

STUDENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPORT NO. 1-2016

To the Chair and Members
Winnipeg Public School Board:

February 24, 2016

Your Student Advisory Committee reports as follows:

1. Facebook Forum

Your Committee was informed that 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.

Your Committee was 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.

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

2. Transgender & Gender Inclusive Washrooms/Change Rooms

Your Committee was 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.

Your Committee was 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.

Your Committee was 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. Your Committee was 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.

3. Mental Health Supports And Resources

At a previous meeting, Your Committee 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).

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

Your Committee was 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. Your Committee was informed that the information collected from the survey will be used to inform and improve programming for the students.

Your Committee was 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 2nd, 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.

Your Committee 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 your committee that they have an addiction foundation Manitoba counselor as well as psychiatrist that comes in a 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.

Respectfully Submitted,

KEVIN FREEDMAN
Trustee Representative

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

Trustees:

Kevin Freedman
Lisa Naylor

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

Regrets:

Churchill High School
Daniel McIntyre Collegiate Institute
Kelvin High School