# Manitoba Education and Early Childhood Learning

# NEWSLETTER

Fall 2026

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## Message from the Deputy Minister of Manitoba Education and Early Childhood Learning

As the school year gains momentum and we move further into the fall season, I want to extend my sincere thanks to everyone working across Manitoba's education and early learning and child care sectors. Across the province, educators, school and system leaders, child care professionals, and community partners have dedicated themselves to creating welcoming, inclusive, and supportive learning environments for children and students. Your ongoing commitment helps ensure that children and students feel valued, respected, safe, and supported in reaching their full potential.

This edition of the newsletter highlights important work underway across both the Early Learning and Child Care (ELCC) and Kindergarten to Grade 12 (K to 12) sectors. In ELCC, updates include new federal funding to support early learning and child care, the ECE Tuition Reimbursement Program, and the opening of three new child care centres, along with 88 facilities adding new spaces for families across Manitoba. These initiatives build on our ongoing efforts to strengthen access to high-quality, affordable child care and support a strong early childhood education workforce.

Within the K to 12 sector, you will find updates on the passing of Bill 38, The Public Schools Amendment Act and Manitoba School Boards Association Amendment Act, the relaunch of the Indigenous Identity Declaration (IID) Form, and continued curriculum development and implementation. This edition also highlights a new web page for French Immersion leaders, providing resources and information to support school leaders working in French-language learning environments.

The recent National Day for Truth and Reconciliation on September 30 offered time to reflect on the history and ongoing impacts of residential schools, and to honour the experiences, strength, and resilience of residential school Survivors, their families, and communities. We were reminded of the important role that education plays in advancing reconciliation and creating learning environments where Indigenous histories, cultures, languages, and perspectives are respected and valued.

As we settle into the new school year and look ahead to the months to come, I am grateful for the leadership, collaboration, and commitment demonstrated across our sectors. Together, we continue to build learning and child care environments where every child and student feels they matter, belong, are respected and safe, and can be successful.

Warm regards,

Mona Pandey

Deputy Minister

Manitoba Education and Early Childhood Learning

Manitoba

## National Day for Truth and Reconciliation: Honouring Survivors and Advancing Reconciliation

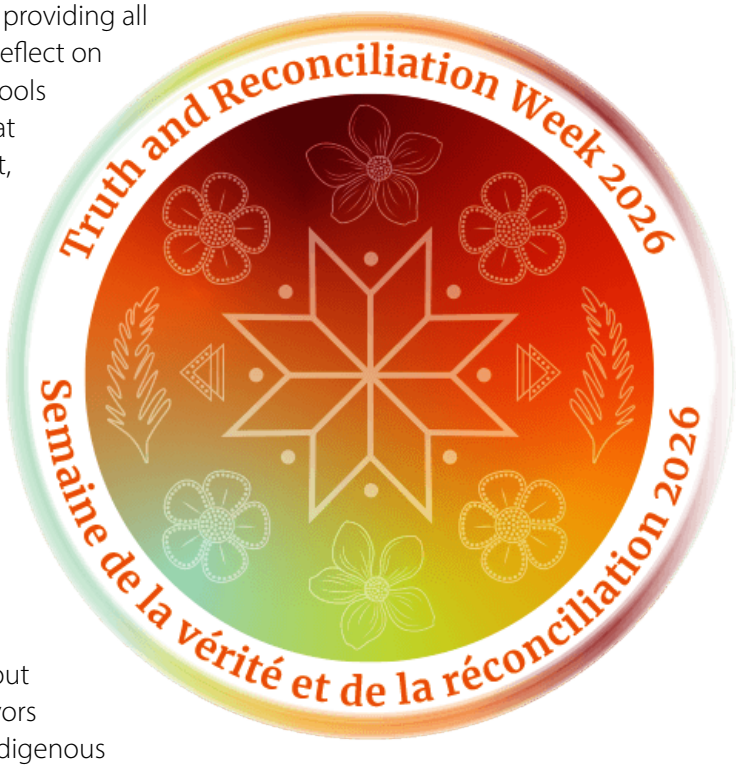
On September 30, Manitobans observed the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, a day to recognize and reflect on the tragic history and ongoing legacy of residential schools, honour Survivors, and remember the children who never returned home.

Originally established as Orange Shirt Day in 2013 through a grassroots movement in Williams Lake, British Columbia, the day has become an important opportunity for people across Canada to learn about the impacts of residential schools and to support healing and reconciliation. In 2021, the federal government formally recognized September 30 as the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation.

This year, the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation's Reconciliation Week theme, Taking Truth to Action, encouraged Canadians to deepen their understanding of truth and reconciliation and to take meaningful action in their communities, workplaces, and schools.

