

SUBMISSION TO  
**MANITOBA'S  
COMMISSION  
ON KINDERGARTEN  
TO GRADE 12 EDUCATION  
MAY 2019**

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**MY CLASSROOM. OUR FUTURE.**



A CENTURY OF SOLIDARITY



The  
Manitoba  
Teachers'  
Society

**Norm Gould, President  
The Manitoba Teachers' Society  
191 Harcourt Street  
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May 3, 2019**

**Manitoba's Commission on Kindergarten to Grade 12 Education  
470 – 800 Portage Avenue  
Winnipeg, MB R3G 0N4**

Dear Commissioners,

On behalf of Manitoba's 16,000 public school teachers, The Manitoba Teachers' Society welcomes the opportunity to work together to improve our public education system for future generations.

Education is often referred to as the great equalizer, however students in Manitoba face numerous obstacles, on a daily basis, in their attempt to access education. The number one challenge is poverty and Manitoba continues to fall behind, with a staggering 12 to 22 per cent of children living in poverty. The percentage is even higher among Indigenous communities.

Research confirms poverty's negative influence on student achievement and retention in school. According to The Canadian Council on Learning, pre-schoolers from low-income families are twice as likely as those from higher income families to be delayed in measures of cognitive development, numeracy and literacy.

These students are essentially entering the school system already behind their peers in so many ways. They are more likely to drop out of school before graduating and can end up on the wrong side of a lifelong gap in employment, earnings and even life expectancy, all in all perpetuating the cycle of poverty.

It is imperative that any plan for improving the public education system includes a comprehensive action plan for reducing the impact of poverty on students.

Funding is also key when it comes to improving the public education system, and while we are aware that this review will not focus on education financing, we would be amiss if we did not reiterate that education must be adequately funded to be effective. The Society supports a model in which public school education is 100 per cent funded by the provincial government. This would improve equity across divisions and ensure long-term sustainability.

We hope that you will take time to reflect on the issues and concerns raised by Manitoba's educators as you work through the consultation process. If you have any questions or require further clarification or documentation, please do not hesitate to contact me.

We look forward to the recommendations and anticipate that they will maintain a focus on improving student learning and wellbeing through innovations based on evidence-based, peer-reviewed research.

Sincerely,



Norm Gould

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# Executive Summary

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## Introduction

Educators believe that public education should provide all students with opportunities to realize their full potential, in an environment that is safe, caring and inclusive.

With these values in mind, as a stakeholder in public education, representing 16,000 public school educators, The Manitoba Teachers' Society is pleased to make this presentation to the ***Commission on Kindergarten to Grade 12 Education Review***.

We appreciate the opportunity to participate in this consultation process and are eager to help in the development of final recommendations to "create an education system that achieves better outcomes for students and reflects the economic and societal needs of Manitobans, both today and in the future." (Manitoba Commission on Kindergarten to Grade 12 Education)

Our submission focuses on the area of teaching, as identified by the Commission's Mandate: "How can we help teachers and school leaders to achieve better outcomes?" It looks specifically at what inputs are necessary to achieve the desired outcomes. In this case, "desired outcomes" refer to a student's ability to reach his/her full potential, which will vary by student.

We have identified eight topic areas where improvements would benefit the overall public school system:

1. Poverty;
2. Class size and composition;
3. Curriculum and assessment;
4. Improved access to clinicians and student support services;
5. Development of teaching and leadership standards;
6. Professional learning and development for teachers;
7. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action #62 and #63; and
8. French-language education.

Full analysis concerning each of the recommendations are in the "full analysis" document that is attached.

# Poverty

## **Recommendation 1:**

That the Government of Manitoba establish a universal meal program for all school-age children. The program must be available for any school-age student at no cost to the student regardless of perceived need.

## **Recommendation 2:**

That the Government of Manitoba work with the City of Winnipeg, other municipal governments in the province and any other applicable parties in establishing a pilot project offering bus tokens to students, so that paying the fare for public transportation is not a barrier to accessing education.

