

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

*Published under the  
authority of  
The Honourable Myrna Driedger  
Speaker*

**Vol. LXXVI No. 46A - 10 a.m., Tuesday, May 10, 2022**

ISSN 0542-5492

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

<b>Member</b>	<b>Constituency</b>	<b>Political Affiliation</b>
ALTomARE, 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
FIELDING, Scott, Hon.	Kirkfield Park	PC
FONTAINE, Nahanni	St. Johns	NDP
FRIESEN, Cameron, Hon.	Morden-Winkler	PC
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, Hon.	Brandon West	PC
ISLEIFSON, Len	Brandon East	PC
JOHNSON, Derek, Hon.	Interlake-Gimli	PC
JOHNSTON, Scott, Hon.	Assiniboia	PC
KHAN, Obby	Fort Whyte	PC
KINEW, Wab	Fort Rouge	NDP
LAGASSÉ, Bob	Dawson Trail	PC
LAGIMODIERE, Alan, Hon.	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	Seine River	PC
MOSES, Jamie	St. Vital	NDP
NAYLOR, Lisa	Wolseley	NDP
NESBITT, Greg	Riding Mountain	PC
PEDERSEN, Blaine	Midland	PC
PIWNIUK, Doyle, Hon.	Turtle Mountain	PC
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	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>	Thompson	

## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, May 10, 2022

*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

**Madam Speaker:** As previously announced, the honourable member for Tyndall Park has indicated that Bill 208, The Teachers' Pensions Amendment Act will be her selected bill for this session, and that the question will be put on second reading of this bill this morning at 10:55 a.m.

## SECOND READINGS—PUBLIC BILLS

Bill 208—The Teachers' Pensions  
Amendment Act

**Madam Speaker:** Accordingly, I will now recognize the honourable member for Tyndall Park to move her second reading motion to begin this debate.

**Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Tyndall Park):** I move, seconded by the member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard), that The Teachers' Pensions Amendment Act, be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

**Madam Speaker:** It has been moved by the honourable member for Tyndall Park, seconded by the honourable member for River Heights, that Bill 208, The Teachers' Pensions Amendment Act, be now read a second time, and be referred to a committee of this House.

**Ms. Lamoureux:** Thank you, Madam Speaker, for the opportunity to rise this morning and speak to Bill 208, The Teachers' Pensions Amendment Act.

I also want to thank RTAM, as we have four guests who have joined us here today in the gallery. We have the president, William; the vice president, JoAnne; treasurer, Pat; and secretary, John. And Madam Speaker, I'm going to table a list of their full names and their positions on the RTAM board, and I didn't want to attempt to pronounce the last names, but here they are to be tabled.

I also want to quickly thank the Minister of Education as well. I know him and I had the opportunity to speak yesterday, and he has been very gracious with his time, as far as helping me with my Education critic role, as well as constituency business in the role of Education.

So just to jump right in, Madam Speaker, I want to start by talking about the Teachers' Retirement Allowances Fund—many will know as TRAF. TRAF is governed by a board that oversees operations, acts as a trustee of the funds, and ultimately is responsible for the administration of Teachers' Pensions Act.

The board itself has 10 scheduled meetings a year and oftentimes meets on special occasions throughout the year as well, Madam Speaker.

Now, this legislation derives from all the hard work that RTAM has done. And I know every member in this House is familiar with the Retired Teachers' Association of Manitoba because they have been very diligent in ensuring that they've met with the different caucuses over the years, which I'm going to talk a little bit more about to come, Madam Speaker.

They also represent over 10,000 members here in Manitoba—that's across the entire province—10,000 members of RTAM, Madam Speaker. That is very telling in and of itself.

One of the other things that they have recently done was they created a letter-writing campaign, and members of this House may have received letters from their constituents, and I'm tabling a copy of this as well now, Madam Speaker, as I think it's important that it's included in Hansard, and it shows the diligence and how they have continued to 'preserve' to ensure that this legislation is passed here in the province of Manitoba.

And this is all recently. If we go to the background of the legislation, we can talk about how RTAM and this very idea has actually been on our radar here in this House for over two decades. It was actually first introduced in 2006 when the PCs were in opposition, and our current Premier (Mrs. Stefanson), when she was the MLA for Tuxedo and the Education critic, she was the first one to introduce the legislation here in these Chambers, and, Madam Speaker, you actually seconded the legislation as well.

And so we've seen it introduced in 2006, and I just want to go back to Hansard here.

So, on December 5th, 2006, the now-Premier said: This bill essentially came about as a result of numerous rallies on the grounds of the Legislature in support of the legislation.

And my colleague from River Heights, he also spoke on December 5th, 2006, and said that he supported this—or supports this legislation because we feel that it is important that retired teachers have better democratic representation on the TRAF board, and this—and that this representation be guaranteed in law and not just be at the will and whim of whatever government is in power.

So, Madam Speaker, that was in 2006. Then, if we fast-forward, in 2007 we have the MLA representing Springfield-Ritchot who introduced similar legislation, and he shared on October 17, 2007, and again I quote here: "I follow in the footsteps of my honourable colleague for Tuxedo in bringing forward this legislation to guarantee a seat for retired teachers on the TRAF board."

And, Madam Speaker, I'd be remiss if I didn't share just one more quote. This quote is actually from my father when he was an MLA, so it shows you, this legislation has been being debated for two generations—at least two generations of Lamoureuxs—here in this Manitoba Chamber.

And my father, a man of many, many words—I think this is telling—he says: It's a no-brainer; this is something that should be passed.

So, in those few words, Madam Speaker, I think that it's evident that there is high support for this legislation—across party lines, in support of this legislation, and I'm hopeful that it's going to pass today, here in the House.

So, this is the third time it is now being introduced, and third time is a charm.

And what I'm going to do is I'm going to read the explanatory note, and then we'll talk a little bit more about it.

So the bill itself amends the Teachers' Pensions Act to add two members to the Teachers' Retirement Allowances Fund board. One of the two new members must be a nominee of the Retired Teachers' Association of Manitoba, and the provisions respecting quorum are adjusted to reflect the increased number of board members.

So the changes are pretty straightforward, Madam Speaker. RTAM represents over 10,000 retired teachers here in the province of Manitoba, and this would enable their voices to be better heard in a formal way at the table, by increasing the board from seven to nine seats.

Currently, the seven seats are comprised of four from the provincial government and three from MTS, the Manitoba Teachers' Society, and increasing this to nine would mean having five from the provincial government, three from Manitoba Teachers' Society, and one from the Retired Teachers' Association of Manitoba. We chose to do it this way in the legislation, Madam Speaker, because it maintains the structure that is currently practised. It is uneven board members for voting purposes, of course, and it enables quorum when needed.

\* (10:10)

So this legislation is important because RTAM, as I've mentioned several times now—over 10,000 members here in Manitoba whose voices deserve to be heard and who we could be learning a lot from with respect to our education system here in Manitoba.

And in addition to this, most pension plans have an array of voices around the table. And TRAF should too. If we look at our nursing unions, Madam Speaker, they have many retired nurses on their board. Why don't we have a retired teacher on our teachers' board?

So with those few remarks, I want to take as many questions as I can, and I'm hopeful that members will speak in favour to the legislation. It will be going through a question at 10:55, I understand, and hope to have unanimous support.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

### 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.

And I do need to remind members in the gallery that there is to be no participation in the proceedings, which includes applause from the gallery. So, your co-operation would be much appreciated. Thank you very much.

So, question?

**Mr. Ian Wishart (Portage la Prairie):** I would ask the member for Tyndall Park what specific timing prompted the member to bring forward this bill?

**Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Tyndall Park):** I'd like to thank the member for his question.

And the timing of it was actually from a meeting that our caucus had with RTAM. That was probably about a year ago now, at this point. It was during the COVID pandemic. I remember we had met over the Zoom platform, and when they shared with us this idea, it was kind of a—in my dad's words—a no-brainer.

So we started to develop some legislation which we have now introduced into the Leg.

**Mr. Nello Altomare (Transcona):** I'd like to welcome our guests in the gallery, at this time. It's good to see members of RTAM and the executive here, advocating for their membership. And in doing so, we do know how important it is to have representation on retirement allowances boards because we have to ensure that the retirement fund is fully funded and well looked after.

Can the member from Tyndall Park talk a little bit about the consultation process and how involved it became?

**Ms. Lamoureux:** I'd like to thank the member for Transcona on his question. I know he, himself, as an

educator, has been a very strong critic for education here in the House, and has persevered quite a bit.

Madam Speaker, we have consulted with RTAM a lot over the last year. That is probably the main group in—which we have consulted with. And we have consulted with them whether it's Zoom meetings and phone calls and the letter-writing campaign.

In addition to this, we have also consulted with teachers throughout the province of Manitoba. I know I specifically reached out to some teachers in my constituency of Tyndall Park.

And we've had the opportunity to speak with MTS, the Manitoba Teachers' Society as well.

Thank you.

**Mr. Bob Lagassé (Dawson Trail):** Can the member for Tyndall Park share how this bill will provide better outcomes for retired teachers here in Manitoba?

