



WINNIPEG SCHOOL DIVISION



# **WSD Board of Trustees**

## **Response to Bill 64 – The Education Modernization Act**

Winnipeg School Division staff have spent the last few weeks since the Province made its announcement on Bill 64 – The Education Modernization Act researching the proposed legislation and accompanying materials. In this presentation, we hope to share with you some of the inconsistencies Minister Cullen is making in his public statements, while also showing you some of the researched facts in response.

We are, first and foremost, concerned about what the Better Education Starts Today model will mean for our students and our families in Winnipeg School Division. Over the years, this division has responded to the unique needs of our communities.

**MB Education Claim:**

- Minister Cullen repeatedly cites a \$40 million savings that will go to frontline education across Manitoba.

**Response:**

- \$40 million sounds like a lot of money, but the reality is it would only add one half time teacher per school in Manitoba – not the many teachers or EAs or clinicians Minister Cullen suggests.
- An extra half-time teaching position is at the cost of needed divisional supports for important school programming.

Let's start with the claim that the merger of school divisions into fifteen regions plus DSFM will result in savings of \$40 million dollars. Minister Cullen has said on many occasions that he sees this \$40 million savings from "top heavy bureaucracies" will result in more teachers and EAs in schools across the province.

It appears Minister Cullen doesn't have any understanding of the real costs of classroom education. While \$40 million sounds like a lot of money, when spread across the entire province, it may, at best, result in half a teaching position in schools. But at what cost?

Superintendents and other division staff provide very important supports to schools in Manitoba. The range of services is extensive, but just for a few examples: professional development planning and implementation, human resources supports, technology and systems structures and supports.

## Examples of Divisional Supports for Schools

Community Support	Literacy	Numeracy	Inclusive Education	Mental Health
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Nutrition programs</li><li>• Housing assistance</li><li>• Health connections</li><li>• School attendance</li><li>• Justice transition</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Talk to Me</li><li>• Read to Me</li><li>• Reading recovery</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Math Pathways</li><li>• Thinking Classrooms</li><li>• Math course for teachers</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Autism program</li><li>• Anxiety programs</li><li>• FASD program</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Healthy Minds</li><li>• Safe and Caring schools</li><li>• Restorative Justice</li></ul>

This slide and the next slide are just SOME of the examples of divisional supports for schools. We do a very good job of making it seem like everything happens at the school level, because we strongly believe that our schools are our community hubs. But every school requires a great deal of support that occurs outside of the school, and is initiated and maintained at the division level.

## Examples of Divisional Supports for Schools

Partnerships	Student Assessment	Indigenous Education	Newcomer Support	Staff Support
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aerospace</li> <li>• Pan Am Clinic</li> <li>• WRHA</li> <li>• CEDA</li> <li>• U of W</li> <li>• Boys &amp; Girls Club</li> <li>• Wpg Symphony</li> <li>• WAG</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Standards tests</li> <li>• Grade 8 Exam</li> <li>• Explore and Discover</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build From Within and CATEP teacher training</li> <li>• Elders</li> <li>• Grad Coaches</li> <li>• LIST teachers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intercultural Support Workers</li> <li>• Adult EAL</li> <li>• Translator services</li> <li>• Interpreters</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Professional Development</li> <li>• Induction and mentorship programs</li> <li>• Leadership plan</li> </ul>

When reorganizing the entire education system into one huge region for all of Winnipeg – all of these programs need to be taken into account and we need assurances that they aren't going to be lost.

It is also important to note that all of this work will continue to be needed to be done – and as you'll see on the next slide – claims that administration costs can be further cut with this new model are questionable.

**MB Education Claim:**

- Minister Cullen claims Manitoba **spends more on administration** than most other provinces – Ontario spends 2.1% on administration vs. 3.1% in Manitoba (48% more)

**Response:**

- WSD admin costs are 7.44% *lower* than than the largest school districts west of Quebec.
- WSD are also lower when compared to large organizations in Health Care and Public Sector (see charts next page)

Minister Cullen has cited comparisons of Manitoba admin costs in education as being 48 percent high than Ontario.

