

ENVIRONMENTAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPORT NO. 4-2025

To the Chair and Members
Winnipeg Public School Board:

December 10, 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. Approval of Agenda

The Committee agreed to add School Zones to the agenda for discussion. The revised agenda for December 10, 2025, was approved by the Committee.

3. WSD Climate Action Plan

Whitney Crooks, Program Director of Climate Justice and Sustainability was in attendance to provide an update on the WSD Climate Action Plan.

The Committee was informed that some consultations with schools have expressed a strong desire of continuity, connection and collaboration with other schools. The Committee was informed that some schools are concerned with losing momentum when key staff or students leave the school. The Committee was informed that students care about climate issues, however, they may need assistance on how to get involved in promoting and practicing environmental issues.

The Program Director of Climate Justice and Sustainability also met with Nutrition Services, Facilities, Transportation, and Custodial Services, to understand existing practices, needs and opportunities for alignment amongst internal departments.

The Committee was informed that during consultation with community partners, Parent Councils noted that city involvement is essential, especially in areas such as active transportation, transit and green spaces. The Committee was informed that many schoolyard projects such as garden beds lack long-term maintenance plans. The Committee was informed that R.B. Russell Vocational High School provides a Horticulture Program for students and that students can assist in maintaining the green spaces. The Committee was informed that community volunteers could support outdoor school projects through WSD's Volunteer Services Coordinator.

The Committee also received an update on WSD's Greenhouse Gas Emissions. The Committee was informed that WSD's annual emissions baseline is being established across multiple years. The Committee was informed that Natural Gas accounts for approximately 94% of WSD's emissions, with remaining contributions from electricity, diesel, gasoline, and propane. The Committee was informed the next steps for data collection which includes operational data such as water, waste, paper use, recycling and business travel, and school activities data such as outdoor learning, active transportation, clubs, and classroom initiatives.

The Committee was informed of the key deliverables which include a division-wide baseline and environmental scan, student meetings and consultations, networking sessions to build connections and communities of practice, identifying school champions, engagement with community partners, which include City, Provincial and Federal collaborators, and a draft of the Climate Action Plan developed with collective input.

The Committee shared that there is a high demand for skilled green trades due to new energy codes and efficiency standards. The Committee suggested integrating sustainability into the curriculum and competencies and discussed how students may be unaware of job opportunities. The Committee shared that Efficiency Manitoba has specialists that can speak about opportunities that are available and provide steps for students to achieve their goals. The Committee shared a need for Professional Development for Teachers who may require assistance teaching climate issues.

4. School Zones

At the request of Maggie Dumouchel, School Zones was added to the agenda for discussion.

The Committee was informed that students have reported unsafe conditions when traveling home, especially crossing Isabel Street. The Committee was informed that concerns go beyond traffic design and this is a broader community safety, including social issues and mental health crises in the neighbourhoods surrounding schools. The Committee was informed that traffic challenges persists even in areas with infrastructure upgrades as drivers continue to ignore signage and rules. The Committee was informed that issues are often enforcement-related, not design-related. The Committee was informed that Parents and Parent Councils are connecting with local councillors, but broader support may be needed.

The Committee was informed that students have regularly express difficulty accessing Transit such as long wait times, limited service, fare enforcement and high costs of student bus passes. The Committee discussed and encouraged members to advocate for equitable transit access for students by designating times when students can travel for free.

5. Gordon Bell High School Tour

Andrew Sinclair, Assistant Director of Facilities Management provided a tour of the recent envelope project at Gordon Bell High School.

The Committee was informed that windows are being added and replaced to allow for more natural light and ventilation. The heating and ventilation system has also been upgraded to ensure a comfortable and healthy indoor environment. The Committee was informed that exterior wall areas of the school will be updated as well as a new roof section. The Committee was informed that beyond the air quality and heating and cooling improvements, there will be more natural lighting and a reduction of exterior noise improving all learning spaces in school.

Respectfully submitted,

Ann Evangelista
Committee Chair

December 15, 2025

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In Attendance:

Trustees: A. Evangelista
Administration: W. Crooks, M. Henderson, M. Rezai, A. Sinclair D. Vo (Administrative Assistant)
Members: W. Burton, M. Dumouchel, J. Engbrecht, L. Robinson
Regrets: T. Kuly