Across Manitoba, communities and organizations marked the day through educational and commemorative events. The Southern Chiefs' Organization hosted its 6th Annual Orange Shirt Day Healing Walk and Pow Wow, bringing people together to honour the experiences of residential school Survivors and their families while supporting continued learning, healing, and dialogue.

In December 2023, Manitoba established Orange Shirt Day as a provincial statutory holiday, providing all Manitobans with an opportunity to reflect on the lasting impacts of residential schools and the intergenerational trauma that continues to affect First Nations, Inuit, and Métis families and communities.




The Manitoba government also continues to support community-led observance and commemoration activities through the Orange Shirt Day Fund, helping communities create opportunities for reflection, learning, healing, and remembrance.

While September 30 has passed, the work of reconciliation continues year-round. By learning the truth about residential schools, honouring Survivors and their families, and supporting Indigenous voices and perspectives, we can all contribute to a more inclusive and reconciled future.

Every Child Matters.

## Department Announcements

# Routine Practices: Updates to Sanitizing and Disinfecting Procedures

Infection prevention and control measures are important for preventing the spread of infection in child care facilities and schools. Routine Practices: Guide to Creating a Healthy Environment and Preventing Infections within Child Care Facilities and Schools was developed to outline fundamental infection prevention and control measures in these settings.

As part of a continual review and improvement process, Appendix E: Cleaning, Sanitizing, and Disinfecting Equipment and Environment has been updated to provide information on the use of high-level disinfectants for disinfecting environmental surfaces. Certain germs require a different chemical, a higher concentration, and/or a longer wet contact time to reduce them to an acceptable level. Child care facilities and schools will be directed by a public health professional when the use of a high-level disinfectant is required.

Updates have been made to the following:

- Appendix E: Guidance for Sanitizing and Disinfecting Solutions
- Infection Prevention and Control Posters: Cleaning, Sanitizing, and Disinfecting with Chlorine Bleach Solution
- Infection Prevention and Control Posters: Cleaning, Sanitizing, and Disinfecting Schedule

Facilities should monitor children for symptoms of illness (e.g., diarrhea, vomiting, cough, fever, rash, or other clusters of unusual symptoms). Facilities are encouraged to contact their local public health office for advice and direction if

- there are signs of an outbreak in the facility (e.g., higher-than-expected absenteeism due to similar symptoms or illness)
- there is a reason to believe that someone attending the facility has been exposed to or has a reportable communicable disease as defined in The Public Health Act
- staff or parents bring forth concerns about an increase in infections

For further information on monitoring, illness policies, and when to contact public health officials, refer to Appendix L: Additional Guidance for Child Care Facilities.

## New Federal Funding Announcement

In June 2026, the federal government announced an additional $5.4 billion over two years (beginning 2026–2027) to support provinces and territories in keeping child care fees stable and affordable for families while maintaining existing commitments. This funding responds directly to provincial and territorial concerns about long-term sustainability and represents an increase of more than 30 percent over the two-year period. It is in addition to the $58 billion already committed through current ELCC agreements and their extensions.

Federal, provincial, and territorial governments remain committed to working collaboratively to advance the Canada-wide early learning and child care system in the context of current economic realities. The shared goal is to ensure that families across the country continue to have access to affordable, high-quality, and inclusive early learning and child care programs over the long term. Provinces and territories will continue to play a central role in setting parent fees and shaping how services are delivered within their jurisdictions.

More information can be found from the news release "Minister of Jobs and Families announces new funding to maintain affordable early learning and child care in Canada - Canada.ca."

## Three New Centres Open, 88 Facilities Add New Spaces to Deliver More Child Care for Manitobans

Manitoba families are benefiting from continued investments in licensed child care, with the governments of Canada and Manitoba announcing the opening of 1,075 new child care spaces in late 2025 and 2026. Additionally, there are currently over 7,100 new capital child care spaces in various stages of development for children aged 0 to 12.

Recent investments include capital funding for three new or expanded child care centres in Winnipeg, as well as start-up and operating funding to support expansions at 88 additional facilities. Among the projects completed, the Ka Ni Kanichihk Medicine Children's Lodge added 32 new spaces at its Winnipeg location, helping support families accessing education, job training, family supports, and mentorship programs.

Further expansion is on the way in rural Manitoba. The Cartwright and District Early Learning Centre will add 16 spaces, while the North Norfolk Childcare Centre in Austin will expand by 36 spaces.

Looking ahead, a new child care centre is planned as part of the Railside development at The Forks in Winnipeg. Forks Railside Child Care, operated by the YMCA-YWCA of Winnipeg Inc., will offer 56 infant and preschool spaces. Construction on the child care component is expected to begin in September 2026, with the centre anticipated to open in fall 2028.

