



March 31, 2020

**Manitoba
Government
and General
Employees'
Union**

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ANY QUESTIONS?

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322 Main Street S
Dauphin MB R7N 1C6

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1665 Parker Blvd
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214 Saskatchewan Ave. E
Portage la Prairie MB
R1N 0K9

Selkirk

413 Main Street
Selkirk MB R1A 2M9

Steinbach

B-98 Brandt Street
Steinbach MB R5G 0V6

Thompson

19 Elizabeth Drive
Thompson MB R8N 1S7

Honorable Minister Kelvin Goertzen
Minister of Education
Room 168 – 450 Broadway
Winnipeg, MB R3C 0V8

via email

Dear Minister Goertzen,

I am writing you today, following your announcement to close schools across the province indefinitely.

When the Premier was asked if educational assistants would be paid during this time, he stated that if people are working they will be paid. If they are not working, there are other programs available to them. We assume the Premier is referencing federal programs announced recently to help with financial assistance.

Later in the press conference, you were asked a similar question and you put the onus on school divisions to make these types of decisions. You said that school divisions would have to make use of employees as much as they can and re-assign them where they're needed, but they will have to decide about layoffs.

MGEU represents support staff in Seine River School Division, Duke of Marlborough School, Manitoba School for the Deaf, the three Manitoba colleges, Brandon University, and Université de Saint Boniface. As you know, there are 37 school divisions and now each of them has been asked to decide the fate of support staff during a global pandemic.

Suspending classroom learning for the year is hard for everyone - teachers, students, and their families, along with school support staff. These are unprecedented times, and now is not the time to create even more fear and anxiety.

School support staff should be treated fairly and equally regardless of where they work in the province. We are calling on you to immediately issue a clear directive to reassure all support staff in all school divisions that they will not be laid off and they will continue to have a full pay cheque during this very challenging time.

Please respond at your earliest convenience.

Regards,

Michelle Gawronsky
MGEU President

MG/hm



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