

**Regular Meeting of the Board  
Agenda**

Thursday, April 11, 2019

8:00 PM

Board Room

Administration Office

181 Henlow Bay, Winnipeg, MB R3Y 1M7

**1. ATTENDANCE**

**2. CALL TO ORDER**

Comments:

*The content of the Informational Reports has been reviewed by Trustees prior to the Board Meeting. The reports reflect discussions and activities of the Committees. At Board Meetings, if Trustees wish to speak or to ask questions regarding a particular report included in the Information Reports section of the Board Meeting agenda - that needs to be identified at the time the agenda is amended. Recommended motions from Committees are addressed separately in the agenda.*

**3. AGENDA APPROVAL**

**4. BOARD MINUTES APPROVAL**

**5. STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS, SPECIAL COMMITTEE REPORTS AND OTHER REPORTS**

**1. Standing Committee Reports:**

- a. Report of the Committee Meeting of the Whole held on March 13, 2019;
- b. Committee Report of the Education Committee Meeting held on March 11, 2019;
- c. Committee Report of the Buildings, Property and Transportation Committee Meeting held on March 4, 2019;
- d. Committee Report of the Communications and Community Relations Committee Minutes held on March 13, 2019.

**2. Special Committee Reports:**

- a. Minutes of the Pembina Trails Educational Support Fund, Inc. Corporate Board Meeting held on March 13, 2019.

### **3. Other Reports:**

- a. Commendation Report dated April 11, 2019;
- b. Bereavement Report dated April 11, 2019;
- c. Teacher Contracts (Permanent and Term) as listed in the Teacher Contracts Report dated April 11, 2019;
- d. Teacher Contract Alterations as listed in the Teacher Contract Alterations Report dated October April 11, 2019;
- e. Substitute Teacher Contracts as listed in the 2018-19 Substitute Teacher Contracts Report dated April 11, 2019;
- f. Resignations as listed in the Resignations Report dated April 11, 2019;
- g. Enrolment Report - March 2019;
- h. MITT Governing Board Minutes - February 12, 2019;
- i. Pembina Trails Voices Minutes - February 19, 2019.

#### **Purpose:**

To consider receiving the Standing Committee Reports, Special Committee Report and Other Reports as information, and

To consider ratifying Teacher Contracts (Permanent and Term) as listed in the Teacher Contracts Report dated April 11, 2019, and

To approve Teacher Contract Alterations as listed in the Teacher Contract Alterations Report dated April 11, 2019, and

To consider ratifying Substitute Teacher Contracts as listed in the 2018-19 Substitute Teacher Contracts Report dated April 11, 2019, and

To consider receiving resignations as listed in the Resignations Report dated April 11, 2019.

### **6. DELEGATIONS**

### **7. EDUCATIONAL PRESENTATIONS**

### **8. BUSINESS FROM PREVIOUS BOARD MEETINGS**

### **9. BUSINESS FROM PREVIOUS FINANCE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE**

### **10. BUSINESS FROM PREVIOUS COMMITTEE MEETING OF THE WHOLE**

### **11. BY-LAWS AND/OR POLICIES**

**11.1 By-Law No. 133 (Borrowing By-Law)**

THAT By-Law No. 133, being a by-law of the Trustees of the Pembina Trails School Division in Manitoba, providing for the borrowing of moneys upon the credit of the said School Division to meet current expenses for the Fiscal Year 2019-20, be given first reading.

**12. CORRESPONDENCE FOR DISCUSSION**

**13. STANDING AND SPECIAL/ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**13.1 Buildings, Property and Transportation Committee**

**13.2 Communication and Community Relations Committee**

**13.3 Education Committee**

**13.4 Finance and Planning Committee**

**13.5 Human Resources and Policy Committee**

**13.5.1 Policy GBKA and Regulation GBKA-R - Whistleblower Protection**

**13.6 Negotiations Committee**

**13.7 Pembina Trails School Division Educational Support Fund Inc.**

**13.8 Pembina Trails Voices**

**13.9 Council of Presidents**

**13.10 Boards/Association Council on Education (B.A.C.E)**

**14. ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS**

**14.1 Update on Capital Projects**

Purpose: To receive a report from the Assistant Superintendent, Divisional Support Services.

**14.2 Aspirational Targets for Literacy and Numeracy**

Purpose: To receive a report from the Superintendent.

**14.3 K-12 Education Review Student Forum**

Purpose: To consider correspondence.

**15. NEW BUSINESS**

**15.1 Trustee Request - G. Melnyk**

Purpose: To consider request from G. Melnyk re, attendance at Board Meetings.

**16. CORRESPONDENCE FOR INFORMATION DISTRIBUTION LIST**

Purpose: To receive as information.