Since October 2023, Canada and Manitoba have opened more than 3,700 licensed and funded child care spaces for children under seven, with over 6,250 additional spaces currently in planning and development, bringing the total to more than 10,000 new spaces for children aged 0 to 6. The province has also opened nearly 1,800 new school-age spaces and committed to more than 900 additional spaces. Altogether, Manitoba has opened or committed to more than 12,700 child care spaces for children aged 12 and under since fall 2023.

Funding for these initiatives and new child care spaces is jointly supported through provincial and federal investments under the Canada-Manitoba Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care Agreement. For more information on the agreement, visit https://manitoba.ca/education/childcare/actionplan.html and https://canada.ca/en/early-learning-child-care-agreement/agreements-provinces-territories/manitoba-canada-wide-2021.html.

For more information about Manitoba child care capital and space expansion projects, visit manitoba.ca/childcare/spacecreation.

Read the full news release.

## Child Care Becomes More Affordable for Low-Income Families

The Manitoba government is taking another significant step toward making child care more affordable for families. As announced in Budget 2026, effective September 13, 2026, eligible families receiving support through the Child Care Subsidy Program are no longer required to pay either the family contribution or the non-subsidized daily fee.

This change is helping remove financial barriers to licensed child care for Manitoba families with low incomes, making it easier for parents and caregivers to pursue employment, education, or training opportunities. The update also simplifies fee administration for child care facilities and home-based child care providers.

Updated subsidy approval letters were issued to eligible families and their child care facilities before September 13, confirming that child care fees have been eliminated while the family remains eligible. The letters also outline allowable absent days and remind families that fees may still be charged if those limits are exceeded. Families remain responsible for any fees associated with absent days that exceed the allowable limit, as these costs are not covered under the child care subsidy policy.

For a copy of the circular and FAQs, visit the Early Learning and Child Care website at manitoba.ca/education/childcare/childcare_news/current_circulars.html.

For general information about the Child Care Subsidy Program, including online application forms, see manitoba.ca/childcaresubsidy.

## ECE Tuition Reimbursement

In partnership with the Government of Canada, Manitoba Education and Early Childhood Learning provides a reimbursement of up to $5,000 per school year to help cover the tuition-related costs of recognized early childhood education programs offered at post-secondary institutions in Manitoba that lead to certification as an Early Childhood Educator (ECE) II or ECE III.

The ECE tuition reimbursement makes early childhood education programs more accessible to individuals entering the early learning and child care workforce and those working to obtain or upgrade their certification. For complete information on eligibility, a list of recognized educational programs, and more, visit manitoba.ca/childcarecareers. The application deadline for the 2026/27 academic year is March 1, 2027.

## Passing of Bill 38: The Public Schools Amendment Act and Manitoba School Boards Association Amendment Act

The Manitoba government has passed Bill 38: The Public Schools Amendment Act and Manitoba School Boards Association Amendment Act. This legislation promotes safe and caring school environments for all students, ensures that all school divisions and districts are led by experienced educators, and expands access to educational support services for First Nations organizations in Manitoba. The bill is available at https://web2.gov.mb.ca/laws/statutes/2026/pdf/c03126.pdf.

### The Public Schools Amendment Act – amendments came into force on June 1, 2026

This part of the bill strengthens existing measures that support safe and caring school environments by updating the provincial code of conduct. The amendments refocus the code of conduct on student behaviour and expand the definition of bullying to explicitly include the misuse of generative AI technologies. The changes also ensure that the code addresses harm not only to individuals but also to groups and the broader school community.

This legislation also requires every school board to appoint an educator to lead its division. The bill sets out minimum qualifications for superintendents, including

- prior teaching experience
- a valid teaching certificate in good standing
- demonstrated administrative expertise

Bill 38 will ensure that an experienced educator oversees the administration of the school division and will have a role in hiring staff.

### Manitoba School Boards Association Amendment – amendments came into force on October 1, 2026

This part of the bill expands eligibility for full membership in the Manitoba School Boards Association (MSBA) to include Indigenous educational organizations and other qualifying groups. The legislative changes will

- enable MSBA to approve membership applications from non-public school boards based on criteria set out in legislation and bylaws
- require the MSBA executive to include a director who is a designated representative of an Indigenous education organization when the association has one or more such member organizations

These changes open the door for organizations such as the Manitoba First Nations Education Resource Centre (MFNERC) to become full MSBA members. This will allow Indigenous educational organizations to access services provided by MSBA to its members, and the requirement for Indigenous representation on the executive will serve to advance reconciliation in education.

