

THE MANITOBA Teacher

APRIL/MAY 2021 VOLUME 99 NUMBER 6 NEWSMAGAZINE OF THE MANITOBA TEACHERS' SOCIETY

TEACHERS REVIEW THE REVIEW

“ This review, while being done under the guise of equality for all, only divides and creates a sense of the elite vs. the other, us vs. them. ”

“ I worry that School Community Councils will be the voice of the most privileged. ”

“ I am very concerned with how the review will impact our most vulnerable learners and the teams that work with them. ”

“ This review was co-chaired by ex-finance ministers. It clearly outlines the government’s priorities. ”

“ Standardized tests are very one size fits all. That is not how classrooms are set up. It is not what our students are. ”

“ Governments and parents should not be making decisions without collaborating with teachers. ”

Maternity & Parental Leave



Are you planning to take maternity and/or parental leave? Information is available on our website at ***mbteach.org*** or contact:

Ashleigh Deeley Michaluk, Staff Officer, Teacher Welfare

The Manitoba Teachers' Society
Teacher Welfare Department
191 Harcourt Street
Winnipeg MB R3J 3H2

Phone: 204-831-3065/1-866-494-5747 (ext 232)

Fax: 204-831-3077/1-866-799-5784

Email: amichaluk@mbteach.org

Virtual Maternity and Parental Leave Seminars from 4:30 to 5:30 PM on:

Tuesday, April 27, 2021 | Tuesday, May 25, 2021 | Tuesday, June 15, 2021

Please email amichaluk@mbteach.org to register.

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FROM THE PRESIDENT

JAMES BEDFORD

There is reason to be heartened that the K-12 Commission on Public Education recommendations acknowledged poverty and the impact it has on the lives of our students. Read more about those recommendations in this edition of The MB Teacher. You need to read about them here because those recommendations are not reflected in Bill 64. Bill 64 dismantles the structures that have been responding to the needs of our students and their communities. Poverty continues as a problem because of government's inability, or lack of ability, to address it. Changing governance structures will only remove some of the voices who have been calling for action. It will not remove the voice of The Manitoba Teachers' Society and its members.

I also share concerns respecting the future of Reconciliation should the changes called for in Bill 64 come to pass. Our Society has been very active in recent years advocating for the implementation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Recommendations. We have made progress at the school division level, working with trustees and superintendents, and with Manitoba Education in implementing Indigenous programming. There have been many division-wide initiatives that have provided valuable resources for members. Bill 64 is largely silent on Reconciliation, and I respect the concerned voices of Senator Murray Sinclair, Rebecca Chartrand and Niigaan Sinclair, among others, who have called attention to the risk Bill 64 poses to Reconciliation.

So where to next? We use our voices to speak up and speak out to defend public education and the collective futures of our students. Your Society is already responding and will continue to do so. Your voice is one that is respected within your community, so I ask you to use it. Opportunity exists to speak at the legislative committee level, to provide your opinion in local press, to express yourself through social media, and to continue to speak to those in your communities about the work you do. I have the responsibility to speak on behalf of all members, but my words have no meaning without the respect and admiration that you gain through the work you do in our schools and classrooms. Never underestimate that respect; you have worked hard to earn it. You have my respect, this year more than ever!

The week since Bill 64 was finally released has been an emotional one, but I have been struck by the support shown for you and for what you do. Teaching can be a lonely profession, but know that you are not alone, you are a Manitoba Teachers' Society member. And your Society is not alone. Together, we've got this!

P.S. This column requires a post-script. This is George Stephenson's last edition, and he will be retired by the time you read his final article. In my leadership role at the Society I have come to respect and rely upon George. His advice, encouragement and humour have helped define my role as President. As a leader I have learned a tremendous amount from him. I will miss you George, and on behalf of 16,000 members, thank you for your dedicated work with the Society.



Editor

George Stephenson
gstephenson@mbteach.org
Phone: 204-831-3058

Design

Krista Rutledge, Matthew Kehler

Photography

Matea Tuhtar

Circulation

Jennifer Nasse
jnasse@mbteach.org

Advertising

Matea Tuhtar
advertising@mbteach.org

The Manitoba Teacher

191 Harcourt Street
Winnipeg, MB R3J 3H2
Phone: 204-888-7961
Fax: 204-831-0877

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The Manitoba Teachers' Society
191 Harcourt Street
Winnipeg, MB R3J 3H2
mts-im@mbteach.org



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INSIDE MTS

CONNECTING THE DOTS AMID CHAOS

DANIELLE FULLAN KOLTON, PH.D., GENERAL SECRETARY

It's a challenge to connect the dots between the three documents that have dominated our lives since the release of the Report of the Commission on K to 12 Education: The 178-page report itself (the impetus), the Better Education Starts Today: Putting Students First document (the plan), and the contents of Bill 64: The Education Modernization Act (the proposed legislation). To be sure, they are riddled with contradictions.

The Commission report is not all bad. In fact, there are a number of valid recommendations on which the government has taken a decisive pass, in favour of a cherry-picking process that distorts the Commission's intent into a regressive and deeply troublesome vision for the future.

And then there is the proposed legislation. Wading through Bill 64 feels like an adventure in Willie Wonka's chocolate factory with all its surprise tunnels, rivers and rooms, and some oompa loompas thrown in for good measure.

"Better" education apparently comes in the form of a corporatized, multi-level reformation that lacks current research and teacher voice. The focus on disproportionate parent choice and voice, increased standardization, questionable and "cleansed" content and scope, accountability, regulation, and austerity measures will have long-lasting and negative consequences. Teachers as specially trained experts in education have been relegated to the backseat of a parent-driven system.

Through this lens, the future of education in Manitoba clearly favours the privileged, deepening inequity and discrimination that already exists. The purpose of public education, it seems, is about training citizens who contribute to the economy, and this is the pathway to education as big business, a page ripped (plagiarized?) straight from the US education playbook.

Our landscape can best be described as volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous (VUCA). This acronym, developed after the Cold War, aptly portrays a context exposed to rapid change, unpredictability, multiple internal and external forces, and

high levels of confusion. We are in VUCA times, and this can feel very destabilizing.

