

CENTRAL DISTRICT ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPORT NO. 2-2025

To the Chair and Members
Winnipeg Public School Board

April 17, 2025

The Central District Advisory Committee reports as follows:

1. Land Acknowledgement

The Committee 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. Lunch/Nutrition Program Update

Katherine Armstrong, Program Director of Nutrition, was in attendance to provide an update on the in-school nutrition program.

The Committee was informed that there are over 30,000 students enrolled in WSD in 78 schools. There are 193 instructional days per year, which equates to approximately 5.79 million meals a year, assuming each school provides one meal per day. The Committee was informed that many schools provide multiple meals per day (breakfast, snacks and lunch) as well as providing take-home meals. The Committee was informed that previously funding for nutrition programs in schools was limited, therefore student participation was also limited, however, with the implementation of the Universal Nutrition program all students are now eligible to participate.

The Committee was informed that prior to the implementation of the Universal Nutrition program, many schools already had established robust food programs. These programs were funded through a patchwork of external grants, volunteers were required to run the programs and there was limited structure, resources or centralized supports available. The Universal Nutrition program was developed to provide structure, resources, and funding to ensure programs are run as efficiently as possible.

The Universal Nutrition program receives funding from the provincial and federal government to employ staff to operate the programs, as well as purchase food and equipment. During the 2024/2025 school year WSD hired approximately 50 food coordinators. The Committee was informed that providing adequate staffing is the biggest challenge for operating the program. The funding provided by the provincial government stipulates that 65% of funding must be spent on food while 35% is allocated for staffing and equipment. WSD is advocating for schools to have autonomy to allocate funding based on the needs of the school.

The Committee was informed that WSD has exceptionally high standards for staff, as well as equipment, and meets and/or exceeds the standards set out by Manitoba Public Health, the Manitoba Moving Forward with School Nutrition Guidelines, Canada's Food Guide and the Child Nutrition Council of Manitoba.

The Committee was informed that WSD has developed open contracts with a variety of food supply vendors, many of them local, so that schools can order directly from vendors that meet their needs

Central District Advisory Committee Report No.2-2025

best. WSD has also invested in storage areas, as well as freezers and fridges in schools. The Committee was also informed that WSD has developed partnerships with various universities which allows dietetic students to do internships in schools, assisting in developing menus and gaining experience in all aspects of the nutrition program. WSD is also collaborating with all metro school divisions to discuss challenges, best practices and working together to ensure funding for this program continues for years to come.

The Committee was informed that the number one goal is safety as there is a zero (0) percent tolerance for unsafe food handling. The Committee was informed that schools can connect directly with vendors to get their supplies delivered directly to the schools. Food vendors are responsible for food recalls and communicate with schools to provide instructions and information on restocking supplies.

The Committee was informed that if a student has declared that they require special accommodations, the information gets communicated to the Food Coordinator to prevent any cross contamination.

The Committee was informed that WSD is looking for feedback to better understand the core values of staff, students, parents and the community to assist in the development of long-term goals for the program. The Committee was asked to provide feedback on the following questions: what impact do you see this program having 5, 10 years from now? What does an accountable and transparent program look like to you? What do you value in a school food program? What voices might not be heard that we should know about? Feedback can be submitted to wsdnutritionprogram@wsd1.org.

3. Guidelines for Board Advisory Committees

At a meeting held February 12, 2025, the Board of Trustees reviewed the feedback from District Advisory Committees regarding the revised Guidelines for Board Advisory Committees. The Trustees agreed that additional feedback was required.

The Committee received a copy of a survey to identify some key priorities regarding the role and structure of District Advisory Committees to make meetings more inclusive for families.

The Committee was encouraged to share the survey with their school communities and to provide feedback to the Board by June 2, 2025, for consideration. The Committee was informed that surveys can be emailed to Board@wsd1.org.

4. 2025/2026 Budget Survey Results

At a previous meeting the Committee was provided a survey to determine the priorities of the WSD community. The survey consisted of three (3) categories, Indigenous Education, In the Classroom, and For Families. Families were asked to rate the following questions on a scale of high priority, medium priority, low priority, not a priority or not sure:

Indigenous Education

- Improving educational outcomes for students facing poverty and diverse learning challenges.
- Providing access to Indigenous language courses, cultural programming and land-based learning for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous students.

Central District Advisory Committee Report No.2-2025

In the Classroom

- Lowering class sizes so that students receive more 1:1 time with teachers.
- Adding more resources such as Educational Assistants (EA's), learning support staff, and clinicians to support teachers.
- Increasing the availability of technology in the classroom with devices like high-definition screens, tablets, and laptops.
- Investing in creative, deep learning programming at all schools around the division such as International Baccalaureate (IB) program, Space to engage in hands-on science, technology, engineering, art and math activities (STEAM) labs, career labs and more.

For Families

- Reducing expenses by removing lunch supervision fees, supporting a universal nutrition program, and covering school supplies and field trip transportation fees.
- Developing after school programs with community partners to keep students engaged in a safe learning environment.

The Committee was informed that a total of 259 responses were received. The Committee received a copy of the results of the survey for information.

Respectfully Submitted,

Rebecca Chambers
Trustee Representative

Central District Advisory Committee Report No.2-2025

Attendance:

Voting Representatives:

Clifton School
Ecole George V School
Glenelm School
Isaac Brock School
Keewatin Prairie School
River Elm School
Technical Vocational High School

Administration:

Garth McAlpine, Acting Assistant Superintendent
Shelley Warkentin, Assistant Superintendent
Stéphane Gautron, Principal, Ecole Sacre-Coeur School
Ara Morris, Principal, Sargent Park School
Chris Goring, Principal, Isaac Brock School
Sari Rosenberg, Principal, Keewatin Prairie Community School
Katherine Armstrong, Director
David Vo, Administrative Clerk, Board Office

Regrets:

Daniel McIntyre Collegiate
Elmwood High School
Greenway School
Kent Road School
Ecole Laura Secord School
Lord Selkirk School
Principal Sparling School
Ecole Sacre-Coeur School
Sargent Park School
Weston School
Winnipeg Adult Education Centre

Trustees:

Rebecca Chambers (regrets)
Perla Javate (regrets)