

**THE WINNIPEG SCHOOL DIVISION**

**STUDENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

**SUMMARY OF DISCUSSIONS – February 24, 2016**

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**1. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

The Committee members approved the Agenda of February 24, 2016, as distributed.

**2. FACEBOOK FORUM**

At a meeting held December 9, 2016, Committee members discussed the possibility of creating a Facebook page dedicated to the members of the Student Advisory Committee in order to discuss topics of interest and share ideas that have been implemented and successful in their respective schools.

Committee members were informed that the Policy/Program Committee is in the process of developing a Social Media Policy which indicates the development of students having access to create a Facebook account for school related activities. Most recently, the Board has been provided with an overview on appropriate use and legal responsibilities to ensure that social media tools are used for the purpose they are intended.

Committee members were informed that once the policy is finalized it will create a great opportunity for students to create and connect through a Facebook forum.

**3. TRANSGENDER & GENDER INCLUSIVE WASHROOMS/CHANGE ROOMS**

Committee members were informed that a Safe and Caring Policy – Transgender and Non-conforming Students, has been developed and referred to the Board's Policy/Program Committee for review and discussion.

Committee members were informed that the new policy has been developed to ensure a safe learning environment and equal access to school programs, activities, and employment for all students and staff. The policy will help ensure safety, comfort and health while maximizing social integration and minimizing stigmatization of transgender and gender nonconforming students and employees. The draft policy also includes provisions for transgender and gender inclusive washrooms/change rooms. As diverse situations occur and the needs of individuals vary, all cases will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

Committee members were informed that in 2013, the Division embarked on a multi-year renovation program to provide gender inclusive washrooms in all facilities. The first phase of the program has been completed with gender inclusive washroom facilities in all high schools. The second phase will focus on junior high facilities and the final phase will address the remaining Division facilities. Committee members were informed that in the meantime, all schools in the Division are able to provide access to a washroom for students or staff who are seeking a gender inclusive facility.

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#### **4. MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORTS AND RESOURCES**

At a previous meeting, Committee members agreed to share school initiatives that support student mental health. Ms Julie Millar, Director of Student Services was in attendance to share possible activities that schools can participate in during Mental Health Week (May 2-6, 2016).

Committee members were informed that the Division has developed a Healthy Minds Strategic Plan. Committee members were informed that there are four components of the Health Strategic Plan: Increase communication to staff/students; Programming; Partnerships; Data collection.

Committee members were informed that the Division conducts an online survey called “Tell Them From Me” for Grade 4 to 12 students. Topics covered are emotional health, risky behaviors, encouragement and aspirations, belonging and interest and motivation. The survey showed that the students in the Division have a higher level of anxiety than the Canadian average. Committee members were informed that the information collected from the survey will be used to inform and improve programming for the students.

Committee members were informed that on May 2-6, 2016, in conjunction with the Canadian Mental Health week, the Division will be organizing a variety of activities and session for students, staff and parents focused on Mental Health. On May 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2016, there will be a Gallery Walk at Prince Charles Education Resource Center to kick off Mental Health week. The Division is looking for representatives (staff/students) to participate at the event and provide a school display on promoting Mental Health activities.

Committee members shared their school respective plan for the Mental Health Week as follows:

- Gordon Bell High School will have student speakers to share their stories during lunch time. They are also hoping to invite someone from Psych health and hold awareness meetings.
- Elmwood is planning to invite Clara Hughes again this year to talk in their school.
- Sisler High School plans to have speakers come in and talk during their Psychology classes.
- R.B. Russell Vocational High School representative informed the committee members that they have an addiction foundation Manitoba counselor as well as psychiatrist that comes in few times a week.
- Technical Vocational High School applied for a grant for drums alive and a spa room with aroma therapy for students to just relax.

#### **5. ENQUIRIES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS AND SCHOOL REPORTS**

Committee members were informed of Skills Manitoba Competition. Students participate in challenges designed to test skills required in trades and technology careers. The philosophy of the Skills Competition is to reward students for excellence, directly involve industry in evaluating student performance and keep training programs relevant to employers’ needs. Over 475 high school, post secondary and apprentice students compete in 42 skilled trades and technology contests in six industry sectors. The 19<sup>th</sup> Annual Skills Manitoba Competition will be held at Red River College on April 14, 2016.

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SCHOOL REPORTS

Student representatives from the following school provided a written report (attached) on school activities:

- Argyle Alternative High School
- R.B. Russell Vocational High School
- Technical Vocational High School

Elmwood High School

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

- Pep Rally

Gordon Bell High School

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

- Winter concert
- Winter send off
- Floor Hockey Tournament
- Opened skating rink on green space
- Mental Health week
- Opened final Science room after renovations
- Village kitchen
- Cyber-bullying awareness meeting
- Pep rallies
- Valentine's day dance

Sisler High School

Committee members were informed of the following event at Sisler High School:

- Sales (popcorn, baked goods, etc.)
- Annual teachers vs. student basketball games
- Talent show fundraiser
- Syrian Refugee fundraiser

**6. NEXT MEETING DATE**

The next meeting of the Student Advisory Committee will be held Thursday, May 12, 2016.

