Problems in the Reform of Educational Finance: A Case Study*

Tim Sale
t. sale and associates

Benjamin Levin
university of manitoba

Educational finance reform proposals emphasize too heavily features of desirable financing systems, and underplay the significant constraints facing any reform proposal. Persons interested in finance reform should pay more attention to factors affecting both adoption and implementation, including limits on decision makers' time, attention, and understanding; the difficulty of integrating all relevant considerations; political limitations; and problems of implementation. We illustrate these constraints and their implications for finance reform through a case study of a Canadian province.

Les projets de réforme des finances en matière d'éducation insistent trop sur les caractéristiques des systèmes de financement souhaités et minimisent les contraintes importantes auxquelles est soumis tout projet de réforme. Les personnes qui s'intéressent à cette question devraient davantage prendre en compte les facteurs ayant une incidence sur l'adoption et l'implantation d'une réforme, y compris les contraintes de temps et les connaissances limitées des décideurs, la difficulté d'intégrer toutes les considérations pertinentes, les contraintes politiques et les problèmes liés à la mise en oeuvre d'une réforme. Nous illustrons ces contraintes et leurs répercussions sur les réformes des finances à l'aide d'une étude de cas tirée d'une province canadienne.

The case we wish to make is a simple one. We contend that discussion of educational finance reform has emphasized too much the elements of a desirable financing system, and not enough the significant constraints facing any reform proposal. We contend that finance reform can only be understood,

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and indeed should only be undertaken, with greater attention to factors affecting both adoption and implementation. We set out, using a particular case in which both authors were participants, to illustrate some of the limitations on the reform of educational finance, and conclude with suggestions for educational finance reformers.

INTRODUCTION

The reform of educational finance is never-ending. Jurisdictions frequently change their approach to educational finance in order to maximize such goals as equity, excellence, efficiency, local control, or accountability. Finance reform is also motivated, of course, by such considerations as tight budgets, legal issues, and new programs.

The finance literature is extensive and wide-ranging. We believe, however, that it has underutilized relevant research on policy adoption and implementation, even though many have recognized the importance of these elements (Garms, 1986). For example, texts on educational finance often give much more attention to various finance formula approaches than to the politics of finance (Burrupp, 1977; Guthrie, Garms & Pierce, 1988; Johns, Morphet & Alexander, 1983). Reviews of finance literature (for example, Guthrie, 1988) also give insufficient play to political considerations. Finance policy is regarded primarily as a matter of working out formulas (Barro, 1989); the key role of political and organizational considerations in policy making is understated.

CONSTRAINTS ON THE ADOPTION OF REFORM

The decision to adopt a new mode of financing education is essentially political, even when the impetus is judicial (Colvin, 1989; Ward, 1988). A political body will decide what reforms, if any, to make. That being said, many discussions of reform do not take into account the limitations politics necessarily impose.

Our approach borrows heavily from Dror (1986), whose analysis of problems of policy making is, in our view, unsurpassed. We identify four main limitations on policy making, recognizing that they are separable only intellectually, and that other formulations could well be developed.

1.The limits of decision makers' time, attention, and understanding.
2. The difficulty in integrating all relevant aspects of reform.
3. The limits imposed by political elements on the scope of any reform.

4. The difficulty of dealing with issues of implementation.

Time, Attention, and Understanding

Educational finance is complex and even the simplest finance formula or system (and most are far from simple) has multiple components. On the revenue side, there are questions of the balance among revenue elements, at both the district and provincial levels. These require consideration of property values, property assessment policies, other tax sources, and so on. On the expenditure side, the various competing goals of a finance system must be kept in mind. So must the mix of elements (categorical, block, equalization, and other grants), as well as the specific policies to be adopted for each of these elements.

All of this is complex enough to fill a long textbook. It is also relatively unfamiliar territory to many elected officials asked to determine, or at least to approve, changes to current practice. Educational finance reform therefore impels decision makers to acquire a very considerable amount of knowledge in a complex, technical, and sometimes arcane field.

The decision maker at the provincial level must also consider the political dimension of proposed reforms. How will any particular proposal affect various political constituencies? Whose districts will benefit, and whose will lose? How will interest groups react to the various provisions? Although there are agreements on some technical aspects of educational finance, the weighing of political considerations will necessarily be subjective (Lawton, 1979).

