

Dear editor:

Many of you will have noticed the signs that have sprung up everywhere throughout Thompson in opposition to Bill 64. There are many reasons that people have been rising up against this misguided piece of Pallister Tory legislation.

Bill 64 is a proposed draconian law that will gut the educational system in Manitoba and turn it into a top-down system that will not meet the needs of Thompson or the North.

This is what Bill 64 plans to do:

Number one: amalgamate all school divisions in the North leaving all of northern Manitoba with a single representative on a provincial Council. This representative will be appointed and will not be accountable to the people. Our voices will be silenced. Your local voice will disappear because there will be no local school boards or school trustees to answer your needs and questions. Our area will be the largest school division geographically in the province, covering everything from Churchill and Lynn Lake down to Falcon Lake in the White Shell, making it unwieldy and impossible for a single representative to adequately represent the needs of all of the diverse communities and interests in the North.

Number two: your democratic rights will be eliminated. Instead of being able to vote for your local school representatives you will be “represented” by an unelected person appointed by the government and not accountable to you in any way. Will you even know who this is, and will they live in your community?

Number three: it eliminates Principals and Vice Principals from the definition of teachers and hands the running of the schools potentially to bureaucrats and non-educated related people rather than educational professionals. This de-professionalizes the principalship and will have far ranging consequences to students who will no longer be served by a unified and collaborative profession.

Education in Manitoba is at a critical juncture. It is important that everyone speak out against these disastrous changes and lend their support to your local school board, teachers and school staff in fighting for our children and future.

I urge everyone to contact the government and express their opposition to Bill 64. This is what you can do:

1. Contact your local MLA Danielle Adams (204) 677-2744
2. Contact the Education Minister Cliff Cullen and tell him this is a bad idea. (204) 945-3720 or ccullenmla@mts.net
3. Sign up to speak in Legislative Committee to voice your opposition.

Sincerely,

Cathy Pellizzaro

President of the Thompson Teachers Association.