Manitoba's Commission on Kindergarten to Grade 12 Education
Public Consultation Summary Report | JUNE 2019

BUILD
RESULTS

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Executive Summary

From April 24 to May 30, 2019 public and student workshops were held to gather feedback on Kindergarten to Grade12 (K-12) education in Manitoba. Eleven public workshops were held across Manitoba - five in Winnipeg and one in each of Thompson, The Pas, Brandon, Dauphin, Carman and Steinbach, with 1,690 participants in all. Two workshops hosting a total of 137 students from across the province were held in Winnipeg.

All public sessions had a large portion of participants self-identify as working in K-12 education in Manitoba (teachers, educational assistants, clinicians, administration, trustees, union) and some participants attended multiple workshops. Student session participants were primarily in Grades 10-12 and had been selected by their school divisions to participate in the workshops.

Feedback from participants was gathered using a variety of tools during the sessions including participant-written small group discussion summaries, individual comment forms and exit forms (hard copy and digital versions), Slido web-enabled in-session engagement tool, K-12 journey map comments and focus area comments as well as notes captured by facilitators during the "reconvene" and sharing circle large group discussions.

Key themes emerging from all/most locations centred around the following (in alphabetical order):
- Amalgamation
- Class size/composition
- Consultation process itself
- Education as an investment
- Inclusion
- Indigenous learners
- Local Autonomy
- Mental Health
- More and equitable funding
- One size does not fit all
- Poverty impacts on learning
- Professional development
- Reconciliation
- Retention and recruitment
- Standardized testing
- The environment
- Union membership

Themes specific to locations emerged in the West (Brandon/Dauphin), the North (Thompson, The Pas), the north-end/core of Winnipeg (RB Russell) and for areas outside of Winnipeg. Themes specific to student sessions and sessions facilitated in French have also been highlighted.

Background

On January 23, 2019, the Manitoba government announced a nine-member commission to undertake a comprehensive, independent review of the Kindergarten to Grade 12 education system. The purpose of the review is to improve outcomes for students, ensure long-term sustainability and enhance public confidence in Manitoba's education system.

On April 12, 2019, a discussion paper and initial public workshop dates were published, providing a framework and timeline for the consultations that included:
- An online survey for Manitobans
- An online survey for Manitoba teachers
- An open call for written submissions to the commission
- A public consultation
- A student consultation
- An open call for briefs followed by public hearings
- An open call to Manitoba teachers for submissions to a collection of exemplary practices

Blueprint Inc. was engaged to carry out a robust program of public and student consultations on behalf of Manitoba's Commission on Kindergarten to Grade 12 Education across Manitoba between April 24, 2019 and May 30, 2019. The consultations allowed a diverse audience of stakeholders from rural, urban and northern communities to share their visions for optimizing education and outcomes of the K-12 education system in our province. Participants included students, parents, educators, school boards, academics, Indigenous organizations, *la francophonie*, municipal councils, professional organizations, the business community and members of the public.

These consultations were designed for maximum participation and to allow for flexibility to meet community and audience interests.

This report provides a summary of the engagement process; the rationale for how the consultation approach was designed; and key themes and detailed feedback from participants.

While the commission undertook additional consultation during this period, this report reflects only the public and student workshops. It is intended to help inform the commission's analysis and support its mandate to develop recommendations that will be submitted to the Minister of Education and Training by February 2020.

Engagement approach

Education is a complex, high-profile and emotionally charged topic that touches every Manitoban. The approach for the public consultation portion of the K-12 Education Review was developed to anticipate that high emotion would be a part of these events, as would productive dialogue on hopes and aspirations for the education system. This engagement was designed to accommodate all perspectives and to provide an environment that facilitated participation by all who attended in a manner that met their individual needs.

Guiding principles
- Create a welcoming, friendly and efficient environment.
- Help participants understand what to do when they arrive.
- Meet people where they are at.
- Ensure information is accessible.
- Structure sessions to set a listening tone.
- Acknowledge frustration, show empathy and adapt.
- Avoid defensiveness.
- Debrief and learn.

Workshop design
The facilitation design for the consultations was based on a technique called Open Space, which is widely used in the early stages of addressing a complex issue, when diverse views and an unknown number of participants are present. At its core, this approach asks participants to self-identify topics that are important to them and begins discussion there. Participants then choose which discussions they want to be part of. When they feel they have no more to contribute, they can move on to another discussion, take a break or even leave. It offers participants a high degree of self-determination, which is particularly important when facilitating emotion and potential conflict.

Insight is derived through a number of distinct ways in this process. First, the relative importance of topics and issues for participants in attendance becomes clear in topic selection; second, the discussion length and degree of participation point to complexity and divergence on a topic; and third, a closing debrief can be used to understand where shifts or convergence in perspective emerged. Notes are also recorded in the discussions by a volunteer recorder.

To ensure that those less inclined to discussion have an opportunity to participate comfortably, this approach was paired with self-directed engagement activities also available in the room [K-12 Journey Map and 6 Focus Areas], topical interactions on Slido and individual comment forms.

A children's table with craft supplies was set up in the room for participants who brought their children.

Workshop process
The following table provides an overview of each step in the event process, from online registration to post-event summary.

