

SOUTH DISTRICT ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPORT NO. 1-2016

To the Chair and Members
Winnipeg Public School Board:

February 9, 2016

Your South District Advisory Committee reports as follows:

1. 2016/2017 Draft Budget Presentation

Your Committee was provided with an overview of the 2016/2017 Draft Budget. Your Committee was informed that on January 5, 2016, the Minister of Education and Advanced Learning announced that the total funding for public schools will increase above the rate of economic growth at 2.55%, or \$32.5 million, to bring total funding to more than \$1.3 billion.

Your Committee was informed that 2016/2017 provincial funding provides 61% of total revenue while 37% comes from property taxation and 2% from other sources. Total revenue from the Province of Manitoba is projected to be \$243,048,107.

Your Committee was informed that the budget was developed on the following Guiding Principles: Leading Education and Innovation; Providing High Quality Education; Employing Qualified, Caring and Competent Staff; Managing Tax Dollars Responsibly.

Your Committee reviewed the expenditures required in the draft budget for the 2016/2017 school year which total \$396.9 million. This represents an overall expenditure increase of \$9.4 million or 2.3% from the 2015/2016 budget. The increase in expenditures is due to the continuation of existing programs and services; mandatory changes in rates and/or costs related to negotiated salary increases, increments, payroll related benefits, benefits and Canada Pension Plan costs; the maintenance of buildings and equipment.

The Board has approached development of the draft budget with a focus on improving student success, aligning resources with student needs and seeking efficiencies in business administration. Consideration is also being given to include budget allocations to Program and Services enhancements such as adding full-day Kindergarten in four schools; providing bilingual language support for the three new language programs slated to begin in September 2016; investing in healthy minds programming; implementing an employee assistance program for the health and wellness of support staff; science enrichment; strengthening indigenous education and bringing gender balance teaching with the addition of a second division-wide Aboriginal elder; enhanced literacy pilot and maintaining the student success initiative at Elmwood High School.

The Board has also addressed aligning its limited resources with student needs. The Draft Budget includes cost saving measures related to efficiencies in delivering compulsory high school physical education credits – where students are earning an external high school credit by participating in out-of-school sports activities; moving from a universal subsidy for the milk program and band instrument program to a needs based support level; program lifecycle; data driven instruction funds retargeted from Comprehensive Assessment (CAP); improvement in business administration including print copier lease savings, fees for office, information systems and research services; support for financial controls, language evaluation and external communications.

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To implement the proposals for consultation, maintain existing programs and services and achieve a balanced budget, the Board proposes a property tax increase of \$62 per year or 5% on the average assessed property of \$203,900 in the Winnipeg School Division, which includes the proposed enhancements. The Draft Budget balances the needs of students, maintains the building and equipment infrastructure of the Division, adds new programs and service enhancements and manages tax dollars responsibly.

Your Committee was informed that since 2006 the net school tax on an average assessed home in the Division when the education property tax credit is accounted for, has remained relatively stable. The Education Property Tax Credit (EPTC) is currently \$700 per owner occupied home. Seniors are eligible for an additional credit of up to \$1,100 and renters are also eligible for a credit through their income tax.

Your Committee discussed the proposed program enhancements and reductions and the potential 5% tax increase.

Your Committee expressed concern on the continual property tax increases and questioned the sustainability of relying on raising property taxes to fund education.

Your Committee expressed concern on the budget additions such as the expansion of full day kindergarten and language programs. Your Committee inquired about the possibility of creating a revenue source for these additional programs by implementing a fee to enroll. Your Committee was informed that the full day kindergarten is targeted in lower income communities to increase student success and implementing a fee to register would not be an option. Your Committee suggested that funding for additional language programs would be better utilized to provide math supports.

In response to an enquiry from a community member, your Committee was informed that the Division has one of the lowest administration costs in the province at 2.8%.

Your Committee felt that the proposed 5% property tax increase was unnecessary and whether social programs should be the responsibility of the Division. Your Committee also noted that it would be helpful for the Division to clearly identify where savings are being achieved in the 2016/2017 Budget.

