



GOVERNANCE for Sustainable Success

62nd Annual Convention | March 19 – 20, 2026 | Delta Hotels, Winnipeg



REPORT OF THE 2026 NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Report of the 2026 Nominating Committee

Candidates

Vice-President (>6000 students)

- Cheryl Smukowich, St. James-Assiniboia S.D. [Page 1](#)

Directors

Region 1

- Nicole Chaske, Fort La Bosse S.D. [Page 2](#)
- Cameron Mateika, Swan Valley S.D. [Page 3](#)

Region 3

- Penny Helgason, Evergreen S.D. [Page 4](#)
- Jeff Friesen, Hanover S.D. [Page 5](#)

Region 5

(one position)

- ~~Christine Jolly, Pembina Trails S.D (withdrawn)~~
- Sandy Lethbridge, St. James-Assiniboia S.D. [Page 6](#)

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Incumbents in the following positions are in the first year of a two-year term; these positions will be up for election in 2027:

- **President:** Alan Campbell, Interlake S.D.
 - **Vice-President (<6000 students):** Leah Klassen, Garden Valley S.D.
 - **Director Region 2:** Ashley Lachance, Prairie Rose S.D.
 - **Director Region 4:** Dr. Henk Warnar, School District of Mystery Lake
 - **Director Region 5:** Cheryl Smukowich, St. James-Assiniboia S.D.
 - **Director Region 6:** Ann Evangelista, Winnipeg S.D.
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The information that follows was provided by candidates for Provincial Executive office.

The final call for nominations will be on the morning of **March 19, 2026**, at the Convention call to order.

VICE-PRESIDENT (>6000 STUDENTS) **CHERYL SMUKOWICH—ST. JAMES-ASSINIBOIA S.D.**



I have proudly served as a School Trustee with the St. James-Assiniboia School Division since 2006. During that time, I've had the privilege of serving on all standing committees and in leadership roles as Vice Chair and Chair of the Board of Trustees, and currently as Chair of the Education, Human Resources and Governance Committee. These roles have given me a strong understanding of governance, labour relations, and the responsibility we carry as school board leaders.

At the provincial level, I have served as MSBA's Region 5 Director for four years and currently serve again in that role. I've also contributed to the Bargaining Advisory Group, the Resolutions and Policy Committee, the Manitoba High School Athletics Association Executive, and as the alternate trustee for Boards over 6,000 on the Provincial Bargaining Table Team for the first negotiated teachers' collective agreement.

But beyond titles and roles, what matters most to me is public education and student success.

Across Manitoba, our classrooms reflect an increasingly diverse student population. Students come to us with different strengths, challenges, cultures, and lived experiences. It is our responsibility—as trustees and as a provincial association—to ensure our decisions reflect those realities and that every student has access to meaningful opportunities to succeed.

That means being a strong voice for all divisions and for all students. It means advocating clearly and consistently for the resources, policies, and supports our boards need to serve our communities well.

I believe deeply in collaboration. The strength of MSBA lies in its members—working together, listening to one another, and advancing the priorities established by our boards. I am committed to working respectfully and constructively with my colleagues on the Provincial Executive to move that work forward.

On a personal note, my husband Scott and I have four children and twelve grandchildren who keep our lives wonderfully busy. They are a constant reminder to me of why this work matters so much.

I care deeply about public education, about strong governance, and about supporting trustees across Manitoba in the important work they do.

It would be a privilege to serve as your MSBA Vice President, representing Boards over 6,000.

I respectfully ask for your support.



DIRECTOR, REGION 1
NICOLE CHASKE—FORT LA BOSSE S.D



Bio not submitted

DIRECTOR, REGION 1

CAMERON MATEIKA—SWAN VALLEY S.D



My name is Cameron Mateika from the Swan Valley School Division Board of Trustees. I have many years of experience as a k-8 teacher, high school administrator, technology coordinator and superintendent. I have lived in the rural area all my life and am involved in a farming operation that makes the challenges of business very real to me. I have experience on many local boards and was Chair of the University College of the North Governing Council. My work with the Elders Board was a very memorable and positive experience. I obtained a Masters and PhD in Information Technology and have a keen interest in what the schools of the future will look like and how we will transition to what the future holds for our present kindergarten students.

