

Rural Education and the Provincial Election

School Divisions all across Manitoba are welcoming back their students this September. This coincides with the provincial election and the campaigning that accompanies the event. High profile comments made recently miss the mark on the needs of students in our schools right now. Especially in rural areas, actual issues include inequity in many areas.

Let's focus on students! Currently Prairie Spirit School Division priorities include:

- 1) High Academic Achievement (Numeracy and Literacy) - Strong numeracy and literacy skills are essential for students to reach their full potential in our evolving society.
- 2) Student Engagement - Engagement includes the ability of students to attend school regularly, work with others, contribute in class, in our communities and in society, and function independently at an age appropriate level.
- 3) Communicate Engagement - A third priority is to communicate and build connections with our communities about the role of the school board and its priorities, and build relationships with our Indigenous communities.

Current funding has limited our capacity to adequately achieve our priorities. For example, critical thinking skills and writing deficits continue to be challenges for our students and a focus for our teachers. Full time Numeracy and Literacy Administrators, which are commonplace in urban school divisions, are unaffordable in the current funding model...and no longer provided by the Department of Education.

Urge politicians to focus on issues that serve the needs of all of their citizens including those in rural Manitoba who suffer from many inequities, including access to resources for Public Education. The extraordinary efforts of our employees go a long way to bridge this gap, however it is not sustainable. We encourage you to discuss relevant Education Issues in Manitoba in your local communities and with your local candidates.

Submitted by the Prairie Spirit School Division Board of Trustees