**17. QUESTIONS FROM TRUSTEES**

**18. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC IN ATTENDANCE**

**19. REQUIREMENT FOR A COMMITTEE MEETING OF THE WHOLE**

**20. ADJOURNMENT**

# Comment: The costs of evolving education in Manitoba

Some change may be necessary but a recent article offered a very simplistic interpretation

By [Garry Draper](#)

Published: March 13, 2019

**Comment**

**0 comments**



Schools are providing services on multiple fronts that require significant investment in training staff. *Photo:*

*FatCamera/E+/Getty Images*

As a lifetime farmer and school trustee for over 25 years, I wish to give my perspective on an article in the November 15, 2018 edition of the *Co-operator*, by Alexandra Burnett and Rodney Clifton of the Frontier Center for Public Policy.

The article commented on how some policy changes by the provincial government are the answer to control rising education costs.

Although they may be correct in their figures and percentages they lack the reasons and understanding for the increasing costs of education. They seem to imply that education is a business and should be treated that way. They maintain that if education costs stayed at CPI costs our taxes would be much lower, but they do not factor in the reasons for the increasing costs of maintaining our education system. Many costs incurred by school divisions have outpaced and are not factored into CPI.

#### ADVERTISEMENT

Staffing accounts for the majority of the costs within school division budgets. In many cases school divisions are subjected to the collective bargaining process. Education is unique in the fact that teachers cannot strike so divisions must, from time to time, accept conditions from arbitrated settlements which add extra ongoing costs such as noon hour supervision, prep time, maternity top-up and extra-curricular hours.

School divisions must also partially fund government initiatives and directives such as: workplace safety and health directives, accessibility requirements, daycares in schools, appropriate education and Grade 12 physical education.

Schools today are committed to providing services to deal with increasing medical, mental health and social issues that require significant investment in training staff. There is also an increase in maintenance costs to provide a safe and caring environment for students and staff.

School bus replacement and repairs, cleaning supplies, technology, fuel (carbon tax) and hydro are a few more examples of uncontrolled costs. A replacement diesel motor can cost over \$20,000. Divisions have even had to replace defective boilers in schools at their own cost.

#### ADVERTISEMENT

The local school is very important in communities so divisions open their schools after school hours for community use (as they should) but extra costs are incurred for things such as extra utility costs and sometimes adding extra custodial staff.

Burnett and Clifton put forward some policy changes that would control costs such as suggesting that all necessary resources would come from the provincial government as they do in other provinces. To eliminate education funding from property assessment would mean the government would have to come up with over \$700 million from other sources.

It would take an additional three per cent sales tax to offset that. A recent *Financial Post* article claims that up to 40 per cent of Canadians do not pay income tax, so relying on income tax would put a tremendous extra strain on those who do. All provinces from Quebec west still fund education from property assessment but it is collected by the government and then redistributed to divisions.

A move to this model with a provincial mill rate would be detrimental to southwest and south-central Manitoba as most divisions there have a lower mill rate than the provincial average.

#### ADVERTISEMENT

Burnett and Clifton suggest that smaller divisions could amalgamate. Amalgamation must be done for the right reason as there must be a benefit to student learning.

When the last round of forced amalgamations occurred there was a huge increased cost that is ongoing. Currently only about 3.5 per cent of school divisions' expenses are administration costs, so in amalgamation the vast majority of expenses in combined budgets will still be there.

Burnett and Clifton maintain that the provincial government could control all aspects of public education. Currently the government sets direction for a basic curriculum and divisions respond to local community needs for supplementary courses and support.

You cannot have a "one shoe that fits all" because every community whether rural or urban has different needs and requirements. If the provincial government controlled all aspects of education, it would greatly reduce the autonomy of our local communities.

The current method of funding education came to be in the 1890s for a reason. Part of the reason was to split funding between the province and the local resident taxpayer. This gave the trustees the ability to respond to local community needs for the education of their students.

Property assessment was used because it was a consistent guaranteed stream of revenue. Those reasons are still very evident in today's society. Assessment portioning has been adjusted in the past and needs to be looked at again.

The education special levy is applied to commercial businesses and that helps balance areas in the province with greater commercial assessment versus areas without. As well, the current education funding formula has an equalization proponent built into it, which further balances the inequity of assessment between divisions. There are currently five divisions that do not receive

any equalization dollars while the highest equalization payment is \$57 million. Thus, there are already measures in place to help balance the costs of education throughout the province to ensure all students in Manitoba are receiving educational opportunities.

The government has enacted an education review, which school divisions welcome, because if there are improved ways of delivering education, everyone benefits.

*Garry Draper farms near Lenore, Manitoba and is a trustee with the Fort La Bosse School Division.*

# Opinion: School taxation a sign of unsustainability

By [Alexandra Burnett](#), [Rodney A. Clifton](#)

Published: November 19, 2018

**Opinion**

**2 comments**

Manitoba school trustees are permitted to tax property owners to fund public schools. No other province gives trustees this responsibility.