My philosophy lines up directly with the strategic plan for the MSBA. I strongly believe that our roles as trustees are about leadership, advocacy, and service. We need to be an open conduit between students and parents with our Provincial Government. We need to assess the priority needs and advocate so that our students will have an equal opportunity to be successful in their future learning and to help them adapt to a rapidly changing and volatile world. One of my goals will be to help advocate for funding that will provide our students with an equal grounding in the Manitoba education system. My hope is that I can work as an MSBA director in Region 1 to make sure all students have a safe environment to complete their learning goals. I believe that each of us has a responsibility to be of service in helping shape our communities. There is pressure on the Public School System but it is the basis of democracy and one of the many strengths of rural Manitoba. I will work towards a strong voice for Region 1 as director. Thank-you for the opportunity to put my name forward.

DIRECTOR, REGION 3

PENNY HELGASON—EVERGREEN S.D



I am seeking your support to serve as the Region 3 Representative on the MSBA Executive because I believe that my experience as a governance focused trustee for 3 terms has prepared me to be a strong and dedicated voice for our region. Trustees in Region 3 deserve a representative that is present, responsive, and genuinely committed to understanding the realities we face in our region.

One of my greatest strengths is empathy. I understand that every board faces unique challenges — financial pressures, community expectations, student needs, and governance complexities. I approach each conversation with an open mind and a commitment to understanding different perspectives. Thoughtful representation requires not just speaking on behalf of others but truly hearing them.

I am also committed to strengthening communication across Region 3. Trustees need clear, consistent updates and meaningful opportunities to share concerns, ideas, and best practices. If elected, I will prioritize:

- Regular and transparent communication with trustees
- Proactive outreach to ensure every board feels represented
- Creating avenues for collaboration and shared learning
- Bringing regional concerns forward clearly and effectively at the MSBA level

Representation should never feel distant. My goal is to ensure that Region 3 trustees feel connected, informed, and confident that their perspectives are influencing decisions.

Together, we can strengthen communication, build stronger relationships, and ensure our region's voice is heard clearly and respectfully.

I would be honoured to earn your vote and serve Region 3 with integrity, empathy, and dedication.

DIRECTOR, REGION 3

JEFF FRIESEN—HANOVER S.D



I am seeking the opportunity to serve as District 3 representative to the Manitoba School Boards Association with deep respect for the role and the divisions it represents, and with a sincere commitment to serve thoughtfully and responsibly.

My wife, Janet, and I will celebrate 35 years of marriage this March. We live and work on our four-generation family farm, where we raised our five children — two of whom we fostered and later adopted. Working with CFS and providing a “place of safety” over the years has shown us how vital strong systems are in times of need. Farming has shaped my perspective on stewardship, patience, and the importance of strong communities — values that guide my approach to public service. Today, we are also enjoying our five grandchildren, who bring new life and energy to the farm.

Over the years, I have served on a variety of boards, gaining experience in governance, collaboration, and respectful decision-making. I have worked with many local students, teaching mechanics and agriculture for high school credit, and have been involved with *Agriculture in the Classroom* and community outreach initiatives such as *Touch the Farm* and the Brandon Fair. These opportunities have helped me connect with people across our region and better understand the priorities of our communities. Media training has further strengthened my ability to communicate clearly and responsibly on behalf of those I represent.

Community involvement has always been important to me. I have coached softball for many years at a variety of age levels, including coaching the same group of girls for the past 12 years. Together we have competed in numerous leagues and tournaments, earning multiple medals and a provincial gold. Those experiences reinforced the value of teamwork, encouragement, and helping young people grow with confidence.

As a trustee for nearly four years, I have gained a strong appreciation for the real challenges boards face — long transportation routes, staffing pressures, and aging facilities. I believe MSBA provides an important opportunity to ensure local values, traditions, and voices continue to shape our school divisions. I chose not to let my name stand for Board Chair so I could dedicate the time this role deserves.