## Curriculum Development and Implementation

Manitoba's Framework for Learning is where K to 12 teachers access all provincial curricula and related guidance to support effective teaching and assessment practices as well as the evaluation and communication of student learning.

The following curriculum implementation is planned for the 2026/27 school year:

- Provincial implementation of the renewed Kindergarten to Grade 10 Science curriculum begins in the 2026/27 school year. The curriculum has been updated in response to feedback received during 2025/26 voluntary implementation.
- As previously communicated, the Kindergarten to Grade 12 English Language Arts (ELA) curriculum implementation plan has been revised for the 2026/27 school year to include
  - pilot and voluntary implementation of the draft Kindergarten to Grade 8 ELA curriculum and draft Kindergarten to Grade 5 reading, writing, and oral language (literacy) progressions
  - full implementation of the Grades 9 to 12 ELA curriculum (The renewed curriculum will be reflected in the 2027 provincial Grade 12 ELA achievement test.)
- A two-year pilot of the renewed Kindergarten to Grade 12 Physical and Health Education curriculum begins in 2026/27, with over 100 schools participating. The renewed curriculum strengthens and updates learning outcomes related to physical activity, nutrition, personal well-being, safety, and healthy relationships to support stronger communities and improved health and well-being for Manitobans. Pilot curriculum documents are available here: Physical Education/Health Education | Manitoba Education and Early Childhood Learning.
- Pilot and voluntary implementation of two new Grade 9 Mathematics courses that integrate financial literacy education will take place in the 2026/27 school year. Graduation requirements have been updated and will apply to learners entering Grade 9 in 2027/28 and beyond to reflect the additional compulsory mathematics credit.
- Pilot and voluntary implementation of the draft Grade 12 Land and Treaties: Relationships and Responsibilities will take place in the 2026/27 school year, following the course's release for voluntary implementation in fall 2025. This course represents a significant milestone in the collective journey toward understanding and honouring the rich history and enduring legacy of past and present treaties in Manitoba.
- Pilot and voluntary implementation of renewed draft applied technology curricula for six Middle Years and nine Senior Years courses begins in the 2026/27 school year. Among these are newly developed draft curriculum for Applied Pre-Engineering (Middle Years and Senior Years) and Applied Home Building and Maintenance (Senior Years). Course codes will be updated in the 2027/28 Subject Table Handbook following completion of the 2026/27 school year.
- Following a three-year pilot, the technical-vocational education Early Childhood Educator curriculum is available for implementation in the 2026/27 school year. The new curriculum provides Grades 9 to 12 learners who are interested in a career in early learning and child care the opportunity to explore all aspects of the profession and develop a strong foundation of knowledge and skills.

## Early Reading Screening

Beginning in the 2026/27 school year, universal implementation of a standardized, evidence-based early reading screening tool is required in Manitoba school divisions and funded independent schools. Each student will receive two early reading screenings in Kindergarten to Grade 4, for three consecutive years.

This fall, resources to support classroom implementation as well as example parent/caregiver communications that may be adapted to reflect local contexts, have been distributed.

## Provincial Report Card Updates

The Manitoba provincial report card has been updated for the 2026/27 school year. The updates include the legislated requirement to report to parents/caregivers early reading screening results separately from academic grades on the Grades 1 to 6 Report Card. Reporting will include the date of screening as well as an indication of whether the student has 'Met' or 'Not Yet Met' the grade-level reading benchmarks at the time of the screening.

Additional updates include the following:

- the alignment of the report card with *Standards for Appropriate Educational Programming in Manitoba (2022)*
- updated Grades 1 to 8 Science subject categories to reflect the renewed curriculum's emphasis on scientific applications, implications, and diverse inquiry processes

The *Manitoba Provincial Report Card Policy (2026) document* has also been renewed to reflect these revisions. Report card templates for 2026/27 are available on the Manitoba Education and Early Childhood Learning website.

## New Free Transit Passes for Youth

The Manitoba government has partnered with the cities of Winnipeg, Brandon, Flin Flon, Selkirk, and Winkler to provide free transit services to youth. The programs in Brandon, Flin Flon, Selkirk, and Winkler are being administered directly between the municipality and the school divisions or independent schools. Students and families in those areas should talk to their school or school division for details on how to access their passes.

In Winnipeg, the Department of Education and Early Childhood Learning is working with the City of Winnipeg to provide transit passes to school divisions and independent schools. Students in Grades 6 to 12 are able to access passes through their school division, or through their independent school, in a phased roll-out that began on September 8, 2026. The roll-out began with Grades 11 and 12 students receiving passes as early as September 8. Students in Grades 9 and 10 received access to the passes on September 22, while students in Grades 7 and 8 were able to pick up their passes at the end of the month. Passes are also available on request for students in Grade 6. Manitoba Education and Early Childhood Learning will provide passes to homeschool students on request.

