

# THE WINNIPEG SCHOOL DIVISION

## STUDENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

### SUMMARY OF DISCUSSIONS – Thursday, November 30, 2023

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#### 1. LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Committee members stated that the students, staff, and communities of Winnipeg School Division are committed to truth and reconciliation through building relationships with Mother Earth, the original peoples of this land and the stories that bring us together. We acknowledge the place in which we gather is on Treaty 1 territory, the homeland of the Red River Métis and the ancestral lands of the Anishinaabe, Ininiwak and Dakota Oyate peoples.

#### 2. ELECTION OF COMMITTEE CHAIR

Committee members were informed that at the Inaugural meeting of the Board of Trustees held on September 11, 2023, Trustee Lois Brothers was appointed as the Board's representative and Trustee Perla Javate was appointed as the Board's alternate representative to this Committee.

The student representative from Sisler High School volunteered to Chair the meeting.

#### 3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Committee members recommended that an opportunity be provided to discuss additional items. Committee members approved the revised agenda for November 30, 2023.

#### 4. WSD 2024/2025 BUDGET CONSULTATION

Committee members were informed that on March 6, 2023, the Board of Trustees approved a budget for the 2023/2024 school year in the amount of \$454,832,200. Committee members were informed that the Province of Manitoba had established a consultant team to guide the development of a new education funding model, initially intended for implementation in the 2023/2024 school year. However, it was later disclosed that the new funding model would not be ready as anticipated, and the Province confirmed that the same formula would apply for the 2024/2025 Budget.

In preparation for the budget announcement, the Board is requesting that parents/guardians share feedback on priorities for schools and the community, programs that should be expanded, and how budget resources could be better distributed to reach those who need them the most. The deadline for this feedback is December 15, 2023, with discussions to take place at the next meeting.

Committee members were informed that the budget for WSD is approximately half a billion dollars, with a collaborative effort from the Board to formulate budgetary priorities. Committee members were informed about the importance of receiving input from student councils regarding school needs such as increased access to technology, universal nutrition programs, and the expansion of IB and AP programs.

#### 5. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Committee members were informed that members may wish to consult with their school

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student council to identify topics for discussion at a future meeting.

Committee members were informed that concerns raised by students last year encompassed issues such as classroom technology, transportation challenges, cafeteria food options, a shortage of substitute teachers, and a desire for increased focus on Indigenous studies and representation.

A student representative from Gordon Bell shared insights into their successful breakfast program, designed to support students from low-income and refugee families, and suggested the potential benefits of implementing similar programs in other schools. This matter will be considered for discussion at the next meeting.

Committee members also shared the following topics for future discussions:

- Implementation and construction updates on gender-neutral washrooms;
- Need for a second sewing teacher;
- Request for a dedicated mental health specialist due to increasing student anxiety, as well as enhanced mental health resources, including a school psychologist, more mental health programs and safe spaces;
- Inadequate English language programs for students whose first language is not English;
- Desire for more sustainable programs such as composting;
- Implementation of additional Indigenous education in the curriculum;
- More after school programs to assist with homework, job and scholarship opportunities;
- Request for air conditioning in classrooms during hot summer months;
- Concerns about safety including hold and secure practices;
- Wi-Fi problems and general need to address technology issues in school.

## **6. DISCUSSION POINTS**

Committee members agreed to add discussion points to the agenda. Committee members discussed implementing gender-neutral bathrooms in schools, emphasizing the need for additional facilities to address overcrowding and support 2SLGBTQI+ students. A student representative from Daniel McIntyre Collegiate Institute (DMCI) High School expressed concerns regarding short bathroom stall doors in the female bathrooms. Committee members were informed that there are challenges of implementing gender-neutral bathrooms, especially in older buildings like DMCI High School where structural constraints make it difficult to modify existing facilities. Committee members also discussed appropriate number of gender-neutral washrooms based on school size and designs of gender-neutral bathrooms, including the option of private spaces within a common restroom area.

