council of experts, a roundtable that became known as the Council on Local Education Funding, to study options for doing things differently when it comes to that portion of education revenue that comes from school tax.

MSBA laid several options before this independent panel. Comprised of representatives from education, agricultural production, business, real estate, municipal government, and the public interest, the Council considered several options. Among many others, such options included moving to a regional or provincial mill rate for Manitoba, adjusting portioned assessment, offsetting the major portion of school taxes through increased provincial funding, the current system of education-related tax credits, tax moratoria, and widening of assessment through regional assessment models. We also studied revenue and expenditures models overall.

At the close of the Council's deliberations, one sole recommendation emerged: that the Province of Manitoba should move to establish a tax commission that will examine all taxes in this province, not just those that are used to support our students and schools. Such a review would be appropriate for determining the overall sustainability of tax-generated revenues for every citizen. It was felt by the experts on this Council that the time was long past due for such a comprehensive review of taxation. We therefore advance this recommendation for consideration of the K-12 Education Review Commission.

MSBA thus recommends that the K-12 Education Review Commission itself recommend that the Government of Manitoba establish a comprehensive tax commission to study taxation in general in our province, inclusive of representation from school boards, municipal government, and other public interest representatives. It is further recommended that such a tax commission be established at the Government's earliest possible opportunity.

Based on its consultations with these many community partners, MSBA believes that the same circumstances exist at the present time as existed in 1964, when, following the recommendations of the Michener Commission, the Government took the first meaningful steps to address fairness on the municipal tax bill by allocating greater grants to municipalities for roadworks, and at the same introduced the Education Property Tax Credit (EPTC) to offset the total amount of school taxes that local property owners had to invest in public education.

The challenge ever since that time has been an increased focus on the ongoing share of the local tax bill for municipal as well as for school board priorities, compounded by an EPTC that did not generally increase in the same proportionate measure as subsequent local tax increases.

In this current context of debt and deficit reduction, we would note that addressing school taxation realities does not necessarily mean greater funding on the part of the provincial treasury. The degree to which adjustments might be made in portioned assessment, towards greater fiscal equity, may yield some meaningful analysis for further consideration.

Table 28– Portioned Assessment and Education Support Levy, 1997-2018

Portioned Assessment and Education Support Levy - FRAME Actual								
	1997	2000	2003	2006	2009	2012	2015	2018
Portioned Assessment								
Urban and Farm Residential	11,741,949,520	12,374,349,240	13,621,406,500					
Other	5,830,902,800	5,874,746,210	6,757,332,339	7,576,750,730	7,902,815,020	12,680,907,600	14,890,446,630	18,522,447,030
Total	17,572,852,320	18,249,095,450	20,378,738,838	7,576,750,730	7,902,815,020	12,680,907,600	14,890,446,630	18,522,447,030
Education Support Levy								
Urban and Farm Residential	92,843,802	97,879,115	71,827,316					
Other	105,284,250	106,077,235	111,473,688					
Total	198,128,052	203,956,349	183,301,004	121,834,152	127,045,336	144,016,238	172,837,644	180,927,882
Mills								
Urban and Farm Residential	7.92	7.92	5.28	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	
Other Property	18.06	18.06	16.50	16.08	16.08	11.36	11.61	9.77

Effective as of 2006, the Education Support Levy was no longer raised on residential property.

As demonstrated in Table 28 for instance, the overall experience during the previous twenty year period, has demonstrated that meaningful changes have already taken place in an effort to address growth in tax assessment. Since the decision was made to discontinue raising of ESL on residential property beginning in 2006, ESL has generated less and less revenue over time, promoting greater ratepayer affordability. Total revenues generated by ESL therefore currently sit at less than their 1997 total. Portioned assessment has also tended to demonstrate restrained growth.

Table 29– Portioned Assessment and the Special Levy, 1997-2018

Total Portioned Assessment, Special Levy and Mill Rates (Province Total) - FRAME Actual								
	1997	2000	2003	2006	2009	2012	2015	2018
Portioned Assessment								
Urban and Farm Residential	11,741,949,520	12,374,349,240	13,621,406,500	17,142,380,560	18,346,446,010	36,114,565,330	43,079,136,460	50,414,567,670
Farm Land and Buildings	1,810,865,990	1,990,184,700	2,207,638,818	2,646,163,510	2,655,795,950	3,971,305,480	4,841,681,210	8,520,935,020
Other	5,830,902,800	5,874,746,210	6,757,332,339	7,607,998,870	7,902,815,020	12,680,907,600	14,890,446,630	18,522,447,030
Total	19,383,718,310	20,239,280,150	22,586,377,656	27,396,542,940	28,905,056,980	52,766,778,410	62,811,264,300	77,457,949,720
Special Levy	360,573,947	422,765,478	523,762,915	623,890,083	703,498,360	771,438,893	898,133,898	1,048,330,481
Special Levy Mill Rate	18.70	20.90	23.30	22.80	24.40	14.70	14.30	13.60
Gross Special Levy and Tax Incentive Grant								
					2009	2012	2015	2018
Gross Special Levy					726,951,404	832,857,207	959,552,225	1,102,281,955
TIG					23,453,044	61,418,314	61,418,327	53,951,474
Net Special Levy					703,498,360	771,438,893	898,133,898	1,048,330,481
For 2009/10 a Tax Incentive Grant (TIG) was offered to school divisions that held their 2009 mill rate at the 2008 mill rate. The TIG reduces the amount of Special Levy that would otherwise have to be raised through an increased mill rate. Divisions that received a TIG in 2008/09 and declined the 2009/10 TIG continue to receive the 2008/09 TIG amount.								
In terms of the Net Special Levy, this means net of the Tax Incentive Grant requisitioned by school divisions for the tax year. Actual remittance to school divisions by municipalities is reduced by the Education Property Tax Credit.								

The above data succinctly captures portioned assessment and the Special Levy over the past 20 years. One can see that assessment has increased by 400 percent. This has of course translated into substantially higher revenues through the Special Levy over time, with lower mill rates during the same timeframe. The table also accounts for how the introduction of the Tax Incentive Grant in 2009/10 served to offset the total amount that most school divisions would have raised using the Special Levy. We believe that a comprehensive tax commission could consider this data by way of modelling for the future, in a way that takes all revenues, expenditures and factors into consideration.

Promoting greater citizen and ratepayer awareness and understanding

One of the major suggestions that MSBA received from those who provided input through the Council on Local Education was the need for citizens to achieve greater understanding of how their tax monies are invested in support of public education.

To help simplify this information and promote such an understanding, we have embarked on a project that is designed to effectively communicate of how each dollar that is invested in public education in Manitoba is spent, when it comes to the operating costs of each school division.

Graph 33– MSBA Loonie Chart of Operating Investments per Dollar, 2018

Of each dollar spent:

80¢ goes directly to the frontline, to pay for the teachers and support workers

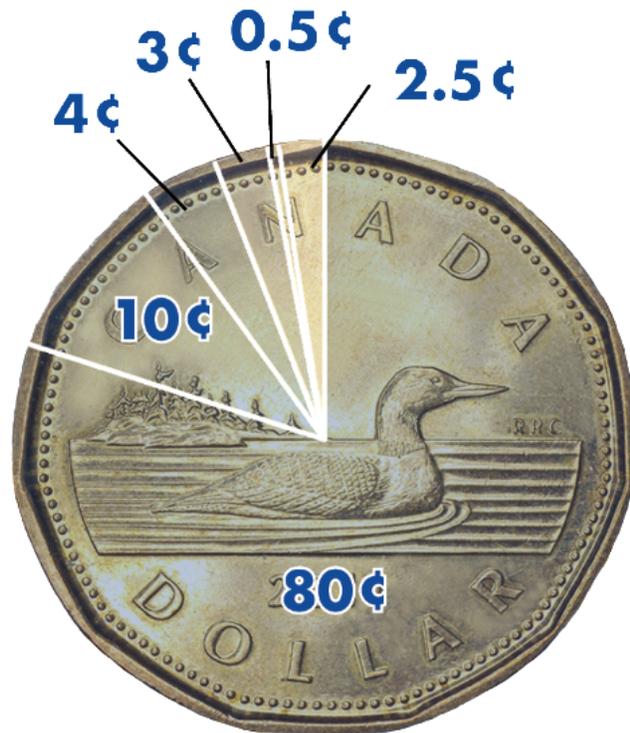
10¢ goes to operations and maintenance, to provide supplies, to fix and repair schools and to keep the heat and lights on

4¢ goes to transporting kids to and from school, including maintaining and fuelling the bus fleet

3¢ pays for qualified administrators to meet the needs of changing, demanding, and fast-paced school divisions

0.5¢ supports the work of locally elected school boards, who ensure that the local voices and local choices are protected when it comes to meeting the needs of each community's children

2.5¢ Any remaining funds are used to deliver programming for local communities and to operate Adult Learning Centres



Pending the establishment of a platform that can identify how each dollar is invested on the part of each school division, the above loonie chart demonstrates to all citizens where, using the provincial average, each of their dollars are invested.

Many school boards are also working with municipal partners to clarify what portion of the local tax bill is school-related versus municipal-related. MSBA is also in process of constructing an accessible, online calculator that will enable all citizens to receive a succinct overview of how their school taxes are invested, for the benefit of students and people in their community.

Sustainability and adequacy of operational funding

In terms of the question of future operational funding and whether such funding remains adequate and sustainable to address student equity and educational requirements, MSBA has long been of the perspective, shared by its partners the Association of Manitoba Municipalities and the Manitoba Chambers of Commerce, that a move towards 80 percent provincially subsidized operating would be desirable. Successive studies have already been undertaken throughout the 1990s and into the millennium, to identify prospects to decrease school board reliance on local education levies for shared benefit.

Achieving such an adjustment would serve to offset the revenues that do come from education levies. How it might be possible to move from 60 percent provincial grant funding to an 80 percent target could also potentially be addressed by the recommended Tax Commission. We remain fully cognizant of the important and current challenges before the Government of Manitoba in addressing deficit and debt reduction priorities and have offered our support and assistance in helping the Government to meet these targets. Notwithstanding, we remain of the shared perspective, with our community partners, that increasing the provincial share of funding remains a compelling public policy objective.

We therefore recommend that the K-12 Education Review Commission itself recommend that the Government of Manitoba undertake a review of the education funding formula at the earliest possible opportunity, with focus on enhancing student and fiscal equity and guided by the principle of promoting investment of a greater share of provincial revenues to offset local taxes.

We would further propose that such a review include representatives of the Manitoba School Boards Association, the Manitoba Association of School Business Officials, the Association of Manitoba Municipalities and the Manitoba Municipal Administrators Association, given the exclusive authority and expertise vested in the members of these organizations in the administration and management of local school revenues. Lastly, we would further recommend that such a review be undertaken as expeditiously as possible.

The question of centralized funding

MSBA does not believe that a move towards centralized funding, as has occurred in every other province with the exception of Quebec (which has adopted a regional mill rate model for collection of its tax revenues), will serve the best interests of students or of our communities. Over the past sixty years, there has always been consensus that, in order to local school boards to continue to meet local needs, some portion of fiscal autonomy remains desirable.

For us, achieving the 80 percent provincial and 20 percent local share would serve to realize this priority. The many examples of local programs, supports and services that we have outlined throughout this report, and also through the “This is Local Choice” series (Appendix B), remains dependent on localized opportunity and decision to allocate resources to address the distinct needs that exist across every community. We therefore recommend that the Commission consider the importance of school board retention of fiscal autonomy and revenue capacity, in order to address distinctive educational needs at a local level.

In keeping with the Quebec model, the Council on Local Education Funding investigated the potential for harmonization of mill rates to achieve greater fiscal equity. The Council noted that

such an approach would respect local autonomy by empowering school boards to maintain their current authorities for levy-based revenue generation, while avoiding a whole-scale centralization of their fiscal capacity. The Council also observed that, because centralization of funding in other provinces has not served to address the degree to which public education relies upon property taxation (see Table 26), a more meaningful reform would be desirable that would represent a “win-win” solution for all interests, especially those of our local ratepayers.

By harmonizing mills, regionally or provincially, it was felt that this would serve the larger interests of ratepayers. The Council concluded however, that evaluation and further study of the possible merits of this strategy, and other alternative approaches to revenue generation, would best be addressed under a more comprehensive tax commission.

To what extent the members of MSBA would support the observations made by the Council has not been surveyed by our association to date. That meaningful conversation must occur in advance of any significant proposals for change to education finance has however, always remained our association’s firmest belief.

General consequences of inflation

MSBA has always advocated for funding that keeps pace with inflationary pressures. We well recognize that inflation drives costs and determines the extent to which we are able to protect frontline services for the benefit of our students, staff and schools.

In the short term, for those boards that remain eligible for operating grant increases, MSBA would observe that current inflationary adjustments for Manitoba are projected to increase at some of the highest forecasts in several years. This will most certainly place a marked burden upon all school divisions in terms of meeting average yearly operating costs.