Add to this the post-pandemic chaos and transformation, and we are ripe for meltdown. Seems like a great time to blow up the education system in all the wrong ways, taking aim at people and systems (teachers, principals, school divisions, and school boards) that have responded in extraordinary ways through the upheaval of COVID.

At the Society, our approach has been laser-focused on stability, security, and support for our members, with communication as the cornerstone of that effort. We commit to keeping you in the loop every step of the way.

Assessing the timelines, legal, operational, and political implications, and effect on teacher welfare, status of the profession, public education, and teacher mental health dominated the first week post-release. That detailed work has helped us create a strategic and measured approach for identifying where we can take immediate action to establish credibility, drive member and public narrative, and weaken the government agenda while also planning to achieve long-term outcomes. This is a sprint and a marathon.

Consideration of our allies has been a key factor as we ask ourselves: Who do we have in our corner and how can they help? The Canadian Teachers' Federation, other member associations, retired teachers, sibling unions, labour affiliates. We are reaching out with intent to achieve critical mass.

We are also leveraging the voice of our 16,000+ members, 38 union locals, robust owned media channels (social media, The Sub, the MTS website), an established, credible reputation with news media and the already high public regard for teachers enhanced by pandemic response. The importance of the strong, loud voices of members cannot be understated.

Throughout this year, we asked you to "Use Your Voice". Now we need you to "Raise Your Voice". Many, many of you have taken to social media to share commentary, bewilderment, and outrage.

There are other strategies you can use, and these are contained in the Toolkit provided to your Local, which you can also access on the MTS website. Keep an eye out for our member email, *The Sub*, for updates, and make sure your contact details are up to date on MyProfile.

While all this plays out, the other work of the Society continues. In 2018, the collective agreements in all thirty-eight Locals under provincial jurisdiction expired. Louis Riel was the lead table and received an award in April, 2020 that provided for a two-year agreement. The Pembina Trails arbitration award in 2021 shattered the salary limits of Bill 28 awarding teachers the same increases as Louis Riel for 2018-2019 and 2019-2020 and further providing a 0.5% increase in 2020-2021 and a cost-of-living adjustment in 2021-2022.

What followed was a cascade of local bargaining and settlements replicating the effective periods and salary increases from the Pembina Trails' arbitration award. This, despite direction sent to school divisions requiring a bargaining mandate from the Public Sector Compensation Committee of Cabinet which was expected to stall settlements.

Robust programming for professional learning continues, volumes of member inquiries are answered weekly, new initiatives for increasing member engagement entry points are being launched, binder meetings for our ambitious Provincial Council 2021 meeting are around the corner, the Summer Seminar program – *The Road Ahead: Leadership. Engagement. Action.* – is under development, committee submissions have been prepared for Bill 16 (The Labour Relations Amendment Act), Bill 45 (The Public Schools Amendment Act) and Bill 64 (The Education Modernization Act), and the list continues.

Despite VUCA, we will prevail. Over a century of safeguarding the welfare of teachers, the status of the profession, and the cause of public education has prepared us for this. We need you to help us propel this work. Raise your voice!



“We must ensure our teachers, staff and school leaders can excel at fostering learning and supporting student success.”

- Cliff Cullen on K-12 Review

Lost in Translation

BY GEORGE STEPHENSON

It has been some weeks now since the government released what was to be plans for reinventing the education system in Manitoba.

Yet, a fog still lies over the future of education in Manitoba.

When the process started a couple of years ago, the government appointed a commission that would hear presentations and deliver a report outlining recommended changes. The commission hired world-renowned education consultant Avis Glaze. The report was completed a year ago.

But while the government sat on that report while the pandemic churned on, it also moved the commission report to the back burner and created its own stew of recommendations on the front element.

Then last month it released three documents at once, hundreds of table-bending pages covering research,

recommendations and legislation (Bill 64).

One was the commission's extensive report. But it was now superseded by the government's own report. And that was joined by hundreds of pages of legislation to clear any legal hurdles in implementing what the government wants.

To sort out the documents and their contents is not easy. From public consultation to final "actions" much appears lost in translation.

The government adopted some commission recommendations, ignored others or simply took parts and dropped parts without explanation.

For example, the commission was charged by the government to examine six "imperatives" in education. During the course of hearings, it expanded that mandate to 10 imperatives, all outlined in its report.

In its report, the government discarded the imperatives and came up with four "pillars" under which recommendations were spread and then drafted a 300-page piece of legislation.

The path from public consultations to the commission to the government report to the legislation is fraught.

One might need, like TV detectives, a wall with string connecting the dozens of floating pieces – the commission, the government report and legislation. At the end of the day the only thing you might realize is that you need another ball of yarn.

While the government report continually suggests its recommendations are based on the commission report, that is not always the case.

In the most-publicized aspect – the elimination of school boards and creation of 15 "regions", the commission made no such recommendations.

It did recommend governance involving both appointed and elected trustees and amalgamation of divisions down to six or eight.

The government doesn't explain why it substantially altered that recommendation or why some school divisions were left on their own. One major question has been why Winnipeg becomes one massive region (250 schools, 100,000 students), while the Hanover division (19 schools, 8,500 students and the home of the former minister of education) remains untouched.

The government's new structure will see creation of new roles for principals and creation of a number of appointed boards to oversee school operations.

School Community Councils of parents and caregivers will be established in every school and given broad authority to have input into many aspects of school administration.

Also being established is a Provincial Education Authority and Provincial Advisory Council on Education. All positions will be appointed and overseen by the province.

While the government nods to the commission, the commission did not recommend creation of this bureaucracy.

In fact it issued a warning about appointed boards.

"This approach is susceptible to partisan influence and allegiance, and appointments can be rescinded with or without cause."

While the government implies its recommendations derive from the views of the commission, in this, and other areas, it is no more reflective of reality than those of a funhouse mirror.

Another example is the observation by the commission: "People want to know that those who are making important decisions within the education system, including elected trustees, are well qualified with knowledge and experience necessary to fulfill those responsibilities."

