

NEWS RELEASE

WSD releases Student Suspension Trends

December 7, 2021 (Winnipeg, MB) – The Board of Trustees of the Winnipeg School Division has released its report based on a targeted three-year (2016-2019) analysis of suspensions within the division. The report provides a more comprehensive analysis of suspension data than WSD’s annual suspension report, and shows trends related to a broader range of demographics.

“We’re pleased to now have this report available, which was delayed due to the pandemic, and that we can continue meaningful progress in engaging our communities in the area of restorative practices,” said Betty Edel, Chair, WSD Board of Trustees. “The report clearly shows that there is an over-representation of Indigenous students even among the small percentage of total students who are suspended.”

Less than three percent (820 out of 35,428 enrolled students; 2.3 percent) of students across the division engage in behaviours that lead to suspensions. Self-identified Indigenous students represent approximately 26.7 percent of all students in WSD, however, they represent approximately 55 percent of suspensions.

As the largest school division in Manitoba, Winnipeg School Division (WSD) diversity is represented by the unique qualities each student brings. In 2018/2019, WSD served approximately 35,428 students over the course of the academic year. Among all WSD students, demographics show there are over 100 different languages spoken, just under 170 different ethnicities were self-identified, and almost 7,000 immigrants/refugees were self-identified.

“We recognize that removing students from the school environment is sometimes necessary for the safety of everyone, however, even with continued learning supports we see that suspended students are much more likely to fail or discontinue a course of instruction,” said Edel. “The work already happening in WSD to continue to engage and support students who have been suspended is remarkable, and yet there is always more we can do to increase their chance of academic success.” Course completion rates dropped from 51 percent in a one to five-day suspension to just 22 percent in a 20 to 30-day suspension.

Next steps to address the trends in suspension rates include engaging with elders and community partners in a divisional Planning Alternative Tomorrows with Hope (PATH) to restore relationships and address suspensions. Student Support Teams will use the Circle of Courage model when working with students, which includes the four aspects: generosity, belonging, mastery and independence. Other steps include enhancing partnerships and collaborating with mental health community agencies, developing connections within WSD between Newcomer and Indigenous Support Teams, Student Services and Curriculum, and professional development and training in restorative practices.

WSD is celebrating 150 years of learning this year and has 78 schools, 29,593 students and 4,573 full-time employees. Its purpose is to provide a learning environment that fosters the growth of each student’s potential and provide equitable opportunity to develop the knowledge, skills and values necessary for meaningful participation in a global and diverse society.

Backgrounders attached:

[Infographic](#)

[Full report](#)

-30-

Media contact:

Radean Carter – WSD Senior Information Officer
(204) 789-0412 or mobile (204) 771-5352 rcarter@wsd1.org