In the past, the Provincial Government has come through for those school boards that do qualify for funding increases, in the form of operating increases that reflect adjustment to meet the inflationary rate.

In recent times, approval of any such inflationary increase has also come with one significant condition: a recommended limit increase of two percent was suggested by Government to boards when setting their local mill rates over the previous two years, in an effort to maintain overall household taxation levels.

As a result of this decision, many internal budget measures have been undertaken by boards to ensure zero impact to front-line program and service delivery. In most cases, school boards were able to implement the recommended mill increase that was put forward by Government. In many cases, boards were able to offset any impacts by depleting existing divisional operating reserves.

With inflation increasing at more significant year over year adjustments, boards not on the equalization guarantee will find it increasingly difficult to stave off front-line impacts if increases to operating funding do not match inflation rates and/or if mill rates remain capped.

The ongoing depletion of operating reserves over the course of 2017/18 and 2018/19 has meant that the primary means boards may have had in previous years to offset global budget impacts, may no longer remain available in the coming fiscal period. By continuing to work together in

partnership on this specific question, we can ensure that no students, staff or communities will be impacted going into the future, due to projected inflationary pressures.

For boards that have historically received the Tax Incentive Grant (TIG), a program established in to control local taxation, direction has been set to repeal this grant by two percent per year, starting in 2017/18. When combined with comparable reductions during the 2018/19 and 2019/20 Fiscal Years, these boards therefore received six percent less operating funding overall. As the TIG represents approximately \$61 million in funding, this will represent a collective reduction (ie: spread across all TIG recipients) of approximately two entire weeks of school operating funding for those boards who will be impacted.

At the same time, these boards face increasing budget constraints, given that annual inflationary pressures come with the same operating impacts as they do for those boards not on the formula guarantee. Faced with a six percent reduction in grant support and in view of inflationary impacts that raise costs, these boards have faced significant decisions when it comes to maintaining status quo delivery for programs, services and supports.

Every year, our association conducts a survey of our members to study the overall impacts of each year's Funding of Schools announcement. In 2018, boards on the formula guarantee were most impacted coming out of the 2018 provincial budget. One school division was compelled to cancel a pilot program designed to support early years learning in the area of numeracy. Other school divisions addressed the budget shortfall by implementing human resource vacancy management and attrition strategies for non-frontline staff positions. In 2019, cancellation of mental health services, deletion of technical-vocational programming, and many other frontline impacts have been locally reported.

From the perspective of our association, these impacts, while reflective of marginal incremental change, are the starting symptoms of a deeper reality that will only continue to be faced by these school boards.

Into the future, the same level of program and service delivery will prove increasingly difficult for these school boards to sustain, particularly if grant support is further reduced and does not at the same time address annual inflationary pressures. We therefore do anticipate that into the future, front-line programming and services across mainly rural and northern school divisions will in fact become impacted in far greater proportion.

No one in Manitoba should be under any illusion that externally driven inflationary pressures will not continue to pose challenges for public school divisions province-wide. As just one illustrative example over the past year, MSBA petitioned the Public Utilities Board to implement a more gradual approach to approval of Manitoba Hydro's proposed general rate increase. With electric and heating costs still increasing by 5.5 percent between 2018 and 2019, school boards will face additional combined expenditure pressures of well over \$2 million system-wide.

MSBA also joined forces with partners nationwide, including CMEC, in opposing possible changes to the federal *Copyright Act* that would have seen school boards shouldered with millions of dollars in costs for continued use of print, visual and other classroom materials.

Our efforts to address such external cost pressures may not seem all that significant, given the overall level of public education investment in Manitoba. However, when combined with many

other inflationary factors, these costs are what contribute to the perception of significant runaway expenses when it comes to operating our schools. Rising fuel prices (compounded by the establishment of the new carbon Tax), rising rates for vehicle insurance, and even the escalation of grocery costs over this past year, have meant that the same has to be achieved every year but with far less.

It should also be noted that, for entities such as the Child Nutrition Council of Manitoba, which depend on low grocery prices to maximize available support for Manitoba's most impoverished students, ongoing hikes to food prices have meant that they are not able to deliver the same. They can only deliver less. This deserves very careful consideration given the important co-relationship between child nutrition and academic achievement, as outlined under the focus area on student learning.

If school boards and the Government of Manitoba can therefore continue to work together in addressing these inflationary pressures overall, we can continue to assure zero impact upon our students, staff and communities. For this reason, we have always strongly encouraged the Government of Manitoba to consider tying annual operating support to the general rate of inflation, when finalizing its development of the provincial budget.

Longitudinally, as has been showcased through Graph 32, that there has been a widening of the difference between provincial and local investment as expressed in constant dollars (adjusted for inflation) and the actual amounts invested in current dollars, remains a very real funding challenge. At MSBA, we therefore feel that it is very important that the Commission be aware of this dynamic, as it influences public perceptions about the degree of investment that has been needed to continue operations.

We therefore recommend that the Commission consider the important differences between actual and constant levels of investment in the public education system when determining how investments in public education have changed over time, as this can be used to inform and contextualise sustainability and adequacy of overall funding support.

As noted, this dynamic tends to fuel a significant degree of misunderstanding. The reality is that until recently, school boards province-wide have received funding that has remained largely adequate to keep pace with constant needs. This funding has also been stable over many decades, even while existing cost control measures have been directed to minimize inflationary impacts, namely in terms of administrative cost controls, implemented guidance on limitations in the setting of the mill rate, and also through incentive measures designed to contain local revenue generation. Recognizing this will be important for the Commission to consider when developing its recommendations regarding the overall adequacy and sustainability of funding.

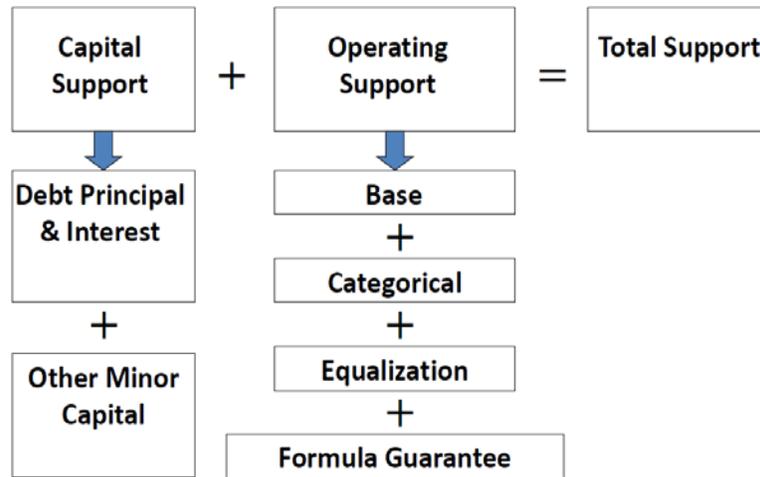
The Funding of Schools Program

In terms of the base, categorical and other funding that are provided by the Government of Manitoba to support core operations, a brief explanation of how provincial operating support flows to support school divisions is necessary.

As shown in Graph 34, provincial support takes two forms: capital and operating. It remains the reality for all school boards in Manitoba that school properties are retained under Crown ownership. Capital requirements are identified by school boards, which exercise maintenance

and operating responsibility for this infrastructure. Construction of new school capital is requested of the Province by school boards through the Public Schools Finance Branch and such decisions in turn remain dependent upon provincial resource allocation, informed by availability of debt financing. As noted, the Government of Manitoba also provides minor capital support for such items as supplies and equipment for major programming, including for trades shops and, from time to time, in support of other moveable assets.

Graph 34– Overview of Provincial Grant Support for Public Education, 2018



The bulk of funding however, flows to school divisions in the form of operating support, which is further defined in terms of four main funding types, base, categorical, equalization and formula guarantee. These grants are divided into further categories, as demonstrated in Table 30.

MSBA would note that growth over time in these funding types has generally remained adequate to provide foundational and therefore core support for those items that each grant is designed to address. The Government of Manitoba has also established new operating grants over time to remain responsive to emergent needs and requirements. Achievement of increased balance over the years, between block and conditional funding support, has also been appreciated.

However, given the widening gulf between actual and constant investment, that taxation revenues have increasingly served to make up the difference in funding across all types of expenditures is noteworthy. As just one example, when it comes to EAL funding support for newcomer and refugee students, school boards currently cover approximately \$10M in additional expenditure for these supports through taxation revenues beyond what is provided through the grant received from the Department of Education and Training for this purpose. This remains true notwithstanding the fact that funding for EAL categorical support from Manitoba Education has outpaced many other grants over the same timeframe (see Table 30). This same reality is evident in several other grant areas as well.

Given that Funding of Schools Program grants represent the approximately 60 percent of all operating funds that the provincial government contributes in support of public education, one can assess whether the types of grants and the amounts provided to that end, are “adequate” to

meet need. MSBA has developed a comprehensive policy statement on education funding that has informed our advocacy on this important topic. This policy addresses funding needs and requirements related to many of the grants that are described in this chapter. A copy of this policy can be found at Appendix D.

In those instances where grants are not available in sufficient volumes to meet population needs and requirements, the larger question of sustainability is important. Overall however, that Manitoba has maintained comparability of its per pupil support on a national stage (see Table 27) remains appreciated by all school boards. Core mandates designed to respond to student learning and teaching needs could not be realized, without this ongoing level of support.

Table 30– Funding of Schools Program Grants, 1997-2018

Schools Finance Program - FRAME Actual	1997	2000	2003	2006	2009	2012	2015	2018
Base Support								
Support for Recognized Expenditures	369,784,985	387,907,785						
Curricular Materials		9,145,539	8,641,191	9,543,108	9,943,981	10,348,615	9,895,879	11,002,656
Information Technology		7,467,144	7,001,708	6,817,924	7,476,898	9,968,112	10,287,764	10,574,198
Library Services	15,314,904	16,215,217	15,699,544	15,681,225	15,286,087	15,284,438	15,265,711	15,690,751
Level 1 Special Needs	42,568,806	44,092,356	46,386,279					
Early Behaviour Intervention		2,019,342	1,904,217					
Early Identification		250,002						
Counselling and Guidance	8,851,505	9,318,125	9,393,014	12,451,465	13,624,556	13,623,086	13,772,324	14,155,843
Professional Development	3,695,699	5,208,001	5,905,426	6,777,926	8,109,178	6,853,807	6,804,415	6,961,675
Occupancy	75,567,708	76,401,153	78,706,448	82,884,157	85,308,047	85,432,498	85,499,993	85,499,975
Instructional Support			312,131,693	317,738,909	319,961,684	320,013,424	319,633,766	328,546,303
Sparsity Support			11,907,083	11,491,355	11,190,095	11,036,385	11,036,802	11,002,656
Student Services				61,538,495	62,287,367	62,038,940	62,928,776	64,174,771
Additional Instructional Support for Small Schools					878,021	979,911	711,469	860,419
Physical Education					3,673,584	3,848,464	3,670,754	3,696,526
Total	515,783,607	558,024,664	495,772,386	524,924,564	537,739,498	539,427,680	539,507,653	551,396,223
The Early Behaviour Intervention Grant was moved to categorical support around 2003								
Categorical Support								
Special Needs	43,882,207	53,945,720	66,922,706	84,281,667	95,373,981	92,147,763	87,133,207	90,784,046
Students at Risk	10,455,739	11,197,170	12,065,921					
Transportation	35,005,521	37,310,976	37,471,699	40,549,181	43,224,881	42,500,332	43,038,612	43,372,607
Technical-Vocational	7,073,600	7,461,225	8,325,663	8,255,710	9,012,970	9,273,535	9,293,443	8,659,625
French Language Programs		5,182,555	5,715,180	5,899,183	6,211,513	6,751,202	7,209,724	7,543,500
Language Enrichment for Native Students		5,158,398						
Early Literacy Intervention / Literacy and Numeracy		5,699,786	5,649,563	6,200,000	6,200,000	7,316,261	13,159,797	14,194,108
Aboriginal Academic Achievement			5,843,299	6,848,801	7,532,524	8,787,388	9,868,900	10,362,250
English Additional Language				6,064,652	9,491,750	11,246,480	10,866,490	12,086,345
Early Childhood Development				1,448,233	1,597,293	2,394,896	2,539,500	2,669,133
Other Categorical	27,387,725	11,153,705	17,660,947	14,259,423	18,775,513	15,771,898	15,694,990	14,311,287
Total	123,804,792	137,109,535	161,598,536	173,806,850	197,420,425	196,189,755	198,804,663	203,982,901
Other FSP Grants								
Supplementary Support	26,523,123	34,402,122						
Other Program Support	7,534,975	7,302,979	5,961,532	8,708,705	8,901,914	8,858,724	10,198,058	8,559,363
Equalization Support			100,423,435	104,562,135	156,093,988	181,260,148	256,824,296	284,029,050
Amalgamated Division Guarantee			1,861,832	964,107	116,176			
Additional Equalization Support				14,770,791	22,918,467	23,922,974	23,922,974	23,922,974
Formula Guarantee					4,741,809	45,345,273	21,621,653	15,932,298
Total	673,646,497	736,839,300	765,617,721	827,737,152	927,932,277	995,004,554	1,050,879,297	1,087,822,809
Uniform Mill Rate Amount	146,768,975	150,353,816						
Equalization is provided to recognize the varying ability of school divisions to meet the cost of unsupported program requirements through the property tax base of the school division.								
Additional Equalization is provided to specifically assist school divisions or districts that have both higher than average tax effort and lower than average assessment per pupil.								
The amalgamated division guarantee was a guarantee provided to ensure amalgamated divisions received no less funding than they would have received if they were unamalgamated								
Formula Guarantee is provided to ensure that every school division will receive at least a 2% increase in funding until 2017, when guarantee adjusted to ensure divisions receive at least								
Other program support includes School Buildings "D" Support, Technology Education Equipment and other minor capital support.								