**Ms. Lamoureux:** Great question. I think that this bill will provide better outcomes for teachers in Manitoba because it brings another perspective to the table to discuss education here in the province. And with any sort of topic, we want to have a wide array—a wide net of expertise, and having a retired teacher come on to the board of TRAF would be expanding that net, Madam Speaker.

**Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights):** Yes. My question to the member for Tyndall Park: The money in the TRAF fund is money which is for retired teachers, right? It is contributed by teachers, it is contributed by the government, but it is for retired teachers. A major principle of democracy is that when you have people involved like this, this is money for them that they should be involved in decision making.

**Ms. Lamoureux:** You know, my colleague brings up a really important point here in the House today. These funds that are going into the board of TRAF and being discussed and debated amongst the TRAF board, they are set in place for retired teachers here in the province. So who better to be having those conversations and partaking in those conversations?

**Ms. Janice Morley-Lecomte (Seine River):** I'd also like to thank the member for bringing this bill forward.

Is the member aware of any other provinces or jurisdictions that have retired teachers sitting on their boards?

**Ms. Lamoureux:** I'd like to thank the member for her question.

Yes, it's currently practised in Prince Edward Island, where three persons are appointed by the minister; one person is appointed by the minister of finance; three persons are members appointed by the Prince Edward Island Teachers' Federation; and one person is a pensioner appointed by the Prince Edward Island Retired Teachers' Association. So, this would actually—we would be following suit to Prince Edward Island, and I think we could be second in the game here, Madam Speaker.

**Mr. Altomare:** As we know, defined benefit pension plans are becoming more and more rare. As we progress, unfortunately, this is something that is making life very difficult for working people in Manitoba and the rest of Canada. You know, you work in a career and you expect to have a good pension afterwards, and a defined benefit pension certainly does that.

I would like to ask the member: What are some of the real pressing issues right now with the Teachers' Retirement Allowance Fund and what they're doing to ensure its long-term viability?

**Ms. Lamoureux:** I'd like to thank the member for his question.

I know RTAM has been incredibly gracious with their time, and they would be more than happy to meet with the member for Transcona (Mr. Altomare) to talk in more detail. But we've seen many issues arise, even just over the last couple of years with COVID, which is why this is more pressing time than ever to ensure that a retired teacher from RTAM does find a place on the board of TRAF.

**Mr. Wishart:** I'd like to ask the member how she would define a retired teacher, particularly these days when we see a lot of so-called soft retirements—phasing out rather than abrupt changes in lifestyle. How would that definition be applied?

**Ms. Lamoureux:** I like that question. I think that this could be described in many different ways. I would argue a member from RTAM, for example, could be the very definition of a retired teacher here in the province.

I also know that, under this legislation, a retired teacher—could be written from The Public Schools Act; it could be a civil service under the Minister of Education, Manitoba Teachers' Society or Manitoba School Boards Association, the faculty of education in Manitoba. There are many different streams in—which constitute a retired teacher according to this legislation, but here and there we could make

reference—we know the Minister of Education, we know the member from Transcona; they are both former teachers—

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

**Mr. Altomare:** Every retired teacher isn't necessarily a member of RTAM, and because of that, I'd like to ask the member: Is there a provision here that says it has to be an RTAM member or can it just be a retired teacher that's put on the board?

**Ms. Lamoureux:** I'd like to thank the member for the question. And he's right, not all retired teachers are members of RTAM. But as I've mentioned, there are over 10,000 members of RTAM here in the province of Manitoba. And, again, we have lots of information that is out there, and I'm sure the board of RTAM would be happy to sit down and talk with the member from Transcona to explain a little bit more about the details and just how much ground RTAM actually covers in the province of Manitoba.

**Mr. Lagassé:** Can the member speak to if there are any residency requirements to sit on this board?

\* (10:20)

**Ms. Lamoureux:** Thank you, Madam Speaker, for the question—or the member for the question.

I want to seek some clarification. Is it the board of TRAF or the board of the Retired Teachers Association that he's asking about?

**Mr. Lagassé:** The—your legislation here, so the—

**An Honourable Member:** TRAF.

**Mr. Lagassé:** Board, yes, TRAF. Yes.

**Ms. Lamoureux:** Yes, so according to this legislation, we would be bumping up the number of board members from seven to nine, and that would be comprised of five from the provincial government, three from the Manitoba Teachers' Society and one from the RTAM association of Manitoba.

**Madam Speaker:** The honourable member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard)? No further questions there.

The honourable member for Transcona.

**Mr. Altomare:** Oh. Okay. We do know at this time that we're in a period of very high inflation, and funding of defined benefits pensions has—and this particular one has a tie to cost of living. And that's a significant piece.

And is the member concerned that government may work to change that arrangement where it's not

tied to COLA anymore because we're in a high inflation environment right now?

**Ms. Lamoureux:** Madam Speaker, and again, I'd like to thank the member for his question.

I think there is always that concern that we are made aware of, but we are hopeful that by having another member on the board, they can provide some further perspective to hopefully—not for that to happen.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**Ms. Morley-Lecomte:** Can the member opposite explain if or how RTAM has helped the public school system with and throughout the pandemic?

**Ms. Lamoureux:** I think I heard the question correctly, and she's asking if RTAM has been involved and has helped the school systems throughout the pandemic.

Madam Speaker, RTAM has been very accessible to anyone who would like to meet with them, and I would make the argument that they have just through their education and awareness purposes in and of itself. They have spread a lot of information throughout the entire province. In our case, to us as politicians, and I would argue that they have made a positive impact throughout the COVID pandemic.

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

### Debate

**Madam Speaker:** Debate is open.

**Mr. Ian Wishart (Portage la Prairie):** It's a pleasure to rise to put a few words on the record regarding Bill 208, and I would like to thank the members for RTAM who have joined us today and have done—I must say the association has done a very thorough job of lobbying on their behalf to make sure that many people in this House, I know, have been approached by them, and they have been well informed and certainly that makes the whole process much, much better.

It is important to have a look at the implications of this bill, and I know the member for Tyndall Park (Ms. Lamoureux) has talked about the number of people on the board, but it is also important to look at motivations behind this.

Certainly, we understand the motivation behind MTS, who is a member of the board. Their membership mostly contributes the current dollars to the

insurance pools that are used, or the investment pools, rather, that are used to generate the funds that are paying out the benefits.

But also to look at the retired teachers' motivation, of course. They're looking for—maximize the benefits and—as they should because that's what they're here to represent their members regarding. And in particular, in a time of high inflation, as the member from Transcona pointed out, this becomes a real challenge because very often inflation rises much faster in short terms than the benefits would from a program like this, which is designed much more to be sustainable over the long term.

And, of course, taxpayers have an interest in this as well because this is an unfunded liability from the Province of Manitoba's point of view, so every year there's a contribution that has to come out of the budget that is part of Education towards this, and that costs the taxpayers of Manitoba dollars every year, and, you know, as a government, we have to be responsible for how that particular money is spent.

So there is a bit of a at-odds situation in terms of being on the board and representing somewhat different interests. It is important, and I would suggest that—to get a proper balance on this board, and I would suggest that the numbers that they're looking at are approximately right; it's certainly something that we need to keep in mind to make sure that the balance is there. And we also need to make sure that we have the expertise in challenging times for investing, because, of course, these days things can go sideways on investments, as we all know. So, it's very important that we look at the long-term sustainability of the different investment pools that are in RTAM.

You can have things arise that cause a little conflict. I think the members here—particularly of RTAM and some of the members in the House—are going to remember that back—not too distant past, there was actually a surplus in one of the investment pools, and there was—they were at odds on how that should be paid and who should receive it and how much because of cost of living allowance was part of the factor in that.

It was settled, I believe either 2016 or 2017; there was a resolution worked out that the Province was part of. And it did cost taxpayers in Manitoba a little bit additional, but it was something that was resolved, and the benefits were able to flow to the RTAM members and rates were adjusted in terms of contributions that MTS members put into that accordingly.

So, it is important to make sure that you understand everyone's motivation in this.

That said, I mean, the member makes excellent points that they are the beneficiaries of this program. We do have to be aware that there are early retirement clauses, and something like COVID may generate quite a number of people that want to take early retirement from programs like this and that will put additional burdens on the program. And we have to make sure that, if nothing else, that this is sustainable in the long run. It's important both to the RTAM members and also to MTS members who hope to benefit from this at some time in the future. Contribution rates, when inflation is high, is also a significant factor. So, it's certainly something that we need to look at.

It's nice to hear that there's at least that one other province that has taken this approach, and perhaps we can learn a bit from what they have done.

And I know in some other provinces it's not actually run separate by a board, it's run by a larger amalgamation of funds, and that is perhaps a significant development that we could look at, whether that's appropriate in our situation.

Number of these in other provinces are very significant investment funds. Ontario teacher's retirement fund is known across the country for the— for its ability to actually have power in the marketplace and has become a major player in—at times, just by their investment impact in the marketplace. So that, too, is something we'd look at; I know we're certainly not of that scale here in Manitoba, but it is part of the overall picture.

