

**Fifth Session – Forty-Second Legislature**  
of the  
**Legislative Assembly of Manitoba**  
**DEBATES**  
and  
**PROCEEDINGS**  
**Official Report**  
**(Hansard)**

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**MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**  
**Forty-Second Legislature**

<b>Member</b>	<b>Constituency</b>	<b>Political Affiliation</b>
AL TOMARE, Nello	Transcona	NDP
ASAGWARA, Uzoma	Union Station	NDP
BRAR, Diljeet	Burrows	NDP
BUSHIE, Ian	Keewatinook	NDP
CLARKE, Eileen, Hon.	Agassiz	PC
COX, Cathy	Kildonan-River East	PC
CULLEN, Cliff, Hon.	Spruce Woods	PC
DRIEDGER, Myrna, Hon.	Roblin	PC
EICHLER, Ralph	Lakeside	PC
EWASKO, Wayne, Hon.	Lac du Bonnet	PC
FONTAINE, Nahanni	St. Johns	NDP
GERRARD, Jon, Hon.	River Heights	Lib.
GOERTZEN, Kelvin, Hon.	Steinbach	PC
GORDON, Audrey, Hon.	Southdale	PC
GUENTER, Josh	Borderland	PC
GUILLEMARD, Sarah, Hon.	Fort Richmond	PC
HELWER, Reg	Brandon West	PC
ISLEIFSON, Len	Brandon East	PC
JOHNSON, Derek, Hon.	Interlake-Gimli	PC
JOHNSTON, Scott, Hon.	Assiniboia	PC
KHAN, Obby, Hon.	Fort Whyte	PC
KINEW, Wab	Fort Rouge	NDP
KLEIN, Kevin E., Hon.	Kirkfield Park	PC
LAGASSÉ, Bob	Dawson Trail	PC
LAGIMODIERE, Alan	Selkirk	PC
LAMONT, Dougald	St. Boniface	Lib.
LAMOUREUX, Cindy	Tyndall Park	Lib.
LATHLIN, Amanda	The Pas-Kameesak	NDP
LINDSEY, Tom	Flin Flon	NDP
MALOWAY, Jim	Elmwood	NDP
MARCELINO, Malaya	Notre Dame	NDP
MARTIN, Shannon	McPhillips	PC
MICHALESKI, Brad	Dauphin	PC
MICKLEFIELD, Andrew	Rossmere	PC
MORLEY-LECOMTE, Janice, Hon.	Seine River	PC
MOSES, Jamie	St. Vital	NDP
NAYLOR, Lisa	Wolseley	NDP
NESBITT, Greg, Hon.	Riding Mountain	PC
PEDERSEN, Blaine	Midland	PC
PIWNIUK, Doyle, Hon.	Turtle Mountain	PC
REDHEAD, Eric	Thompson	NDP
REYES, Jon, Hon.	Waverley	PC
SALA, Adrien	St. James	NDP
SANDHU, Mintu	The Maples	NDP
SCHULER, Ron	Springfield-Ritchot	PC
SMITH, Andrew, Hon.	Lagimodière	PC
SMITH, Bernadette	Point Douglas	NDP
SMOOK, Dennis	La Vérendrye	PC
SQUIRES, Rochelle, Hon.	Riel	PC
STEFANSON, Heather, Hon.	Tuxedo	PC
TEITSMA, James, Hon.	Radisson	PC
WASYLIW, Mark	Fort Garry	NDP
WHARTON, Jeff, Hon.	Red River North	PC
WIEBE, Matt	Concordia	NDP
WISHART, Ian	Portage la Prairie	PC
WOWCHUK, Rick	Swan River	PC
<i>Vacant</i>	Morden-Winkler	

## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, March 16, 2023

*The House met at 10 a.m.*

**Madam Speaker:** O Eternal and Almighty God, from Whom all power and wisdom come, we are assembled here before Thee to frame such laws as may tend to the welfare and prosperity of our province. Grant, O merciful God, we pray Thee, that we may desire only that which is in accordance with Thy will, that we may seek it with wisdom and know it with certainty and accomplish it perfectly for the glory and honour of Thy name and for the welfare of all our people. Amen.

We acknowledge we are gathered on Treaty 1 territory and that Manitoba is located on the treaty territories and ancestral lands of the Anishinaabeg, Anishinewuk, Dakota Oyate, Denesuline and Nehethowuk nations. We acknowledge Manitoba is located on the Homeland of the Red River Métis. We acknowledge northern Manitoba includes lands that were and are the ancestral lands of the Inuit. We respect the spirit and intent of treaties and treaty making and remain committed to working in partnership with First Nations, Inuit and Métis people in the spirit of truth, reconciliation and collaboration.

Good morning, everybody. Please be seated.

### ORDERS OF THE DAY

#### PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

##### House Business

**MLA Nahanni Fontaine (Official Opposition House Leader):** Pursuant to rule 34(8), I am announcing that the private member's resolution to be considered on the next Thursday of private members' business will be one put forward by the honourable member for St. James (Mr. Sala). The title of the resolution is Calling on the Provincial Government to Listen to Doctors and Stop the Cuts at the Grace Hospital.

**Madam Speaker:** It has been announced that the private member's resolution to be considered on the next Thursday of private members' business will be the one put forward by the honourable member for St. James. The title of the resolution is Calling on the Provincial Government to Listen to Doctors and Stop the Cuts at the Grace Hospital.

\* \* \*

**MLA Fontaine:** Would you call Bill 203, The Orange Shirt Day Statutory Holiday Act, for second reading this morning.

**Madam Speaker:** It has been announced that the House will consider second reading of Bill 203 this morning.

### SECOND READINGS—PUBLIC BILLS

#### Bill 203—The Orange Shirt Day Statutory Holiday Act (Various Acts Amended)

**Madam Speaker:** So I will now call second reading, Bill 203, The Orange Shirt Day Statutory Holiday Act (Various Acts Amended).

**Mr. Ian Bushie (Keewatinook):** I move, seconded by the member for St. Johns (MLA Fontaine), that Bill 203, The Orange Shirt Day Statutory Holiday Act (Various Acts Amended), be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

*Motion presented.*

**Mr. Bushie:** It gives me great pleasure to—well, a little bit torn in terms of regarding it as a great pleasure because this is now the second time that I've brought forward this piece of legislation, Bill 203, The Orange Shirt Day Statutory Holiday Act.

And why I say it gives me great pleasure because it's after hearing basically for my entire life the impacts that have been felt by the residential school system, the intergenerational impacts, the survivors, the stories, the children, the grandchildren and the survivors of residential schools here in Manitoba—so the perseverance and inspiration gives me great pride. It gives me great cause also to raise this issue so it is not forgotten. It is never forgotten.

And here in Manitoba, we do recognize Orange Shirt Day here in the province of Manitoba. It is also now a federal holiday, so we're asking now that this now become a provincial statutory holiday, here in Manitoba. And it's not a matter of a day off or a day to go out to the cabin or the cottage and close up for the season, but it's a day of reflection, recognition and acknowledgment for the impacts that have been felt by residential school.

And it's not just the survivors themselves, direct families themselves, but all of Manitoba and all of

Canada and all of society need to reflect and acknowledge and be aware, and made aware of those impacts. And those devastating impacts, the attempts at genocide, assimilation, extermination that the residential school system brought towards Indigenous people.

Madam Speaker, for a number of years now, on September the 30th, people have used that opportunity, and that day in particular, to be able to have those conversations, to be able to now educate themselves, their families, their loved ones about the impacts of residential school.

But it's more than just that. It's more than just the one day of the year. It's more than just September the 30th. That is an education that needs to happen for us throughout and continues on throughout, 365 days a year.

But if you recall—and I'm sure Madam Speaker was also able to participate in various September 30th activities and events that happened just this past year. And I'm going to sit here and remember a couple of conversations that I had when I was fortunate enough to join the event that began at The Forks, that came down the downtown Winnipeg into RBC Convention Centre. And the conversations I had, not just with Indigenous folks and Indigenous people, but people from all walks of life during those walks down the streets where some of them said, you know, I had to leave work here; I had to skip work to come here; don't tell my boss that I'm here, but I wanted to participate.

I, too, have questions; I, too, have things that I want to ask and things that I want to be able to take forward to my family, my community and educate on the residential school system and the impacts that it had. But I don't have that ability; I don't have that ability to do that because I have to skip out of work, I have to take a day off that's—that I'm not going to be paid for, a day off that maybe my boss may not agree to, but I want to do that because that's the right thing to do.

So I've had—I had those conversations just in that walk from The Forks to the RBC Convention Centre. But I've had those conversations throughout Manitoba, not just in my community, not just in my Indigenous First Nation communities, but across Manitoba. I've had those conversations in the Chamber here. I've had those conversations with members across the way. And that's—that shows me the need for this piece of legislation to pass, so we have that ability to do that.

And like I said, it's not about a day off. It's not about a day off of school or a day off of work. It's about education, so everybody has that ability, so we don't kind of bring it up as the cause of the day. Because we all remember it. We all remember the discovery of the unmarked graves in Kamloops. And we all remember how that felt for all of us. And slowly over time, that was something we talked about each and every day.

For the longest time we talked about that each and every day. And there's still a number of people that talk about it every day. But now that starts the lesson. That starts to kind of—the conversation that now goes towards something different, whatever may be happening in the world. But that does not make that issue less important. That does not make that issue lesser than anything else.

\*(10:10)

And, Madam Speaker, this piece of legislation and being able to recognize Orange Shirt Day as a statutory holiday here in Manitoba will help allow that, will help keep that conversation.

