

**EDUCATION EQUITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPORT NO. 2-2026**

To the Chair and Members  
Winnipeg Public School Board:

May 26, 2026

The Education Equity Advisory Committee report 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. Diversity & Anti-Racism

The Assistant Superintendent of Anti-Racism, Equity and Climate Justice, Mohammad Rezai and Anti-Racism & Climate Justice Support Teacher, Monique Burke were in attendance to provide an update on Diversity & Anti Racism.

The Committee received an overview on the work of the Diversity & Anti-Racism team and the evolution of WSD's approach to equity, inclusion, and climate justice. The Committee was informed that the position was created three years ago and has continued to grow through collaboration with schools, community organizations, and initiatives such as CEDA grants. The work expanded from one position into a broader team that includes Anti-Racism & Climate Justice Support Teacher, Newcomer Services & Intercultural Support Workers, EAL supports, and Program Director of Climate Justice & Sustainability. The Committee was also informed that relationship-building is central to the work, with a focus on understanding schools, communities, and students to identify and reduce barriers within systems, curriculum, and practices.

The Committee was informed that the Anti-Racism, Equity & Climate Justice Team work with individual, including at schools, divisional, and community levels. Some of their initiatives include coaching teachers, developing school responses to discrimination, creating WSD Climate Action Plans, and strengthening partnerships with families and community organizations. The Committee was informed that the team's work is guided by priorities such as advancing Truth and Reconciliation, improving representation and inclusion, reducing barriers, strengthening teaching and learning practices, and supporting systemic change through collaboration.

The Committee engaged in meaningful discussion around language and approaches used in equity work. The Committee reflected on how terms such as "build capacity" can carry colonial perspectives by implying that people need to be "filled" with knowledge rather than recognizing the strengths and knowledge communities already hold. The Committee acknowledged these concerns and emphasized the importance of decolonizing language, learning collectively, and valuing multiple ways of thinking. The Committee discussed the importance of land-based learning, newcomer and Indigenous storytelling, and circle-based learning experiences that encourage reflection and shared understanding.

The Committee discussed the connection between equity, inclusion, and student attendance and engagement. The Committee was informed that culturally responsive and identity-affirming learning environments help students feel safe, valued, and connected to school communities. The Committee was also informed that reducing barriers for newcomer and marginalized students, strengthening relationships with families, and providing wraparound supports can improve attendance, belonging, and overall student experiences.

The Committee discussed the importance of reflection and ongoing learning in achieving meaningful change. The Committee noted that professional development alone is not enough without personal reflection and action. The Anti-Racism & Climate Justice Support Teacher emphasized that their work is intended to remain responsive and community-informed rather than fixed within a rigid framework. Community voices, student experiences, and partnerships continue to shape the direction of the work, with a strong focus on collaboration, responsiveness, and continuous growth.

### 3. Staff Resources and Additional Support

A Committee member requested that Staff Resources and Additional Support be added to the Agenda for discussion.

The Committee discussed ongoing challenges related to staff resources, student support, and inclusive education practices. Members discussed how families have historically struggled to ensure students are meaningfully included within school environments. Concerns were raised that approaches to student support can sometimes become overly clinical or behaviour-focused, rather than centred on the individual student and their needs. The Committee shared that there is a growing shift toward more person-centred and relationship-based models of support.

The Committee discussed the increasing pressures placed on teachers and school staff. Members acknowledged that teachers are often expected to meet a wide range of complex student needs without having access to sufficient specialized training or resources. It was noted that teachers cannot reasonably fulfill the roles of specialists such as speech-language pathologists, occupational therapists, or physiotherapists on their own. Members suggested expanding collaborative models, such as two-teacher classrooms and increased in-school specialist support, in order to provide more proactive and effective assistance for students.

The Committee also reflected on the meaning of equity and inclusion within classrooms. Members discussed whether full inclusion in large classroom settings is always the most appropriate approach for every student, particularly for students experiencing anxiety, learning challenges, or other support needs. Concerns were raised that students may sometimes be physically included in classrooms without receiving the individualized supports necessary for meaningful participation and success.

The Committee heard concerns regarding limited funding and systemic barriers across school divisions. The Committee emphasized that divisions are often placed in difficult positions when trying to meet student needs with insufficient provincial resources. Discussions highlighted the need for stronger collaboration between education, health, and community systems, as well as greater advocacy directed toward provincial funding and prevention-based supports within communities. The Committee noted that many school divisions across Manitoba are facing similar challenges related to equity, inclusion, and adequate supports for students and families.

The Committee was informed about several ongoing initiatives and broader provincial discussions related to student support services, including work surrounding autism strategies, early years policies, and community-based supports. The Committee emphasized the importance of reducing adversarial relationships between schools and families and instead working together as a united front to advocate for meaningful change and improved outcomes for students.

#### 4. Municipal Council and School Board Elections 2026

The Committee was informed that the Manitoba School Boards Association (MSBA) has resources available to support school board trustee candidates. The Committee suggested that information regarding Municipal Council and School Board Elections be shared through school newsletters and that an information session on “How to Become a Trustee” be hosted for interested community members.

The Committee was informed that the University of Manitoba has approached WSD about offering free workshops on elections to help engage newcomer families who may be unfamiliar with the electoral process.

The Committee discussed whether election-related information would be available in multiple languages for families. The Committee was informed that in the past, information about the general electoral process had been translated, although specific information related to school trustees had not. The Committee was informed that this could be explored further to better support WSD newcomer families.

Respectfully submitted,

Betty Edel  
Committee Chair

#### In Attendance:

Trustees: B. Edel, T. Kuly  
Administration: M. Rezai, M. Burke, D. Vo (Administrative Assistant)  
Committee Members: B. Conia  
Regrets: A. Evangelista