It also leads its report with the observation: "The research in education states quite convincingly that teachers and principals are most influential in improving student outcomes."

On the other hand, the government report mentions parents far more than teachers.

As the Winnipeg Free Press pointed out the term parent "is mentioned 74 times in the BEST strategy; in comparison, teacher is mentioned 60 times.

The question arises whether parents in general are those "qualified" and "knowledgeable" people? If parents themselves thought so, they wouldn't be sending their kids to school, they'd be



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teaching them themselves.

It's not to denigrate the input of parents, but the government document does not explain why or how the creation of the new bureaucracy will improve student outcomes.

This is not to say that the commission report, if released on its own, would have been viewed as perfect. There are recommendations that would have sparked much controversy. But what it does have is pages of research and public input to support their decisions. The government report does not on many actions it plans to take.

For example, the commission report goes into detail about the issue of poverty and student outcomes. The government report barely acknowledges the issue.

In an interview with CBC Radio, Education Minister Cliff Cullen simply said that will be handled through the government's overall poverty reduction strategy. Actually, the government has promised in its report to establish a task force to examine poverty and education, as recommended by MTS.

The government can point specifically to recommendations that are reflective of the commission report. But if that report provided the foundation for the government's list of actions, where were the commissioners when everything was released?

When the reports of government-appointed commissions and task forces are released it is most often with a

government acknowledgement of which recommendations it will adopt and which need further study or which will be dropped.

And when that happens, there are commissioners or at least the chairs of the commission available to answer questions.

One can imagine the outcry if, say, the federal government had re-imagined and rewrote the findings of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission into its own document and its chair was nowhere to be seen when it was released.

As this is being written, it has been more than a week since the education release and not a single commissioner has been quoted publicly about their support of the government's actions or lack thereof.

But this is just the beginning.

While the government's goals are clear, much of the rhetoric around reaching them still call for detail.

Implementation will better show the province's intentions and help lift the fog over many of the vague actions being proposed.

As the government leaves the commission report to the archives, it should take note of one paragraph from that document:

"This is certainly not the time for failure; we cannot afford to miss the mark. Our children's success and the effectiveness of the education system cannot be left to chance. There are no second chances or margins for error when the future of our children is at stake."

Responding to the Government report

The government's report, *Better Education Starts Today*, developed in response to the recommendations of the Commission on Kindergarten to Grade 12 Education, identified four pillars for student success: Governance and Accountability for Results, High-Quality Learning and Outcomes, Future-Ready Students and Excellence in Teaching and Leadership.

While the government's report does not act on all recommendations of the Commission, it does include lessons learned from the

COVID-19 pandemic, especially in terms of remote learning.

Here are some highlights of the government's plans for K-12 public school education and the Society's responses. This is by no means an exhaustive list, as many of the recommendations are vague with little or no detail. The government has said it will consult with stakeholders over the coming months, which will hopefully result in improved clarity.

The full government report can be found at mbteach.org.

What the Government Report Says:	The MTS Response:
PILLAR 1: GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY FOR RESULTS	
Develop a fair and sustainable funding model. The new model will simplify funding to schools, better support specialized learning needs and create predictability in funding. This will support planning and provide flexibility to school and regional leaders to address local needs.	The Manitoba Teachers' Society supports a funding model in which public school education is 100 per cent funded by the provincial government. This would improve equity across divisions. Further, education funding must be stable, adequate and sustainable to effectively support student learning.
Implement a new provincial governance model that is coordinated, accountable and engages parents at the school level and in the design and oversight of the overall education system.	The Society recognizes the value of parental involvement in a child's learning and encourages parental participation. However, decisions pertaining to factors directly affecting student learning such as curriculum, programming and assessment is the responsibility of certified teaching experts. Teachers with their knowledge, experiences, and competencies, are experts in the field of education and qualified to make decisions about student learning, programming and assessments and more.
PILLAR 2: HIGH-QUALITY LEARNING AND OUTCOMES	
Implement new provincial summative assessment at Grades 3 or 4, 6 or 7 and 10 with school-level data made available to local school communities.	MTS agrees that ongoing assessment of student performance is essential. Student assessment is best conducted in a classroom using curriculum-based tools rooted in academic, cultural, and environmental context. Reporting of provincial assessments data should be limited to providing a provincial, not an individual school or divisional, snapshot of how the system is performing and to determine if more resources are needed in certain jurisdictions.

What the Government Report Says:	The MTS Response:
PILLAR 3: FUTURE-READY STUDENTS	
<p>Explore the continuation of a provincial K-8 virtual school of learning platform. Enhance implementation of the Provincial Remote Learning Framework and principles to guide the ongoing development of remote learning and teaching.</p>	<p>Virtual classrooms should never be used as an alternative to in-class learning, as it is a poor substitute. Optimal student learning occurs when a teacher and a student are together. Virtual schools should only be an option when there is no alternative.</p> <p>We welcome the use of technology in classrooms and encourage the development of a virtual learning platform, as one of the many tools teachers can access to meet the needs of their students.</p>
PILLAR 4: EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING AND LEADERSHIP	
<p>Establish professional standards and a regulatory framework to guide teacher training and professional practice.</p>	<p>The development of standards is crucial in helping to guide the expectations for all educators. MTS is ready to work with the government to develop a uniform set of professional standards, offer ongoing professional development to support those standards, and to help support teachers in need of assistance in meeting the standards within an organization of both teachers and school leaders that is unique to the Manitoba context.</p>
<p>Remove principals and vice principals from teacher bargaining units.</p>	<p>Research shows that the quality of the school culture suffers when principals and vice principals are removed from the bargaining unit. Ultimately, this has a negative effect on student achievement. The current environment is based on collaboration and trust where teachers and school leaders work together to ensure the success of all students. Principals and vice principals have been part of Manitoba's professional teacher organization since a group of teachers and principals established The Manitoba Teachers' Federation in 1919 and we will fight to ensure they remain members of the Society.</p>

Our recommendations

In February, 2019, the Society submitted 17 recommendations to the K-12 review commission. The recommendations focused on six areas: Poverty, class size and composition, earlier assessments for special needs and learning disabilities, professional development for teachers, implementing The Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action #62 and #63 and a plan for meeting the growing demands in French Language Education.

