

THE MANITOBA TEACHERS' SOCIETY

ISSUES UPDATE



A CENTURY OF SOLIDARITY



The
Manitoba
Teachers'
Society

K-12 Comprehensive Education Review



What We Know

The K-12 education review will be led by a nine-member Commission tasked with proposing a “renewed vision” for kindergarten-to-Grade 12 education and making “bold recommendations to ignite change” within existing systems and programs that will inspire excellence in teaching and learning.

The Review will concentrate on six broad areas of focus:

1. **Long-term vision** – What should the goals and purpose of K-12 education be in a rapidly changing world?
2. **Student learning** – What are the conditions required to achieve excellence in student achievement and outcomes in Manitoba?
3. **Teaching** – How can teachers and school leaders become more effective?
4. **Accountability for student learning** – How can the education system develop a stronger sense of shared accountability for student learning?
5. **Governance** – What type of governance structures are needed to create a coordinated and relevant education system?
6. **Funding** – What actions are required to ensure that the education system is sustainable and provides equitable learning opportunities for all children and youth?

The Commission will be led by Janice MacKinnon, a former Saskatchewan NDP cabinet minister, and Clayton Manness, who served as finance and education ministers under former Manitoba premier Gary Filmon. They will be joined by former education minister Ian Wishart, Terry Brown, Mark Frison, John Daniel Lees, Laura Repski, Jill Quilty and Denis Robert.

The consultation process will run from February to May 2019 and the public release of the recommendations will occur in March 2020.

MTS Position

The Society agrees that a review of the education system is necessary and will participate fully to ensure that the voices of teachers are part of the consultation process.

What can I do?

Stay informed on this issue and many more by connecting with MTS on social media, updating your profile in MyProfile and visiting our website. More information about the review, including profiles of the commissioners can be found on www.edu.gov.mb.ca/educationreview/.

We encourage you to participate in this Review, whether it is speaking at a town hall, sending in an online submission or completing the survey, it's crucial that the voices of teachers are part of the conversation.

Provincial Bargaining



What We Know

In spring of 2019, the provincial government will introduce legislation to replace the current system of local bargaining with provincial bargaining.

This means that moving forward all collective agreements for MTS members will be negotiated at a single provincial bargaining table.

If the Bill passes through the reading and committee stages smoothly, it will become law by the date specified in the legislation.

MTS Position

MTS supports single tier provincial bargaining with a uniform collective agreement for all teachers, subject to the following conditions:

1. Teachers remain governed under the Labour Relations Act.
2. MTS will bargain directly with the Province of Manitoba (the funder).
3. Bargaining must be free, fair and with an open scope.
4. The mechanisms for dispute resolution, whether strike or interest arbitration, must be without limitation.
5. The best provisions from existing collective agreements should be the standard for the new contract.
6. The membership of MTS will remain, as it currently exists.

What can I do?

After the Bill has received First and Second Reading, it is referred to a Standing Committee of the House. At this stage, you may make oral presentations or offer written submissions expressing your opinions and concerns. You must register with the Office of the Clerk by calling (204) 945-3636 to make an oral presentation on a piece of legislation at Committee stage.

If you simply want to express your opinion on the Bill but do not wish to present, you can contact either your MLA or the Minister responsible for the Bill.

You can also attend a Committee Hearing to show your support for colleagues who are speaking to the Bill. You do not have to register to attend. Committee meetings are held in Room 254 and/or 255 of the Legislative Building.

We encourage you to stay informed on this issue and many more by connecting with MTS on social media, updating your profile in *MyProfile* and visiting our website.

School Division Amalgamations



What We Know

A major area of concern for teachers and communities today is the question of school division amalgamations. One of the main areas of focus for the upcoming Comprehensive Education Review, as indicated in the mandate of the Commission, is governance, more specifically, “what type of governance structures are needed to create a coordinated and relevant education system?” These discussions will certainly include the amalgamation of school divisions.

The minister has said on several occasions that school division amalgamations will be part of the Review. There has been no indication as to which divisions are targets for amalgamation.

The most cited report on school division amalgamations is *The Norrie Report*, commissioned by Conservative government of Gary Filmon in 1994, which recommended reducing Manitoba’s 57 school divisions to 21. The former government did not adopt this report and instead encouraged school divisions to voluntarily amalgamate.

The most recent school division amalgamations occurred in 2002, when the NDP government passed legislation to reduce the number of school divisions from 54 to 38, which is where things sit today.

MTS Position

MTS would support amalgamations with the following criteria:

1. The benefits and improvements for amalgamation must be clearly outlined.
2. There is no loss of service and no decrease in resources to the affected areas.
3. All savings from amalgamations must be reinvested into education.

What can I do?

Stay informed on this issue and many more by connecting with MTS on social media, updating your profile in MyProfile and visiting our website.

We encourage you to participate in this review, whether it is speaking at a town hall, sending in an online submission or emailing the Commission. We will have more information on what you can do as soon as the details are announced by the province.

What We Know

All provinces in Canada have a structure and process of regulating and monitoring the teaching profession and teachers. A small number of provinces have a College of Teachers, which oversees the teaching profession.

