

Manitoba Education Research Network

**Annual Report
2014 - 2015**

MERN

Manitoba Education Research Network

Message from the Director:

The Manitoba Education Research Network (MERN) began in 2004 as an initiative within government. In 2012-13, the network moved outside of government supported by an annual grant from Manitoba Education and Advanced Learning with financial administration by the Manitoba School Improvement Program and office space provided by the Faculty of Education, University of Winnipeg. MERN now operates with the capacity to represent education research interests on the part of all its associates in the education field.

As an informal network organization, MERN depends on in kind contributions from five education faculties and twelve affiliate education partners. These contributions from network members are highly significant particularly as the interest and support for MERN increases over time. In 2014-2015, MERN delivered annual activities and added other events related to education research groups and publishing initiatives. Some highlights:

- The MERN Teacher Education Research Group (TERG) hosted a fall 2014 seminar that featured a session by Dr. Jim Parsons, University of Alberta. MERN has established a relationship with the Canadian Journal for Teacher Research (CJfTR) edited by Dr. Parsons. Larry Petkau, River East Transcona School Division, had his article on work with the MERN Grade Twelve Inquiry Project (GTIP) published in this national journal.
- The MERN Indigenous Education Research Group (IERG) used a “bear-pit” format for the MERN Treaties and Reconciliation Winter 2014 Education Research Seminar. This event brought people together to meet and share lunch at the Manitoba Metis Federation location in Winnipeg. Several IERG papers have been published as part of the *MERN Occasional Papers Series: Indigenous Education*.
- A new MERN Leadership Education Research Group (LERG) is in early stages of development with a fall 2015 seminar planned.
- An article titled “The Manitoba Education Research Network: Teacher Research to Enhance Equity and Engagement in Education” was published in the March 2015 issue of *Canada Education*.

In addition to its many face-to-face events, technology applications support a range of MERN initiatives. The University of Winnipeg provides videoconference access for Winnipeg-based faculties of education to Brandon University and University College of the North. Frontier School Division (FSD) continues to support MERN teleconferencing and hosts the MERN Winter Forum that has become an annual live streamed event with the FSD technology department connecting sites across the province.

I am pleased to provide this annual report for 2014 – 2015 on behalf of the Manitoba Education Research Network.

Respectfully submitted,

Heather Hunter, PhD
Director

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1. Preface

The Manitoba Education Research Network supports research events and activities related to schools and schooling in Manitoba. MERN sponsors include Manitoba Education and Advanced Learning, twelve education partner organizations, school divisions and the five faculties of education in the province. Now in its tenth year of operation, the network has an established program of Manitoba-based research events and activities. These core functions are sustained on an annual basis while additional MERN initiatives are developed in response to evolving priorities, leadership directions and expanding knowledge base in the field.

2. Mandate

The Manitoba Education Research Network (MERN) supports liaison with deans of education in Manitoba universities, superintendents of school divisions and senior leaders in the education field regarding Manitoba-based research in education. MERN works to improve the quality of education in Manitoba through a collaborative effort on the part of Manitoba's five faculties of education, Manitoba Education and Advanced Learning and its affiliated partner organizations.

3. Governance

3.1 MERN Deans Advisory Group

The MERN Deans Advisory Group members are the deans and associate deans of education faculties from Manitoba universities, along with the Deputy Minister of Education, and the Director of MERN (chair).

In 2014 – 2015:

Stefan Delaquis, Dean, Université de Saint-Boniface
Heather Duncan, Dean, Brandon University
Gerald Farthing, Deputy Minister, Manitoba Education
Heather Hunter, Director, Manitoba Education Research Network (Chair)
David Mandzuk, Dean, University of Manitoba
Ken McCluskey, Dean, University of Winnipeg
David Williamson, Dean, University College of the North

MERN Editorial Board:

Members of the MERN Deans Advisory Group participate on the MERN Editorial Board along with Jon Young, Editor, *MERN Monograph Series*.

3.2 MERN Affiliates Group

The MERN Affiliates Group members are the executive directors and senior leaders of major education partner organization and the Director of MERN (chair).