The program in all participating municipalities will be for the full year, with passes expiring on August 31, 2027.

## Relaunch of the Indigenous Identity Declaration (IID) Form

Effective September 2026, Manitoba Education and Early Childhood Learning is relaunching the Indigenous Identity Declaration (IID) form. This update is aligned with our shared commitment to improving data quality, supporting a distinctions-based approach, and ensuring consistent collection practices across Manitoba's education system. This information supports schools, school divisions, and the department in planning for programs and services that improve student success. Identifying Indigenous students helps schools better understand and support the strengths, needs, and experiences of Indigenous learners.

Declaration is voluntary, and families may choose to declare or update information at any time. Families may also choose to not declare. All information is protected under The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FIPPA) and remains on a student's file once completed unless updates are required. The redesigned student IID form has been developed to be low barrier, family friendly, culturally safe, and accessible to all parents and caregivers. Beginning in the 2026/27 school year and moving forward, schools should include the new IID form with registration materials for all students. Families should be asked to redeclare their Indigenous identity, as updates to the form include new office codes. Participating helps guide education planning and resources while ensuring that education reflects the diverse identities and experiences of Indigenous learners across Manitoba.

For more details, visit https://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/iee/identity.html.

## Recognizing the Contributions of the 2025/26 Student Advisory Council and Welcoming the 2026/27 Student Advisory Council

The Minister's Student Advisory Council is made up of 30 high school students from across the province who provide student perspectives and advice to the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Learning on issues affecting Kindergarten to Grade 12 students. The council helps ensure that student voices are considered in education policy, programs, and emerging issues, while also giving members opportunities to develop leadership and advocacy skills.

The 2025/26 council has completed its term after a year of providing thoughtful advice on a range of topics. Members contributed to discussions on subjects including learning supports, financial literacy curriculum, climate education, and artificial intelligence in education. Details will be highlighted in the council's annual report, which will be released in the coming weeks.

We also congratulate those selected for the incoming 2026/27 council. Throughout the coming school year, council members will meet with department representatives and the Minister to contribute student-informed insights and perspectives.

Finally, we thank everyone who applied. The application window for the 2027/28 council will open in spring 2027.

## Divisional Attendance Plans and Process for Unclaimed Pupil Files

The department has developed new guidance related to divisional attendance plans and unclaimed pupil files. Beginning this fall, school divisions and districts will submit annual attendance plans aligned with the Safe and Caring Schools: Student Presence and Engagement framework. Plans will include preventive strategies, intervention thresholds, and graduated responses to support student attendance, presence, and engagement. These plans are intended to facilitate a coordinated, proactive approach to promoting student presence, engagement, and well-being.

In addition, a new provincial process has been introduced for reporting unclaimed pupil files when a student has disengaged from school and cannot be located despite extensive efforts to make contact. This process supports student safety, strengthens system accountability, and helps ensure that students who may be disconnected from education are identified and, where possible, supported to re-engage in learning.

## MERLIN: Supporting Manitoba Educators for 30+ Years

MERLIN works behind the scenes and alongside your organization to provide the tools, training, and secure environments that empower great teaching. From curricular software and professional learning opportunities to built-in cybersecurity protections, MERLIN's services are designed to support educators every day.

MERLIN's provincial licensing program includes a variety of curricular software to support literacy, numeracy, STEM/STEAM, accessibility, graphic design, and more. Its dedicated team can connect your administrative, technical, and pedagogical staff with professional learning opportunities that supports the purposeful, effective, and secure use of technology within their unique roles.

Visit www.merlin.mb.ca or email info@merlin.mb.ca to learn more.

## 2026 EIS Collection Application

The 2026 version of the Education Information System (EIS) Collection application has been released. The latest version includes several enhancements designed to improve accessibility, streamline reporting processes, and reduce submission errors.

New features in the 2026 release include the addition of a frequently asked questions (FAQs) document within the application's Help menu, providing users with quick access to support information while working in the system. The FAQs will also continue to be available on the EIS Collection website.

In addition, the Graduate by School report can now be generated and exported in Excel format, making graduation data easier to review, analyze, and share. This report will be used to submit graduation data to the department. A new marks code, CC, has also been introduced. This temporary placeholder code may be used for courses that will be completed in a future term or academic year and will be replaced once a final grade is assigned. The CC code is accepted during EIS Collection validation, helping prevent submission errors; however, it will not appear on official transcripts.

The 2026 EIS Collection application, installation manuals, and related resources are now available on the Education Information System (EIS) website.

