

# Manitoba Education and Early Childhood Learning

February 2023

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## Message from the Deputy Minister

I hope you are all having a great start to 2023. There is so much going on, and after a typical prairie cold-snap, the warm weather in the forecast should soon let us enjoy the outdoors in this beautiful province.

I did want to take some time to share some staffing updates within Manitoba Education and Early Childhood Learning. A departmental contact list can be accessed as needed online at [www.edu.gov.mb.ca/aboutus.html](http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/aboutus.html). It includes contact information for various divisions, branches and senior leaders. This list is regularly updated, so please ensure you are using the most current version and feel free to share with your teams.

And of course if you have questions not answered in the below or comments to share don't hesitate to reach out.

*Dana Rudy*

## Early Learning and Child Care Update

### Early Learning and Child Care

There are many changes happening within Early Learning and Child Care. The focus right now is on building a foundation to support the expansion of high quality, affordable and accessible early learning and child care. This includes a focus on demand planning and developing a robust workforce strategy. Schools will be invited to express interest as part of the expansion shortly. Broader discussions of synergies between early learning and child care are planned for the future once the more immediate priorities within the sector are addressed. The team is issuing a [monthly newsletter](#) so please feel free to visit for more information. As previously announced, Sarah Whiteford is the Assistant Deputy Minister for Early Learning and Child Care. Her direct email is [sarah.whiteford@gov.mb.ca](mailto:sarah.whiteford@gov.mb.ca) so if you would like to connect with a member of the team don't hesitate to reach out to her.

## K-12 Education Update

### K-12 Education Action Plan

Our website has been updated with information about Manitoba's K to 12 Education Action Plan. Please visit [www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/action\\_plan/index.html](http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/action_plan/index.html) for information on the progress made to date. A new department newsletter will launch next month to highlight some of the developments currently underway and on an ongoing basis.

### Framework for Learning

The [Framework for Learning](#) is now available online. Please check out the site for more information about the global competencies and plans for curriculum and assessment. There is a link for [feedback](#) on the new framework. Kassy Assié and Rhonda Shaw are co-leading the implementation of this framework along with the leaders and staff from both Bureau de l'éducation française and the Learning and Outcomes Branch.



## K–12 Education Update *(continued)*

### ► Policy Directive and Action Plan on Student Presence and Engagement

The department has launched a new Policy Directive and Action Plan on Student Presence and Engagement. We thank the Attendance Task Force that was in place since 2019 and all the leaders and organizations who provided feedback on the new policy. This feedback has been incorporated into the final draft. Divisions and schools are asked to update their policies by June 2023.

A new campaign “School. Keep Going.” has also launched to build awareness and create an opportunity for public discourse. Posters have been sent to all schools. A survey destined for school leaders and divisions to inform implementation planning will also be sent shortly.

The Attendance Task Force work has concluded with the establishment of the School and Community Support Unit within Manitoba Education and Early Childhood Learning. Jennifer Young leads this unit and questions about the policy directive can be sent to [attendance@gov.mb.ca](mailto:attendance@gov.mb.ca). The policy directive as well as the campaign materials can be viewed at [www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/attendance/index.html](http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/attendance/index.html).

The Task Force was instrumental in the development of an attendance action plan, policy directive for student presence and engagement, and public education campaign to increase awareness and public discourse around roles and responsibilities. We thank the [Attendance Task Force](#) for the guidance, recommendations, and initiatives to address chronic absenteeism.

## Departmental Announcements

### Leadership Updates

**Susan Emerson** has started in her new role as Executive Director of the Provincial Operations Branch, Early Learning and Child Care. Susan joined the department in September 2022 from her most recent position of Vice-President of Operations at the YMCA-YWCA of Winnipeg, responsible for oversight of their many community programs. She has over 30 years of experience in the early learning sector.

**Jennifer Faulder** has moved to a new role in the Early Learning and Child Care team as Executive Director of Policy and Planning. Jennifer has over 17 years of experience in the development of public policy, including 12 years in leadership roles. Most recently, she served as the Director of Education Administration Services with the department. Jennifer's first day in the role was January 9, 2023. We are happy to share that **Faisal Islam** will be the acting Director of Education Administration Services while the competition for this position occurs. Faisal is a manager within Education Administration Services so we thank him for ensuring continuity of services and leadership of the branch.

**Jeff Kehler** has started in his new position of Executive Director, Governance and Policy with the System Performance and Accountability Division previously held by Julia Tetrault. Jeff has been with the Manitoba government for over 12 years, in policy and legislative development roles in post-secondary and K to 12 education. For the past several years, he has been the Director of the Legislation Office, working with all areas of the department leading the development of strategic government priorities. Thanks to **Claire Gumienny** for assuming the role of Acting Director for the Legislation Unit. Claire has worked in this unit for eight years so again we appreciate the experience and leadership she will bring to this role.