In varying degrees, the government's final report (derived from the commission report) touched on many of the recommendations. The following illustrates how the government responded to, or was silent on, the MTS recommendations.

What We Recommended:	How Government Responded:
POVERTY	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A universal meal program. • Accessible and affordable transportation. • A task force to focus on how socio-economic conditions affect access to education. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plans to improve and address gaps in nutrition programming for school-aged children. • Establish a taskforce in connection to Poverty Reduction Strategy to examine linkages between poverty and education.
CLASS SIZE AND COMPOSITION	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reinstate the cap on class size for Kindergarten to Grade 3. • Class composition must be considered when determining class size. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a Minister's Advisory Council on Inclusive Education. • Plans to adapt Language Arts high school credits to respond to current needs for newcomers and refugees.
CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and update any K-12 curriculum that is older than seven years. • Reporting of common provincial assessments and data should be limited to providing a provincial, not an individual school or divisional, snapshot of how the system is performing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appoint a Provincial Curriculum Advisory Panel • Launch a Teachers' Idea Fund to promote creativity and innovation. • Implement new provincial summative assessments with school-level data made public. • Implement a provincial report card for students with special needs. • Develop a provincial data and performance measurement strategy.
DEVELOPMENT OF TEACHING AND LEADERSHIP STANDARDS	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with The Manitoba Teachers' Society to develop uniform teaching and leadership standards for the profession. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop teaching and leadership standards for professional practice and conduct. • Undertake a review of regulatory framework for strengthening the teaching profession.

What We Recommended:	How Government Responded:
IMPROVED ACCESS TO CLINICIANS AND STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commit to reducing the wait time for assessing students with learning disabilities. • Develop a comprehensive mental health curriculum for K-12 students. • Improve access to clinician and mental health services. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate early and on-going identification of learning needs and supports for children and youth with special needs. • Implement Mental Health and Addictions Curriculum. • Partner with Department of Mental Health to build upon enhanced mental health programming.
PROFESSIONAL LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT (PLD)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review PLD funding for teachers to ensure that funding is adequate. • Ensure PLD is accessible to all teachers and reflective of needs. • Ensure that teachers are given more autonomy to choose PLD opportunities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review funding designated for PLD. • Create professional learning framework that addresses learning needs for staff. • Provide sustained PLD for the implementation of K – 8 Mathematics and K-12 Language Arts curricula.
THE TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION COMMISSION’S CALLS TO ACTION #62 AND #63	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make age-appropriate curriculum on residential schools, Treaties, and Indigenous peoples’ historical and contemporary contributions. • Establish senior-level positions in government dedicated to Indigenous content and Indigenous student achievement. • Increase support to Indigenous parents and caregivers to better engage families at the school level. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement an Indigenous Inclusion Strategy • Create an Elders and Knowledge Keeps in Schools Initiative. • Enhance age-appropriate curriculum on residential schools, Treaties, and Indigenous people’s historical and contemporary contributions. • Collaborate with First Nations partners to discuss a plan for advancing technology education and technical vocational facilities.
FRENCH-LANGUAGE EDUCATION	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a strategy for recruiting and retaining French-language teachers. • Ensure that students enrolled in French Immersion programs are being given the supports they need to succeed, graduating with bilingual capabilities. • Ensure that the curricula for the Immersion and Francophone programs are created in French. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Address limited supplies of French language teachers. • Create French language student networks for connecting French language learners across the province. • Explore the use of technology to integrate French culture in classrooms. • Revise French Immersion curriculum policy.

FAQ

BILL 64: THE EDUCATION MODERNIZATION ACT

WHAT IS BILL 64?

Bill 64 - *The Education Modernization Act*, is the enabling legislation that will be used to achieve some of the government recommendations included in the K-12 Education Review. Once it receives royal assent, Bill 64 will replace *The Public Schools Act*, *The Education Administration Act* and *The Community Schools Act*, the pieces of legislation currently governing education in Manitoba.

WHAT IS PROPOSED IN BILL 64?

Bill 64 proposes the elimination of democratically elected school boards, the creation of a provincial education authority, school division amalgamations reducing the 37 divisions to 15 “regional catchment areas” plus DSFM, and limiting principals and vice-principals from being in the same bargaining unit as teachers.

WHEN WILL THIS HAPPEN?

Some parts of Bill 64 come into force when it receives royal assent. Others come into force on proclamation before *The Public Schools Act* is repealed and replaced by the new *Education Act*.

July 1, 2022 is the date set for the Provincial Education Authority to take over. Bill 64 must become law first. The provincial government is planning to appoint a transition team to implement the changes.

It is important to note that there are specific timelines and dates associated with the implementation of some of the items proposed in Bill 64, meaning that proclamation and royal assent will not result in an immediate change in the education system.

WHAT ABOUT PRINCIPALS AND VICE PRINCIPALS?

For 102 years, principals and vice principals have been integral members of The Manitoba Teachers' Society, and they will continue to be members. We are committed to continuing to provide the services that they have come to expect.

There is nothing in Bill 64 that restricts membership in the Society, and we are working to ensure protections are in place for continuous membership of principal teachers and vice principal teachers.

Under the terms of Bill 64, principals and vice principals must be certified teachers but are excluded from the definition of a teacher. They will continue in their roles and will remain in TRAF.

WHAT ARE OUR KEY CONCERNS? (including but not limited to)

Bill 64:

- includes system-wide changes that lack evidence of their impact on improving educational outcomes—the stated intent of commissioning the education review. The status of principals and vice principals within the teacher bargaining unit is one such example. How does this improve student learning?
- eliminates principals and vice principals from the definition of teacher in the legislation. This removes them from the profession of teaching narrowing their role to management and away from instructional leadership. This deprofessionalizes the principalship and will have consequences that are wide-reaching.

Students are best served from a unified and collaborative profession.