Because school divisions have taxing authority, both taxpayers and parents must pay attention to what school boards actually do.

A few years ago, the Winnipeg School Division (WSD) proposed to increase property taxes by 6.4 per cent when the consumer price index (CPI), a standard measure of economic growth, was about 0.5 per cent. Even so, the board chair claimed that if trustees didn't approve the increase, which was about eight times higher than the CPI, teachers' jobs and educational programs would be cut.

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A week later, with much hand-wringing, WSD trustees approved a 5.89 per cent increase in property taxes, half a per cent below the proposed budget but still seven times the increase in the CPI.



Fortunately for taxpayers, the Frontier Centre for Public Policy has just released a new research report, *Never Enough: The increasing cost of public education in Manitoba and how to curb it*, assessing the cost of public education in Manitoba from 2002-03 to 2016-17. This paper can help taxpayers understand how unsustainable this situation is.

The study shows the rising cost of education in 36 of the 38 Manitoba school divisions. The least expensive school division in 2017 was Garden Valley, which spent \$10,520 on each student, while the most expensive division, Frontier, spent \$20,305 per student.

Even so, costs have been rising in all divisions by between two and four times CPI. Between 2002 and 2017, for example, WSD increased the least, by about 60 per cent. The Flin Flon School Division increased the most, by about 108 per cent. Over that period, the CPI increased by only 34 per cent.

#### ADVERTISEMENT

Obviously, it's not sustainable to have the cost of education consistently outpacing CPI year after year. Soon, education will crowd out other expenditures.

Eventually, the increasing cost of education will need to be controlled.

If over this period, the cost of educating students was equivalent to the increase in CPI, the average cost per student in 2017 would have been \$7,859 rather than \$12,820, saving about \$5,000 per student in that year alone. The provincial saving would have been slightly more than \$873 million.

A few simple policies could curb the increasing cost of public education. The minister could disallow school boards from raising funds by taxing property. All the necessary resources would come from the provincial government, as they do in other provinces.

As well, the minister could merge small school divisions into larger divisions. Turtle River, for example, has fewer than 700 students, which is smaller than many schools in other divisions.

#### ADVERTISEMENT

Such policies would force the provincial government to take responsibility for funding all aspects of public education. In this way, the educational objectives would be constrained to a common core. If school boards needed more money, they must justify the need to the provincial government. They couldn't just increase property taxes.

It is possible to ensure Manitoba students are well educated while also constraining the rising cost of education.

*Alexandra Burnett is a junior research associate and Rodney A. Clifton is a senior fellow at the Frontier Centre for Public Policy.*

**POSITION:** Chief Financial Officer (CFO)  
**DEPARTMENT:** Corporate Services  
**DATE:** March 14, 2019

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### **POSITION SUMMARY**

Reporting to the Executive Director, the CFO is the senior financial position at the Manitoba School Boards Association (MSBA) and is responsible for the general oversight and administration of all financial and physical operations of the association, including maintenance and operations related to capital, Information and Communications Technology and other infrastructural assets.

The CFO is responsible for preparing annual and monthly budget and financial reports for information, review and/or approval, including all statements as required for presentation by the Executive before the association's general and annual general meetings.

The CFO is responsible, in concert with the Executive Director and senior management team, for monitoring legal, regulatory, policy, accounting, security and financial standards, trends and developments that may impact the financial and policy interests and requirements of the association, and for preparing options and recommendations related to the same.

The incumbent meets as required with the MSBA Executive Director, the senior management team of the association, and with the Provincial Executive Committee, as well as with trustees appointed to serve on the association's Trust Committees for the Pension Plan for Non-Teaching Employees, as well as for the Manitoba School Insurance (MSI) Program and also for the Manitoba Universal Standards Trust (MUST) Fund.

The CFO also serves as liaison between the association and its auditors to present and clarify budget, policy and financial obligations and requirements relating to the association, while coordinating renewal of audit services on a periodic basis. The CFO maintains good working relationships with banking, wealth management and investment service providers across each of the association's programs, supports and services, and seeks out the achievement of ongoing efficiencies and renewal in delivery of such services for the benefit of the association and its membership.

The CFO serves as supervisor for one full-time equivalent (FTE) staff person, while leading the daily oversight, policy implementation, and financial administration and management of the association, including all revenue and expense accounts and claims.

The CFO is responsible for accountability through reporting, and remains in as needed contact with, school board office staff, members, stakeholders, and external service providers, in relation to financial administration of the association's annual budget (totaling over \$3 million as of March, 2019), the statutorily established Pension Plan for Non-Teaching Employees of Public School Boards in Manitoba (current assets totaling \$580 million), as well as for all grants and claims related to the Manitoba Schools Insurance (MSI) Program, MUST, the Child Nutrition Council of Manitoba, and the Teens

Against Distracted Driving and Safe Grad Programs, including an investment portfolio (totaling \$11 million as of March, 2019) related to these programs, supports and services.

