

THE WINNIPEG SCHOOL DIVISION
STUDENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE
SUMMARY OF DISCUSSIONS – MARCH 6, 2018

1. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The Committee members approved the Agenda of March 6, 2018, as distributed.

2. 2018/2019 DRAFT BUDGET DISCUSSION

Committee members were provided with an overview of the 2018/2019 Draft Budget.

Committee members were informed that on February 8, 2017, the Province of Manitoba announced funding for public education. The increase for all of Manitoba for 2018/2019 is .5% or \$6.6 million dollars. Committee members were informed that the portion of the funding allocated to the Division is tied to the number of students enrolled in the Division and equals an increase of .3% or \$600,000 over last year's funding.

Committee members were informed that the Division's costs increase every year due to inflation on required expenses such as Canada Pension Plan, Employment Insurance Premiums and Payroll Taxes. Committee members were informed that even with the Province's introduction of wage freezes for public sector employees, including teachers, salary increments earned by Division staff must be accounted for in the 2018/2019 budget.

Committee members were informed that the Minister encouraged school boards to limit the special requirement increase to 2%. Committee members were informed that special requirement is based on the school year and property taxes are based on a calendar year.

Committee members were provided with three possible options based on meeting a 2% or 3% special requirement.

Committee members were informed that one option is a 2% special requirement or 3.29% property tax and is based on proposed additions for Health and Safety enhancements, additional resources for program and policy analysis and no reductions to existing programs and services.

Committee members were informed that an alternative option is a 2% special requirement or 3.29% property tax increase and is based on proposed additions for additional resources for program and policy analysis, financial software expenditures, building maintenance, school specialty programming promotional signage, additional teaching support for the Aerospace Program at Tec Voc High School, Health and Safety enhancements, online course delivery and school program additions such as additional funding to support students in care who are 18 to 21 years of age, Morningstar program, Inner City Science Centre. Committee members were informed that proposed reductions to this option include discontinuing the School Resource Officer program, Full-Day Kindergarten program reduction to half-day, converting summer school program to an online course delivery model, reduction of travel budgets and vacancy management.

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Committee members were informed that a third option is a 3% special requirement or 3.71% property tax increase and is based on proposed additions such as additional resources for program and policy analysis, building maintenance, school specialty programming promotional signage, additional teaching support for the Aerospace Program at Tec Voc High School, Health and Safety enhancements, online course delivery and school program additions such as additional funding to support students in care who are 18 to 21 years of age, Morningstar program, Inner City Science Centre. This option is based on no reductions to existing programs and services.

Committee members were informed that a 2% special requirement or 3.29% increase on property taxes for education is approximately \$45 per year on the average assessed home value of \$214,200.

Committee members were informed that at a meeting held October 2, 2017, the Board of Trustees approved a motion that the Division enter into a three-year contract with the City of Winnipeg for the School Resource Officer (SRO) program for the period September 2017 to June 2020.

The Division, the Province and the City of Winnipeg are each responsible for paying one-third of the program, and although not required under the Public Schools Act, the Division is required to increase the Special Levy to support this valuable program and provide the much needed resources that keep our school communities safe for our students.

Although the Province informed the Division that no further funding would be forthcoming, the Board has requested a meeting with the Minister of Education and the Minister of Justice to discuss the importance of the School Resource Officer Program, the financial impact on school divisions and the importance of the Department of Justice to financially support the educational component of justice through the SROs in the public school system and community.

Committee members were informed that the current provincial government has suggested that a review of school division amalgamation will take place after the 2018 municipal elections.

Committee members were informed that amalgamation may eliminate some of Manitoba's 37 school boards and would cut administration costs and save tax dollars, although it may achieve minimal savings at the cost of meeting localized education needs.

Committee members were informed that the members of the Board will continue to seek clarification from the Minister of Education on the intent of amalgamation and share concerns on the impact an amalgamation will have on the Division's ability to provide unique programs and services that are required to support students and community.

Committee members were informed that the Division faces further challenges as downtown growth is promoted under the Community Revitalization Tax Increment Financing Act (TIF). The School Division receives less property taxation for properties identified under TIF designation.

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3. ATMs IN SCHOOLS / INTERAC PAYMENTS

At the previous meeting, Committee members agreed to discuss ATMs in Schools / Interac payments. Committee members were informed that as a result of previous discussions at Student Advisory Committee meetings, regarding automated banking machines, administration has obtained information regarding the viability of placing Automated Banking Machines (ATM) in schools.