Because we need to educate ourselves; we need to educate ourselves on the history of what we've gone through here in Manitoba and Canada. As dark as it may be in some instances, we need to be able to educate and have those conversations. So that we never, ever go back to a system that does that to Indigenous people here in Canada, and here in Manitoba.

Madam Speaker, we've heard, kind of, debate back and forth at the last time we brought forth this piece of legislation, as this is something that we need the opportunity, we need time to be able to bring this forward.

And there was—seemed to be a—almost an—I want to call it an excuse—to not kind of pass this legislation last year, because it was—there was a time crunch, we didn't have enough time to talk to labour, we didn't have enough time to talk to employers and employees, schools and what have you.

But now we've had ample amount of time. We've had, the government has had, ample amount of time to have those conversations. And here we are now in March, months and months away from September the 30th, with now the ability and the time to pass this legislation; to now work out all of those little things, and all those little questions that may have arisen the last time we brought forth this legislation.

And now we have that opportunity to do that and collectively bring this forward, because it is the right thing to do. Reconciliation is not just the buzzword of the day for government, the buzzword of the day for society. It's something that we need to live every day, each and every day.

And there's a number of different—there's economic reconciliation, there's education, there's justice. There's all kinds of impacts and programs and policy developments, social programs that reconciliation needs to be a part of. And making this a holiday here in Manitoba will give us that opportunity, will give us the opportunity to be able to do that.

You know, we talk about the TRC calls to action, and the 94 calls to action. And I know this kind of hits directly on maybe No. 62, but it also—it will impact much more than that. It will also reflect and touch on a number of different calls to action if we have this ability to set aside this day to have those conversations, to educate our communities, to educate our people, to educate our young people and to educate our generations to come.

Madam Speaker, it's not about just putting on an orange shirt and saying: yes, I support this process; yes, I support reconciliation; yes, I support by just doing this. We can support this by passing this legislation today. We can support this by having this day set aside, specifically this day set aside, to have those conversations.

And I remember members across the way participated in the walk from The Forks, and various events in their constituencies and their communities, and for that I applaud them. But I also say: now back up those actions. Don't just go through the motions and say you support without really supporting.

This is a way that—and this piece of legislation, Bill 203, making the Orange Shirt Day a statutory holiday here in Manitoba, will allow us to work collaboratively. There's no political affiliations when it comes to being able to do the right thing by Indigenous people, and there shouldn't be. Because if we all talk about reconciliation, and we all talk about the need, and the importance of Orange Shirt Day, then let's back that up.

We as legislators here in this Chamber have that opportunity to truly back up our words when we talk about reconciliation. And is this the be-all, end-all? Absolutely not. But it's definitely a step in the right way, it's a step in the right direction. And it's that acknowledgement to say: this is important to us, this

is important to Manitoba, this is important to Canada, this is important to society.

And we have that opportunity, then, by passing this bill and bringing forth that statutory holiday here in Manitoba; to have that ability to let our communities and our people have those conversations, at whatever pace they might want to have them at. If they want to be able to take the day off and spend that with their family, then that's great.

And let's have those conversations, because there's—when it came time to residential school, the students and the families that went and were impacted by that residential school system did not have that ability. They did not have that ability to have that family time together. They did not have that ability to have those conversations with their children, their parents or grandparents, because they just weren't there. They were taken away, they were put in a system that wasn't their system; a system that was meant to 'eximilate'—assimilate and exterminate.

And Madam Speaker, we have that ability now to try and help rectify that wrong. Like I said: it's not the be-all, end-all answer but it's definitely a step in the right direction. And members opposite have shared their passion for this issue as well.

So, I then ask them: let's share that passion together, and let's sit here and pass Bill 203, to make Orange Shirt Day a statutory holiday here in Manitoba.

### Questions

**Madam Speaker:** A question period of up to 10 minutes will be held. Questions may be addressed to the sponsoring member by any member in the following sequence: First question to be asked by a member from another party. This is to be followed by a rotation between the parties. Each independent member may ask one question, and no question or answer shall exceed 45 seconds.

**Mr. Reg Helwer (Brandon West):** Thank you to the member opposite for a second reading on this bill. He seems to have changed his approach a little bit, but I'm curious. As we see legislation reintroduced, we often see it evolve and change.

And can the member tell us what has changed in this legislation from the original introduction?

**Mr. Ian Bushie (Keewatinook):** I thank the member for the question, and the former minister also spoke to this issue at the time. And, at the time, there was a

number of different scenarios that were given and reasons as to why this legislation was not a given.

And it wasn't so much about the content of the legislation. It was about the timing, from what I understand from the member opposite. So now we're sitting here months and months ahead of September 30th with the ability to pass this today.

**MLA Malaya Marcelino (Notre Dame):** When you previously brought forward this bill in fall 2022, every PC MLA, including the Premier (Mrs. Stefanson), stood up in their orange shirts and voted against it.

Can you please tell the House how Manitobans reacted to that?

**Mr. Bushie:** I thank my colleague from Notre Dame for the question.

And I want to say the reaction was outrage, but as Indigenous people that's not the reaction that's a go-to reaction. So it was met with disappointment—disappointment in the fact that members opposite and members of the PC caucus would sit and talk and stand in the media, talk about legislation, talk about the importance of the Orange Shirt Day, talk about the importance of being able to do that, but then not support this piece of legislation, the bill that was brought forward in its first kind of reading that we brought forward.

But Madam Speaker, it was even a heart—more disheartening for the public and Indigenous people to have that vote while members opposite actually wore their orange shirts.

**Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Tyndall Park):** I'd like to thank the member for bringing forward this legislation again today here in the House.

I was hoping that the member could share with us what other jurisdictions and levels of government have already passed legislation similar or just as is like this legislation.

**Mr. Bushie:** I thank the member from Tyndall Park for the question. And I think I want to be able to stay and speak specifically to what—how this affects us here in Manitoba.

Of course, we have the federal recognition of this being the holiday across, and not having that here in Manitoba creates a lot of confusion. And it did create a lot of confusion for the last couple of years now in terms of what that day means—what that day means for employers, employees, schools and whatnot.

So I'm not going to sit here and speak about other provincial jurisdictions, but I'll speak for us because the federal jurisdiction, the federal impacts affect us here today, which is now a holiday, and we don't have that here in Manitoba.

**Mr. Blaine Pedersen (Midland):** In the member's opening comments, he did speak about an education component, so I'm just wondering how does the member envision incorporating an education component into such a day of reflection, to ensure that we're not viewing this just as a holiday and not—and making sure that it is a day of reconciliation.

**Mr. Bushie:** I thank the member from Midland for that question.

And like I said, this isn't just about the one day. This is about education overall. So we've had, and I'm sure members in every constituency, and students and parents in every constituency, have asked that very question, about how can I find out more. How can we hear more, how can we hear the truth of residential schools?

So, we do that about incorporating that into the curriculum, and again, the TRC Calls to Action call for the education component to be able to do that as well. So it is more than just the one day. It's about incorporating that into curriculums across all of Manitoba.

**MLA Marcelino:** The PCs previously voted against your bill, The Orange Shirt Day Statutory Holiday Act.

\* (10:20)

Is it too late for the PCs to do the right thing and vote in favour of this bill?

**Mr. Bushie:** The very short answer to that is no. It's not too late to support this.

We're sitting here now, as was mentioned the last time, and that was some of the debate back and forth when this was introduced in the fall, that it was too late. There wasn't enough time to be able to do that. So now, here we are, sitting here in March, with September 30th, with sessions—still two months—plus part of sessions, so we still have that opportunity.

So, it is not too late to support and unanimously support this piece of legislation because it is the right thing to do.

**Mr. Brad Michaleski (Dauphin):** I was just listening to the preamble on this and the member does suggest the holiday—I think that's an inappropriate term for

this particular issue, so again, I would say our government is advancing reconciliation in a meaningful way. We have a very strong vision for a strong economic and social recovery.

So, and in light of that this is a request for a stat holiday, has the member opposite spoken with the Indigenous Chamber of Commerce about how this would impact businesses owned by Inuit, Métis and Indigenous people?

**Mr. Bushie:** Well, that's a very disheartening question to be able to bring forth by this member, first off, claiming that they're, you know, pushing reconciliation and advancing reconciliation, which truly isn't the case. And I know they're caught up in the term and the phrase and the definition of holiday, but if we brought this forth in terms of a day of reflection, they would even downplay that even more.

So we are, by Manitoba and standards being able to allocate this day and put aside this day—they're, again, trying to give you the narrative of the holiday. It's not a holiday. It's not a day off. But in terms of what this has brought forward to be able to actually set aside this date. The terminology is what it is, but at the same time, the day of reflection is something that's more important to everybody here and Indigenous communities.

And for Indigenous businesses—

**Madam Speaker:** The member's time has expired.

**MLA Marcelino:** How would making Orange Shirt Day a statutory holiday advance reconciliation?

**Mr. Bushie:** I thank my colleague for that question.

In terms of being able to advance reconciliation, it's always a work in progress. It's always something that we need to be able to move forward. And including—and I mean, just by definition alone—advance. We need to be able to advance those days of reflection, advance that reconciliation.

So, having Orange Shirt Day as a statutory holiday will now encompass a number of different things, a number of different aspects to be able to advance that reconciliation, whether it be through education, whether it be through being able to actually have time with your families and educate society as a whole.

So how does this advance reconciliation? It gives the opportunity for society, Manitobans, Indigenous communities to have that day to do just that.

