



**REFLECTIONS**  
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Committed to the mission of enhancing teaching and learning.



## EDITOR'S MESSAGE

### Change: Thinking outside the box

We live in a time of rapid change: innovations in communication and computer technology, diminishing natural and economic resources, and downsizing in many sectors of the economy. In education new curricula introduced in rapid succession, mandate the outcomes and standards that students must achieve. Computer technology coupled with partnerships from the corporate community are poised to change education.

"Man has become able to create his future society, not as he has done so far, blindly and unknowingly, but within limits, consciously. What he is faced with is the problem of deciding what kind of future he wants." (Herbst, 1974, quoted by Wirth)

What do we envision for public education in the next century? The knowledge and expertise to create exciting and challenging learning communities are available to us; but we must act now.

Change permeates every aspect of our lives and resisting it allows others to gain control determining our destiny. To maintain control we must revisit and remold the assumptions we hold. As Michael Fullan observed, education is in need of being reinvented: "we need to think outside the box." Educators must think of themselves as inventors, inventing learning communities that suit learners today and in the future. We need to reaffirm basic social and educational principles and rethink them in terms of a rapidly changing society. James Lewis, Jr. in his book *Achieving Excellence in Our Schools* pinpointed cultural norms that positively affect school change. These norms are: collegiality, experimentation, high expectations, trust and confidence, tangible support, using knowledge bases, appreciation and recognition, caring, celebration, and honour, involve-

ment in decision making, protection of what is important, traditions, honest and open communications, teamwork, entrepreneurship, participative management, community participation, achievement orientation/excellence, and semi-autonomy.

By actively pursuing the cultural norms outlined by Lewis, educators will be capable of solving problems, and, making and carrying out decisions related to the changing needs of students, parents and their learning communities.

*Reflections* provides our readers with articles that discuss applications of change in education. We invite you to think about change, to discuss it with colleagues, then undertake the challenge to transform education in Manitoba.

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