## **Recommendation 3:**

That the Government of Manitoba establish a task force to focus on how socio-economic conditions affect access to education, with a mandate to improve access for the province's most vulnerable students within an appropriate and reasonable timeframe. The Society should be part of this task force.

# Class Size and Composition

## **Recommendation 4:**

That the Government of Manitoba reinstate the cap on class size for Kindergarten to Grade 3 to help ensure that teachers are able to give students the individualized attention they need to improve educational outcomes.

## **Recommendation 5:**

That class composition i.e. students with exceptionalities (defined as those students identified as having behavioural problems or mental or physical disabilities, as well as other special needs students including gifted students), English and French as an additional language learners (defined as students whose first language differs from the school's primary language of instruction, and who may require focused educational supports to assist them in attaining proficiency in that language) be taken into account when determining class size.

# Curriculum and Assessment

## **Recommendation 6:**

That the Government of Manitoba review and update any K-12 curriculum that is older than seven years. Further, that any new curriculum include representative teacher participation in the development process, be based on a clear multi-year curriculum development implementation plan and be sustainably funded.

## **Recommendation 7:**

That the Government of Manitoba support classroom-based formative assessments that align with existing and new curriculum. Further, that the results of any provincial assessments be used to access/determine if more resources are needed in certain jurisdictions. 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.

# Improved Access to Clinicians and Student Support Services

## **Recommendation 8:**

That the Government of Manitoba make a firm commitment to reducing the wait time for assessing students with learning disabilities, so that those who qualify for a special education designation receive early intervention and the necessary supports, regardless of where in the province the student is attending school.

## **Recommendation 9:**

That the Government of Manitoba develop a comprehensive mental health curriculum for K-12 students, promote mental wellness and help reduce the stigma associated with mental health issues.

**Further**, that the Government of Manitoba ensure that mental health services are readily accessible in schools and increase the number of school counsellors and other specialist support teachers to address students' mental health issues where necessary.

## **Recommendation 10:**

That the Government of Manitoba ensure that students requiring clinician resources, such as psychology, social work, physiotherapy, occupational therapy, audiology, speech and language pathology, etc. are given access in a manner that is timely, efficient and effective.

# Development of Teaching and Leadership Standards

## **Recommendation 11:**

That the Government of Manitoba work with The Manitoba Teachers' Society to develop uniform teaching and leadership standards for the profession.

# Professional Learning and Development for Teachers

## **Recommendation 12:**

That the Government of Manitoba and school divisions work together to review funding for professional learning and development (PLD) for teachers to ensure that PLD is adequately funded by Manitoba Education and Training so that teachers have ongoing opportunities to increase skills for their work in complex and diverse classrooms.

## **Recommendation 13:**

That the Government of Manitoba, The Manitoba Teachers' Society and school divisions work together to facilitate appropriate professional development opportunities, which is accessible to all teachers and reflective of complex and diverse classrooms.

**Further**, that the Government of Manitoba and school divisions work together to ensure that teachers are given more autonomy to choose professional development opportunities that are reflective of their specific classroom needs.

# The Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action #62 and #63

## Recommendation 14:

That the Government of Manitoba maintain an annual commitment to Indigenous education as reflected in #62 and #63 of The Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action, in consultation and collaboration with Survivors, Indigenous peoples, and The Manitoba Teachers' Society, to:

1. Make age-appropriate curriculum on residential schools, Treaties, and Indigenous peoples' historical and contemporary contributions to Canada relevant to the local community and Nations involved.
2. Provide the necessary funding to schools for the use of certified teachers, acting in the capacity of Indigenous education consultants, and the use of Elders to utilize Indigenous knowledge and teaching methods in classrooms.
3. Increase support to Indigenous parents and caregivers to better engage families at the school level.
4. Build teacher-student capacity for intercultural understanding, empathy, and mutual respect, using anti-racism curriculum and teaching resources developed by Manitoba Education and Training.
5. Provide the necessary funding to post-secondary institutions to educate teachers on how to integrate Indigenous knowledge and teaching methods into classrooms.
6. Establish senior-level positions in government at the assistant deputy minister level or higher dedicated to Indigenous content and Indigenous student achievement.
7. Provide time for teacher professional development that promotes reconciliation.