That's just not true when it comes to Winnipeg School Division. Our admin costs are actually 7.44 percent lower than other large school districts.

<b>Comparison of Admin Costs</b>	<b>2017/18</b>	<b>2018/19</b>	<b>2019/20</b>
<b>Ontario</b> Toronto, Peel, Toronto Catholic, Dufferin-Peel Catholic)	7,427,696,505 180,106,034 2.42%	7,718,102,715 188,731,020 2.45%	7,516,928,837 188,156,848 2.50%
<b>Alberta</b> (Calgary, Edmonton, Calgary Catholic, Edmonton Catholic)	3,669,083,233 119,271,135 3.25%	3,737,112,380 124,462,923 3.33%	3,575,605,122 117,400,273 3.28%
<b>BC</b> (Surrey, Vancouver, Coquitlam)	1,728,644,944 58,540,876 3.39%	1,784,386,740 57,547,358 3.23%	1,832,563,010 59,847,385 3.27%
<b>Saskatchewan</b> (Regina, Saskatoon)	501,214,800 14,234,077 2.83%	513,576,239 14,191,977 2.76%	508,765,843 13,920,854 2.74%
<b>Total</b>	<b>13,327,572,686</b> <b>372,152,122</b> <b>2.79%</b>	<b>13,753,178,074</b> <b>384,933,278</b> <b>2.80%</b>	<b>13,432,862,812</b> <b>379,325,360</b> <b>2.82%</b>
<b>Winnipeg School Division</b> Total Expenditures Administration and Governance (Gross) ** net of severance accrual	419,779,160 11,128,850 2.65%	424,453,187 11,080,601 2.61%	434,762,394 11,364,182** 2.61%
<b>Difference</b>	<b>-5.06%</b>	<b>-6.73%</b>	<b>-7.44%</b>

This chart shows the difference between large groupings of school divisions in four other provinces and their total percentage of administrative costs.

Last year:

Ontario's costs were 2.50%

Alberta's costs were 3.28%

BC costs were 3.27%

Saskatchewan's were 2.74%

Combined, all those provinces average admin costs were 2.82 percent – compared to Winnipeg School Division at 2.61 percent, we're actually already 7.44 percent lower. Minister Cullen is suggesting that bigger divisions, or in Manitoba, regions, will mean lower admin costs. We don't agree. And for more comparisons, we'll look at Health Care costs next.

### Health Care Administrative Costs and Percentages by Regional Health Authority 2018/2019

Region	Corporate	Patient-Care Related	HR & Recruitment	Total Administration
Interlake-Eastern	3.00%	0.50%	2.07%	5.57%
Northern	3.98%	0.66%	1.20%	5.84%
Prairie Mountain	2.31%	0.34%	1.17%	3.82%
Southern Sante-Sud	2.94%	0.25%	0.96%	4.16%
CancerCare MB	2.10%	0.66%	0.70%	3.45%
WRHA	2.58%	0.58%	0.97%	4.13%
Shared Health	3.76%	0.60%	1.30%	5.66%
Provincial %	2.74%	0.51%	1.06%	4.31%
Provincial Totals	\$133,559,455	\$25,149,251	\$51,917,064	\$210,625,769
WSD				2.61%

In the last reported year, prior to COVID, administration costs at Regional Health Authorities across Manitoba have been more than DOUBLE in most cases the administration costs of Winnipeg School Division.

Since the Pallister Government came into power in 2016, the cost of administration in Health Care has risen from 3.1 percent to 3.8 percent in 2019.