The—not only these days do we not only look at the 'retrates' of return and how they're—but it's the ethics of the investment that certainly comes into play. And very often we hear that now, particularly with retirement funds, groups that—don't want to see their money put in certain types of investments simply because of the ethics involved, or their perceived ethics involved and that, so that's something that we need to look at.

That said, certainly I am pleased to put a few words on the record in regards to this. I think that this is a move in the right direction and that, you know, we need to look at how this can be refined. Perhaps at committee we can approach some of the issues of conflict that we do see in motivation, which is something that I think we certainly need to be aware of.

But, with that, Madam Speaker, I would like to provide the opportunity for others to speak to this bill.

\* (10:30)

**Mr. Nello Altomare (Transcona):** It's always a pleasure to put some words on the record, especially regarding this particular bill, Bill 208, Teachers' Pensions Amendment Act. This is something that—we're certainly in support of retired teachers, in support of them having a voice because it's important. As it's been said in the House earlier today, retired teachers provide a very important—I believe—balanced voice to this, one that needs to be at the table making decisions regarding this particular defined benefit pension plan.

The Teachers' Retirement Allowance Fund is one of the jewels in the province of Manitoba when it comes to a defined benefit pension plan, one that many people that work in this system look forward to accessing at some point in their career. And one that—once retired, we know that many of retired teachers in Manitoba return to the classroom. They returned to the classroom to provide support, especially during the pandemic. Without retired teachers, I would say that many schools would have had to shut down.

As a matter of fact, Madam Speaker, right now, we're in a situation where many schools, because of COVID, because of the stresses on the system, have—are experiencing, right now, this very case where teachers are not only having to do what they're doing with—regularly, but also covering colleagues who can't be at work because they're sick, and because they want to keep people safe, right? And so we want to ensure that retired teachers can continue to do that.

Now, how's that connect to this? It connects to this because we need a pension plan that is viable. Long-term sustainability is important. I do know that the retired teachers want to ensure that, when they have their voice at that table, that it's a voice that understands defined benefit pension plans, understands the investment strategy of a defined benefit pension plan because it has to maintain its long-term viability.

And, of course, Manitoba Teachers' Society is—has had their voice to this. Doesn't—in my conversations with them, sees this as something that can move forward and because, as was mentioned earlier, we do have a province in Canada, PEI, as the member from Tyndall Park outlined, that does have a retired member on there.



The one piece that I want to ensure, and maybe this will come out in committee, is that who is that member going to be? And what kind of qualifications are they going to have? That sort of thing. And we can flesh this out so that it's something that gives the board some, I guess the term would be, a learned experience with this. Because it is, as I said earlier, Madam Speaker, very important.

The other pieces we have to remember is that with defined benefit pension plans that the 'contributions' are what make it. I will say that teachers in the past, since 2016, have had to endure a lot of interference by this government when it comes to wage negotiations, when it comes to benefits, when it comes to negotiating fairly with people that work in the system, that work in a core government service, Madam Speaker.

And when you restrain and restrict and, in some cases, illegally interfere in bargaining, that impacts, of course, the wages and salaries of members, therefore impacting the level of contributions. And that has to be looked at seriously by this government and thinking, how do we maintain our defined benefit pension plans like TRAF?

It's really important because I will say, right now, the teaching pool, in Manitoba, because of some of the decisions made by this government here, is shrinking. We've had teachers lose jobs in Seven Oaks School Division, in Brandon, and throughout other jurisdictions in this province, and that impacts the amount of money that is going into this defined benefit plan.

And as the member from Portage indicated, there are unfunded—this is an unfunded liability, right, that has to have hundreds of millions of dollars put in place. I do recall an NDP government break—putting in \$500 million a few years back to further unfunded liability because it's important. What is also important is that this government understands the contributions of teachers, and that they are bargained with fairly, without interference.

So when you have an illegal wage freeze that's imposed, that impacts viability of defined benefit pension plans like TRAF. And I know the retired teachers of Manitoba are worried about that, because it directly impacts their pensions.

And the other piece that we have to remember here is that when you have that voice added to that, it adds—it feels like they're part of the team, Madam Speaker, part of the team that's looking after this pool of funds that is intended for teachers that have put in

a lifetime of service for Manitoba students, communities and families; it's very important that at the end of a very rewarding career, they can look back at it—not to, you know—with a lot of fond memories and a lot of—and a job well done.

And so when we have people like RTAM in the building here, listening in on debate, I know that as retired teachers, they look back on their careers with a great deal of pride and a great sense of accomplishment. They've added to the fabric, they've added to a person's personal development, they've added to community development, and there's nothing more satisfying than that, Madam Speaker, when you're able to say at the end of a career that—a job well done.

And a defined benefit pension plan that you've contributed to is something that one can look forward to, that you don't have to think about that when you're in the actual field, when you're in—the teacher—when you're in the classroom, because your focus when you're in the classroom, Madam Speaker, has to be on the kids in the community that you serve.

By RTAM adding a member and there—another member actually, going from seven to nine, what they're doing is ensuring that that teacher in the classroom can be focused on the duty at hand, as opposed to worrying about, who's looking after my pension?

Because it's a very real concern in this day and age, because defined benefit pension plans, Madam Speaker, are becoming rarer and rarer, and it's something—like I said earlier in my questioning, this is a jewel that we have here in Manitoba, one that needs to be looked after, one that needs to be polished. And I think we can polish that jewel by adding more members to the TRAF board, so that we do have a variety of voices.

Because it is important, right? Currently we have four government members on the board and three Manitoba Teachers' Society members on the board. The bill adds two more. It doesn't necessarily indicate what that other—the other member would be, government, or could be MTS, maybe. But it does specifically indicate that one of the members represent the retired teachers of Manitoba.

And that's something that I would like to certainly see happen in the province, because, as the member from Tyndall Park indicated, the retired teacher force is growing. It's growing because, I will say, Madam Speaker, they've been put under a lot of stress throughout—since 2016, I would say, by a government

that introduced a bill, 64, that caused many people pause; that did impact the number of people that retired; that did have an impact on classrooms.

When you remove the years of experience—because I will say, the most experienced teachers often provide incredible value, and are always called upon, Madam Speaker, for—to come into the classroom and to sub, to provide support to schools. And I think what happens here in this House really impacts our retired teacher pool. We can't lose sight of that.

So, we on this side of the House are certainly happy to see the retired teachers here; happy to advocate for the retired teachers. It's a noble profession, one that I spent 33 years of my life in; one where I consider myself a teacher. I am still a teacher. I carry my certificate with pride. I can't tell you how satisfied I was, and I know how satisfied they feel in their careers.

So with those few words, Madam Speaker, thank you.

\* (10:40)

**Hon. Wayne Ewasko (Minister of Education and Early Childhood Learning):** Good morning, and it gives me great pleasure to stand today and speak to Bill 208, brought forward by the member for Tyndall Park (Ms. Lamoureux).

I would like to say thank you and welcome to the gallery this morning, many of my long-time friends that I've been meeting with for quite some time over my 11 years as the MLA for Lac du Bonnet. And so I would like to give a bit out—a bit of a shout-out to Bill Cann, who's the past president of RTAM, and JoAnne Hoyak and Pat Bowslaugh and John Sushelnitsky and, of course, one of the long-time people who have contacted me over the last many, many years, Guy Hanson as well, who's up in the gallery today.

I'd like to also share, Madam Speaker, that I had the pleasure this last week of bringing—unfortunately virtual—greetings this past week to their AGM, which was held May 2nd to 4th. And we've had many meetings over the last bunch of years with our Retired Teachers' Association of Manitoba. And, absolutely, they represent over 10,000 retired teachers here in the province.

And much like the member for Transcona (Mr. Altomare), I, as well, still consider myself a teacher, even though I've been out of the classroom

now for, it's coming up to 11 years, but I absolutely left teaching when I absolutely loved it. This was an opportunity to represent 23,000 constituents and then—now, since the Premier (Mrs. Stefanson) had put me into the—as minister—the Education and Early Childhood Learning, I have the opportunity of representing and helping with one-point-almost-three million people.

So this is an absolute honour to be standing today to be speaking and putting a few words on the record to Bill 208, which is sort of interesting to hear from the member from Transcona that it almost sounds like they're going to be supporting this. So that is—that's good to hear, Madam Speaker, because for 17 years they really sat and didn't do a whole lot. And I'm going to go a little partisan for a few seconds because the member from Transcona put some inaccuracies on the record.

So, I did want to correct a couple items. And so what I'd like to do is basically say, you know, contrary to what the member has said—and it's unfortunate—that the member from Transcona's stuck in the past—the Premier and our team has—had withdrawn bill 64. And why is that—why did that happen, Madam Speaker—is because we're collaborating. We're listening to all of our education partners all across this great province of ours. And they said loud and clear that they wanted the governance model—the governance model—to be left alone, the trustee model to be left alone, so we withdrew bill 64.

