



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

September 5, 2024

Honourable Nello Altomare
Minister of Education and Early Childhood Learning
Room 162 Legislative Building
450 Broadway
Winnipeg, MB R3C 0V8

Honourable Malaya Marcelino
Minister of Labour and Immigration
Room 156 Legislative Building
450 Broadway
Winnipeg, MB R3C 0V8

[by email only: mineecl@manitoba.ca; minli@manitoba.ca; dmedu@manitoba.ca; dmli@manitoba.ca]

Dear Ministers Altomare and Marcelino,

Every year, the Manitoba School Boards Association convenes its annual convention, bringing together school boards province-wide for professional development, dialogue on important topics in public education, as well as our annual resolutions session where our members consider policy proposals for adoption on behalf of the wider membership.

This past spring, members passed **Resolution FFM-01-24 Increased Support for Newcomers**, which reads as follows:

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Manitoba School Boards Association lobby the Provincial Government for increased support and resources in the form of settlement services and English/French as an Additional Language support for school divisions which are experiencing higher enrollment of newcomer families. These initiatives are crucial in ensuring successful integration and education for newcomers in our communities.

In passing this resolution, our membership wished to formally communicate that higher immigration has resulted in greater need for additional supports. If the Province of Manitoba plans to increase immigration numbers, schools will need additional resources to support these newcomers and their families.

Under any given budget cycle, resources allocated to EAL and francisation programs by public school divisions have outpaced the total level of grants that are received from the Government of Manitoba through the Department of Education for this purpose. While our members have generally borne such critical investments through the revenues collected locally from our community members, fiscal pressures have increasingly signified the need to direct these funds towards sustainment of many priorities, including Additional Language supports. In addition to the regular number of nominees entering Manitoba, our province has experienced significant patterns in resettlement of refugee families as well.

According to data produced by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, resettlement of Syrian and, into more recent times, Ukrainian refugees, has occurred province-wide, meaning that for our members in rural and northern communities especially, it is not simply a matter of expanding Additional language programming upon widening of existing resources but of first securing the providers necessary to even offer such services.

For refugee families where students with disrupted learning are present or, where there may be secondary age students arriving without any English or French language foundations, the responsibility of preparing these youths for meaningful educational opportunities and/or workforce entry cannot be understated. Public School boards cannot

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achieve the necessary results and outcomes alone. We are therefore asking for your support in the current and future budget years to help us deliver more sustainable programming to help these families in significant need.

We would certainly appreciate an opportunity to meet with you to discuss this priority and look forward to identifying solutions that can make a real difference for newcomer and refugee students across Manitoba.

Should you have any questions or wish to discuss this matter further please feel free to arrange a meeting. Our Executive Director, Josh Watt, can be reached at jwatt@mbschoolboards.ca at any time.

We thank you in advance for your consideration of our concerns and look forward to working with you to achieve constructive outcomes for the sustainability of our programming, supports and services.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sandy Nemeth".

Sandy Nemeth, President

cc: Brian O'Leary, Deputy Minister, Manitoba Education and Early Childhood Learning
Bernadette Preun, Deputy Minister, Manitoba Labour and Immigration
Josh Watt, Executive Director, Manitoba School Boards Association