School divisions/districts and independent schools are reminded of the following reporting deadlines:

- High school marks and graduation data submissions are due no later than October 7, 2026.
- The enrolment and categorical data reporting date remains the first Wednesday in October, with submissions due no later than October 15, 2026.

All technical support requests related to EIS Collection should be directed to AppSupportEISCOLL@gov.mb.ca.

For non-technical questions regarding reporting requirements, a complete list of departmental contacts is available at www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/eis/help_desk.htm.

## BEF-USB Collaboration Supports Development of Resources for French Immersion Schools

A schoolscape, which includes the visual, written, and symbolic elements that make French visible and vibrant throughout the school environment, plays an important role in supporting student learning, fostering a sense of belonging, and promoting the French language. It is with this perspective in mind that the Bureau de l'éducation française (BEF) and the Université de Saint-Boniface (USB) have combined their expertise to support Manitoba's French immersion schools in the creation of rich and inspiring French language environments.

Since 2023, this collaboration has enabled research findings to be turned into practical tools for school leaders. Among the resources developed are professional learning opportunities, a bilingual guide, and a video featuring authentic examples of effective practices.

All of these resources are available on the department's website and are grounded in four principles: learn, observe, reflect, and act. They were designed to help school leaders understand the principles of schoolscapes, analyze their linguistic environment, identify opportunities for improvement, and implement actions tailored to their local context to strengthen the visibility of French in their schools.

Many schools have already launched projects to enhance their schoolscape. To date, five professional learning sessions have reached 42 school leaders from 31 schools, representing nearly 26 percent of Manitoba's French immersion schools. Since 2024, more than 20 schools across nine school divisions have received funding to support projects that enrich their schoolscape through the Canada-Manitoba Agreement on Minority-Language Education and Second Official-Language Instruction 2024–25 to 2027–28.

This partnership demonstrates the value of collaboration among government, post-secondary institutions, and schools in transforming research-based knowledge into concrete actions that strengthen the vitality of French and support student success in Manitoba.

School leaders are invited to visit the department's website to access resources that support the implementation of the French Immersion Program: www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/docs/policy/frenchimm/index.html.

## New Web Page for French Immersion School Leaders

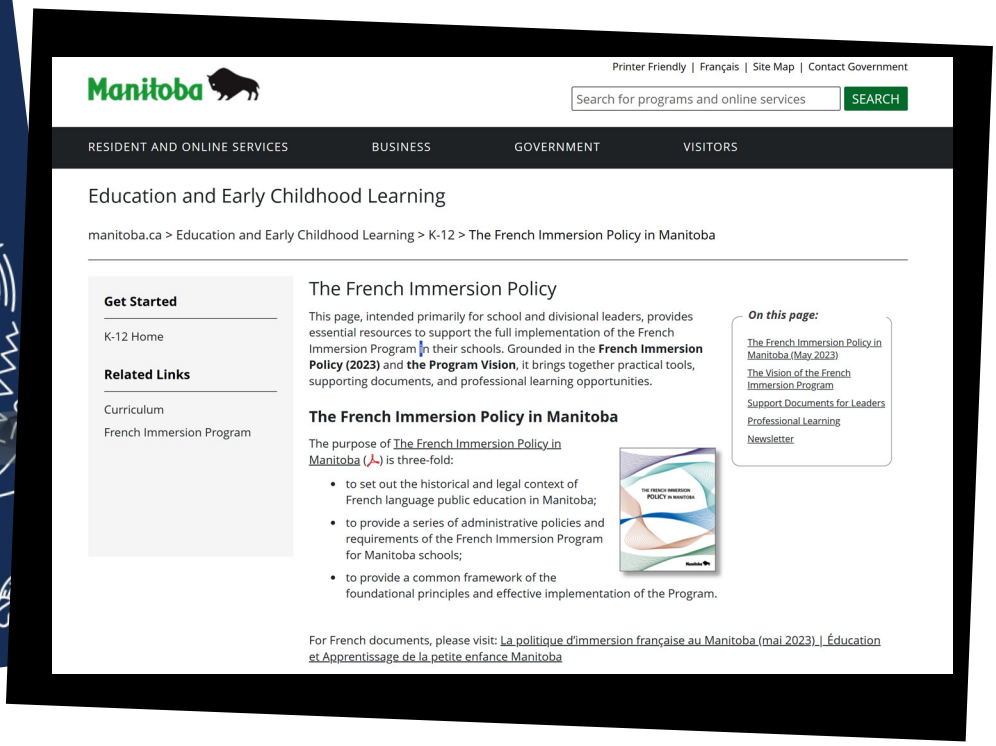
The Bureau de l'éducation française (BEF) has launched a new web page to support school and divisional leaders in the French Immersion Program.

