

# THE WINNIPEG SCHOOL DIVISION

## CENTRAL DISTRICT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

### SUMMARY OF DISCUSSIONS – Tuesday, November 9, 2021

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#### 1. INTRODUCTIONS

Committee members were informed that the meeting of the Central District Advisory Committee took place on Treaty One Land and the traditional homeland of the Metis nation.

Committee members were informed that at the Inaugural meeting of the Board of Trustees held on September 13, 2021, Trustee Reid was appointed as the Board's representative and Trustee Chen was appointed as the Board's alternate representative to this Committee.

#### 2. ELECTION OF COMMITTEE CHAIR

Parent representatives from Cecil Rhodes School and Daniel McIntyre Collegiate volunteered to Co-Chair the meeting.

#### 3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Committee members approved the agenda of November 9, 2021, as distributed.

#### 4. BUDGET CONSULTATION 2022/2023

Committee members received an overview on the Budget Consultation for the 2022/2023 school year.

Committee members were informed that on March 9, 2021, the Board of Trustees approved a budget for the 2021/2022 school year in the amount of \$421,039,400. Committee members were informed that last year under direction from the Province, property tax levels were frozen at the 2020 levels, leading to a reduction of 0.54 percent on the property tax levy for WSD homeowners. This reduced provincial investment in education resulted in reductions of \$4,457,395 for WSD. School divisions across the city were required to make similar reductions to their budgets. Committee members were informed that without the option to raise revenue through property taxes WSD was unable to fund programs that are unique and valued within the WSD community.

Committee members were informed that it is anticipated the provincial government will continue to fund education at the same level as last year and freeze property taxes once again this year. This may result in a significant loss to programs and services for students. Committee members were informed that as WSD begins discussions and consultations with the public regarding the 2022/2023 budget, several significant factors must be taken into consideration including, drop in enrolment, rising labour costs, inflation, provincial funding and the cap on property taxes.

Committee members were informed that in September of 2018, enrolment totaled 33,093 which reflected a steady trend in enrolment of approximately 33,000 students per year over the previous decade. Committee members were informed that since 2018 there has been significant drops in student enrolment, 2019 saw a drop of 1.05 percent, 2020 was down 9.62 percent and 2021 was down 2.32 percent. Committee members were informed that the pandemic would have resulted in many families opting to provide homeschooling for their children, however, with students largely returning to in-class education for the 2021/2022 school year, there appears to be a more permanent trend developing. Committee members

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were informed that the drop in enrolment directly results in a reduction of provincial funding which represents 60 percent of WSD of the overall funding for WSD.

Committee members were informed that salary and benefit costs represent 87 percent of WSD's budget. Arbitration rulings in the spring of 2020 significantly increased labour costs for the 2020/2021 fiscal year and will continue to have significant impact on the 2022/2023 budget. Committee members were informed the Province has not provided any additional funding to cover increased labour costs. Committee members were informed that WSD will continue to make appeals for additional funding.

Committee members were informed that year-over-year inflation in Manitoba as of September 30, 2021 is at 4.66 percent. The inflation rate primarily impacts labour agreements, but impacts other goods and services as well.

Committee members were informed that provincial funding, excluding the effect of enrolment, has increased at the rate of 0.6 percent over the last few years, which is less than the rate of inflation in Manitoba including non-pandemic years.

Committee members were informed that property tax revenue represents 40 percent of the overall funding for WSD which has been capped at 2 percent for the past few years. Overall funding for WSD is approximately 1.16 percent  $[(2\% \times 40\%) + (.6\% \times 60\%)]$  which does not allow for adequate funding for all of the programs and services offered by WSD.

Committee members were informed that final numbers have not been provided to date, however it is anticipated that without an increase in funding WSD will unfortunately be required to reduce expenditures again this year.

In response to an enquiry regarding the decrease in student enrolment, Committee members were informed that homeschooling increased during the pandemic as well as students moving out of WSD. Committee members were informed that many newcomer families move into the WSD catchment area however, in recent years the number of newcomers immigrating to Manitoba has decreased which also affects enrolment.

A parent representative commented that the WSD catchment area does not allow as much opportunity for housing development as other areas of the city. In other divisions there is more housing development in the catchment area which allows for an increase in enrolment numbers.

In response to an enquiry, Committee members were informed that it is anticipated that the surplus will be used to help balance the 2021/2022 budget.

Committee members were informed that the Board of Trustees is requesting input from Parent Councils on which programs are important to them and which programs may be redundant. Parent Councils are encouraged to discuss the questions on the Budget handout regarding resources available to schools to fill educational mandates, important school issues and suggestions on how WSD might address the fiscal challenges of the 2022/2023 budget. Committee members were encouraged to provide feedback to [board@wsd1.org](mailto:board@wsd1.org) as soon as possible. Committee members were informed that the final budget must be submitted to the Province by March 15, 2022.

Committee members were informed that parent councils may invite trustees to attend a meeting to discuss the budget.

## **5. BILL 64 – EDUCATION MODERNIZATION ACT UPDATE**

Committee members were informed that on September 1, 2021, the interim Premier of Manitoba announced that Bill 64 – the Education Modernization Act would be removed from provincial business due to public concerns expressed regarding various components of Bill 64, namely the proposed governance model.

Committee members were informed that the withdrawal of Bill 64 allows WSD to continue to provide valuable services and programs such as Nutrition programs, Housing assistance, Health connections, Reading Recovery, Math Pathways, Autism programs, Anxiety Programs, Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) Programs, and many more, all of which are vital services to support students, families and the community.