The question then becomes one focused on sustainability and how to improve delivery of funding in a way that supports focus on becoming the most improved province overall. As mentioned prior, an important question related to this focus is how much can continue to be borne by the ratepayer. Another question that deserves response is the right balance of accountability to effectively and efficiently administer this level of funding.

In respect of the former question, MSBA has already provided its recommendations. Taxation and the education funding formula deserve their own distinctive review, to determine what might be done differently, if anything, to address growth in local revenue generation. Another approach in addressing growth in costs and sustainability for ratepayers may also be found in the question of the ongoing downloading of costs to the public education system from health, social service and justice budget portfolios.

These continuing cost downloads have increased expenditures in the delivery of services to students and added significantly to what a school is expected to provide in the 21st century. From social workers to school resource police officers to clinicians, as needs have changed so too have the costs associated with maintaining and expanding such services. In the face of such challenges, many school boards have simply accepted responsibility for offering such supports, notwithstanding historical reliance on other systems to provide such service. As we noted under the focus area on teaching, redressing this situation can occur through enhanced and targeted funding from the province to support centralized services, through the traditional portfolios that have been responsible for providing such services.

Given increasing needs for clinician services, and the reality that mental health requirements for students are increasingly addressed through divisional staffing to deliver core supports, the above observation comes with the same caveat we offered prior: it is integral to ensure that capacity and supply of human resources remain adequate and sustainable to meet our students' needs. We would therefore not advocate that employment of required professionals by school divisions be discontinued outright, in favour of exclusive delivery of such services through other sectors, if this would mean that these other sectors would be required to address program and service demands according to their existing capacity. Were this to occur, MSBA would note that students, families and communities across Manitoba would quickly become disadvantaged.

As an aside, we would also note that in many other provinces, school resource officers are wholly funded by their respective policing agencies, while in Manitoba, this tends to reflect a sharing whereby school divisions pay the entry-level salary of a police officer and the remaining compensation is then split 50/50 between municipal and provincial levels of government.

In terms of school resource officers and social workers, much work has already occurred province-wide to develop the community hub model that we have described under the focus area on student learning. Such hubs serve to foster greater inter-sectoral and inter-agency collaboration, focused on meeting the needs of at-risk students. By enhancing relationship and communication through such collaborative models, we are hopeful that appropriate dedication of police and social work professionals to support school communities, through their respective budget portfolios, can continue to occur.

By way of containing costs to education going forward, we therefore recommend that the Commission take into account the absorption by the public education system of programming,

supports and services normally delivered under health, justice and social services portfolios, when examining sustainability of expenditures for public education in Manitoba.

In respect of the second question concerning the right balance of accountability to effectively and efficiently administer provincial grant funding, MSBA has always maintained that block funding remains the most desirable form of funding. While general frameworks of accountability serve to indicate how grant funding is invested to respond to each identified category which has been defined for a specific grant, maximum flexibility in liberating staff time to make use of these grants remains important.

As an example of this, we would highlight the changes that have recently taken place in special needs funding, to address requirements for students with disabilities and exceptionalities. Whereas these grants formerly required significant administrative requirements, a reality that consumed undue amounts of staff time, the decision to flow special needs funding proportionately to all school divisions, with school division allocation of these resources to schools, has addressed much of the “red tape” that formerly governed these important grants. This could not have been more important, given the significant growth in special needs grant funding as demonstrated under Table 30.

In the context of what MSBA has described under the section of this report on student learning, maximal use of time and deployment of time management strategies applies to students in the classroom, but it equally applies to our employees. Freeing their time to invest in frontline service delivery, as opposed to grant administration, has and can continue to make a significant difference.

Capital infrastructure, assets and technology

Beyond operating investments, MSBA believes that the Commission should be aware of the importance of capital infrastructure and its role in delivering public education. At current time, based on a survey of our members, MSBA would observe that the average age of our current schools tends to be 50 years or greater in Manitoba. Special investments made in the 1950s, 60s and 70s following the establishment of high school or collegiate divisions, along with general investments as required to accommodate the so-called baby boom generation during those years, served to address capital requirements at that time.

The general state of this infrastructure today has however, meant significantly increased maintenance and operating expenditures. It is important for the Commission to understand that whereas a 100 year old school today is a relatively rare structure, as we look ahead to the next century, the need for renewal of infrastructure that will approach the same anniversary will only accentuate.

Retrofitting infrastructure to anticipate accessibility needs of the students, staff and community members who access our buildings and properties for a host of purposes, will only add to capital pressures overall. Expenditures related to maintenance and operation of buildings will also foreseeably increase into the immediate future, given uncontrollable externalities such as hydro rate increases and the imposition of the federal carbon tax.

While MSBA’s advocacy has been directed towards achieving improved understanding among the decision-makers responsible for such increases, it is MSBA’s experience that other

governments and entities choose to download costs onto the public school system, rather than supporting school boards in their task of responding to fiscal pressures and restraint. The impact is either a reduction to programs, supports and services for our students and communities, or the need to increase educational levies to address such pressures.

Expenditures associated with general asset renewal, including for general equipment and supplies and also for larger assets such as maintenance, operation and renewal of bus and vehicle fleets, remain significant. Efforts to establish common procurement initiatives to address asset renewal are ongoing and have helped to achieve greater efficiencies, even while replacement costs associated with aged assets can be considerable and as such, are regularly deferred, posing safety concerns.

Technology and IT infrastructure also remains an added challenge, given an increasingly connected and automated world. Dependence on technology for educational applications and the need to equip students with increasing sophistication in those technological tools and applications that will ensure they are prepared for lifelong learning, means that we cannot shortchange this key priority. MSBA foresees that such needs will only grow and never diminish. There are countless examples across Manitoba of how local school board priorities for funding IT infrastructure and connectivity have benefitted entire communities with connectivity and access to technology, while providing students with access to a greater array of online and distance delivery course options that stimulate and respond to their interests.

As a partial means of addressing system-wide requirements, we have already tabled recommendation 14, that the Commission extend consideration to the opportunity for the establishment of a specialized rural and northern technology grant. This aligns with each of the above stated opportunities.

Consideration for a multi-year funding model

Addressing the level of investment that is needed to ensure that our public education system remains strong and that capacity keeps pace with all future needs and requirements represents one of the most daunting challenges for school boards and the Government of Manitoba. MSBA would posit that this challenge is and can be exacerbated by annualized funding that inhibits multilateral and long-term planning to address all needs.

In order to address needs even over the course of one decade, the reality of annual budget processes does tend toward meeting only immediate needs year over year. This occurs in spite of our best efforts to focus on investing in those items that will ensure we are able to promote equity and accessibility, remain responsive, agile and flexible, and deliver high quality programs, services and supports.

Such a funding model does not seek to place blame on any single organization or individual. Rather, it reflects the way that things have always been done, and stems from the nature of public sector budgeting and investment processes. It is also a reflection of many additional realities, including changes arising from the four year election cycle, as well as based on national and provincial economic performance, federal funding transfers and support, and changes within key revenue sources.

This said, that the sources of revenue and the functions in which expenditures have been made have tended to remain generally stable over time, this may lend itself to consideration for the introduction of a multi-year funding approach.

Table 31– Proportionate Operating Fund Revenues by Source, 1997-2018

Operating Fund Revenue by Source % - FRAME Actual								
	1997	2000	2003	2006	2009	2012	2015	2018
Provincial	62	60.2	56.6	62.2	65.4	64.9	61.9	59.3
Municipal	32.5	34	37.7	31.9	28.9	29.1	31.8	34.7
Federal	1.1	1.1	1	0.1	0.6	0.9	0.3	0.2
First Nations	2	1.9	2.2	3.5	3.1	3	4	4.1
Other Divisions	0.9	1	0.9	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.5
Private	1	1.1	1.2	1.1	1.1	1.1	1	0.8
Other	0.5	0.5	0.4	0.5	0.4	0.4	0.3	0.2

Table 32– Proportionate Operating Fund Expenditures by Function, 1997-2018

Operating Fund Expenditure by Function % - FRAME Actual								
	1997	2000	2003	2006	2009	2012	2015	2018
Regular Instruction	56.6	59.9	58.2	56.5	55.3	55.3	55.8	55.7
Exceptional / Student Support Services (2006)	12.9	13.7	14.3	17.2	18.6	18.8	18.4	18.6
Community Education	0.7	0.6	0.7	0.9	1	1	1.1	1
Divisional Administration	3.6	3.6	3.4	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.4
Instructional and Pupil Support Services	5.4	5.1	5.1	5.1	3.6	3.6	3.4	3.4
Transportation of Pupils	4	4	3.9	4	4.1	4.3	4.3	4.4
Operations and Maintenance	11.8	12.1	12.1	12.1	11.7	11.4	11.4	11.5
Fiscal	2.8	1.8	1.8	1.8	1.8	1.7	1.7	1.7
Technology (Vocational)	2.3							
Adult Learning Centres				0.4	0.5	0.4	0.5	0.4

Were it therefore possible to adapt certain processes within the annual budget cycle to achieve multi-year investments that would be guaranteed over a longer period, this would certainly assist school boards in addressing system-wide priorities. Especially in terms of core program and capital infrastructure, achievement of a multi-year funding model has remained a desirable yet elusive opportunity for all school boards to date.

We therefore recommend that the Commission extend consideration to the overall capacity of school divisions to address short and long-term goals for public education in Manitoba, in relation to the current annualized funding model. Further, that the Commission support multi-year funding for core program and capital infrastructure by way of promoting achievement of a longer term vision focused on enhanced student achievement and equity.

Charter schools and voucher funding

Within public education today, particularly south of the American border, a great deal continues to be written concerning public investment in charter schools, voucher funding to support private education, and how both come with the most negative of impacts concerning sustainability of resources to support public education. There are many arguments as to why

charter schools and voucher education work or do not work. MSBA does not hold a formal policy view of either.

In the lead up to this review, some commentators have however, suggested that Manitoba may benefit from introducing these forms of education to fit our local context. MSBA would simply note that what Manitoba already has, in terms of funded independent schools, would represent the equivalent of the voucher system that has been introduced in many American states. As noted earlier in this report under shared accountability, that parental decisions to enrol students in independent schools in Manitoba tends to reflect faith-informed reasons does distinguish private education in Manitoba from many other jurisdictional contexts. MSBA has therefore never challenged ongoing support by Manitoba Education for independent schools. We have however, emphasized that these schools must remain subject to the same accountability frameworks as public schools, by way of promoting system coherence.

From our perspective, it remains important that all educational entities collaborate to achieve greater educational attainment and to this end, public education does provide critical support that serves to enhance equity and opportunity for students in independent schools. We therefore believe that, in respect of “vouchers”, what Manitoba already has is working, and does not require change at current time.

In terms of charter education, we would also note that Manitoba has such education in place, albeit not in a manner that is analogous or reflective of many of the core characteristics that distinguish charter schools from public schools in other jurisdictions. Given the portability of local revenues to support pupils enrolled in the Division scolaire franco-manitobaine, as well the legal method prescribed for funding support for pupils enrolled in the high school programming that is offered by the Manitoba Institute of Trades and Technology, that these examples reflect the same funding principles as exist for charter schools in other jurisdictions, has represented the extent to which such models have been established in Manitoba.

In both cases, there are very compelling reasons for such models, given the constitutional protections and rights that are vested in the DSFM (as discussed under the focus area on governance), and the historical arrangements that existed between the predecessor entities to MITT and its founding school boards.

That we must strive to ensure that our regular public education system remains adequately funded, to promote greater focus on achieving fiscal and student equity for all students and ratepayers during a period of limited resources, should mean that we focus efforts in the future on strengthening and enhancing revenues in support of what is, rather than to consider the subtraction of funding to create models of education that may lead to elitism, congregation, segregation or exclusion.