Then there is the matter of the place of educational finance reform on a government's overall agenda. Complex and important as it is, finance reform competes with many other issues facing any administration, many equally complex and many ranking higher on the political agenda. Thus, the time a provincial Cabinet may devote to understanding finance reform is likely to be limited. This is not a hopeful conclusion, given earlier comments on the complexity of finance as a subject, and most decision makers' relative unfamiliarity with it.

Integration of Relevant Aspects

Educational finance is itself complex, but also linked to other, equally complex matters that would, in the best of possible worlds, receive simultaneous consideration. Educational finance should be considered in the general context of municipal taxation systems, property assessment systems, and taxation levels. Important constitutional or legal provisions may affect finance decisions. Other levels of government are involved, and their views and situations must be taken into account. Equally, decisions about educational finance must attend to likely spending consequences, and thus to the place and priority of education as compared with other areas of expenditure. In Canada, for example, health care is consistently the public's number-one spending priority (Morrow, 1985), although there is evidence that education is moving up the public agenda (Livingstone & Hart, 1987). Since health care costs continue to rise more rapidly than inflation, relative priorities determine how much money may be available for educational finance regardless of the merits of any particular financing scheme. Indeed, lack of money has itself been a powerful motive for changes in financing systems in Canadian provinces (Fleming & Anderson, 1984).

A second set of conditions that should be, but frequently are not integrated into policy calculations are those to do with possible impacts and outcomes. Although it is reasonable to ask what impact any educational finance plan might have on the actual provision of schooling, or to ask what unanticipated outcomes might result, such questions are not often posed in the policy-making process. Thus, until recently, justifications of educational finance proposals rarely mentioned their impact at the school or classroom level, or even the programmatic effects at the district level.

This is so despite the fact that no policy will produce all the desired effects and will produce unanticipated, although not always negative, results (Jordan & McKeown, 1988). Levin (1988) has pointed out the unused potential of cost-effectiveness in deciding educational policy, noting the system's incapacity to take into account this fact. Coleman and LaRocque (1990), Hanushek (1986; 1989), and Walberg (1984), among others, have argued that current financing practices are unlikely to have the desired effect on school outcomes. One possibility is that in making decisions we lack the will or the skills to think through questions of impact. Alternatively, there may be compelling reasons to discount such questions when decisions are being made.

In fact, both are likely. Dror (1986) notes a number of ``policymaking incapacities' (p. 131) involving features of organizations and features of human thinking. He claims that

> Currently known core policymaking institutions, including structures and processes and their interactions, have limited maximum performance capacities, error propensities, and resulting incapacities. These result partly from inbuilt characteristics of the process-system and of the materials out of which it is made. (p. 133)

Dror concludes, to simplify an eloquent and detailed argument, that although policy-making incapacities can be reduced, there are important reasons for believing they cannot be eliminated or even made negligible; ``Many incapacities are shared by all central minds of governments, being in the main common to all contemporary forms of governments' (p. 216).

Political Constraints

Political calculations will inevitably—and properly—play on government decision making about educational finance. Beyond the requirement politically to calculate, however, politics impose absolute restraints on reform. For example, a system in which the majority of members of a legislature represent rural districts militates against reforms that would increase the rural tax burden.

Some contend that these political elements interfere with rational decision making. In our opinion, that view misconstrues democracy, where we trust these political elements to yield a better decision than would any competing method. We do not pretend for a moment that political processes always result in good decisions.

Implementation

There is now a very considerable body of literature on policy implementation, both in education (McLaughlin, 1987) and more generally in public policy and administrative studies (Linder & Peters, 1987; Wildavsky, 1979). If one were to find a lesson in this work, it would surely be that implementation cannot be taken for granted; what is intended and what results are often different.

Several implementation issues require especially careful attention in considering educational finance change: the capacity of the system (including the people in it) to understand and to absorb the change, the willingness of the system to do so, and the various unanticipated but nonetheless serious effects of any change. Majone (1975) has argued that policy making should discard optimal solutions in favour of a stringent focus on feasible choices, thus requiring careful attention to implementation: ``When all . . . constraints are taken into consideration, the range of feasible choices turns out to be much more restricted than is usually assumed' (p. 50). Of course, some would suggest that consideration of feasibility, however flawed, is precisely what political processes accomplish.

Finally, we should note Dror's concept of ``high probability of low probability events.' In other words, we can predict that in the course of policy making and execution some very significant surprises will occur, with major resulting disruption. We cannot—and this is true by definition— predict which particular surprises these will be.

Given all of this, it is not surprising that educational finance changes are rarely well thought out, have multiple and possibly contradictory goals, or are undertaken without adequate attention to practical results. Our perspective suggests no alternative.