Committee members were informed that although Bill 64 has been withdrawn by the provincial government the Minister of Education stated of the four pillars outlined in the “Better Education Starts Today” (B.E.S.T.) strategy, Governance, High Quality Learning and Outcomes, Future Ready Students and Excellence in Teaching and Leadership, the only one that was of concern was Governance, and stated there was still commitment to implementing the other three pillars.

Committee members were informed that while WSD supports some of the key priorities outlined in B.E.S.T. strategies to improve student outcomes, any changes to the delivery of education in Manitoba must be piloted by the government to ensure that new initiatives will contribute to the educational success of the child. Committee members were informed that the outcomes must demonstrate an ability to benefit the unique needs of supporting our students and school communities.

Committee members were informed that WSD will continue to be engaged in discussions with the Province to maintain programs and services for our students.

## **6. COVID-19 UPDATE**

Committee members were informed that Public Health officials announced new public health orders that came into effect on October 5, 2021. Committee members were informed that although the province has moved to restricted (orange) level of the Pandemic Response System, schools will remain at caution (yellow).

Committee members were provided an overview of the “Restoring Safe Schools” plan outlined by the Provincial government including mask requirements, hygiene requirements, vaccination and testing requirements, and isolation requirements.

In response to an enquiry regarding access to lockers and the long term effects of carrying heavy backpacks, Committee members were informed that currently the province has requested limited access to lockers. Committee members were informed the Division will discuss alternate solutions with the province to provide students with access to lockers.

## **7. SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICER PROGRAM**

Committee members were informed that at a meeting held November 1, 2021, the Board of Trustees approved a motion to distribute the results of the evaluation of the School Resource Officer (SRO) Program to all District Advisory Committees for information.

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Committee members were informed that as part of the 2021/2022 Budget discussions the School Resource Officer (SRO) Program was discontinued effective July 1, 2021. Prior to the removal of the SRO program an evaluation of the program was conducted.

Committee members were informed that the initial goal of the survey was to determine if the program should continue, however, difficult budget decisions resulted in the SRO program being terminated prior to the compilation of the survey results.

Committee members were informed the survey was completed by WSD student's grade 7-12, parents/guardians and WSD staff. Committee members were informed that the survey captured information regarding the SRO's ability to establish positive relationships with students, whether or not students felt safer at school with SRO's present, and if SRO's helped to keep school and neighborhoods safe. Committee members were informed that the results of the survey had indicated that the SRO program and objectives required more awareness and understanding by students, staff and parents/guardians.

In response to an enquiry, Committee members were informed that although the SRO program was paid in partnership between WSD, the Winnipeg Police Service and the Province, the portion paid by the province had been capped and was no longer taking into account the increases in the cost of the program leaving WSD to pay the remaining fees. Committee members were informed that WSD will continue to explore alternate options to partner with organizations to help keep our schools and community safe.

## **9. ENQUIRIES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS AND SCHOOL REPORTS**

### SCHOOL REPORTS

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

- Principal Sparling School
- Sargent Park School

## **10. FOR INFORMATION**

### **Manitoba Association of Parent Councils (MAPC) Membership**

Committee members discussed the benefits offered by Manitoba Association of Parent Councils (MAPC) including the Chairperson's Breakfast, Annual General Meeting and Conference, forums, workshops, and presentations. MAPC offers many resources for parent councils to ensure that parents/guardians, families and parent groups have the support they need to be engaged in their schools. Committee members agreed that MAPC had been a valued asset to their Parent Councils.

In response to an enquiry, Committee members were informed that WSD covers the cost of MAPC memberships for Parent Councils interested in becoming a member.

### **Guidelines for Board Advisory Committees**

A Committee member requested that Advisory meetings be made available to the public to adhere to the Guidelines for Board Advisory Committees.

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In Attendance:

**Voting Representatives**

Cecil Rhodes School  
Clifton School  
Daniel McIntyre Collegiate  
Elmwood High School  
Isaac Brock School  
Laura Secord School  
Lord Selkirk School  
Principal Sparling School  
Sargent Park School  
Tec Voc High School

**Regrets**

Ecole George V School  
Glenelm School  
Greenway School  
Kent Road School  
River Elm School  
Ecole Sacre-Coeur  
Weston School  
Wolseley School  
W.A.E.C.

**Administration**

Celia Caetano-Gomes, Superintendent of Education Services  
Joyce Wong, Director  
Brenda Lapointe, Board and Community Liaison Officer  
Paul Kochan, Secretary Treasurer  
Dino Di Fabrizio, (Acting) Director  
Anne Pereira, Principal Cecil Rhodes  
Susan Drysdale, Principal Clifton School  
Erin Enns, (Acting) Vice Principal Daniel McIntyre Collegiate  
Michael Babb, Principal Elmwood High School  
Christopher Goring, Principal Isaac Brock School  
Wade Gregg, Principal Laura Secord School  
Alison Petrelli, (Acting) Vice Principal Lord Selkirk School  
Lionel Pang, Principal Principal Sparling School  
Marla Tran, Principal River Elm School  
Melody Woloschuk, Principal Sargent Park School  
Dennis Mogg, Principal Tec. Voc. High School  
Lindsey Munz, Vice Principal Tec. Voc. High School  
Brian Rogowsky, Principal Wolseley School  
Aaron Benarroch, Principal W.A.E.C.  
Kelly Bowen, W.A.N.T.E.  
Tarin Howard, Recording Secretary

**Trustees**

Arlene Reid  
Jennifer Chen