While their roles, responsibilities and structure vary from province to province, some of the main functions include some or all of the following: certification, setting and enforcing professional standards, handling conduct complaints, investigations, discipline, pre-service education and in-service education.

Governments who have mandated a College of Teachers have justified the regulatory body based on promises of improved transparency, teacher quality and accountability, and educational outcomes. Members pay a mandatory annual registration fee, which ranges from \$80-\$150.

There has been an increasing trend of austerity-focussed governments conducting comprehensive education reviews some of which have resulted in a College of Teachers being imposed as one strategy to improve education.

MTS Position

The Manitoba Teachers' Society is committed to high quality, professional teaching as outlined in and governed by our Code of Professional Practice. The current structure provides us the authority to receive, review and resolve complaints about the conduct of a member.

MTS does not support the establishment of a College of Teachers, because it would:

1. *weaken the teacher union by stripping it of its role as a professional organization;*
2. *download the cost of teacher certification to teachers through mandatory fees;*
3. *create a parallel system of misconduct management which duplicates an existing service, potentially subjecting members to additional investigation and discipline beyond what is vetted by the employer and the union;*
4. *diminish our current involvement in teacher formation and the strong educational partnerships established with post-secondary institutions;*
5. *reduce the influence of MTS in advocating for teacher autonomy in professional development;*
6. *impose a schedule and structure of professional learning that may not align with teacher or contextual needs; and*
7. *complicate assessment of competency and separate it from employers and the union, diminishing the ability to support struggling teachers.*

What can I do?

Stay informed on this issue and many more by connecting with MTS on social media, updating your profile in MyProfile and visiting our website.

We will share information on how to participate in the K-12 education review and any other actions deemed necessary as we navigate our way through this process.

Principals and Vice-principals



What We Know

In 2017, *The Avis Glaze* report, aimed at reforming education in the Province of Nova Scotia recommended the removal of principals and vice principals from the Nova Scotia Teachers' Union.

The Nova Scotia government implemented this recommendation in August 2018.

Manitoba has been closely mirroring the strategy of the Nova Scotia government, and with the upcoming K-12 education review, there is concern that a recommendation to remove principals and vice principals from The Manitoba Teachers' Society could be on the agenda.

MTS Position

Principals and vice principals are first-and-foremost *principal teachers* and an integral part of the general body of the teaching profession.

As such, The Manitoba Teachers' Society will oppose any attempt to implement recommendations, plans or references that would remove principals and vice principals from membership in the Society.

Furthermore, any future prospects for cooperation between the government and the Society would be seriously compromised.

What can I do?

The Society has distributed "*I am a Principal Teacher*" cards to all principals and vice principals, asking them to reaffirm their intent to remain members of MTS by signing and returning the cards. The majority of cards have been signed and returned. If you have not returned your signed card, please do so as soon as possible.

Whether you are a principal, vice principal, teacher, clinician or guidance counsellor, your participation in the K-12 review is crucial. We encourage you to participate and tell the Commission the importance of collegial interactions between all segments of our profession, that have worked collaboratively, in a unified vocation to achieve the important goals of an effective public education system and the teaching profession.

School Board/ Division Governance



What We Know

The Nova Scotia government, based on recommendation from the *Avis Glaze Report*, replaced its elected school boards with a single advisory council.

With the upcoming K-12 education review, the Manitoba provincial government has signaled its intent to review school board governance.

MTS Position

Local school boards play an important role in the delivery of K-12 public school education by ensuring responsiveness to local education needs and concerns. MTS supports the continuation of school boards that are:

1. Governed democratically;
2. Locally elected; and
3. Have the ability to raise revenues for enhancing programs and services

What can I do?

It is important that teachers participate in the consultation process for the K-12 education review and call on the government to make sure public education is adequately funded to meet the growing needs of Manitoba's classrooms.

Education Finance



What We Know

Manitoba's public school population has grown about another 1 per cent, and for the third year in a row, the government provided a funding increase less than the rate of inflation. In fact, the 2019/20 funding increase of 0.5 per cent, an amount equivalent to that of the previous year, together mark the two smallest funding increases since the 1990s.

On a per pupil basis, the situation is even worse when one factors in enrolment growth as well.

The provincial government also directed school divisions to limit education property tax increases to two per cent and announced the continuation of tax incentive grant phase out (over the six years) which commenced last year.

Manitoba is the only province that has district or divisional taxation authority to raise revenue and expenditures. Based on this fact, and the upcoming K-12 educational review, what we don't know is the probability that the province will remove school divisions' right to tax and replace it with a single provincial mill rate as they did in Saskatchewan some years back.

MTS Position

The Society believes that every child in Manitoba is entitled to an education that meets the child's needs and therefore supports an education system:

1. Where the provision of funding to support the necessary programs is the responsibility of the provincial government.
2. Where funding is stable, adequate and sustainable to support student learning.

What can I do?

It is important that teachers participate in the consultation process for the K-12 education review and call on the government to make sure public education is adequately funded to meet the growing needs of Manitoba's classrooms.