



**SCHOOL  
STAFF  
LIAISON**

# 2017-18 in Review

## Teachers Speak Up For Education

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Teachers understand the needs of their students, their schools and their communities. Despite their expertise, experience and commitment to the teaching and learning relationship, teachers are often excluded from the educational decision making process.

In 2017-18 teachers were presented with a unique opportunity to influence the outcome of the leadership races of Saskatchewan's two major political parties. While the Pick a Premier campaign was a high profile example of teachers advocating for the needs of their students, it was just one of many instances where teachers showed their commitment to the public good of publicly funded education.

The past year saw teachers, individually and collectively, make their voices heard and use their position as visible and respected members of their communities to draw attention to the need for a strong, well-resourced education system designed to meet the needs of all Saskatchewan students now and in the years to come.

A brief summary of some of the key events of 2017-18 are outlined in this document to highlight the important work teachers are doing to speak up for education.

EVENT	FEDERATION ACTION AND RESULTS
AUGUST 2017	
<p><b>Provincial Collective Bargaining</b> – STF suspends collective bargaining talks in response to government delays.</p>	<p>The provincial government fails to make appointments to the Educational Relations Board, charged with overseeing the implementation of local and provincial collective bargaining agreements. This is despite having received nominations months before.</p> <p>The Federation files a court application to force the government of Saskatchewan to name representatives to the Educational Relations Board.</p> <p>The provincial government fails to act and the Federation suspends provincial collective bargaining talks.</p> <p>The provincial government makes the necessary appointments and the Federation withdraws the court application.</p> <p>News release, October 3, 2017:</p> <p>“This situation is unacceptable,” said [STF President Patrick] Maze. “Without the Board in place, there’s simply no way to guarantee the fair implementation and monitoring of collective agreements with teachers. The solution is quite simple; government needs to make the appointments to the Board as required by legislation.”</p>
<p><b>Pick a Premier</b> – political advocacy campaign launched alongside the leadership campaigns of the Saskatchewan Party and the NDP.</p>	<p>The Federation launches the Pick a Premier Campaign, in which teachers are encouraged to buy a membership in one of the provincial political parties and vote for a leader.</p> <p>The Federation interviews each leadership candidate and posts the videos to the STF website.</p> <p>Thousands of Saskatchewan teachers buy a membership, engage with candidates and cast their vote. Public education is pushed from the margins of political debate into the mainstream. Many of the leadership candidates include education issues in their platforms.</p>
NOVEMBER 2017	
<p><b>Treaty Education</b> - Education Minister Bronwyn Eyre criticizes treaty education in the legislature.</p>	<p>Minister Eyre, in a speech in the legislature, questions if there is “too much wholesale infusion into the curriculum” of treaty education.</p> <p>The Federation speaks directly with the Minister and makes a public statement about the value of treaty education, urging the Minister to review her Ministry’s policy and curriculum documents to ensure this important work continues.</p> <p>News release, November 8, 2017:</p> <p>“We are all treaty people, and treaty education must be a fundamental component of education in Saskatchewan.”</p> <p>Teachers take to social media to express their concern over these comments and to reiterate their belief in the value of treaty education. Teachers make “STF very concerned about Minister Eyre’s comments regarding Treaty Education” the most re-tweeted STF tweet for 2017-18.</p> <p>Minister Eyre apologizes in the legislature for her comments and reaffirms mandatory treaty education.</p>
<p><b>Teacher Well-Being</b> – creation of a Teacher Well-Being Committee at STF.</p>	<p>In response to resolutions from Council and the responses regarding violence in the classroom found in the 2017 STF Member Survey, the Federation establishes the Teacher Well-Being Committee. The Committee has a mandate to provide leadership related to the four categories of teacher well-being: professional, financial, physical and social/psychological.</p> <p>The Committee drafts principles that guide the Federation staff’s response to a number of tragic events impacting teachers across the province.</p>
DECEMBER 2017	
<p><b>Provincial Auditor’s Report</b> – safe schools and prekindergarten readiness highlighted.</p>	<p>In her semi-annual report, the Provincial Auditor highlights the need for safe schools and for more supports to meet the goal of having 90 percent of students ready to learn as they leave a prekindergarten program.</p> <p>The Federation draws attention to the connection between inadequate funding for education and the inability to meet educational goals.</p> <p>News release, December 13, 2017:</p> <p>“There’s simply no point in setting goals if you’re not going to provide teachers and students with the kinds of resources they need to meet these goals,” Maze said. “In fact, asking teachers to collect data and then doing nothing beyond reporting the data actually increases their workload and frustration.”</p>
JANUARY 2018	
<p><b>Government Austerity</b> – concerns about further cuts to education.</p>	<p>Upon learning that school boards have been warned to prepare for further budget cuts, the Federation sounds a warning bell to the public. The STF urges parents to voice their concerns and demand accountability from government.</p> <p>News release, January 16, 2018:</p> <p>“Here we have a government loudly proclaiming their dedication to important educational goals, then cutting the resources needed to achieve them through back-to-back austerity budgets in education,” Maze said. “It’s the height of hypocrisy.”</p>

