

Chamber 2011

Good Morning. It's a pleasure to be here this morning representing the 15,000 members of The Manitoba Teachers' Society and to have the opportunity to introduce the Honourable Nancy Allan, Minister of Education.

We are pleased to sponsor this Manitoba Chamber event because we believe quality public schools are vital to a growing economy and thriving communities. Everyone, including business, has a role in ensuring Manitoba's 170,000 students lead healthy, productive and rewarding lives.

I don't want to steal the Minister's thunder, but it has been a busy year for her since we were here last January when she was the freshly-minted Minister of Education.

Over the past 13 months she has been a Minister who has not only listened, but heard the concerns of teachers and parents.

A year ago MTS published poll results that said the public were struggling with a student promotion policy that existed in some Manitoba school divisions that said students could never be held back a year.

Our polling also showed that teachers were frustrated by a provincial policy that said they couldn't dispense consequences when students were late in submitting assignments. At the time, there was a lot of media attention about these two issues.

This fall, Minister Allan made it clear that teachers and parents voices were important in making decisions about students and that teachers' professional judgment was valued and would be respected when deciding whether to promote a student to the next grade or accepting late assignments. I would like to publicly thank the Minister of Education for listening to teachers and parents and making these changes.

These are just two of many initiatives that the Minister has spearheaded this past year. I am sure that she will outline her department's other recent proposals for students, parents and teachers.

MTS is anticipating the provincial public school funding announcement in the coming days. With absolutely no self interest, (wink, wink) we hope this will be 11th consecutive announcement of increased funding to our schools at or above the rate of economic growth.

I truly believe that investing in our schools is an investment in Manitoba. A sentiment I know this Minister would agree with.

Now before I steal anymore thunder I'd like to introduce, the Minister of Education, the Honourable Nancy Allan.