### Comparison of Largest Manitoba Public Sector Organizations

	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
City of Winnipeg	1,619,030,000	1,703,879,000	1,728,328,000
Total Expenditures	92,009,000	92,653,000	95,674,000
Finance & Admin	5.68%	5.44%	5.54%
WRHA	3,006,780,822	3,064,334,140	2,329,934,232
Total Expenditures	131,697,000	126,557,000	106,245,001
Admin Costs	4.38%	4.13%	4.56%
Total	4,625,810,822	4,768,213,140	4,058,262,232
	223,706,000	219,210,000	201,919,001
		4.60%	4.98%
Winnipeg School Division	419,779,160	424,453,187	434,762,394
Total Expenditures	11,128,850	11,080,601	11,364,182**
Administration and Governance (Gross)	2.65%	2.61%	2.61%
Difference	-45.18%	-43.22%	-47.46%
**net of severance accrual			

Another comparison we've made is to large local organizations – WRHA was on the previous slide but here it is in comparison to the admin costs of the City which last year were 5.54 percent, WRHA was 4.56% for an average of 4.98 percent. Once again, Winnipeg School Division admin costs are far lower at 2.61 percent – that's a difference of 47.46 percent lower than other large organizations in the city.

Why this is important is to show that bigger doesn't necessarily mean better.

**MB Education Claim:**

- It takes a complete tear down and restructure of education in Manitoba to find efficiencies.

**Response:**

- Modest and less disruptive changes like merging all Winnipeg school busses, shared IT and purchasing would mean REAL savings starting sooner. These suggestions have been ignored by Manitoba Education.

While the province hasn't come outright and said they are tearing down and restructuring the entire education system to find efficiencies, we have read between the lines.

Some of the areas where significant savings could be made through merged systems have been suggested by school division senior administrators, including Winnipeg School Division, for years, without any action by the province.

**MB Education Claim:**

- Where you live changes how you learn because school funding is based on a district's ability raise money through property taxes, not where the resources are most needed

**Response:**

- WSD receives less than 60% of its operating revenue from the Province and has had no choice but to turn to property taxes to get the resources needed for important programming in the division.

It may be true that depending on what school division the programming is different. That's how responding to unique needs of communities has worked, and it has worked well in Winnipeg School Division. Unfortunately, revenue through property taxation has had to be the method of funding these unique and important programs.

We are concerned about what is going to happen to these programs in the larger regional model.

Program/Service	Total Cost	Amount paid by property taxes	Ramifications
Off Campus Programs	305,800	262,960	At-risk students may not return to school
Home Learning Assistants/Early School Years	70,000	60,194	Students with unique needs would lose service.
Library & Support Services Department (LSS)	594,300	511,044	Partially reduced but the remainder of the service remains valuable
Attendance Officers	141,300	121,505	At-risk students may not return to school
Therapy Services	667,400	573,903	O/T P/T services are valued by families of at-risk students.

These next three slides show just some of the areas where there are already funding gaps, and programs are being paid for mostly through revenue from property taxes.

Program/Service	Total cost	Amount paid by property taxes	Ramifications
<b>Student Support Services (excl Transp.)</b>	74,377,286	43,800,231	Funding – Prop Tax 59% - our most vulnerable students would be at risk for significant loss of services
<b>Transportation</b>	7,458,300	5,004,144	Funding – Prop Tax 67% - Working parents would see large reduction in service
<b>Intercultural Support Workers</b>	560,300	481,807	Newcomer/Immigrant community would lose valuable service
<b>Library Technical Assistants</b>	621,600	534,519	Library Services would be significantly reduced.
<b>District Computer Technicians</b>	283,400	243,698	Critical function in assisting with both schools and central functions
<b>Adult Crossing Guards</b>	657,000	564,960	Children would be at risk for traffic accidents

There is no guarantee that any of these programs or services will continue to be provided under the new model, or that these programs, which we know to be highly effective and necessary in our communities, will be expanded across the entire Winnipeg region.

Program/Service	Total cost	Amount paid by property taxes	Ramifications
Summer School	292,600	174,609	Students would be forced to pay for this service
Nutrition	1,099,823	945,748	Crucial program for families living in poverty
Nursery	5,189,400	4,463,687	Important program for at-risk students
Bilingual Programs	5,620,267	4,776,323	Funding – Prop Tax 85% - Ability to offer fulsome instruction in heritage language may disappear.
French Language	45,223,733	37,792,374	Funding – Prop Tax 84% - Ability to offer fulsome instruction in an official language drops quickly.

