

CENTRAL DISTRICT ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPORT NO. 1-2016

To the Chair and Members
Winnipeg Public School Board:

February 3, 2016

Your Central 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 had discussions on the proposed 5% tax increase and reported the following:

Your Committee expressed concern on the proposed changes to the milk subsidy and band equipment. Your Committee indicated that the milk and band programs are essential to schools.

Your Committee questioned why the Board would consider additional programs, while cutting other services and resulting in the need to raise property taxes.

Your Committee expressed concern on the expansion of the full day kindergarten pilot program in four schools without sufficient research on whether the program is beneficial to children. Your Committee expressed concern that families are enrolling in the program to meet child care needs. Your Committee requested that funding for the full day kindergarten be utilized in more important areas.

Your Committee supported programs that benefit students, but urged the Board of Trustees to be mindful that senior citizens have limited income and a property tax hike may have a negative impact on them.

Your Committee expressed concern on the operation of lunch programs. Your Committee indicated it would be beneficial to have the lunch program operated by paid Division staff as opposed to parent council members and volunteers.

Your Committee expressed concern on the implementation of additional language programs and questioned at what point can the Division no longer accommodate requests for language programs. Your Committee was informed that the Division has a policy on language instruction (Policy IGAL – Language Instruction) that outlines the requirements for establishing a language program such as student enrolment, continuation of the course and availability of qualified certified teachers. Your Committee was advised that the Board is always willing to consider requests for language programs should criteria be met and there is sufficient space available.

Your Committee expressed concern on the loss of property taxes on buildings that are tax exempt. Your Committee was informed that the Province provides the Winnipeg School Division with Equalization payment in the amount of approximately \$55 million to address fiscal challenges.

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Your Committee was informed that the Accessibility for Manitobans Act will have a financial impact on the Winnipeg School Division as it requires all Manitoba organizations including school divisions to establish a plan by 2017 on the implementation on the requirements to meet the legislation.

Your Committee expressed concern on the Provincial K-3 class size initiative as they continue to experience large classroom sizes. Your Committee was informed that the initiative is intended to enhance the quality of education in schools, by providing students with more one-on-one time with their teachers. School divisions have five years to fully implement the initiative. This will mean that by September 2017, all K-3 classes will need to be in compliance with the guidelines.

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.

2. Audit Process

The Chair of the Committee raised under New Business, the possibility of conducting an audit of the Winnipeg School Division by an outside organization to identify where funding is being spent and possible savings on redundant or duplicated services. Your Committee was informed there are many functions within the Division which are audited and closely monitored. The Division hires an external company to audit the financials to ensure the Division is fiscally responsible. As well, student progress is constantly monitored and programs are audited routinely to ensure supports continue to meet the needs of students in the Division. In addition, catchment areas, along with Division facilities are also closely monitored. Your Committee was informed that there is constant evaluations of programs and services by the Board of Trustees. Your Committee was informed that the Department of Education also has expectations and requirements that school divisions must meet. Your Committee was informed that at a meeting held February 1, 2016, the Board of Trustees approved a recommendation to conduct a feasibility study on transportation, and have consultation with stakeholders to identify efficiencies for the delivery of services.

Respectfully Submitted,

ALLAN BEACH
Trustee Representative

Central District Advisory Committee Report No. 1-2016**IN ATTENDANCE:****Representatives:**

Carrie Johnston, Cecil Rhodes School
Ron Balilo, Daniel McIntyre Collegiate
May Hupé, Elmwood High School
Jason Neiser, Ecole George V School
Arlene Reid, Glenelm School
Bonnie Benson, Glenelm School
Jolene Schnerch, Isaac Brock School
Liz Jackimec, Isaac Brock School
Simon Wormenor, École Sacre-Coeur
Horacio Medeiros, Sargent Park School
Glenda Bork, Tec Voc High School
Marla Friesen, Wolseley School

Alternate Representatives

École George V School
Ecole Sacre-Coeur

Regrets:

Greenway School
Kent Road School
Lord Selkirk School
River Elm School

Administration:

Celia Caetano-Gomes, Superintendent of Education Services
Julie Smerchanski, Director of Assessment & Instruction
Tom Bobby, Acting Secretary-Treasurer
Anne Pereira, Principal, Cecil Rhodes School
Rosanna Guzzi, Vice-Principal, Daniel McIntyre Collegiate
Paulo Texeira, Vice-Principal, Daniel McIntyre Collegiate
Mike Babb, Principal, Elmwood School
Melody Woloschuk, Principal, Isaac Brock School
Lisa Calvez, Principal, École Sacre-Coeur
Luba Krosney, Principal, Sargent Park School
Rick Horaska, Acting Principal, Tec Voc High School
Michelle Sacco, Vice-Principal, Tec Voc High School
Suzanne Mole, Principal, Wolseley School

Trustees:

Allan Beach
Kevin Freedman
Cathy Collins