|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| ***Province*** | ***Législature*** | ***Session*** | ***Type de discours*** | ***Date du discours*** | ***Locuteur*** | ***Fonction du locuteur*** | ***Parti politique*** |
| Manitoba | 35e | 4e | Discours relatif à l’Éducation | 10 mai 1993 | Rosemary Vodrey | Ministre de l’Éducation et de la Formation professionnelle | PC |

Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Education and Training): Yes, thank you, Mr. Deputy Chair.

I am pleased to introduce the Estimates for the Department of Education and Training for 1993-94. I would like to set a context for this introduction by giving you an indication of my department's accomplishments and then describe where we will direct our energies in the coming year.

It has been a little over a year since I became the Minister of Education and Training. In that time I

The review of The Public Schools Act: The report of the panel has just been released, and our education partners are now taking the time to review the 106 recommendations. These recommendations have organizational, legal and financial implications on our current education system and will eventually contribute to the new legislation.

The task force on Distance Education and Technology: I will be releasing the report of the third and the final stage of this task force shortly. I expect that the report's recommendations will positively affect our technological capacity in education and help meet the needs of Manitobans in all areas of the province.

Francophone Governance: We will introduce legislation in this session to implement the governance structure, with the election of regional committees and school boards taking place this fall. A committee, chaired by former Chief Justice Alfred Monnin, will work in partnership with parents and other interested individuals on the model and the implementation of Francophone Governance.

High School Review: Many of the strategies recommended in Answering the Challenge have been implemented. Current work is focusing on instructional methods, improvement in curricula and in the learning environments.

The University Review: The commission has concluded its hearings and has received 237 briefs or submissions. These are being reviewed and analyzed for the commission's consideration. The members hope that they will have a draft report or an interim report ready this summer.

The consolidation of all skills training initiatives within my department: A new division has been created within my department that brings together all the skills training initiatives of government in one place. Consolidation will result in a more effective delivery of programs and services.

Workforce 2000: This is an initiative that ensures ongoing training within the workplace so that knowledge and skills remain up to date. The number of partnerships in this area is steadily increasing.

College Governance: The incorporation of the community colleges under boards of governors will allow the colleges to be more responsive to the needs of the community in the education and training area.

These initiatives have already resulted in real educational benefits to Manitobans, such as expanded high school, college and university program offerings, higher performance standards for students and a greater community involvement. I think you will have to admit they amount to an impressive record of action designed to address the challenges of the future. These reform initiatives are also designed to ensure that our programs and institutions reflect our commitment to lifelong learning.

I would also like you to note that each of these has involved consultation with our partners in education and training. Educational reform has been and will continue to be a consultative process. My department and our government are committed to meaningful participation and openness and have accepted the responsibilities and the rewards that come with these. At a recent educational forum, I described my vision of the future of education in this way. It will involve partnerships of all sorts, including those among parents, schools, business and industry, between schools and universities and between community colleges and schools. Education in the future will also be accountable and responsive to the needs and the aspirations of Manitobans. So you can see that the partnerships and public consultation with all members of the community are an important part of the future. They are also the means that we will use to get there.

Manitobans know that the responsibility for educating and training our citizens is a shared one. Each of us has a role to play in the process. The department provides leadership to ensure that there are high quality education and training programs for Manitobans throughout their lifetimes so that they develop their own potential and contribute to the economic, social and cultural life of Manitoba.

To ensure that the future of education is a sound one, we have had to make some tough decisions. We can no longer ignore the fiscal challenges facing us. We must take action to reduce and to eliminate the budget deficit. Manitobans have sent us a very clear signal that they do not want to pay more taxes. They expect us to eliminate the deficit by keeping our spending under control. They also believe in accountability and our ability to do more with less.

In February I announced a 2 percent reduction in provincial funding to school divisions for the 1993-94 school year. Per pupil support to independent schools was reduced by the same amount. In keeping with our commitment to taxpayers to restrict increases in taxes, I also announced in February a 2 percent limit on the amount of additional money school divisions can raise through property taxation in a fiscal year. That limit remains in effect for the next two years. The Educational Support Levy rates, however, stay the same in" 1993 as in 1992.

It is important during these difficult times that all public sector organizations control spending. Therefore, grants to school divisions for, administration have been reduced. School' divisions now have an option of closing their schools for up to 10 days allocated for in-service or administration. We have already introduced a similar measure in the provincial government for both MLAs and civil servants.

The schools finance branch has worked closely with the Advisory Committee on Education Finance last spring and summer. They made recommendations which I accepted in six areas, and these have resulted in better recognition of smaller class size in small rural high schools, the enhancement of Level II and Level III funding for special needs children, additional funding for northern divisions, funding for Distance Education and fairer funding for transportation. Also, phase-in funding for '93 and '94 will assist school divisions in making the transition to the new funding formula announced in '92-93.

In February, I announced a 2 percent reduction in support to universities and a cap on tuition increases and tuition changes for visa students. I asked that the universities examine their spending and identify cost savings in the face of extraordinary fiscal challenges. Again, it is important during these difficult times for public sector organizations to control their spending. The time has come to find creative and innovative ways of controlling spending while ensuring a high quality of education and training for Manitobans. We have both recognized the need and found ways of doing so.

