

STRATEGIC DIRECTION 2002–2005

PURPOSE

This document describes the main intended areas of changing or expanding activity across Manitoba Advanced Education and Manitoba Education, Training and Youth for the next three years. It is a revised version of the strategy initially developed more than two years ago.

This document is used to guide budgeting, staff allocation and program activity at the department level and to be the framework within which other strategies, unit plans and department estimates are developed.

Since 1999, and within the overall frame of the Strategic Direction, a number of other strategy documents have been developed to provide greater focus for particular areas of the Departments. These include:

- the Manitoba K-S4 Agenda for Student Success
- the Manitoba Training Strategy
- The Post-Secondary Education Strategy and the COPSE strategic plan
- the College Expansion Strategy
- the Aboriginal Education and Training Framework
- Five Year School Capital Plan
- MERLIN Business Plan

The strategy documents focus on areas of change. However ongoing programs and activities are also important commitments. Specific unit objectives are complementary to the larger strategies and are laid out in the “Supplementary Information for Legislative Review” document published annually.

In addition, the Departments’ strategies complement and support other main government-wide strategies including Healthy Child Manitoba, Northern Development, and community economic development.

CONTEXT

Manitoba’s education and training system has provided many benefits to the province and has done excellent work. However as context changes, there must be ongoing redirection of attention and energy to meet new challenges. The Departments’ overall direction and specific strategies have been designed to respond to important changes in the social and economic context such as growing demand for education across the society, changing skill requirements in the labour market, the need to foster equitable outcomes across geographic, ethnic and socio-economic groups, growing knowledge about effective teaching and learning, an aging physical infrastructure, greater access to knowledge through information technology, changing requirements for effective citizenship, and so on.

ROLE OF THE DEPARTMENTS

MISSION

Our mission is to provide access to relevant education and training that is of high quality, affordable, available and responsive.

Scope

Education and training should be understood to include everything from early childhood education through post-secondary education, adult education and workforce training and learning. The Departments' authority and responsibilities vary across these sectors, with the strongest mandates in relation to K-S4 education and post-secondary education. Early childhood education and development are primarily the responsibility of other units of government.

Tools

The Departments achieve their mission using several vehicles. We provide *direct service delivery* in a number of areas (such as training, student financial assistance, delivery of distance learning courses, and services to students with disabilities). However most education services are delivered by others. Most of the department's budget flows to external organizations and the department's work involves *policy direction, financial support, and capacity building*. These elements are provided primarily to organizations and institutions but also in some cases to individuals. The policy levers are intended both to assist and to control other organizations and individuals in providing or obtaining educational services.

In working towards its goals the Departments value innovation, evaluation, accountability, openness, responsiveness, partnership, consultation, and research. The Departments have to balance the requirement for efficiency, effectiveness, quality and accountability in existing activities with the need to anticipate and respond to changing conditions. The former dynamic leads towards standardization; the latter towards experimentation and diversity. Both are necessary elements and the tension between them has to be managed. Also important is a constant effort to reduce unnecessary or low value-added tasks to free resources for more important needs.

GOALS

Manitoba Education and Training is committed to focusing on five main goals:

1. Improve success rates in all programs and institutions.
2. Expand the range of people we serve.
3. Better integrate and support knowledge and skill development within economic and social priorities.
4. Build the capacity of institutions and the community to support learning.
5. Build a learning continuum within and across sectors.

Over the past three years considerable progress has been made on each of the goals and on the creation of greater synergy across the goals. The actions below represent areas of continued importance to guide activity for the next few years. Many of the actions are relevant to several goals.

Criteria for Actions

All the actions should:

- be aimed at improving learner outcomes;
- build on good work already being done by various partners;
- build respect and collaboration among all partners;
- be based on the best available research and evidence
- be ambitious but attainable

ACTIONS

Across all goals:

1. Develop active partnerships and invite the contribution of all elements of the educational community.
2. Develop new institutional vehicles, program structures, delivery systems or credentials as appropriate.
3. Improve information to all parties about needs and programs.
4. Focus on problem prevention wherever possible.
5. Improve use of research, empirical data and program evaluation as a basis for policy and practices.

1. Improve success rates in all programs and institutions

- 1.1 Improve programs, teaching practices and supports for populations where success rates are least satisfactory;
- 1.2 Ensure that policies and programs recognize the importance of both equity and diversity;
- 1.3 Develop new credentials or qualifications to meet particular needs;
- 1.4 Improve data and dialogue with students, institutions, employers and public on success levels;
- 1.5 Implement specific strategies to improve success in high poverty communities;

2. Expand the range of people we serve

- 2.1 Continue to develop and implement the Aboriginal Education and Training Framework in all departmental activities;
- 2.2 Link Department programs to the government's overall early childhood development agenda;

- 2.3 Improve services to adult learners and employers, both those currently in and outside of the workforce;
 - 2.4 Improve program provision and support services for children and adults with disabilities;
 - 2.5 Ensure that programs and policies recognize the needs of immigrants;
 - 2.6 Expand use of new delivery vehicles such as distance education, prior learning assessment and self-directed learning;
 - 2.7 Develop new programs and institutions for particular learning needs;
 - 2.8 Ensure that all policies and programs support a lifelong learning approach;
 - 2.9 Improve the affordability of post-secondary education by controlling tuition levels, improving student financial aid, and improving students' ability to earn income;
 - 2.10 Develop the government's youth strategy in collaboration with other departments.
3. *Better integrate and support knowledge and skill development with economic and social priorities*
- 3.1 Strengthen the contribution of education to local community economic development;
 - 3.2 Promote international education;
 - 3.3 Develop research capacity in Manitoba to support priority areas and as an economic activity in its own right;
 - 3.4 Participate actively in government-wide strategic areas such as Healthy Child, Neighbourhoods Alive, Economic Development, Aboriginal, Disability, the North, etc.;
 - 3.5 Build stronger connections between labour market needs and educational programs;
 - 3.6 Improve labour market information for learners, families and communities;
 - 3.7 Improve the capacity of the Departments to understand and respond to emerging economic and social issues.
4. *Build the capacity of institutions and the community to support learning*
- 4.1 Improve professional development and ongoing learning in educational institutions, workplaces and related community organizations;
 - 4.2 Work with institutions to ensure appropriate environmental scanning and planning processes;
 - 4.3 Work with employers to improve the degree to which skills are actually used in workplaces;
 - 4.4 Address physical infrastructure problems in schools, colleges and universities;
 - 4.5 Provide reasonable levels of public funding to educational programs and institutions with emphasis on improving responsiveness to key objectives.
 - 4.6 Support learning activities for families.

5. *Build a learning continuum within and across sectors.*

- 5.1 Strengthen bridges between levels of education to allow easier movement of learners from one kind or level of education to another including prior learning assessment, articulation, and joint programming;
- 5.2 Improve capacity of education providers to work with employers, community groups, each other and other interested partners;
- 5.3 Work with advocacy groups to strengthen their contribution to educational outcomes;
- 5.4 Work with other departments and with other levels of government to strengthen communications among all parties regarding goals, priorities, programs and learners needs.