## French-Language Education

### Recommendation 15:

That the Government of Manitoba, the Bureau de l'éducation française, and all other stakeholders work together to develop a strategy for recruiting and retaining French-language teachers.

**Further,** that the Government of Manitoba make a commitment to increase bilingual staff in all positions in French Immersion schools.

### Recommendation 16:

That the Government of Manitoba, the Bureau de l'éducation française, and all other applicable parties work together to ensure that students enrolled in French Immersion programs are being given the supports they need to succeed, graduating with bi-lingual capabilities.

### Recommendation 17:

That the Government of Manitoba and the Bureau de l'éducation française ensure that the curricula for the Immersion and Francophone programs are created in French (not translated) in order to integrate linguistic and cultural differences and to respond to the needs of the community.

# The Manitoba Teachers' Society Educational Review Submission - FULL ANALYSIS

For Manitoba's Commission on Kindergarten to Grade 12 Education  
May, 2019

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## Introduction

For 100 years, The Manitoba Teachers' Society has been the voice of public school education in this province and we wholeheartedly welcome the opportunity to participate in this once-in-a-generation review of the K-12 public education system.

We are committed to working together to ensure that all students are provided equal opportunity to reach their full potential in safe, caring and inclusive schools.

Our 16,000 members are on the frontlines of the education system, and are acutely aware of the daily challenges and opportunities for improvement in Manitoba's public schools.

We have identified eight topic areas where improvements would benefit the overall public school system:

1. Poverty;
2. Class size and composition;
3. Curriculum and assessment;
4. Improved access to clinicians and student support services;
5. Development of teaching and leadership standards;
6. Professional learning and development for teachers;
7. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action #62 and #63; and
8. French-language education.

The following is a full analysis and rationale for the 17 recommendations included in the *Executive Summary*, in response to the question "How can we help teachers and school leaders achieve better outcomes" as identified by the Commission's mandate.



# Poverty

There is overwhelming evidence that links poverty with reduced achievement in educational outcomes. Bronell, Fransoo and Martens (2016) is most succinct in their conclusion, that “socioeconomic status is the single most powerful predictor of educational outcomes.”

Child poverty in Manitoba ranges from 12 per cent to 22 per cent, depending on the measure, and is higher than Canada’s overall average. The percentage is even higher among Indigenous communities where one in two First Nations children, one in four Métis and one in four Inuit live in poverty, all higher than in Canada overall (Child and Youth Report, 2017).

According to The Canadian Council on Learning, “pre-schoolers from low-income families are twice as likely as those from higher income families to be delayed in measures of cognitive development, numeracy and literacy” (Flessa & McAdie, 2007).

Put simply, when students from poor households enter the education system they are already at a disadvantage and are less likely to graduate which can lead to a lifetime of challenges and costs.

Highschool dropouts are less likely to find a job and earn a living wage, and more likely to be poor and to suffer from a variety of adverse health outcomes (Rumberger, 2011). Moreover, they are more likely to rely on public assistance, engage in crime and generate other social costs borne by taxpayers (Belfield & Levin, 2007).

In 2013, The Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives estimated the lost income and productivity of 11,000 low-income youth failing to graduate at \$23 billion, lost taxes at \$9.9 billion and additional social assistance payments at \$1.4 billion.

There are many reasons why these students underperform and eventually drop out of the school system. The two most common reasons we hear from our members have to do with food insecurity and the lack of transportation to and from school.

It is well established that proper nutrition supports effective learning for students, and since children spend half of their waking hours at school it makes sense to use schools as the medium for providing food to help instill healthy eating habits in a non-stigmatizing way.

## **Recommendation 1:**

That the Government of Manitoba establish a universal meal program for all school-age children. The program must be available for any school-age student at no cost to the student regardless of perceived need.

Currently, some schools provide breakfast and lunch programs, some at a cost and others for free. In 2016/17, the Child Nutrition Council of Manitoba (CNCM), which funds school nutrition programs, served 3.7 million snacks and meals, reaching 24,000 students and 239 programs.