- introduces mechanisms for parent influence over decision-making in areas best suited for the expertise of trained teachers and principal teachers including, but not limited to, staff hiring and performance evaluations, recommendations regarding priorities and policies on discipline management and analysis of student achievement.
- includes mechanisms to issue directives and requirements for system accountability that will increase standardized testing as well as publication and public comparison of test results. This will serve to widen existing systemic discrimination and inequities.
- authorizes the Provincial Education Authority Board, whose members are appointed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council, to implement policies about potentially sensitive curricular content, opening the door for regressive curriculum.
- attacks local democracy through a public appointment structure that can be subject to politically partisan influence and loyalty, susceptible to appointment rescindments with or without cause, and indicates no structure to ensure diverse community representation.
- obstructs free and fair collective bargaining. Under Bill 64, the new teacher employer—the provincial government—requires arbitrators to take into account the ability of the employer—also the provincial government—to pay. Arbitration is the only dispute resolution mechanism for teacher bargaining, and it must remain robust, effective and fair.

- eliminates all school divisions and creates regional catchments that may not be equipped to respond to local needs, based on their size. This centralized structure could *increase* bureaucracy and high-level administration rather than reduce it.
- creates uncertainty at a time when the COVID pandemic makes public services more important than ever.

While not all aspects of the BEST report appear in the Bill, the government is not finished. Through the establishment of regulations, the education minister could implement change that does not require legislation. MTS will be vigilant and intentional in our communication, both with the government and with you, to ensure protections for our members remain in place.

WHAT ARE THE NEW REGIONS?

Fifteen new regions, plus DSFM, will replace 37 separate school divisions. Once the new governance model has been implemented, the new regions will be as follows:

1. Winnipeg, St. James-Assiniboia, Louis Riel, Pembina Trails, Seven Oaks and River East Transcona
2. Garden Valley, Western
3. Frontier, Kelsey, Flin Flon and Mystery Lake
4. Evergreen, Lakeshore
5. Beautiful Plains, Park West, Rolling River
6. Interlake, Lord Selkirk
7. Mountain View, Swan Valley, Turtle River
8. Hanover
9. Fort La Bosse, Southwest Horizon, Turtle Mountain
10. Sunrise, Whiteshell
11. Brandon
12. Seine River
13. Portage La Prairie, Pine Creek
14. Border Land, Red River Valley
15. Prairie Spirit, Prairie Rose

WHO IS MY EMPLOYER?

There is no immediate change to your employer. Once established, the Provincial Education Authority will become the employer for all public school employees except for employees in the Division scolaire franco-manitobaine (DSFM) and the Manitoba Institute of Trades and Technology.

WHAT HAPPENS TO MY COLLECTIVE AGREEMENT?

Current collective agreements remain in effect and will be followed.

WHAT HAPPENS TO SCHOOL BOARDS?

Bill 64 proposes the abolishment of school boards. All school boards and school divisions/districts will be dissolved and replaced by 15 regional councils to represent schools in specific geographic boundaries. The regional councils will be comprised of parents.

WHAT IS THE PROVINCIAL EDUCATION AUTHORITY?

The Provincial Education Authority will be responsible for collective bargaining, the delivery of K-12 education, remote learning and more.

The Provincial Education Authority must appoint a director of education for the schools in each regional catchment area. The director of education will effectively act like a superintendent does under the current system. The Provincial Education Authority is expected to be in place by July 1, 2022.

WHO RUNS THE PROVINCIAL EDUCATION AUTHORITY?

The new Provincial Education Authority is made up of government appointees, of which two must also be serving on the Provincial Advisory Council on Education.

The Provincial Education Authority Board will report to the Minister.

WHAT IS THE PROVINCIAL ADVISORY COUNCIL ON EDUCATION?

The Provincial Advisory Council on Education is comprised of 15 elected representatives who are members of a School Community Council, and an elected trustee from DSFM. This advisory council will provide the Minister of Education with direct parental advice on matters relating to the education system, including, but not limited to: staff hiring and performance evaluations, recommendations regarding priorities and policies on discipline management and analysis of student achievement.

WHAT IS A SCHOOL COMMUNITY COUNCIL?

Parents and guardians of each school community will elect an executive (the School Community Council) to work with the principal on matters impacting the school community. The council's specific roles have not been finalized but could include assessing the effectiveness of programming at the school, analyzing student achievement and learning outcomes and proposing capital construction projects and budgets. These councils will replace traditional parent councils.

WILL THERE BE JOB CUTS?

Currently, there is no information about staffing changes.

WILL MY UNION CHANGE?

No. The Manitoba Teachers' Society will continue to be your union.

I DON'T SUPPORT THIS BILL. WHAT CAN I DO?

Visit mbteach.org for a toolkit that will help you #raiseyourvoice.

SPRING/SUMMER 2021
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Attachment

Strategies for Fostering Connections
May 4: 9am-4pm CT

Motivational Interviewing

Strategies for Supporting Change
May 11: 9am-4pm CT

Play Therapy

Tools for Helping Children and Youth
May 12-13 & July 28-29: 9am-4pm CT

Additions and Youth

Substances, Technology, Porn
May 27: 9am-4pm CT

Self-Injury Behaviour in Youth

Issues and Strategies
June 1-2: 9am-4pm CT

De-escalating Potentially Violent Situations™

June 8 & August 17: 9am-4pm CT

Eating Disorders

From Image to Illness
June 17: 9am-4pm CT

Critical Incident Group Debriefing

July 6: 9am-4pm CT

Anxiety in Children and Youth

Practical Intervention Strategies
July 7: 9am-4pm CT

Autism—Strategies for Self-Regulation,
Learning, and Challenging Behaviours
July 14-15: 9am-4pm CT

Gender and Sexual Diversity in Youth

July 21-22: 9am-4pm CT

Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder

Strategies for Supporting
August 12-13: 9am-4pm CT

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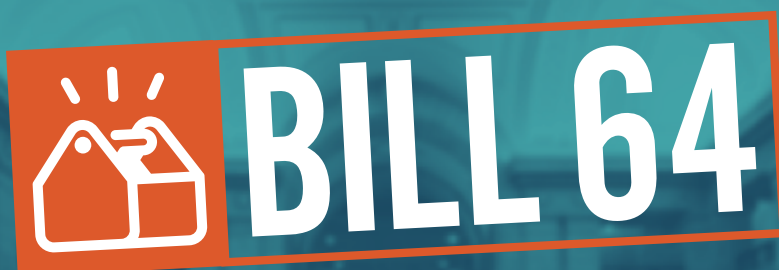
For 102 years, principals and vice principals have been integral members of The Manitoba Teachers' Society and will continue to be members. As such, MTS is committed to providing the services that principals and vice principals have come to expect.