**Student Representatives:**

Argyle Alternative High School  
Children of the Earth High School  
Elmwood High School  
Gordon Bell High School  
R. B Russell Vocational High School  
Sisler High School  
Technical Vocational High School

**Administration:**

Julie Millar, Director of Student Services  
Gil Richard, Staff Advisor, Argyle Alternative High School  
Lindsey Trudeau, Staff Advisory, Children of the Earth High School  
Justin Dyck, Staff Advisor, Gordon Bell High School  
Katharine Thiessen, Staff Advisory, R.B. Russell Vocational High School  
Carmelo Militano, Staff Advisor, Sisler High School  
Michelle Sacco, Vice-Principal, Technical Vocational High School  
Helena Tessier, Recording Secretary  
Chrissie Gallo, Recording Secretary

**Trustees:**

Kevin Freedman  
Lisa Naylor

**Regrets:**

Churchill High School  
Daniel McIntyre Collegiate Institute  
Kelvin High School

## Argyle Alternative High School Report

Please find below some of the initiatives and events that Argyle is currently undertaking.

- **Family Night:** On the last Thursday of every month, Argyle hosts a family night with invited families, students and friends to share a meal prepared by staff and students and also take part in a make and take hosted by the teachers.
- **Youth in Philanthropy:** Student representatives research and select a deserving charity in which they financially support through the generous sponsorship of the **Winnipeg Foundation**.
- **Healing with Horses:** An eight week initiative operated by miracle Ranch and run by our phys ed teacher. This is where students were introduced to horses and instructed in the care and grooming of them. The purpose was to have students develop caring and nurturing relationships with each of their horses and also develop and strengthen their own sense of compassion and self-care.
- **Women's group:** Meets weekly to discuss issues and develop relationships amongst the young woman of our school.
- **Men's group:** Meets biweekly to discuss issues and develop relationships amongst the young men in our school, topics are generated by each individual in the group.
- **Traditional Aboriginal Sweats:** Offered monthly, students participate in aboriginal teachings and customs. The sweats are run by a member of our student support service staff.
- **Fort Whyte alive program:** Operates all year students who participate are actively involved in the maintenance and care of various areas of the facility including farm and greenhouse. Through these activities and responsibilities they are taught about sustainable development.
- **Social justice group:** students are exposed to issues, events and individuals under the umbrella of social justice and human rights. The main focus is to make students aware of events and situations that impact on human rights and social justice.
- **Career Day:** A morning event held on December 9. This is where students are exposed to various careers and occupations and are given the opportunity to sit through these presentations and ask questions related to the information. A total of 13 occupations represented this year.
- **Christmas Feast:** three held on December 16, this is a time for staff and students come together and prepare a turkey meal for family and guests and to celebrate the upcoming holiday season.
- **Miranda's Story:** A film produced by Argyle staff and students was premiered at the **Winnipeg Aboriginal Film Festival** on Nov. 19 2015

### Synopsis:

*Miranda, a confused fifteen year-old who is at odds with her controlling foster parent, decides to run away and secretly moves in with her older cousin Stephanie, a single mom of three children. When her cousin disappears, Miranda assumes the responsibility of caring for the children, but the situation starts to spiral and Miranda is faced with a dilemma of whether or not to call CFS.*

**Argyle School Report**

**Model UN** – Students meet every Tuesday to learn about debating techniques to prepare for a mock UN assembly in May

**Argyle Book Club** – Meets weekly

**Food Security initiative** – Student research the issues surrounding food in the point Douglas area. Students were to create posters on the issue, which in turn will be judged by a panel.

**Street Hockey** – Played weekly with staff and students.

Argyle Open House - April 7<sup>th</sup> 2:00-6:00 pm

R.B. Russell

### Gender neutral washrooms and change rooms

R.B Russell has a gender neutral washroom but you have to get the key from teachers, it would be better if I was always open so someone can just use it without having to ask all the time. It's also in our basement and we think it would be better on the main floor because it would make everyone equal and not feel embarrassed or self-conscious about using the gender neutral washroom because really anyone can use it. Our school does not have a gender neutral change room yet.

### Mental Health supports and resources

Our school has an Addictions Foundation Manitoba counsellor that comes in every Thursday to talk with the people who need to talk about issues in their life. We also have a psychiatrist that comes in 3 ½ days a week to support students with mental health issues. We have a health and wellness week where students can go to different workshops to learn about different strategies for dealing with mental health like traditional Indigenous ceremonies and self defense. There were also workshops on anxiety and drug abuse and they also gave everyone a healthy lunch.

We have four guidance counsellors one for each grade who are there for support when the students need it. Our school has healthy snacks for students so they can get energized and get through the day.

Brandi  
Phoenix

## **Student Advisory Committee - Report Technical Vocational High School**

- **WIT:** The 41st Annual Winnipeg Invitational Tournament for basketball was held at Tec Voc's Hornet Dome from January 13 - 16.
- **Valentines Day Carnations:** Student council sold carnations to students who wanted to spread love around. The carnations were delivered to students on the 12<sup>th</sup> of February. All proceeds went to the student councils savings fund.
- **Student vs Teachers Hockey:** An ice hockey game where students and teachers competed against each other.
- **Festival Du Voyageur:** To celebrate Festival Du Voyager, our school ran activities such as scavenger hunts and relays. There were many performances, and a variety of traditional French meals were sold to students. Free maple taffy was made in snow.
- **School Tours:** From February 29 – March 3 Schools from grade 8 - 9 students will be taking tours around our school.
- **Open house:** On March 3<sup>rd</sup> our school will be having an open house from 6pm - 8pm.
- **Ski & Snowboarding Trip:** Several Students will be participating in a 2 day ski and snowboarding trip from March 10 – 11.