Timing	Step [task owner]
Pre-event	**Online registration** [secretariat, facilitators] By event, registrants were asked to provide first name, last name and responses to the following: 1. Briefly note the topics that are most important to you that you would like to discuss or provide feedback on at the workshop. 2. Which language do you prefer to participate in? Collected topics from (1.) were reviewed in advance of each event and formed the initial discussion topics for that session. If pre-registration numbers reached within 50 of the room's capacity for any event, mitigation plans were developed based on the event location and available resources.
Event	**Public Workshop** [facilitators, secretariat, commissioners, attendees] Doors opened 30 minutes prior to published event start time, facilitators, secretariat and commissioners were stationed at the exterior doors and throughout the room to welcome attendees, provide them with a workshop brochure and offer a brief overview of the workshop. Self-directed engagement activities – As attendees arrived, opportunities for immediate self-directed participation were available. • K-12 Journey Map – A graphic "pipeline" of K-12 education with participants invited to add their thoughts directly to the large format graphic. • 6 Focus Areas – As outlined in the discussion document, posters of the areas were available for response with markers and sticky notes. • Option to review initial discussion topics, join a circle and begin a discussion, or write comments in the comment form provided in the brochure. • Option to use Slido to provide feedback. Welcome – Commissioners welcomed attendees to the session and introduced the facilitator, who provided a short explanation of the workshop organization, options to participate and session guidelines. The facilitator also reviewed the initial discussion topics and advised how new topics could be added to the workshop. Small group discussions – Attendees joined numbered/labelled group discussion circles to participate in small group discussions for one hour. The facilitator reminded attendees to consider joining a new discussion group from time to time. Commission and secretariat members joined groups to listen to the small group discussions and take notes, rotating throughout the room. Reconvene – The facilitator reconvened all participants to share highlights and key learnings from small discussion groups. Break – 10 minutes to move chairs into two concentric circles. Sharing circle – The facilitator and the commissioner invited all participants who wished to share ideas, concerns, questions and

	feedback with the workshop attendees to join the inner circle, and a cordless mic was provided so all attendees could hear the speakers. Close – The commissioner thanked attendees for their contributions. The facilitator outlined the additional options for providing feedback to the commission. Debrief – The facilitator lead the workshop team (secretariat, facilitation team, commissioners) in a session debrief to capture feedback and adapt the workshop plan throughout the process.
Post-event	**Documentation** [facilitators] Exit surveys, comment forms, 6 focus areas feedback posters, K-12 education journey feedback, pictures, Slido feedback (Ideas, Opening Questions and Exit Surveys) were compiled. Session summaries were drafted at the close of each session and provided to the secretariat.

NOTES:
1. *Chairs were set around tables for the small group discussions during the first session on April 24 in Winnipeg (Caboto Centre), but tables were removed from the Thompson session set-up and for all subsequent public workshops.*
2. *The Sharing Circle portion of the public workshop was introduced at the Thompson session on April 25 and used for all subsequent public workshops.*
3. *Community elders were invited to speak at the start and close of the public workshops in Thompson, The Pas and for the May 15 session in Winnipeg (RB Russell).*
4. *French/English translation services were available for the French session held on the afternoon of April 27 in Winnipeg (Canad Inns Destination Centre Club Regent) and the May 9 session in Brandon. facilitated primarily in English. All other public workshops were facilitated in English.*
5. *Child care was provided at the May 25 public workshop at RB Russell High School.*

Engagement summary

Public engagement

Nine public workshops were planned between April 24 and May 14, 2019, across Manitoba, with two additional workshops added in Winnipeg for May 15 and May 25 as a result of high interest and feedback received during the initial public workshops.

In total, 1,690 people attended public workshops. Following is a detailed breakdown of participation.

Public Workshops		Participants		
Date, time	Location	# pre-registered online	# attended session	# used Slido
April 24, 2019, 6:00–8:30 PM	Caboto Centre 1055 Wilkes Ave, Winnipeg	192	200+	117
April 25, 2019, 6:00–8:30 PM	Westwood School 46 Mallard Cres, Thompson	86	97	20
April 27, 2019, 9:00–11:30 AM	Canad Inns Destination Centre Club Regent,	140	150	81
April 27, 2019, 1:00–3:30 PM	1415 Regent Ave West, Winnipeg (PM facilitated in French)	87	91	57
May 6, 2019, 6:00–8:30 PM	Wescana Inn 439 Fischer Ave, The Pas	82	108	35
May 9, 2019, 6:00–8:30 PM	Clarion Hotel & Suites 3130 Victoria Ave, Brandon (Bilingual)	204	261	86
May 11, 2019, 9:00–11:30 AM	Aspen Lodge 200 1st St. SE, Dauphin	90	82	28
May 13, 2019, 6:00–8:30 PM	Carman Collegiate 121 4th Ave SE, Carman	183	167	80
May 14, 2019, 6:00–8:30 PM	Pat Porter Active Living Centre 10 Chrysler Gate, Steinbach	135	107	43
May 15, 2019, 6:00–8:30 PM	Caboto Centre 1055 Wilkes Ave, Winnipeg	312	205	110
May 25, 2019, 9:00–11:30 AM	RB Russell High School 364 Dufferin Ave, Winnipeg	229	222	48

