

INFORMATION FOR PARENTS AND CAREGIVERS

On March 15th, 2021, Manitoba Education announced significant changes to the education system in Manitoba. **Better Education Starts Today: Putting Students First** has been developed in response to the Commission on Kindergarten to Grade 12 Education, as well as to the learnings from the COVID-19 pandemic.

The **Better Education Starts Today** strategy is our government's vision and set of priority actions needed to ensure we are putting Manitoba students first. The vision is for all Manitoba students to succeed, no matter where they live, their background, or their individual circumstances.

What will these changes mean for my child and my family?

Our priority is to maintain stability in the classroom for students, parents, and the broader school community while we work towards building an improved education system.

There will be no immediate changes in everyday school life. Policies for school catchment and schools of choice remain the same. Over time, the goal is to move decision making closer to students by strengthening the role schools play in the overall system, giving parents more voice, and shifting more resources to the classroom where they are needed most.

Parents and caregivers can expect

- ✓ more opportunities for direct involvement in decisions at the school and system level
- ✓ more in-class supports as funding is redirected to classrooms where it matters the most
- ✓ more inclusive classrooms and schools, including decreased wait times for students with special needs
- ✓ improved mental health supports and student services
- ✓ better career preparation for your child to pursue post-secondary education, trades, workforce, or entrepreneurship
- ✓ more information about how your school is performing

Parents and caregivers are central to our schools and student success. We need strong parental voices and ongoing involvement in decision making for the system to be successful. Through stronger partnerships with the school and teachers, parents and caregivers will understand more fully what is happening in the classroom, how their children are doing, and how they can support their children at home.

Here are some of the key changes:

All Students

- ✓ Establishing School Community Councils in every public school with a focus on improving student achievement and well-being, and encouraging all parents and caregivers to be members, reflecting the diversity of the school. Schools in the Division scolaire franco-manitobaine (DSFM) will maintain their existing school committees.
- ✓ Providing you with more information about your children's achievement and well-being, including a new provincial report card for students with special needs.
- ✓ Creating a Minister's Advisory Council on Inclusive Education to address wait times for services for children with special learning needs for specialized assessment.
- ✓ Implementing a Knowledge Keepers in Schools Initiative to support student and teacher learning of Indigenous languages and cultures and to ensure greater focus on closing the gap in Indigenous student achievement.
- ✓ Establishing better communication with parents and caregivers on what their children are expected to learn and know.
- ✓ Putting a stronger focus on improving literacy and numeracy, and making curriculum enhancements in science, mental health, and physical/health education.

Early and Middle Years

- ✓ Implementing new tools to assess student readiness to learn as they enter Kindergarten or Manitoba schools for the first time.
- ✓ Creating new provincial tests and assessments for Early and Middle Years students.
- ✓ Providing more timely assessment and interventions for students with special learning needs.

High School

- ✓ Moving provincial math and language arts exams from Grade 12 to Grade 10.
- ✓ Expanding technical-vocational programs based on workforce needs.
- ✓ Providing more opportunities for developing science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics (STEAM) skills through experiential and workplace technical-vocational learning experiences, especially for girls, Indigenous students, and Francophone students.
- ✓ Establishing new credits and micro-credential programs for successful transitions from high school to post-secondary and/or to work experience and the labour market, including a focus on digital literacy and digital learning.
- ✓ Expanding remote learning, including establishing a new provincial online high school.
- ✓ Creating a Provincial Student Advisory Council to capture the voices of our youth and to help inform the system of what they need to succeed.

What's next?

We will be consulting with parents and caregivers as part of the design and oversight of K to 12 education. Here are some of the things we would like to talk about:

- ✓ What parents and caregivers need to become more involved in their children's education.
- ✓ How student learning and assessment can be improved.
- ✓ The role of School Community Councils.
- ✓ Ways to create stronger connections between teachers and parents/caregivers.

Details on consultation topics and opportunities to participate will be shared publicly by the end of March. Here are some ways to stay informed and navigate the changes that lie ahead:

- ✓ A website has been set up for regular updates. Please check back often.
www.bettereducationmb.ca
- ✓ To reach out to the Education Transformation team, please email
edutransformation@gov.mb.ca.