### **MAJOR ACCOUNTABILITIES**

- Responsible for supervision of one FTE staff person (finance clerk) with lead responsibility for daily financial administration and operations relating to all association revenues and expenditures.
- Primary responsibility for daily financial oversight and management related to all monetary and financial accounts and instruments administered by or through MSBA.
- Ongoing implementation of reasonable security and safeguards as required to protect the financial assets administered by the association.
- Preparation of financial statements and support to independent external auditors in relation to their preparation of annual audited financial statements and other reports related to MSBA, MSI – Property, MSI – Liability, MUST Fund, MSBA Pension Plan, MSBA Pension Administration Fund and the Child Nutrition Council of Manitoba.
- From time to time, the issuance of a Request For Proposals in support of the ongoing renewal of independent audit services, with final submission of recommendations to the Executive Director.
- Administration of the Non-Teaching Pension Plan for MSBA on behalf of the school divisions who are party to this Plan, as well as the individual members of the Plan.
- Coordination of assets in relation to investment portfolio management as required to maintain liquidity to respond to the financial obligations of MSBA, MSI-Property, MSI-Liability, MUST Fund and MSBA Pension Administration.
- Management and renewal of capital and physical resources and assets for all association-owned infrastructure, including related tendering of contracts and procurement, as well as implementation of archival renewal and records-keeping protocols.
- Primary coordinator for Information and Communications Technology at the association through asset renewal and arrangements for external service support, including related tendering of contracts and procurement.

### **NATURE & SCOPE OF POSITION**

The Chief Financial Officer advises the Executive Director and/or senior management team as required, on aspects of finance and administration regarding MSBA and its programs including the Manitoba Schools Insurance program, the Pension Plan for Non-Teaching Employees, the Pension Plan Administration fund, and the Manitoba Universal Standards Trust Fund. This includes responsibility for the management of funds held in trust by MSBA for its various programs and accountability for revenue collection and expenditures, including through the annual audit processes related to each of these accounts.

The incumbent coordinates on an as needed basis with external service providers in relation to the Insurance Programs and Pension Plan.

The incumbent is responsible for establishing maintaining payroll responsibility for all staff and senior officers, as well as meeting expenses and remuneration for persons who serve as representatives of

the association and its membership on internal and external committees, as approved by the association under its policy framework.

The Chief Financial Officer coordinates duties relating to management and renewal of capital and physical resources and assets for all association-owned infrastructure and serves as the primary coordinator for Information and Communications Technology at the association through asset renewal and arrangements for external service support.

### **KEY DUTIES & RESPONSIBILITIES**

Please note that all proportional assignments are approximate and may vary.

#### **A. Financial (40%)**

- Ongoing monitoring and control of expenditures and revenues in relation to available budgetary resources through regular review, bookkeeping and analysis of planned activity to actual results: determination of cause of variances, advising the Executive Director of areas of concern, and development of alternatives and recommendations.
- Responsible for ensuring adherence to proper financial and accounting controls and procedures, including maintenance of reasonable security and safeguards.
- Prepares monthly and year-end financial statements for audit for MSBA, MSI – Property, MSI – Liability, MUST Fund, MSBA Pension Plan, MSBA Pension Plan Administration Fund, and the Child Nutrition Council of Manitoba.
- Makes recommendations regarding and prepares budget proposals.
- Performs all payroll and benefits administration functions for association staff and, as applicable, persons serving on committees on behalf of the association, including all necessary tax reporting and maintenance of personnel compensation files.
- Preparation of annual vacation and sick leave entitlement calculations for all association staff, while authorizing the same in relation to the incumbent's direct report.
- Ensures compliance through verification of committee member and staff expense reports in reference to the association's approved policy frameworks.
- Prepares and files quarterly Goods and Services Tax (GST) and annual Revenue Canada mandated taxation returns, and semi-annual pension plan GST rebate claims.
- Calculates annual MSBA membership fee and issues all invoices for remittance of membership fees.
- Authorizes all incoming cheques and invoices and reconciles monthly bank statements
- Prepares and presents financial statements for the MSBA General Meeting and/or Annual General Meeting, as well as Profit/Loss statements for other events sponsored by MSBA.
- Coordinates with MSI insurance broker on the financial aspects of the loss pools including invoicing, claims, rebates and year-end statements.
- Coordinates with the MUST Fund committee staff member on the financial aspects of the Fund including calculation of annual assessment, invoicing, claims and year-end statements.

- Maintains accounting records for affiliated organizations (Child Nutrition Council of Manitoba, Safe Grad/Teens Against Distracted Driving) and coordinates with the respective staff.