Public Workshop Participation
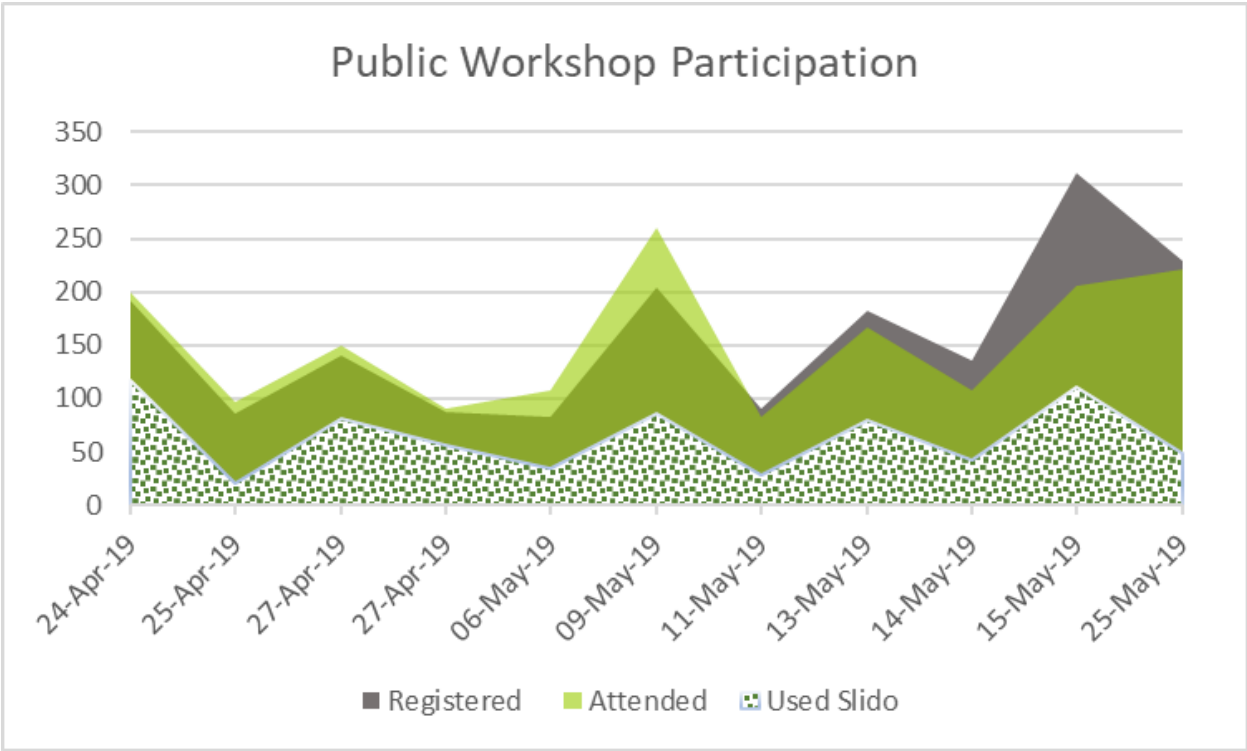
Attendees represented many education stakeholder groups in Manitoba, including classroom teachers, support teachers, educational assistants, clinicians, K–12 administrators, union staff, parents, teacher educators, industry sector representatives/employers, elected representatives (union, school board, municipal, provincial), students and others.

- Current K-12 educators—teachers, support staff, administrators, school trustees, board staff—made up an estimated 50% or more of each workshop.
- There was a significant number of repeat attendees across multiple workshops.

An initial list of small group discussion topics for each session was derived using the information gathered from event registrants. In addition to this list of discussion topics, new topics could be added to the workshop by participants by request. Following is a detailed breakdown of small group discussion topics by workshop.

Date City	Topics derived from online pre-registration form	Topics added in session
April 24 Winnipeg	• Class size • Teacher supports, resources, training • Governance/structure/school boards • Curriculum • Math education • Student assessment • Teachers, clinicians and principals in the same union • Full-day Kindergarten	• Outdoor education • Inclusion • Supervision/safety in schools • Student supports • Arts/Music education • Indigenous education • Libraries • Alternative programming • LGBTQ2S perspectives
April 25 Thompson	• Class size • Special needs support • Teaching resources and supports • School board structure • Specific needs of students in the	• Inclusion • Math education • All-day Kindergarten • Provincial report cards • Teacher retention/recruitment in the

		North
	North	• Curriculum • What is meant by accountability? • How are Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) calls to action being addressed? • Amalgamation • Long-term vision for education
April 27 Winnipeg (AM)	• Class sizes • Importance of arts/music • Amalgamation/elimination of local school boards • Inclusion – how it looks in a classroom today • Indigenous student needs • Collective bargaining with the provincial government • Who is in the teachers' union • Poverty and its impacts on learning • Resources for teachers • Teacher/school staff workloads • Classroom supports • Student learning and assessment • Financing education • Sex education • Literacy/numeracy • English as an Additional Language learners • French language education	• Infrastructure • Curriculum re: government and democracy • Mental health in schools • Full-day Kindergarten • Financial literacy
April 27 Winnipeg (PM) (Facilitated in French)	• Governance • Supporting students • Inclusion and special needs • French as a first language (FL1) education • French Immersion (FL2) • Teacher shortage • Early childhood • Labour relations/human resources • The curriculum • The community's voice in the schools • Class size • Assessment: Student achievement and performance • Assessing teaching services and quality • Future of the Bureau de l'éducation française (BEF) • Promoting post-secondary education in French • Promoting the teaching profession	N/A
May 6 The Pas	• Teaching excellence • School governance • Teacher retention in the North • Provincial bargaining	• Structure of the school year • Poverty • Dual Credit System • Attendance issues

	• Class sizes
	• Resources/opportunities for smaller/
	  northern schools
	• School curriculum
	• Indigenous content/perspectives
	• Resources for students with special
	  needs
	• Youth mental health
		• Funding for French Immersion
		• Vocational training
		• Bullying
		• Mandatory Kindergarten
		• Including principals in the teachers'
		  union/teachers' union structure

May 9 Brandon	• Teaching excellence • Governance/local decision-making • Governance/local decision-making • Class sizes • Student mental health • Curriculum • French language education • Class size • Supports for special needs students • Teacher training/development • Equal opportunities for rural schools • Indigenous education supports • Inclusion • Band/music education • Literacy • Numeracy • Student assessment • Student achievement/success • Class sizes • Curriculum • Poverty	• Home schooling • Equity in education funding • Local innovation • Educational Assistant (EA) supports • Sex education