A student representative from Gordon Bell High School shared a concern about limited prayer rooms for religious freedom in schools. Committee members discussed the importance of creating quiet and safe spaces for students to pray and raised issues of principals, teachers and staff monitoring prayer rooms. Committee members also shared concerns about outdated technology in schools, highlighting the issue of teachers using personal devices due to technological limitations, including a Wi-Fi outage.

Committee members shared insights on school lunch programs, expressing concerns about the variety and nutritional value of food. Committee members discussed a shift towards less balanced, ready-to-go items and increased prices in cafeterias post-COVID. Committee

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members suggested exploring more culinary programs among schools where students contribute to making lunches, potentially reducing costs and improving the quality of meals.

Committee members discussed the limited French immersion programs and science course options, as well as the impact it has on students' post-secondary aspirations. A student representative from Gordon Bell High School shared the difficulty in taking all three science courses and the limitation on course availability, leading to taking online classes or classes in Winnipeg Adult Education Centre after graduation. Committee members were informed that the challenges posed by smaller schools is due to fewer teachers being able to teach other courses. Committee members also discussed the challenge of scheduling conflicts within enrichment programs and the accessibility of Advance Placement (AP) and International Baccalaureate (IB) programs across schools in WSD. Committee members were informed that the Superintendent recognized the need to address these issues to ensure equitable access to high-quality education and will take it back to the Board for discussion.

Committee members discussed issues related to transportation, including requesting a stop service. Committee members were informed concerns regarding public transit may be brought up with City Services and to call 311 to lodge a complaint. Committee members were informed that the concerns regarding transportation will be brought forward to the Board, as well as MSBA.

A student representative from Gordon Bell High School shared concerns about safety in schools, specifically security issues and people wandering around their school. Committee members were informed that students should bring the concern to the principal.

**7. ENQUIRIES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS AND SCHOOL REPORTS**

SCHOOL REPORTS

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

- Gordon Bell High School

**8. FOR INFORMATION**

Committee members were provided information on Guidelines for Board Advisory Committees, COVID update, School Grants/Proposals, New Structure/Clusters, as well as Lead in Drinking Water Testing and Mitigation Results.

Committee members were also encouraged to attend bi-weekly regular board meetings to stay informed about ongoing events and updates within WSD. Committee members were informed they register as a delegation to present topics they may wish to discuss.

**9. NEXT MEETING DATE**

Committee members were informed the next Student District Advisory Committee meeting will be held next year (T.B.D.) to continue discussions on the WSD 2023/2024 Budget Consultation and Future Agenda Items.

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In Attendance:

**Voting Representatives**

College Churchill High School  
Daniel McIntyre Collegiate Institute High School  
Elmwood High School  
Gordon Bell High School  
Sisler High School

**Administration**

Matt Henderson, Superintendent  
Michelle Lejano, Recording Secretary

**Regrets**

Argyle Alternative High School  
Children of the Earth High School  
Grant Park School  
Kelvin High School  
R.B. Russell High School  
St. John's High School  
Tec Voc High School  
W.A.E.C.

**Trustees**

Lois Brothers  
Perla Javate  
Tamara Kuly

Student Advisory Committee  
Gordon Bell High School Report - November, 30. 2023

Students at Gordon Bell are coming back and settling into this school year. Although, there is a big difference with all of the construction going on. Under all of the circumstances, we are committed to learning and to keep activities and programs

#### Construction Details and Updates

Public City oversaw a significant building envelope and mechanical systems upgrades project for Gordon Bell High School, overseeing a multidisciplinary group of consultants in the fields of architecture, landscape architecture, structural, mechanical, electrical, and building envelope. The largest school renovation project in Manitoba took two years to complete and covered the entire 154,000 square foot building's wall envelope, roof envelope, and HVAC system. Gordon Bell is undergoing renovations that include intricate design elements like GFRC cladding and colorful punched windows. The project is a component of a research grant from the National Research Council of Canada (NRCan) that involves energy experts from Red River College's Building Efficiency Technology Access Centre (BETAC) as well as deep energy retrofits.