**Mr. Shannon Martin (McPhillips):** I know my honourable colleague across the way had suggested he doesn't want to talk about jurisdictional differences, but I'm only seeking information related to the implementation of the day in order to ensure that—and I understand the terminology that we want to move away from holiday, and I completely agree. And the member used the word reflection.

So, is there any other jurisdiction that he's aware of in Canada that's implemented a similar day, that has implemented ideas that promote reflection that the member would suggest that we can utilize here in the province, so that we do have the day as 'esbiged'—envisaged by his bill?

**Mr. Bushie:** Again, the members opposite are trying to deflect the fact that this does not exist in Manitoba. Again, trying to deflect and—let's talk about other jurisdictions. Let's talk about what's working over there. Let's talk about what's working here.

Well, let's talk about what's not working here in Manitoba. Not supporting this piece of legislation, and not having this as a statutory holiday to allow those conversations to happen, to allow us to be leaders. Not allow us to be followers and following other jurisdictions and let's see what works over there. Let's be the leaders here. Let's be the ones at the forefront, being able to drive this issue, to advance reconciliation—truly advance it. Not seeing what somebody else does and let's take a piece of that.

Let's be the drivers and the leaders behind this.  
*[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**MLA Marcelino:** Why is it important to educate Manitobans on the legacy of residential schools?

**Mr. Bushie:** I thank that—the member for that question.

We've been, time and time again, into the school system; time and time again being able to talk to parents, to talk to teachers, to talk to educators about educating Manitobans and doing that exact process, so we don't go back to repeating that.

If there was never a time where we spoke about residential schools, would we be talking about it today, would it be the issue that it is today? No, it would not be, because it would be something that would be swept under the rug. Something that—a dark part of Canadian history that we don't want to talk about anymore.

So, we need to educate Manitobans, so we never go back to having an assimilation, extermination and the genocide of Indigenous people ever happen again.

**Madam Speaker:** The time for this question period has expired.

### Debate

**Madam Speaker:** Debate is open.

**Mr. Reg Helwer (Brandon West):** I'm pleased to rise to second reading of this particular piece of legislation.

I thank the member opposite for bringing it forward again. It creates discussion in Manitoba, which creates discussion in the Legislature, obviously, and he seems to have a different approach this time, speaking to it, than he has in the past.

I think that the collegial approach is what we were trying to accomplish before, as a government, and that is why we felt the need to make sure that we had proper consultation on a legislation of this type.

You know, it's—as members talked about earlier—to call it a holiday is not appropriate. It is a day, as the member said, of reflection, recognition, acknowledgement, and it's grown so much more beyond that, Madam Speaker.

I thank the member opposite for his recognition that we do have this day recognized in Manitoba, but then he seems to say that we don't have it recognized. So, we have had this day recognized with the provincial civil service, and with the education system in Manitoba, that both have had this as a day of recognition for the past couple of years.

And the day has evolved, as we've gone through those couple of years and learned much about how the day is recognized, what people do on that day, where they go, how they continue their education, how reconciliation in action actually happens, Madam Speaker.

I was very fortunate, last year, to attend the day in Brandon at the Riverbank, which of course is a very important area of Brandon for the Indigenous population, for First Nations and Dakota; and to talk about and learn about what was happening on that day, at that time.

We have a very active group in Brandon that works with city council, BUPAC [*phonetic*], that makes sure that many people are engaged in these discussions, and the discussion ended up eventually changing the no—the name of Grand Valley Road, as

part of reconciliation, Madam Speaker, to Remembrance Road.

Madam Speaker, now the name in Dakota is something that—I can't speak Dakota, so I don't want to damage the pronunciation; I can spell it out for people, but I do think it does—is pronounced something like Wikokisuye Conka—Conku [*phonetic*] and it's W-o-k-i-k-s-u-y-e and then C-o-n-c-k-u. And that was tremendously well received by the Dakota Nation, and by the residents of Brandon and western Manitoba.

That act of reconciliation in action was very touching and very moving to watch that happen. And then to walk with everybody to the site of the former residents' school, that has of course been torn down, and to have ceremonies there and on the way. And to hear how people 'recking'—are recognizing that day and learning more about it all the time, Madam Speaker, was a tremendously moving experience for many of us.

I think everybody that was on that walk—you know, there were celebrations, I guess you could call them—or events, that sought to educate people about what that day means to people, what happened in residential schools, and that creates more and more discussion, Madam Speaker.

\* (10:30)

And that is what we are seeing happening in Manitoba over the last couple of years. That day has changed and evolved, and I anticipate it will continue to evolve over the next many years.

And we will see positive outcomes from this, I do hope, Madam Speaker. That is certainly what I heard from survivors of residential schools there. They talked about, you know, the sins of the father, and these are not my words, but the residential school survivors said that today's world is not responsible for the sins of the father. That was their words.

And I think to those of us that were not involved in that, that gives us some—I don't know what—comfort's not the right word, but it allows us to further the discussion, Madam Speaker, and have a dialogue on what happened in residential schools, how we move forward from that and educate the Canadian public and the world public.

Because we have many immigrants, as you well know, coming into Manitoba, especially Ukrainian refugees and other refugees that did not know this existed in Manitoba, Madam Speaker, and they were



shocked that residential schools existed in Manitoba. And learning about it for the first time, I think, gave them pause about the country that they have come to. It was not the country that they thought they were coming to because of the heritage of residential schools.

I can remember, for my own education, when I was in high school, learning about apartheid for the first time from a fellow student. And my high school days are quite a long time ago, but at that time, there was little discussion of it in the media or in anywhere that we read.

And my classmate, a good friend, brought forward this information to our class, and we were shocked that apartheid in South Africa existed, that what it was we'd never heard that word before, just like the immigrants and the refugees that have come to Canada were shocked that we had residential schools and the impact of those residential schools in Canada, Madam Speaker.

So it had been a tremendous, I think, evolution in the minds of Canadians, what is now happening on September 30th and what will continue to happen, how we continue to educate Manitobans and Canadians and the world about this very sad portion of our history that continues to have impacts to this day.

I was very—I've been very, very fortunate in my political career that I've been able to meet with chiefs, grand chiefs, Inuit, Métis, and learn from them and have discussions about various things like September 30th. Very emotional meetings at times. We occasionally have to—not occasionally, often have to pause the discussion to give people time to come to terms with the emotions that discussing Orange Shirt Day brings to the fore, has an impact on everybody in the meetings, Madam Speaker.

And I think that those have all told the government what First Nations, Inuit and Métis are thinking about Orange Shirt Day. And they represent the larger community, and we listen to them on what they think should happen on this day.

And much of that has already come to pass. As I said, the provincial civil service takes the day in recognition. The education system has the day in recognition. There's been some discussion whether we should maybe have students in class so that they can learn on that day about Orange Shirt Day, but that has come and gone and I don't think that opportunity is there anymore, Madam Speaker.

You know, I can think back to a time when I was in school and told, you don't have school tomorrow; you got a day off. That's not what this day is; it's very important to Manitobans and Canadians that we learn about our history, and we learn about our history leading up to this day and on this day, Madam Speaker.

So, that is a critical part of the path that we are on. I think it is a continuous evolution that we will see. Can there be healing? I certainly hope so. Can we all be part of that healing? That's part of our role and responsibility, to listen to the survivors and learn from them what they experienced, and try to find that path forward; society understands what occurred; and make sure that this doesn't happen again.

We regularly see the repercussions of residential schools in the media, in various areas of society, and while it is very saddening, Madam Speaker, it is indeed something that we can learn from and work forward on reflection, recognition and acknowledgement.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**MLA Malaya Marcelino (Notre Dame):** If I could just be indulged for a couple minutes. I just wanted to say at the outset that I had never actually been too interested in becoming a politician myself, especially after watching my own mother go through the difficulties for 12 years, and to see what it was like on our family. But that all changed for me on March 3, 2019.

This is a day that changed the lives of many people in the Filipino community, especially the Adao family, when their 17-year-old son Jimboy Adao was killed in a meth-fuelled home invasion. It was a break-in, and Jimboy was stabbed to death. Completely innocent, had just—was just studying for an exam the next day, because it was going to be his—the exams before spring break.

This changed the lives of a lot of people, including myself, because after that incident and what I got to see happening in our community, specifically in the Filipino community, changed my mind. What I saw was a lot of fear from the Filipino community, a lot of outright racism and a lot of—just—almost like a violence. People were wanting to lock their doors with—they were putting up, like, wooden things on their doors at night.

I—there were community meetings afterwards. The police would come. Community meeting after community meeting, I think I went to three or four and I got to hear Filipino community members, leaders

who I respected, saying the most racist things about Indigenous community members.

I think the time was a very raw time, a very fearful time, but there was still very, very racist things that were being said. And a lot of the racism that was being said was because of the lack of understanding and a lack of education about the history that we face here as Canadians, and the history of Indigenous people here, in Canada.

One of the worst things I heard in some of those community meetings from a so-called respected community leader, was that we should somehow find a way to sterilize native women from having more babies. That was probably one of the worst things I heard. But it was along the vein of those types of sayings.

And so, here I was, sitting there. I had already been asked to run for the NDP and didn't want to, because I had a one-year-old and a three-year-old. But I knew that if I didn't do it, these other folks would be tapped to do it. And as lacking as I am and as I was at that time, I knew that I was still going to be better than that, because at least I would have an open mind and the ability to research, and the ability to know that this was really wrong, this kind of thinking, and I wouldn't even be able to go that path in any way, but that there must be a better path.

\* (10:40)

So I decided to do it; so my life changed, too, on that day.