Other divisions in Winnipeg also have unique programs and the big question is – which, if any, will survive the transformation to the new model? French Immersion programs, for example, are largely funded through property taxation at 84 percent of the cost – how will this and other funding gaps in programming be addressed by the new model – both in funding and delivery?

**MB Education Claim:**

- Indigenous students are falling behind because only 51% of Indigenous students graduate within four-years, compared to a 90% graduation rate among their non-Indigenous peers.

**Response:**

- Pointing to a four-year graduation rate as **the** indicator of success shows ignorance of the socio-economic and social status challenges our Indigenous students face.
- WSD supports a large number of Indigenous students who return to school and successfully complete their diploma as mature students.
- Many Indigenous students overcome trauma in order to successfully graduate. Whether it takes four years or six years, it is a successful graduation.

Winnipeg School Division is absolutely a leader when it comes to Indigenous Education. We were the first school division in Canada (in 1996) to have a full policy on Indigenous Education, and the first school division in Canada to open Indigenous Schools (COTE 1991 and Niji Mahkwa 1993). We have developed many teaching tools and methods throughout the years to ensure our Indigenous students are successful. There is no reason to fixate, as this government is doing, on a four year graduation being successful.

**MB Education Claim:**

- Only 64 per cent of students are meeting expectations in the fundamentals of reading and 55 per cent in math.

**Response:**

- These numbers come from the province’s calculated “Literacy Index” and “Numeracy Index” which researchers cite as a misuse of a weighted average.
- It combines assessments that are representative of the number of students meeting expectations on certain criteria, as well as the actual average achievement levels of students on provincial assessments.
- Literally, combining two things that make no sense to combine.

We’ve included this as another example of the misleading information that is being presented to the public.

**MB Education Claim:**

- Manitoba businesses consistently say that attracting skilled talent is a significant challenge.

**Response:**

- Winnipeg School Division has created partnerships and opportunities to experience an occupation in the real world, allowing students to understand the relevance of education as it pertains to their career opportunities.
- Partnerships include aerospace manufacturing, banking, healthcare and more.

It may be true that Manitoba businesses are having a hard time attracting skilled talent –but it isn't because of a lack of effort within school divisions. Winnipeg School Division has partnered with a variety of businesses to establish learning criteria that will benefit students as they enter worklife. More of these kind of partnerships is needed to help connect the right students to the right careers.

**MB Education Claim:**

- The new provincial governance model will strengthen parental voice through new **School Community Councils** and the new **Provincial Advisory Council on Education**

**Response:**

- The ONE parent elected from the Winnipeg region will represent the interests of 100,368 students and their school communities.
- In contrast, the ONE parent elected from the Seine River region will represent the interests of 4,513 students and their school communities.
- The Provincial Advisory Council on Education, by its very structure, is grossly non-democratic.

It seems to be extremely apparent that this model, with only one representative from each region, regardless of the number of students and parents in that region, is not democratic. Democracy is representation by population. A single elected parent from the entire Winnipeg region will have to speak on behalf of over 100,000 students and their parents/guardians and their school communities. There is no room for diversity based on any of the many demographics found in Winnipeg – from income, to age, to ethnicity. This structure needs to be seriously reconsidered and changed.



### WSD Education Governance Model

**WSD**  
Representing 79 schools  
33,093 Students  
(2019/2020 Province Frame Report)

**Board of Trustees**  
Consisting of 9 Elected Officials

**District Advisory Committees**  
Consisting of 79 Parent Representatives  
5 District Advisories, plus 1 Student Advisory

**Parent Councils**

### Manitoba Education Governance Model

**Provincial Education Authority**  
Representing 15 regions (37 School Divisions  
Merged = 657 Schools)  
188,540 Students

**Board**  
11 appointed members including  
at least 2 parent representatives  
of the Provincial Advisory Council  
(only 2 parents to represent 15 regions  
chosen by the Minister of Education)

**Parent Advisory Council**  
One parent representative elected  
for the City of Winnipeg

**School Community Council**

This chart shows how our current governance model compares to the proposed model.

