

Panel Discussion

Wednesday January 18, 2017

1. Elected vs. Appointed Boards

- Local knowledge and accommodations. We see the differences in our communities now but have the local representation to best meet the needs of each community and school.
- We know the people in our communities that are in our elected areas. We see them daily and need to be accountable to them and responsible to them. The Board is elected by the same people that elected MLAs.
- The importance of local voice. People know they can contact someone from their area to hear concerns.
- Who determines diversity of a Board member? Is a stay at home parent not a representative of a diversified member of the public?
- Appointed would be taxation without representation. This is not done in RMs our towns, cities etc. Different from Health because there is not tax assessment for Health. People pay taxes on their land/homes that is specifically assigned to education.
- Spirit of democracy. We practice this in our schools and is one of the founding principles of our nation and province!
- The report clearly indicates the best practice across Canada is elected Boards.

2. Separate and Public Boards

- How do you have two different systems in the province? People may change schools just to have their local voice/representation.
- Is this fair to tax payers? No.

3. Current System

- Perrins indicated unanimous support.
- Report does not address “compelling why” for change
- Sask. is well in line with number of Boards across Canada in terms of number and area and students. Could the rest of Canada have it so wrong?

4. Shifts in Governance

a) Strategic Direction and Accountability

- Changes in legislation – setting outcomes and standards- Do it!
- # of Trustees – work with SSBA; diversity in each community; diverse geography needs to be represented
- Skill set – Trustees care about students, a skill set that is not learned. They are elected just like MLAs. Trustees have great skill sets, much diversity around the table. Even if there was a standardized skill set there would have to be people hired to do the work. An appointed trustee does not have the time to do the work. Vested interest in our communities and schools. Local voice when hiring is also important.
- Principals and SCC present their LIP and results to Board at Spring Program Plans
- Strategic planning and review yearly. LIP reviews with respective schools.

b) Effectiveness

- Education Quality Council – Not defined!
- ESSP monitors student performance which is under the umbrella of school division accountability.

c) Efficiency

- Could look at procurement. Buses, fuel, supplies, and furniture could all be addressed. SSBA involvement in tenders. Using a platform such as in tenders.
- IT and Payroll could have an abundance of implications not addressed.
- We are contracted by Ile le Crosse for Student Services
- We bring in students from FDFN and Green Lake at High School
- It may actually cost more to improve student outcomes
- We've balanced our budgets year after year

d) Consistency/Standardization

- Envelope dollars for Governance
- Place out of scope on provincial grid
- Linc – we keep within the money we have but are open to a provincial Linc agreement

e) Participation

- We meet with SCC at their meetings and hold two division nights to work together. They are part of the school LIP.
- Local Priority is engagement
- Who will meet with SCCs if there are no local boards?
- Principals and SCC present their LIP and results to Board at Spring Program Plans
- Strategic planning and review yearly. LIP reviews with respective schools.
- We have FN representation on the Board – Flying Dust

The core shifts in Governance can all be addressed and achieved without disrupting school divisions.

5. Hypothetical Models

- All come with challenges and consequences
- More important – what is lost? Last amalgamation took time and focus away from students. Increased expenses come with amalgamation. (ie: Partnerships with Health, Social Services, meaningful relationships, etc.)
- How does this impact students? Cannot sacrifice students to experiment.
- Did past amalgamation impact grad rates?

6. ESSP

- Only 3 years into the plan and now have greater alignment and results than ever before.
- The Board supports the plan and focuses division strategic plan to be aligned with ESSP
- The Board supports the PLT.

7. Potential Change

- Need to talk to the sector to ensure little impact on students and staff
- Morale issues with uncertainty and change
- The implementation window- there needs to be time as many things will not be thought of.

- Education is built on relationships. A great deal of time and effort goes into building relationships. **Cannot have influence without relationships, and governance is built on influence.**
- At what expense of students is the government willing to gamble that students may pay for this potential change?
- No research for one Board being effective

Building meaningful relationships with First Nations must be done at the local level by local representatives with authority. Flying Dust First Nation and the Meadow Lake School Division worked together for over four years to complete an agreement that shared authority, through a local defined Community School Council, and financial resources to build a shared ownership high school.

This agreement received national attention upon its signing. It was complete with the help of Regional Director Glenn Wouters and Deputy Minister Craig Dotson as well as Minister of Northern Affairs Robert Nault, but it was built on the relationship of trust between the Chief and Council and the Meadow Lake School Division Board and Administration.

Flying Dust First Nation was an important part of MLSD. The first round of forced amalgamation watered down the sense of trust, belonging and influence Flying Dust felt with the school division and the agreement has slowly dissolved. Further amalgamation will make it even more challenging to reach out to the 74 individual First Nations in Saskatchewan.

NWSD currently has eight First Nations within its boundary, a situation where reaching a tuition agreement is a challenge, and building a meaningful relationship with nine educational systems non attainable.

There is a disconnect between the goal of working with our First Nation neighbours and amalgamation.

Glen Winkler

Northwest School Division

Board Member