



LEADERSHIP, ADVOCACY AND SERVICE FOR MANITOBA'S PUBLIC SCHOOL BOARDS

March 17, 2020

The Honourable Kelvin Goertzen
Minister of Education
Legislative Building
168-450 Broadway
Winnipeg, MB R3C 0V8

Dear Minister Goertzen,

On behalf of the Manitoba School Boards Association, I am pleased to share with you a copy of the resolutions passed by the MSBA's membership at the 2020 annual general meeting held March 13, 2020.

Established practice of the MSBA is to invite your written response to the enclosed resolutions. Given the requirement for social distancing, we shall postpone any in-person invitations to your office to respond to these resolutions until such time as it is safe to do so.

In closing, we would like to extend our appreciation for attending the 2020 convention to share in-person with our delegates the information around the COVID-19 Coronavirus and ultimately the suspension of classes for the three-week window. It was very much appreciated by our boards to have the partnership of the Government of Manitoba during this important challenge.

The MSBA and its membership value our positive working relationship with your department and we are committed to continued collaboration with government to serve the educational needs of students and communities across our province.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Alan M Campbell".

Alan M Campbell
President

AMC/ak

cc Manitoba School Boards
 MSBA Provincial Executive



Leading Change

with courage, clarity and resilience

MANITOBA
School Boards
ASSOCIATION

56th Annual Convention
March 12 - 13, 2020
Delta Winnipeg,
350 St. Mary Avenue

2020 Resolutions

*to the Honourable Kelvin Goertzen,
Minister of Education*



FUNDING AND FINANCIAL MATTERS

ALLOWING OPERATIONAL RESERVES FFM-01-20 (Region 1)

BE IT RESOLVED THAT Manitoba School Boards Association lobby the Provincial Government to change the regulations to permit School Boards to create operational reserve funds.

Rationale:

Reserve Funds are established by Boards to assist with long term financial stability and financial planning. They are an important element of the Board's financial plan. By maintaining adequate levels of reserve fund balances, Board's are able to mitigate current and future risks, provide a cushion to absorb unexpected shifts in revenue or expenditures, fund one-time expenditure requirements, or minimize fluctuations in taxes.

As with many Boards, certain operational expenses can fluctuate greatly year over year. As Boards are not permitted to run deficits, they must fully budget for these potential expenses in their annual operating budget.

The provincial government acknowledges the importance of operational reserves by establishing them for themselves. Municipal governments also have established operational reserves. School Boards are not currently permitted to create operational reserves, as the Public Schools Finance Board currently restricts the creation of Reserve Funds to be Capital in nature.

Given the financial restrictions currently placed on School Boards by the provincial government, such as the 2% cap on the Special requirement and the ongoing reductions to the administration cap, it is becoming harder and harder for Boards to find the financial flexibility to invest in new educational initiatives and improve educational outcomes. Allowing operational reserves would allow some flexibility and would conform with the provincial government's request for fiscal prudence.

SUBSIDIZING TRAVEL COSTS FOR NORTHERN TEACHERS FFM-02-20 (Region 4)

BE IT RESOLVED THAT Manitoba School Boards Association advocate with Manitoba Education for financial support for travel and substitute teacher costs when teachers from school divisions north of the 53 parallel are required by Manitoba Education to attend workshops held in southern Manitoba.

Rationale:

Northern School division representation at southern Manitoba workshops or in-service sessions are sometimes required by Manitoba Education. The extra cost of releasing teachers and transporting them to such mandated events financially impacts the northern school divisions due to the additional release time and travel days required to attend that exceed the length of the actual workshop. Manitoba Education should ensure a more fair access to its mandated events by subsidizing the travel and substitute costs.

FUNDING AND FINANCIAL MATTERS CON'T...

SPECIAL NEEDS FUNDING FFM-03-20 (Region 5/6)

BE IT RESOLVED THAT Manitoba School Boards Association request Manitoba Education to review the Special Needs formula-based funding model (formerly Level 2 and Level 3 student specific funding) and the underlying characteristics in order to address changing school division demographics, and by extension growing needs for support;

AND FURTHER that Manitoba Education make transparent the formula used to calculate the formula-based funding that is allocated to school divisions.

Rationale:

In correspondence to school division in February 2017, Manitoba Education and Training stated:

Ending the student specific application process for Level 2 and 3 funding will avoid the negative labeling of students by funding category, save staff time in preparing and reading funding applications, and will allow for predictable levels of funding as school divisions plan for and provide appropriate educational programming that is inclusive of all students. It is hoped that this change in funding process will allow for more opportunities for innovation in service delivery models that will further enhance equity and inclusion in Manitoba schools, while supporting high levels of achievement for all students.

However, since piloting the new funding model in 2016 and fully implementing it across all school division in 2017-18, student profiles and student demographics have changed significantly and, in many cases, enrolment has increased in a number in school divisions across the province.

While the need for supports have increased, funding has remained relatively frozen at 2016-17 levels. Consequently, in order to meet the growing needs, a greater burden has been placed on the local taxpayer.

With recent limits imposed on local taxation increases, an undue restriction is placed on local school boards to adequately provide appropriate resources for the most needy and vulnerable student population.