If elected, I will listen carefully, communicate consistently, and represent District 3 with fairness and respect. I would be honoured to earn your support and serve with integrity, reliability, and genuine care.

jeffriesen@hsd.ca/204-326-0254



DIRECTOR, REGION 5

SANDY LETHBRIDGE—ST. JAMES-ASSINIBOIA S.D.



First elected in 2010 in the St James Assiniboia School Division.

Served two terms as the MSBA Vice-President of School Boards over 6,000 students (ending today!), also previously served as a Region 5 Director.

Being retired has allowed full commitment and support to the needs of my home division and MSBA.

My continuous goal for the Association is to represent member boards, be your voice by:

- Commit to quarterly Region 5 Board Chair / Superintendent / CFO meetings.
- Commit to hosting Region 5 Trustee Teams meetings to share information on what is happening in Metro divisions.
- Commit to hosting a meeting with the City Council Liaison Representative to MSBA every six months to bring concerns to her attention.
- Available to discuss items Metro boards want to brought forward to the MSBA Executive table.
- Encourage participation of all member boards in MSBA organized events /meetings.

Energy, enthusiasm, passion, feistiness and commitment are traits I bring to the table as a member of the MSBA Executive, representing you.

Thanking you in advance for your support!

Rules of Procedure for Nominations and Elections

Nominations

1. In 2026, Vice-President (greater than 6000 students), and one Director each for Regions 1, 3, and 5, will be elected at the Annual Convention of the Association.
2. Every candidate for office shall be a trustee of a member board at the time of being nominated.
3. No person shall hold the same Executive position for more than two, complete consecutive terms.
4. The Nominating Committee will ensure that there is at least one qualified candidate for each position up for election. None of the Committee's nominees shall be a member of the Nominating Committee.
5. Further nominations may be made from the floor of the Annual Convention by a convention delegate with the consent of the nominee.
6. An individual trustee may submit their name to the Nominating Committee, in writing, with the support of an electorate of five (5). This will not apply to candidates nominated from the floor.
7. Nominations will be accepted by the Nominating Committee until the last call for nominations from the floor at the call to order of the Annual Convention.
8. If a candidate for President or Vice-President is not elected, that candidate is deemed to have been nominated for any other position for which they are qualified if that candidate so desires.
9. Voting shall be by ballot. Voting for President shall be by board ballots, which will be distributed in such numbers as determined by Association by-laws to a trustee authorized by each board to receive those ballots. Voting for all other positions will be by individual trustee ballots, with the Vice-Presidents elected by trustees at large, and Directors elected by the trustees of each respective region. Every trustee of a member board is eligible to register as a voting delegate at a Convention and upon registration shall be given the right to vote. Only Convention delegates and members of the Executive present at the convention shall be entitled to vote at Convention, and no person or member shall vote by proxy.
10. Prior to the elections, the President shall appoint scrutineers, none of whom shall be voting delegates or staff, and in the event that a vote is required on any election, the scrutineers shall collect and count the ballots and declare the name of the successful candidate for each office.
11. Where one officer is to be elected, a candidate, in order to be elected, must receive over 50% of the votes cast. If on the first or subsequent vote no candidate receives over 50% of the votes cast, the name of the candidate receiving the fewest votes shall be deleted and another vote taken.
12. Where two or more Directors are to be elected at one time, a candidate, in order to be elected, must receive over 50% of the ballots cast. In the event that more than one ballot is necessary, any successful candidate will be declared elected and the candidate receiving the fewest votes shall be dropped from the ballot; except where this would reduce the remaining candidates to one, in which case only the successful candidate shall be removed from the ballot.
13. Should a tie vote occur during an election which would have the effect of no change in the makeup of the next ballot, a second vote shall be taken, where possible. If the second vote again results in a tie, the successful candidates shall be determined by lot.

The final call for nominations will be on the morning of March 19, 2026, following the Convention call to order.

All elections will take place on Friday, March 20, 2026, in accordance with the Convention program.