

**CENTRAL DISTRICT ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPORT NO. 1-2017**

To the Chair and Members  
Winnipeg Public School Board:

November 9, 2017

The Central District Advisory Committee reports as follows:

**1. Election of Committee Chair**

The Committee was informed that at the Inaugural meeting of the Board held on September 11, 2017, Trustee Arlene Reid was appointed as the Board's representative and Trustee Cathy Collins was appointed as the Board's alternate representative to this Committee.

The parent representative from Isaac Brock School volunteered to Chair the November 9<sup>th</sup>, 2017 Central District Advisory Committee Meeting.

**2. 2018/2019 DRAFT BUDGET DISCUSSION**

The Committee received an overview on the Budget Consultation for the 2018/2019 school year.

The Committee was informed that the Board is committed to obtaining feedback from school communities, parent councils, residents and staff groups for the 2018/2019 school budget. The District Advisory meetings will provide parent representatives with an opportunity to share feedback, ideas and questions with the trustees in their local area.

The Committee was informed the 2017/2018 final budget included expenditures of \$406,594,200. The 2017/2018 Budget included much needed programs, although not provincially funded, such as the Nursery Program, Library Technical Assistants, School Resource Officers, Adult Crossing Guards, Summer School, Off Campus Programs, Nutrition and Therapy Services to support students.

The Committee was informed that the two major sources of funding are the Province of Manitoba and the property tax levy. In the most recent budget, provincial funding provided only 62% of the total revenue required to balance the WSD budget. The second major source of funding is from property taxation which provided an additional 36% of the total revenue. The remaining two percent is revenue from other sources such as the federal government, First Nations authorities and other school divisions who use WSD resources.

The Committee was informed that 81% of the budget goes directly to the cost of providing instruction and supports in the classroom. The other 19% covers costs such as student transportation, building maintenance and operations, business administration and support services related to research, planning and technology and other mandatory expenses such as Canada Pension Plan costs, Employment Insurance premiums, payroll tax and the cost of supplies, materials, books and equipment.

The Committee received an overview on the financial challenges faced by the Division in education funding. The Committee discussed the level of funding that is required to assist school divisions in removing the many barriers to education that may impact student outcomes and their continued success in school. Provincial funding continues to lag behind the needs of the students, families, staff and communities of the Division, resulting in an increased reliance on property taxation.

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The Committee was informed that 60% of its school buildings are more than 40 years old and 35% being more than 50 years old. The Board has made significant investments from its budget and from reserve/surplus to address much-needed building repairs and upgrades. Additional on-going/sustained budget allocations are required to address much needed investments such as electrical upgrades and additional outlets, heating and ventilation equipment maintenance, window replacement, galvanized waterline replacement, elevator and upgrades. The requirements far exceed the provincial funding for these types of projects. The challenges in ensuring that the necessary technology infrastructure and classroom technologies are kept secure and up-to-date to support student learning are also very significant and continue to grow.

The Committee was informed that for over forty years, the Division has provided nursery programming as part of an early years learning strategy for students. Implementation of full day kindergarten began with a pilot program in the 2014/15 year. In the 2016/17 year, the program was expanded and is now offered in 11 school locations. These programs allow children to succeed, in particular students and families who benefit from accessing learning opportunities at an early age. There are key cost savings to government and society when there is support for early years education.

The Committee was informed that the Province of Manitoba would continue to fund the Student Resource Officer Program but would not be increasing its funding. The Division and the Province are responsible for paying 50% of the constables salaries, 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. The Committee was informed that 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 School Resource Officers in the public school system and community.

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

The Committee received a survey to facilitate discussions on the 2018/2019 Budget which identified 3 main topics for feedback. The topics were WSD programs and services and funding challenges for the Division, what role parents and school communities play to ensure the necessary revenue from provincial funding and property taxation are available and what additional information/resources/process would be helpful to continue dialogue with parents, neighbours and the community.

The Committee raised a variety of concerns related to maintaining buildings, class sizes being too large, inadequate funding for programs and services, supports for teachers in the classroom, educating parents and community members about Divisional programs and services and engaging the community in schools.

The Committee discussed the role parents and school communities play to help ensure that the necessary revenues from provincial funding and property taxation are available to fund student programs and services. The Committee suggested parents attend PAC's, District Advisory Meetings, and contact their MLA to share their concerns to ensure educational resources are available for students.

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The Committee discussed what additional information/resources/process would be helpful to continue dialogue with all parents, neighbours, community and partners in education. The Committee indicated that they would like to have more transparency regarding what programs and services are being reduced or added to the budget. The Committee also indicated that they would like the dissemination of information regarding the budget to be relayed in a more efficient and effective format to parents and community members in the Division. The Committee suggested more time to provide feedback to the Board.