In 2014– 2015:

Carolyn Duhamel, Executive Director, Manitoba School Boards Association
Maxine Geller, Chair, Council of School Leaders of the Manitoba Teachers' Society
Heather Hunter, Director, Manitoba Education Research Network (Chair)
Lorne Keeper, Executive Director, Manitoba First Nations Education Resource Centre
Ken Klassen, Executive Director, Manitoba Association of School Superintendents
Naomi Kruse, Executive Director, Manitoba Association of Parent Councils
Sharon Parenteau, General Manager, Louis Riel Institute, Manitoba Metis Federation
Ken Pearce, General Secretary, Manitoba Teachers' Society
Helen Robinson-Settee, Director, Aboriginal Education Directorate
Rob Santos, Associate Secretary, Healthy Child Manitoba Office
Roy Seidler, Executive Director, Manitoba Association of School Business Officials
Lesley Weisshaar, Executive Director, Manitoba School Improvement Program
James Wilson, Commissioner, Treaty Commission of Manitoba

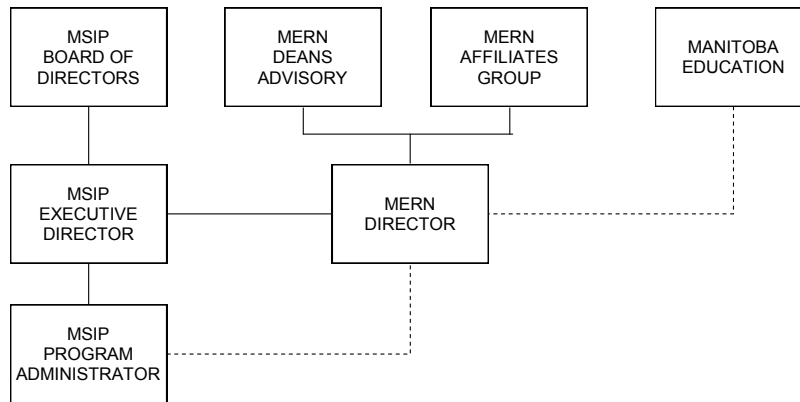
4. Responsibilities

The Manitoba Education Research Network serves public education by carrying out its responsibilities for:

- a) Facilitating a province-wide education research community,
- b) Increasing professional learning through inquiry,
- c) Creating opportunities for research connections across the field, and
- d) Supporting education priorities most relevant to Manitoba through collaborative research activities.

5. Organizational Chart

MERN - Organizational Chart



MERN Organizational Chart April 2012

6. Financial Information

MERN financial information appears in the 2014 – 2015 Manitoba School Improvement Audited Financial Statement tabled at the MSIP AGM, November 2015.

MERN has received a \$123,000 annual operating grant from Manitoba Education and Advanced Learning beginning in 2012-2013. This amount has been reduced to \$93,000 (-25%) for 2015- 2016. [Appendix 1: March 2, 2015 Letter to the Department from MERN Affiliates requesting restoration of funding for 2016-2017]

7. Performance Reporting

The following table summarizes MERN activities for the 2014/15 reporting year:

PROGRAM AREA	2014- 2015 ACTIVITIES	IMPACT/COMMENTS/RESOURCES
Governance		
	MERN Deans Advisory Group Spring Meeting – June 13 2014 Fall Meeting – September 3, 2014	Location – University of Winnipeg (UW) Location – UW
	MERN Affiliates Group Spring Meeting – June 19, 2014 Fall Meeting – September 9, 2014	Location – University of Winnipeg (UW) Location – Manitoba School Boards Association (MSBA)
	MERN Joint Advisory Meeting – December 19, 2014 MERN Ad hoc Management Committee Meeting – February 6, 2015	Location – Manitoba School Boards Association (MSBA) Location - MSBA
Forums		
	Spring Forum – April 11, 2014 <i>“Pedagogy of Place”</i>	125 participants Facilities - UCN Leads – Aboriginal Education Directorate (AED), University College of the North (UCN)
	Fall Forum – November 9, 2014 <i>“Equity in Education”</i>	95 participants Facilities – BU Leads – Manitoba School Boards

		Association (MSBA), Manitoba School Improvement Program (MSIP)
	Winter Forum – January 30, 2015 “ <i>Engagement in Manitoba’s Schools</i> ”	150 participants Videoconference/ Livestreamed Facilities – Frontier School Division Leads – Healthy Child Manitoba Office (HCMO), Manitoba Association of Parent Councils (MAPS)
	MERN North 2015 – March 13, 2015	140 participants Facilities – UCN – Thompson Campus Leads – University College of the North (UCN)
Luncheons/ Education Seminars		
	MERN Awards 2014 Luncheon – June 12, 2014	70 participants Location- Legislative Building Lead – Education and Advanced Learning
	MERN Treaties and Reconciliation Summer 2014 Seminar – June 2, 2014	65 participants Location – Brandon University Lead – Aboriginal Education Directorate
	MERN Teacher Education Research Fall Seminar – September 26, 2014	85 participants Facilities – MTS Lead – Manitoba Teachers’ Society (MTS)
	MERN Treaties and Reconciliation Winter 2014 Seminar – December 14, 2014	70 - participants Facilities – MMF Leads – Manitoba Metis Federation, MMF, Manitoba First Nations Education Resource Centre (MFNERC)
Launches		
	<i>The MERN Journal, Volume 7, Special Issue: Mathematics Education</i> – Launch – May 16, 2014	80 participants Location – Manitoba Teachers’ Society Lead – Manitoba Teachers’ Society (MTS)
Website		
MERN Website		Gerald Neufeld, Webmaster (Retired, BU)