One of the calls of the TRC to reconciliation has to do with newcomers having to learn about the history in Canada, about what Canada's done to Indigenous peoples. And this isn't happening right now. It's happening in schools; I see that. Even I didn't have that type of education, but my own children are having that education.

They know about Phyllis Webstad; they know about, you know, a sanitized history of residential schools. I didn't have that, and many newcomers don't have that. This day that the member for Keewatinook (Mr. Bushie) is so bravely trying to put forward in this House is so important, especially for the newcomer community.

Because how else would we know about things like this that has happened in Canada? We know about all the positive things about Canadian history, but how would we know about all these other things, especially

if everybody's just working all the time, you know, even having three jobs?

Having a statutory holiday would be a very, very strong signal of the leadership that we would have in this province: saying from a very, very top level that this is something that all communities in Manitoba need to pay attention to. This isn't going to be some holiday where we're all going to, you know, take a couple days off before and after, and now we're going to be going to Minneapolis to go shopping.

This is going to be the type of day that's going to be similar to Remembrance Day or days where we commemorate the Holocaust. This isn't a happy day; this is going to be a teachable moment, and that there's going to be other types of wonderful organizations that are going to be able to bring their creativity and their sensitivity and compassion to this day and make it into so many things that we can't even imagine yet.

And this Legislature should be creating that space, so that we can be making that day happen for all these folks to be able to make this day what it should be. This day is about honouring survivors. They're not called residential school alumni; they're called residential school survivors because of what they've had to go through to make it this far.

And that's what we owe these folks. And we owe it, as well, to newcomer communities across Manitoba so that they can also have that signal that this is an important day, this is an important topic, we need to learn more about this.

As the MLA for Notre Dame, I go door to door almost every Friday and I see first-hand; I hear first-hand the racism that continues. I hear blatant words and comments about Indigenous people still to this day. And this is—this statutory holiday that the member for Keewatinook is bringing forth is going to be a signal to our communities to please pay attention; there is something here, let's learn more about this, let's take a different approach.

And I really do believe that. And that's why I'm wholeheartedly expressing my support for this bill, brought forth by the member for Keewatinook.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**Mr. Blaine Pedersen (Midland):** The Bill 203, The Orange Shirt Day Statutory Holiday Act—and I think the member has emphasized that it's actually a day of reflection and that, unfortunately, in the title of the bill, it says holiday and people get images of that. So, let's think of it as a day of reflection.

And on that thought, I would like to reflect back on my time as a minister—Cabinet minister—and my meeting—many meetings with First Nation, Métis and Inuit community leaders.

I was fortunate enough to be able to travel the winter roads when I was Infrastructure minister, and I saw the good work that the community members—the pride—not only the good work, but the pride they take in maintaining these roads, making sure that they were—they've moved away from going across lakes, which can be dangerous, especially towards the end of the season. And maintaining these roads—and just had an excellent tour of the winter roads and the community people who work—community workers who work to keep those roads open.

I was also fortunate enough to travel to Red Sucker Lake and meet Chief Samuel Knott and his council. This was a ceremony they were having with Yamana Gold for an exploration agreement. And there was quite the elaborate ceremony, which was new to me, but it was very interesting.

I also met an Indigenous woman by the name of Linda Murphy. She's a geologist and she works—at that time was working for Yamana Gold, and we have maintained that friendship ever since. I quite often called her for advice, and when she was having some issues within government as a geologist, she would call me. And so I really value her opinion and her friendship.

While we were at Red Sucker Lake and met with the council, of course there's many issues that councils are dealing with at any one time. At that particular time, Red Sucker Lake was trying to move their garbage dump. And they were waiting for federal government approval to find a new location for the garbage dump, which was going to be away from town and sounded like a good proposal to us, and when I—but the federal government didn't like the location where they were moving it. They said it was too close to the airport. So we—so I asked Chief Knott, so where is the current dump? It's right beside the airport. You see it as you're landing on the plane. And they were moving it away.

Long story short, is my assistant managed to get ahold of some federal bureaucrats. We managed to get approval for it, and they were able to move the dump to a better location. And we did keep up that conversation with Chief Knott and his council over other issues as well. I know that right now, Marcel Colomb First Nation is working very closely

with Alamos Gold at Lynn Lake. This is a huge opportunity for those—for that community.

Alamos—when I was minister in charge of mines, we met with Alamos a number of times, and their priority was to work closely with Marcel Colomb First Nation and other communities there. They've—I understand they've now got approval to move forward, tentatively, on this mine project at Lynn Lake and—but they're also actively training workers from Marcel Colomb to be involved in this project, so it's a good thing going forward.

The minister of Indigenous relations—northern relations—I probably got the name wrong, but—and I were supposed to fly up to Lac Brochet for an exploration agreement about uranium with that community. However, that's when COVID hit, in early 2020, and we were not able to go to their community. Really looking forward to going to that community and seeing them and visiting with them, and seeing this exploration agreement signed.

Of course, that's when COVID hit and many of the remote communities were into lockdown. They did their very best to handle a very difficult situation in those. And it really—it stopped our ability to be able to visit those communities, but we were still able to keep in communication with them. And they did excellent work in trying to contain COVID within their communities.

When I was assigned minister of Infrastructure back in 2016, one of the first things that we took on was to bring back the—close down the East Side Road Authority. This was the \$500-million 50-mile road project that the former government had spent so much money on with so little results.

\* (10:50)

And one of the first things—the very first thing that we did was bring the community—affected communities in to meet in my office with them about what had happened during the East Side Road Authority. And it was not good, how they were treated by the East Side Road Authority and the former government. They were forced to open bank accounts under East Side Road Authority name, but they had no authority to control that account.

We met—the meeting was supposed to be an hour, but it went much longer than that because the communities—the elders, the chiefs and everyone who attended—had their turn to speak about what had happened during this time when this East Side Road Authority was there.

And it was the building of trust. They didn't have any trust in government before then, and this was the beginning of building that trust to be able to work with these communities. And I believe our minister, and the former minister who sits beside me, have worked very hard to build that trust with the—not only the First Nations, but with the Métis community and the Inuit communities.

And we will continue to do that going forward. It's—I certainly remember fondly my interactions with the communities while I was in Cabinet. They were always very respectful and I tried my best to be able to build that trust with them. And I believe we were able—I was able to do that, and I believe our government continues to do that.

And so, we look forward to seeing this—what happens with this bill today, this morning, and I thank the member for Keewatinook (Mr. Bushie) for bringing it forward.

Thank you.

**Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Tyndall Park):** I'd like to just start off by thanking the member for Keewatinook for bringing forward this really important piece of legislation that I do hope is passed here today in the Legislature.

And I'd also like to thank my colleague from Notre Dame for the words that she shared during debate today. I think it's very powerful and impactful and a perfect example of why this legislation is so important and why we do need more education here in the province of Manitoba—something that this legislation could help enable.

Madam Speaker, back on August 12th, 2021, I actually wrote to the minister of Indigenous reconciliation and northern affairs, and the minister of Finance, asking that Manitoba as a province join the federal government in recognizing September 30th as the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, by declaring it as a provincial stat day.

And the reason I did this, Madam Speaker, is because I do believe that our province has a role to play in this. We have a responsibility, and it's clearly written out in the Calls to Action. And we do. That onus is on us, as a province, as provincial legislators. And that's why it's really important we do pass this piece of legislation.

With the support of my party, I actually introduced bill 240, and I'm going to table it here this morning. So, shortly after introducing bill 240, my

colleague from Keewatinook introduced bill 200, the Orange Shirt Day act, which I'm also going to table as well, Madam Speaker.

And the reason I do this is now today, this is the third time this legislation is being introduced into these Chambers over the course of three years, and I think that shows how important it is that it is, in fact, passed this time around.

And that's because it's being introduced by two different parties in this—in these Chambers. And it would be very encouraging, and I think an incredible step forward for Manitoba as a whole, if this provincial government would also support the legislation that is before us right now.

Madam Speaker, I'm mindful of time. I'd like to see the legislation passed; I just want to share a very quick story. This past September, I had the opportunity to go to Meadows West School, which is in the heart of Tyndall Park constituency. It's actually where my nephews go to school, as well, and I got to join them for their assembly about truth and reconciliation.

And it was truly one of the most beautiful things I've seen, because it was reconciliation in action, and the school assembly had children from all grades spread throughout the gym, and they sat in the four directions and together walked around from section to section, bringing forward their commitments.

And these are grade 2s, Madam Speaker, and grade 6s, and they had tangible commitments, things that they were going to do to make reconciliation, here in the province of Manitoba, better.

And it was incredibly inspiring. I think we could learn from them, here in these Chambers, Madam Speaker, by bringing forward tangible ideas, and this legislation is a tangible idea. It's something we can do, it's a call to action that we can fulfill and I'm hoping that it will be passed here today in the Legislature.

Thank you.

**MLA Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns):** I want to just correct the record for something that was just said by the member for Tyndall Park. I think it is explicitly important to recognize, to honour and to acknowledge that this bill actually comes from residential school survivors.

It doesn't come from anybody else. It is the work of residential school survivors. It is the work of the children and grandchildren and great-grandchildren of residential school survivors like the member for—our

colleague, like myself, like our leader. That comes from the Indigenous community and it comes from survivors. And so to say anything different is incredibly disrespectful and wholly anti-Indigenous.

Folks in this Chamber today have an opportunity to let this bill go to second reading and to move down its legislative path. Again, as I said last time when we were debating this bill, it's not enough to be performative.