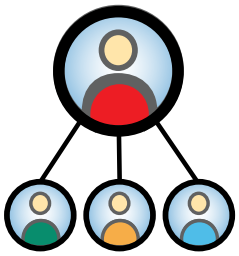
Grounded in *The French Immersion Policy in Manitoba* and *The Vision of the French Immersion Program in Manitoba*, the web page serves as a centralized hub that brings together key resources, practical tools, supporting documents, and professional learning opportunities offered by BEF.

Key sections:

- The Manitoba French Immersion Policy provides a chart summarizing the key components of full implementation of the French Immersion Program.
- The Vision of the French Immersion Program outlines Manitoba's renewed vision for the French Immersion Program.
- Support Documents for Leaders includes documents, tools, and resources to support the full implementation of the French Immersion Program.
- Professional Learning highlights professional learning opportunities for leaders and teachers.

To learn more, visit www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/docs/policy/frenchimm/index.html.



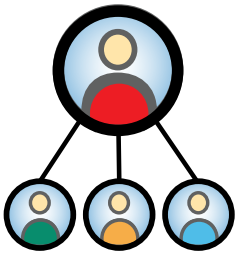


## Leadership Updates

### System Performance and Accountability Division Welcomes a New Commissioner of Teacher Professional Conduct

On May 18, 2026, **Noni Classen** assumed the role of Commissioner of Teacher Professional Conduct. A former teacher, Noni has worked alongside children, families, educators, clinicians, and communities across Manitoba and Canada for more than three decades, focusing on child protection, harm prevention, and strengthening systems that help keep children safe. As part of that ongoing commitment, she is pleased to share the following message:

> *"It is a profound honour to serve as Manitoba's Commissioner of Teacher Professional Conduct. I begin this role with gratitude and a deep appreciation for the trust placed in this office. Throughout my career, I have had the privilege of working alongside children, families, educators, clinicians, and communities across Manitoba and Canada to strengthen child protection and promote safe, supportive environments for children. Protecting children and maintaining public trust has been at the heart of my work for more than three decades.*
>
> *Teachers play an incredibly important role in the lives of children and young people. Every day, educators across Manitoba support, encourage, and guide students with professionalism, compassion, integrity, and care. The role of the Commissioner's Office is to protect students and uphold public confidence in the education system by ensuring concerns related to professional conduct and competence are addressed fairly, independently, thoughtfully, and in accordance with the legislation. These processes must also be carried out with professionalism, dignity, and respect for everyone involved.*
>
> *As I begin this role, my focus is on listening, learning, and working collaboratively with the public, education partners, and school communities across the province. I also want to acknowledge the professionalism and dedication of the staff of the Commissioner's Office during a period of transition. I look forward to building on the important work already underway as we continue to strengthen student safety and well-being, procedural fairness, and safe, respectful learning environments for students and school communities across Manitoba."*



## Leadership Updates *(continued)*

### Indigenous Excellence in Education Division Bids Farewell to Previous Assistant Deputy Minister and Welcomes a New Acting Assistant Deputy Minister

After more than two years of dedicated leadership with Manitoba Education and Early Childhood Learning, **Jackie Connell** left her role as Assistant Deputy Minister of Indigenous Excellence in Education to become Chief Superintendent of the Louis Riel School Division in August 2026. During her time with the department, Jackie helped advance several key priorities, including the expansion of Indigenous language revitalization initiatives, the implementation of Manitoba's Universal School Nutrition Program, and the strengthening of anti-racism and equity efforts across Manitoba's K to 12 education system. A passionate advocate for student success, Jackie brought a strong commitment to Indigenous education, community engagement, and relationship building with school divisions, Indigenous Rights holders, and education partners across the province. We thank Jackie for her leadership and contributions and wish her every success in this exciting new role. **Jordan Bighorn** is serving as Acting Assistant Deputy Minister of Indigenous Excellence in Education, providing continued leadership and support to the division and its partners.

### Early Learning and Child Care Division Welcomes Chiemeka Eleonu, Manager, Business Planning and Technology

**Chiemeka Eleonu** joined the Policy and Planning Branch as Manager, Business Planning and Technology Services, on June 29, 2026. Along with a diploma in Network Systems and Administration, Chiemeka is currently completing a Master of Business Administration (MBA) with a specialization in Management, Change and Business Analytics with Carleton University. He brings over 10 years of experience in digital communications, project management, and continuous improvement. Chiemeka worked in the banking and financial management sectors before joining the Department of Business, Mining, Trade and Job Creation as a Senior Business Analyst in 2024. Chiemeka is also an adjunct professor of project management at the University of Winnipeg.

