

ENVIRONMENTAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPORT NO. 1-2026

To the Chair and Members
Winnipeg Public School Board:

February 25, 2026

The Environmental 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. WSD Climate Summit

The Committee was informed that an invitation to the Climate Action Summit has been distributed to schools in WSD. Whitney Crooks, Program Director, Climate Justice and Sustainability also extends the invitation to the Environmental Advisory Committee. The Summit will be held on March 4, 2026 from 9:00 a.m to 12:00 p.m at the Prince Charles Conference Centre.

The Committee was informed that the Program Director, Climate Justice and Sustainability has visited 30 schools to build connections with staff, students, facilities, and our external partners to support the development of a Climate Action Plan.

The Committee discussed the importance of aligning WSD's efforts with the Province of Manitoba's Net Zero Action Plan and developing K-12 climate education curriculum. The Committee was informed that WSD has not yet been formally involved at the provincial level, there is interest in strengthening those connections and expanding partnerships moving forward.

The Committee was informed that if the Environmental Advisory Committee would like to attend the WSD Climate Summit, to email Whitney Crooks at wcrooks@wsd1.org.

3. Energy Audit

At a previous meeting, the Committee requested that the Director of Facilities Management be invited to the meeting to provide an update on energy audit conducted on schools.

Mari Aguirre, Director of Facilities Management provided an overview of the Energy Audit that outlines utility use, costs, trends, and key operational issues to inform future climate action planning. The Committee was informed that in 2024, 71% of total energy use was natural gas and 29% electricity; however, electricity accounted for 57% of total energy costs (\$3.7M) compared to 43% for natural gas (\$2.77M).

The Committee was informed that typical energy use is driven primarily by space heating, with smaller shares from fans/pumps, lighting, plug loads, cooling, and domestic hot water. While electricity consumption has decreased by 15%—largely due to LED lighting retrofits—costs have increased by 50%. The Committee was informed that Natural gas consumption has risen

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by 10% since 2019, with costs up 40%. The Committee was informed that the contributing factors for the increase costs include over-ventilation, outdated or ineffective control systems, simultaneous heating and cooling, continuous equipment operation, antiquated steam systems, and high air infiltration rates.

The Committee was informed that Energy Use Intensity (EUI) data shows that 80% of WSD schools are above the national average, with 75% of steam-heated schools ranking highest. The Committee was informed that water consumption has decreased by 60%, yet costs have risen 13% due to a 70% increase in water and sewer rates, with a further 40% increase expected in 2026.

The Committee was informed that there is a need for improved building controls, retro-commissioning, steam trap audits (supported by Efficiency Manitoba grants), improved indoor air quality monitoring, radon gas mitigation, and potential migration to RETScreen for energy management.

The Committee was informed that the audit findings are expected to help establish a baseline for climate action planning, including consideration of renewable energy transitions and long-term efficiency investments.

Respectfully submitted,

Ann Evangelista
Committee Chair

In Attendance:

Trustees:	A. Evangelista, T. Kuly
Administration:	M. Aguirre, W. Crooks, M. Rezai, D. Vo (Administrative Assistant)
Members:	W. Burton, J. Engbrecht, L. Robinson, R. Sales