It's not enough to wear your orange shirt and then in the very next breath, step up, stand up in this House and vote against legislation that clearly residential school survivors want and clearly Indigenous peoples deserve and clearly that most Manitobans want to see become law in our great province here.

And so, I will again, once again, ask members opposite to be on the right side of history, to allow this bill to go to second reading so that we can put this in place for the upcoming September 30th and allow finally in this province, residential school survivors to be acknowledged, to be recognized, to be honoured and to allow all of us to move together in a good, respectful, equitable path towards reconciliation.

Miigwech.

**Madam Speaker:** Is the House ready for the question?

**An Honourable Member:** Question.

**Madam Speaker:** The question before the House is second reading of Bill 203, The Orange Shirt Day Statutory Holiday Act (Various Acts Amended).

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion? Agreed? *[Agreed]*

I declare the motion carried.

## RESOLUTIONS

### **Res. 5—Calling on the Provincial Government to Stop Underfunding Education**

**Madam Speaker:** The hour is now 11 a.m. and time for private members' resolutions. The resolution before us this morning is the resolution on Calling on the Provincial Government to Stop Underfunding Education, brought forward by the honourable member for Transcona.

\* (11:00)

**Mr. Nello Altomare (Transcona):** I move, seconded by the member for Union Station (MLA Asagwara),

*WHEREAS adequately funded education supports the development of Manitoba's children and has the potential to break cycles of poverty, close the gap in social inequality and create a more inclusive society; and*

*WHEREAS the Provincial Government under this Premier has acted just like Brian Pallister by inadequately funding education, which negatively impacts Manitoba's students; and*

*WHEREAS the Provincial Government has consistently underspent its budgets for education and strategic education infrastructure investments by millions of dollars, nearing \$220 million in the 2021-2022 year alone; and*

*WHEREAS rising costs, increased enrollment and inadequate funding have forced school divisions such as Brandon School Division, Seven Oaks, Pembina Trails and more to cut programs which the most vulnerable students and families rely upon such as all-day kindergarten, speech-language pathology, psychology and reading recovery; and*

*WHEREAS school divisions across the province have had to cut staff positions including teachers, education assistants, librarians and more because of the Provincial Government's underfunding of education, which has increased class sizes and reduced the amount of direct engagement educators have with children; and*

*WHEREAS the Provincial Government's reduced its share of funding education from 62.4% to 56.4% while attempting to undermine education with Bill 64, a bill that was seconded by the Premier; and*

*WHEREAS the Provincial Government previously promised to implement a new education funding model by 2023-2024 but has instead delayed it to 2024-2025 in order to hide its reduction in funding until after the next election.*

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba condemn the provincial government for its failure to properly fund schools, teachers and communities, and urge the provincial government to stop underfunding education and to release its hidden education funding model.

**Motion presented.**

**Mr. Altomare:** It's always an honour to stand here and to stand in support of fully funded public education, a public education system that requires support regardless of the government being in power.

*Mr. Andrew Micklefield, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair*

Public education, like public health care, is a sacred trust, one that is handed to a government when they arrive in this very grand building, a building that when you walk up the stairs, tells and 'exposes' how important it is to ensure that our publicly funded services are just that, adequately and fully funded, Deputy Speaker.

Why? Because a fully funded and resourced public education system play incredible dividends. For every dollar invested, Deputy Speaker, a return of \$13 is quite common. And it's borne out in all of the research. So, when we invest in that young child, the dividends that are paid later on are enormous, and we know that.

The other piece is that it maximizes, obviously, employment opportunity. It's an effective crime-reduction strategy proven to improve health outcomes for individuals, communities, and a way of either life expectancy, their ability to participate in a community because that's all learned in a public school that is fully funded and fully resourced. A very important piece.

But most of all, Deputy Speaker, what it does is that it breaks the cycle of inequality. Here in Manitoba, we know the impacts of that. We know that we have high rates of poverty in this province and we need to have an effective strategy to deal with that. One of the most effective—cost-effective strategies, of course, is a fully funded public education system.

Why? Because it supports Manitoba children, their families and their caregivers. It's something that we've been handed as people and as members of this House to have stewardship over.

And that's an important term that I think I would like to espouse a little more on, is that stewardship and how important that is. Because we have seen in the past how with public services like health care and education, a government assumes stewardship over that. And when you're handed that stewardship, it's an important piece that you ensure that you do everything possible that it is fully funded and fully resourced.

But what have we seen these past seven years, Deputy Speaker, is an abdication of that responsibility. We have seen public education endure seven years of

austerity that has impacted the system greatly. And we see it every day and we see it through the—every budget consultation that has taken place the past number of years. Schools are having to decide what they're going to cut next. And if the system was adequately funded and fully funded, they wouldn't be having that dialogue.

Instead, what's happened here is that with this particular government, Deputy Speaker, there's been an erosion of trust, that trust relationship between the provincial level of government and that municipal level of school governance has been eroded. The trust piece right now is almost nil.

As a matter of fact, the only thing that they can trust that they'll receive from this government is inadequate support, and we see that borne out in the numbers. We see that borne out in the financial report on accounting and Manitoba education. That shows quite clearly, Deputy Speaker, that from 2016 to now, support from the provincial government for public education has eroded. What once used to be 62.5 per cent in 2016 is now down to 56.4 per cent in the latest numbers. It's borne out there.

And so, what ends up happening is that a school division then has to make up that difference. And that difference is becoming increasingly difficult to make up, Deputy Speaker. There is something called the tax offset grant that is supposed to make up for something—that provision that was put in bill 71 where you're not allowed, a local school division isn't allowed to increase taxes. When instead they were guaranteed through an offset grant that it will make up the difference. What has been borne out is that difference now cannot be made up, cannot be made accountable for.

So, you have some school divisions now, Deputy Speaker, that are going to forego the offset grant so that they can increase taxes so that they provide that bare minimum of service to their community. It's not a burden to do that. That is something that the community is calling for, and of course, that level of government is responding to.

And it is absolutely important that we ensure that these kind of scenarios don't occur. And how do you ensure that those scenarios don't occur? You ensure that the system is fully funded, properly resourced with professionals that know what they're doing.

I talked about earlier about an erosion of trust. Right now what we have is a situation in Manitoba where school divisions are having to endure the

punishing effects of inflation and the punishing effects of the cumulative impact of underfunding. It's the cumulative impact of seven years of underfunding right now that is absolutely hammering the system.

So, as I've said before in this House, you can't light a fire and watch the house burn down and then show up with a couple of pails of water and say you're rescuing the system by throwing it on the fire that you first started in the first place. That just doesn't work. It doesn't work with a complex system like public education.

As a matter of fact, what the public expects, Deputy Speaker, is that we, in this House, come here and act like we are true stewards of the system and ensure that it's properly resourced. Just like with health care, the same goes for public education.

You know what would've been really quite refreshing from this government, Deputy Speaker: for them to admit in their budget that they've underfunded. I think Manitobans would've appreciated a really honest admission that for the past seven years they have made a mistake, that they haven't funded public education to where it needed to be. I think the public would've accepted that.

Instead, no, they're doubling down, Deputy Speaker. They're doubling down on their years of underfunding by still saying that they're adequately supporting public ed. That's an insulting argument to make to Manitobans. Manitobans have seen this. They've seen and have felt the impact.

I can name—well, a number of us in this House can name school divisions that have reached out to MLAs on both sides of the House, that are asking for meetings because of the impact of the cumulative effect of seven years of underfunding. We can talk about Borderland that is now reducing staff, that is now reducing programming, reducing bus services. We can talk about Hanover School Division that is feeling the detrimental effects of what I've said earlier is the cumulative impact of seven years of underfunding.

\* (11:10)

We know that this hurts communities, it hurts families and most of all, Deputy Speaker, it hurts kids in the classroom. Because what they need is they need support, especially as we're emerging from a pandemic.

What did we see in this budget, Deputy Speaker? We didn't see any admission of a mistake made these

past seven years. As I said earlier, it would have been refreshing for members opposite to stand up and say, you know what, we've made a mistake; we're going to do our very best now to resource and fully fund public education.

People would have respected that. That would have been quite something to see. Because, like I said earlier, Deputy Speaker, stewardship doesn't look at what party you're at. Stewardship looks at how responsible you are with not only the importance and responsibility of fully funding education, but you're also understanding the need and the benefit for communities, for schools and for families.

This is very important, Deputy Speaker. That is why we're bringing forth this PMR. It is an honour to be here to support this, and I look forward to further debate this morning on this particular issue.

Thank you.

### Questions

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** A question period of up to 10 minutes will be held, and questions may be addressed in the following sequence: the first question can be asked by a member from another party; and any subsequent questions must follow a rotation between parties; each independent member can ask one question. No question or answer shall exceed 45 seconds.

The floor is open for questions.

The honourable member for—hang on a second, got to get my stopwatch here. The honourable member for Borderland.

**Mr. Josh Guenter (Borderland):** We know that school snack and meal programs help increase student presence and engagement, so why would the NDP vote against a 1-and-a-half-million-dollar increase in annualized funding for the Child Nutrition Council of Manitoba?

**Mr. Nello Altomare (Transcona):** You know what, I would suggest that the member for Borderland reach out to the child nutrition council. The child nutrition council does provide tremendous support for students in Manitoba.

I remember being first exposed to them in 2014 and applying for support for my own schools, particularly a nutrition program. What became very clear is that, as we progressed, the need grew. And when he says—the member from Borderland said, why don't we support that?