That such principles are contradictory to the governing principles of equity, inclusion and fairness that the public education system in Manitoba strives to achieve, must deserve very careful consideration. We would therefore encourage the Commission to consider the opportunity to strengthening delivery of evidence-based, poverty-targeted initiatives that will provide enhanced support of all public schools, to meet the needs of students province-wide before any consideration would be extended to voucher or charter forms of education.

We believe that many of our members would support this approach and we would also note that several have implemented local programs that are aimed at achieving the same approach that many charter schools would provide, without compromising the principles of public education or creating semi-autonomous governance structures that would duplicate alignment and challenge coherence across K-12 education in Manitoba.

Final thoughts on funding

Manitoba's collective history has demonstrated significant investment of time and effort in addressing the question of education finance and funding. Over time, many of the same perspectives have informed public policy review on this important topic, as were shared at the very beginning of this chapter. MSBA has always advocated for an equitable education funding system that will serve to promote the hallmarks of student and fiscal equity, local and fiscal autonomy, fairness for ratepayers, sustainable funding investments that reflect the best tenets of adaptability, flexibility and accountability, while also remaining effective and efficient to address the needs of students and staff.

We trust that the information and data provided to the Commission will be informative and assist in untangling an education finance model that many feel is cumbersome and complex. The reality, as we have shown, is that while our current model of finance may reflect sophistication given its design to respond to many significant circumstances and realities across this province, it has been a model that has nevertheless worked well.

Without provincial government funding support, delivery of public education would not be possible. By the same token albeit in somewhat smaller measure, without local revenue support, delivery of public education would not be possible. That responsibilities are shared leads to strengthening of accountability under our continuing partnership for addressing the needs of students and communities.

In recent years, the question of sustainability of our funding model in relation to the local ratepayer has increasingly been brought to the attention of school boards. The many recommendations that MSBA has tabled reflect our commitment to investigating options and alternatives that might serve to address this need, while at the same time ensuring that the needs of our students, staff and schools continue to be addressed.

One of the major achievements of Manitoba's funding model has been the reflection of stability over time. While several important shifts have occurred within the scope of grants or processes, that the outcome of funding investments has generally reflected a gradual increase (when adjusted for actual dollars invested) has meant that, quite contrary to ongoing critique, our system of public education has remained relatively moderate in terms of actual growth.

That Manitoba's overall funding investment has also led to comparability in terms of per pupil funding nationally, means that in spite of the many challenges that might exist across the funding model, it does support competitive standing for Manitoba relative to its provincial peers.

The key challenge would appear to be the degree to which inflation impacts growth in all costs related to education. To this end, we believe that two separate and distinctive reviews: one of taxation in general, and one devoted to the education funding formula, would serve to

modernize efforts to understand whether any changes might occur that would promote lesser reliance upon local education revenues, while also addressing the larger question of equity and fairness in distribution of resources.

That MSBA and its longstanding partners, including the Association of Manitoba Municipalities and the Manitoba Chambers of Commerce, have advocated for such a review over many decades means that, as with this present review, an opportunity presents to place fresh focus on this subject that may well be “once in a generation”.

Predictability of funding has long remained one of the other shared principles that our membership believes is necessary, remaining as important as the questions of adequacy and sustainability. To that end, we have demonstrated that over time, revenue and expenditures at the operating level have remained fairly stable. This stability may well lend itself to prospects for multi-year funding that can better promote such predictability.

To conclude, MSBA would note that behind every dollar and every cent that is invested in education, there is a human reality that is often obscured amidst focus on models and processes, facts and numbers. We noted earlier that the decisions which are made in respect of educational programming to prepare our human resources for service to their school divisions can impact the very future of this province. So too, the decisions that are made concerning funding can represent all the difference in the kinds of educational programming, supports or service delivery that will enhance a student’s educational experience and their preparation for life beyond the classroom.

The many initiatives that we have described in our focus on student learning directly depend on investments to make those a reality across this province. In our recognition that addressing poverty through ongoing mitigation can lead to improved academic achievement and student success overall, that funding plays the key role in providing the resources necessary to do so, goes without mention.

As Commission Co-chair MacKinnon once concluded:

In the end, government decisions affect all of us, and minding the public purse involves more than just watching the dollars and cents. It means making the best public policy choices within the broad framework of the trade-offs required for us to live within our means. Minding the public purse is the responsibility of all of us, and each of us has an obligation to contribute what we can to the debate about Canada’s future.¹⁷⁸

We hope that through the data, information and evidence that has been presented in this chapter, we have responded to this most critical observation.

¹⁷⁸ MacKinnon, J. (2003). *Minding the public purse: The fiscal crisis, political trade-offs, and Canada’s future*. McGill-Queen’s University Press, Montreal & Kingston., p. 282.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

The following provides a summary of all recommendations submitted for consideration of the K-12 Education Review Commission from the Manitoba School Boards Association.

LONG TERM VISION

MSBA would recommend that the Commission:

1. construct its long-term vision for public education using reliable projections of population growth, by way of supporting the resources necessary to respond, adapt to and sustain educational demands across urban, rural and northern communities.
2. recognize the need for programming, supports and services that will assist Aboriginal and Indigenous communities, as well as newcomer and refugee communities, to promote their ongoing integration and inclusion within public education and in preparation for labour market entry.
3. inform its long-term vision for public education by embracing the importance of opportunities for continued excellence through provision of French language (FL1 and FL2) programming, supports and services— both to respond to the constitutional rights of the Francophone minority language community in Manitoba and also to meet parental and student demand for French language education at the FL2 level, including basic and immersion programs.
4. recognize the importance of maintaining focus on and response to work relevant experience (through high school apprenticeships, work practica, career preparation and other student experiences), as well as through resources for the expansion of dual credit courses and community connectors. This recognition will help to promote ongoing alignment between secondary and post-secondary sectors of study and training while also providing even greater opportunities for student preparedness beyond high school.

STUDENT LEARNING

5. review successful programs that demonstrate evidence-based and proven results in addressing the impacts and risks of student poverty, to determine opportunities for possible expansion of such programs to all school divisions across the province in future.
6. consider opportunities for province-wide expansion of nursery, pre-Kindergarten and full-day Kindergarten programming for optimal early years impact.
7. consider the importance of Manitoba's current commitment to integration, inclusion and accessibility for all students, staff and community members by way of promoting the ongoing delivery of equitable, effective and efficient programming, supports and services that serve to meet community needs.
8. consider evidence-based models that demonstrate the interdependence and interrelationships between all significant providers of education and learning, when responding to the question of ultimate responsibility for student success and learning in Manitoba.

9. extend consideration to the establishment of a formal, education-focused poverty reduction strategy, led by a working group composed of representatives from the Government of Manitoba, school divisions (school boards, senior administration and teachers), parents and students, to identify and collate promising practices and other initiatives, in order to enhance current response to poverty in the school context. This would help accentuate focus on poverty mitigation in relation to Manitoba Education's poverty reduction strategy.
10. lend consideration to the establishment of an advisory committee that will be mandated to study alternate and enhanced measurement in student performance and success, in order to ensure that improvement is focused on measures and indicators reflective of both inputs and outputs, while also reflective of both summative and formative learning and evaluation.

TEACHING

11. consider recommendation for a province-wide review of education and training programs designed to respond to the human resource requirements of school divisions in Manitoba, to explore options for optimizing capacity and supply to meet provincial demand.
12. include a province-wide review of clinician capacity in Manitoba within the scope of the above human resource study, to explore options for optimizing clinician supply to meet provincial demand.
13. consider that Pupil to Educator Ratios are generally indicative of class size in each province, but that considerable intra-provincial variation does occur, according to class size management choices that reflect autonomy and community context at the local level.
14. extend consideration to the opportunity for the establishment of a specialized rural and northern technology grant, that will enable delivery of professional development as well as a wider array of secondary courses for pupils, to promote accessibility and equity to expanded learning opportunities.
15. consider the establishment of a continuous competency framework to help enhance professional practice insight, led by representatives from the Department of Education, school boards, senior administrators, teachers and members representing the public interest. Rather than proceed to regulation of the teacher profession in Manitoba, such a recommendation would help to implement a non-disciplinary strategy for added value to the regular evaluation and feedback procedures that are currently mandated.

ACCOUNTABILITY FOR STUDENT LEARNING

16. acknowledge that accountability and responsibility for student learning is in fact shared when it comes to public education in Manitoba and that therefore, enhancement to public education must appropriately contemplate the individual and interdependent roles and responsibilities of each part within this whole.
17. support current data management strategies focused on achieving balance and identifying relationships between input, output, formative, summative, financial and non-financial measures, indicators and performance drivers, and with encouragement to continue efforts to link key databases relating to social, cultural, economic, academic and other educational

indicators towards the establishment of a continuous framework of informed assessment and accountability.

MSBA would note that deepening a sense of shared accountability can also be achieved through fostering of enhanced opportunities for dialogue and meaningful planning and collaboration between three important "systems", including K-12 education providers; educational entities and partners who reflect the educational spectrum from cradle to careers; and entities and partners who reflect the ongoing alignment between education, training and workforce development.

GOVERNANCE

18. recognize that the principle of local autonomy remains informative and instructive for the structuration of educational governance in Manitoba, with all community held rights pertaining thereto.

19. respect the constitutional protection of Manitoba's Francophone minority language community to continued local governance through the Commission scolaire franco-manitobaine and further, that the Commission recognize that such guarantee and protection reflects the rights that were already held by majority language communities through their local school boards.

20. support the introduction of enabling legislation by the Government of Manitoba to establish electronic means of satisfying all candidacy and voting responsibilities during future municipal and school board elections.

21. consider opportunities to extend voting rights to all persons who will merit representation through their taxation during the most recent four year election cycle, including persons whose identities have been confirmed on the Elections Manitoba permanent voters registry and Permanent Residents whose citizenship applications remain in process.

22. support the introduction of legislation or regulation that shall provide gratis media coverage for school board candidates, in order to promote appropriate public awareness and information concerning school board elections prior to the conclusion of each election.

23. support amendment to The Municipal and School Board Elections Act, in order to mandate placement of election polling stations in population centres that will enable greater proximity and accessibility for voters on each local registry and further, that municipal and school board ballots be consolidated into one single ballot for each community and at each polling station.

The Commission has inquired about changes to entities other than school boards that may improve governance. In order to strengthen the shared services that are provided by the Manitoba School Boards Association, we recommend that the Commission:

24. support future exclusion of all fees and rebates associated with maintaining coverage under the Manitoba Schools Insurance Program, from calculation of administrative cost ceilings.

25. support advocacy by the Manitoba School Boards Association to amend our statutory membership criteria, in order to provide services and programming to First Nations, Métis and Inuit education providers.

In general we would also strongly encourage the Commission to inquire with our members, as well as with members of the Manitoba Association of School Superintendents and the Council of School Leaders, concerning the future role and responsibilities of principals within the overall context of governance, administration and management.

Lastly, MSBA would like to offer one general recommendation to the Commission that would not seem to correspond to any particular focus area but may best be addressed under governance. This recommendation would be that the Commission encourage the Government of Manitoba to provide for more regular review education as a general means of enhancing opportunities to achieve shared vision, take stock of student learning and teaching, affirm accountabilities, confirm appropriate governance in public education, and review funding.

Given the importance of education to the vitality, success and well-being of our province, that a comprehensive review has not taken place sooner is an important consideration for Government that transcends all focus areas.

FUNDING

Lastly, MSBA would recommend that the Commission:

26. recommend that the Government of Manitoba establish a comprehensive tax commission to study taxation in general in our province, inclusive of representation from school boards, municipal government, and other public interest representatives. It is further recommended that such a tax commission be established at the Government's earliest possible opportunity.

27. recommend that the Government of Manitoba undertake a review of the education funding formula at the earliest possible opportunity, with focus on enhancing student and fiscal equity and guided by the principle of promoting investment of a greater share of provincial revenues to offset local taxes.

28. consider the importance of school board retention of fiscal autonomy and revenue capacity, in order to address distinctive educational needs at a local level.

29. consider the important differences between actual and constant levels of investment in the public education system when determining how investments in public education have changed over time, as this can be used to inform and contextualise sustainability and adequacy of overall funding support.

30. take into account the absorption by the public education system of programming, supports and services normally delivered under health, justice and social services portfolios, when examining sustainability of expenditures for public education in Manitoba.

31. extend consideration to the overall capacity of school divisions to address short and long-term goals for public education in Manitoba in relation to the current annualized funding model. Further, that the Commission support multi-year funding for core program and capital infrastructure by way of promoting achievement of a longer term vision focused on enhanced student achievement and equity.

For further access to MSBA recommendations on finance of public education, please also consult Appendix D.

CONCLUSIONS

The mandate and work of the K-12 Review Commission has presented a once-in-a-generation opportunity for the Manitoba School Boards Association to respond to six key themes that are of essential value to public education in our province. MSBA has responded based on its legal mandate to promote the cause of public education and to raise public awareness of educational issues in Manitoba, a mandate that we have always exercised in partnership with the Department of Education and Training of the Manitoba Government.