What the member has not stated is that with the K-to-12 commission—which again was the first major commission of its kind since 1959, Madam Speaker. So we needed some recommendations. We've had many meetings with RTAM. We've had many meetings with MTS and all of our other education stakeholders and partners across this great province of ours, and I think we've developed a great plan. It's the action plan. It's the K-to-12 action plan. It's a road map for student success. And I know that we've had many accolades from fall of our education partners all across this great province of ours for that action plan, except for the member from Transcona and his so-called team, the NDP team over there.

So in—contrary to what the member had said in regards to Bill 208, Madam Speaker, is that we've actually invested over \$327 million over the last two years to Education. We have funded Education far more than the former NDP government ever did, and we're looking seriously at—and again I applaud the member for Tyndall Park (Ms. Lamoureux) for

bringing forward this legislation today, and it gives us the opportunity to debate and have a conversation.

I also wanted to take this opportunity to congratulate the new board, Madam Speaker, of RTAM. And I've actually had—I have the list here somewhere, and I would like to possibly mention a few of the new people that are on there as well.

So, we have a new executive director for RTAM as well, and his name is Ed Seywright [*phonetic*—and I'm hoping I pronounce that name—his name right—but I welcome Ed to the RTAM board. And, of course, just newly elected, we have president, Linda Blair, who is the new president. And we have Joan Zaretsky, who is the vice president. We have Dave Najdych, who is the secretary. We have Pat, who—Bowslaugh, who is staying on as treasurer.

And just a quick shout out to Pat, she just received—we were at the Manitoba royal winter fair in Brandon, and maybe of our—many of our colleagues from all sides of the House, Madam Speaker, had attended the Manitoba royal winter fair in Brandon, and it was nice to see people actually in person and see that the Brandon royal winter fair had happened again. And so, Pat, that evening, on MLA evening, was congratulated by the Manitoba royal winter fair for a volunteer award. So, again, congratulations Pat.

We also—to continue on, Madam Speaker, we also have Shannon Culbertson, who is a representative from Brandon as a director on the board. We have Bob Davies, David Harkness, Paul Harland, Dennis Kozak, Gabe Mercier from Ochre River—and I just had a nice conversation with Gabe not that long ago—Audrey Siemens, and Rex Virtue as a director, and, of course, last but definitely not least—it just so happens to be the list that I have—is Anne Williams.

So, I'd like to congratulate the new board of RTAM, and I know that their encouragement and advocacy work that they do on behalf of their over 10,000 members, I know will be looked upon quite favourably, not only here in the Chamber, but all across the province, Madam Speaker.

A couple quick tidbits before I turn it over to anyone else who'd like to put some—put a few words on the record. I would like to commend all of our retired teachers in this great province of ours, Madam Speaker. And I know that the member from Transcona is closer to that mark than I am, but I know that we as teachers, we put many volunteer hours into our various communities, right?

And I'd like to commend RTAM and all the retired teachers for continuing their work within their communities, and whether that's where they taught in the school divisions that they taught, the schools that they taught, or other places around this province, because it's not just a 9 to 3:30 job, Madam Speaker. It is a life; it's calling, it's an absolute calling to be an educator here in this great province of ours, and I know that they've also stepped up. I know the pandemic's been really tough on not only our teachers but our education system, our students, our staff, our support staff, our parents, absolutely everybody, and I know retired teachers have stepped up and come alongside and taken the opportunity to volunteer and to substitute teach as well.

And so, you know, again, back to Bill 208, again with the retired teachers and positions and increasing the positions on the TRAF board and that, I mean, definitely we're open to looking at that, and we're supportive of this idea and that's been—as the member from Tyndall Park pointed out—it's been—it's almost two decades long of conversations like this. And it's unfortunate that the previous government had 17 years to get something like this done, but you know what, Madam Speaker, I'm not going to go into long diatribes over that poor history of the former government. We're now in 2022, we're moving forward and we're having those good conversations.

Another big shout out to RTAM is a fact of—that they're offering to help with their—with the Ukraine refugees and our new members of Manitoba, new citizens of Manitoba coming in as new immigrants, coming in and possibly helping with some Ukrainian classes or English classes or anything that they can possibly help.

And again, this is a shout out to absolutely anybody coming to the province of Manitoba or who wants to help out. Our arms, our doors are open for Ukrainian refugees. Definitely go to Manitoba for Ukraine website to check out how you can help. If you're Ukrainian, you're new to the province and you're coming from Ukraine, please register so that the government—

\* (10:50)

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

**Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights):** Madam Speaker, I will speak just very briefly.

I think this is an important initiative by my colleague from Tyndall Park. It is really, incredibly important that RTAM be represented on the TRAF

board. This is, in essence, money which is going to retired teachers; it is their money. Democracy, a major principle is that those who are involved should be able to be represented, and I think it's about time that this happened.

I think the people who are concerned about conflicts of interest and things like that, that the problem here, if any, is that RTAM representatives want, more than anybody else, this fund to perform well. And so, I think all of us want a fund which is sustainable and performs well, and I think that there's no one better to ensure that than people from RTAM who have the wisdom and experience over many years to contribute in this way.

I want to thank the retired teachers who contributed so much during the COVID pandemic, because that was really incredibly important that they were here and helping to save our education system, quite frankly. And they did an incredible job, and for that we thank teachers who retired, who came back and rallied to help students at a difficult time.

So, those are my comments. Thank you. Merci. Miigwech.

**Madam Speaker:** Are there any further members wishing to speak in debate?

If not, is the House ready for the question?

**Some Honourable Members:** Question.

**Madam Speaker:** The question before the House, then, is second reading of Bill 208, The Teachers' Pensions Amendment Act.

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

**Hon. Wayne Ewasko (Acting Government House Leader):** Madam Speaker, I canvass the House to see if we can call it 11 o'clock and proceed with resolutions.

**Madam Speaker:** Is the will of the House to call it 11 o'clock? *[Agreed]*

## RESOLUTIONS

### Res. 13—Calling on the Provincial Government to Increase Investment to School Nutrition Programs

**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 the provincial government—Calling

on the Provincial Government to Increase Investment to School Nutrition Programs being brought forward by the honourable member for Tyndall Park.

**Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Tyndall Park):** I move, seconded by the member for St. Boniface (Mr. Lamont), that,

*WHEREAS in Manitoba, the Child Nutrition Council of Manitoba is a charitable organization formed in 2001 to help school children and youth learn, grow, and succeed by supporting school meal and snack programs; and*

*WHEREAS the Child Nutrition Council of Manitoba has identified that the organization is unable to keep up with the high demand for its services as it can no longer accept new school applicants and has a growing waitlist; and*

*WHEREAS in the 2021-22 school year, the Child Nutrition Council of Manitoba funded 298 programs across Manitoba, with an estimated reach of over 36,000 students per day; an increase from 2015-16 school year where 240 programs were funded with an estimated reach of 22,000 students; and*

*WHEREAS data collected by the Child Nutrition Council of Manitoba schools with meal programs reported that 75 per cent of participants saw an improvement in student attendance, 86 per cent saw academic effort and attention span improved, and 70 per cent saw better academic performance and a decrease in disruptive behaviour; and*

*WHEREAS the Province of Manitoba has provided funding that covers roughly 10 per cent of a school's calculated food costs for a year, equalling roughly \$0.17 per student per day; and*

*WHEREAS schools are the most appropriate medium for providing food to children and youth because they provide structure and an opportunity to instill healthy eating habits in a non-stigmatizing way; and*

*WHEREAS the high rate of child and youth poverty in Manitoba, exacerbated by COVID-19, led to an exponential increase in the use of food banks; and*

*WHEREAS the K-12 Commission recommends that the education system "Improve access to nutritious food for Manitoba students and expand health-promoting meal programs in Manitoba schools through enhanced partnerships and coordination among organizations.*

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba urge the provincial government to increase its funding to current school meal and snack programs to, at a minimum, 20 per cent of a school's calculated annual food cost to ensure programs are accessible for all school-aged children and youth in the province at no cost regardless of one's perceived needs.

*Motion presented.*

**Ms. Lamoureux:** Thank you, Madam Speaker, for the opportunity to rise a second time today to talk about education here in our province. And I just want to take a quick second to thank all of my colleagues here in the House for the unanimous support on Bill 208, and thank RTAM again for coming out again to join us here today in the House.

Madam Speaker, I want to—just before jumping into the legislation—talk a little bit about the Child Nutrition Council of Manitoba—that's CNCM we'll be talking a lot about here this morning—as well as MTS, the Manitoba Teachers' Society, for all the consultation that they have done with not only our caucus but also the NDP caucus and the Conservative caucus in the development of this legislation, Madam Speaker.

And I should also thank legal here at the Manitoba Legislature for all the—all their patience with me for this morning, Madam Speaker, in going back and forth in the development of Bill 208 and this resolution before us.

So, this resolution talks about the need for increased investments into school nutrition programs. And just a little bit of background about this. It was first brought to my attention in a Zoom meeting with the Manitoba Teachers' Society, and they were talking about the growing need for programs such as these.

