



"Accepting the Challenge"

MSBA Resolutions Committee Minutes

Tuesday, November 30, 2010, 3:00 p.m.
Conference Room, Administration Office

Present: M. Sefton (Chairperson) L. Ross, G. Barnes
Regrets: Dr. D. Michaels

I. ELECTION OF CHAIR/SETTING REGULAR MEETING DATES/REVIEW COMMITTEE RESPONSIBILITIES

The MSBA Resolutions Committee Meeting was called to order at 3:05 p.m. It was agreed Trustee Sefton would serve as Committee Chairperson.

II. COMMITTEE GOVERNANCE GOAL ITEMS NIL

III. OTHER COMMITTEE GOVERNANCE MATTERS

A) The Committee considered and discussed the following items to be forwarded to the 2011 MSBA Annual Convention:

- 1) Property tax exemption to eliminate property tax on Division owned property.
- 2) Manitoba Schools Insurance Program coverage to increase insurance for computer theft and volunteers.
- 3) Public Schools Finance Board – Five Year Plan asking MSBA to petition the PSFB for information regarding the outstanding requests of school divisions Five-Year Plan requests.
- 4) Private donations for capital projects to allow divisions to solicit private donations for major building additions/renovations or capital equipment.
- 5) Full day/every day Kindergarten classes.
- 6) Change the School of Choice date from May 15th to September 15th of each year. (To be removed.)
- 7) Lengthen the school year to 200 days. The Committee requested Senior Administration research what other Divisions are doing with respect to length of school day to meet the required amount of instructional time.
- 8) Consultation with Manitoba School Divisions regarding the establishment of standardized report cards by the Provincial Government.
- 9) Impact on the local taxpayer should School Divisions lose the right to a local property tax levy and what effect this had on school divisions in other Provinces who lost the right to tax.

The Committee agreed that the resolutions be forwarded to the Board for approval on these items. Final drafts of the final resolutions to be presented to the Board will be forwarded to Committee members before taking to the Board for approval. (Appendix "A").

Recommendation:

That the Board submit to the Manitoba School Boards Association resolutions on the following:

- 1) Property Tax Exemption.
- 2) Manitoba Schools Insurance Program Coverage.
- 3) Public Schools Finance Board – Five Year Plan.
- 4) Private Donations for Capital Projects.
- 5) Full Day/Every Day Kindergarten.
- 6) Length of School Year.
- 7) Standard Report Cards.
- 8) Ability to Levy Property Tax.

IV. OPERATIONAL INFORMATION

NIL

The meeting adjourned at 4:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

M. Sefton, Chair

L. Ross

RESOLUTION:

CATEGORY: EDUCATION FINANCE

TITLE: PROPERTY TAX EXEMPTION

SPONSORING DIVISION: BRANDON SCHOOL DIVISION

BE IT RESOLVED THAT MSBA petition the Government of Manitoba to undertake the necessary action to exempt all school division owned property from local property taxation.

Comments:

Section 22(1) and Section 23(1) of The Municipal Assessment Act presently provides for the exemption of school property to a maximum of 4.047 hectares or 10 acres. Further, in The Public Schools Act Definitions “public school” means an institution for educational purposes established and maintained under this Act or The Education Administration Act. “Institution” can be an organization and not only a building. Presently the Provincial Assessment Branch does not exempt vacant land. This interpretation is considered to be incorrect based on the definition of an “institution”. The Minister of Local Government should be requested to direct the Provincial Assessment Branch to revise its interpretation to be in accordance with The Municipal Assessment Act and The Public Schools Act. In addition, many school divisions require more than 4.047 hectares (10 acres) to accommodate high school facilities. Therefore the maximum areas should be removed from The Municipal Assessment Act.

RESOLUTION:

CATEGORY: SCHOOL BOARDS

TITLE: MANITOBA SCHOOLS INSURANCE PROGRAM COVERAGE

SPONSORING DIVISION: BRANDON

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Manitoba Schools Insurance Program (MSIP) review the insured amounts provided for computer theft, funds transfer fraud and accident insurance for volunteers.

Comments:

The insurance coverage presently provided for computer theft, funds transfer fraud is \$1,000,000 and accident insurance for volunteers is a maximum of \$20,000. These insurance coverage amounts have not been increased for several years and are no longer sufficient considering current situations Divisions are experiencing. It is requested that the MSIP review the provided coverage with the view to increasing them to a more appropriate amount.