May 11
Dauphin
	• Teaching excellence
	• Class sizes
	• Education quality
	• Curriculum
	• Governance/local decision-making
	• Special needs supports
	• Math education
	• Education funding
	• Equal opportunities for rural/small
	  schools
	• Long-term vision for education
	• Literacy
	• Poverty
	• Student achievement
	• Student assessment
		• Mental health
		• EAs
		• French Immersion resources
		• At-risk learners
		• Achieving success for First Nations
		  students
		• Teacher training/supports
		• Applied/hands-on learning
		• Inclusion
		• Teacher workload

May 13 Carman	• Teaching excellence • Class sizes • Funding • Teacher training and supports • Access to resources for rural divisions/locations • Mental health needs and supports • Standardized student assessment • Teacher/staff accountability • Poverty • Math education	N/A

	• Local autonomy and decision-making • Reconciliation/TRC in schools • Early years education • Closure of the education library • Teacher workload • Literacy • Indigenous education • Classroom inclusion • Vocational/job training • Governance	
May 14 Steinbach	• Teaching excellence • Class size/student–teacher ratio • Educational funding • Local desires and solutions • Governance • Curriculum • Standardized student assessment • Student accountability • Impact of poverty in the classroom • Amalgamation of schools and divisions • Access to clinicians and student support services • Reconciliation/TRC in schools • Funding/resources for EAs • 21st-century learning • Special needs education • Citizenship in education • Supports for students with learning Disabilities	N/A
May 15 Winnipeg	• School funding model(s) • Class size • Class composition/diversity • Literacy • Governance • Special education • Student mental health • Sex education • Libraries • Amalgamation • Professional development for teachers • Music education • Funding of arts education • TRC/reconciliation • Innovation in education • Child poverty • EAL • Numeracy • Classroom supports • Student achievement • Teacher education • Newcomer services • French Immersion • Professional standards in education • Teaching excellence	• Independent schools • Early childhood education • Sustainable living education • School absenteeism • Long-term vision • Healthy workplaces in education • Bilingual education • Union membership

	• Local voices in community schools • Inclusion and equity • Alternative education • Clinical/clinician services • LGBTQ+ education and allyship	
May 25 Winnipeg	• Local autonomy and representation • Class size/class composition • Sexual health education • Supports for students living in poverty • Teacher education and professional development • Special education • Student mental health • Indigenous perspectives in education • Financial literacy • Breakfast/snack/lunch programs • Integrating cultural perspectives • Multi-age classrooms • Funding of arts in schools • Supports for refugee/newcomer students • Student attendance • Early years education funding • EAL programs • Youth in care • Classroom supports (EAs, resource, clinicians) • Parental engagement • Amalgamation • Teaching/education programming excellence • Equity in education • Curriculum for the future	• Literacy • Students with disabilities • Funding school choice • LGBTQ+ • Increasing Indigenous graduation

During each workshop, Slido—an online interactive engagement tool (see Slido.com)—was used to pose questions to the attendees and gather feedback. Following is a summary of questions asked on Slido and number of (#) responses by workshop.

Slido Questions	Apr 24	Apr 25	Apr 27	Apr 27*	May 6	May 9**	May 11	May 13	May 14	May 15	May 25
What advice or questions do you have for the commission as the process continues?	N/A	9	75	59	29	70	25	102	24	119	28
What are your hopes for this K to 12 Education Review?	100	13	48	31	14	40	5	42	25	65	29
What are your concerns for this K to 12 Education Review?	90	13	49	18	18	38	15	40	25	63	30
What are your priorities for the discussion today?	21	N/A	15	10	3	6	2	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Please share any comments, ideas or questions that you would like considered as part of Manitoba's Commission on K to 12 Education.	9	N/A	17	8	4	3	1	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Based on your discussions today, what are some key themes you would like the commission to consider in their review?	115	N/A	N/A	N/A	29	48	31	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Exit Survey	9	7	11	39	13	19	9	24	11	21	6

Questions asked in French only.
**Questions asked in French and English.*
N/A – question not asked; based on attendee feedback, Slido tools were adjusted to optimize participation over the engagement period and questions were consolidated to simplify options for participants to provide their feedback.

Attendees were also provided with hard copy Comment Forms and Exit Surveys in the workshop brochure. Following is a summary of submissions of hard copy forms/surveys by workshop.

Hard copy forms submitted	Apr 24	Apr 25	Apr 27	Apr 27*	May 6	May 9**	May 11	May 13	May 14	May 15	May 25
Comment Forms	45	11	25	6	3	22	26	25	15	28	18
Exit Surveys	48	20	41	8	15	49	36	38	27	43	20

Forms provided in French only.
**Forms provided in French and English.*

Exit Survey Results[1]
Q1. How did you hear about the workshop?

Website	22.6%
Social Media	25.6%
Newspaper	7.4%
From a friend	13.7%
Other	34.2%

Q2. How well did you feel you were able to participate today?

1 star	3.1%
2 stars	10.7%
3 stars	30.2%
4 stars	31.4%
5 stars	24.5%

Q5. Overall, how would you rate the workshop?