## Democratic representation

- We urge the Provincial Government to
  - preserve the significance of local school-based decision making across Manitoba
  - reassess the governance and regional model, factoring in student population and school community representation, specifically for the City of Winnipeg.

Getting the proposed model reconsidered and changed will take pressure from the people it matters to most – you, your families, your friends and colleagues. Talk to them about speaking up as well so that the Provincial Government hears the message:

- preserve the significance of local school-based decision making across Manitoba
- reassess the governance and regional model, factoring in student population and school community representation, specifically for the City of Winnipeg.

## Progressive and inclusive education



- MB Government spent over \$1 million on a Commission on K to 12 Education and now claims the Commission's report doesn't provide a road map.
- The Commission's report includes 75 recommendations to improve education in Manitoba.
- WSD Board of Trustees supports a progressive and inclusive education that includes more of the recommendations in the Commission's report.

You may feel like you've already spoken up – and likely you have. We went through an entire year of sharing what we thought was important to education in Manitoba. Winnipeg School Division hosted several large, well attended, focus group meetings with the Commission on K to 12 Education. We had plenty to say, and a lot of what we said was included in the Commission's report.

Yet very few of the Commission's 75 recommendations are seen in what the Province has released so far in its Better Education Starts Today materials.

Why spend over \$1 million and not use those results?

## How WSD has got it right

- Everything is based on The Principles of Learning
  - Inclusion
  - Assessment
  - Engagement
  - Collaboration
  - Understanding
- These principles provide a common guide and reflect the expectations that already exist within WSD.

At Winnipeg School Division – we know there is room to improve. We embrace the opportunity to find those savings from shared resources. To elevate programs that are working so well for our students and for students in other school divisions so that all students can benefit from them. But we have to have a starting point and in WSD, that is the Principles of Learning. These five principles are a guide that will help get all educators in Manitoba on the right path – they provide the ‘roadmap’ that Minister Cullen claims is missing.

## What you can do to support progressive and inclusive education

- Speak up! Talk to your MLA, write a letter, ask them to slow down the process so things are done right.
- Fight to change the proposed regional representation to a more democratic model (representation by population).
- Demand that more of the recommendations in the Commission on K to 12 Education be implemented.
- Join BEST Strategy Advisory Groups.
- Use social media to raise awareness.



The government has said that it wants to consult even more with Manitobans about how to build that roadmap for Better Education that Starts Today. We may be asking why bother, since we've given our opinions and ideas over and over again and they have largely been ignored. But now is not the time to give up – we must work together to continue to press this government to hear what works well. To fight regional representation for a more democratic model. We need to talk to our MLAs and the Minister of Education and his department and ask them to slow down this process so that is done right, not fast, not cheap, right.

And we can point at the work already done in the Commission on K to 12 Education report, and to include more of those recommendations because those recommendations came from the people of Manitoba who care about the education of our youth.

There are also councils and taskforces being created right now by the government – you can express your interest to be involved in those groups as well. You can find links to those on the government's [bettereducationmb.ca](http://bettereducationmb.ca) website

## And now for the \$40 million question

- Why dismantle Winnipeg School Division, and other school divisions, without a better alternative ready to go in place?
- Are we willing to hold the government accountable for the transition to an equitable and sustainable Education funding model?

**Getting the foundation right – building an education system that is classroom-focused, student-centred, and parent-friendly.**

Winnipeg School Division has reached out to meet the changing needs of our population for the past 150 years – and continues to do so to this day. With all of the programming and successes – including academic success with outcomes exceeding Provincial results in the past two years – Winnipeg School Division is meeting the needs of its students and families. There are places to improve, as we've touched upon in this presentation, however, a complete dismantling of the entire school division along with every other school division in the city to make one, enormous and potentially impersonal organization seems like a big step back for education.

Let's make sure politicians and the public know where we stand.