And I remember feeling absolutely astonished when I learnt that it only costs 17 cents a day to ensure a child in school receives food, whether that's through snack or breakfast or lunch programs, Madam Speaker, yet according to CNCM, 31 per cent of elementary students and 62 per cent of secondary school students don't eat breakfast daily. That's a very large number here in the province of Manitoba.

So now I've been working very closely with the Child Nutrition Council of Manitoba to ensure that this resolution reflects the needs and requests from the community here in our province, because it does differ from province to province.

And before diving too far into it, there are two specific and very important points that I want to share with the House.

Firstly, I think it's important that we discredit the assumption that meal programs are only for underprivileged children. This is completely inaccurate and is quite stigmatizing in the long run, too, Madam Speaker.

Perhaps, yes, there could be limited access to food, but also there are things to consider like long bus rides. Oftentimes, students are on the bus for long periods of time between being at home and getting to school, which they could then be hungry, Madam Speaker.

We also know that oftentimes students are being rushed out the door to go catch their bus, so perhaps there are some days where they either forget or they don't have time to eat breakfast, Madam Speaker.

We know that many students have early morning responsibilities, you know. Last—in February we were doing I Love to Read and I remember one of the students, they were telling me about how when they grow up, what they want to do is help their sibling. And I asked, so what do you mean by that? And they were sharing with me that how, every morning before school, they help their sibling make their bed and they make sure that their sibling is fed and gets onto their school bus; they go on two different school buses, Madam Speaker.

These are a lot of responsibilities for a child in school, and that's why I think it's really important that we do have these meal programs in place, because in this specific example, this child could be then going to school and their priority was their younger sibling the entire morning, and maybe they forgot to take care of themselves as well, Madam Speaker.

We can also talk about early school drop-offs or extracurricular activities. I know back—if I reflect back to being in grade 7 and 8 myself, Madam Speaker, doing early morning sports before the school day started.

So perhaps I got to school at 7 or 7:30 in the morning. We then went and maybe we were running track that day, Madam Speaker; we then get back to school and dive right into our studies at 9 a.m.

It's really important that we have time in between there, Madam Speaker, to eat a healthy and nutritious breakfast, because we know students function better.

So, to that point, it's really important that we recognize how, according to CNCM, studies have demonstrated that children who are well nourished have improved memory, problem-solving skills and creative abilities.

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

Madam Speaker, this is very—Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have a switch here—this is very self-explanatory. Our brains need fuel, and food acts as a sense of fuel for our brains. If we want to do well in school, if we wanted to be able to problem-solve and be creative in our thinking, I know many of us MLAs here in this House, we need food, especially to be able to function in question period.

In addition to the food, these nutrition programs also serve as a space that is safe for children to find encouragement, interact with adults, and receive education about nutrition.

We see how this affects children every day, beyond their school days as well. It affects their lives at home by creating a healthy culture for children to partake and talk about healthy foods and healthy living.

It also gives them more energy outside of school, whether that be socializing, whether that be care programs or that be playing sports or doing their homework when they get home from school, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Investing more in programs such as these could also have a ripple effect into dietary concerns and eating disorders that so many face through all the healthy conversations that occur through these programs.

\* (11:00)

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, just a little bit more history about CNCM. It was created as a non-profit in 2001 and the Manitoba school board association played a fundamental role in this creation, along with representatives from health, education, social services, businesses and community services and agencies. And the reason I list all of these is because I know it's quite easy and quite habitual to be able to pass off these sort of conversations and assume that the federal government is going to take responsibility of this.

But Mr. Deputy Speaker, these departments here—and I'll list them again: health, education, social services, businesses, and community services and agencies—are in fact provincial topics, and so this is a

provincial responsibility. Currently, CNCM supports over 280 schools and community-based breakfast and snack lunch programs. That's just here in Manitoba, which equates to over 34,000 children and teens being fed through these snack and meal programs every year, here in the province and throughout the province.

To try and paint a picture to the House, there are 19 of these programs in the Interlake-Eastern Regional Health Authority; 27 of them in northern regional health authority; 75 in Prairie Mountain Health; 26 in Southern Health; and 131 in the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority. I'm actually tabling a list here with a further breakdown of how, for example, there are four schools in the Flin Flon School Division; eight schools in Lord Selkirk School Division; three in Portage la Prairie School Division, all utilizing these meal programs. I'm tabling a copy of this here, Mr. Deputy Speaker, for the House.

So as you can see, they're used all over Manitoba. And this demonstrates the point that I was making earlier regarding how there is the need throughout our province, and it's applicable to all demographics, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And there are ways that people of any age, any demographic can support these nutrition programs, whether it's through donating food, donating money, their time and resources, even through CNCM support shops. They have a shop on their website that I encourage my fellow colleagues here to check out. They're just different ways to support these nutrition meal programs.

There are some unique ways, too. There's actually a grocery store in Morris, Manitoba that provides food for cost to the schools so they can better afford and run these nutrition programs. I know many MLAs have supported CNCM through their Stone Soup event that's held every year at the Hydro Place, and I've seen many of my colleagues there, and we get to partake in—have maybe 10 different types of soups over a lunch hour, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's a great way to support.

But ultimately, CNCM is ran, in large, off donations. And I've learnt that this provincial government has a responsibility to increase funding to current school meals and snack programs, which is ultimately why this resolution is being brought forward this morning.

So before wrapping up—I'm noticing my time—I did wanted to share one more thought as I think it's worth pointing out: the number of students using these programs and how that continues to grow. So if

you reflect back to 2015, 2016, there were 22,000 students using the program; 2016, 2017—23,000; 2017, 2018—28,000; 2018, 2019—30,500; 2019, 2020—34,000; and last year, Mr. Deputy Speaker, 2020, 2021—36,000.

It is continuously going up and I'm going to table this for the House as well. I think it's important we include it in Hansard, and I think that is why it's so evident that there is a growing need to invest in these nutrition programs to ensure that our students are doing as well as they possibly can be doing in the province of Manitoba. I'm happy to take any questions that my colleagues may have, and hope for a hopeful debate. Thank you, Madam—Mr. Deputy Speaker.

### 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 may be asked by a member from another party; any subsequent questions must follow a rotation between parties; each independent member may ask one question. And no question or answer shall exceed 45 seconds.

The floor is open for questions.

**Mr. Rick Wowchuk (Swan River):** I thank the member from Tyndall Park for bringing this forward.

Can the member share any stories of how the school nutrition program's currently in effect in their constituency [*inaudible*]

**Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Tyndall Park):** I know—I can actually reflect back on when I was a student at Stanley Knowles School at the time, and I had—there was an afterschool program, when your parents work late and can't pick you up until, like, five or whenever they're off work.

And there was a school program there, where they actually had—it was like a salad bar sort of thing where you can walk through and it's healthy food. You get to pick different options and they talk to you about, I remember, the food wheel diagrams that we had growing up in school.

And I know it's changed over the years as we continue to learn more about nutrition as well. But there are programs such as that all over the province.

**Mr. Nello Altomare (Transcona):** I'd like to ask the member for Tyndall Park: you know, the Manitoba NDP stands for a 'universal' nutrition program for schools throughout the province where kids can get

the fuel that they need to be their best in class, knowing that we look at it as a pedagogical piece, a teaching piece, another tool in our vast tool box in order for kids to thrive.

So I will ask the member: Do you support the Manitoba NDP in their call for a universal meal program for Manitoba?

**Ms. Lamoureux:** You know, I much more appreciated the member's questions in Bill 208 than this one, because he's making it partisan.

So, I have a couple of things to say on this, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The NDP were in government for 17 years. [*interjection*]

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order.

**Ms. Lamoureux:** They had every opportunity— [*interjection*]

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order.

**Ms. Lamoureux:** —to implement something of this nature. And they chose not to. So, yes, I think— [*interjection*]

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order.

**Ms. Lamoureux:** —it's terrific that they are supporting it now, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And if that—if they introduce legislation here in the House, we will absolutely support that. But right now, this is the legislation that we are introducing and, hopefully, they will return that favour and support it.

Thank you.

**Mr. Shannon Martin (McPhillips):** I'd like to thank my colleague, the MLA for Tyndall Park, for bringing forward this resolution this morning.

In her opening comments, the member discussed conversations with MTS, Manitoba Teachers' Society.

I'm wondering if the member can share any consultations that she held with school divisions that will ultimately be of value and assistance in partnering to deliver the programs that she references in her resolution?

**Ms. Lamoureux:** I'd like to thank the member for McPhillips for his question.

So, I did mention that I had spoken with MTS, the Manitoba Teachers' Society, and also the Child Nutrition Council of Manitoba. Further to the two groups, we also consulted with the K-to-12 commission review and had many conversations regarding the review, in and of itself.

And I have personally held many conversations. Whenever I go into the schools, whether that's discussing graduations coming up and farewells, whether that's I Love to Read Month, or schools coming down here to the Legislature, these are conversations that tend to organically come up. And so I've discussed it with many teachers in the constituency of Tyndall Park as well.

**Mr. Altomare:** We do know the importance of nutrition programs and what it means to building school community, tearing down school aversion.

Can the member talk about some of the ancillary benefits, other than nutrition, that programs that introduce food in a school provide the community?