In the remainder of this article, we illustrate these considerations through description of a case study of educational finance change in Manitoba.

THE CASE

The Setting

The Province of Manitoba has some sixty school divisions and districts. There are a total of about 200,000 students in 700 schools, about 250 of which enrol fewer than 200 students. School districts were consolidated more than twenty years ago, resulting in large rural districts. However, declining population and demographic changes have meant that even geographically large districts may have very small and dispersed student populations. This makes pupil transportation a major concern. More than half of all divisions/districts had fewer than 1500 students in 1989.

Additionally, school districts vary greatly in size, the smallest having under 1,000 students, the largest more than 30,000. There are great geographic, demographic, economic, tax base, and other disparities among districts. About 80% of the funding of public schools in Manitoba is supplied by the provincial government through convoluted arrangements. This is exclusive of a large program of property tax credits normally not seen as education funding even though they reduce school tax.

The Authors' Perspective

The case is built from the authors' personal experience. Both of us were on the staff of the Manitoba Department of Education during many of the events we describe, one as Assistant Deputy Minister for educational finance, the other in senior staff positions not directly involved in reforms. Both of us left the Department—one in 1988 and the other in 1989. The case description derives from documentary sources and from our experiences and recollections. We sought and received critical review by others directly involved in these events.

Background to Change

Manitoba implemented its program of school finance in 1984, after extensive public review of an earlier system implemented only in 1980. To understand why there were three major shifts in less than a decade, the reader should know that Manitoba changed its governing party in 1977, 1981, and again in 1988; each new government brought forward new programs of educational finance.

The review discussed in this article sprang from two major sources, reform of the province's property assessment system, and the recommendation in the 1984 reform that, after three years' operation, the Government Support to Education Program (GSEP) be reviewed. In addition to these formal causes, there had been widespread dissatisfaction with major features of the GSEP, particularly the role of equalization payments and the degree to which the GSEP was based upon the previous year's expenditures of each school division.

The review began internally in March 1986, and initially was coordinated with assessment reform through a staff committee representing five provincial departments and the central government's policy arm. Public review commenced in the fall of 1986 with a series of regional meetings with members of the Manitoba Association of School Trustees (MAST), the Manitoba Teachers' Society (MTS), and the Manitoba Association of School Business Officials (MASBO). These meetings were designed to sensitize audiences to major policy issues in Manitoba's educational finance. Various groups submitted briefs. The Department discussed ``work in progress' with the groups, with the support of the Minister and Deputy Minister. The 1989 spring Throne Speech indicated that the government would issue a ``consultation paper' on this subject during the 1989 session of the legislative assembly. Despite later announcements that release was imminent, as of this writing (January 1991) the consultation paper has not appeared. The three organizations know that the consultation paper has been in draft for a year, and have indicated to the Minister their hope it will be circulated for their comment and reaction prior to formal release. The Minister has indicated his wish for further seminars, but has not yet directed that these take place.

Major Stakeholders in the Review

There are four major stakeholders:

Central government: Anxious to control expenditure growth and to reduce unpredictability of fiscal demands. Prefers a structural rather than an ad hoc approach.

Department of Education: Interested in a wide range of program issues including transportation, special needs, giftedness, libraries, and guidance. Recognizes limitations on funding but sees uneven program delivery across the province.

Providers: Teachers, Trustees, Superintendents, and other administrators, all of whom emphasize program availability and cost control, yet value local autonomy. This group has the greatest variety of agendas.

Recipients: Children and parents, whose lobby groups want specific solutions to local issues. For example, parents want more program variety. Lobby groups want ``more' of whatever they exist to lobby for. This is the least articulate and most diffuse group.

The last stakeholder group—recipients—has not been formally included in the review, with the exception of such specific lobby groups as a library committee of parents in one school and advocacy groups presenting briefs. The review was set up to provide significant political opportunity to educational interest groups regarded as having the most political influence. One outcome was a bias towards the status quo, since changes unacceptable to any group were likely to be rejected before any formal report. The Manitoba Teachers' Society has well-developed policies on educational finance the review must consider if the Society is to be satisfied with proposed change. Extensive consultation thus narrows the range of possible policy choices. It also shifts governments' attention towards the political agendas of the participants, perhaps at the cost of more consideration of educationally sound alternatives. Consultation also emphasized the formula more than its implementation and follow-up, which organizations see as *their* prerogatives.