It is important to note that 60 per cent of the programs supported by CNCM needed to access further resources to meet the unmet demand of students in their schools. These programs should be able to access more stable and less complicated sources of funding and be able to expand to all public schools.

Students who are unable to walk to school due to distance, weather conditions or safety concerns, can have a difficult time arranging an alternate means for getting there. For many low-income parents, dropping kids off at school in a car is not an option, and at \$70.10 for a monthly youth bus pass, the cost of public transit is unaffordable.

Some school divisions are already budgeting funds to help cover the cost of getting students, who would otherwise not be able to afford it, to school.

In 2018/19, the Winnipeg School Division allocated \$309,000 from its annual budget for buying tokens for low-income students and special programs. The Louis Riel School Division has a \$18,000 transportation budget, of which a portion supports students from low-income households. Pembina Trails spent \$23,784 in the 2017/18 school year on Winnipeg Transit reduced fare tokens and the reloading of Peggo cards.

However, as in the case of breakfast and lunch programs, the demand for bus tokens is much higher than supply, resulting in waiting lists at some schools.

### **Recommendation 2:**

That the Government of Manitoba work with the City of Winnipeg, other municipal governments in the province and any other applicable parties in establishing a pilot project offering bus tokens to students, so that paying the fare for public transportation is not a barrier to accessing education.

While we have chosen to focus on addressing food insecurity and transportation issues as ways to reduce the effect of poverty on students, this is just the tip of the iceberg. For example, more and more schools are imposing fees to cover the costs of supplies like paper and notebooks as well as transportation for field trips. The costs associated with field trips, which often enrich the educational experience, is a barrier for some students.

Students living in poverty should have equitable access to co-curricular activities (activities that take place outside the classroom but reinforce or supplement classroom curriculum in some way e.g. music and art) and extra-curricular programs (activities that occur outside of the educational setting and do not provide instruction or experience to supplement the academic curriculum e.g. involvement in martial arts, Girl Guides etc.).

Co-curricular and extra-curricular activities help foster the all-round development of students through experience. Research shows that students who participate in these activities achieve higher academic results, develop stronger relationships in schools and are more likely to lead an active and healthy lifestyle.

Unfortunately, many families simply cannot afford the costs to register their children in these activities, which can average \$1,120 per year (Simpson, 2017), and they look to schools to fill this void.

The rising cost of school supplies present another burden for students from low-income households. In the August, 2017, Winnipeg Free Press article, Schlesinger (2017) cited a study from RetailMeNot.ca where it noted that families spend almost \$900 for back-to-school supplies.

Technological devices, which are becoming increasingly necessary for students to fully participate in all classroom activities, have been one of the factors behind the rising costs. And while the provincial guide for the Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) program stipulates that the equity must be taken into account, finding a solution to allow for equitable access for all students may not always be a top priority for schools.

In short, if these devices are required by a school, they should either be provided by the school division or provisions should be made to make devices available to those who cannot afford them.

We recognize that poverty is a complex issue, and its effects are felt across the education system. Getting a child into a classroom is simply not enough. To best serve the students of this province, now and into the future, we must first acknowledge the far-reaching effects of poverty and fully understand the issues of inequality and poverty in our school systems. Only then can we create educational policies that provide equitable opportunities for all students.

### **Recommendation 3:**

That the Government of Manitoba establish a task force to focus on how socio-economic conditions affect access to education, with a mandate to improve access for the province's most vulnerable students within an appropriate and reasonable timeframe. The Society should be part of this task force.

# Class Size and Composition

The universal cap on classroom size, mandated by the Smaller Classes Initiative (SCI), required 90 percent of classrooms from Kindergarten to Grade 3 in each school division be limited to a maximum of 20 students. This served as an equalizer because it guaranteed individualized attention for these students, regardless of where they went to school.

The provincial government abandoned the SCI in 2017, far too early to see results especially since the program was never fully implemented.

The most well-known study on class size, Tennessee's Project STAR, showed that K-3 students who have greater access to individual attention from their teacher, due to smaller class sizes, achieve greater academic success. Furthermore, smaller classes are especially helpful for students from families with a lower socio-economic status and those with learning disabilities.

