

May 20, 2021

The Honourable Brian Pallister
Premier, Province of Manitoba
Room 204 Legislative Building
450 Broadway
Winnipeg, MB R3C 0V8

Dear Premier Pallister:

I am writing to you today on behalf of the River East Transcona School Division Board of Trustees with concerns that require your immediate attention.

We are requesting that the government pull Bill 64, 'The Modernization of Education'. The expansive and regressive reforms proposed in the bill will set the provision of quality of public education in eventual peril at the expense of children, the future of Manitoba. The governance structure outlined in Bill 64 is anti-democratic and an example of a failed structure attempted in other provinces, such as in PEI.

The main rationale stated by you and your government for the expansive and unsubstantiated changes contained in Bill 64 is unsubstantiated and deeply flawed rationale, including, students are failing, bloated boardrooms and the 'resulting \$40 million in savings'. Firstly, reams of credited research and data points to socio-economic factors impeding a student's ability to succeed in school. With Manitoba's child poverty rate climbing, and no meaningful investment or consideration of poverty contained within this legislation, our students will falter. Additionally, we would like to point out that administration and local representation accounts for 1 cent of every dollar spent on education. As an amalgamated division in 2002, we have first-hand experience of the exponential expenses as a result, with conservative estimates of over \$3 million additional annual costs.

In good faith, we presented in front of the Education Commission during the review process, which lacked commissioners being present during presentations and a complete absence of our input and others in the contents of Bill 64.

Further, we have attempted to have productive and meaningful communication with your government, including a failure of former Education Minister Goertzen to meet and even speak with us. We have further attempted to reach out to your government through a series of letters to the Minister of Education and one letter to the Minister of Health. To date, we have not received a response. Communications from the department of education have been sent directly to our senior management personnel, circumventing the school board entirely. This points to the dismissive nature of your government and one that is not collaborative. As duly elected board of trustees, we are the voice of our community entrusted with public education and your lack of engagement is ignorant to not just us, but the constituents we represent.

We ask that you remove the damaging Bill 64, examine the education review and engage in dialogue and meaningful collaboration with all education stakeholders to develop a plan that will truly modernize education in the best interests of students, staff, parents, and the province.

We look forward to your timely response.

Sincerely,



Jerry Sodomlak
Chair, Board of Trustees

CC: Hon. Cliff Cullen, Minister of Education
Progressive Conservative Caucus
Wab Kinew, Leader of the Official Opposition, New Democratic Party of Manitoba
New Democratic Party of Manitoba Caucus
Dougald Lamont, Leader of the Liberal Party of Manitoba
Liberal Party of Manitoba Caucus
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