Committee members were informed that the cost to acquire an ATM is approximately \$4,000. In addition to the cost of the machine, whether purchased outright or leased, the customer is responsible for the costs of installation including electrical and internet or telephone communication hook-ups, anchoring/placement, and security. The replenishment of cash to the machine is usually the responsibility of the customer although some third-party services may be available. The customers generate revenues from the machine by charging a user transaction fee which ranges approximately between \$1.00 and \$1.75.

Committee members were informed that administration has previously contacted high schools in the Winnipeg School Division and the cafeterias in most schools are operated through a food service contractor who offers interac as a method of payment. At least one school indicated that a cash-back option is available with an approximate \$1.50 charge.

Committee members were informed that in addition to the transaction fee charged at ATMs, the user is also often charged a processing fee by their own financial institution that can range from \$1.50 to \$2.00.

Committee members indicated that safety concerns may be an issue if ATMs were placed in schools. Committee members also discussed concerns such as students having access to funds and the ability to withdraw large amounts of money.

It was also noted that security for ATMs is becoming more critical both for the machines themselves and as a result of card reader devices that are being placed on ATMs to steal banking card information.

The Committee agreed that ATMs in schools would not benefit students and may pose safety concerns, however, Committee members agreed that mobile debit machines for payments such as school fees and school merchandise would be convenient.

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4. GENDER NEUTRAL WASHROOMS

At a previous meeting, Committee members agreed to discuss Gender Neutral Washrooms in Division schools.

Committee members were informed that in 2013, the Division embarked on a multi-year renovation program to provide gender neutral washrooms in all of our facilities.

Committee members were informed that all schools in the Division are able to provide access to a washroom for students or staff who are seeking a gender neutral facility. This type of accommodation is typically provided through re-purposing of an existing washroom facility to a gender neutral use.

5. STUDENT PARTICIPATION IN EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES AND VOLUNTEERING

At a previous meeting, Committee members agreed to discuss student participation in extra-curricular activities and volunteering.

Committee members shared methods that may increase the awareness of extra-curricular activities and volunteer opportunities for students. Committee members indicated that volunteer opportunities have been shared by the school's guidance counsellor, announced over the Public Announcement System and traditional methods such as posters and email. A student representative from Sisler High School informed Committee members that the student council has been successful in reaching out to students by utilizing Telegram Channel (app) to promote extra-curricular activities and volunteer opportunities.

Committee members discussed the effectiveness of approaching students and making personal connections in order to have discussions to increase a student's interest in extra-curricular activities and volunteering.

Trustee Broughton informed the Committee of an opportunity to invite Volunteer Services of Manitoba to the next Student Advisory Committee or arrange visits to individual schools in order to continue the discussion.

6. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Committee members previously discussed and agreed to add the following topics for discussion at a future meeting:

- Nutrition in Schools (cafeteria food, pricing)
- Weapons at School (School Safety)

Committee members agreed to also add the following topics for discussion at the next meeting:

- Use of Online Learning Platforms
- Integrating Gender Education into the Health Curriculum

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7. ENQUIRIES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS AND SCHOOL REPORTS

SCHOOL REPORTS

Elmwood High School

Committee members were informed of the following events at Elmwood High School:

- Newcomer Leadership Group
- African Drumming Session
- Spirit Week
- Varsity Boys – Winnipeg Tier 2 Basketball Championship
- Cultural Week
- School worked with Wpg Police/Crime Stoppers to create a presentation on Fentanyl
- Mini Ethics Bowl
- Gaming Tournament

8. NEXT MEETING DATE

The next meeting of the Student Advisory Committee will be held Tuesday, May 15, 2018.

Student Representatives:

Churchill High School
Daniel McIntyre Collegiate Institute
Elmwood High School
Grant Park High School
Kelvin High School
Sisler High School

Regrets:

Children of the Earth High School
Gordon Bell High School
R.B. Russell High School
St. John's High School
Tec Voc High School

Administration:

Doug Edmond, Director of Research, Planning & Technology Services
Emil Contreras, Vice-Principal, Churchill High School
Robyn Harrington, Staff Advisor, Daniel McIntyre Collegiate Institute
Helena Tessier, Recording Secretary

Trustees:

Arlene Reid
Chris Broughton