That being said, we acknowledge that there is no universally agreed-upon and empirically supported threshold for positive impact of class size, and for every study in support of smaller class sizes there is another to the contrary.

What we can speak to with confidence is the feedback we receive from our members who are in Manitoba's classrooms. A full school year has passed since the removal of the cap on classroom size, and according to a recent poll, conducted by Viewpoints Research on behalf of The Manitoba Teachers' Society, teachers and students are feeling the impact.

According to the poll, 84 per cent of K-3 public school teachers agreed that the removal of the cap has had a negative impact on their ability to provide individualized attention to students. Three in four agreed that their ability to perform their job as effectively as they would like is being compromised.

More students in a classroom means less one-on-one time with the teacher. Questions might go unanswered, simply because there are too many to answer. Students who are struggling can be overlooked in a large classroom because there is less opportunity to participate in discussions. With fewer students, teachers are able to take the time to correct or encourage students experiencing difficulty in a particular area because they become more intimately aware of the student's strengths and weaknesses.

Research shows that the inability to participate is a contributing factor in students becoming disengaged from the lesson. This should be of concern to anyone who cares about our public education system because engaged students are more likely to do well and less likely to drop out of school.

According to the poll, the decrease in individualized time with the teacher is already affecting student engagement, especially in the early years. Since the removal of the cap, 74 per cent of K-3 teachers are reporting that student engagement has suffered.

Typically, student engagement declines as students progress through the school system, reaching its lowest levels in high school, making this increase in the early years very alarming.

The negative impact on student behaviour for K-3 students has increased to 82 per cent from 75 per cent in 2017. Again, this is not surprising, as larger classrooms tend to be more disruptive because there are more students to manage (MTS Membership Poll 2018).

## **Recommendation 4:**

That the Government of Manitoba reinstate the cap on class size for Kindergarten to Grade 3 to help ensure that teachers are able to give students the individualized attention they need to improve educational outcomes.

In order to enhance quality and equity in our public schools, class size must be addressed along with class composition, as they are directly related.

A class of 29 students, comprised of three with special needs and one non-English/non-French speaker, requires a different teaching strategy than a class with 26 students of which five students have special needs.

The workload shifts significantly and becomes more difficult to meet the needs of all students. Furthermore, research has demonstrated that “smaller classes may have the greatest positive impact on students with the greatest educational needs” (OISE-UT/CEA, 2010).

### **Recommendation 5:**

That class composition i.e. students with exceptionalities (defined as those students identified as having behavioural problems or mental or physical disabilities, as well as other special needs students including gifted students), English and French as an additional language learners (defined as students whose first language differs from the school’s primary language of instruction, and who may require focused educational supports to assist them in attaining proficiency in that language) be taken into account when determining class size.

## **Curriculum and Assessment**

It is important that students have access to innovative, up-to-date curriculum based on evidence, peer-reviewed research and effective pedagogical practices, reflective of today’s world. Furthermore, curriculum needs to reflect the context and population of Manitoba.

With their knowledge, experiences and competencies, teachers are central to any curriculum development effort. Teacher expertise should be shared collaboratively at all levels i.e. provincially, divisionally, in the school and classroom.

### **Recommendation 6:**

That the Government of Manitoba review and update any K-12 curriculum that is older than seven years. **Further**, that any new curriculum include representative teacher participation in the development process, be based on a clear multi-year curriculum development implementation plan and be sustainably funded.

The most reputable gauge of individual student performance is the professional judgement of the classroom teacher. Teachers utilize a balanced approach to student assessment through a variety of classroom-based methods, allowing them to pinpoint the individual needs of students and apply corrective measures in the classroom.

Provincial assessments are limited as they provide a snapshot of student achievement, as such, provincial assessments should be used solely to ensure that system wide changes are adequately funded and supportive of effective pedagogy.

### **Recommendation 7:**

That the Government of Manitoba support classroom-based formative assessments that align with existing and new curriculum. **Further**, that the results of any provincial assessments should be used to access/determine if more resources are needed in certain jurisdictions. 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.