Your Committee was informed that 85% of the Division Budget in salaries and any significant reductions to reduce the property tax increase would require reducing approximately 100 teaching position.

Your Committee was informed that the administration reviews expenditures on a regular basis to find savings. In addition, the Division has lost revenue due to development of new properties commercial assessment.

In response to a concern on the transportation budget and unnecessary costs the Division is incurring, your Committee was informed that the Division provides transportation to the students of language programs which results in increased attendance and student success. When transportation isn't provided, often attendance decreases and students soon withdraw from classes.

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In response to an enquiry from a parent representative on staggered bell times, your Committee was informed that there can be significant savings with the implementation of staggered bell times. This may be reviewed for next year, as the Board needs to take many things into consideration as well as have consultation with families. Your Committee was informed that consideration can also be given to dedicating a cluster zone for the pick up and drop off of children.

Your Committee recommended the Division review all programs, services and departments to identify where funding is being spent and which programs and services are essential. Your Committee indicated that the Division's expenditures include services that should be funded by the Province, such as the social programs and school resource officers. Your Committee expressed concern on the level of government funding to special needs children as well as their legal obligation and accountability to support special needs children. Your Committee was informed that trustees have been strongly advocating with the Province for additional funding and support.

In response to an enquiry from a parent representative, your Committee was informed that the Division incurs costs related to the use of schools by the community, however, the Board is working with the City of Winnipeg to maximize efficiencies between the City and the Division. Your Committee was informed that the Board is reviewing with the city including the Corydon Community Centre on Joint Use Agreements.

In response to an enquiry regarding the possibility of a Hockey Academy at Kelvin High School, your Committee was informed that although Kelvin High School met the requirements to accommodate the Hockey program, another school division was chosen by the Hockey Academy.

Your Committee commented that the Budget simulation tool is not effective to provide feedback to the Board.

Your Committee was informed that there is a Budget presentation on the Winnipeg School Division's website along with a Budget simulator, property tax calculator and survey.

Your Committee was informed that in addition to budget presentations at District Advisory Committee meetings, information is available on the Division's website. A Public meeting will also be held on February 22, 2016 at Administration Building No. 1, 1577 Wall Street East at 7:00 p.m. to provide budget information to the general public and receive feedback from individuals or groups that may wish to attend as well there is a survey posted on the Division's website www.wsd1.org. The deadline to receive feedback regarding the budget will be received by the Board until February 26, 2016. All feedback will be considered by the Finance/Personnel Committee. The Board of Trustees will approve the budget at its meeting to be held March 7, 2016.

Respectfully Submitted,

CHRIS BROUGHTON
Trustee Representative

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IN ATTENDANCE:

Voting Representatives:

Sara McIvor-Prouty, Carpathia School/River Heights School
Beth Smyth, Collège Churchill
Andrea Villeneuve, Grant Park High School
Judy Grossman, Ecole J.B. Mitchell School
Miles Barber, Kelvin High School
Matthew Cosway, Ecole LaVerendrye
Jodie Sie, Ecole Riverview School
Dayna Distasio, Ecole Riverview School
James Cresswell, Ecole Robert H. Smith School
Donna Fletcher, Ecole Robert H. Smith School
Rockwood School

Regrets:

Trustee Rollins
Brock Corydon School
Churchill High School
Earl Grey School
Harrow School
Lord Roberts School
Montrose School
Queenston School

Trustees:

Chris Broughton
Mark Wasyliw

Administration:

Tom Bobby, Acting Secretary-Treasurer
Julie Millar, Director of Student Services
Rob Riel, Director of Aboriginal Education & Newcomer Services
Linda Berry, Vice- Principal, Ecole J.B. Mitchell School
Claudette Warnke, Principal Ecole LaVerendrye
Wade Gregg, Principal, Queenston School
Tom Rossi, Principal, Ecole Robert H. Smith School
Helena Tessier, Recording Secretary

Non-Voting/Resource Members:

Community Members
Carrie Logan, WANTE Representative