What we would support, Deputy Speaker, is to completely eliminate the wait-list. Instead of just dabbling or dipping your toe in the water, let's ensure that every kid or every school that applies gets the funding that they need. It's as simple as that, and that could have been done in this budget.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** The member's time has expired.

**MLA Uzoma Asagwara (Union Station):** I'd like to thank my colleague for bringing this forward this morning. It's incredibly important, and I know he does a lot of important advocacy in regards to his critic role in education.

Just like Brian Pallister, the Premier (Mrs. Stefanson) has continued to underfund education, which has resulted in school divisions having to make cuts.

How have the government's cuts to education hurt Manitoba students?

**Mr. Altomare:** I want to thank the member for Union Station for that question.

The cuts have had a devastating impact. I recall when we were having these conversations in 2017-2018, and as we moved into the election in 2019, Deputy Speaker, schools were already raising the alarm of what underfunding has done to services that were available for kids.

We can start with clinical wait-lists that used to be weeks, back in 2016, are now months. Students and families are waiting almost eight to nine months for a psychological assessment—

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** The member's time has expired.

**Mr. Shannon Martin (McPhillips):** I want to thank my colleague, the MLA for Transcona, for bringing in this resolution. I think we can all agree that one of the fundamental issues when it comes to education funding is the formula itself.

We have some areas, and I think, you know, in McPhillips area where there simply isn't that commercial base, and other areas of the province, in particular this city. And you think of, you know, those divisions that would have the IKEAs of the world.

Does the member have any suggestion as to how the funding formula itself needs to be changed to ensure the equity that it refers to?

**Mr. Altomare:** I want to thank the member for McPhillips for that question. That is something that

we can, you know, agree that we have to have a funding formula that does prioritize equity.

How do you do that? Well, with commercial revenue, we can have, you know, a free and open dialogue, Deputy Speaker, around maybe—perhaps we consider a province-wide approach when it comes to commercial tax revenue for education.

We can also look into maybe different funding models depending on a region that you are in the province because currently, right now, there are too many little pieces that have to be adjusted so that that school in Ashern does have the same access to funding and support that that school in Seven Oaks School Division has.

So this member has asked a very, I think, pertinent question, one that needs to be, you know, further explored, and perhaps can be done through open public consultation—

**Deputy Speaker:** The member's time has expired.

**Mr. Mintu Sandhu (The Maples):** Seven Oaks School Division has to make very tough decisions where they have to raise education property tax by 4.95 per cent because of these—PC's cuts for the last seven years.

Instead of making cuts, what are the sum of the programs PCs could implement that would benefit Manitoba students?

**Mr. Altomare:** You know, Deputy Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for that question.

The Department of Education used to play a really major role for school divisions in leadership around programming that is—wasn't available to smaller school divisions.

I think we're at the point now where we need to have a province-wide approach to a number of issues, the first one being a nutrition program, Deputy Speaker. That is something that could be tackled and handled quite 'easily'. Like I said earlier, in a response to an earlier question, instead of just going part way, let's go full way and eliminate wait-lists for a nutrition program.

The second thing that the province can provide leadership—

**Deputy Speaker:** The member's time has expired.

**Mr. Guenter:** Over the past three years, our government has provided school divisions with an additional \$17 million in funding for students with special needs.



And yet every year, members opposite, particularly the NDP, have voted against this increase.

Can the member opposite explain why the NDP does not believe students with special needs should receive this additional funding?

**Mr. Altomare:** You know, I want to thank the member from Borderland for that question because I think what this will allow me to do is kind of lay out the landscape when it comes to students with additional needs. That part is growing in Manitoba, and right now every school division is experiencing difficulty in attracting the proper clinical supports, the proper supports through EAs or even class-size supports around that particular issue.

The money that has been put forward, Deputy Speaker, isn't really attaining what it needs to do, and that is supporting all that incredible demand for those particular services where kids with additional needs require more than—

**Deputy Speaker:** The member's time has expired.

**Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Tyndall Park):** I'm wondering if the member is aware that for the last 10 consecutive years, so three or four years under the NDP government and six or seven years under the PC government, all school divisions have experienced a 6 per cent decrease in funding after adjusting for inflation. Is he aware of this?

**Mr. Altomare:** You know, when it comes to the funding of public schools, what we have to have is an open and clear dialogue as to what's necessary.

This government did go down that road in trying to do that with a revamp of funding formula. They were on record saying that they were going to bring it forward for this particular funding year, and then didn't. All of that consultation. All of that opportunity to show really what—where they were going to put their money and how they were going to do it. Again, another opportunity that's been lost.

\* (11:20)

And so, right now, all we're doing here is waiting. And do—then do school divisions have trust in what they're going to get? I doubt that, Deputy Speaker.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** The member's time has expired.

**Mr. Martin:** Further in conversation, and I've done my best listening to the member for Transcona (Mr. Altomare), and we're always going to have a

debate in this House about education funding and the amount of.

I'm more interested in the member's perspective as to the disbursement of those funds, whether or not he sees the allocation of those funds to be simply provided to school boards for them to make those decisions. I mean, the member has mentioned clinical assessments, he's mentioned nutrition, obviously additional supports for students. Or does he see the need for those funds to be more directed by the Department of Education to the divisions in terms of specific allocations? Or, again, does he see a wider approach that allows those divisions to make those choices based on their own determination—

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** The member's time has expired.

**Mr. Altomare:** I thank the member for that question. That's what bill 64 wanted to eliminate. It wanted to eliminate the ability for that consultation to take place.

What's happened these past number of years, Deputy Speaker, is what I said earlier in my preamble, my 10 minutes before, is that trust between this government and school boards has been completely eroded. And what we're going to have to spend a number of some significant time on is rebuilding that trust so that we can have that kind of dialogue. And the only way you do that is by inviting all stakeholders to the table so that we can get to this.

And I know it sounds—probably had previous members say this before—

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** The member's time has expired.

Time for questions is over.

### Debate

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** The floor is open for debate.

**Hon. Wayne Ewasko (Minister of Education and Early Childhood Learning):** Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, for allowing me to get up this morning and have a conversation in regards to this resolution brought forward by my friend from Transcona on education funding.

And I listened 'intently' and—to the member from Transcona, and respectfully, because I know how many years the member from Transcona had put into being within the education field, and I acknowledge that.

And that's why, on a few occasions, probably not as many as I would like or he would like, but on a few occasions, we have got together and had conversations in regard to how to move things forward on the education file. Because for me, it would be disingenuous if I didn't offer that up because I know that Manitoba is a small world when it comes to education. It's a 16th degree of separation, and we've got many mutual friends around the province that, at the end of the day, the kids, the children, the students are at their centre of everything that we should be doing in regard to education, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

So, when the member brings forward a resolution like this, I know that part of it is coming from the member from Transcona, and I know that part of it is coming from the self-serving talking points of his leader, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because, unfortunately, everything that the Leader of the NDP does is try to put a wedge. And it really doesn't matter, all the good things that are happening, or have happened and continue to happen, in education. The member from Fort Rouge would continue to do what he does, and that's be partisan and not see through the lights of many things that we're doing positively.

I'll go through the member's resolution sort of throughout the whereases, and we will talk about the fact that I appreciate him bringing some of his 'tecor'—his historical knowledge to the Chamber today.

And we talk about funding and we talk about funding formula. We talk about poverty in education.

I have not heard—I know that one of the members from our side of the House asked the question in regards to nutrition. I had not heard the member say, hey, great job from doing—for doing something that his party should have done in the 17 years that they were in power, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

So, we've partnered with the children's nutrition council of Manitoba, and I, as well, have had many dealings with them over the years, prior to politics, on those food and nutrition programs being developed and sent out to various school divisions, Mr. Deputy Speaker. That's why we felt that it was very important to more than double the funds to the children's council of Manitoba.

And is there more work to do? Absolutely there is, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but it was our government that took that stagnant \$1.2 million that the NDP put in, in the very first place, way back in 2006. So, for nine years, the former NDP government didn't feel

that children's nutrition was very important and didn't move one iota on that.

With the now Minister of Advanced Education, we worked closely together to more than double the funds to the children's council of—children's nutrition council of Manitoba, to be able to reach out to almost 70,000 students, Mr. Deputy Speaker. So, I have not heard a big kudos from the member from Transcona, but maybe it's still coming.

In regards to taking poverty serious, unlike the NDP, we had the Poverty and Education Task Force, which is also showing that we're listening to education partners all across this great province of ours and making sure that we're implementing a lot of the recommendations that they feel are priority items, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

We've partnered—and again, the key word here is partnering, and working with the partners and listening—we've partnered with Shoppers Drug Mart to make sure that over 3 million menstrual products per year for three years, totalling a significant amount of dollars, Mr. Deputy Speaker. You know, we've partnered with them to make sure that comes to a reality, and I know that the member from St. Johns is itching to get up and put a few words on the record.

But I will give some non-partisan kudos to all sides of the House that we have, you know, talked about this, and we've, the PC government under the leadership of Premier—the Premier (Mrs. Stefanson), we've brought this to fruition and making sure that access to menstrual products are available here in Manitoba.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, when we talk about funding, the member from Transcona unfortunately ignores the fact that since 2016, we have increased education funding to the tune of 20—by 23 per cent. This year alone, \$100 million, an increase of 6.1 per cent, to the K-to-12 system. That is the largest percentage increase in well over 25 years and probably even into the '70s.

So, we are taking education serious in this province of ours. We're working with our education partners to make sure that we're listening to the challenges that they are having.

The member from Transcona mentions the funding formula. Absolutely. Prior to me getting into politics, prior to 2011, this was something that was being said around the divisional tables, the board tables and the senior admin, the tables within school communities, for many years prior to that.