RESOLUTION:

CATEGORY: Education Finance

TITLE: PUBLIC SCHOOLS FINANCE BOARD – FIVE YEAR PLAN

SPONSORING DIVISION: BRANDON

BE IT RESOLVED THAT MSBA petition the Public Schools Finance Board (PSFB) to provide information regarding the outstanding requests of Manitoba School Divisions as submitted in the Five-Year Plan Requests, to provide a projected time-line for fulfilling these requests, the amount of Provincial Government funding required to meet the Five-Year Plan requests, and to provide a listing by school division of PSFB project support for the past five years.

Comments:

All Manitoba School Divisions submit a Five-Year Plan to the PSFB on an annual basis. Divisions are advised when projects are approved but are not provided as to the status or a time-line for their other project requests. This requires divisions to continue to repeat project requests or results in other requests not being submitted due to the amount of projects presently outstanding. School Divisions and Government should be aware of funding necessary to meet the outstanding infrastructure needs of Manitoba Public Schools and an approximate time-line for implementation.

RESOLUTION:

CATEGORY: EDUCATION FINANCE

TITLE: PRIVATE DONATIONS FOR CAPITAL PROJECTS

SPONSORING DIVISION: BRANDON

BE IT RESOLVED THAT MSBA petition the Government of Manitoba to have the Public Schools Finance Board provide a policy and/or parameters allowing School Divisions to solicit private donations for major building additions/renovations or capital equipment (e.g. vocational equipment, computer systems).

Comments:

Financial constraints in funding by the Provincial Government and at the local level result in capital projects being reduced, delayed or cancelled. There may be instances where School Divisions could obtain private donations in support of such projects allowing them to proceed. To date the Provincial Government, Manitoba Education, or the Public Schools Finance Board have not provided guidelines to School Divisions or provided encouragement in this regard. The ability to obtain private corporate support would be beneficial to School Divisions.

RESOLUTION:

CATEGORY: STUDENTS AND INSTRUCTION

TITLE: FULL DAY/EVERY DAY KINDERGARTEN

SPONSORING DIVISION: BRANDON

BE IT RESOLVED THAT MSBA urge the Government of Manitoba to fund full day/every day Kindergarten.

Comments:

Government currently funds Kindergarten on a half time basis. Government has also spoken strongly about and has initiatives in place regarding early childhood education. All current educational research stresses the vital importance of early childhood education particularly in regards to literacy and numeracy development. Full day/every day Kindergarten would lend stronger support to the education of all children, the system and to government initiatives, i.e. a strong message would be given to the public/community for public education and the great need for the initiatives in early child development. The Province of Ontario has recently accepted the importance of full day/every day kindergarten commencing on a phase-in basis. The next great development in education must take place in this area if the political will to act exists.

RESOLUTION:

CATEGORY: STUDENTS AND INSTRUCTION

TITLE: LENGTH OF SCHOOL YEAR

SPONSORING DIVISION: BRANDON SCHOOL DIVISION

BE IT RESOLVED THAT MSBA petition the government of Manitoba to increase the number of days in a school year to 200 days.

Comments:

School Divisions continue to have difficulty providing the required hours of instruction within the number of school days currently provided in the Public Schools Act. During the period 2008/2009 to 2012/2013 the number of days in the school year has been either 193 or 196 days. In order to provide the necessary instructional time for our students the number of days in the school year should be increased to 200 days.

RESOLUTION:

CATEGORY: SCHOOL BOARDS
TITLE: STANDARD REPORT CARDS
SPONSORING DIVISION: BRANDON

BE IT RESOLVED THAT MSBA petition the Provincial Government to consult with School Divisions before implementing a standard Provincial report card.

Comments:

The Provincial Government recently announced through the media that they would be implementing a standardized report card to be used throughout the Province. Many School Divisions have undertaken significant work in the area of assessment and reporting. This information should be considered by the Province before mandating a standard report card. It is important that consultation with School Boards occur regarding this matter.

RESOLUTION:

CATEGORY: SCHOOL BOARDS
TITLE: ABILITY TO LEVY PROPERTY TAX
SPONSORING DIVISION: BRANDON

BE IT RESOLVED THAT MSBA research the amount the Provincial Government grants would need to be increased if Manitoba School Divisions lost the ability to levy a local property tax and further, provide information on how school divisions in other Provinces dealt with this matter when they lost the right to local property taxation.

Comments:

One of the major issues facing Manitoba School Boards is the discussion regarding school boards' right to a local property tax levy. This matter is very important in order that funding for local needs and Board autonomy are maintained. The Manitoba School Boards Association needs to take a very strong and proactive position for Manitoba School Boards regarding this matter. In order to accomplish this, it is important for the public to know how much funding would be required from the Government of Manitoba to continue the K-12 educational services currently supplied by Manitoba School Divisions. Further, it is important to know the effects the loss of ability to a local property tax levy had on school divisions in other Provinces when this right was removed. The above requested research is necessary for consideration and discussion of this very important matter.