This report has therefore outlined some of the chief observations, options and recommendations that, from our perspective, will add and increase value both to the work of the K-12 Review Commission and ultimately, to Manitoba's system of public education. Our guiding principle has been to promote lasting return on investment when it comes to public education for all Manitobans, both now and into the future.

Into the foreseeable future, population growth will signify that demands and pressures placed on Kindergarten to Grade 12 education in Manitoba will become more accentuated, not less. Public education must provide for the majority, while equally taking steps to ensure that Aboriginal and Indigenous learners as well as pupils from newcomer backgrounds are provided with the very best opportunities. This is especially key given the role and unlimited capacity that these growing populations shall contribute to the sustainment of Manitoba's prospects and prosperity.

In its ongoing objective of achieving equity for all communities, Manitoba must take measures to address delivery of education across a wide geographic expanse given the distribution of its population across urban as well as rural and northern communities— a trend that seems likely to persist given the foundations, structures and cycles associated with our current economy. As demonstrated, equity must focus on the equality of each community but must emphasize the promotion of inclusion and accessibility for all Manitobans— both to address social justice and fairness, as well as to achieve greater economic efficiency and participation.

Poverty as a factor remains one of Manitoba's most significant obstacles. It is the single-most factor that constrains progress and improvement in educational attainment and achievement and consumes the greatest time and effort of most every actor in public education today. While eradicating poverty remains a laudable goal for the public, private and non-profit sectors, we have provided several meaningful examples of how the impacts of poverty, within general enhancements to the classroom, can be addressed for lasting change and improvement.

Manitoba's system of public education and the outcomes that it produces are among the best in the world. While performance and achievement can always be enhanced towards ongoing perfection, no mistake should be made that, in view of its many social and economic challenges, the results we have produced remain among the envy of the world. Rather than applying a deficit lens upon these outcomes, we believe that supporting public education through an approach that emphasizes our individual and collective capital— that is to say, one that addresses our strengths— will be the key to building a better future.

In this respect, acknowledging the structures of accountability that do serve to inform our appreciation of what can change, where and how, remains important. In terms of assessment

and performance indicators, Manitoba can continue to perfect and improve measurement by way of promoting even greater evidence-informed practice.

To this end, we have provided several key options and recommendations for student learning, accountability, governance and funding that we believe can help to support Manitoba's focus on becoming the most improved province overall, not least of which speaks to its system of public education.

We believe that we have answered the questions that we set out to address at the very beginning of this report. While it can be conceded that "what is education for?" shall remain a timeless inquiry that shall guide future development of the content, methods and outcomes of public education in Manitoba, the second question, focused on assessing whether we as school boards remain worthy of the students, families and communities that we strive to serve, demanded a more introspective study.

To this end, we have collected many examples of the contributions made by our school boards, through local programs, supports and services, to strengthen education provision and improvement in the context of their communities. We have also taken stock of the views of our population when it comes to the governance of their schools. We have studied the democratic basis of the local school board and believe that grassroots civic engagement remains vibrant and healthy when it comes to the election process overall, including opportunities to run as a candidate, electoral turnover and voter participation in elections.

A large majority of Manitobans support the continuation of school boards and believe that electing local citizens to govern their system of education remains a fundamental democratic right. As an association, we have always held that if the people of a community desire change to their local school board, they ought to have that right. We hold that it is a right that is vested in them alone, according to the value of local autonomy. The generations of veterans who fought to defend and protect this right would, as based on our interviews with a representative sample of them in the lead up to last year's significant 100th anniversary of the armistice ending the First World War, would also reinforce this view.

The Manitoba School Boards Association has never been a stranger when it comes to asking the hardest hitting questions concerning questions of funding and taxation. For many years, we have indeed advocated for lesser reliance on local revenues as a means of supporting the needs and requirements of all Manitobans and special interests in our communities. In terms of the question of funding, there is unison among school boards insofar as almost all emphasize their commitment to the continued raising of some portion of local revenue based on property assessment to support schools, a reflection of the principle of fiscal autonomy.

The proportionate share of how much local revenue is generated towards supporting schools, which is dependent upon existing variation in property assessment across school divisions, has led to the establishment of localized priorities in terms of funding. Is centralization of funding the answer to resolving the student and fiscal equity questions once and for all in Manitoba? In an effort to appropriately develop a modernized response to this question, our association asked a group of independent experts from varied backgrounds for their perspectives and ideas. This Council on Local Education Funding included representative voices from agricultural production, business, and municipal sectors. Stakeholders from the education sector were also included, including parents.

Following a comprehensive review of several options for meaningful reform of education funding, it was striking that the only recommendation upon which this diverse panel could agree was that the Manitoba Government ought to establish a tax commission to review all revenues raised by all levels of government. To us, this single recommendation spoke very clearly for the future: most Manitobans do understand that tax dollars used to support education flow to a very worthy cause. The impacts of their investment are evident through the many schools and students that remain permanent fixtures upon our prairie landscape.

In the Council's sole recommendation were two equal observations. What Manitobans do not favour is the loss of local choice when it comes to how education is provided in their community. This ability to choose depends on availability of local funding, or at the very least, local voices making local choices in how funding is allocated to address and meet the needs of every community. Wherefore and hence resides the local school board, one of the oldest forms of democracy on a continent devoted to the communitarian ideal and that has also stood committed to the protection of representative governance, around the world and also at home.

The second observation is that when it comes to returning money to Manitobans' pocketbooks, many concede that there remains much value for our province in its ongoing commitment to supporting schools. Funding this support in a more sustainable way that addresses sustainability, adequacy and need, will remain important for the future.

School boards are by no means averse to change. The last message we want received from the this report is one of not wanting to do things differently than we have in the past. Making changes to a system as complex and varied as a public school system however, is not an easy task. As the association that represents those who are elected by communities to ensure that local voice and local choice remain vital features of Manitoba's public education system, we well understand how daunting a task this can truly be.

Therefore, in closing, we extend a hand of partnership and cooperation to the K-12 Education Review Commission and also to the Government of Manitoba. Given that the Government and school boards share responsibility for Manitoba's public education system, as established under our system's legal and regulatory framework, it has always been incumbent upon both of us to work closely when addressing one another's needs and requirements.

For the last 147 years, we have indeed shared in this important responsibility. Together, we have produced a quality public education system that is safe for all students: one that has also changed and adapted to meet the needs of Manitoba's ever-changing and growing population and the social, economic and cultural needs that sustain the fabric of this province and its people. Our education system is one of the best in the world because of our continuing partnership.

When it comes to the work ahead, we therefore offer to work together, knowing that this is the best way forward towards building upon our foundations and towards building a stronger future for all students and communities. We are therefore hopeful that this message is received in a spirit of genuine cooperation and partnership, and we would like to thank the K-12 Education Review Commission, as well as the Government of Manitoba in advance, for their consideration of our recommendations and observations under 2020 Vision.

APPENDIX A

Beliefs and Principles of Public Education as Adopted by the Manitoba School Boards Association¹⁷⁹

Beliefs

The Manitoba School Boards Association believes:

- THAT the public school system is a cornerstone of a free and democratic society and the collective responsibility of all citizens;
- THAT community voice and local control are essential features of a quality public education system;
- THAT the public school system in Manitoba should provide equity of opportunity for all students irrespective of geographic location or community wealth; and
- THAT elected school boards must have the legal authority, the financial flexibility and the local autonomy to reflect the education needs and priorities of their respective communities.

Principles of Public Education

The Manitoba School Boards Association believes that the purpose of public schooling is to provide for the development of all children, so that each may take a meaningful place in society.

The Manitoba School Boards Association has identified the following principles as key to the fulfilment of that purpose.

- The public school system provides quality programming that respects the intrinsic value of the individual and focuses on the development of each child.
- Public school programming reflects a contemporary view of the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that are of most worth to the individual and to society.
- Public schools reflect the character, cultural heritage, and democratic institutions of the communities they serve.
- The public school system demonstrates respect and support for fundamental human rights as identified in Canadian and provincial legislation.
- Public schooling is a responsibility shared among the school, the family, and the community.

¹⁷⁹ MSBA. (2016). *Manual of policies and beliefs*. Winnipeg. Accessible online-
https://www.mbschoolboards.ca/documents/manualPolicies_Beliefs_%20May%202016.pdf

APPENDIX B – THIS IS LOCAL CHOICE



Providing students with the learning spaces they need

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Early Years Literacy—developing readers

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In December 2018, after more than three years of negotiations, approvals, delays and reversals, the Evergreen School Division received provincial government permission to build a much-needed, self-funded music-learning space at Gimli High School. The advocacy efforts of students and the community were instrumental in helping the school board achieve its goal of a new learning space, which will benefit Evergreen students for years to come.



esd.ca

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Local choices mean Garden Valley School Division is moving closer to its literacy goal: 85% of K-4 students reading at or above grade level. Thanks to initiatives such as literacy coordinators, increased professional development, improved classroom libraries, and a community partnership, "The Imagination Library," that puts books in the hands of preschoolers, that goal was being met by 77% of K-4 students by June 2018.



gvsd.ca



Culture, Curriculum, Community

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Newcomer Hub welcomes refugee students & families

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Only 12 schools in Manitoba offer Ukrainian Bilingual programming, and two of those are in the Lord Selkirk School Division. The program provides students from K – 8 with a rich understanding of language, culture, tradition and heritage. It has grown from 107 students in 2010 to 147 in 2018, and is embraced by the community. Local funding makes this program possible.



lssd.ca

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Pembina Trails schools are welcoming an increasing number of refugees. The division has established a unique relationship with Immigration Partnership Winnipeg, Manitoba Association of Newcomer Serving Organizations and other groups, to support these families. The Newcomer Community Hub connects parents of young and school-aged children to both immigrant resources and emotional supports. This is what can be accomplished when school boards, organizations, and the community work together.



pembinatrails.ca



Cool to Care about belonging and inclusion

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The St. James-Assiniboia School Division is dedicated to making schools safe places for all students. The division's 26 schools have all formed Safe Schools Committees to bring together students and staff members who work jointly on creating safe, inclusive and caring environments. Annually, early, middle, and senior years students, along with their principals and guidance counsellors, come together division-wide to discuss topics such as inclusion, diversity, and school connectedness.





A focus on equity

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The Seven Oaks School Division is committed to ensuring that all students have equal access to school services and programs. To support this philosophy, the board has adopted policies such as low-cost school supplies and no fees for lunch supervision or musical instruments. It also has a transportation policy that offers support for low-income families and transports children to and from daycares. Collectively, these and other equity-focussed policies and practices are leveling the playing field for students in the Seven Oaks S.D. community.



7oaks.org



Fostering early learning through play

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Kids at Play (KAP) is an extended-day kindergarten program in the Seine River School Division. It provides students with rich learning opportunities that complement their half-day kindergarten experience. KAP's child-centred and play-based program fosters students' social, oral language, and emergent literacy and numeracy skills. While optional, the majority of kindergarten families have elected to participate in KAP. Local funding makes the program possible.



