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Profile**

The Governance of Education in Canada

By Dr. Jon Young

My research interests have always been driven by a commitment to public education in Manitoba and across Canada, and by my own interest in comparative inquiry and collaborative writing.

Currently, I am working on the following two particular aspects of that agenda: the changing patterns in the governance of teacher education in Canada, and the changing role of school boards in Manitoba and their importance as institutions of community voice and localism in public education.

The governance of initial teacher education: While ultimate authority for almost all aspects of public education resides with the provincial government, by the 1980s *de facto* authority over initial teacher preparation in Canada had come to reside with universities. Certification regulations simply required a Bachelor of Education degree from a Manitoba university (or equivalent from outside of Manitoba). In the last 20 years, this has changed and is continuing to change. My research documents these changes in selected provinces – Manitoba, British Columbia, and Quebec – and will examine similarities and differences between provinces and the potential impact of these differences on the teaching profession.

The research examines three different models of governance and their different interests: the *political mode*, where government controls decision making in initial teacher preparation; the *institutional mode*, where universities control the decision making; and the *professional mode*, where control is in the hands of the teaching profession. While each mode shares a common interest in

high-quality teaching, each model also has its own particular interests: for government, public policy; for the university, research and critical inquiry; and for the profession, expert practice. This research explores the interplay among these models, and the differences among the provinces in the dominance of particular models.

While there are a number of common developments across provinces, such as the increasingly active role of provincial governments, the research suggests that each province has a distinctly different orientation or emphasis. In Ontario and British Columbia, the College of Teachers has the authority to set certification standards for the province, so the profession has come to exert

Profile

Dr. Young is a Professor in the Faculty of Education at the University of Manitoba and a Special/Visiting Professor at the University of Nottingham, England. He is co-author, with B. Levin and D. Wallin, of *Understanding Canadian Schools: An Introduction to Educational Administration*. In addition to the research interests outlined in this profile, he retains a career-long interest in equity issues and multicultural education, and has edited two books and numerous articles and book chapters on this topic.



increased authority over initial teacher preparation. In Manitoba, the research suggests that the universities still retain most of the practical authority over initial teacher preparation. In Quebec, the provincial government has gone the furthest in exercising its authority by establishing standards for teacher preparation and for accrediting teacher education institutions.

As this research project develops, I will be looking in more detail at these different approaches and what effect, if any, they have on teachers' professional identities and the nature of teachers' work. In particular, I will examine the effects of the implementation of the labour mobility requirements of the Agreement on Internal Trade that are scheduled to come into effect this year, which is intended to require that all provinces accept each others' teaching certificates at face value without imposing additional certification requirements.

School Boards and Local Autonomy in Manitoba: A second ongoing research interest is the changing role of school boards across Canada and particularly in Manitoba. School boards are one of Canada's most enduring forms of elected representation. While undergoing considerable changes in terms of size, structure, and function, they have remained important institutions for local participation in public education. In recent years, school boards in many provinces have been weakened through the centralization of governing authority, school board amalgamations, the removal of local taxation authority for education, and movement toward province-wide collective bargaining.

While Manitoba has not engaged in many of these centralizing initiatives, there continues to be considerable debate about whether to do so. This research seeks to examine these Manitoba debates and to provide an analysis grounded in a commitment to public education – education based on public access and equity, adequate public funding, and public participation.