1 star	3.6%
2 stars	13.3%
3 stars	31.3%
4 stars	34.3%
5 stars	17.5%

Process significance
- Public sessions were held in locations across Manitoba (Winnipeg, Brandon, Dauphin, Steinbach, Carman, Thompson, The Pas) that represent a large portion of Manitoba's population.
- The process design provided for a conversational tone at the workshops and time/space for all participants to provide their feedback in discussion as well as in documented form (hard copy and digital).
- The process was flexible and iterative in that two public sessions were added as a direct result of early session feedback, with one being hosted in the northwest quadrant of Winnipeg responding to specific feedback on this initial gap in session location coverage. Also, Slido questions were streamlined and the small group discussion set-up was adapted to better meet the needs of participants throughout the engagement process.
- Indigenous community Elders who participated in Thompson, The Pas and Winnipeg (May 25) workshops facilitated community member access to the process and provided valuable guidance to the public engagement team.

Process limitations
- Group discussion summaries were completed by volunteer recorders and may reflect the biases of these volunteers. In order to mitigate this bias and ensure dissenting views were

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[1] Includes survey results from all sessions entered in Slido and on hard-copy exit surveys.

captured, tools were used to gather feedback, including: session summary notes – "reconvene" discussion, sharing circle (facilitator documented), individual Comment Forms and Exit Surveys (hard copy and on Slido), 6 Focus Area and Journey Map.
- The Caboto Centre is not easily accessible by public transit, which was a barrier to access for two of the evening sessions in Winnipeg.
- This process may not include feedback from a representative sample.
  - Although there were four sessions in Winnipeg, not all of Winnipeg was well represented (two sessions at Caboto Centre – SW, one session at Club Regent NE, one session at RB Russell – NW).
  - Workshops were all held in cities and towns and required participants from outside of those centres to be able to travel to the location. Feedback is therefore less likely to include perspectives from rural/remote locations of the province.
  - Repeat attendees took up space on registration lists as well as speaking time in multiple sessions and thus perspectives brought forward by these repeat attendees may be overrepresented.
- Thompson and Caboto Centre (May 15) venue capacity limitations were reached during pre-registration and required the waitlist function on Eventbrite to be enabled, potentially resulting in would-be participants not attending.
  - The Thompson workshop was over-capacity and resulted in the removal of tables from the small group discussion room set-up that continued throughout the balance of the engagement process.
  - All waitlisted participants were approved for the Caboto Centre (May 15) and room capacity was not reached at the session (i.e., some who pre-registered did not ultimately attend).
- Slido users in the April workshops identified that they preferred to engage on Slido when they could see others' feedback. The impact of not being able to make polls public is not known; however, Slido use was adapted in subsequent sessions to include the Ideas function that does allow for all Slido participants to view comments while the event remained open online.
- Some attendees who did not speak English or French experienced language barriers (specifically noted at the May 25 workshop at RB Russell High School). These participants were often newcomers to Canada and, as a result of the language barriers they experienced, they were not able to fully participate in the workshop or provide their feedback into the process.
- The calendar invitation from Eventbrite for the May 15 workshop in Winnipeg was set to Central Standard Time but should have been Central Daylight Savings Time. This resulted in participant calendar invitations noting a 7:00 PM start time (vs. a 6:00 PM start time).
- Workshop duration (2.5 hours) was too short if the workshop start was delayed. As a result, some workshops (Thompson April 25 and Winnipeg May 25 and for some who attended Winnipeg May 15) did not provide enough discussion time for participants.
- Workshop was dependent on clear audio/mics, so where this was not achieved (i.e., in Brandon and Steinbach), communication and clarity were somewhat compromised.

Student engagement
Student representatives primarily in Grades 10 to 12 from all 37 school divisions were invited to engage in the full-day student workshop, and all but two divisions sent student delegates. Through school division administration and based on the 2018–2019 enrollment,[2] 112 students gathered in Winnipeg on May 3, 2019. The workshop was facilitated primarily in

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[2] School divisions with up to 2,000 students: 2 delegates; 2,001–5,000 students: 3 delegates; 5,001–10,000 students: 4 delegates; 10,001–20,000 students: 5 delegates; more than 20,000: 6 delegates.

English, with some French language supports provided. An additional workshop was later added for 25 Division scolaire franco-manitobaine (DSFM) students on May 30, 2019 and facilitated in French.

Public Workshops		Participants	
Date, time	Location	# attended session	# used Slido
May 3, 2019, 9:30 AM–3:00 PM	Canad Inns Destination Transcona 826 Regent Ave W., Winnipeg	112 students 44 chaperones	114
May 30, 2019, 9:00 AM–11:30 AM	École Roméo-Dallaire 81 Chemin Quail Ridge, Winnipeg	25 students	8

The May 3 student workshop was designed considering the unique characteristics of the student participant group (number, predominant language, school division/geographic mix, etc.).

In advance of this workshop, students were asked to provide responses to two questions to guide the workshop discussion topics.
1) Thinking about your experiences from Kindergarten to Grade 12…
    a) What was the biggest challenge you have faced in achieving success in school?
    b) What was most helpful in achieving student success?

2) What do you think is most important that we discuss as a group in the student workshop?

Date	Topics derived from pre-registration questions	Topics added in session
May 3	• Accommodating different learning styles • Improving opportunities for smaller/ rural/northern schools • Changes to the school timetable/ schedule • More chances for applied/hands-on learning • Bullying • Providing mental health/wellness supports to students • Integrating technology into the classroom/curriculum • Increasing academic standards • Emphasizing sustainability in schools • Teaching life skills/financial skills • Student input into how schools operate • Teacher availability • Alternative ways to assess students • Including more Indigenous content • Local decision-making in the school system	• Creating safe and inclusive spaces for LGBTQ+ students • Emphasizing climate change in schools • Teacher quality

The May 30th DSFM student workshop, which was facilitated in French, included an exercise inviting the students to describe what their "dream school" would look like, based on one of the following themes suggested by the facilitator: artistic and cultural activities; sports, the francophonie, the environment and the trades. This was followed by informal discussions where key topics – reading, student engagement and provincial testing – were highlighted. Students were also guided through a process, with facilitator prompts, to identify a few priorities to inform the commissioners.