PROMISE years, working together as advocates for rural education

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PROMISE Years is a partnership of several school divisions, including Turtle Mountain, with Prairie Mountain Health, C.F.S., Western Manitoba, Manitoba Family Services and Housing, Manitoba Health, Healthy Child Manitoba, and the Children's Therapy Initiative. Promise Years provides speech/language, occupational, and physiotherapy support to pre-school aged children. These supports can be challenging for families to secure in rural areas. Through this partnership, children and families get the support they need, when they need it, which better prepares children for success as they enter kindergarten.



tmsd.mb.ca



Vocational Programs

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Local choices mean Border Land School Division can offer diverse programming to meet the needs of all students. In Border Land we offer Automotive Technology, Carpentry, Culinary Arts, Manufacturing and High School Apprenticeship Programs.



blsd.ca



Kick-starting trade careers

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In Beautiful Plains School Division, students have access to a wide range of educational opportunities including our High School Apprenticeship Program. Supported by our local businesses, industry, and the school division, the apprenticeship program allows high school students to "kick start" trade careers. Students involved in the program help to facilitate growth of rural and urban industry and provide professional trade service to Manitoba communities.



beautifulplainsd.ca



myBlueprint, a career education planning resource

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"myBlueprint" is a resource that helps students discover their learning and personality styles, interests, and motivators. Job-specific compatibility surveys provide occupation matches to inform student self-discovery. Students are able to set short and long-term school course plans, identify postsecondary options, and explore information about apprenticeships, college and university programs, and workplace opportunities across Canada. And with direct access from home, parents can become more involved with their child's education and career planning.



rrsd.mb.ca



Building strong reading and writing skills

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*Local Voices
Local Choices*

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mbschoolboards.ca #LocalVoicesLocalChoices

River East Transcona School Division is proud to be a leader in providing intensive literacy supports based on the philosophies of educator and author Regie Routman. As a result of these supports, students have shown greater independence, confidence, and skill. The quality of their writing has grown, and they're better prepared for success. This focus across a division and across levels is a "first of its kind in North America," according to Ms. Routman.



retsd.mb.ca



Deepening understanding of Indigenous cultures

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Local Choices*

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An agreement between the Kelsey School Division and the Opaskwayak Education Authority (OEA) enables students at Margaret Barbour Collegiate in The Pas to participate in the land-based education program developed by OEA. Students receive credit for this provincially approved program, which was originally designed to help Indigenous youth learn about their own heritage. Now, the program is available to all area youth, helping them to deepen their understanding of Indigenous history, traditions and cultures.



kelseyschooldivision.com



A positive mental health strategy

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In Southwest Horizon School Division, the Mental Health Wellness Facilitator works as part of the leadership team to develop a positive mental health strategy for the division. The Wellness Facilitator provides supports both within the classroom and with families, for students whose needs and experiences interfere with their ability to be consistently successful in school. The Facilitator also liaises with agencies that deliver services that sometimes can be difficult to access in rural Manitoba.



shmb.ca



Resources for equal learning opportunities

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Local Choices*

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In July 2018, the Interlake School Division received approval for upgrades to science labs at Teulon and Warren Collegiates. These renovations will ensure all students have equitable access to programs and resources needed in preparation for post-secondary education. The school board allocated approximately \$500,000 in locally generated funding for this project. Advocacy efforts of PAC's, students and the community were instrumental in achieving this goal of new learning spaces, which will benefit Interlake students for decades to come.



interlakesd.ca



Partnerships that benefit schools and communities

#ThisIsLocalChoice



Initiatives like this depend on



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Local Choices*

Because schools belong to communities

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A partnership between Fort La Bosse School Division and local internet service provider RfNow Inc. provides high-speed fibre internet access throughout the division. Schools enjoy high-speed internet access at a significant cost savings, allowing the division to be creative in its use of technology to deliver programming in rural schools. The local partnership also means that entire communities now benefit from having access to high-speed internet service.



flbsd.mb.ca



Diversity and global citizenship

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Each year, 25 to 35 students from as many as 14 different countries come to Lord Selkirk School Division to learn English, and to immerse themselves in cultural, academic, athletic, and vocational opportunities. The program, now in its 18th year, enables cross-cultural learning, and provides a real-time lesson in global citizenship. In the words of one parent, they chose the program "to teach the head but also to touch the heart". Local support makes this possible.



lssd.ca



Creating safe and caring schools

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In River East Transcona School Division, positive behavioural interventions and supports (PBIS) help students improve their behaviour and academic performance while building a positive school culture and stronger divisional community. Each school uses data to determine where supports are required, then engages divisional PBIS coaches to help staff create effective teaching plans to support student success. This is just one of the many ways RETSD works to create safe and caring environments in its schools.



retsd.mb.ca



Supporting High School Programming

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Mountain View School Division has an extensive video conference network that connects all high schools in the division. The network allows the division to provide high school courses to students in small rural schools that would not otherwise have the ability to offer a full slate of courses. This initiative would not have been possible without significant local investment by the division in building its own high-speed internet infrastructure – local voice, local choice.



mvsd.ca



Junior kindergarten to support 4-year-olds

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In 2018-2019, the Interlake School Division fully funded a new junior kindergarten initiative in each of its eight communities. This important program serves to support four-year-old children and their families in the transition to kindergarten. Approximately 70% of our incoming kindergarten students (124 students) have accessed the junior kindergarten program in its first year.



interlakesd.ca



Collaboration, creativity and team work

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Lord Selkirk School Division provides high-calibre music education at all grade levels. More than 50% of junior high students are involved in band programs, and the high school choral program has grown 120% in the last decade. Music enhances academic and social skills, discipline, collaboration, and creativity, traits that employers want in employees. Music changes lives, with many graduates continuing in the field in lifelong careers. Local funding makes this possible.



lssd.ca



Nature studies program

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Park West School Division has a locally developed, four-credit Nature Studies program in which students focus on outdoor education, resource and habitat management, wildlife management, and tourism. This is an innovative program that provides experiential learning opportunities for students in a unique natural setting. It is directly linked to the board's strategic plan with targeted outcomes of developing citizenship, building assets in students, promoting education for sustainable development, and expanding and promoting Indigenous education.



pwsd.ca



Preparing students for success

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In Swan Valley School Division, students have access to thirteen technical vocational options. The technical vocational facilities provided to students are state of the art. The equipment our students use is industry standard, so that our graduates are industry ready when they graduate. Local partnerships and local funding make this extensive vocational programming possible.



swanvalley.ca



Additional time for the youngest learners

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All schools in Park West School Division are staffed at 0.75 full-time equivalent for kindergarten, which is 50% beyond regular provincial funding. Our students attend half-time during the first semester, and full-time in the second semester. The specific goals of the kindergarten pilot are to improve student achievement in literacy and numeracy, and to improve student social and emotional skills.



pwsd.ca



Local communities partnering with school divisions

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All the schools in Park West School Division are now connected to a locally owned fibre optic network. The Park West Fibre Optic Co-op (PWFOC) is a partnership between the division and local municipalities that has installed and owns 60 strands of fibre. This fibre links communities throughout the region. Partnerships of this nature allow rural communities to receive a level of broadband connectivity usually found in large urban areas.



pwsd.ca



Learning in a real-world environment

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Louis Riel School Division's Bistro in the Park opened in 1999 as an innovative skill development and work space for students with learning exceptionalities. Today, the Bistro has expanded its mandate, offering a hands-on learning program available to all students in the division. It provides employment, occupational, and life skills training in an active restaurant environment that also happens to be a favourite lunch spot for the Louis Riel community.



lrsd.net



Keeping Indigenous culture alive at school

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The voices of our local community guided the School District of Mystery Lake to make the local choice to establish Wapanahk Community School as a Cree bilingual school. The school provides increased supports for students and families and extended evening activities for community and family engagement. The focus on Indigenous culture includes extensive land-based training and a school yard complete with a trapper's cabin and other traditional landscaping.



mysterynet.mb.ca



Inspiring a love of learning in the early years

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Turtle River School Division recognizes the importance of early learning. Rich early learning opportunities support brain development, provide a strong learning foundation, and correlate with good physical health. Programs that support student growth, development, and learning are key to future well-being. In Turtle River, such programs include play-based learning, full-time kindergarten, and pre-kindergarten opportunities such as junior kindergarten and Kindergarten Here I Come. The division serves students and families by inspiring a love of learning in the youngest children.



trsd.ca



Effective distance education through collaboration

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Pine Creek School Division leads a consortium of six divisions to deliver high school courses to students through the Teacher Mediated Option (TMO). Because of direct communication with TMO teachers, course completion is at 96%, and 25 students were able to graduate specifically due to their involvement with TMO. This option, which is available for all Manitoba students, highlights the level of inter-divisional cooperation and collaboration that exists in the Manitoba public education system.



pinecreeksd.mb.ca



Swimming Counts – Saving Lives

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Winnipeg School Division, in partnership with the City of Winnipeg, launched Swimming Counts, a water safety initiative to teach students at the grade 4 level basic survival skills in and around water. Winnipeg S.D. trustees initiated the program in response to a growing need in the community, where many newcomers to Canada and inner-city youth have had neither the opportunity nor environment to learn about water safety.



WINNIPEG SCHOOL DIVISION
winnipegd.ca



Leadership in Indigenous Education

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The Winnipeg School Division supports Indigenous education, students and staff in multiple ways. It established an Indigenous education consulting teacher position in 1979, and in 1996, adopted Manitoba's first Indigenous education policy. Initiatives are woven throughout the curricula, across all WSD schools, and include bilingual language programming in Cree and Ojibwe. Elders in the classroom and locally developed Indigenous education teaching materials bring Indigenous perspectives into classrooms.



WINNIPEG SCHOOL DIVISION
winnipegd.ca



Winnipeg School Division Nursery Program

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The WSD Board of Trustees established a nursery program in 1965 in Winnipeg's lowest socio-economic areas. Early years development, up to age six, set competency and coping skills that affect learning, behaviour and health throughout life. Preschool education can produce substantial gains in children's learning and development. Today, WSD runs nursery classes at 59 schools, fully funded by the local community.



WINNIPEG SCHOOL DIVISION
winnipegd.ca



Culture, Curriculum, Community

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Only 12 schools in Manitoba offer Ukrainian Bilingual programming, and two of those are in the Lord Selkirk School Division. The program provides students from K – 8 with a rich understanding of language, culture, tradition and heritage. It has grown from 107 students in 2010 to 147 in 2018, and is embraced by the community. Local funding makes this program possible.



lord.ca



A Place of Belonging

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In 1988, Winnipeg School Division, with the local community, began a bold undertaking to establish schools in Winnipeg's North End that emphasized Indigenous culture, language and academics. It allowed Indigenous youth the freedom to practice their culture in a place where it was once prohibited, in schools. Today, Children of The Earth High School and Nijji Mahkwa School are centres for heritage language instruction, cultural activities and the Indigenous perspective into current provincial curriculum.



WINNIPEG SCHOOL DIVISION
winnipegd.ca



Supporting Newcomers to Winnipeg

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WSD schools are respectful and caring environments, providing newcomer families and students an orientation, information about the school community, and opportunities to learn about Canadian culture. With over 7,000 EAL students, including newcomers and some Indigenous students, WSD has established initial assessment protocols to program for each student's English language needs. WSD provides educational assistants, seven Literacy, Academics and Language Centers, Intercultural Support Workers, community support, materials and supplies.



WINNIPEG SCHOOL DIVISION
winnipegd.ca



French immersion programming

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Because local school boards respond to community needs, French immersion programming is expanding in the Prairie Rose School Division. In 2017, residents and the Regional Health Authority asked the board to consider making French immersion programming available in Carman in addition to the already established École St. Eustache and St. Paul's Collegiate programs. An information session and survey confirmed public support, and in 2018, 18 kindergarten students joined the first French immersion class at Carman Elementary.



Food and Nutrition Programs

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Initiatives like this depend on



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Food and nutrition programs are available in Rolling River School Division schools to ensure students have access to healthy food choices in school canteens, breakfast, lunch and snack programs, vending machines and fundraising activities. Healthy eating is essential for maximum academic, physical and mental performance. School programs assist in this regard by providing students with supportive environments and the opportunity to develop skills that they need for lifelong healthy eating behavior.



Environmental Education

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Rolling River School Division's Wetland Centre of Excellence and related programming at Rivers Collegiate engages students in conservation through study and reflection on sustainable action projects, and student-to-student mentored field trips. The program is based on principles of eco-literacy, with a view to preserving and acting in such a manner that people "care" for their environment. Students' learning process also involves establishing partnerships with the local municipality and other provincial and national environmental organizations.



Hockey Canada Skills Academy

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Rivers Collegiate in the Rolling River School Division has partnered with the Hockey Canada Skills Academy program to offer a skill development program for all levels and abilities of students in Grades 7-12. Some are just beginning to learn how to skate, while others continue to master their skills and knowledge of the game. All participants work at their own pace, but are challenged daily to improve. This program also allows students to feel a sense of belonging in a family-like atmosphere, and promotes a lifelong recreational activity.



Horticultural Program

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Erickson Collegiate's horticultural program in the Rolling River School Division is experiential. Through hands-on and project-based activities, students develop their understanding of plant propagation, greenhouse production, and problem-solving skills related to plant care. Starting in February, students plant and transplant flowers and other plants to have them ready for the annual community sale in May. Students also are responsible for the "greening" of the school and the beautification of the town by planting and maintaining flowerbeds.



Learning as an UNESCO school

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Onanole Elementary School in Rolling River School Division has been an UNESCO candidate school for nine years, and is in the process of applying to become a member school. As a UNESCO school, it works to weave the four themes of UNESCO into curricular outcomes: sustainable development, peace and human rights, intercultural learning, and UN priorities. These themes are infused through whole-school initiatives that provide students with opportunities to expand their learning.