And I'm proud to say that our government is taking a look at the funding formula. We have had consultations, we will continue to have consultations with our education partners, because this is not something that's easy.

As the member from Transcona admitted himself, there's many different factions that—and pieces and components within the funding formula that has to be considered because in some areas of the province, they are far underserved as other areas in the province. And it does come down to various things such as taxation revenue and all those types of things.

But at the same time, I do have to correct the record, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that we on this side of the House, with our property, taking the education tax off of property and making sure that education is funded more than ever before, that indeed we are funding—the Manitoba provincial PC government is funding education to the tune of about 80 per cent.

\* (11:30)

And that's actually recorded in the FRAME document that the member tries to cite, but doesn't cite the whole document, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It is about revenues coming from the provincial government.

And so, I do want to put on the record for—in the short amount of time, Mr. Deputy Speaker, as well, some other—to correct the record of some of the misnomers that the member put into his resolution.

And again, I know that some of that stuff in the resolution is not coming from him. This is his leader coming in and trying to create chaos in an area that it doesn't need to be. But, so we'll talk about Seven Oaks School Division funding; I know that's been brought up a couple times, and will continue to be brought up.

Since 2016, Seven Oaks has received a 21 per cent increase in their budget. This year alone, they received a 3.8 per cent overall increase to the tune of \$3.3 million. Madam—Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am sorry that the member from Transcona is on the side of raising taxes to Manitobans.

We, on this side of the House, are working with Manitobans to make sure that they are receiving more money in their pockets to be able to spend on things that they see fit. And that includes education: \$100 million this year alone.

The member, in his resolution, brings up Brandon School Division. Brandon School Division has received a 39.9 per cent increase in overall support

from our government since 2016-17, and has experienced a \$13.8-million increase, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

This is significant dollars. River East Transcona, this year alone: a 9.8 per cent increase; \$11-million increase, Mr. Deputy Speaker. In the resolution, the member mentions Pembina Trails. This year alone: 13.2 per cent increase, and last year a 12.2 per cent increase.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have more work to do on education and that's why we are the government that is going to continue making sure that students in Manitoba are receiving—are seeing success, no matter where they live, their cultural background or their own personal circumstances.

Thanks for your time, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

**MLA Uzoma Asagwara (Union Station):** I'm going to start my remarks, you know, on a hope here. I'm going to start my remarks by thanking not only my colleague, the MLA for Transcona, for bringing this resolution forward, but for thanking him for his 33 years of service as an educator in Manitoba.

And I want to express that gratitude, because I'm sure we've all been positively impacted by educators throughout our lives. I certainly wouldn't be in this Chamber as an MLA had it not been for educators who lifted me up throughout my journey in school and continued to do so, even though several of those folks have long been retired.

And so, I think it's particularly egregious when a minister of Education would stand in this House and disrespect not only a fellow colleague in such a personal manner, but disrespect a colleague who was an educator for 33 years, by implying that someone who cares so deeply for educators and students and families in this province would bring forward any materials or speak on this issue from a place that is not his own.

To imply that our colleague is bringing forward issues and advocating in the way that he is, at the behest of our leader or with words that are not his own, is deeply insulting. And our colleague deserves an apology from the minister for his behaviour and his disrespect.

Because it speaks to the way in which the—  
[interjection]

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order.

**MLA Asagwara:**—a number of educators with years of experience, who are critical of this government.

The notion—the notion—that our colleague does not bring his full expertise to this House is ludicrous, and he deserves an apology from that minister.

Now, I'm going to say what everybody in Manitoba is already very well aware of: this government has cut funding to education since 2016. The impacts are obvious.

This government has made decisions that have directly impacted the ability of kids in our communities to have the kind of access to education and resources they deserve. And we see this in the ways in which teachers are reaching out, admin are reaching out and telling us that they're exhausted, that they are taking on even more responsibility with even less resources and they're showing up every single day tired but eager to do their jobs, meeting students who are eager to learn, but unfortunately are having to do so in a system that has been starved by this government.

And, I mean, we can highlight as my colleague already has, the MLA for Transcona, the fact that we have less EAs in the classroom, the fact that we have teachers who have been fired, more teachers who are being let go from their jobs because schools cannot afford to have them in the classroom.

We know that educators are taking on more responsibility, wearing more hats than they ever have in the past in order to try and meet the needs of their students.

We know that classroom sizes are growing because this government, despite the former premier, Brian Pallister's commitment not to remove the cap on classroom sizes, they did the opposite. And now we see, since that cap has been removed, that sizes, especially for kids in the early learning years, are growing, making it more difficult for them to get that one-on-one time that they need, that many kids need, and for educators to provide that direct—the direct, you know, education opportunities that these students—that they know their students need.

We've seen in various ways the ways in which this government's cuts have impacted educators. And I suppose I shouldn't be surprised that the Minister of Education would come in this House and be disrespectful toward a colleague in regards to this issue, when we've seen that he probably learned a lot of that behaviour from the former premier, Brian Pallister, who took it upon himself to on many occasions disrespect educators.

We saw even during the pandemic that educators were told to—that they would have to go to the United States to get access to vaccines. I still hear about that from educators, right now, who couldn't believe that, despite the fact that they were going above and beyond during this pandemic, working with families in very creative ways to try and meet their—the needs of their kids, their academic needs, that they were going to be, you know, sent on maybe a bus or something, I don't know, to the US to get vaccines.

That was a tough time. That was a really low moment for a lot of educators in Manitoba, seeing how little regard this government had for them. And that sort of behaviour has continued.

And to borrow some words from my colleague, which I think is a really great way of illustrating what this government is trying to do in this current budget, which is not nearly enough because they've starved education for so many years; really, this government has created a massive fire in education, a massive fire that is out of control. And their solution to it is to try and grab a few buckets of water, throw it in random places on the fire and say, that's going to put it out.

That is absolutely unacceptable. It's a terrible approach. It's ineffective, inadequate.

And we live in a province—these students are going to school in a province that currently has the highest rates of child poverty in the country. And the efforts that this minister is saying he deserves a pat on the back for, which is such an embarrassing thing to stand up and say in this House, that he—why aren't members opposite giving him a pat on the back while Manitoba has the highest rates of child poverty and this government is doing less than the bare minimum to meet those needs? And he wants a pat on the back. So embarrassing, Deputy Speaker.

You know who deserves a pat on the back? It's the educators who are showing up every single day, digging into their own pockets, buying lunches for kids, bringing snacks from home, taking foods off of their own tables so that kids in their classrooms aren't hungry and they can learn.

\* (11:40)

Do you know who deserves a pat on the back, Deputy Speaker? It's the parents who—some of which don't work jobs that are paying a living wage because this government refuses to do so, who are going out of their way, on their downtime, to meet with those same teachers in extended hours. Meet with those teachers: that's what those parents are doing, to figure out a way

to close the gaps this government has created in the education system, to make sure their kids have the best shot at having good outcomes.

Do you know who deserves a pat on the back? It's the support workers. Support workers in our schools, who go out of the schools and meet people in their homes, who are going around in their schools, and trying their best to make sure that their students' needs are met, and that someone is engaging with them one on one to see what's going on and how they can help.

Those support workers doing that work: again, with less resources now than they've ever had because of this government's cuts. Those are the people that deserve a pat on the back. And, funny enough, Deputy Speaker, they're not asking for it. They're not asking for it, because they know it's not about them; they know it's about kids; they know it's about families.

They're writing to us instead, hoping that we'll advocate on their behalf to make sure this government does the right thing, finally—which they're not doing, which we see in their budget. They're still failing and falling short. And they want us to believe that they're failing up, somehow.

They're continuing to fight for those families and those students as they show up every day on the job, hoping that at some point, the government's going to wake up and realize that they're not doing enough, that their decisions have hurt our education system.

And I think all Manitobans are rooted in the reality, now, that they can't trust this government. This government doesn't have their backs. This government doesn't understand the needs of students and educators and families, in terms of education in Manitoba.

This government will stand up in the Legislature and ask for a pat on the back instead. That's their priority. It's their needs. It's what they can say when they go out in public and talk about announcements that are empty, that don't result in improved outcomes for students and their families.

Manitobans don't trust this minister and they don't trust this government because of all of their actions and decision making since 2016, and because of the decisions they made to this day, in this House, that reflect they do not prioritize the needs of students first. They don't put the needs of Manitoba educators first.

And that's why, we, on this side of the House, will continue to bring forward the facts, continue to

advocate for Manitobans and their education, their students, and we'll continue to make sure that, collectively, Manitobans work together to do what we did for bill 64: shut down this government's bad ideas, bring forth the right ones and improve education for Manitoba students.

Thank you.

**Mr. Josh Guenter (Borderland):** I have been listening to the debate and read the resolution, and it just makes me wonder whether the NDP has any regard for the truth anymore. And I don't know that they ever did, but I wonder if they've lost their ability to blush on the other side.

I wonder if they understand the difference between right and wrong. I wonder if they recognize facts, because there's precious little of that—there's precious little of that—in this resolution. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think of, in a couple weeks, of the farmers who are going to be going out with their manure spreaders—we call them honey wagons in southern Manitoba—and spreading manure—*[interjection]*

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order, please.