Government officials have confirmed the following:

- There is no restriction on unionization/membership for principals and vice principals;
- Principals and vice principals are not to be included in bargaining units consisting of teachers;

- Principals and vice principals will continue to be covered under their current collective agreement until a new agreement is negotiated with the new employer;
- Principals and vice principals continue to remain eligible for TRAF;
- The status of part-time principals and vice principals will be determined by the Labour Board.

It is important to note that there is no immediate impact to principals and vice principals for the upcoming school year (2021/22).



TOOLKIT

The MTS toolkit gives you background on the legislation, how it impacts teachers, and most importantly, how you can #raiseyourvoice as a Manitoba educator in opposition to Bill 64.

Visit mbteach.org for more information.

YOUR VOICES, HEARD

Members' responses to the K-12 recommendations have been coming in by the hundreds. Here is a snapshot.

#useyourvoice



As I listened to the announcement today the biggest question (among many others) going through my mind was: how can government-appointed people who don't have an education degree improve the education of our children?

Dividing principals and teachers is a bad idea. Making principals "management" will create problems, division and unending grievances. I have worked for a crown corporation before and can give many examples of how this creates a toxic environment.

A well-rounded physical and health education program is more than just "gym" class. The curriculum covers a wide range of important topics such as nutrition, mental health, substance use, human sexuality, personal safety, personal and social development. These important topics are ones that we cannot afford to remove from our students' education.

Teachers are professionals. We work to achieve our mandate: student learning. This is not new. Our government would have you believe that teachers are motivated by money. We are not. Our government is telling you that we are failing. We are not. Our government wants you to think that we are lazy and inept. We are not.

People with no experience, or worse, an axe to grind, in a position to evaluate staff and make recommendations they are not qualified to make, will not improve student outcomes.

Very unhappy with the review. A government that has not actually spent time in schools wants to change the learning model to a business-run model. Ultimately everyone will lose – mostly students.

Basing curriculum and goals solely on how Manitoba students perform on standardized tests is extremely concerning. If we solely focus on teaching to the test we would score higher, however, our children would be missing out on so much more. The document also mentions that mental health is important, however, if schools are evaluated on how children perform on standardized tests, mental health will be put on the back burner.

Today's report was insulting to teachers. It does not seem more efficient but a lot more complicated. I have spoken with many administrators who just want to quit their jobs because of the heavy stress level. We care about education, about our teachers and our students. The government does not understand what we do or all of the extra work we do.

I see no mention of strengthening supports for students with special needs or about reduction of class sizes which teachers have been screaming about for years, decades even.

I have been teaching for over 35 years, 33 of them in the north. We are already, as educators, performing these "recommendations"! That is our job and our passion!

With no mention of addressing child poverty or hunger, I see no chance of any of this improving student outcomes.

There are a lot of general statements here with no specific or direct goals.



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If you're already teaching topics like **nutrition**, **sustainability**, **food security**, and **careers**, why not connect them to agriculture and really bring them to life?

Check out our resources at: aitc.mb.ca



WE'RE TURNING OVER A NEW LEAF!

Next month we're going to look a little different.
Same great resources and programs, fresh new look!

Sign up for our monthly newsletter to stay up-to-date!





Kinesiology student appreciates support and resources of Access Program

Join the Access community at UM

Taylor Tutkaluke always knew she wanted to go to university and make a difference. Her plan was to study Kinesiology and then pursue occupational therapy. But it wasn't until her second year at the University of Manitoba when a work colleague suggested she apply to the Access Program.

"I wish I had Access in my first year," says Tutkaluke, who grew up in North Winnipeg playing competitive ringette. Because Access provides smaller first year classes, her biology class would have had less than a dozen students rather than what seemed like hundreds, and it would have been much easier and less intimidating

to approach the instructor and ask questions because she would have really gotten to know them.

"I definitely recommend Access to anyone starting university. Access goes above and beyond to provide us with support. I can't imagine my university experience without it."

The Access Program at the University of Manitoba provides holistic support to Indigenous, newcomer, and other U of M students, empowering them on their path to success.

"Everyone in Access is so welcoming. They are like my extended family, providing support and

resources I didn't know existed."

Access staff let Tutkaluke know about scholarships and financial support she could apply for, lessening her financial burden and obligation to work while she studied. The counsellors are always there for her, ready to listen. "I always feel much more supported, bouncing things off another unbiased person. That's so crucial."

Tutkaluke was also eager to join Access in order to connect to her Indigenous culture.

"They have helped me tremendously to better understand myself and areas of my identity, and to better understand Indigenous people."

She began attending Access cultural workshops, made her own medicine bag, listened to the wisdom of Unkan (Grandfather) Wanbdi, and found herself newly immersed in her culture. Access also connected her to the greater Métis community on the UM campus.

Tutkaluke says her biggest challenge is time management. Because she continues to work and actively volunteer in her community while she studies, finding the right balance and way to schedule her time is important. Access also helps with that.

Now Tutkaluke encourages other Indigenous students to start their university studies with the Access Program.

Students who plan to start their studies at the University of Manitoba this fall should apply to the Access Program by May 1.

umextended.ca/access

"I don't think I would be where I am today without the supports of the Access Program. Access is really good because it establishes a community within a larger whole."