Hands-on automotive learning

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The power mechanics program in Rolling River School Division is designed for students who have a strong interest in the automotive field. From introductory courses in Grades 9 and 10, through more specialized courses in Grades 11 and 12, it allows students to develop their skills in automotive technology. The program combines classroom instruction and hands-on learning using current technology and equipment. Students gain valuable skills that may lead to careers in the automotive industry.



rrsd.mb.ca



Partnering with Post-Secondary Institutions

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The Health Care Aide Partnership between Red River College and the Portage la Prairie School Division serves students in several ways. All students receive five high school credits, and Health Care Aide Certification. Students wishing to move directly into the workforce after graduation are able to do so, with the skills and credentials needed to obtain employment. And for those students with other, health-related career aspirations, the program serves as a ladder opportunity.



plpsd.mb.ca



Early entry into the trades

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Rolling River School Divisions' High School Apprenticeship Program (HSAP) is all about on-the-job experience. HSAP provides practical, paid, work experience, along with credit towards a high school diploma. The program offers an opportunity for early entry into the trades, and can serve to build interest among youth in important career options. After graduation, students are able to transfer their hours of HSAP on-the-job training to a Level 1 apprenticeship-training program.



rrsd.mb.ca



Programming that supports agriculture

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In the Swan Valley School Division, students in the Precision Land Management Program use real-time kinetic (RTK) technology to map farmland and elevations to solve drainage issues. With the skills they have acquired, many of these students are able to find employment with local farm implement dealerships. These students work with customers, to help them gain the skills needed to fully utilize the modern technology found in today's farm machinery.



SWAN VALLEY
SCHOOL DIVISION
svsd.ca



Developing environmentally conscious citizens

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The Swan Valley School Division is a proud supporter of the Envirothon program, which is aimed at developing citizens who are willing and prepared to work towards achieving and maintaining a balance between the quality of life and the quality of the environment. Envirothon teams from the Swan Valley Regional Secondary School have seen much success at the provincial, national and International levels, and many students have pursued careers in the field of environmental studies.



SWAN VALLEY
SCHOOL DIVISION
svsd.ca



Using STEM skills to help community

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Students in the Swan Valley School Division use 3-D printers to help develop their STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) skills, such as those related to design and programming. But students also put the printers and the skills they have acquired to a very practical use, helping the community solve every-day problems. As an example, students manufactured the specialized parts needed by a local snowmobile club to get its trail groomer operational again, which benefited the entire community.



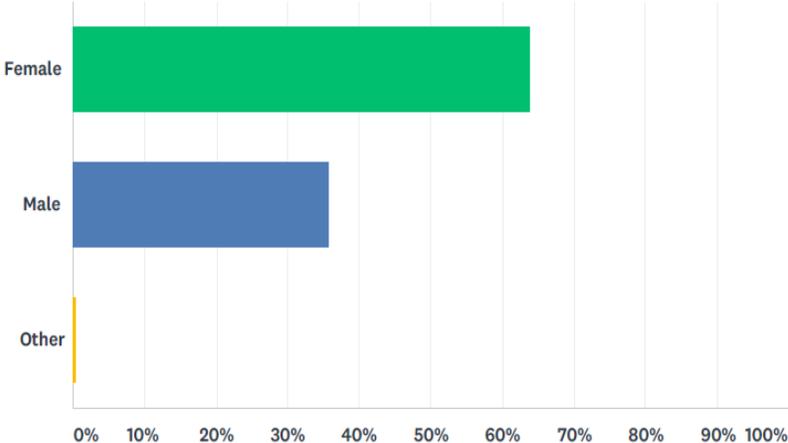
SWAN VALLEY
SCHOOL DIVISION
svsd.ca

APPENDIX C

MSBA 2018/19 QUADRENNIAL TRUSTEE PROFILE SURVEY RESULTS

Q1 I identify as:

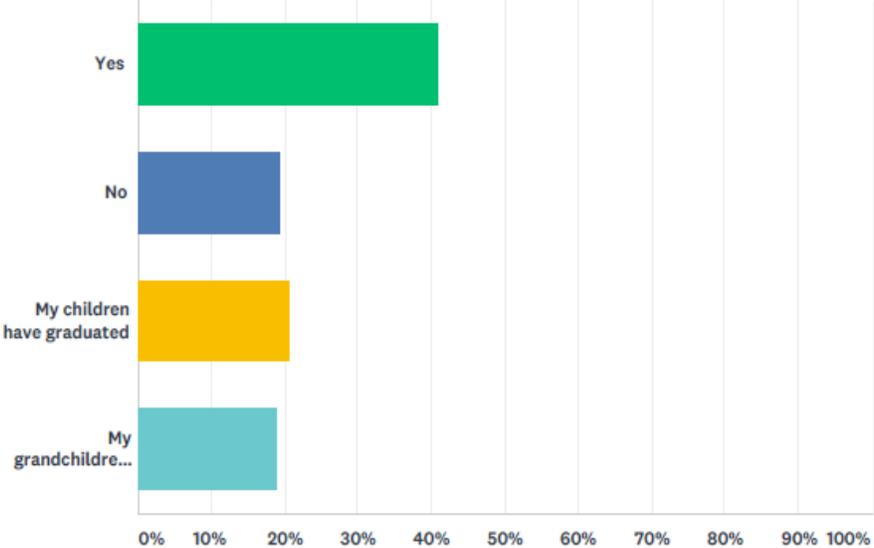
Answered: 251 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Female	63.75%	160
Male	35.86%	90
Other	0.40%	1
TOTAL		251

Q2 I have a child (or children) currently registered in the public school system (K-12):

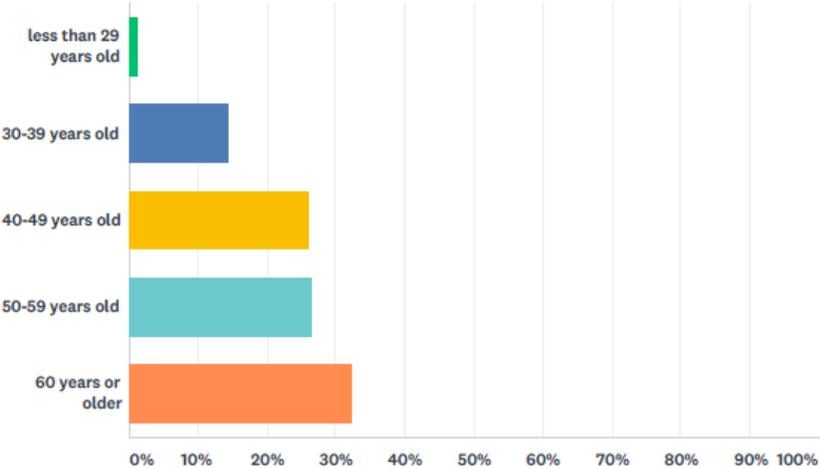
Answered: 251 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	41.04%	103
No	19.52%	49
My children have graduated	20.72%	52
My grandchildren are in school (K-12)	18.73%	47
TOTAL		251

Q3 My current age is:

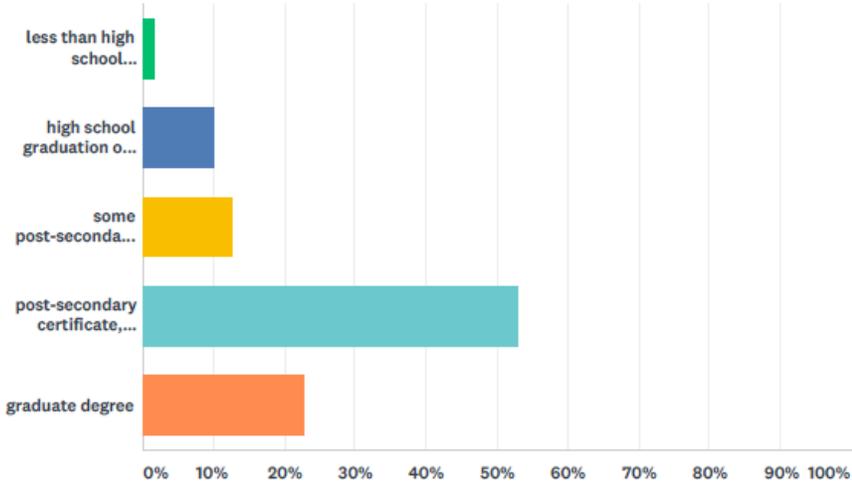
Answered: 251 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
less than 29 years old	1.20%	3
30-39 years old	14.34%	36
40-49 years old	25.90%	65
50-59 years old	26.29%	66
60 years or older	32.27%	81
TOTAL		251

Q4 The highest level of schooling I have attained is:

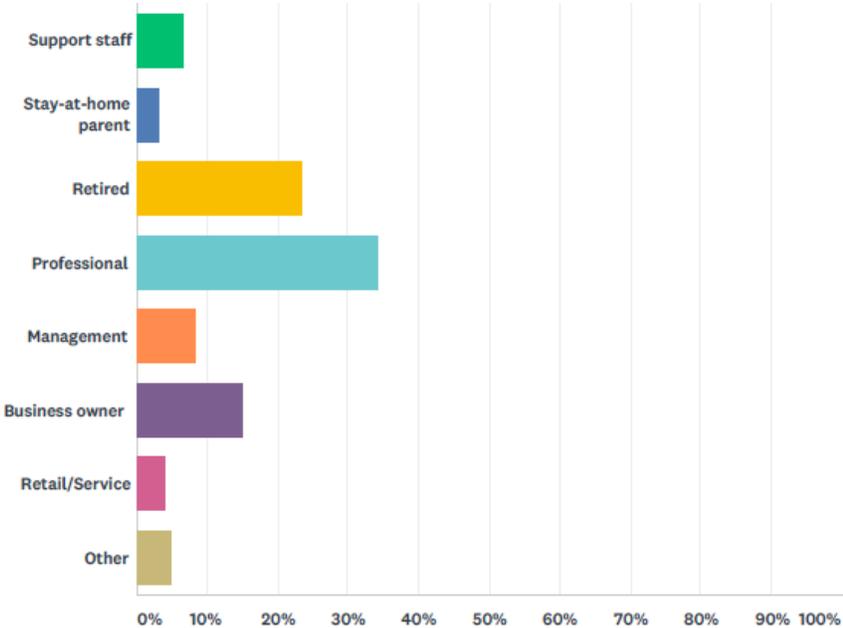
Answered: 251 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
less than high school graduation	1.59% 4
high school graduation or equivalent	9.96% 25
some post-secondary education	12.75% 32
post-secondary certificate, diploma or undergraduate degree (e.g. trades certificate, college certificate or diploma, bachelor's degree)	52.99% 133
graduate degree	22.71% 57
TOTAL	251

Q5 I would classify my current occupation / industry as:

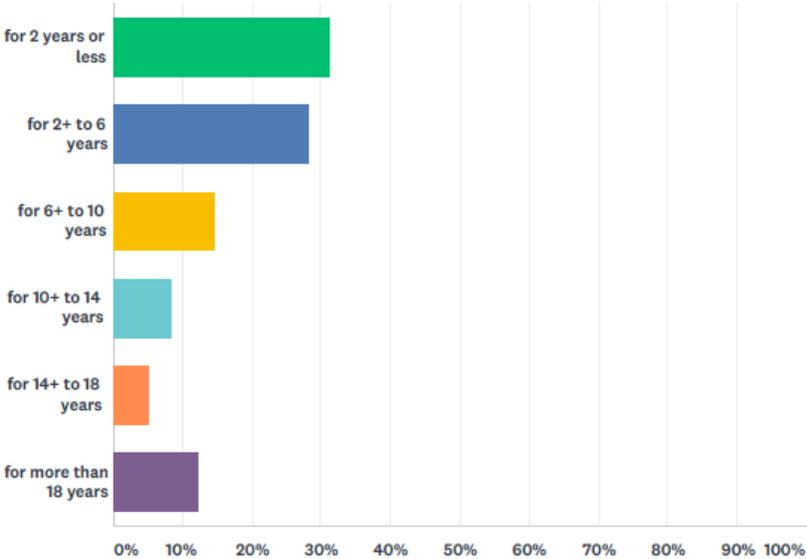
Answered: 251 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Support staff	6.77% 17
Stay-at-home parent	3.19% 8
Retired	23.51% 59
Professional	34.26% 86
Management	8.37% 21
Business owner	15.14% 38
Retail/Service	3.98% 10
Other	4.78% 12
TOTAL	251

Q6 I have served as a school trustee:

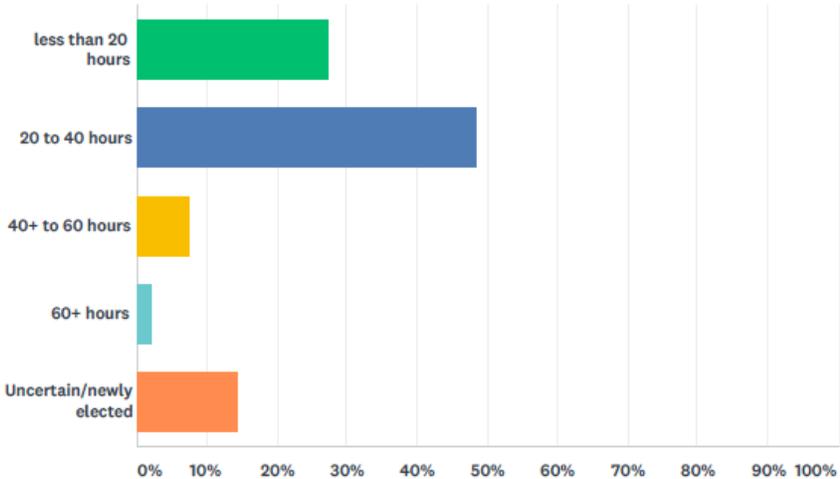
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ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
for 2 years or less	31.08%	78
for 2+ to 6 years	28.29%	71
for 6+ to 10 years	14.74%	37
for 10+ to 14 years	8.37%	21
for 14+ to 18 years	5.18%	13
for more than 18 years	12.35%	31
TOTAL		251

Q7 In an average month, I spend this many hours on school board-related duties (e.g. preparing for and attending board and committee meetings, representing the school board at public functions, etc.)