The Committee was informed that due to the Provincial funding timelines, the Division has a limited time to consult with the community. The Committee was informed that the Secretary-Treasurer's Department determines the amount needed to sustain programs and services before the funding announcement is made public.

The Committee suggested the distribution of information regarding the Pre-budget consultation meeting date be provided to parents through Synervoice automated calling system. The Committee also suggested that the distribution of information be provided in other languages to accommodate the families where English may not be their first language.

The Committee was informed that the Board will be holding a public pre-budget consultation tentatively scheduled for the late November/early December. Further information to be provided once a date is confirmed. Educators, Parent Council and Community members are encouraged to attend the public forum to discuss the challenges in sustaining high quality programs for students.

The Committee was informed that it is anticipated that the Provincial funding announcement will be made in late January / early February. Once the announcement is received, the Finance/Personnel Committee of the Board will prepare final recommendations for approval by the Board of Trustees. Budget information will be distributed to all schools, parent councils, student councils, advisory committees, employee groups and others on request, and posted on Division's website.

The Committee was also informed that in addition to Budget presentations at District Advisory Committee meetings additional information is available on the Division's website including a Budget tool and property tax calculator. A survey is posted on the Division's website [www.winnipegssd.ca](http://www.winnipegssd.ca). Committee members were advised that the members of the Board are interested in receiving pre budget feedback.

District Advisory Committee meetings will be scheduled in February to provide an opportunity for dialogue and discussion about the draft budget. A Public Meeting regarding the draft budget will be held on February 26, 2018. The deadline to receive feedback regarding the budget will be received by the Board until March 5, 2018. All feedback will be considered by Finance/Personnel Committee. The Board of Trustees will approve the budget at its meeting to be held March 12, 2018. The Board must finalize the budget by March 15, 2018, as required by legislation.

### **3. REVISED TRANSPORTATION POLICY – EEA**

The Committee received an overview of the revised Policy EEA – Transportation of Pupils to include provisions for Courtesy Transportation Services. Courtesy Transportation is offered to those students who meet specified criteria. As with most school jurisdictions, the number of students who are eligible for transportation varies from year to year.

The Committee was informed that the Transportation Policy – EEA meets all of the provincial regulatory requirements to ensure that students who live further than 1.6 km, who have exceptional learning needs or who live in hazard areas are accommodated. The policy provides transportation at no charge to Kindergarten to Grade 6 language and alternative program students, and for Nursery students attending French immersion milieu schools.

Among the provisions is a mandate that no new bus routes or stops be added to accommodate courtesy seating. Courtesy Transportation seats are not guaranteed for the full school year as students who meet full eligibility requirements will have precedence over a courtesy seat assignment. The Committee was advised that the number of students requiring transportation changes on a regular basis therefore vacant seats on buses may or may not be available.

The Committee was informed that the Board has also directed administration to conduct a larger study on fee for service and courtesy transportation and make a recommendation for possible implementation in the 2018/2019 school year.

#### **4. TREE PLANTING/URBAN FOREST MANAGEMENT PLAN**

The Committee was informed that at a meeting held March 21, 2017, the Board of Trustees recommended that the Urban Forest Management Plan be distributed to District Advisory Committees for consideration and feedback on the plan.

The Committee was informed the members of the Board would like schools to discuss whether their students and school community would benefit from participating in this educational and ongoing learning opportunity. Please visit the Division's website at <https://www.winnipegssd.ca/About%20WSD/sustainabledevelopment/Pages/default.aspx> to view the WSD School Ground Greening Guidelines for reference purposes.

As outlined in the plan, a budget would be required for the initial 3 year project and after which sustainable long term funding would be required for the continuous maintenance and upkeep of the grounds.

The Committee was informed the purpose of the Urban Forest Management Plan is to provide guidelines for increasing the number of trees by adding approximately 60 trees a year on WSD properties. The plan will provide direction on developing and caring of the urban forest, implementation framework, budget requirements and other required supports.

The Committee was informed that in order to incorporate a formal tree planting program, a number of factors would need to be considered, such as, the size, type, location of the trees/shrubs, allergies, staffing, and required equipment. A tree planting program will be valuable to the Division which gives consideration to historic issues; maintenance requirements; properly planned projects utilizing the expertise of landscape consultants for larger projects; if the school/stakeholders are involved in a planned development and take ownership of the project; and adequate funding.

The Committee was informed that Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) is at the forefront of curriculum in Manitoba Schools. The incorporation of key themes of sustainable development into the education system will help students become informed and responsible decision-makers, playing active roles as citizens of Canada and the world. These complex concepts can be further illustrated in well-designed school grounds. These traditionally barren landscapes can contribute to social, cultural, environmental, and mental well-being of the entire community.

The Committee received a survey to provide feedback on the benefits and challenges of

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implementing a Tree Planting/Urban Forest Management Plan program. The Committee separated into small groups to discuss the benefits and challenges of implementing a Tree Planting/Urban Forest Management Plan program. The Committee had many concerns such as the overall maintenance, the placement of trees and the cost of the program.

