

ENVIRONMENTAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPORT NO. 3-2025

To the Chair and Members
Winnipeg Public School Board:

October 22, 2025

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. Introductions

The Committee was informed that Trustee Ann Evangelista was appointed as the Board's representative, and Trustees Tamara Kuly was appointed as the Board's alternate representative to this Committee.

3. Terms of Reference

The Committee received the Terms of Reference for the Environmental Advisory Committee for information. The Committee had a round-table discussion regarding their personal visions for the Committee and why they are passionate about the environment.

The Committee recommended that the Terms of Reference be revised to include an evaluation of the present state of the Environment. The Committee also suggested to state a minimum of 3 members is required for quorum purposes as a minor revision to the membership.

The Committee also discussed connecting with Student Advisory Committees and school-based environmental/green invite students to join the Committee. The Committee was informed that there are logistics WSD must consider when inviting students to attend evening meetings and that administration will review possibilities and provide an updated at the next meeting.

Recommendations:

That the revised Terms of Reference be approved.

4. Guidelines for Board Advisory Committees

The Committee was informed that during the 2024/2025 school year, the Board of Trustees reviewed the Guidelines for Board Advisory Committees to consider options to improve and encourage parental engagement and involvement. The Board held many consultations to receive feedback from families on the structure of the meetings and to identify areas of improvement to ensure meetings are accessible, including thought-provoking topics and how members participate and their role as a parent representative of their school community.

A draft of the Guidelines for the District Advisory Committee was distributed to families with proposed revisions to increase parental engagement and provide opportunities for families to share information and network with other schools.

Based on the feedback, the Board of Trustees agreed that additional feedback was required. A survey for families was created to identify some key priorities regarding the role and structure of District Advisory Committees to make meetings more inclusive for families and to foster meaningful engagement with the community. A total of 228 families provided feedback to the Board. The feedback indicated that families prefer Trustees to Chair the meetings and that the meetings be held from 6:30pm to 7:30pm at rotating school locations.

The Committee was informed that as committees will now be voting by consensus, having a trustee chair the meeting who will be familiar with processes to reach consensus, and by moving to elected officials to chair meetings, every parent will have the opportunity to voice their inquiries.

5. Energy Management

At a meeting held May 14, 2025, the Committee requested that the Director of Facilities Management be invited to a future meeting to provide an update on Energy Management.

The Committee was informed that Andrew Sinclair, Assistant Director Facilities Management has information that will be prepared and shared at a future meeting regarding Water and Waste, Hydro and Gas usage in schools and buildings.

The Committee was informed that the Envelope Project at Gordon Bell High School is a huge success for WSD. The Committee was informed that Envelope Project is about sealing up areas in the buildings which will reduce energy consumption considerably. The Committee was informed that Niji Mahkwa has submitted a request for the Envelope Project and has received approval for their design, however project dates are currently unknown. The Committee was informed that more schools will be looked into for the Envelope Project.

The Committee shared that there are grants available for Climate and Economy Solutions Programs from the Manitoba Grants for eligible applicants such as School Boards to apply for funding. The Committee was informed that there are some items in smaller schools that could benefit from the grants, but there are items under the Public School Act that should be funded by the province.

The Committee discussed transportation in WSD. The Committee was informed that fewer students are taking buses as they are now attending their catchment schools. The Committee was informed that WSD has hired more bus drivers and purchased additional smaller buses that consume less diesel to reduce the additional expenditure of hiring external bus companies. The Committee was informed that there is an increase in transportation needs with newer neighbourhoods.

The Committee requested an update on whether the Winnipeg Transit route changes has affected WSD. The Committee was informed that Winnipeg Transit has increased the volume of buses for some routes and decreased in some areas, which has caused longer bus rides and increases in transfers. The Committee was informed that Charter buses were removed for every Division.

The Committee requested that an energy audit of schools be conducted to determine areas that may require efficiency upgrades. The Committee was informed that the Director of Facilities Management will conduct the audit and provide an update at the next meeting.

6. WSD Climate Action Plan

At a previous meeting, the Committee was informed that the Board of Trustees approved the establishment of a Director of Climate Justice and Sustainability position.

The Committee was informed that the Director of Climate Justice and Sustainability started at the beginning of October. The Committee was informed that the position will be consultative with diverse voices such as Elders, students, custodians, and tradespersons. The Committee was informed that the Director of Climate Justice and Sustainability will work collaboratively with outside school divisions and provincial partners as well as community partners (transportation, facilities, education, youth, climate action and justice) to determine long and short-term goals.

The Committee was informed that the Director of Climate Justice and Sustainability will develop a plan for review.

7. School Zones

At a meeting held May 14, 2025, the Committee recommended that Trustees advocate to increase school zones.

The Committee was informed that the Board of Trustees including Administration will be meeting with City Councillor Santos for Point Douglas to discuss school zones, reducing speed limits and creating safer routes for students and staff who are cycling to school.

The Committee discussed school zone safety and active transportation. The Committee discussed the importance of advocating for enforcement of school zones all year round and expanding the school zones.

The Committee also suggested that a policy be developed regarding walking and cycling to school. The Committee was encouraged to have their respective Parent Councils advocate to the City Councilors to reduce speed limits near schools all year round and expand school zones in communities.

Respectfully submitted,

Ann Evangelista
Committee Chair

In Attendance:

Trustees: A. Evangelista, T. Kuly
Administration: M. Henderson, M. Rezai, D. Vo (recorder)
Members: M. Dumouchel, S. Durling, J. Engbrecht, L. Kozak, L. Robinson, R. Sales