



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 Lisa Naylor  
Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure  
Room 203 Legislative Building  
450 Broadway  
Winnipeg, MB R3C 0V8

[by email only: [mineecl@manitoba.ca](mailto:mineecl@manitoba.ca); [minmti@manitoba.ca](mailto:minmti@manitoba.ca); [dmedu@manitoba.ca](mailto:dmedu@manitoba.ca); [dmmti@manitoba.ca](mailto:dmmti@manitoba.ca)]

Dear Nello and Lisa,

As long-time advocates for public education, you require little introduction to the annual resolutions process that is regularly conducted by the Manitoba School Boards Association during its spring convention!

This past spring, our members passed two resolutions that speak to shared responsibilities under your respective portfolios as the Ministers responsible for Education, Transportation, Infrastructure and Government Services in Manitoba.

**Resolution FFM-02-24 – New School Construction Projects** reads as follows:

*BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Manitoba School Boards Association lobby the Provincial Government to provide school divisions with a comprehensive guideline that outlines the steps that school boards must follow in order to qualify to be added to the list of new school construction projects and to establish a consultative process to support decision making around new school construction projects.*

In respect of this resolution, our members endorsed the current time, there is no clear roadmap identifying the steps or criteria for qualifying for a new school construction project. Our members have therefore asked

- 1) What are the determinants for a school division being selected for new school construction?
- 2) How many portable classrooms are required before a new school is considered?
- 3) If multiple schools are at capacity and students are using libraries or music rooms for classrooms, do these factors influence the decision-making process – what factors are considered when a division is experiencing growth and feels a new school is required?

As always, we would certainly appreciate any perspective or information that you can provide by way of helping respond to these important inquiries.

We would equally highlight, based on discussions convened with Minister Altomare and Deputy Minister O'Leary earlier this year, that clarifying the role and responsibilities of the Public Schools Finance Board (and its successor under the Government Services Department) would help to promote more streamlined relationship and communication channels for our members to submit and receive follow-up directly on such inquiries. We were heartened by Minister Altomare and Deputy Minister O'Leary's affirmation of the necessity of establishing a return to such accessible and responsive services in respect of school capital and would be very pleased if we were able to provide our membership and their senior administration teams with a single point of contact where we can begin the task of re-building the kind of relationship and communication that was previously enjoyed, before the PSFB mandate was transferred to Government Services.

.../2

Since the time that the resolution was passed, we were also intrigued to discover that, following repealment of all references to PSFB under *The Public Schools Act*, one reference to the Board continues to exist under Part 4, section 2(3)(a)-(b) of The Provincial Planning Regulation (M.R. 81/2011). The discovery of this continued provision followed from a significant conversation between members in MSBA's Region 5/6 and the importance of consultation around school sites in new community subdevelopments, taking account of access to both English (including French Immersion) as well as Francophone public school programming to serve these new neighbourhoods. While The Provincial Planning Regulation does fall under Minister Bushie's authority, that this Regulation speaks to the joint school infrastructure role of both Education as well as Transportation, Infrastructure and Government Services, we felt warranted further follow-up, not just in terms of who exercises this consultation duty but in terms of operationalizing this particular provision in future for our mutual benefit.

The second resolution that we wished to raise to your attention is **T-01-24 – Bus Safety**, which reads as follows:

*BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Manitoba School Boards Association lobby the provincial government to pursue two actions to make school bus loading and unloading safer.*

- Increasing the penalties for vehicles passing a stopped school bus that has its stop arm extended and red loading lights flashing,*
- Undertaking a stronger educational and information campaign that emphasizes regulations related to school bus safety and that informs the public of potential penalties, and worse yet, potential tragedies.*

The initial sponsor of this resolution identified that in its own small, rural community, bus cameras reveal that on average there are 4 violations per week when a vehicle passes a stopped school bus that has its stop arm extended and its red loading lights flashing. Believing this is not unique to their division, they believed this needs to be addressed before a young child is killed by such a driver. Our wider membership certainly concurred with this assessment and so passed the resolution as a general assembly.

Our members recognize that Manitoba has enacted stiffer penalties for distracted driving; the current fine is \$672.00 with 5 demerits and a three-day license suspension. Presently, the fine for vehicles passing a stopped school bus that has its stop arm extended and its red loading lights flashing is \$673.65 and two demerits. Accordingly, we would invite a review of this penalty and encourage that this offence also involve a license suspension and additional demerits. While no number of demerits and suspensions are sufficient for the loss of life, additional penalties may act as an even stronger deterrent.

We would also strongly encourage a renewed government education and information campaign to remind all motorists in Manitoba of the extreme danger of passing a stopped school bus. On behalf of our members, MSBA concurs that we need to do more to protect the lives of our children in Manitoba.

Should you have any questions or wish to discuss this matter further please feel free to arrange a meeting with us. Our Executive Director, Josh Watt, can be reached at [jwatt@mbschoolboards.ca](mailto:jwatt@mbschoolboards.ca) at any time to coordinate follow-up.

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,



Sandy Nemeth, President

cc: Brian O'Leary, Deputy Minister, Manitoba Education and Early Childhood Learning  
Ryan Klos, Deputy Minister, Manitoba Transportation and Infrastructure  
Josh Watt, Executive Director, Manitoba School Boards Association