**Ms. Lamoureux:** That is a terrific question. We've changed some course, here. And I want to thank the member for Transcona (Mr. Altomare) for that question.

As mentioned in my introductory remarks, a nutrition program is much more than just food for the students. Yes, that is the overarching fact, I almost want to say, but it plays a larger role.

We know that when it comes to problem-solving in schools and creative abilities, as well as just energy—we talk about fuel, or food being fuel for the brain, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We know students do better in their academics.

And they carry that mentality and that attitude with them outside of school, as well, when it comes to homework, when it comes to socializing with their friends. And these programs, aside from just the food again, teaches children—

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

**Mr. Wowchuk:** Can the member share how many school divisions in Manitoba currently participate, just to get an idea of the diversity across the province?

**Ms. Lamoureux:** I actually tabled all of that information, so I no longer have it here in front of me, but what I can say is there are 19 programs in the Interlake-Eastern Regional Health Authority, 27 in the northern regional health authority, 75 in Prairie Mountain Health, 26 in Southern Health, and 131 in Winnipeg health authority.

\* (11:10)

**Mr. Altomare:** I'd like to ask the member for Tyndall Park (Ms. Lamoureux), who does she imagine will be running these programs in the schools? Is there going to be something that is going to be through the Department of Education? Is this going to be through C-N-C? Is this going to be through a different organization?

**Ms. Lamoureux:** Presently, the programs that are currently running are run through CNCM, as well as volunteers throughout the school—and the school volunteers sometimes are comprised of teachers themselves, sometimes it's of parents who live nearby and want to come and help out with the lunch program, for example.

I know on the CNCM website, as well, it talks about how there are dieticians involved in these programs, so I imagine that they sometimes frequent—visit—frequently visit these nutrition meal programs as well.

**Mr. Martin:** To the member for Tyndall Park: I'm wondering if the member has looked at all at Backpack programs, which provide students with nutritional food for the weekend? It has been used in a number of jurisdictions; it's shown to be a benefit.

Would the member consider that as part—a necessary part and component of the resolution she's bringing forward today?

**Ms. Lamoureux:** I think that's actually a very good idea. This resolution that has been introduced, however, was in working with CNCM, and this is what they have come up with as far as what should be introduced at this point of time in the province of Manitoba.

Perhaps you can further consult with this Backpack idea for a different legislation.

**Mr. Dougald Lamont (St. Boniface):** Thank you very much, the member for Tyndall Park for bringing this forward.

And I'm just wondering if she could expand or talk about the reasons that students may need to participate in a snack or nutrition meal program.

**Ms. Lamoureux:** I think that's the best question so far, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

There are many reasons students have to participate, or will choose to participate in these nutrition programs, and we have talked about, yes, there could be limited access to food, but there are a lot of other things that happen in the morning before school gets



started too: we talk about long bus rides, as I alluded to in my introductory remarks; we can talk about early morning responsibilities.

Sometimes children have chores and sometimes they forget to eat or they're rushed out of the house before they have the opportunity to eat. Oftentimes, we're all forgetful as humans; maybe we forgot our food at home and got to school on an empty belly and may need to eat. There's a wide array of reasons children may come to school and be hungry.

**MLA Uzoma Asagwara (Union Station):** I just wanted to ask if the member could provide some clarity around if she's consulted with different cultural communities and gotten any insights into how a food program would be delivered in a way that meets the needs of very, very diverse communities and children who perhaps, maybe have, you know, nutritional needs that are not Eurocentric, which is what we know a lot of some of the Canada health food guide, et cetera, have been very Eurocentric focused.

So I'm just wondering if she's had any consultation with cultural communities to make sure that the program would be representative of our diverse communities and students?

**Ms. Lamoureux:** I want to thank the member for Union Station for their question; it's an excellent question.

I've actually had several conversations with CNCM, the Child Nutrition Council of Manitoba, specifically about this topic, and I think that's why it's incredibly important that these school meal programs and nutrition programs are kept local; it's kept grassroots.

I know when I think about the different demographics of our constituencies throughout the province, they change quite a bit. I know in my constituency of Tyndall Park, I have a very, very high Filipino population. I also have a very, very high Indo-Canadian population. So we might want to incorporate some foods that are more—whether it's customary, whether it's favourites, whether it's branching out and wanting to try new things and expose children in our education system to different types of food, we can introduce that into these meal programs at that grassroots level—

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

The time for questions has ended.

## Debate

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

**Hon. Scott Johnston (Minister of Seniors and Long-Term Care):** Thank you to my colleagues, and thank you Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am pleased to put some words on the record regarding my honourable friend from Tyndall Park's resolution. I know the member from Tyndall Park has passion to address the needs of those who require supports, and I appreciate her bringing this resolution forward.

As a former school trustee, I am understanding of the benefits of all children having a healthy learning environment. Madam Speaker, I recall, in my tenure as a school trustee, reviewing data and attending seminars, advocating for supports for student nutrition to be a staple to the daily student routine.

As a matter of fact, when I first came to this place of honour, I was appointed the legislative assistant in Education, and I had the pleasure of attending a conference that the member from Portage la Prairie, who was then minister of Education, put on. It was a day conference and the whole discussion, through a number of stakeholders, were a number of different educational issues, and one of them was a very significant presentation on nutrition in schools and the benefit of nutrition in schools.

And I know that my former colleagues on the St. James-Assiniboia board were certainly—when they were privy to that type of discussion, they went back and eliminated all the vending machines that had strong presence of sugars and soft drinks and things like that. So certainly these type of discussions do 'presip'—present results.

And, Madam Speaker, we support healthy schools that promote the physical, emotional and social health of families in communities. When I was a member of the board of trustees, we recognized the need to identify those who were in need of utilizing breakfast programs or snack programs or luncheon programs within our schools; it just made sense. I believe most school divisions offer supports to their individual schools in the form of nutritional grants over and above the contribution by the Child Nutrition Council of Manitoba, which is certainly admirable.

I would like to take a moment to acknowledge the Child Nutrition Council of Manitoba for the fine and worthy work that they do. This organization has made it their mission to ensure children have access to

healthy food choices that allows for students to have a supportive and healthy eating environment in school. Madam Speaker, through grants administered across Canada by the Child Nutrition Council of Manitoba, students are able to access a nutritional breakfast, snack or lunch program free of charge. This council not only supported these nutritional programs for students at schools, but they also work behind the scenes to lobby for initiatives to continued support. They raised awareness for nutritional issues and the need for food and nutritional policies in schools. They helped guide decision makers in developing food health policies and becoming a recognized voice for issues regarding nutritional programs for school-age children in Manitoba.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I can't stress the importance of students having a healthy school. This not only promotes the physical, emotional and social health of schools, but it also promotes this for their families and school staff, as well as the overall school community.

As well, Madam Speaker, I would like to recognize the other organizations who contribute to the Child Nutrition Council of Manitoba: The Winnipeg Foundation, the Manitoba School Boards Association—and, as I mentioned, the role that the boards association play alongside with the provincial government as well as the other contributors certainly do create a healthy environment for children.

But we can do more. The work being done by the Child Nutrition Council of Manitoba complements the goals of the Manitoba government's Healthy Schools initiative: To create schools' environment that 'enhealth'—that enhance a healthy development of children and their families, working in partnership with communities, resources and service providers, which is beneficial, again, to the whole community.

\* (11:20)

Madam Speaker, I'd like to briefly touch on this initiative. The Healthy Schools initiative was introduced in Manitoba in 2000 as Nurses-in-School to provide and strengthen public health and primary health capacity in schools and to promote activities to support wellness in school communities.

Consultations took place; Nurses-in-School shifted into the broader Healthy Schools title. This was done to better reflect the needs and capacities of the school communities.

Under this revised title, the initiative included three main components to address the needs of school communities: (1) Promoting targeted provincial

activities in response to issues affecting the health and wellness of a school community; (2) Promoting community-based activities via Healthy Schools grants; and finally, developing resources for provincial-wide use, and helping to identify them.

As I mentioned, Madam Speaker, during my tenure as a St. James-Assiniboia school trustee, we introduced nutritional grants for each school to utilize for a school nutritional program that they wished to initiate. So, we as a board determined that this was certainly a very worthy cause, but we also believed that the school should have the discretion to be able to initiate as per their needs.

The breakfast program was certainly well received and appreciated, not only by students, but by parents who were relieved to know that their children had the option to participate if they needed to. Mr. Deputy Speaker, grants were also used for mid-morning and afternoon snacks for—to utilize fresh fruit and vegetables.

Madam Speaker, I give credit to the teachers and the teachers aides who truly care about the children in their care. They are part of a community that works together to ensure no one slips through the cracks.

I had a great deal of contact with parent councils as a school trustee, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Parent councils always wanted to participate and had their eyes not only on their own children but the student population as a whole. Parent councils are a vital resource for a school to contribute to school policies that will help support the needs as identified in a school.

As members of the community, parent council members are also able to serve as an advisory to the school to identify supports that students may need, and they observe outside of the school body, acting in the best interest of the community.

