

Bill #3

Equity in Education Act

Moved by: Minister of Government Services

WHEREAS public schools offer the most promising potential for building a harmonious and tolerant society ¹

WHEREAS all aspects of a curriculum are paramount to a student's development ²

WHEREAS multilingual education is a bridge to greater cultural understanding, empathy, increased political participation, and a healthier democracy ³

HIS MAJESTY, by and with the advice and consent of the Youth Parliament of Manitoba, enacts as follows:

Purpose

1. The purpose of this act is to
 - a. Establish SEEM with the mandate set out in Clause 4;
 - b. Ensure each K-12 student in Canada receives a fully multilingual education;
 - c. Ensure that Canadians from coast to coast to coast receive the same educational opportunities;
 - d. Aid in the revitalization of Indigenous languages and cultures, and;
 - e. Ensure equitable education for all K-12 students in Canada.

Definitions

2. The following terms shall be defined for the purposes of this Act:
 - a. **Academic Year:** Typically from September 1 to June 30, the days where students are expected to be present at school, at least 194 instructional days
 - b. **Advanced Placement:** A course offering undergraduate university level curricula and examinations to high school students.
 - c. **CEFR:** The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages is an organizational model for language proficiency, grouped into 6 main categories A1

¹ The role and importance of public education | *Foundations of education*, Brock University
<https://foundations.ed.brocku.ca/week06/2/>

² Teachers oppose letting parents opt kids from classes. (2012, May 28). *CBC News*.
<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/teachers-oppose-letting-parents-opt-kids-from-classes-1.1184377>

³ Kwame, A. (N.d) Education for Global Citizenship. *The Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education*

to C2, and three broad categories Basic User, Independent User and Proficient User.

- d. Compulsory Classes:** Courses that are deemed mandatory by a provincial or territorial educational ministry for advancement or graduation.
- e. Indigenous Language(s):** Any language/dialect belonging to one of the 12 recognized Indigenous language families according to the Office of the Commissioner of Indigenous Languages
- f. Local School:** A school in a student's catchment area/community.
- g. Public School:** A school whose operations are overseen by a School Board and provincial/territorial education ministry, a school **mostly** supported by public funds.
- h. School:** Any academic institution, public, private, or religious, offering a Kindergarten to Grade 12 (or equivalent), inclusive, education.
- i. School Board:** A local board or authority responsible for the provision and maintenance of schools in a certain region of a province/territory.
- j. School Day:** The hours of the day, varying by school district, in which a student is receiving instruction.
- k. Trade School:** A school offering education from grades 10-12 (or equivalent) offering specialized education, typically one requiring manual skills and special training to prepare students for the workforce.
- l. Private school:** A school whose operations are overseen by private individuals, and mostly supported by private funds.
- m. Normal division testing:** Tests made by teachers for purposes of assessing their students.

Establishing SEEM

- 3.** The council of Supervising Educational Equity and Multilingualism [SEEM] is hereby established.

Mandate of SEEM

- 4.** The mandate of **SEEM** shall be to
 - a.** Oversee the implementation and retention of this act by provincial and territorial education ministries, school boards and schools;
 - b.** Ensure equitable funding to schools and school boards;
 - c.** Collaborate with Indigenous leaders and education ministries from each Province/Territory to instill the proper facilities for the implementation of the new language education requirements;
 - d.** Establish the expected minority language benchmarks for students in Grades three, six, nine and twelve (or equivalent);

- e. Examine progression of proficiency in the minority language a student is enrolled in via **normal school division testing**.

5. Transfer of operations of Private Schools

- a. All schools operated by a private institution shall transfer their operations to a local school board or provincial/territorial education ministry as directed by **SEEM**.
- b. All students previously enrolled in a private institution will automatically be enrolled in their grade-appropriate, local public school **in the following academic year**.
- c. **Should the guardians of a student wish to have their child participate in home schooling for the following academic year, they may appeal to SEEM.**
 - i. **Should the reasoning of the guardians be insufficient, the student shall be enrolled as detailed in Clause 5c. Otherwise, SEEM shall provide additional and/or fiscal resources.**
- d. **All faculty working for private institutions will keep their jobs but switch to the new system.**

6. Secularization of Education

- a. No schools may offer any religious education to their students, any institution wishing to offer religious education may offer it as an extracurricular activity;
- b. Parents cannot opt-out their children of provincially/territorially mandated curriculum due to religious objection.

7. Specialized Education

- a. Each school board shall operate the following schools offering specialized education:
 - i. At least one (1) school with K-12 education, offering specialized education for students with disabilities;
 - ii. At least one (1) school with education in grades 9 to 12 (or equivalent) offering specialized education in the trades;
 - iii. At least one (1) school with education in grades 9 to 12 (or equivalent) offering specialized education with Advanced Placement courses.
- b. Admission to a school offering specialized education will be considered on a case-by-case basis after an application of admission is made to **SEEM**;
 - i. Applicants shall prove the student's need for the specialized education they are applying for;
 - 1. Proof of need can be provided via a written letter **by a certified medical professional** submitted with the **SEEM** application.

8. Multilingual Education

- a. Different streams of education shall be created based on language prevalence:
 - i. In Newfoundland & Labrador, Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, British Columbia, Yukon, Northwest Territories and Nunavut, one stream of French language education and one stream of Indigenous languages education.
 - ii. In Québec, one stream of English language education and one stream of Indigenous languages education.
- b. The following minimum standards will be in place:
 - i. All students **have the option** to be enrolled in one of the two streams offered in their province/territory of residence;
 - ii. Each student shall receive at least four (4) hours of instructional time per school day in the minority language chosen;
 - iii. Each student, by the completion of Grade Twelve (or equivalent), shall attain at a minimum B2 level according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) in order to graduate.

9. Coming Into Effect

- a. Clause 7 shall come into effect one (1) **academic** year after the assent of this bill;
 - i. **SEEM** will commence enforcement of Clause 9 at the start of the next Academic Year proceeding the coming into effect of section 7.
- b. Clause 8 shall receive gradual implementation;
 - i. Starting in the next Academic Year, each student entering Kindergarten, Grade One, Grade Two or Grade Three (or equivalent) shall be enrolled in one of the streams offered and shall be enrolled in a stream until completion of secondary school (or equivalent).
 - ii. Students entering grades four through twelve (or equivalent) in the next academic year, after the assent of this bill, may continue their current **public** education until completion of secondary school (or equivalent)

10. Non-Compliance

- a. Failure from an school or provincial/territorial school board to comply with this act shall result in the following:
 - i. Reduction in federal financial support for the provincial/territorial education ministry if the offender is a province/territory, or;
 - ii. Fines of \$100,000 per academic year of non-compliance if the offender is an individual school or school board, or/and;

- iii. After 10 academic years of non-compliance, transfer of the operations of the provincial/territorial education ministry OR individual school/board in non-compliance to **SEEM**.