

SOUTH ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPORT NO. 1-2021

To the Chair and Members
Winnipeg Public School Board:

February 11, 2021

The South Advisory Committee reports as follows:

1. 2021/2022 Draft Budget Discussion

The Secretary-Treasurer was in attendance to provide an overview on the draft Budget for the 2021/2022 school year.

The Committee was informed that on February 4, 2021, the Province of Manitoba announced an increase in education funding of \$20.8 million dollars. This resulted in a decrease in funding from the province of 1.6% or \$2.9 million dollars and an additional reduction from other revenue resources such as the Federal government of \$1.3 million dollars. As a result, the Board of Trustees is required to reduce almost \$5 million in programs in order to achieve a balanced budget of \$421,039,405. As directed by the Provincial Government, the property tax levy for WSD home and business owners will be frozen at 2020 levels or a decrease of about \$6 a year on the average assessed home value of \$225,700 within in WSD.

The Committee was informed that the reduction in the provincial budget along with the two percent cap on the special levy has created a deficit that requires WSD to reduce programs and/or services in order to achieve a balanced budget for the 2021/2022 school year.

The Committee was informed that the Board of Trustees drafted a proposed list of reductions to be made including School Resource Officers, Unfilled divisional support position vacancies, Occupational/ Physio-Therapy, Milk Subsidy Program, Utility savings, School Budgets (non-salary), and School Clerk positions(12 month to 10 month).

The Committee requested an update on the results of the SRO program survey. The Superintendent of Education Services informed the Committee that the survey was completed February 5, 2021. The results of the survey are still being tabulated and will be presented to the Board of Trustees for their review at a future meeting.

Trustee Dumont informed the Committee that the proposed reductions are programs/services that are not mandated by the Public Schools Act and the Division does not receive provincial funding. Trustee Dumont informed the Committee that although each of the programs are invaluable to WSD, the Board of Trustees had identify programs that would have the lowest amount of impact on schools and students. The results of the survey will be valuable as the Board begins discussions with the City and the City of Winnipeg Police Service to discuss alternate options for the SRO program.

Trustee Dumont informed the Committee that initially the SRO program began as a tripartite agreement between the City of Winnipeg, the Province of Manitoba and WSD, for the delivery of service and was equally funded by all parties. In recent years, the province does not provide funding to support for any increases and WSD has supplemented the difference to support the continuation of the program. The Board of Trustees will continue discussions with the City and Province regarding alternate options for the SRO program.

The Committee expressed concern regarding the proposed reduction to Occupational/ Physio-Therapy programming. Trustee Dumont informed the Committee the Board of Trustees will request a meeting with the province to request that funding be provided by the WRHA for the delivery of the

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program. In the event that WRHA is unable to subsidize the costs of the Occupational/ Physio-Therapy program the Board of Trustees would need to re-examine the list of non-mandated programs to determine what other areas reductions could be made to balance the budget. The Committee encouraged the Board and the administration to consider other options to retain the program in the event that Health Services is unable to subsidize the program. The Committee discussed and agreed that any reduction of Occupational/Physiotherapists would directly impact students. The Director of Education informed the Committee that other school boards employ Occupational/ Physiotherapists and that the administration could review whether this is an alternative option.

The Committee was informed that the Milk Subsidy program provides milk at a reduced cost which is available to any students who wish to participate in the program. The Committee recommended providing milk at a reduced cost only to lower income families.

The Committee was informed that the utility budget has a surplus this year, in part due to the milder winter. The Secretary-Treasurer informed the Committee that the utilities surplus has been used to balance the budget in previous years and is the maximum amount recommended at this time.

The Committee was informed that the reduction to the Technical/Clerical budget would represent approximately 10 percent of staffing. Parent Representatives expressed concern that there would be an increased need for technical support for students participating in remote learning. The Committee was informed that this reduction would not affect technical support for remote learning.

The Committee was informed that school budgets would be reduced by 20 percent. Schools are able to meet the educational requirements and often accumulate a small surplus at the end of the year.

The Committee expressed concern that reducing 12 month to 10 month contracts could result in issues when students require course changes etc. prior to the school year starting. The Superintendent of Education Services informed the Committee that most schools currently operate with only 10 month clerical staff. Committee members were informed that in schools with 10 month clerks there are additional flexible weeks beyond the school year.

The Committee was informed that there will be a meeting on February 22, 2021 for delegations and that the Board of Trustees will be approving the 2021/2022 budget prior to March 15, 2021.

2. WI-FI in Schools

The Committee discussed the need for better access to WI-FI in schools and requested that this be added to a future agenda for discussion.

3. K-12 Education Report

The Committee was informed that the Board of Trustees is expecting that the province will release the report in the next few weeks.

4. Covid-19 Pandemic

The Committee was informed that WSD has not been able to retain a full complement of supply teachers due to recruiting qualified candidates to fill the positions.

5. Cecil Rhodes School

The Committee was informed that the surveys have been completed and that the administration is reviewing the results of the survey. The Committee was informed the results of the survey will be presented to the Board of Trustees at a future meeting for review and consideration.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jamie Dumont
Trustee Representative

In Attendance:**Voting Representatives**

Earl Grey School
Ecole LaVerendrye
Ecole River Heights
Harrow School
J.B. Mitchell School
Kelvin High School
Queenston School
Riverview School
Rockwood School

Regrets

Brock Corydon School
Carpathia School
Churchill High School
College Churchill
Gladstone School
Grant Park High School
Grosvenor School
Lord Roberts School
Montrose School
Ecole Sir William Osler
Robert H. Smith School

Administration

Celia Caetano-Gomes, Superintendent of Education Services
Julie Millar, Director
Brad Burns, Principal Ecole River Heights
Cinzia Caputo, Principal Riverview
Dominique Ostermann, Principal Sir William Osler
Dominic Zagari, Vice-Principal Kelvin High School
Nicole Kurtz, Vice-Principal J.B. Mitchell School
Suzanne Mole, Principal Montrose School
Susan Christiuk, Principal Carpathia School
Ryan Hughes, Principal Churchill High School
Jamie Hutchison, Principal Grant Park High School
Evelyn Siddall, Principal Harrow School
Paulette Huggins, Principal J.B. Mitchell School
Ruth Schappert, Principal LaVerendrye School
Michelle Namaka, Principal Queenston School
Andrea Powell, Principal Robert H. Smith School
Kathy Ateah, Principal Rockwood School
Warren Nickerson, Vice-Principal Robert H. Smith School
Tarin Howard, Recording Secretary

Trustee

Jamie Dumont
Chris Broughton (Regrets)