### Early Learning and Child Care Division Welcomes James Houston, Director, Capital Development

**James Houston** joined the Capital and Space Expansion Branch as Director of the Capital Development Unit on June 15, 2026. James holds a Bachelor of Arts in Political Studies and a Certificate in Public Sector Management from the University of Manitoba. He brings over a decade of experience with the Manitoba government and most recently served as Manager, Corporate Services and Intergovernmental Affairs, with Municipal and Northern Relations. His background includes managing large-scale funding models, program reviews, and stakeholder engagement with departments, municipalities, and Indigenous partners.

## Upcoming Events/Reminders

### Manitoba Education and Early Childhood Learning offices will be closed on the following dates:

- Thanksgiving Day: Monday, October 12, 2026
- Remembrance Day: Wednesday, November 11, 2026

Licensed child care facilities may also choose to be closed, as per ELCC's 2026 Closure Days schedule. To verify closure dates for a specific child care facility, please contact the facility directly.

### Professional Learning Opportunities at MTS PD Day 2026

Manitoba Education and Early Childhood Learning is partnering with Special Area Groups of Educators to offer professional learning sessions at MTS PD Day on October 23, 2026. Department staff will share updates on curriculum development and emerging areas of practice to support classroom implementation and student learning. Sessions include the following:

**Manitoba Association of Teachers of English:** An overview of the renewed K to 12 English Language Arts (ELA) curriculum and the integration of the elements of Manitoba's Framework for Learning, including provincial guidelines for teaching and assessment practices, and guidelines for the assessment, evaluation, and communication of student learning. A second session for K to 12 teachers will explore how Manitoba's global competencies are integrated within the curriculum and ELA discipline.

**Science Teachers' Association of Manitoba:** An overview of the renewed K to 10 Science curriculum, outlining the organization, big ideas, and pedagogical approach to science teaching and learning in Manitoba.

**Environmental and Climate Action Education Network of Manitoba:** An overview of the department's work to strengthen climate education within the K to 12 sector.

## Recent and Upcoming Proclamations

### Peace Days – September 11 to 28, 2026

Peace Days is an annual initiative that promotes values of peace, respect, inclusion, and community engagement. Through learning opportunities and community activities, Peace Days encourages students and Manitobans to work together to build stronger relationships, foster understanding, and contribute to more welcoming and inclusive communities.

### School Support Staff Recognition Week – September 21 to 25, 2026

School Support Staff Recognition Week celebrates the invaluable contributions of school support staff across Manitoba. Educational assistants, administrative staff, custodians, library and technology personnel, bus drivers, and many others play an essential role in creating safe, welcoming, and supportive learning environments that help students succeed every day.

### Media Literacy Week – October 26 to 30, 2026

Media Literacy Week highlights the importance of helping learners develop the knowledge and skills needed to critically access, analyze, evaluate, and create media in an increasingly digital world. The week encourages students, educators, and families to explore responsible digital citizenship, critical thinking, and informed participation in online and media environments.

## Upcoming Events/Reminders *(continued)*

### Dyslexia Awareness Month – October 2026

Dyslexia Awareness Month demonstrates the department's commitment to strengthening the literacy achievement of Manitoba students by building educators' awareness and skills in meeting the needs of students with dyslexia.

### Manitoba School Library Day – October 26, 2026

Manitoba School Library Day recognizes the important role of school libraries as safe, inclusive, and welcoming spaces for students to explore and learn. The wide range of resources available to students reflects the diversity of school communities, supports curriculum implementation, and creates a lifelong love of learning. Students and educators are invited to reflect on the meaningful connections they have with their school libraries as places of inclusion, inspiration, and growth.

### Financial Literacy Month – November 2026

Financial Literacy Month promotes the development of the knowledge, skills, and confidence needed to make informed financial decisions. Through learning opportunities both inside and outside the classroom, students can explore topics such as budgeting, saving, spending, and financial planning to support lifelong financial well-being.

### Bullying Awareness and Prevention Week – November 15 to 21, 2026

Bullying Awareness and Prevention Week recognizes the role that schools, families, and communities all play in preventing bullying through the promotion of safe and caring environments for children, youth, and adults. By working together, we continue to create school communities where every student feels safe, respected, valued, and a true sense of belonging.

The *Manitoba Education and Early Childhood Learning Newsletter* aims to provide our education and early childhood learning partners with access to information about departmental initiatives and leadership updates, and to highlight some upcoming plans/important dates. More detailed information can be found by visiting www.edu.gov.mb.ca/.

The newsletter is published in fall, winter, spring, and summer. Please email questions and feedback on the newsletter or the material covered to SRUnit@gov.mb.ca.

Thank you.