May 30	Identified priorities
	• Connect learning to "real life" skills required for the realities of life outside the classroom. • Develop effective resources to better support students with mental health issues. • Involve students in a more significant manner in the decision making process. • Improve student assessment tools and processes used in schools to focus more on "understanding" rather than on "memorization. • Reduce class sizes. • Offer more opportunities to strengthen the sense of belonging of Francophone students and develop a pertinent communication strategy to achieve this goal.

During each of the student workshops, Slido was used to pose questions to the students and to gather feedback. Following is a summary of questions asked on Slido and number of (#) responses by workshop.

May 3-Slido Questions	# of responses
What do you hope to get from today's discussion?	39
Do you think your time in the education system has prepared you for life after high school? Why/why not?	138
What priorities do you want to talk about during the discussion today?	55
Please enter the top-two most interesting things you learned from this discussion.	95
What was the one thing you learned this morning that you didn't know before?	29
What did you like about this morning's session?	31
What would you improve about this morning's session?	26
Exit Survey	39

(N/A = not asked)

May 30-Slido Questions Questions originally posed in French. Session facilitated in French	# of responses
What advice do you have for the Commission or what questions would you like to ask as the process continues?	3
What are the greatest challenges you have faced at school?	1

What has most contributed to your success?	0
Exit Survey	3

(N/A = not asked)

Slido was used as a key facilitation tool in the May 3 workshop due to group size and to maintain student engagement over the full day. Slido was not used in the same way on May 30, as the group was much smaller and the workshop duration was shorter.

Exit Survey Results[3] (May 3rd)
Q2. How well did you feel you were able to participate today?

1 star	0.0%
2 stars	14.3%
3 stars	0.0%
4 stars	42.9%
5 stars	42.9%

Q5. Overall, how would you rate the workshop?

1 star	0.0%
2 stars	0.0%
3 stars	14.3%
4 stars	28.6%
5 stars	57.1%

Process significance
- May 3 session included students from all but 2 school divisions and provided the opportunity for students to discuss perspectives and provide feedback from across the province.
- Students in both sessions were highly engaged in workshop activities designed to meet the group size and workshop length.

Process limitations
- The processes by which participants were selected for the May 3rd session were owned and managed by the school divisions and not shared with the facilitators or commission. The letter from the commission, inviting school divisions to identify student delegates, stated that it would be "valuable to hear from students from a variety of backgrounds, experiences and circumstances – those who are experiencing a high degree of success and those who have experienced obstacles – in their K to 12 education path".
- Both student sessions were held in Winnipeg and therefore provided a "home" environment for some students and a "visitor" environment for others.

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[3] Only 7 responses in total.

Key themes

This section reflects the areas of common interest that emerged from the public and student workshops held across Manitoba. The summary of key themes[4] was determined based on a review of individual event summaries as well as the detailed perspectives captured in response to the six focus areas contemplated at each consultation and review of individual comment forms submitted at workshops.

The first section includes themes that were raised by participants in all sessions. Subsequently, themes that emerged less often or in specific locations follow. Finally, the key themes that emerged in the student sessions are listed.

The key themes in each section are listed in alphabetical order.

Themes common across all locations

Class size
Participants emphasised that class size must be carefully managed in order to ensure that students are kept engaged and teachers are able to manage the numbers of students, needs and workloads in the classroom. Increased class sizes deter from positive learning outcomes. Larger class sizes hinder teachers' ability to meet all students' needs.

Consultation in good faith
Participants expressed concern that input provided throughout consultation will not be used/heard by the commission and the provincial government and/or that outcomes are predetermined.

Education is an investment
Kindergarten to Grade 12 public schools are one of the most important resources in Manitoba. Participants expressed concern that the focus of the commission's work is to defund or cut allocations to schools. Many cited the importance of understanding that funding education is a much-needed investment that generates a high return on quality of life for all. In order for Manitoban students to be equipped for competitive job markets and post-secondary learning, more, not less, investment is desired for Manitoba's school system.

Inclusion
Diverse learning abilities of all students means that students learn at different rates and in different ways. Participants suggested that applying a cookie-cutter approach to curriculum cannot account for the diversity of learning abilities as well as factors such as first language, context (e.g., legacy of residential schools) and impact of poverty on day-to-day learning. If needs and barriers are not addressed, students risk falling behind in all areas, and it becomes more difficult to catch up. Schools, students and teachers all need more individualized resources and supports to support learning at all stages.

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[4] Note that all opinions and perspectives are not represented in this section, as it is meant as a summary of the most common themes. Also, key themes do not include a relative sizing, as the data gathered is a combination of group discussion outcomes across multiple workshops and individual feedback. Fulsome data analysis of coded hard copy documents and digital files could be considered to determine a comparative sizing of key themes.

All students want the opportunity to participate and learn. Participants want to see inclusive curricula and classrooms that are designed to reflect diverse learning styles and approaches to teaching.

Intersectoral and interagency collaboration
Issues for teachers and students go beyond school walls and involve overlapping and interdependent systems. Participants called for collaboration, coordination and alignment among different sectors and government departments (child welfare, housing, healthcare, justice, etc.) may be beneficial and serve to improve learning outcomes and pressure on teachers.

Mental health
Participants stressed that mental health supports are needed to assist students and teachers, as health and well-being are essential components for learning and success. Identifying and implementing strategies and supports that address a spectrum of mental health needs across student populations are needed.

