

## **The Manitoba School Library Association**

### **Position Statement on the Closure of the Manitoba Curriculum Support Centre**

**March 13, 2019**

The provincial government has decided to close the Manitoba Curriculum Support Centre (CSC) as of April 1. MSLA is very concerned by this closure and we are urging our membership to individually speak out against this decision.

Closing the CSC will negatively impact educational programming and curriculum implementation across the province. The CSC supports education in Manitoba through:

- sharing materials, including books, artifacts, kits, and movies, specifically curated to align with Manitoba curricula
- sharing materials for visually-impaired students
- being accessible to Manitoba's rural and northern communities where resources and reliable internet may be scarce
- being accessible to Manitoba's home school educators
- supporting library initiatives, including Freedom to Read, TD Grade One Book Giveaway and Copyright Law information
- sharing professional development materials for educators
- providing journals and relevant research to support teacher candidates and educators pursuing further education

The provincial government has not shared the entire scope of its plan for CSC, but has indicated that some materials (namely the materials for the visually impaired students) will remain available and that there will also be an online collection. Not only does this not address the useful hands-on materials many educators valued from CSC, it is concerning because as we know, online resources and those for visually-impaired learners still require selection, weeding, cataloguing and other maintenance in the scope of a library.

Moving to an online model is not equitable for many of our rural and northern communities where internet access is unreliable and/or cost-prohibitive. Additionally, some Manitoba communities chose to not use the internet for religious reasons. Libraries, as an institution, uphold equality, equity, and accessibility.

It is particularly concerning that the government made this decision after initiating, but not concluding, an education review and did not consult with any stakeholders. As Manitoba Teachers' Society has stated, the provincial government has acted in bad faith.

MSLA is asking our members as individuals to contact their MLA to speak against this closure. (We recommend you use personal email accounts and not identify yourself with a school or school division.) We also urge you to share the information regarding the problematic closure with your Manitoba friends and family and urge them to write to their MLAs as well. The public needs to be informed why this service is valuable to Manitoba educators. We have included a form letter that you may wish to use;

we encourage you to personalize it and add your passionate voice. The form letter includes sending a copy to both Brian Pallister and Kelvin Goertzen. If one of them is your MLA, please remove their name. Please send both an email and a paper letter for maximum impact.

Additionally, once the promised link to the provincial education review is made public, we urge you to complete it and to include your concerns over the CSC there, as well.

To look up your electoral division and MLA:

<https://www.electionsmanitoba.ca/en/Voting/WhatsMyEDNonElection>

The CSC had been serving Manitoba educators for over 100 years. It was a valuable resource to all Manitoba educators. **The CSC should remain as a fully functioning, well-funded, properly staffed resource for all Manitoba educators.**