#### Fine Arts Department

Gordon Bell has a lot of offers, programs, groups, and activities when it comes to the Fine Arts Department. It's one of the things that Gordon Bell is more than proud to offer to students of all grades. Our Junior Choir, Senior Choir, Urban Fusion, and Senior Band collaborated all together for our Remembrance Day Assembly on November 10, 2023. We are also excited to introduce our Drama production. Auditions for the Drama productions have taken place, and rehearsals are starting soon. Our Senior choir and vocal jazz group, called VOX, organized a retreat at the end of October. VOX sang O Canada at the Moose game on November 4, 2023. VOX is performing at Lion's place on December 20, 2023. A collaboration between our VOX and Senior Choir Choral Fest on November 14, 2023. Gordon Bell is hosting a Winnipeg School Division Middle years Choral Celebration on November 16, 2023. Many grade 7 and grade 8 choir members are performing. We also have a lot of programs that take place during the lunch hour or after school. Our Junior and Urban Fusion practices take place during the lunch hour and after school. There's also a Ladies Small Group and A Small Hip Hop Crew for the lunch hour. Senior Band and Jazz band rehearsals are taking place everyday during the lunch hour. We also have programs and activities that our art students are preparing continuously for, projects such as Gordon Bell's Legacy Film and Stop Motion Animation Project, Gordon Bell's Art Club is planning a mural for the Spring, and our Indigenous Map Mural Project. Our Fine Arts department are working their hardest to prepare for our upcoming Winter Concert, where our Senior Choir, VOX, and Urban Fusion come together and perform different pieces for our students to enjoy.

## Clubs and Lunch Hour programs

Gordon Bell offers a lot of clubs where students of all grades can join. We have clubs that take place during lunch time. Our Closely Knit Lunch Club where students can reduce stress and anxiety, students can make something for themselves or to give to someone in need. We also have a beading club, where various projects will be offered throughout the semester. Projects include pins, earrings, lanyards, and different items that are decided by the student. We have a Sewing Club, where the objective is for students to have a comforting space to be creative and productive, where they are provided with sewing projects and crafts. Our Beat Bliss club, where it conveys the essence of the drumming club as a place where members can come together, have fun, and experience the positive benefits of drumming. We have our Speakers Group, where students work on writing speeches and practice on delivering their speeches. Students deliver their speeches to the Lions Manor residents in our last week of school before Winter Break. Our Board Game Club, where students can bring their lunch and play Board games every Thursday at lunch. Lastly, we have our Electric Intramurals where students can come in and play popular video game titles in a structured environment. Students have the opportunity to compete against their fellow students in many organized events, game days, and mini tournaments.

## Student Council

Our Student Council works continuously to offer Gordon Bell Students fun, engaging, and social events for students and teachers. Our fall spirit week was a success, a lot of students at teachers dressed up in halloween costumes, and a lot of students had fun with our interactive games and contests our student council committee organized. As the seasons change, our committee is planning on fun and festive events, like Hullabaloo and dress up days. A group of students have volunteered to help Westminster's Children's Holiday Sale. A group of assigned students are setting up two days before the sale. On the day of the Holiday Sale, groups of students are assigned to wrap gifts, serve cookies, tea, and snacks, and students are also assigned to help children shop for their Holiday presents. As time passed by, a selected group from Student Council were selected to partake in a project that is funded by United Way. The project is about one of the Sustainable Development Goals that needs to be addressed and worked on.

## Athletics

Our Athletic teams have been having the best of times and having lots of fun with their fellow teammates. Both our Volleyball Girls and Boys Varsity teams have made it to play-offs. The basketball and soccer season started off strong, with players representing each grade and both teams starting practices. During any sport season in session, Gordon Bell Athletes' support for one another creates room for the team to learn. As the season starts, students are more than excited to see our teams thrive and compete.

For the students, there has been planning of events and activities over the last few months. We are looking forward to more new and exciting opportunities in the upcoming years as we continue to experience more as each month goes by. The students are appreciative of these opportunities and the

close-knit community Gordon Bell provides. After the winter break, we look forward to the coming months and hope that everyone will continue to take care of their health.

Gordon Bell Representatives

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