		Faculty)
Event Information	<i>Calendar of Events</i> for all partner activities Call for proposals, programs and abstracts posted	Visits to MERN site = 13,000
Online Registration	Support for MERN Forums with online registration	Online registration for all MERN public events
Archives		Visits to Journal pages = 530 Visits to Monograph page = 400 Visits to Award Recipient page = 290 Note: Visits to the Journal and Monograph pages are underestimated as only the visits to journal and publication lists page are counted. MERN publications are PDF files that can be downloaded directly and this kind of access is not included in the count.
Publications		
<i>MERN Monograph Series</i>	Issue 7 - Pending	Jon Young, Editor (Professor, UM Faculty)
<i>The MERN Journal</i>	<i>The MERN Journal, Volume 7, Special Issue: Mathematics Education</i> <i>The MERN Journal, Volume 8, 2013-2014</i> <i>The MERN Journal, Volume 9, Special Issue: Inquiry into Social Studies Education</i>	Marion Terry, Editor (Professor, BU Faculty)
MERN Highlights	Electronic newsletter	Monthly
<i>MERN Researcher Profile</i>	Paul Betts, UW Laura Sims, USB	Published in <i>Education Manitoba</i> Fall 2014 Spring 2015
MERN e-messages	Regular emails to network informing about calls for presentations, forum registration information, invitations, event programs and relevant research information.	Email is primary mechanism for network communication therefore it is important to maintain up to date contact information essential for network functioning.

MERN Editorial Board	Meets annually	As part of the MERN Deans Advisory Group meetings
<i>MERN Occasional Paper Series</i>	<i>Indigenous Education, No. 1</i>	"Inspired to Face the Hurdles" by Laura Sims, USB
Other		
	MERN Indigenous Education Research Group	Members: Marlene Atleo, Laara Fitznor, Frank Deer, Kevin Lamoureux, Sherry Peden, Laura Sims, David Anderson, Jamie Wilson, Lorne Keeper, Heather Hunter (chair)
	MERN Teacher Education Research Group	Members: Gary Babiuk, Paul Betts, Kathy Collis, Ian Donnelly, Gail Ruta Fontaine, Sarah Gazan, Marc Kuly, Lloyd Kornelson, Ralph Mason, Francine Morin, Terry Price

Contact:

Date: May 11, 2015

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APPENDIX 1: LETTER TO DR. GERALD FARTHING



March 2, 2015

Dr. Gerald Farthing
 Deputy Minister
 Manitoba Education and Advanced Learning
 162-450 Broadway
 Winnipeg, MB R3C 0V8

Dear Dr. Farthing

On February 6, 2015, MERN affiliate organizations met to consider the recently announced reduction in MERN operating support for the 2015-2016 fiscal year. As education stakeholder associations that have worked collaboratively with faculties of education over the past decade to build this very successful research network that MERN has become, we are deeply concerned about the implications of this reduction in provincial funding support for this organization.

In the current educational context, there are few structures or incentives that support local education research. MERN, as both an organization and a program, is a notable and highly successful exception in this regard. Built from an initial concept with only modest staffing resources, MERN has evolved into a multi-partnered research network which regularly brings together education practitioners, stakeholder organizations, education faculties and senior ministry staff to address pressing public education issues in Manitoba schools. MERN fora and seminars attract several hundred participants each year and provide a venue for sharing valuable knowledge and information about policies, practices and challenges in our provincial public education system. These events, open to all at no charge, are financed through in-kind supports and services from MERN affiliate members and post-secondary faculties – planning, facilities, food services, technology resources and supports, facilitation services, presenter costs, administrative support.

Likewise, MERN publications are financed through in-kind supports from education partners – research, writing, editing, printing, art work, website design and maintenance, etc. In short, Manitoba’s education stakeholder organizations and post-secondary institutions have invested heavily in building the MERN program and understanding well the challenges in coordinating and executing, multi-partnered initiatives as MERN does, we are concerned that the announced reduction in provincial funding support will necessitate a significant scaling back in terms of the program components that MERN can provide in the 2015-2016 fiscal year.

This said, we appreciate the financial challenges facing Manitoba’s provincial government and the pressure which this can exert on individual departmental budgets. While we accept that the 2015-2016 reduction in provincial funding for MERN may not be reversible in the short term, we would respectfully request that Manitoba Education and Advanced Learning reconsider this matter with a view to restoring full funding to MERN for the 2016-2017 fiscal year.

Sincerely,

				
Manitoba School Boards Association	Manitoba Association of School Superintendents	Manitoba Teachers Society	Manitoba Association of Parent Councils	Manitoba Association of School Business Officials

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