Major Issues in the Review

To the government, the major policy issues have to do with the desirability and feasibility of change from fiscal, administrative, and political perspectives. These issues might be explored under the following headings:

How *imperative* is the overall need for change? (central government, school boards, taxpayers)

How *imperative* is the need for change from a program perspective? (department and field)

How *feasible* is any change that would take into account the fiscal realities of central government?

How *feasible* is any program change of interest to the department and its clients?

No single proposal could satisfy all these divergent agendas. Thus reform must take into account, as it proceeds, both the substantive desires of the participants, and their relative political clout. Careful management is required.

The Imperative of Change

Manitoba's overall fiscal situation is that of a ``poor' province. This status is not likely to change in the foreseeable future. Wage pressures in the education sector are nonetheless increasing as teachers come off a two-year agreement that did not provide increases to meet rises in the cost-of-living. Pressures will be greater because of teacher shortages in Ontario and British Columbia.

In terms of program expenditures, and because of Manitoba's rapidly aging population, the greatest fiscal pressure facing the Province arises particularly but not exclusively from the health care sector. Debt service costs will also continue to require a significantly larger proportion of current income than was the case a decade ago.

Despite the major structural fiscal isses noted above, the present funding of Manitoba's public education system does not reflect the province's underlying financial situation. Manitoba's pupil-teacher ratio (PTR) of 14.9:1 is the lowest in Canada. The average of all provincial PTRs in Canada today is 16.7:1 (Council of Ministers of Education of Canada, 1988). The difference between Manitoba's and the average Canadian PTR represents over $60 million annually in salary costs. Manitoba also spends more than the Canadian average per pupil, and devotes a higher percentage of gross provincial product (GPP) to education than do other, wealthier, provinces. The student population is stable, with no projected significant increase.

Educational finance research shows that much variation in per-pupil expenditures can be explained by pupil-teacher ratios. The PTR is thus both a major structural issue and a major policy lever in control of education costs. It is unclear whether smaller PTRs increase pupil performance. Some researchers contend that lowering of PTR is a poor use of educational resources (for a recent treatment of this issue, see Tomlinson, 1989).

As many jurisdictions do, Manitoba faces economic pressure to restrain expenditure growth in the education sector so funds can be allocated to higher demand areas. To accomplish this politically difficult task, allocation mechanisms must be, and be seen to be fair and balanced. Moreover, any changes must be realizable in practice. School divisions and teachers will accept only with difficulty any proposal that would effectively raise pupil-teacher ratios. Just as importantly, if schools and school divisions do not wish to, or do not see how to provide education with a somewhat higher PTR, then a proposal to increase PTR is likely to be unworkable, or to create more negative consequences than it otherwise might.

School Board Perspective

Although school divisions, like other publicly funded bodies, will always wish for more funding than is available, divisions face serious problems as a result of GSEP structures.

The GSEP requires divisions to provide the first-year costs of any new program, with the GSEP providing support from the second year. This means divisions able to raise local support can attract provincial support after one year, whereas those with less local fiscal capacity are less able to do so. Divisions with low assessment bases may face extreme local tax pressures when raising very small sums of money. This is especially problematic given the substantial differences in local tax bases among Manitoba school divisions.

As well, the GSEP makes no allowance for the extreme range in Manitoba in costs of transportation, special needs services, or other unevenly distributed costs of education. Coleman (1987) has suggested that uncontrollable costs are due largely to geographic factors, and account for a high proportion of cost variation among school districts.

Equalization grants are tied to balanced per-pupil assessment. Although this is a logical measure of a division's ability to raise funds on its local tax base, it works against those divisions with declining enrolment. As enrolment drops, their balanced assessment per-pupil rises, making them appear wealthier and less in need of equalization. In fact, their costs do not decline in step with enrolment, and their per-pupil costs often increase.

Finally, the GSEP contains no provision for such services as libraries and guidance teachers, considered necessary in a modern education system. Although support for these services could be introduced through categorical grants, this would add excessively to the costs of the system, since many wealthier divisions are now providing these services through their local levy. Others, with weak levy bases, cannot afford to do so.

The above analysis illustrates how imperative is educational finance reform from the board perspective. Reforms, however, will likely be acceptable only insofar as they add funds for ``needful' programs without reducing funding in others. If some boards are penalized and others gain, the political costs of reform will rise steeply. Boards will see any proposed reform from their own, rather narrow point of view rather than the broader provincial perspective. And all boards have an interest in increasing the total amount of provincial funding rather than in redistributing existing funding.