**Stacey Hay** is now Director of Teacher Certification and Standards. This unit will be responsible for overseeing the operations of the Professional Certification Unit, establishing the new independent body to address teacher professional misconduct, establishing the teacher registry, working towards establishing a framework for professional competencies for teachers and updating teacher certification standards. Stacey will work with Connie Lehky who remains the lead for professional certification for teachers.

**Maude Plourde** has been appointed Acting Director of the Official Languages Programs Unit of the BEF. This Unit negotiates the Protocol for Agreements for Minority Language Education and Second-Language Instruction, and implements the Manitoba/Canada Bilateral Agreement in education. Maude joined the BEF in 2001; since then, she has held various positions. Prior to this appointment, she was the lead manager for negotiations with the Department of Canadian Heritage.

### Coming soon

#### ► Manitoba Education Council—February 6, 2023

The Education Council brings together intersectoral partners to facilitate system-level planning and collaboration with a focus on student achievement and well-being.

A provincial implementation team with representation from all school divisions and department leaders is also being established to provide strategic and operational guidance on the implementation of the K to 12 Education Action Plan.

We are pleased to share that Sandra Herbst, Superintendent/CEO of River East Transcona School Division will co-chair this Implementation Team with Janet Tomy, Assistant Deputy Minister, Student Achievement and Inclusion Division. More details and invitations to an onboarding implementation team meeting will be sent out in the near future.

#### ► Preventing and Addressing Misconduct in School

The department has met with stakeholders to inform the next steps for establishing an independent body to investigate and respond to cases of misconduct as well as expanding the policy levers to improve the protection of children in our schools. While the preliminary focus is teachers, the department continues to explore opportunities to ensure professional conduct and child/student safety measures for non-teaching personnel in partnership with school divisions and employing authorities, and beyond to consider the impact for the early learning and child care sector. A second round of consultations is planned for mid-February. For more information, please contact Jeff Kehler at [jeffrey.kehler@gov.mb.ca](mailto:jeffrey.kehler@gov.mb.ca).

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## Coming soon *(continued)*

### ► Student Information System (SIS)

With the business requirements now collected the department is preparing to release a Request for Proposals. A small group of stakeholders was invited to inform this process with the goal of establishing a SIS Steering Committee in February. This Steering Committee will support the design and implementation of a new provincial system. The following organizations have received invitations to nominate representatives for this committee:

- Manitoba Association of School Superintendents (MASS)
- Division scolaire franco-manitobaine (DSFM)
- Manitoba Association of School Business Officials (MASBO)
- Manitoba Association of Educational Technical Leaders (MAETL)
- Manitoba First Nations Education Resource Centre (MFNERC)
- Student Services Administrators' Association of Manitoba (SSAAM)
- Manitoba Federation of Independent Schools (MFIS)
- Digital and Technology Solutions (DTS)
- Manitoba Education and Early Childhood Learning (MEECL)
- Manitoba Education Research and Learning Information Networks (MERLIN)

Once established this committee will be added to the list of [advisory groups web page](#).

## Stakeholder Engagements

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### Reports

**Consultations around the Online High School have concluded.** Thanks for the contributions as part of the consultations. A What We Heard Report is being compiled and will be shared with those who participated. For more information, please reach out to **Ted Fransen**, Provincial Lead for Remote Learning at [ted.fransen@gov.mb.ca](mailto:ted.fransen@gov.mb.ca).

**Poverty and Education Task Force:** The final meeting of the [task force](#) was held on January 17, 2023. The final report on the task force was submitted to the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Learning shortly thereafter, with a public release planned for February 2023. For more information please contact Jackie Connell at [PovertyEDU.TF@gov.mb.ca](mailto:PovertyEDU.TF@gov.mb.ca).

**Elder and Knowledge Keeper Symposium:** Standing Room Only! We appreciate the huge interest and participation in the Elder and Knowledge Keeper Symposium. This was a great event that we plan to repeat next year (at a larger venue). A summary of the symposium, which captures the learning from the day, is now available at [www.edu.gov.mb.ca/iid/symposium.html](http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/iid/symposium.html).

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### Surveys

- **Queen's University Health Behaviours in School Aged Children Survey for Grades 6 to 10.** For more information, please contact Allan Hawkins at [allan.hawkins@gov.mb.ca](mailto:allan.hawkins@gov.mb.ca).
- The department is working with the Minister's Consultation Table to launch a robust **Early Learning and Child Care workforce strategy**. For more information please contact Sarah Whiteford at [sarah.whiteford@gov.mb.ca](mailto:sarah.whiteford@gov.mb.ca).
- As part of the **launch of the [Provincial Attendance Policy and Action Plan](#)**, school leaders and division teams will have an opportunity to provide input to inform next steps and implementation supports. The survey will launch shortly and will be sent to all school divisions and school leaders.