More and equitable funding
Participants in all sessions indicated that equitable funding distributed across divisions would make it possible for students and teachers to access similar kinds of resources. Funding is not the same across divisions and results in a disparity of available opportunities for all students and educators. Participants also suggested that looking at how education is financed in Manitoba is important, as is ensuring that funding does not decrease overall.

Poverty impacts the ability to learn
Food and housing security are essential tools for learning that many Manitoban students do not have. Participants stated that students who come to school hungry and tired face impediments to their ability to learn, their teachers' ability to teach and, in some cases, the focus of the classroom in general. Providing access to food for all students will decrease hunger in the classroom, destigmatize the need to access support and improve learning outcomes.

Standardized testing
Many participants suggested that standardized testing does not reflect academic achievements or students' understanding; too much emphasis on assessment takes away from creativity in the classroom and impedes reflection of distinct geographic and community nuances. Others suggested that standardized testing be tied to report cards to create more connection between classroom outcomes and test scores.

Themes common across most locations
Amalgamation
Participants expressed concern that amalgamating school divisions and boards would have a negative impact on community-specific needs and that it would become more difficult for diverse voices to be heard. It was suggested that there could be an option to voluntarily amalgamate, as each of the divisions has their own unique issues.

Indigenous learners
Participants noted that Indigenous learners have unique needs to be met throughout the Kindergarten to Grade 12 journey. Indigenous perspectives, culture and language were identified as critical components that could be reflected in all curricula at every stage.

There are unique challenges related to intergenerational trauma as a result of colonization and the legacy of residential schools that Indigenous students deal with that impacts many aspects of learning.

Local autonomy
Having a "local voice" in the education system was important to participants. Many expressed concern that a province-wide system may not allow for the unique characteristics and opportunities that exist in rural and northern communities and that educators, administrators, parents and students in these communities know best how to navigate what is needed in their communities.

Professional development
Participants cited the desire for more professional development opportunities for teachers. The classroom has changed—who is in it, technology, curriculum—meaning that teachers must be supported to keep up with changes so that education can adapt to prepare students for the future.

Reconciliation
Reconciliation relies on understanding that the reasons for the gap in education outcomes between First Nation and Indigenous students and non-First Nation and Indigenous students in Manitoba is directly tied to the legacy of residential schools and the generational impacts that resulted. Participants emphasised a critical need for equitable funding models as well as supports for Indigenous languages and cultural practices if improvements are to be realized.

Retention and recruitment
Participants recognized that there are challenges unique to rural and northern schools in attracting and retaining teachers.

The environment
Students and teachers expressed a desire to see more classroom/curriculum discussion of climate change and more education about environmental sustainability.

Union membership
Many participants expressed their preference to keep teachers, principals, clinicians and administrators in the same union—no "us vs. them."

Themes within specific locations
Brandon/Dauphin
Participants noted that local autonomy is not only important in terms of ensuring there is local decision-making and accountability for education, but also in terms of ensuring the social and economic survival of small communities that are seen to be at risk of losing small schools.

Many reported that by ensuring there are equitable opportunities for learners in small communities parents will not have to make the choice to either move to a larger community or send their young children somewhere else to learn.

Central/Core Area Winnipeg
Participants were grateful the commission heard the request for a session in the core area of Winnipeg.

Outside Winnipeg
Participants at all of the sessions outside of Winnipeg indicated that funding needs to increase in order to support services for all kids, no matter where they live. They reported that local representation on school boards and in schools, in both rural and northern communities, is imperative in order to support meeting community-specific needs. Some participants suggested that, while communities across the province are in favour of inclusion, there are insufficient resources to achieve it.

Thompson/The Pas
Participants in northern Manitoba indicated that geographic isolation and the legacy of residential schools, including poverty and the number of children in care in the community, increase pressure on teachers, schools and educational resources. One of the impacts of residential schools that participants highlighted is that there is generational suspicion or wariness about the importance and safety of schooling.

Attendance was cited as a major challenge in northern and remote areas, especially in early years, which is related to poverty and other life challenges that students face when other things are a greater priority. Participants noted that there are many small communities spread out throughout the north that lack the necessary educational resources needed to address attendance issues and other learning challenges.

Participants at these two workshops reported a need to ensure that Kindergarten to Grade 12 exists in every community, including remote north or First Nations communities. Participants acknowledged that there are associated challenges to finding and retaining teachers in northern communities.

That students and teachers in northern Manitoba do not have the same resources or opportunities as those in the south was highlighted, along with concerns about how student outcomes/measures of success in this region are compared to the provincial/national average.

Themes from French sessions
Amalgamation
Participants suggested that schoolboard amalgamation would not generate economies of scale or enhance the quality of education. In the case of French language education, it is seen as critical that the Manitoba Education and Training's Bureau de l'éducation française (BEF) lead these efforts, as they know the unique qualities of the French language communities best.

French language education
Participants suggested that the BEF needs strengthening to support schools offering the Français Program and the French Immersion Program. Some participants articulated that the education system is not broken, and extraordinary things are being done. One example given is the highly successful French Immersion program in Manitoba.

The DSFM has a unique mandate to protect and champion access to French as a first language education in Manitoba. Participates indicated that it is important to find a *Manitoba* solution.

French language speakers
Participants indicated that French language education is much more than just an advantage for getting a job and that it is important to consider its real value in the context of the cultural and linguistic importance to francophones in Manitoba and Manitobans in general.

Poverty
Participants indicated that poverty is an underlying factor that affects the entire school system, including the DSFM system, and that it is on the rise. There are concerns that insufficient resources in the classroom make dealing with the pressures of poverty, inclusion, etc., very challenging.