Taxpayers' Perspective

Ultimately, all of the costs of education come from taxpayers. In Manitoba the property tax provides about 44% of the costs of public education. This tax is offset by a complex set of tax credits delivered through the income tax and property tax system to various target groups. About 50% of the tax credits are neither income dependent nor linked to the level of the property taxes in question. Over the years, tax incidence levels have shifted so that particular groups, such as residents of rural towns and villages, pay almost no property taxes for education, and others, such as land-intensive farmers, pay very high education taxes. Taxpayers in adjoining school divisions may pay radically different rates yet enjoy roughly the same educational services.

Departmental Perspective

The Department of Education and Training must disburse funding for public education in a manner that is fair and that assists divisions to provide programs consistently across the Province. It is doubtful that the GSEP adequately responds to demands.

Field Perspective

Staff members who deliver education services to Manitoba's children generally agree there are significant disparities in education programs and opportunities across the province. Through local and provincial organizations, they have made repeated calls for funding to reduce these disparities.

The Feasibility of Change

Central Government Perspective

Manitoba's central government agencies have called on line departments to become increasingly accountable for achieving specific program goals with assigned funding. At present, there are no clear program goals in the Department of Education against which assigned funding levels can be tested. Few elements link system goals with funding, program levels, and outcomes at any level of the system.

This is not a recent problem, but rather stems from what might be termed ``benign neglect' dating from the re-organization of school division boundaries in the mid-1960s. No government since that time has seen public education as a major priority in *policy*. Although funding has been generous, it has been mechanistically distributed, and thus the direction of current programs is divorced from funding.

The GSEP is *fiscally* driven, with few program- or service-level goals informing funding. It is thus incapable of serving as a funding mechanism in a system that seeks to develop *program* accountability. In other words, it *cannot* serve the central government's current goal of accountability.

Departmental and Field Perspective

Department and field perspectives on this issue are similar to that of the central government. Over the past few years, most divisions have developed increased financial management capacity, and accept the provincial financial reporting system (FRAME). Although divisions sometimes allocate expenditures to inappropriate FRAME categories, this may well result from there being no incentives to increase accuracy since FRAME data are not central in determining funding levels in the GSEP.

In sum, structural reform of Manitoba's educational finance system is warranted according to field, departmental and central government perspectives. Reform is feasible; the development in 1988 of a fully functional model of an altered funding system proved this. There is significant support from the three major educational organizations for a new funding system. The elements of a significant reform are in place. Yet, as of the end of 1990, no new educational finance package has been announced. Why has reform not proceeded?

Political Realities and Incapacities

At this point we return to the initial section of our article, and indicate how the constraints and incapacities earlier described have worked in this particular case. Each of the limitations has had an important effect on finance reform.

Educational finance reform in Manitoba has suffered because such reform is complex, difficult to grasp. With the advent of a new government in 1988, Cabinet ministers needed time to acquire at least a rudimentary understanding of the finance system and possible alternatives. In Manitoba, educational finance reform was not a significant part of any party's commitment during the 1990 election, nor has it been high on the Conservative government's political agenda, with the exception of tax relief for farmers, partly implemented already.

The problem was exacerbated by the limited ability of both the Department of Education and the Department of Finance to project the financial implications of various changes over the medium-to-long term. Bureaucratic units have assumed continuance of similar policies, and have difficulty answering questions about what might happen under quite different rules and conditions. The capacity to provide sound advice is therefore limited. When the Education finance unit developed a reasoned approach to long-term forecasting, it found that interest in such projections among politicians and political staff was not very high, especially from 1988 to 1990, while the government was in minority.

A central problem of the reform is, in fact, an effect of the 1988 change in government. The finance reform was conceived and initiated under the previous government. The substantive content of the proposed change, its discussion, and its implementation occurred under particular political conditions, and envisaged a particular group of policy mkers. The review was well advanced when the 1988 election and change of government came. Many of the fundamental parameters then shifted, but strategy did not officially change—no doubt partly because the new Minister did not at first see clearly the various implications of the review and therefore could not give directions about change. The tremendous pressure from so many sides and on so many issues that immediately hits a new minister, and then continues unrelentingly, also makes it difficult to devote sustained attention to any particular issue, even one as important as educational finance.

The new government has also sought to manage other complex issues that have national implications, such as Meech Lake, where Manitoba turned out to have a very important role. The political agenda has been extremely crowded and the stakes on national issues very high. Cabinet has been unable to devote the time required for full understanding and discussion of the implications of educational finance reform.