B. Pension Plan (35%)

- As a non-voting member of the MSBA Pension Trustees, participates with the Labour Relations Unit non-voting member in supporting the Trust Committee in the committee's mandate to maintain the Plan for the benefit of school boards who are party to the Plan (including the association) as well as the individual members.
- Liaises with the retirement consultants, actuarial consultants and administrators, plan custodian, plan auditors, legal counsel and board office staff and employees/members on specific details as well as broader issues.
- Balances member contributions to custodian deposits annually in preparation for year-end finalization.
- On a quarterly basis, under guidance received from the Trust Committee, analyzes the pension plan investment portfolio balances and re-balances to the investment mandate.
- Coordinates the printing and distribution (paper and electronic) of the Pension Plan Annual Report, Employee Booklet, Administration Guide and other Pension reports as required.

C. Investment Portfolio (10%)

- Makes investment recommendations to the Executive Director and coordinates assets within the investment portfolio while maintaining adequate cash positions in all programs (MSBA, Pension Administration Fund, MSI – Property, MSI – Liability, and MUST Fund).
- Trades at cost between programs to maximize portfolio return.
- Prepares monthly reports on investment portfolio assets and returns for MSBA Executive.

D. Information Technology (5%)

- Coordinates with external service providers to provide troubleshooting services to staff.
- Coordinates with professional IT consultant on troubleshooting and upgrades to equipment and software.
- Performs needs analysis and oversees procurement.

E. Capital infrastructure (5%)

- Makes recommendations and coordinates building maintenance including renovations and critical asset replacements.
- Performs cost/benefit analysis and makes recommendations for the procurement of new furnishings and other fixed capital assets.
- Serves as main contact regarding building maintenance and cleaning personnel.

F. Other Duties (5%)

- as assigned by the Executive Director

## **QUALIFICATIONS**

Qualifications shall include and demonstrate the following:

- Possession and good standing related to a professional accounting designation (CPA).
- A minimum of five years of relevant business experience that includes accounting and financial oversight and administration.
- Demonstrated experience with personnel administration and pension administration would be an asset.
- Demonstrated experience with information systems and Microsoft Office applications, especially spreadsheet applications, including Microsoft Excel.
- Experience with SAGE or other applicable accounting software would be an asset.
- Demonstrated ability to work under pressure to meet strict deadlines in a multi-task environment.
- Demonstrated management and supervisory skills, coupled with superior communication abilities.
- Familiarity with Pension Plan legislation, as well as with general legal, regulatory, policy and accounting standards and trends related to financial administration would be an asset.
- Demonstrated experience with financial management and administration in a public or education sector context would be an asset.
- Written and spoken knowledge of the French language would be an asset.
- Demonstrated experience working with First Nations, Métis or Inuit peoples or communities would be an asset.
- Demonstration of a suitable combination of education, experience, competence and skills, as may not necessarily be listed above, would also be considered.

## **GENERAL COMPETENCIES**

### ***Knowledge:***

The incumbent must have demonstrated working knowledge of generally accepted accounting principles and audit processes. They must be familiar with office management practices and principles and have well developed planning and organizational skills with an emphasis on attention to detail. The incumbent will have strong computer skills, including a demonstrated willingness and ability to understand and promote new technological developments. The incumbent must be competent to perform regular analysis leading to the formulation of options, alternatives and recommendations, briefs and reports for consideration of senior leadership.

### ***Interpersonal skills:***

The incumbent must have strong interpersonal skills given relationships with a wide range of individuals and organizations and provides leadership to one administrative assistant. The CFO position requires an innovative, flexible individual who is competent in many fields of financial and program management and able to achieve results while working in a fast paced and political environment. The incumbent must demonstrate the highest standard of diplomacy, sensitivity, confidentiality and tact relating to their duties under all circumstances. The incumbent must demonstrate superior team- and relationship-building and networking abilities, to appropriately position the association for internal and external cohesion and advantage.

***Supervisory skills:***

The CFO shall exercise competent supervision for one FTE staff member and, from time to time, other temporary support workers. The incumbent will be competent to address human resource issues on an as needed basis, while also promoting a collegial and friendly work environment that supports the performance and well-being of all association employees.

***Oral and written communication skills:***

The incumbent must have demonstrated superior oral and written communication, public speaking and presentation skills in the English language. The CFO requires an ability to communicate complex technical terminology and jargon for ease of understanding to non-financial audiences. The incumbent shall be competent to produce superior written communications in original, finished form.

**REFERENCES**

Candidates must provide a minimum of three references who are available for expedient interview as part of the overall selection process, with clear indication of the references' names, contacts, organizational affiliations, and their current or previous professional relationship to the candidate.

**EQUITY AND DIVERSITY**

Employment equity and diversity are factors in the selection process for this position. Candidates are encouraged to identify if they are of First Nations, Métis, Inuit or other Indigenous ancestry are persons with a disability, are members of a visible minority community or belong to other groups that may warrant equity consideration.