Meeting the wide-ranging education and training needs of Manitobans is a high priority for this government. One of the ways we intend to do that is with the introduction of a new education information system within my department. Its comprehensive database, which includes information on students, schools, divisions, teachers and professional staff, courses and facilities. will be used for planning and developing policy.

Now I would like to turn to other initiatives and issues affecting K-12 education. I have spent a good deal of time this past year consulting with people who have a stake in the improvement of our education system. My consultation with educational partners have been very successful in identifying issues in need of attention. Among those we have identified are preventing violence in the schools, parental involvement, early literacy, teacher training, student and program assessment, vocational and career education. We will have an opportunity in a series of Education Innovation fora to consult on ways of addressing these issues as well.

I recognize that violence in our schools is a very serious problem. It is a problem in the whole of society, and it will not be resolved by educators alone. We need to work together. We have already begun forming partnerships that include parents, schools, community agencies and various government departments. We have worked with school divisions to create a resource list of 80 people who can provide support in dealing with disruptive students.

My department has also been presenting a series of training workshops on prosocial skills. These workshops focus on managing student conduct and conflict mediation in schools. The response of those attending has been very positive.

My department also organizes second step workshops that provide support for violence prevention. One hundred and twenty-three educators have been trained to be trainers in this series. In addition, 222 educators have been trained to implement violence prevention programs in classrooms.

The Student Support branch has funded school programs on Behaviour Management and Violence Prevention in 62 schools in 15 divisions. The $358,000 allocated to these programs underscores our commitment to this issue.

Also, an interdepartmental committee has been formed that includes Education and Training, Justice, Family Services and Health. This committee is looking at ways of improving the co-ordination of services in various areas including serving students with profound e"1°tional or behavioural disorders.

As you can see, we are working hard to combat violence in the schools. We know we need community involvement to be successful in meeting this challenge. We know that parental involvement has a very positive effect on student attendance, achievement and discipline. When parents are involved in their children's education, students have greater motivation and a more positive attitude towards homework and school. It is not surprising then that these students do not usually become school dropouts.

My department is actively reviewing the most effective ways of involving parents. The Student Support branch recently completed a study entitled Parents and Schools, Partners in Education. This describes the benefits of parental involvement and the dynamics of involvement programs.

Both the Curriculum Services and Native Education branches have created parent guides on a variety of subjects. The Dauphin office of the Native Education branch has held a parent empowerment conference that dealt with, among other things, parent-teacher interviews and legal rights.

Recommendation on parental involvement is also included in the report of the legislative reform panel. I personally believe that increasing the involvement of parents in the school system will be an effective way of addressing many of the social challenges in the classroom. We also know that parents playa crucial role in early literacy.

The issue of teacher training is a concern as well. We want to make sure that teachers have the appropriate training to meet the demands of both the present and the future. That means ensuring that preservice as well as in-service training is relevant to them.

We must find innovative ways of providing opportunities for ongoing professional development. My department provides supports to teachers in the use of effective instructional methods in the classroom, and we know that the ability to collaborate and work in teams is important for students to have. Co-operative learning has become an important practice.

The Student Support branch, in conjunction with the federal Stay-in-School Initiative and the Winnipeg Education Centre, is organizing a co-operative learning program for Manitoba educators. It will train educators to train other educators in the effective use of this strategy.

Manitobans have also told us that they want a more clear picture of how well students are performing in the province. They know that our future economic well-being depends on it.

Teachers also want to know that what they teach and how they teach is appropriate to children's abilities and needs. Our approach to student and program assessment has five prongs and involves the inclusion of student assessment guidelines in curriculum guides, cyclical assessments in major subject areas, the use of departmental examinations in the last year of high school, professional development activities to enhance educators' abilities to assess student achievement and collaboration with the faculties of education to ensure that teachers in training develop a wide repertoire of assessment and evaluation skills and activities.

Discussions with educators and other partners in education have identified the need to have strong programs that incorporate what we have always thought of as the basics and the new basics. According to the Economic Council of Canada's employability profile, the new basics comprise: academic skills; communicating, thinking and learning skills; personal management skills such as positive attitudes and behaviours, responsibility and adaptivity; and teamwork skills such as working together.

We are working with our partners in education to devise strong programs. An interorganizational curriculum advisory committee has recently been established to provide input on curriculum matters. Currently under review are the new science and math curricula.

Our consultations have not stopped at our border either. We have also been working with our partners in the western provinces to develop computer-assisted courses in math and science. Manitoba's contribution to this process of courseware development is a course in calculus. I am excited about the work the department is doing to assess uses of existing and emerging technologies of instruction.

Recently completed was an interactive video disk pilot project for middle-year science students. This action research project took place in six rural and six urban schools. The results have been very exciting. They suggest that the use of this technology may be an important way in encouraging greater participation and achievement of all students, particularly girls, in science.