EVENT	FEDERATION ACTION AND RESULTS
JANUARY 2018 <i>(continued)</i>	
<p><b>Arbitration</b> – decision to apply for arbitration in provincial collective bargaining.</p>	<p>The Teachers' Bargaining Committee makes application to the Educational Relations Board for binding arbitration in provincial collective bargaining talks.</p> <p>News release, January 24, 2018:</p> <p>"We have put forward thoughtful, reasonable and fiscally responsible proposals that would increase supports for students and allow teachers to do their best work," Maze said. "All we've received in return is a call for rollbacks and an extremely narrow interpretation of what should be discussed in bargaining."</p>
APRIL 2018	
<p><b>STF Public Survey</b> – results indicate education is a high priority for the public and teachers are well-respected.</p>	<p>A public survey conducted by Praxis Analytics shows that Saskatchewan people think education is extremely important to our quality of life in Saskatchewan, ranking its importance second only to health care.</p> <p>Three-quarters of those polled rate teachers positively, including 29.3 percent who give teachers the highest-possible rating. Teachers are rated highly for their commitment, understanding of material and for being respectful. Only 7.5 percent rate teachers negatively.</p> <p>News release, April 4, 2018:</p> <p>"I think our political leaders ignore these messages at their peril and should return to a time when teacher voices were heard as decisions are made about the future of education," Maze said.</p>
<p><b>Budget</b> – release of the provincial budget.</p>	<p>The provincial budget increases spending on education by \$30 million.</p> <p>The Federation acknowledges Scott Moe's fulfilment of his promise during the leadership race, but stresses that it does not make up for the \$54 million taken out of the budget last year.</p> <p>News release, April 10, 2018:</p> <p>"Last year, we saw a net increase of 2,500 students and 188 fewer teachers. This budget falls short of addressing that reality."</p>
<p><b>Re-Imagine Education</b> – launch of Re-Imagine Education, a project intended to engage with the public to create a bold vision for public education.</p>	<p>The Federation announces plans to conduct a wide-ranging and comprehensive research and public consultation project to articulate a new vision for public education in Saskatchewan.</p> <p>An Invitation to Re-Imagine Education:</p> <p>"The decisions we make about education today will change the way we experience tomorrow. We want to hear from you about building classrooms that meet current and future needs."</p>
MAY 2018	
<p><b>Supporting the Principalship</b> – Federation brings together stakeholders to discuss how best to support principals and vice-principals.</p>	<p>The Federation brings sector partners together to develop a shared understanding of the STF Supporting the Principalship Model.</p> <p>Principals, vice-principals and other educational leaders meet to articulate perceptions of their roles and the supports they require from the sector. This information will inform future development of supports and collaborations in benefit of principals and vice-principals.</p>
<p><b>Social Justice, Inclusion and Equity</b> – teacher working committee meets.</p>	<p>The Social Justice, Inclusion and Equity Implementation Committee concludes five days of meetings focused on developing recommendations to advance policy implementation in this area.</p> <p>Meetings result in a final report with 32 recommendations to support teachers in social justice, inclusion and equity work.</p>
<p><b>Curriculum Renewal</b> – teachers working with the Ministry to develop curriculum.</p>	<p>Teachers continue to be involved in curriculum renewal efforts in a number of areas, including Physical Education 20/30, secondary arts education, secondary social sciences and practical and applied arts.</p> <p>As a result of Federation advocacy, the Ministry of Education agrees to strike an Implementation Vision Team, which will seek information from teachers, school divisions, First Nations authorities, curriculum writers and pilot teachers regarding the processes that would best support curriculum implementation.</p>
JUNE 2018	
<p><b>Enrolment Increases</b> – government forecasts over 2,700 new students in September.</p>	<p>The media reports a number of school divisions hiring teachers for 2018-19.</p> <p>The Federation advocates for funding increases to cope with increasing enrolment, pointing out, recent hires are not keeping pace with enrolment. Funding is 1.3 percent lower than 2016-17 levels, while enrolment has increased 2.32 percent over the same period.</p>

# For your reflection and consideration...

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- As you reflect on the events of 2017-18, what stands out for you as significant?
- How might students, parents and the wider community be engaged differently?
- What would support teachers as they continue to advocate for the needs of their students, schools and communities?
- As we consider the Re-Imagine Education Initiative, what are the complex problems in education for which we should/could seek solutions together?



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