**From:** "Aditya Krishnan" <[cbckidsnews@cbc.ca](mailto:cbckidsnews@cbc.ca)>  
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**Subject:** CBC Kids News

Hi

Have you heard?

CBC has a new 'news' website ... just for kids 9-13.

[CBC Kids News](#) is news by kids, for kids! We have a number of topics including [sports](#), [video games](#), [celebrities](#) and [featured stories about kids](#) across Canada. We even tackle some of the more complicated stories adults are talking about, like [this explainer](#).

We want to hear what YOU think of our news service! There is a survey at the bottom of the website. Please fill it out and let us know how we're doing. Is this something you think you'd share with kids? Do kids like it? Do you like it? What should we do more of? The more we can relate our content to what kids want to hear and see, the better our website will be!

We have also attached a poster that's easy to print on a 8.5 x 11 piece of paper. If you think CBC Kids News is something kids will be interested in, please help us spread the word.

If you have specific questions, don't hesitate to send us an email. We look forward to hearing from you!

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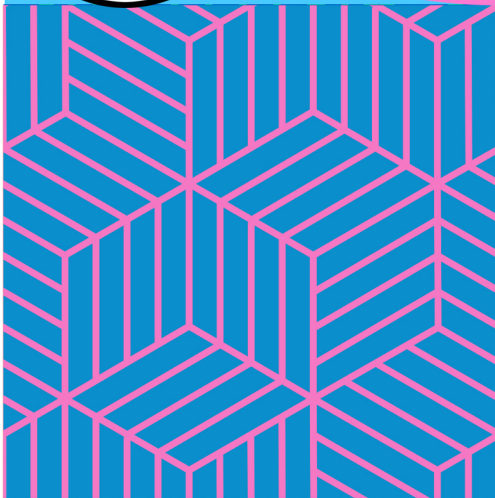
Aditya  
CBC Kids News Team  
E: [cbckidsnews@cbc.ca](mailto:cbckidsnews@cbc.ca)



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**Ask  
more.  
Know  
more.**



**Real  
kids.  
Real  
news.**



**cbckidsnews.ca**



## WHAT CAN I DO TO MAKE MY VOICE HEARD

Stay informed on this issue. Talk to your local school board. Connect with Swan Valley School Division on social media. Look for information in your mailbox, the Star and Times and ValleyBiz. Listen to local radio for updates as well. All of these mediums will be used to share information

and provide updates as they become available. You are strongly encouraged to participate in this review, whether it is speaking at a public meeting, sending in an online submission or completing the survey when it becomes available, it is critical that your voice be heard.

## SVSD BOARD OF TRUSTEES CONTACT INFORMATION

Donna Burghart  
P. (204) 281-1379  
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Superintendent:  
Tim Mendel  
P. (204) 281-1521  
E. [tmendel@svsd.ca](mailto:tmendel@svsd.ca)

## OTHER RESOURCES:

[www.svsd.ca](http://www.svsd.ca) [www.mbschoolboards.ca](http://www.mbschoolboards.ca)  
[www.edu.gov.mb.ca/educationreview](http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/educationreview)

Every Manitoban has a stake in the future of our children. As taxpayers, it is your right to speak up and be heard. Remaining silent should not be an option when it comes to how your tax money is used concerning our kids, their future and our society's future.

## HOW WILL MANITOBBANS BE ABLE TO PARTICIPATE

The government has said, "all Manitobans are encouraged to participate in the consultation process, which will run from February to May 2019. You can participate by attending a public meeting, submitting a written report or by filling out an online survey."



## K-12 EDUCATION REVIEW INFORMATION PACKAGE

# BECAUSE OUR SCHOOLS BELONG TO COMMUNITIES LOCAL VOICE MATTERS



## BRINGING AWARENESS OF POTENTIAL REVIEW IMPLICATIONS

Details of the announced K-12 education review are beginning to be released. In an effort to engage the residents of the Swan Valley and surrounding areas, the Swan Valley School Division

has prepared this package of information to bring awareness to the review, and the potential implications to the future of education not only within our division, but the province of Manitoba.

## WHAT IS THE TIMELINE

The Commission has said that from February to May 2019, online engagement as well as public and stakeholder meetings will occur. Analysis and formulation of recommendations will occur between June 2019 and January 2020 with the final release of the recommendations in March of 2020.

*Local voices making great local choices  
because the people making the choices live  
and work in the Valley!*

*Ready to succeed.*



A message from the  
Swan Valley School Division



# WHAT IS THE EDUCATION REVIEW?

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

Six broad areas of focus have been identified:

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 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?