# Improved Access to Clinicians and Student Support Services

Studies have shown that early assessment of learning disabilities improves performance and education outcomes, by addressing learning difficulties before they become entrenched and lead to other issues such as behavioural and emotional problems.

Unfortunately, learning disorders are usually not recognized until a child reaches school age and begins exhibiting problems in areas like reading, writing and math.

In Manitoba, there is no comprehensive data for the average time it takes for an assessment to be completed, but anecdotally we know that assessments can take well over a year.

Once a learning disability has been identified, programs and services can improve student outcomes. However, because of the lag in assessment time, many students are disadvantaged as they struggle to keep up with the curriculum. Oftentimes, this leads to frustration, which manifests as behavioural issues and is disruptive to the entire classroom.

Put simply, timely assessment helps to enable children to reach their full potential as learners.

## **Recommendation 8:**

That the Government of Manitoba make a firm commitment to reducing wait time for assessing students with learning disabilities, so that those who qualify for a special education designation receive early intervention and the necessary supports, regardless of where in the province the student is attending school.

There's an important link between mental health and well-being, and student learning and academic performance. Meldrum et al. (2009) note that mental disorders can affect a student's emotional well-being (impeding social development which can leave youth feeling socially isolated, stigmatized, unhappy), ability to learn (for example in the case of ADHD), and can be a factor in why some students drop out of school. These issues can range from depression and anxiety to eating disorders and substance abuse and have significant implications for students and schools.

Similarly in a 2009 report, the Canadian Council on Learning states that poor mental health in Canadian school children poses a significant risk to their academic development and puts them at greater risk of dropping out of school, substance abuse and suicide.

According to the Mental Health Commission of Canada (MHCC), between 15 and 25 per cent of young people in Canada suffer from a mental disorder, making it the most common and disabling condition affecting youths. Furthermore, the MHCC noted that 70 per cent of mental illnesses in adults have their onset during adolescence or childhood and 70 per cent of childhood cases of mental health problems can be solved through early diagnosis and interventions.

Dr. Anita Chandra is with the Department of Population and Family Health Sciences, Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School, and she examined the issue in a paper entitled *"Public Health Stigma starts early: Gender differences in teen willingness to use mental health services."*

She said that gender differences in negative mental health attitudes and willingness to use mental health services are present early in adolescence, therefore the availability of enhanced mental health education and services in middle school may reduce gender disparities by incorporating stigma reduction efforts and addressing differences in knowledge and exposure to mental health issues.

Put simply, the earlier the diagnosis the better. According to Kutcher et al. (2009), schools are "an ideal place to begin the work of addressing mental health" because they can:

1. Pro-actively promote mental wellness;
2. Be sites for early identification;
3. Have educated personnel who recognize and intervene on behalf of students; and
4. Serve as sites for mental health care delivery if working in an integrated way between classroom teachers and mental health specialists.

Some schools in Manitoba are already integrating mental health promotion and planning into their current curriculum and activities. However, since mental health promotion is not mandatory, this is happening on an ad hoc or incidental manner. All students deserve access to this level of service.

### **Recommendation 9:**

That the Government of Manitoba develop a comprehensive mental health curriculum for K-12 students, promote mental wellness and help reduce the stigma associated with mental health issues. **Further**, that the Government of Manitoba ensure that mental health services are readily accessible in schools and increase the number of school counsellors and other specialist support teachers to address students' mental health needs where necessary.

Once needs are identified, it is important that students are able to access special-needs programming in a timely and efficient manner. Currently, there are not enough school-based resources to address the diverse needs of students.

In the north, it is not uncommon to have one psychologist service all the schools, resulting in wait times of three months to a year, between visits, depending on the type of service required.

Further issues arise if a child changes schools, perhaps moving to a division with no extra funding to hire a qualified clinician. This is neither efficient nor effective.

### **Recommendation 10:**

That the Government of Manitoba ensure that students requiring clinician resources, such as psychology, social work, physiotherapy, occupational therapy, audiology, speech and language pathology, etc. are given access in a manner that is timely, efficient and effective.