The Committee discussed whether school parent advisory councils would support matching funds to plant trees. The Committee agreed that they would support the planting of trees if schools could get funds from other sources. The Committee suggested partnering with other organizations. The Committee also agreed that schools would support the program as long as current programs and services being provided to schools were not being reduced. The Committee indicated that schools would prefer to use parent council funds for higher priority items such as, equipment, technology, playgrounds and play structures that also benefit students. The Committee is concerned that schools who do not have the land / space available to plant trees will be financial obligated to support other schools that are able to plant trees.

The Committee agreed that there are benefits to planting trees including providing greener play areas for children and the environment. The Committee expressed concern that with the current constraints on the budget it may not be beneficial to implement the plan at this time.

## **5. BARRIER-FREE MANITOBA**

The Committee was informed that as a result of the recent Accessibility Legislation, school divisions received provincial direction regarding the requirements to meet accessibility legislation, the Human Rights Code, Workplace Safety & Health Act and other legislation and regulations.

The Committee was informed that Barrier-Free Manitoba requested that school divisions provide their support by signing a letter campaign to the provincial government to develop an accessible education standard under the landmark Accessibility for Manitobans Act.

The Committee was informed that the Division responded to the request from Barrier-Free Manitoba and provided a copy of the Division's Accessibility Plan and Strategic Plan to outline achievements, goals and objectives and reaffirming our commitment to continuing to address barriers in schools.

The Committee was informed that although, the Division has been successful and progress has been made in meeting the requirements, school divisions are concerned that new regulations may incur additional costs for school divisions which may be unfunded by the government. The Committee indicated that families also have barriers that are preventing them from participating in school and community events.

The Committee was informed that Barrier-Free Manitoba is working on targeting not only schools but the general public. For more information on the Barrier-Free Manitoba or to provide feedback visit <http://www.barrierfreemb.com/>

The Committee was advised that for more information on the Winnipeg School Division's Accessibility Plan can be found on the Division website: <https://www.winnipegssd.ca/AccessibilityPlan/Pages/default.aspx>

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**6. 2017/2018 ADVISORY COMMITTEE DATES**

The Committee was informed of the following schedule of the District Advisory Committees for the 2017/2018 school year:

**Central District Advisory Committee**  
**7:00 p.m.**

**Thursday, November 9, 2017**  
**Wednesday, February 21, 2018**  
**Thursday, May 3, 2018**

**Inner City District Advisory Committee**  
**6:30 p.m.**

Wednesday, November 15, 2017  
 Thursday, February 15, 2018  
 Wednesday, April 25, 2018

**North District Advisory Committee**  
**7:00 p.m.**

Tuesday, November 14, 2017  
 Tuesday, February 13, 2018  
 Tuesday, April 24, 2018

**South District Advisory Committee**  
**7:00 p.m.**

Tuesday, November 21, 2017  
 Tuesday, February 20, 2018  
 Tuesday, May 8, 2018

**French Immersion Advisory Committee**  
**7:00 p.m.**

Wednesday, November 29, 2017  
 Thursday, February 22, 2018  
 Thursday, May 10, 2018

**Student Advisory Committee**  
**4:00 p.m.**

Tuesday, November 28, 2017  
 Wednesday, March 6, 2018  
 Tuesday, May 15, 2018

Respectfully Submitted,

ARLENE REID  
 Trustee Representative

**IN ATTENDANCE:****Voting Representatives:**

Angelica Romero, Daniel McIntyre Collegiate  
 Elmwood High School

Glenelm School  
 Liz Jackimec, Isaac Brock School  
 Melissa Bowman Wilson, École Laura Secord School  
 Alan Cunningham, École Sacré-Coeur  
 Horace Medeiros, Sargent Park School  
 Wolseley School

**Alternate Representatives**

Jolene Schnerch, Isaac Brock

**Trustees:**

Cathy Collins  
 Arlene Reid  
 Kevin Freedman

**Administration:**

Celia Caetano-Gomes, Superintendent  
 Julie Smerchanski, Director of Assessment & Instructional Support  
 Services  
 Mike Babb, Principal, Elmwood High School  
 Lloyd Rana, Vice-Principal, Elmwood High School  
 Melody Woloschuk, Principal, Isaac Brock School  
 Brian Rogowsky, Vice-Principal, Isaac Brock School  
 Lorne Belmore, Principal, Daniel McIntyre Collegiate  
 Rhona Churman, Principal, École Laura Secord School  
 Luba Krosney, Principal, Sargent Park School

**Regrets:**

Kelly Bowen, WANTE Rep  
 Clifton School  
 Lord Selkirk School  
 River Elm School  
 Tec Voc High School