*To create an inspiring learning community, where we all belong, contribute and succeed.*

## FACT OR FICTION?

We are strongly encouraging all citizens to make their voices heard when given the opportunity. Amalgamation, governance and funding are all topics that will be addressed during the review, the following information is intended to validate some truths, and dispel some myths.

**School boards are opposed to the review.**

**X** FICTION School boards welcome the review. If we can find ways to save money while increasing learning, create more opportunities for our students and increase engagement from our communities, why would we oppose such an outcome? If the review is comprehensive, transparent, inclusive and non-political, boards will support the conclusions.

**Eliminating the ability of the local school board to tax will mean no more property taxes!**

**X** FICTION In provinces where local school boards have been stripped of their ability to tax, the province has instead collected and set the tax rate. The money goes into the government's bank account so local tax money may or may not be spent in our Division. If property tax for education was eliminated the government still needs the revenue so will tax in another manner, such as adding 2 or 3% to the PST. Locally collected taxes ensure that the money is spent where it is collected.

**Funding for SVSD from the Province has not increased in the last 5 years.**

**✓** FACT The provincial contribution to SVSD's budget has actually decreased by about \$240,000 per year over the last two years. It has again for the 2019-20 school year. The previous three years saw a 0% increase. The Province has also made it clear that similar cuts to our budget are to be expected over the next few years.

**Amalgamation saves money.**

**X** FICTION A study from the Frontier Institute for Public Policy after the last round of amalgamations, which resulted in the loss of 20 school divisions, showed no savings. It was found that dollars were spent to save pennies. In fact, in some areas, when factoring in contract settlements costs only increased. There is NO real relationship between school division size and cost per student. Example:

- Western SD – 1700 students - \$11,412 cost per student
- Winnipeg SD – 31425 students - \$12,943 cost per student

**The larger the entity the less connected you are to local stakeholders.**

**✓** FACT A great example would be health boards. As health boards have grown bigger, have services improved? Have costs been lowered? Do local citizens feel like they have a voice when it comes to making decisions about health services in their area? If the answer is no, let us not make the same mistake in Education.

**SVRSS is a unique high school because it offers more technical vocational programs than most rural and urban high schools.**

**✓** FACT SVRSS is unique in this regard. High schools the size of SVRSS would typically have 3 or 4 vocational options. SVRSS offers 13. Many high schools in rural Manitoba offer none. SVSD Boards have made a conscious decision over the years to pay for and provide these options to our students.

**Trustees are paid very well, so reducing the number of trustees or eliminating school boards all together will save a great deal of money.**

**X** FICTION SVSD trustees are paid as follows: chair \$10,074; vice-chair \$8,345; trustee \$7,320. Provincially, total trustee costs account for 0.5% of the overall budget.

**Trustees do not want to make hard decisions so they just increase taxes.**

**X** FICTION Your Board undertook a comprehensive review of its operations one year ago. Upon completion of that review, the Board made the following decisions to reduce costs:

- reduced itself from 9 to 7 trustees
- consolidated the schools in Minitonas
- reduced staffing levels
- restructured Birch River to a K-6 school from a K-8 school for the 2018-19 school year
- reduced 4 bus routes
- requested the closure of Birch River School for the 2019-20 school year

## YOUR LOCAL SCHOOL BOARD IS WORKING FOR YOU

The Swan Valley School Division celebrated its 50th Anniversary last year. During its 50 year existence, local citizens have had an active voice in shaping the educational system that we have in the Valley. Over the years local voices have made local choices, resulting in huge benefits to our children. Some decisions that were made locally are:

- offering a K-12 French Immersion program
- providing full-day Kindergarten
- creating one Regional Secondary School for all students in the Valley
- providing a wide variety of technical vocational programs, with first class shop space which mirror industry standards containing the latest tools and equipment
- installing a fiber optics network allowing for greater internet and communication capabilities
- providing band, drama and visual arts programming
- partnering with University College of the North (UCN) to offer dual credit opportunities to our high school students. Students may graduate high school having all ready earned post-secondary credits
- welcoming and allowing UCN to utilize our shop space to offer programming to college/adult students
- partnering with local groups to operate daycare and early years programming in our schools
- providing stakeholders the opportunity for meaningful involvement in the creation of the SVSD Strategic Plan
- involving parent and staff representatives in the hiring of school principals
- collaborating with all municipal governments on a number of projects, for example doctor recruitment initiatives, the electoral boundary revision submission and joint facility usage agreements
- providing additional funding above Provincial support for our Special Education Programs
- implementing recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission
- providing the Swim for Life program to all students grades 3-7
- partnering with a number of community groups to support families

## Amalgamation talk raises concerns

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The Municipality of Grassland would like to take this opportunity to respond to some of the issues and implications inherent in Manitoba's pre-budget consultation process. Our council is concerned that this commission should not just be a pre-cursor to forced school board amalgamations but a true consultation regarding education issues in the province. Our municipality, like many others, is a relatively new one, established as a result of the amalgamation of three former municipalities. While we have done our best to make it work well for us, we strongly opposed the way the then provincial government handled the process; the complete disrespect shown to municipal officials will not soon be forgotten.