# Development of teaching and leadership standards

The Manitoba Teachers' Society has a *Code of Professional Practice* and a review process that governs teacher ethics. What is needed is a uniform set of standards for professional competency.

The development of standards is crucial in helping to guide the expectations for all educators. Standards can also play a key role in guiding the development of individual growth plans, supervision and evaluation policies, and support the review and evaluation of educators whose competency is in question.

Leadership standards are an extension of teaching standards and would serve to reinforce Manitoba's long history of collaborative relationships between teachers and school leaders (principals and vice-principals), as well as enhance our community of learning and professional governance. The standards should never attempt to quantify teaching or diminish the work of teachers and school leaders.

In 1997, the Alberta Teachers' Association (ATA) and the Government of Alberta collaborated in the development of teaching standards for the profession. This was a first for Canada. Based on the success of this collaboration, they have expanded the scope of the standards to include school leadership (principals and vice-principals) and superintendents which will come into effect by September 2019.

Alberta Education and ATA are collaborating to help educators learn about and prepare to meet the updated standards.

Various models have been implemented across the country, however, the one thing that remains constant is the importance of collaboration between all stakeholders.

The Society has a well-established professional development program and partnerships with pertinent stakeholders and is ready to work with the Government of Manitoba to develop a uniform set of professional standards, offer on-going professional development to support those standards, and provide interventions to help 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.

## **Recommendation 11:**

That the Government of Manitoba work with The Manitoba Teachers' Society to develop uniform teaching and leadership standards for the profession.

# Professional Learning and Development for Teachers

Teachers are confronted with ongoing challenges, including changes in curriculum, new instructional methods, advances in technology, and increasingly diverse and complex student learning needs.

When students have a learning need, it means that teachers have a learning need (Katz & Dack, 2013).

Teachers look to professional development and learning to give them the tools needed to best respond to the needs of their students.

Please note, while professional development and learning tend to be used interchangeably, they are in fact different.

Professional development involves many aspects of learning but may also involve developing mindfulness, team

building and team development, intellectual stimulation ... and reinvigorating teachers' love for their subject (Fullan & Hargreaves, 2012).

On the other hand, "professional learning may look like professional reading, [workshops], data teams, curriculum planning [and] collaborative inquiry" (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012).

There can be no development without learning, therefore professional development should be used in conjunction with professional learning to achieve optimal results.

Currently, educators can participate in professional development and learning opportunities through their school divisions and the Government of Manitoba, however adequate funding is still needed to enable teachers to access and participate in a variety of professional learning and development opportunities.

It is also important that professional development and learning opportunities be available in English and French to ensure that all teachers can access opportunities that are reflective of their classrooms.

Put simply, any improvement agenda should be built on a foundation of building school cultures that support teachers as learners collaborating to improve their practice. This is enhanced when teachers engage in professional dialogue (Donohoo, 2017a; Donohoo, 2017b; Hattie, 2015; Hattie, 2016).

### **Recommendation 12:**

That the Government of Manitoba and school divisions work together to review funding for professional learning and development (PLD) for teachers to ensure that PLD is adequately funded by Manitoba Education and Training so that teachers have ongoing opportunities to increase skills for their work in complex and diverse classrooms.

It is not enough to allocate additional funds to professional development. The quality of professional development is equally important when it comes to professional learning for educators.

School division PDL is broadly curriculum focused, which is certainly important, but does not by itself address the skills required to optimizing an increasingly complex classroom. In an attempt to cater to a large crowd, a one-size-fits all approach is adopted, at the expense of more focused sessions, applicable to individual needs and enhancing teacher collaboration.

### **Recommendation 13:**

That the Government of Manitoba, The Manitoba Teachers' Society and school divisions work together to facilitate appropriate professional development opportunities, accessible to all teachers and reflective of complex and diverse classrooms.

**Further**, that the Government of Manitoba and school divisions work together to ensure that teachers are given more autonomy to choose professional development opportunities that are reflective of their specific classroom needs.



# Implementing The Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action #62 and #63

The Government of Manitoba has shown leadership with its efforts to achieve reconciliation through education. Through grant funding to schools for Indigenous Academic Achievement, developing residential school resources and hosting collaborative conversations about Indigenous education, the government has shown a commitment to ensuring that Canada's rich Indigenous heritage is reflected in Manitoba's classrooms.