Brandon Wosniak, UM student,
Métis living in Winnipeg



ACCESS Program

Discover the path between you and your dreams

The Access Program includes two paths:

- University of Manitoba Access Program (UMAP) supports students in degree and diploma programs.
- Health Careers Access Program (HCAP) supports Indigenous (Status, Non-Status, Métis, Inuit) students for entry to health-related professions.

To learn more visit, umextended.ca/access or call 204-474-8000



University
of Manitoba

Extended Education



#AccessUM

Provincial Council 2021

STORY BY ANNE BENNETT

Candidates for Provincial Executive

To date, six MTS members have been nominated to fill five vacancies on the provincial executive. They are:

- **Sonja Blank**, Mountain View Teachers' Association
- **Carla Bouchard**, Pembina Trails Teachers' Association
- **Lindsay Brown**, Seven Oaks Teachers' Association
- **Kent McPherson**, St. James-Assiniboia Teachers' Association
- **Cynthia Taylor**, Louis Riel Teachers' Association
- **Jonathan Waite**, Seine River Teachers' Association

Elections will take place on May 15, 2021 at the Annual General Meeting of the MTS Provincial Council. Further nominations can be made at that time.

Candidates' election statements, biographies and photos can be viewed on the MTS website, mbteach.org.

MTS ponders MFL membership

Delegates to the 102nd MTS Provincial Council Annual General Meeting will consider a resolution that would have MTS join the Manitoba Federation of Labour (MFL).

Currently, more than 30 unions representing more than 100,000 workers come under the umbrella of the MFL. The coalition works to advance the interests of members, promoting a strong voice for improved living and working conditions for Manitobans. MTS has previously collaborated with the MFL, most recently as part of its Coalition to Defend Public Services, which combined expertise and shared costs among unions to successfully challenge the constitutionality of Bill 28, the Pallister government's wage freeze bill. The MFL is also a proponent of improved workplace health and safety, pensions, strong public services, collective bargaining rights and employment standards for workers.

Affiliating with the MFL presents



opportunities to contribute to the direction of labour relations in Manitoba, but does not compromise the autonomy or governance structures of member unions. Nor does membership in the coalition impact an affiliate's status as non-partisan. Non-partisan MFL affiliates include MNU, MGEU, CUPW, UMFA and WAPSO.

The per capita cost to join the MFL would be \$1.10 per MTS member per month (\$13.20 per member per year). MFL affiliation also requires affiliation with the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC), within a period of three years, at a cost of \$0.75 per member per month (\$9.00 per member per year). Affiliates of the MFL and CLC also become affiliates to local Labour Councils. In Manitoba, Labour Councils exist in Winnipeg, Brandon, Portage la Prairie, Selkirk and Thompson. This adds approximately \$0.29 per member per month (\$3.48 per member per year).

Additional information about the MFL is available at mfl.ca

Committee would explore barriers for 2STLGBQIA+ teachers

MTS should establish an ad hoc committee of the membership aimed at removing barriers to engagement with

the Society and school divisions for 2STLGBQIA+ members, says the MTS Provincial Executive and the MTS Equity and Social Justice Standing Committee.

A resolution to Provincial Council AGM mandates members of the proposed committee to "investigate and report on barriers faced by Two Spirit, Transgender, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Queer, Intersex, Asexual, plus, members".

The Society has a long history of commitment to improving equity for members, notably in the form of the Indigenous Voice and Action Standing Committee (IVASC), and the Women in Educational Leadership Commission (WELCOM). The MTS Equity and Social Justice Standing Committee is tasked with overseeing a broad range of issues impacting the engagement, visibility and voice of marginalized or racialized members.

An ad hoc committee would be a mechanism by which MTS could identify and explore emerging opportunities for advancement of inclusive education and the provision of safe, supportive environments for 2STLGBQIA+ members.

It is further resolved that a preliminary report be presented to the January, 2022 MTS Presidents' Council with recommendations forwarded to Provincial Council in 2022.



JOIN THE TEACHER-LED LEARNING TEAM

APPLY TODAY!

The mandate of the Teacher-Led Learning Team is to design and facilitate workshops for Society members across the province.

Check out the TLT Facilitator Application Process at mbteach.org.

For further information, please contact Eric Sagenes at esagenes@mbteach.org.

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PORTFOLIO

! That's a new one

An Oklahoma sports announcer who was caught on video making racist comments about high school basketball players blamed his Type 1 diabetes.

Matt Rowan said that he believed his microphone was off when he called Norman High School players the racial slur.

In an attempt to offer an explanation, Rowan said his diabetes will sometimes cause him to say "hurtful" comments.

"I will state that I suffer Type 1 Diabetes and during the game my sugar was spiking. While not excusing my remarks it is not unusual when my sugar spikes that I become disoriented and often say things that are not appropriate as well as hurtful," he said. "I do not believe that I would have made such horrible statements absent my sugar spiking."

At the end of the line, **with a lot of help**

BY GEORGE STEPHENSON



For members who have read this column and these pages through the years, my views are well known. At the same time, I have never personalized it with the words "me" or "I".

This one is different.

This will be my last column in this space.

Having decided to retire as head of Communications, I wanted to write one column about my personal discoveries in almost 20 years at MTS. And even before.

At the top of the list for some time has been both the continual and recurring admiration I have for so many teachers. Those I have written about, assigned writers to write about, simply heard about and those I watched nurture and guide my daughter through the years.

I feel honoured to have spent these last years of a long career to promote, highlight and reflect back on our members, and the public service, passion and commitment our members carry with them into their classrooms and schools.

As part of my job, nothing invigorated me more than walking through schools, watching teachers and administrators turning morning

ANOTHER RIGGED ELECTION!

A mother and daughter were arrested in Florida for illegally accessing hundreds of student accounts to rig the vote for teen homecoming queen.

Laura Rose Carroll, 50, an assistant principal, and her daughter, 17, are charged with multiple computer-related offenses.

The alleged scheme took place at Tate High School in Pensacola, where Carroll's daughter was enrolled. Carroll worked as an assistant principal at an elementary school in the same district at the time.

In October 2020, hundreds of votes for Tate High School's Homecoming Court were tagged as fraudulent, with 117 votes originating from the same IP address linked to Carroll's phone.