As part of a working community, a school, the guidance counsellors also act as a resource to ensure that nutritional needs are identified and addressed through meal and snack programs.

I was always so humbled to see these resources at work to ensure our schools are able to contribute to the health of our children. Madam Speaker, I'd like to take a moment to acknowledge the other programs our guard—our government supports in order to address the issues of child poverty in Manitoba.

The early learning and child care department has increased funding by \$2.17 million to provide annual

operating grants and one-time start-up grants supporting a total of 766 licensed early-learning and child-care spaces in home-based facilities and child-care centres.

And the child-care centres should be also too complimented and recognized for the nutritional programs that they initiate on their own. Madam Speaker, this is an opportune time to have this discussion. As the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Learning (Mr. Ewasko) is moving on initiatives stemming from consultations from the K-to-12 commission.

Madam—or, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the current Minister of Education is a former teacher and guidance counsellor and he certainly recognizes the need for these initiatives and I know he's truly supportive and as he continues to work through the educational reform, I'm sure that this is something that will be addressed.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Now, I'm sure all honourable members appreciate the speech which we've just heard. But there is one element of the speech I wish to draw attention to, and that is that I'm not Madam Speaker. I know it's easy—easily done, but please refer to me as Mr. Deputy Speaker. But, anyway, all in a day's work.

I believe it is the honourable member for Transcona who wishes to speak next.

**Mr. Nello Altomare (Transcona):** This is a serious issue. I do want to acknowledge the words that the member from Assiniboia put on the record. They're important because there is a realization in those words that nutrition is important. It's not just about feeding kids and providing free food; that's not what it's about.

Nutrition programs are something that I came to as a teacher and school administrator. I can tell you, when I started working in 1986, Deputy Speaker, programs like this did not exist; and growing up, programs like this did not exist. We lived in different times.

Right now, we're living in a time challenged by a global pandemic, challenged by a government that starves core funding to core government services like health care and education. We've well established that, and we're seeing the impacts of that, Deputy Speaker.

I will say this is such a serious issue that, in my experience of working in River East Transcona School Division and the old Transcona-Springfield

School Division, that we have families working two or three jobs in a minimum-wage environment right now that is challenging them to fulfill those very traditional roles that some of us have of a family, like somebody home, getting breakfast ready, going grocery shopping, coming home and making sure that everyone has what they need.

The pandemic right now, this environment that's created in this province right now when it comes to minimum wage, has challenged us like never before. We have working people, Deputy Speaker, in this province—and I've said this before—working multiple jobs to provide for their families, provide for their loved ones. I would argue that a government needs to evolve along with the people that it serves—evolve, modernize, adjust, even be proactive in ensuring that what you do to the least of these, you do to me. Ensuring that, when it comes to providing a core service—and I think what I heard the member from Assiniboia say—that nutrition programs are now something that is very important to a child's experience at school.

I will say, my experience evolved throughout the—my entire career. Once I became a school administrator, I thought it was: Oh, I'm ensuring that the curriculum gets covered, that I'm providing some support—or all of my support to teachers and to people working in the system. But it was more than that. You begin to realize very quickly that it's about community building and reaching out to the community, Deputy Speaker. And in doing so, the best way to do that is to do that by breaking bread.

\* (11:30)

Because in all parts—in all of our schools in Manitoba, we have families that are dealing with intergenerational trauma that see school as a place to avoid at all costs. So our challenge as educators is how do we deal with—how do we properly address that?

We do that by breaking bread. First with the child that they trust us with, parents and families; make it part of their school day, and again, this isn't like giving food, this is providing time for community, providing time for getting to know your students, and then the magic begins to happen, Deputy Speaker.

I recall many occasions where the child says to their parents: You need to come down to the school, we're having whatever particular—either meal, or event, or activity. And it begins to break down the barriers that exist. And this will take time; this is something that nutrition programs as a—this is, if

there's ever something that is a parallel benefit, this is it.

Because not only are you feeding kids, you're also feeding their family, and 'embuilding' trust in an institution that is very important to that child.

And so, what we have here is an opportunity in this House this morning to look at how important it is that we shift our thinking from what was—what served us well 30, 40, 50 years ago, to right now, Deputy Speaker, where families are finding it exceedingly difficult to provide not only some of the basics but also the time, a critical time that you have with family.

And what a nutrition program did, I recall back in one of the schools that I worked at, is that—and I think the member from Assiniboia brought this—brought this up too, because it's more than just breakfast, right? Because a lot of times we can build into a school day the ability to grow our own food.

And what we did at many of the schools that I worked at is that we were actually actively involved in growing nutritious vegetables so that we can not only teach a child or teach a family how to grow their food, but also how to prepare it. And we did that together in unison, and that was an experience that was—it was life changing for many, and provided them the hope that they needed when they're being challenged on a day-to-day basis.

And once we realize that, Deputy Speaker, we're able to work magic.

I think there is a will in this House to understand that nutrition programs are just part of what we do in schools now. I think it's incumbent on a government is to show some leadership in this area, and to say that we're going to provide programming for every school in the province.

Yes, it'll be a challenge. But that's what government are tasked to do, to rise to the challenge.

Like I said in my opening remarks, Deputy Speaker, that this is a serious issue. The pandemic has shown cracks, crevices in our social safety net that need to be addressed.

I also mentioned in my remarks something that really impacts me in my daily life, and it's what you do to the least of these, you do to me. It's just not good enough anymore to not have a program in place that we know has a positive impact on a child and their family.

We have many examples throughout the developed world. We know of Scandinavian countries like Finland, Sweden, Denmark, providing universal nutrition programs in their schools; it's just part of what they do.

I would challenge us as members of this House, that this becomes something that we do for all of our children, here in Manitoba. Because, like I said earlier, Deputy Speaker, our society is evolving. There are cracks that are appearing. We have people working full-time at minimum-wage jobs that are taxed to the—when I say taxed, physically taxed. And what can be better than a Department of Education, a Manitoba government that understands that need, fills that void, and ensures children do not go hungry while they're in the care of Manitoba schools?

Thank you.

**Mr. Shannon Martin (McPhillips):** Before I start, I think it's important to remind and put on the public record that we are still in a situation of COVID and remind all Manitobans that they play a role in addressing the pandemic that's with us, including boosters, masking where appropriate and social distancing.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I appreciate that the member for Tyndall Park (Ms. Lamoureux) has brought forward a great resolution this morning. I really appreciate the tone, the conversation, this morning from the members, or the comments from the members opposite, to the questions which have been most insightful. And I—in particular, I do appreciate the member for Union Station's (MLA Asagwara) comments about culturally appropriate food and nutrition, because that is a very valid component, and it is an opportunity, as well, as has been noted by the member for Tyndall Park, to introduce young people to the culinary opportunities that are in front of them, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Now, the member for Tyndall Park shared with this House what should actually be, for all of us, some concerning statistics. And simply, you look at the member for Tyndall Park's resolution and she notes that in—that the Child Nutrition Council of Manitoba funded 298 programs with an estimated reach of over 36,000 students per day. All these students, whether it's these 36,000 students—and obviously, all students require our support in ensuring that their academic potential is fully realized.

Academic potential is more than just ensuring that you have textbooks, whether you have computers or

you have a pen. All those are really moot if a child is attending school with an empty stomach.

This—these challenges are not new, but that being said, that doesn't mean that they are insurmountable. The Child Nutrition Council of Manitoba, which has been referenced on several occasions this morning, has played a lead role in addressing this situation, but it is very evident that more needs to be done. Oftentimes, when we rise in the House, we speak of our own situations, our own backgrounds, and obviously, that shapes us as an individual.

I recall, in my own situation, my mother was a single mother, and she was—worked seasonally in the kitchens at a military base, and every winter she was laid off and collected—and it was called at the time, it was called unemployment insurance. And I remember a large bag of puffed wheat and a bag of powdered milk which was what got me through those months when my mother was collecting unemployment insurance, but again, I don't—despite that, you know, my mother did her best, and I did have, you know, breakfast. I won't eat puffed wheat or drink powdered milk to this day, Mr. Deputy Speaker, even if you put—wrap it in marshmallows and try to convince me it's a Rice Krispies square, that won't happen.

But it does show that there is and has been a need and will continue to be a need. I mentioned to the member for Tyndall Park (Ms. Lamoureux) and—I was reading and as I was preparing for this debate this morning, I was taking a look at the Economics of Education Review, which had an analysis of some of the programmings in South Carolina. And I appreciate the member for Transcona (Mr. Altomare), who was sharing perspectives from the Scandinavian countries, Sweden and Denmark and Finland, and their approach.

And I know in other jurisdictions—and as I referenced to the member for Tyndall Park, for example, South Carolina has introduced what's called the Backpack program. And so, at the end of the school day, on Fridays, students who do request are provided, actually, a backpack with enough food to feed them and possibly their families for the weekend. This is a—this program, the Backpack program—at least the one in South Carolina—has been in effect for a number of years. And I think it's important to share with the House some of the key findings of the Backpack program, which is essentially talking about providing quality nutrition to students.