Like previous RHAs and previous school divisions, municipalities fought against forced amalgamation in isolation. After it became very apparent that there was a popular wave of strong opposition to the process, it was much appreciated at the time that what was then Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition stepped in as our champion, although to no avail.

Now the shoe is on the other foot and the current provincial government is the party pushing amalgamation. Because municipalities, like school boards, have a responsibility to defend the interests of our communities, we believe it is appropriate that we offer our perspective on this issue.

The consultation process involves a survey that can be completed online. The problem is that the survey is composed of leading questions that, at first glance, can only be answered one way (Do you support better value for money?) and the answers would then be taken as justification and

public support for amalgamations. The underlying assumption is that amalgamating school divisions into larger units or even eliminating school boards altogether would deliver big cost savings.

Amalgamation has been a recurrent theme in many jurisdictions over many years, promoted by governments of all political stripes. However, most of these actions, when studied after the fact, are revealed to have created no cost savings.

If local people are not involved in local decision-making, who will advocate for smaller schools and local programming? In addition to the questions contained in the survey, there are other relevant questions that could have been asked:

- Do you favour more students travelling more miles on buses?
- Does your school play a role in community development?
- Are you in favour of local employment?

The preamble to the survey seems to suggest that if the proposed actions were taken, the school tax portion of our property tax would be eliminated. This is very disingenuous as it would actually only be diverted to either a larger school division or to provincial coffers.

The province should be studying the larger real issue of how education funding is generated instead of proposing big disruptive changes in pursuit of fictitious cost savings.

Submitted by the Council of the Municipality of Grassland, March 22, 2019

## Municipality speaks out against school division mergers

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The Municipality of Grassland is speaking out against the amalgamation of school divisions, a move that may be considered as part of the provincial government's ongoing review of the education system.

In a letter sent last week to elected officials, media organizations and others, the municipality said while the underlying assumption is amalgamating school divisions - or eliminating them outright - would result in large cost savings, studies have shown the opposite.

The Municipality of Grassland was formed in 2015 through the amalgamation of the RMs of Cameron, Whitewater and the Town of Hartney.

"It's already happened once in our area years ago with amalgamation of school boards, but our biggest concern is the keeping of the local schools open," Grassland Reeve Blair Woods said.

"It seems to be a draw to go bigger all the time and we're not exactly jumping up for joy on that one."

The Manitoba government has set up a commission to review the province's K-12 school system, including ways to improve literacy, graduation rates and test scores in math and science.

The commission will also look at the number of school divisions, and Education and Training Minister Kelvin Goertzen has said previously that many people believe the number of elected school board members, which is approximately 290, is too high.

"I'm not ruling out any sort of recommendations that (may) come forward, but we'd need to see some evidence that it's the right number," Goertzen told The Canadian Press earlier this month.

"I certainly hear more people talk about less than more, particularly in Winnipeg, where you have a number of different divisions."

While the review is expected to finish by early 2020, Woods said the biggest thing for him will be a transparent process.

"The school boards take care of the local interests, and that's what's important, just like our municipality takes care of the local interests too," he said. "We're the feet on the ground."

Turtle Mountain School Division Supt. Tim De Ruyck said the local school board asked to meet with the RMs in the division, as well as different employee groups and parent councils, to raise awareness about the education review and to dispel some of the "myths" around education-related taxes.

The presumption, he said, has been that those levies will be eliminated when they would actually be diverted to a larger school division or directly to the province.

De Ruyck also pointed to a study from the Frontier Centre for Public Policy in Winnipeg, which found that overall spending by amalgamated school divisions in the 2000s was greater than prior to amalgamation.

"(It's) the whole notion of local voices and local choices, but there's a lot of merit in keeping the authority over public school divisions local and that's the overarching theme," he said.

The province has also hired, as the lead consultant for the commission, Avis Glaze, who produced a report for the Nova Scotia government last year that led to the province replacing its English-language school boards with an advisory council.

Glaze also recommended that school principals and vice-principals no longer be part of the teachers union.

While he did not know if Glaze's hiring was an indication that school boards would be eliminated in Manitoba, De Ruyck said his hope was that factors, such as geography, culture and climate, would be strongly considered as opposed to a "one-size-fits-all model."

Southwest Horizon School Division board chair Janice McDonald said she too was concerned about the hiring, but hoped the province would "really listen to the people that are out in the schools, in the communities, and really taking advice from the ones who know the system best."

McDonald added that the division is also encouraging communities, including clubs, churches and businesses, to write letters to the commission as well.

The commission will be taking written submissions until the end of May and plans to set dates for presentations after that.