

Education Matters — Recruitment

We very nearly lost it — until the details of Bill 64 were published, nobody thought that the province could just take away the local control that has been a feature of Manitoba's schools and substitute central planning.

The uproar that Bill 64 unleashed is proof that we Manitobans treasure the fact that the people most responsible for our children's education are not centralized bureaucrats, but members of our communities and that they are kept focused on peoples' needs. Since trustees are locally elected officials, we will once again soon face an election as constituents choose who will represent them on the school board.

Well, that moment is coming up; there will be an election for municipal councils and school boards this October. Let's make it a real one. We are going to need candidates. If you are interested in becoming a trustee, now is the time.

A trustee is entrusted and empowered by the Public Schools Act to oversee the delivery of education within a school division. In Beautiful Plains School Division, the responsibility includes schools in Neepawa, Carberry, Brookdale, Eden, and in seven Hutterian colonies.

The qualifications required include Canadian Citizenship, residence in the school division, an age of at least 18, and the signatures of 25 voters in the division. More important perhaps, but not specified in the Act, you have the opportunity to learn what the students need, what the community and parents want, and to attend two meetings each month that school is in. Perhaps the most important thing is to deliberate with your fellow trustees, and to support the decisions that are made collectively by the board of trustees. You'll be talking about everything from finances to pedagogy, preventive maintenance, software choices, and professional development. You won't be micro managing; you design the policies and leave the execution to the staff.

What are the rewards? Well, you are paid a little indemnity to keep the work from being a drain on your resources, your expenses are covered, but the main reward is how the division progresses with students at the heart of the work.

The company is good; you'll be among people who share your concerns and challenges. You will become a member of the organization that speaks for all school trustees, and will meet with your counterparts across the province.

Many provinces have reduced the role of local school trustees in the name of efficiency, but they haven't been as pleased with the situation they have created. Manitoba maintains a real grassroots democracy. Let's treasure and support it. For more details about Trusteeship, check out the BPSD's [website](#). Please call the Division Office, and put your name forward if you are interested.