\* (11:40)

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the program found that children with a bag of non-perishable food to nourish them over a weekend had grown, obviously, rapidly—some 450,000 American children make use of that program. But what it showed, that there was improvements in end-of-grade reading and, to a lesser extent, math scores for economically disadvantaged primary school students. As well, the impacts on both reading and math scores were strongest for those youngest and lowest performing students. So, again, as a government and as an elected official and as educators, these are the individuals and these are the students that our primary focus should be on, is how do we ensure that, again, your educational potential is realized.

As well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the other key finding was that the impacts of test scores were similar to those found for other nutritional interventions in prior research, and that the improvements were large enough to substantially reduce the performance gap experienced by economically disadvantaged students. So, I mean, it is clear that the evidence exists for the value of ensuring that students who arrive at school, arrive at school nutritionally sound and with the necessary energy, as the member for Tyndall Park noted.

We all play a role in ensuring that the—that our students, whether it is transportation, and again textbooks, but now, with the topic of breakfast programs or nutrition programs—whatever terminology you want to use—that we need to collectively—and I do believe that we collectively see the value in these programs. Obviously, there is programming going on right now. There's partnerships going on that are of value, and that much is evident, and I would suspect that the results of the current nutrition programs done by the Child Nutrition Council of Manitoba would reflect very much the results found in the South Carolina Backpack program—which, by the way, I know the member for Tyndall Park noted, I believe it was 17 cents per student, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in terms of the costs of the nutritional program.

Now, the Backpack program, while being a little more expensive—but, obviously, it plays—obviously—a slightly different role. But, again, in terms of, you know, money for value, we are looking at—they found—they're looking at about \$5 per pack. So, again, a very small investment when you look at the larger educational budget, which is always something of value.

Again, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the member for Tyndall Park has put a lot of very valid comments on the record and, more importantly, in her resolution. I think this is something that is worth investigating—this is—or something—debating.

This is something worth doing further research on to determine exactly where in the system this is required. It—does it require additional funding to the Child Nutritional Council of Manitoba? Do we need to do additional outreach with community organizations, as noted by the member for Union Station (MLA Asagwara), to ensure that we have culturally appropriate foods available for, you know, for those areas of the city and the province where it would be warranted? So all these are valid.

So with those few comments, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'd like to thank the member for Tyndall Park (Ms. Lamoureux) for bringing forward this very excellent resolution this morning, allow us to have this recent debate. I appreciate the tone this morning, and I wish the member best of luck in ensuring that this sees the success that she desires.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

**Mr. Dougald Lamont (St. Boniface):** I want to thank everyone for the comments they put on the record today. It's been—there have been some really important contributions. I want to thank the member for McPhillips (Mr. Martin) for sharing his story, as well, just to say that this is a very important issue.

When we talk about child poverty, we often talk about child poverty—or child—lack of nutrition for children, but of course, children are always members of a family, so it's also about family poverty. It's not new that Manitoba has some very serious poverty, and it's not just that we have widespread poverty, but it's also very deep poverty that, for many people, if they were to receive an extra \$12,000 or \$13,000 a year, that would only just bring them up to the poverty line.

The other is that there has always been in—a spirit of generosity in Manitoba—I would say not always from government, but certainly from civil and faith organizations and many faiths who serve people on a regular basis and open their doors in order to be able to assure—make sure that people are fed. And it is—it's both an issue of how we act in a humane government in order to make sure that children are taken care of, because if we're not making sure that—if we're not taking care of children, they are ultimately—they're going to grow up to be adults and, as they put it, be our future. If we're not investing in our future and in

our children, we're really not doing the work we need to do.

So I do appreciate the member for Tyndall Park for bringing this forward. I appreciate all the comments that have been made by everyone simply to say that this is incredibly important, because there are many people who cannot afford to put food on the table. That—if you look at the stats—statistics from Winnipeg Harvest, tens of thousands of children go through Winnipeg Harvest every month, and their parents—both parents—are working full time. That it is difficult, often, for people to—even to work full time and still be able to afford to put food on the table, and that's a sad reality.

In addition, I would just want to say, it's not purely a subject for this—is that we need to make sure that kids are eating properly. I remember that my cousin was on a—the parents board of my—of the school my kids went to. He was at a meeting for the Winnipeg School Division, where there's an enormous diversity of schools, an enormous diversity of needs. And on the one side, he was sitting next to parents who were concerned about how they were going to raise money for a trip to Europe for their students, while on the other side were parents who were wondering how they were going to raise money to buy a washer and dryer to make sure that kids could actually have clean clothes.

So those disparities have to be recognized. But it also—as the member for Tyndall Park mentioned—it's important to recognize the universality of this as well, that we don't want to stigmatize people and say: Well, if it—you know, you're getting that—you're getting this special meal because it's not—it's because, you know, they're being singled out in a way that's negative; they're being stigmatized.

But ultimately, education is the great leveller, is that—it's the one area in life where we hope that, when people come into it, it can—you can help ensure that people become everything that they can be, that they can fulfill their potential. And they're only going to be able to do that if they're not being distracted by hunger pangs, and making sure they have good nutritious food.

So, it has been—there has been lots of contributions, valuable contributions, to the debate, and I thank everyone for their contributions and I'm looking forward to this passing.

**Mr. Rick Wowchuk (Swan River):** I thank the member from Tyndall Park for bringing forth this very important resolution.

We all know that a healthy school promotes physical, emotional and the social health of students, their families, school staff and the school community. Becoming a healthy school is a journey that can start with a few simple changes. The approach doesn't require more work, just a different way of working that, over time, becomes every day practice.

And I always like to share a few, kind of—my life experiences. As an educator for 35 years, we know that the way a student starts its day sets the stage. And I remember in the early '80s, back in Birch River, when we had a hot lunch program and everybody looked forward—all those students, every morning, looked forward to what soup was going to be put on the table. And we had a lady there named Grace Chabai, and man, did she make good chicken noodle soup, and the students would, you know, just be looking forward to that one meal that day, because that might be the only meal that they got at noon hour, and that sandwich.

So—yes, sorry about that, I covered my mic up—but those—that's the influence that a person like that in the community can have, let alone us teachers. And I recall in my, you know, 35 years of coaching as a football coach, there is one place that hated to see our football team arrive at, and that was the Bonanza in Yorkton, Saskatchewan, because I'm sure we ate them out of a home in there when we went in there.

\* (11:50)

But there were students there that wouldn't get off the bus, and they—because they didn't have the money to go in there, and us as coaches, whether we're an educator or coach, we always, always made sure that one of those students that were sitting on the bus, they were too embarrassed to talk about it, but you knew that they just didn't have the money to go in there, and we made sure, you know.

We'd go up to them and say, hey, you need—want us to buy you supper? And they—you know, they'd perk up and they'd just—that smile on their face told us

that was probably the first meal of the day that they were going to have, and they walked into that restaurant and they filled their tummies and they walked out of there, you know, like, full.

And that happens every day in the classroom to so many students, and sometimes as educators we identify those students, and we want to make sure, you know, that they have that environment, because there is no doubt that if they don't have that nutrition, you know, and things like that, their thinking, their way of writing tests and all those things, you know, are really, really, really put at a disadvantage.

School divisions and schools choose as—what they want to invest and the programs they want to offer for those students, and a lot of times the local leadership at the school, and the school division level, are best equipped to make decisions for their students.

Children are best able to concentrate and learn in their classroom environment when their bellies are full, and we know that. There are many successful and existing programming to provide nutritious meals for children in school.

And we all know, good health is necessary for learning.

Healthy Schools is Manitoba's school health initiative designed to promote the physical, emotional, and the social health of school communities.

It's based on the belief that good health is important for learning, and schools are in a unique position to have positive influence on the health of children, youth and their families.

And we also know that Healthy Schools has identified six health topics as priorities within the school community: healthy eating, mental health, physical activity, safety and injury prevention—

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order, please. When this matter is again before the House, the honourable member for Swan River will have six minutes remaining.

The hour being 12 p.m., this House is recessed and stands recessed until 1:30 p.m. today.

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA**

**Tuesday, May 10, 2022**

**CONTENTS**

<b>ORDERS OF THE DAY</b>		<b>Resolutions</b>	
<b>PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS</b>		Res. 13—Calling on the Provincial Government to Increase Investment to School Nutrition Programs	
<b>Second Readings—Public Bills</b>		Lamoureux	1820
Bill 208—The Teachers' Pensions Amendment Act		Questions	
Lamoureux	1811	Wowchuk	1823
Questions		Lamoureux	1823
Wishart	1813	Altomare	1823
Lamoureux	1813	Martin	1823
Altomare	1813	Lamont	1824
Lagassé	1813	Asagwara	1825
Gerrard	1813	Debate	
Morley-Lecomte	1813	Johnston	1825
Debate		Altomare	1827
Wishart	1815	Martin	1828
Altomare	1816	Lamont	1830
Ewasko	1818	Wowchuk	1831
Gerrard	1819		



The Legislative Assembly of Manitoba Debates and Proceedings  
are also available on the Internet at the following address:

**<http://www.manitoba.ca/legislature/hansard/hansard.html>**