Further, the government was until recently in minority and still has only a bare majority. Until the last election the government's primary consideration was survival and obtaining a majority. Each policy action was evaluated under that constraint. Thorough-going educational finance reform, especially when linked to impending property assessment reform, is likely to be controversial and hard to sell to the public, and hence is to be avoided in minority government. It is too soon to know whether the slim majority the

Conservatives obtained in the fall of 1990 will change the government's approach to educational finance reform.

The Conservative government has also been most anxious about the provincial budget deficit, and therefore reluctant to consider alternatives requiring injections of new money into the education system. Without new money, government has difficulty creating support for policy change.

The Conservative government is composed largely of members from rural constituencies. This means great weight will be given in decision making to the interests of rural school divisions, and to such issues such as pupil transportation. Many of the preoccupations of the former government, such as the needs of the inner city, are now much less salient.

A further barrier to change came with another of Dror's low-probability events. Through an unusual set of circumstances, three senior members of one particular school division were catapulted into senior governmental advisory or staff positions. The Deputy Minister of Education, a senior advisor to the Premier (since elected an MLA), and the Chair of the Minister's Advisory Committee on Education Finance—all from the same school division—have considerable influence on government policy. Since the school division in question has strong and not necessarily typical views on major issues, reform has been significantly affected.

Finally, senior staff persons who conducted the finance review were appointed by the previous government, and were viewed with considerable suspicion by the new government. Manitoba has a politicized (by Canadian standards) senior administration; those who survive from one administration to the next may still be removed in due course. This happened to the Assistant Deputy Minister of Education, who had been responsible for the finance reform effort. However, because there were no other senior staff with a background that would enable them to take over reform, reform was largely halted for some months so the bureaucracy could develop new expertise to compensate for his removal.

Thus, despite the feasibility of and imperative for change, educational finance reform did not proceed. All of the difficulties outlined at the beginning of this article played a part in these events. Limits of time, attention, and understanding both slowed the reform effort and reduced its priority in government. Political pressure from various interest groups, particularly from those with close links to the new government, raised questions about the credibility of work done in 1987 and early 1988. Reluctance to provide additional funds narrowed the reform options available. The needs of a minority government brought issues other than educational finance to the fore.

In all of this, issues of implementation have received particularly short shrift. The 1987–1988 review assumed that implementation could be fostered through participation in policy making. However, well over a year has now passed since the end of the formal discussions on finance reform. Changing circumstances and budget pressures may well undermine a fragile consensus. Thus, even were changes to be announced soon, there might be more opposition to them, both in principle and in their implementation, than would have been the case with an earlier announcement.

IMPLICATIONS

We do not think the particular circumstances described here unusual. Indeed, we would suggest that, although the specifics may vary, any complex policy reform will have to contend with the kinds of events, both anticipated and not, that occurred in Manitoba. Change in any policy arena takes place on ground that is itself changing. We are drawn to the analogy of so-called chaotic systems such as weather, in which small perturbations in any system may have dramatic long-term effects.

Persons interested in reform, then, must be prepared to work in a disruptive and disrupted world. It is not reasonable to expect a major policy reform to be developed, approved, and implemented in a smooth and linear way. It might be better, perhaps, to think of the reform process as analogous to whitewater rafting on an unfamiliar river. There will be periods of intense and even frantic activity, as well as periods where activity stalls. Reform is not smooth and continuous.

Under these conditions, promoters of reform must be prepared to be persistent, patient, and adaptable. Persistence is required to keep the objective in mind and to follow through on reform despite major unforeseen obstacles and substantial delays; to continue to look for opportunities to move forward whenever these occur; and to work towards effective implementation of policy changes. Patience is required in inauspicious times, or when other agendas come to the fore and a reform agenda has to be delayed or temporarily put aside. It is important not to be discouraged too easily at such times. And adaptability is required to make changes in any reform proposal, changes which without destroying the reform's integrity may yet secure a crucial vote or opinion, or overcome a particularly difficult obstacle.

The obstacles cited at the beginning of the article are, as our case study illustrates, substantial, and they have important implications. The pursuit of reform may seem so difficult as to be overwhelming. Yet change takes place. We argue for recognizing the difficulties without abandoning the enterprise, for a point of view that does not underestimate the task but equally does not shirk from it. We can be assured at the outset only that the journey will be important, interesting, and full of surprises.

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Tim Sale is with T. Sale and Associates, 941 North Drive, Winnipeg, Manitoba, R3T 0A9, and Benjamin Levin is in the Department of Educational Administration and Foundations, Faculty of Education, University of Manitoba, Winnipeg, Manitoba, R3T 2N2.