The Manitoba Teachers' Society and the Government of Manitoba should maintain and strengthen our partnerships in Indigenous education to ensure the success of all students.

## **Recommendation 14:**

That the Government of Manitoba maintain an annual commitment to Indigenous education issues as set out in #62 and #63 of The Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action, in consultation and collaboration with Survivors, Indigenous peoples, and The Manitoba Teachers' Society, to:

1. Make age-appropriate curriculum on residential schools, Treaties, and Indigenous peoples' historical and contemporary contributions to Canada relevant to the local community and Nations involved.
2. Provide the necessary funding to schools for the use of certified teachers, acting in the capacity of Indigenous education consultants, and the use of Elders to utilize Indigenous knowledge and teaching methods in classrooms.
3. Increase support to Indigenous parents and caregivers to better engage families at the school level.
4. Build teacher-student capacity for intercultural understanding, empathy, and mutual respect, using anti-racism curriculum and teaching resources developed by Manitoba Education and Training.
5. Provide the necessary funding to post-secondary institutions to educate teachers on how to integrate Indigenous knowledge and teaching methods into classrooms.
6. Establish senior-level positions in government at the assistant deputy minister level or higher dedicated to Indigenous content and Indigenous student achievement.
7. Provide time for teacher professional development that promotes reconciliation.

# French-Language Education

French-language education is the fastest growing segment of public education in Manitoba, having increased by more than 40 per cent in the last 15 years. This amounts to more than 95,000 students or 52 per cent of Manitoba's student population learning French in school, whether it's in the Division scolaire franco-manitobaine (DSFM), immersion schools or through learning French as a second language.

With the growing demand for French-language education comes a growing demand for French-language teachers. Unfortunately, there is a shortage of French-language teachers across the country.

According to Canadian Parents for French, in its report on *The State of French Second Language Education in Canada 2018*, there are a number of factors at play.

The uneven concentration of French speakers across the country, varying provincial requirements for students to study French, the demand for French speaking individuals in many other economic sectors, and, ultimately, the hard-to-predict decisions people make in choosing a career path weigh into the challenge of recruiting, hiring and retaining French Immersion teachers.

The DSFM and immersion schools rely heavily on graduates from the Université Saint-Boniface (USB), the only French language university in Western Canada, to fill their teacher roster. While enrollment is rapidly increasing in USB's education faculty, and is expected to graduate 67 French language teachers in 2019, 56 in 2020 and approximately 70 in 2021, it is simply not enough to fill the demand.

After 40 years of ever-expanding immersion programs, the percentage of Canadians who can speak both official languages has dropped. Furthermore, according to a Statscan study quoted in the *Globe and Mail*, Pertiz (2018),

## **Recommendation 15:**

That the Government of Manitoba, the Bureau de l'éducation française, and all other applicable parties work together to develop a strategy for recruiting and retaining French-language teachers.

**Further**, that the Government of Manitoba make a commitment to increase bilingual staff in all positions in French Immersion schools.

the rate of young anglophones aged 15 to 19 who are bilingual outside Quebec has decreased continuously in every census year since the mid-nineties.

In Manitoba, the story is the same. While French Immersion Program enrolments are growing at a rate greater than that of the overall K to 12 public school population, the French Immersion Program is losing nearly half of its Kindergarten students by the time they reach Grade 12, suggesting a retention problem with French Immersion enrolments. (French Language Education Review 2015-2016)

## **Recommendation 16:**

That the Government of Manitoba, the Bureau de l'éducation française, and all other applicable parties work together to ensure that students enrolled in French Immersion programs are being given the supports they need to succeed, graduating with bilingual capabilities.

French-language education is not simply the translation of English education, but a unique educational and cultural experience.

### **Recommendation 17:**

That the Government of Manitoba and the Bureau de l'éducation française ensure that the curricula for the immersion and francophone programs are created in French (not translated) in order to integrate linguistic and cultural differences and to respond to the needs of the community.

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