Multiple students later reported that Carroll's daughter described using her mother's access to Focus, the student information system, to cast votes from students' accounts.

PARTY
LIKE IT'S
2019

Two Miami Beach officers trying again to disperse crowds at spring break.

Miami Beach Police attempted to break up a group of about 200 or more people who were blocking a roadway, drinking with open containers and smoking what appeared to be marijuana, the department said.

chaos into calm. To learning. To joy.

It borders on ironic that I leave with these thoughts.

I am not a teacher. Indeed, many teachers in my school days barely thought of me as a student.

Strapped in junior high (yes, I go back that far; it was Alberta!), suspended three times in high school; valedictorian wasn't in my immediate future. I was a less obnoxious, but a greater iconoclast John Bender (Breakfast Club) type.

When I started working for teachers, an old friend said it seemed odd. I said it was my redemption song.

I mention this because, even though there were teachers who despised me, there were many others who overlooked, and sanded down, the hard edges, ensuring I kept moving forward. Going sideways was always an option.

It wasn't easy for them. Because of unavoidable family circumstances, I attended 10 different schools in 12 years. Throughout, my parents made sure I went to school, leaving the rest up to teachers. Even as I was just passing through, many teachers cared.

There was one who had me teach a Grade 7 English class. I was in Grade

7 at the time. I scoffed at something the teacher had said and she said if I thought I could do a better job, go ahead. After class, she gave me a date I would be teaching and an armful of material I had to learn.

I studied it all to avoid a disaster. But, it was a disaster. Apparently teaching involves more than knowing stuff. But at that point I did know more about language than anyone in that class. I became the school newspaper editor in Grade 8 and have never held any job outside of communications since. I developed a lifelong love of language. As a journalist years later it finally dawned on me what she had done. I smiled.

It's a reminder that you may never know the profound influence you will have on your students. What you do today will open avenues throughout their lives, even those students other teachers have written off.

Back in 2013, my daughter, Kit, graduated Grade 12 and wrote a piece for this magazine thanking the teachers who brought her to that point. She mentioned specific events, but no teachers by name. We heard later there were staff room debates about who she was talking about.

It was heartening, for as the

specifics were real, it showed they were universal, positive experiences shared by many teachers and their students. And their parents.

Most teachers don't get written about. Some feel unappreciated. Some have complained to us that the public only thinks teachers get paid too much and get two months off.

There will always be those negative voices, probably the same ones who think they are self-made, discounting all those who have built and cleared the path to what they've become.

Actually all our research has shown a vast majority of the public supports and respects teachers. They see that you are on the frontlines, during COVID days and every day. They know you earn every penny, and every day off. They know they could never do what you do (as I learned in Grade 7).

And every ideal student and every recalcitrant student, pushed and encouraged to achieve more than they imagined, carries those teachers with them every day.

So, to those here now and those who came before, I just have two parting words.

Thank You.

QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS?
I'D LOVE TO HELP.
REACH ME AT [RJOB@MBTEACH.ORG](mailto:rjob@mbteach.org)

REFRESH

BY RAMAN JOB, PUBLIC RELATIONS FACILITATOR

THREE TOOLS TO MAKE YOUR SOCIAL MEDIA LIFE EASIER



Buffer

If you or your organization want to save time posting to Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and LinkedIn, look no further than Buffer – the top-rated social media scheduler.

Buffer lets you easily compose all your posts at once, tweak the content for each platform and schedule posts for various times during the day, all from the same screen.

It also lets you repost content from others and even suggests photos for those posts.

With every new post, Buffer gives you the option to “Add to Queue,” “Share Now” or “Schedule.” And there’s nothing like opening up your Buffer calendar to see what you have on deck days or even weeks ahead.

If you want to post without logging in all the time, you can simply download Buffer’s Chrome extension to buffer any online content you come across. Just make sure you always give proper attribution and have permission to post.

Buffer also comes with a mobile application that makes it easy to work right from your smartphone.

It comes with a couple of hitches, though.

Instagram photos must be square rather than rectangular to work with Buffer (even

though it doesn’t matter on your phone app). And naturally, Buffer wants real money to make its magic part of your life – \$15 to \$99 CA. There is a perfectly serviceable free option that will let you post to three social channels at a time – but without scheduling.

A decade ago, I was more than impressed with Buffer’s support – which included a pre-arranged Saturday phone call asking me how they could improve features. It’s a level of service I’ll always remember.



Canva

Canva bills itself as the “world’s easiest design program.” And to be honest, many of us are dying to unleash our own inner graphic artist.

But few of us have anything approaching that kind of skill. There’s just no substitute for the work of a highly trained artist working on your projects.

If budget is an issue, though, and the idea of working on some cool social media graphics is one you just can’t resist, hop into a trial version.

Canva will give you incredible options. Thousands of design templates and 400,000 photos will make you feel like you’re in a graphic candy store.

It will take more than a few clicks to create usable designs, though, so the app comes with plenty of training videos and tips. And whether it’s Instagram stories or Twitter fleets, Canva makes it easier.

Also try the cheaper and less versatile Snappa or Pic Monkey.



Pexels

Hunting for free stock pics? Pexel photos and video clips are gorgeous and gratis. When you’re looking for some quality stock images this should always be your first stop. If you have some design skills you can even modify these images to suit your project or post. Beautiful stuff for any purpose. There’s even a mobile app. Get ready to scroll.

Who knew, Google?

Want to dress up that big white Google search screen to make it far more interesting? Take a break from blank. Hit the customization icon in the lower right-hand corner of that big white screen and you’ll find plenty to tinker with. You can set a vibrant colour background, change themes, add quick links – even upload your own photos.

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Participants will explore a range of labour relations topics while developing leadership and facilitation skills. Each session will provide offerings on behalf of the Teacher Welfare and Professional and French Language Services departments. Participants will examine current initiatives developed by unions to engage the 21st century member and address working conditions for the current labour force.

Visit **mbteach.org** for details on the application process and criteria for candidates.

APPLICATION DEADLINE: April 16, 2021, 4 p.m.