

CENTRAL DISTRICT ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPORT NO. 2-2021

To the Chair and Members
Winnipeg Public School Board:

April 28, 2021

The Central District Advisory Committee reports as follows:

1. Bill 64 – The Education Modernization Act

The Committee was informed that on March 16, 2021, the Province of Manitoba announced substantive changes to the education system in Manitoba.

The Committee was informed that the new governance model includes 15 new regions, plus Division Scolaire Franco-Manitobaine (DSFM) to replace 37 separate school divisions in Manitoba. This would require Winnipeg, St. James, Louis Riel, Pembina Trails, Seven Oaks and River East Transcona School Division to merge into one region for the City of Winnipeg representing 188,540 students. The Committee was informed that local School Boards would be replaced with a Provincial Education Authority.

The Committee was informed that through this new Governance Model School Community Councils would be established in place of Parent Councils. One parent representative of a School Community Council from each of the regions would be elected to the Provincial Advisory Council. This would result in one parent being elected to represent the City of Winnipeg schools and all parents.

Trustee Reid provided an overview of Bill 64 which highlighted some of the proposed changes and the impact Bill 64 may have on programs and services. The Committee was informed that the Province expects \$40 million in savings that would go to frontline education across Manitoba, this equates to one half-time teacher per school in Manitoba. WSD provides many programs and services to support our students such as Nutrition programs, Housing assistance, Health connections, Reading Recovery, Math Pathways, Autism programs, Anxiety Programs, Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) Program which are important to our families. The Committee was informed that Manitoba Education believes that a complete restructuring of education is necessary to find efficiencies, meanwhile, suggestions of modest and less disruptive changes such as merging all Winnipeg school busses, shared IT and purchasing would result in immediate savings. The Committee was informed that Manitoba Education suggests that where you live changes how you learn because school funding is based on a district's ability to raise money through property taxes, however WSD receives less than 60 percent of its operating revenue from the Province and has no choice but to rely on property taxes to fund resources needed for important programming for students. The Committee was informed that Manitoba Education claims that Indigenous students are falling behind because only 51 percent of Indigenous students graduate within four-years, compared to 90 percent graduation rate among their non-indigenous peers. The Committee was informed that pointing to a four-year graduation rate as the indicator of success shows ignorance of the socio-economic and social status challenges students face. WSD supports a large number of Indigenous students who return to school and successfully complete their diploma as mature students. Many Indigenous students overcome trauma in order to successfully graduate which may take more than four years to achieve, but is no less a success.

The Committee was informed that under the new model the responsibilities of the Parent Advisory Council are unclear, and that the education system needs to be operated by educators and not by appointed officials.

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Trustee Chen informed the Committee that the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternative (CCPA) held a webinar recently where a previous member of the Parent Advisory Council in Nova Scotia provided insight on what can be expected under the new model which is the current model being used in Nova Scotia. The Nova Scotia representative informed the audience that under the new model, parents are left without direction and have focused their questions and frustrations on teachers and Principals who are not the decision makers. Committee members were informed that the webinar can be viewed on YouTube at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jX-K3kvz8eY>.

Trustee Reid informed the Committee that under Bill 64 parents are defined as legal guardians which excludes grandparents, aunt or uncles which would have no voice in Education. The Minister of Education would have ultimate decision making power.

The Committee was informed that under the new model there would not be any parent councils in the traditional sense, which would mean there would be no treasurer and no way for schools to conduct fundraisers which would result in loss of playgrounds and lunch programs etc.

The Committee expressed that Bill 64 did not appear to offer any improvements to the Education system. The Committee also voice concern that one parent representative could not represent the needs of such diverse communities.

The Committee encouraged parents to be involved by joining coalitions, letter writing campaigns, writing letters to their MLA's, or register as a delegate to ensure their voices are heard. The Committee was informed that it is important to act quickly as waiting until the new school year may be too late to evoke change.

2. Provincial Consultation

The Committee received an overview on the timelines outlined by the Province to consult with parents, Parent Advisory Councils, and School Staff regarding the role and processes for School Community Councils and the establishment of the Provincial Education Authority.

The Committee was informed that during the spring/summer of 2021, the Province intends to consult with parents, parent advisory councils, and school staff on the role parents can play in decision making and the role and processes for school community councils. The Province also intends to consult with education staff and stakeholders on priority actions as well as establishing a curriculum review panel, and a new assessment framework.

The Committee was informed that by fall of 2021, the Province intends to release a road map for the implementation of the priority actions and the timelines for change.

The Committee was informed that by November 2021, the Province anticipates having the Provincial Education Authority established along with the changes to the current school trustee system expected by July 1, 2022.

3. MAPC Bill 64 Meeting Invitation

The Committee was informed that MAPC is organizing a coalition of parent councils and allies to save public education in Manitoba. Parent Councils are being invited to participate in zoom meetings to discuss and develop a campaign to stop Bill 64.

4. Minister of Education's Student Advisory Council

The Committee was informed that the Minister of Education is receiving application from Students for the Minister of Education's Student Advisory Council. The Student Advisory Council would be comprised of up to 20 Manitoba youth, aged 14 – 18 and would report directly to the Minister of Education. Council members would serve a 12 month term starting in August, 2021 and ending August 2022. Council members would also meet with government staff and education stakeholders via virtual meetings.

5. Renaming of Cecil Rhodes School Update

The Committee was informed that the Board of Trustees received an overview of the results and confirmed that the school community and the community at large did not speak with one voice. In respecting the two different voices a conclusive recommendation was not reached however the members of the Committee felt that naming schools after individuals lends itself to conflicting ideals as societal values continue to be in constant flux.

The Committee was informed that the results of the survey for the Renaming of Cecil Rhodes School had been referred to the Building/Transportation Committee for review and consideration. The Building/Transportation Committee will be presenting their recommendation to the Board of Trustees at a meeting being held on May 3, 2021.

Respectfully Submitted,

Arlene Reid
Trustee Representative

In Attendance:**Voting Representatives**

Daniel McIntyre Collegiate
Elmwood High School
Isaac Brock School
Lord Selkirk School
Sargent Park School
Tec Voc High School

Regrets

Cecil Rhodes School
Clifton School
Ecole George V School
Glenelm School
Greenway School
Kent Road School
Laura Secord School
Principal Sparling School
River Elm School
Ecole Sacre-Coeur
Weston School
Wolseley School

Administration

Celia Caetano-Gomes, Superintendent of Education Services
Joyce Wong, Director
Brenda Lapointe, Board and Community Liaison Officer
Adam Dyck, Vice-Principal Tec Voc High School
Alison Petrelli, Vice-Principal Lord Selkirk School
Amie Johnston, Principal Lord Selkirk School
Brian Rowgowsky, Principal Wolseley School
Christopher Torrance, Vice-Principal Elmwood High School
Dennis Mogg, Principal Tec Voc High School
Emil Contreras, Vice-Principal Sargent Park School
Jeannette Tourangeau, Vice-Principal Elmwood High School
Lindsey Munz, Vice-Principal Tec Voc High School
Melody Woloschuk, Vice-Principal Sargent Park School
Michael Babb, Principal Elmwood High School
Michelle Sacco, Vice-Principal Tec Voc High School
Wade Gregg, Principal Laura Secord School
Aaron Benarroch, Principal W.A.E.C.
Tarin Howard, Recording Secretary

Trustees

Arlene Reid
Jennifer Chen
Linda Schatkowsky