**Mr. Guenter:** —and I think their approach to this resolution, as it is with everything, it seems, is to just spray a bunch of garbage at the windshield so you can't see your hand in front of your face. And Manitobans have to muddle through all that misinformation. I think it does a disservice to the level of debate in this Chamber, and I think it does a disservice to our democracy.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to talk a little bit about schools in my area, about my experience with the education system. I had a conversation with a teacher friend of mine, just last night, who was very positive about his experience in the education system, feels very supported. And of course, you know, everybody—nobody would turn down a raise, and in this year's budget, we have \$77 million in additional funding to address wage pressures.

But, nevertheless, he feels very supported and appreciates his benefits and the work that he's able to do. And there are teachers like that all across this province who every day go out and put their best foot forward and do all that they can to set our children, our students up for success. And we as a government support that.

**Point of Order**

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** On a point of order, the honourable member—or the honourable Minister—excuse me—for Advanced Education. On a point of order.

**Hon. Sarah Guillemard (Minister of Advanced Education and Training):** Yes, on a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I just want to comment that you yourself have given us direction and advice that we have to be careful with our words. And certainly, when there's heckling going on we can be very passionate about various issues. But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would say that a line has been crossed when a member opposite, the member for Wolseley (Ms. Naylor), called out to our member who is speaking right now that he is convoy boy. Previously, I know that members opposite have referred to members from our side as mean girls. And I think that this, also, is below what we expect of decorum within this Chamber.

I would ask the member for Wolseley to apologize for her comments.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** The honourable Opposition House Leader, on the same point of order.

**MLA Nahanni Fontaine (Official Opposition House Leader):** On the same point of order, it is ironic that the member is getting up to try and call out heckling or name-calling, whatever she's trying to construct this particular moment as, when the minister for Education just insulted our member.

So, Deputy Speaker, the member for Wolseley will not be apologizing for that particular heckle today or any day.

Miigwech.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Speakers don't rule on comments not on the record unless it's egregious and you know, abundantly clear. I did not hear said comment. It's not a point of order. But let's all behave like grown-ups both on the record and off the record because on occasion, I do hear, and if I do hear something that is severely across the line, I won't be afraid to speak up about it. But the member does not have a point of order on that case.

So I'm going to give the floor back to—I see different members standing. I want to make sure that—the honourable Minister of Education, on a point of order.

**Point of Order**

**Mr. Ewasko:** On a point of order, the member from St. Johns got up on a point of order and then put some misinformation on the record.

In regards to—and she—I'm going to have to look for some clarity because I absolutely don't believe that I have today or ever have insulted the member for Transcona (Mr. Altomare). I've multiple times shared in this House, on how many times that I have high respect for the individual. I do not have the same respect for their leader and I've put that on the record, Mr. Deputy Speaker. If she has some more clarifying information she could put that on the record today, but I'd ask her to apologize because in this House, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I like to think that I treat people like I'd like to be treated outside this Chamber and I'd ask her to say it outside this House.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** I'm asking the minister to—

**Mr. Ewasko:** Wind it up?

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Wind it up, please, yes.

**Mr. Ewasko:** I will, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Thank you for your guidance. So, to the member from Transcona, I have never thrown an insult his direction. I think definitely the Leader of the Opposition, I don't trust, but nor should Manitobans. Thank you for the opportunity—

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Thank you, Minister.

On the same point of order, the honourable Official Opposition House Leader.

\* (11:50)

**MLA Fontaine:** At this point, this is getting ridiculous and childish, Deputy Speaker. I will not be apologizing. The Minister of Education routinely gets up with little disrespectful comments in his responses in QP to the member for Transcona, that he can't read, math is hard for him, all of this stuff.

None of us on this side of the House are going to be apologizing this morning or at any point today. Thank you.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Okay, members, it's not a point of order. It's a dispute over the facts; it's a continuation of debate. So I'm going to repeat my earlier admonition to all members on all sides: Let's behave and speak like adults on the record and off the record.

\* \* \*

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** And I believe the member for Borderland (Mr. Guenter) does have the floor. The honourable member for Borderland may continue.

**Mr. Guenter:** Let's not forget that the Manitoba NDP is led by a man with a criminal record. So that explains everything that that party is all about. And I think that is something that Manitobans are going to pay close attention to on October 3rd.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, our government has demonstrated historic support for teachers, for educators, for our students. We want our students to be positioned for success in this changing world. And I think it's important to note that Manitoba has the third highest per capita funding, the third highest spending per student in Canada, at \$15,434 according to Stats Canada.

So this reflects our commitment to improving the school system within Canada. What is the NDP record? The NDP record is having numeracy and literacy rates fall to—from the—when they took office in 1999, they were the third highest, and when they left office in 2016, literacy and numeracy rates were dead last in Canada. That is their record.

So we will put our record up against their record, our record of support for our students and educators in Manitoba, against their record of failure. And I also want to reflect on some positive news, and I very much appreciate a good working relationship with our wonderful Minister of Education here, who does a fantastic job on many files. He has led the charge on our \$10-a-day child-care program and something that our government supports, and that we—and that has been so well-received across the province.

But he is also been active in and accessible to advocates and groups out there who want to work with him in the Department of Education on things like daycares and schools and things like that. And we're very pleased to have the Minister of Education in southern Manitoba in Morden for the sod turning of the new school there in Morden, Discovery Trails School, and so it's exciting to see that school take shape.

I know students and parents and teachers, the whole community, is excited about it. We've experienced so much growth in recent years and frankly in—for several decades now, and it's such a good thing to see. But to have the minister there in person and to be able to turn the sod with him, and to have Superintendent Ross there and the board chair and trustees, Board Chair Brian Fransen and members of

the community come out and support that; it was such a positive event.

And it was a little microcosm of what's going on all across Manitoba when it comes to education—more schools being built. I think there's seven built, seven that are under way, and I think another nine that are in the pipeline, something like that. So, but the support is there, and it's growing. Just this year alone, if we're talking dollars, we're seeing a 6.1 per cent increase. And the member opposite did talk a little bit about the education funding formula, and of course those numbers break down a little differently for different school divisions.

And so there are some that are actually seeing double-digit increases in their funding, and Western School Division is one of them, seeing an 11 per cent increase this year in funding. So that's something that is very exciting.

So the support from our government is there. We're going to continue to support school divisions and teachers and students and parents and ensure that they are set up for success in this changing world. And our Minister of Education has been doing a fantastic job.

I want to reflect, as well, a little bit on my time—we're just coming out of I Love to Read Month, last month. And it was a great opportunity to go into some of these schools and have a conversation with students, and, you know, read a book, and things like that. And interact with the teachers, as well, and the staff. And I have to say, in my area, I visited Border Valley School down in Rhineland and it was just a wonderful school.

The principal is actually a former high school teacher of mine, and so—his name is Mr. Donovan Giesbrecht and so he asked me to call him Donovan, and I said, I just have the hardest time, after years of calling him Mr. Giesbrecht, to call him Donovan. But, we're going to work on that, but he always invites me in and it's—and they really run a great school there.

It's clean; the students are attentive and respectful, and that's the experience I've found in other schools, in Hochfeld, in—where we popped in—and the teacher—to deliver a book, and the teacher said, hey, do you have time? You know, we're just learning about politics and the way government works and could you come and talk to our students?

And we were very happy to do that. And again, the students were very respectful and asked very pertinent and interesting questions. And we went to

Plum Coulee School and École Elmwood School in Altona as well, and found that experience to be true there, too.

So, you know, we continue to support our students and our education system in Manitoba. But I just think it's really important that we not lose sight of the fact that, for all the words and all the hyperbole of the members of the Manitoba NDP, let's not forget that when they took office, they took a province that was third highest in terms of student achievement in the areas of numeracy and literacy, and somehow managed to place us at the bottom of the pack, dead last, through their mismanagement of the education system in their 17 years in power.

So, that's what we've been working with as a government and I think it's—that's an area of this resolution that should receive more attention, is the K-to-12 review, our government's work around that, the comprehensive review to really tackle ways to increase student presence, student attendance and—as well as student learning.

We can talk about money, and money is important. But we also want to see results and the K-to-12 review in our government's leadership on that and the—our Minister of Education's leadership on that is very important.

So, with those few comments, I yield the floor.

**Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Tyndall Park):** I recognize I only have two minutes here, but I am going to share just a couple of quick thoughts. I think we should be more solution-focused on this. We should be talking about nutrition programs.

A lot of work that comes from Child Nutrition Council of Manitoba and MTS. We should be talking about extracurricular programs. Seven Oaks has

done—Seven Oaks School Division has done an extraordinary job in bringing forward these programs like swimming and skating and we could be learning from this. We should be talking about school supplies, remote learning, how it's not only helping those who are immune-compromised, but also with academics and mental health. We should be talking about teachers' salaries and recognition, how we desperately need more teachers here in Manitoba.

These are all the subjects that we should be talking about, and it's unfortunate that we just wasted the last hour. Thank you.

**Mr. Shannon Martin (McPhillips):** It's always a pleasure to rise in this House and participate in the democratic process, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Before I get into the comments about the education resolution, I think it's important to put on the record, I think, this Chamber's thoughts and condolences to the police officers today and the community in Edmonton. I hear breaking news that two police officers in Edmonton have been killed today, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I just think it's important to put on the record our collective grief with the police force in Edmonton and with the people of Edmonton.

We often see education as a great equalizer, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in our community. And this is more evident today than ever before, when we see—

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order, please. The hour being 12 noon, when this matter is again before the House, the honourable member for McPhillips will have nine minutes remaining.

The hour being 12 o'clock noon, this House is adjourned and—recessed. It's not adjourned; it's recessed. And staff—*[interjection]*—thank you, clerks—and stands recessed until 1:30 this afternoon.



**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA**

**Thursday, March 16, 2023**

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