PLAYGROUND DEVELOPMENT COSTS FFM-04-20 (Pembina Trails S.D.)

BE IT RESOLVED THAT Manitoba School Boards Association Executive advocate with and urge the Minister of Education to include the cost of development and construction for playground structures and outdoor equipment, accessible to all students, in the provincial funding formula for all new school builds and the replacement of play structures which have been deemed unsafe for use.

Rationale:

Outdoor education and play is a vital part of our school programming and the health and wellbeing of our students. Playground structures and other outdoor education equipment form a critical component of this programming. There is no provincial funding currently in place to fund, as part of new school construction the development or construction of playground structures and outdoor education experiences.

EDUCATION PROGRAMMING

DUAL CREDIT RECOGNITION EP-01-20 (Region 4)

BE IT RESOLVED THAT Manitoba School Boards Association advocate with Manitoba Education and the Department of Economic Development and Training for a return to past practice whereby courses in accredited university or college programs that were completed successfully by high school students were recognized for post-secondary as well as high school credit.

Rationale:

For several years students in some northern high schools were selected by their school principals and allowed to enroll in university or community college post-secondary courses as a means of enriching their curricular experiences when it was untenable to offer specific vocational or enrichment courses (e.g. International Baccalaureate) in their high school due to financial, staffing and facility restraints. This opportunity was welcomed by these high school students and also encouraged some students to give more consideration to vocational careers. Upon high school graduation such successful dual students often enrolled in that post-secondary institution to further their training and certification.

In recent years, while some arrangements for high school students to attend vocational programs in nearby post-secondary education institutions has been developed when their high school has no dedicated vocational facilities, such students no longer receive official recognition by the post-secondary institution of the students' earned achievements, even when they achieve a similar level of course attainment as the college graduates.

Official recognition by post-secondary institutions of such dual achievement, as well as encouraging student vocational career selection, would allow for more flexibility in the training of northern workers in several fields, and allow and encourage high school students who qualify for such admission to be recognized for their successful course/program completion.

ELECTIONS EP-02-20 (Region 5/6)

BE IT RESOLVED THAT Manitoba School Boards Association urge the Manitoba Government to repeal legislation requiring school closures on fixed election dates in order to continue to expose our students to our democracy in action and enable the voting public to see our schools in operation.

Rationale:

We have opened our schools as polling places for decades without incident. Doing so provides an opportunity to teach our students about the democratic process and to showcase our schools to the public.

STUDENTS

MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORTS S-01-20

(Region 2)

BE IT RESOLVED THAT Manitoba School Boards Association lobby the provincial government to ensure comprehensive mental health supports including crisis response services are available locally.

Rationale:

There are students in crisis who are not able to access the mental health services they need in a timely manner. Many students do not get the attention and follow-up that they need. Without exaggeration, all regions in the province are under-resourced and kids are paying with their lives.

VAPING..... S-02-20

(Region 2)

BE IT RESOLVED THAT Manitoba School Boards Association urge the Ministers of Health (Manitoba and Canada) and Manitoba Education to develop education programs modelled on successful tobacco use reduction strategies to discourage the use of vaping products by our students.

AND FURTHER that Manitoba School Boards Association urge these agencies to regulate vaping products and e-cigarettes by: lowering their nicotine content; banning their use of flavorings, and their sale on the internet; setting the legal age for their sale and the sale of tobacco products to 19 years; ensuring that health and safety warnings be placed on their packaging and prohibiting the promotion and advertising of them anywhere they can be seen or heard by youth.

Rationale:

The growing use of vaping products poses a significant health risk to our students and the use of vaping products is reversing the gains we have made in reducing the use of tobacco products by young people. We are now aware of serious health risks from select vaping products. There may be long-term health risks as well. We need to act now.

FACILITIES AND MATERIALS

REMOTE PARTICIPATION IN PROVINCIAL MANDATED PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FM-01-20 (Region 4)

BE IT RESOLVED THAT Manitoba School Boards Association advocate with Manitoba Education to provide mechanisms for interactive video conferencing access for personnel from northern school divisions to attend mandatory Manitoba Education workshops/in-service sessions held in southern Manitoba.

Rationale:

Costs of attendance at required workshops and in-service sessions put on by Manitoba Education could be reduced significantly if electronic attendance was possible, saving substitute teacher costs and travel costs, and time.

EXTERNAL ORGANIZATIONS

ACCESS TO MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONALS EO-02-20
(Region 5/6)

BE IT RESOLVED THAT Manitoba School Boards Association lobby the provincial and federal governments to have increased timely access and coverage to mental health professionals under our Health Care System.

Rationale:

Currently, access to mental health professionals on an individual and on-going basis is not covered by Manitoba Health. There are provincially funded community mental health agencies such as the Manitoba Mood Disorders Association that offer group sessions, but do not provide individual coverage. If a student, staff, or family member needs to have on-going one-to-one mental health care, it is at their own expense. We do provide mental health services through schools and at hospitals in a crisis situation but often that is not sufficient and not on a regular basis. We can do better, and it is imperative that individuals get the help they need before it escalates into a more serious condition. While universal health care is available to all in Canada, so should access to universal mental health care, and not just for those individuals who can afford it.