This next year, we will continue strengthening our programs. Strong student achievement and high-quality programs are important elements of future reform.

The last issue I will deal with in K to 12 education is vocational or career education. We want to ensure that students making a transition from school to work have a smooth passage. Providing work experience, co-operative education, business education partnership programs and the skills for independent living course at the high school level gives students an opportunity to use skills learned in school and develop new ones they can use when they enter the workforce.

Mentorship and job shadowing programs give them a taste of the real world of work, and decide whether an occupation is for them or not. Funded vocational programs have industry advisory committees that play a role in defining expected outcomes and ensure that the skills students learn adequately prepare them for the workplace.

The recent switch to unit credit funding for vocational programs encourages a wide variety of students to become involved. The new funding formula makes it possible for all students, including the academically inclined, to take the course as electives. The unit credit funding formula has been widely praised across Manitoba school divisions for its innovative approach to vocational education.

We are very concerned that all students can make the transition from high school to work or further education and training and that Manitobans have opportunities to pursue lifelong learning. That is one of the reasons that we published Manitoba Prospects, a career-planning tabloid, this winter just before the two-career symposia. The tabloid and career symposia work well together to inform students of vocational options and their educational or training requirements.

That brings us to the initiatives in the area of post-secondary education and training. We have just made major changes in the post-secondary education and training area to consolidate all government skills training initiatives within a single division. Programs have been transferred to our newly created Advanced Education and Skills Training division from the Departments of Labour, Family Services and Rural Development and from my department's former Post-secondary Adult and Continuing Education, or PACE division.

The new division will oversee the delivery of programs to meet wide-ranging education and training needs of all Manitobans, including programs for youth, for employed and underemployed adults, for various equity groups including aboriginals, women and the disabled, for social assistance recipients, some of whom are single mothers, and for Manitobans generally seeking higher levels of skill training. Apprenticeship programs are also included in this division. The division will offer programs that will be delivered in a variety of settings for both sequential and nonsequential learners. The reorganization will ensure that education and skills training initiatives are linked, effectively co-ordinated and strategically focused, to improve the employability of all Manitobans.

Our challenge in making these changes has been to respond to education and training needs of all Manitobans in an efficient and a co-ordinated way that will support the skill requirements necessary to make Manitoba industry more competitive at the national and the global levels. The reorganization also puts the division in a better position to respond effectively to the Canada/Manitoba Labour Force Development Agreement signed at the end of March. The agreement stresses the needs for cooperation, collaboration and the promotion of program complementarity between the two levels of government. Our aim is to reduce overlap and duplication and support the overall development of an efficient and an effective government response to the need for labour market related programming.

In partnership with Employment and Immigration Canada, we have already established a management committee with representatives from both levels of government to ensure that the spirit of the agreement is fulfilled. In Manitoba we will soon begin a consultation process with our labour market partners in the private sector to determine the structure and the role of new provincial and local labour force development boards. Once established these boards will provide advice and direction in support of government labour market programming.

College governance is another step we have taken to improve our capabilities in the labour market area. Through this initiative we are changing institutional arrangements to address current and evolving labour market needs. As of April 1 the three community colleges in Manitoba became incorporated under appointed boards of directors and the provisions of The Colleges Act. The colleges incorporation will allow them to be more flexible and innovative in their approach to program delivery and in their response to business and community needs.

Our Workforce 2000 initiative continues to be our key response to an increased demand for work-based training that meets the skill needs of industry. In collaborative effort with the private sector, Workforce 2000 has forged new partnerships and new models of training through its industry-wide human resource planning component. To date, May 1991 to March 31, 1993, 53 sectoral partnership agreements have been put in place.

Within the area of training incentives to small- and medium-sized businesses, 1,704 contracts have been initiated and, further, 285 contracts with large companies have been signed to provide support through payroll tax refunds. These two initiatives have resulted in training for 51 ,238 employees since the program's inception in May 1991.

Through the initiatives that I have described for you, my department is addressing important issues and making significant improvements to Manitoba's education and training system. We are not doing it alone, but with the active assistance of our partners. Consultation with our partners has identified issues in need of resolution and issues that respond to them. Our partnerships have been very successful.

I am proud of the members of my department who have recently been honoured with awards. Last summer, Physical Education Curriculum Consultant Rick LaPage was given the R. Tait McKenzie Award of Honour by the Canadian Association for Health, Physical Education and Recreation.

In November, the director of the Literacy Office, Devron Gaber, was honoured by the Association of Canadian Community Colleges and Xerox Canada for innovation, excellence and leadership in the Canadian system of colleges and technical institutes.

Just recently, Guy Roy, Assistant Deputy Minister of the Bureau de l'Education Francaise, received a Canada 125 Award for significant contribution to community and Canada. Guy was also honoured last year by the French government for outstanding contribution to French language service in Manitoba.

I am proud of my department and its achievements. I have every confidence that the measures we are taking now to reform the system will ensure that Manitobans have access to the highest quality education and training programs. I know that Manitobans will be prepared for the 21st Century long before they enter it.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Chairperson.