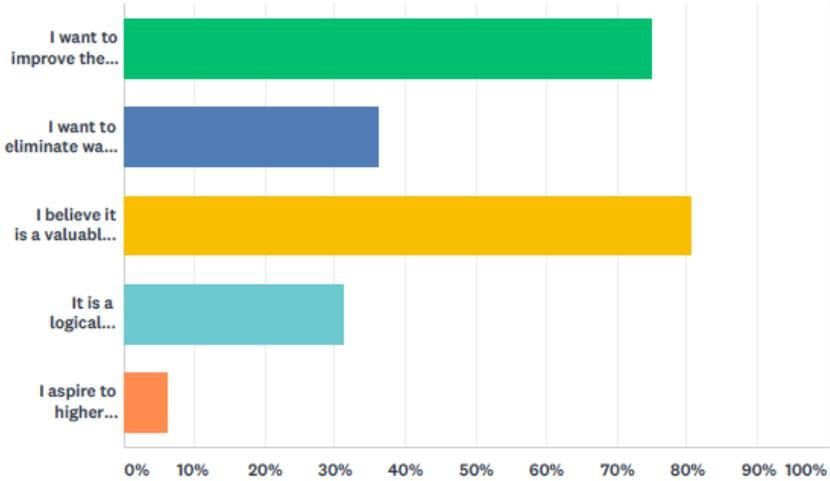
Answered: 251 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
less than 20 hours	27.49%	69
20 to 40 hours	48.61%	122
40+ to 60 hours	7.57%	19
60+ hours	1.99%	5
Uncertain/newly elected	14.34%	36
TOTAL		251

Q8 I am serving as a school trustee because (choose as many as apply):

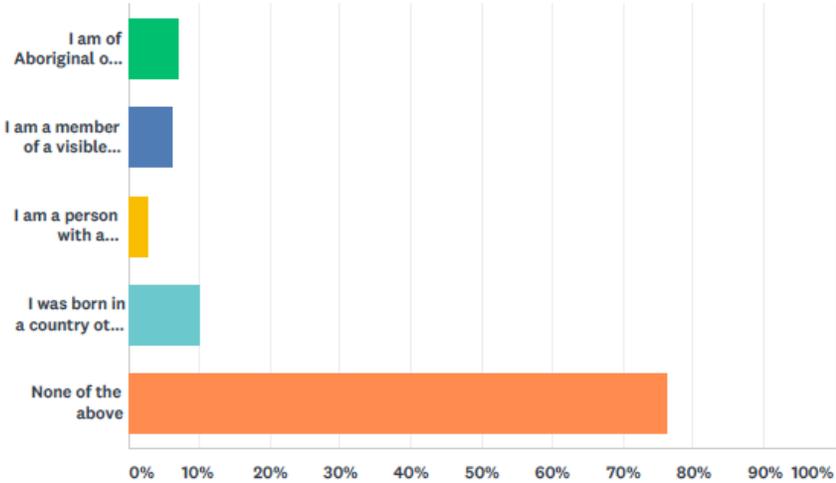
Answered: 251 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
I want to improve the school system for students	74.90% 188
I want to eliminate waste and encourage fiscal responsibility	36.25% 91
I believe it is a valuable way to serve my community	80.48% 202
It is a logical extension of my previous experience in the education system (e.g. as a teacher or other school staff member, PAC member, etc.)	31.08% 78
I aspire to higher political office	6.37% 16
Total Respondents: 251	

Q9 In consideration of school boards as diverse and representative organizations in Manitoba, which of the following statements best match your life circumstances (choose as many as apply.)

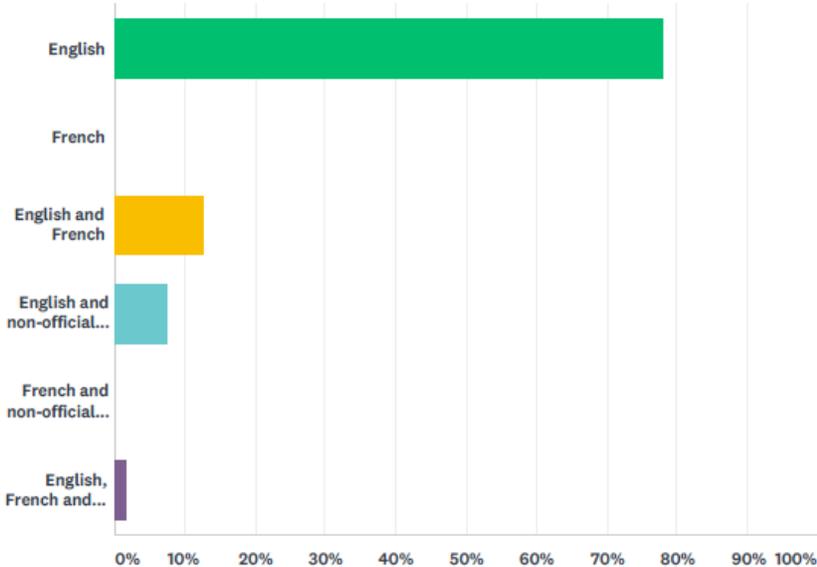
Answered: 251 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
I am of Aboriginal or Indigenous ancestry	7.17%	18
I am a member of a visible minority	6.37%	16
I am a person with a disability	2.79%	7
I was born in a country other than Canada	9.96%	25
None of the above	76.10%	191
Total Respondents: 251		

Q11 Which of the following best describes your language fluency?

Answered: 251 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
English	78.09%	196
French	0.00%	0
English and French	12.75%	32
English and non-official language	7.57%	19
French and non-official language	0.00%	0
English, French and non-official language	1.59%	4
TOTAL		251

APPENDIX D

Consolidated Policy Statement on Finance Adopted by the Manitoba School Boards Association

Principles

The Manitoba School Boards Association believes that a quality public education system which supports student learning and high levels of achievement for all students requires on-going investment through a funding model that is equitable, flexible and sustainable. The association therefore endorses the following principles regarding a renewed funding structure for Manitoba public schools.

- The provincial general revenue contribution to public K-12 education approximate 80% of total annual school operating costs excluding Government expenditures for teacher pension plan contributions, major capital construction costs and education property tax credit programs;
- The balance of required financial support be raised by elected school boards through the education property tax levy in local communities;
- Provincial funding for schools come primarily in the form of block or per pupil grants rather than categorical grants, to provide school divisions with the maximum flexibility in allocating resources;
- The provincial government provide the necessary resources to ensure successful implementation and sustainability of new or expanded provincial requirements for the delivery of school-based services or programs;
- Relevant provincial departments (i.e. health, child and family services, immigration and labour, justice) provide financial support for the delivery of non-educational services to children when that delivery takes place within a school setting; and
- The purchase of supplies and services required within the public school system be exempt from consumption taxes levied by federal, provincial, or municipal levels of government.
- The education funding formula should contain sufficient equalization measures to ensure equity of opportunity for students and fairness for taxpayers in divisions with low assessment bases.
- That affordable, high-speed, high-capacity broadband access be provided for all Manitoba students regardless of where they attend school within Manitoba.
- The Manitoba School Boards Association believes that all requirements, limitations, restrictions or conditions to which school budgets will be subjected should be clearly communicated no later than the time of the annual Provincial funding announcement.
- The Manitoba School Boards Association believes that annual increases in education funding should more closely reflect actual operating cost increases.

Taxation Issues

The Manitoba School Boards Association believes that:

- no change should be made regarding the inclusion of commercial assessment in the local tax base without the provincial government first thoroughly reviewing the matter and determining the effect on individual school divisions of sharing commercial assessment.

- the City of Winnipeg should close the assessment roll at the latest date permissible by law (December 31 of the previous calendar year) for purposes of calculating the annual Special Levy Mill Rate.
- properties in un-assessed territories should be subject to education property taxation.
- divisions should be exempt from paying property taxes or municipal special services levies on any and all property which is registered in the name of the school division.
- all taxes identified as education taxes should be remitted to school boards to fund Manitoba public schools.

Funding Formula—General

- The Manitoba School Boards Association believes that the provincial Education Ministry should begin distributing operational support to school divisions at the start of each new fiscal year.
- The Manitoba School Boards Association believes that students under the age of 21 who have met the requirements for high school graduation should be eligible for funding from the province for an additional one year of study, with no additional cost to the home division in the way of residual or transfer fees.

Funding Formula—Specifics

Curriculum

- The Manitoba School Boards Association believes that the province should fund fully costs associated with the introduction of new provincial curricula and learning initiatives, including the costs of materials, equipment and facilities, and professional development for teachers and school administrators.
- The Manitoba School Boards Association believes that increased support is required for technical-vocational education, and that students across the province should have equal access to high level technical-vocational programming and facilities.

Facilities

Procedures

The Manitoba School Boards Association believes that:

- Public Schools Finance Board funding should be based on a formula that reflects the current construction costs as determined by the tendering process, and which ensures a timely and proactive approach to school renewal.
- The Public Schools Finance Board approval process should take into consideration the need to undertake work at times when students and staff are not in the building, so as to minimize health and safety risks to the occupants.
- The Public Schools Finance Boards should be required to keep school boards informed, year over year, of the status of divisional funding requests.

Grant Structure

The Manitoba School Boards Association believes that:

- the capital support formula for major renovations of existing facilities should include provisions for program areas such as computer labs and technology centres, multi-purpose, band and art rooms, lunch rooms, and clinician offices, and that such provisions be included when calculating school capacities.
- full support should be provided to all Manitoba school divisions to renovate buildings in order to permit access to all schools for physically disabled persons.
- the costs of upgrading temporary classrooms should be the responsibility of the Public Schools Finance Board, and that specific funds should be allocated for that purpose.
- the Public Schools Finance Board should provide school divisions with reimbursement of interest costs for all capital support debentured projects.
- the Public Schools Finance Board should support costs associated with linking portable classrooms to school buildings.

Special Education

- The Manitoba School Boards Association believes that the provincial government has a responsibility to provide the necessary funding and create appropriate mechanisms for the distribution of that funding to ensure that special needs students have full access to the education to which they are entitled.
- The Manitoba School Boards Association believes that the provincial Education Ministry should provide funding to enable development of enriched programs for gifted students.
- The Manitoba School Boards Association believes that the Education Ministry should provide appropriate funding to enable schools to meet the special needs of immigrant and refugee students.

Technology

The Manitoba School Boards Association believes that:

- the provincial government should take a leadership role in ensuring that the infrastructure is in place, and that school divisions have the necessary resources, to enable schools to access and utilize current and relevant technologies (including broadband Internet access) to support and enhance student learning.
- the provincial government should assist school divisions in the disposal electronic waste.

Equity

- The Manitoba School Boards Association believes that the education funding formula should include appropriate mechanisms to ensure equity of opportunity for all students, reflecting the increased costs often associated with program and service delivery in rural and northern regions of the province.

Miscellaneous

- The Manitoba School Boards Association believes that the Community School Initiative should be supported sufficiently so as to remove financial barriers that may prevent some school divisions from designating some schools community schools.

Interorganizational and Inter-Departmental Financial Responsibilities

- The Manitoba School Boards Association believes that provincial and federal authorities should clarify jurisdictional responsibilities and financial obligations for the education of First Nations students residing both on and off-reserve.
- The Manitoba School Boards Association believes that the provincial Education and Child and Family Services Ministries should develop joint tracking and funding mechanisms to address more adequately the social and learning needs of children in care Manitoba public schools.
- The Manitoba School Boards Association believes that community police services should be available to schools, to help ensure safe environments in schools and communities.
- The Manitoba School Boards Association believes that school boards require assistance from the provincial government and community agencies to address the needs of immigrant and refugee students and their families.

Private Schools

- The Manitoba School Boards Association believes that the requirements which apply to Manitoba public schools for reporting of financial and educational operations should apply equally to funded independent schools.

Miscellaneous

- The Manitoba School Boards Association believes that the Northern Remoteness Allowance should be adjusted yearly to reflect the corresponding increase in the provincial budget.

Please also note that the MSBA *Manual of policies and beliefs* also provides other insights regarding finance and funding beyond the above consolidated policy statement. The manual is accessible online-
https://www.mbschoolboards.ca/documents/manualPolicies_Beliefs_%20May%202016.pdf

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