Themes from student sessions
Climate change
Students recommend that increased classroom time and curriculum focus be prioritized to learn about climate change, including environmental sustainability.

Engagement
Students expressed a desire to be actively engaged in decision-making about education and are eager to contribute ideas and suggestions based on their experiences. Students have a voice and want to be heard. Students expressed thanks for being included in the K–12 consultation process.

Equity and inclusion
It was understood by many students participating that a lot of programs/courses/options available in urban environments—specifically Winnipeg—are not available in rural and northern schools. More broadly, students articulated that the education system could greatly benefit from fostering more equal opportunity for all students from all backgrounds in all regions of the province in order to support different learning styles. Students expressed concern that resources are not distributed to schools equally.

Students expressed that the education system is biased and not inclusive of students of colour, LGTBQ+ and differently-abled students, and that the disparity in inclusivity sets up some students for success and leaves others behind.

Indigenous curriculum
Many students suggested that Indigenous history should be a mandatory course for all students in all school divisions. (This echoes one of the TRC's 94 calls to action.)

Mental health
Students indicated that they want increased access to mental health and social supports in the schools. Students would like to learn about coping mechanisms and tools to offer peer support when needed. Students noted that teachers do not seem to get the support they need to support students with mental health needs. (The desire for increased access to mental health resources came up frequently in both student sessions.)

"Real life"
More educational opportunities that prepare students for "real life" are desired. Students want to see the connections between learning and life outside school (e.g., financial literacy, job skills) as critical to understanding the relevance of what is taught.

Students suggested that emphasis on critical thinking is needed for students to be engaged, not just teaching the curriculum in the same way to all students. Students expressed concern

that they are being taught what to think, not how to think, and that current testing methods focus on memorization more than understanding.

Ways of learning
Student participants identified that it is important to quickly catch kids who are falling behind and offer hands-on projects, not only tests, to explore creativity and different ways of learning. Once learners fall behind, it is very hard to catch up and the demand for supports needed to address the gaps increases. More broadly, students recommended teaching that is tailored to different ways of learning and comprehending, including opportunities for "hands-on learning," outdoor learning, smaller class sizes and more active engagement of students in their learning.

Access to arts, cultural, sport and intramural activities in school were cited as ways to increase opportunities to develop collaboration and communication skills among students. Facilities that allow schools to support these activities are seen as important.

Specific to DFSM students
Students expressed interest in having more opportunities to "live" their francophonie and strengthen a sense of belonging to the francophone community in Manitoba. Students made a clear distinction between learning *about* French versus having experiences *in* French, and would prefer more of the latter.

Students indicated that they want more exposure to non-traditional careers and professions and the opportunity to take trades courses in French.

Focus area key themes
At each of the 11 public workshop consultations, the same six focus areas were presented for consideration.
1. Long-term vision – What should the goals and purpose of K to 12 be in a rapidly changing world?
2. Student learning – What are the conditions required to achieve excellence in student achievement and outcomes in Manitoba?
3. Teaching – How can teachers and school leaders become most effective?
4. Accountability for student learning – How can the education system develop a stronger sense of shared accountability for student learning?
5. Governance – What type of governance structures are needed to create a coordinated and relevant education system?
6. Funding – What actions are required to ensure that the education system is sustainable and provides equitable learning opportunities for all children and youth?

The following represent the key points that emerged out of the discussion of these focus areas specifically. In many cases, this information echoes the key themes identified above; however, given that these six topics were contemplated in every session, additional perspectives were captured for consideration.

Long-term vision
- Students need to be equipped for life. Reading, writing, math and critical thinking skills are paramount but can only be achieved if the "whole student" is supported. This is a challenge, as so many resources are needed to support learning that targets circumstances that occur outside of school. Child poverty in Manitoba is a huge barrier to improved learning outcomes. There is a need to address barriers to learning before kids even get into the classroom.

Student learning
- Resources are needed that target students' challenges outside the classroom (food programs, mental health support) in order to meet basic needs. Students can't learn if they are hungry, homeless, in crises.

- Small(er) class size (by far) is identified as a critical component for teacher success, in addition to ensuring that teachers have in-class resources such as educational assistants and other supports to meet student needs.

- Smaller class sizes benefit both teachers and students.

Teaching
- Teachers and principals should remain in same organization.

- Additional tools and resources are needed to support integrated classrooms with complex needs (i.e., classroom supports, professional development, etc.)

- Collaboration – with other teachers, leaders, librarians, student support experts, parents, community members – is important.

Accountability for student learning
- Resources in school to support teachers to teach/meet student needs

- Importance of seeing the whole child and providing mental health supports and necessary skills for life

- Testing and data: Testing should be linked to report cards. Testing and data cannot be used efficiently if unconnected from the context in how/where gathered. There needs to be a link between overarching standards and local realities.

Governance
- School divisions provide local oversight that reflects community priorities.

- If amalgamation of school divisions were to occur, it would need to be staged slowly to allow for proper consultation and incorporation of local decision-making inputs. Bigger isn't necessary better, and any overarching model must allow for local decision-making.

Funding
- Funding should be provided to all schools and students in the same way and equally on a per capita basis. It is critical to address issues of equity and access in schools where some schools have more resources than others. There is believed to be a divide between rural, northern and urban schools and how funding is allocated.

- Criticism arose that funding education via property taxes creates a two-tier system.

- School divisions reflect local needs and priorities and need to remain autonomous. Economies of scale will not be realized via amalgamation, as what works in one area of the province isn't going to fit another, and there will be a cost to right-size everything.