

March 4, 2024

French Immersion Advisory Committee Report No. 1-2024

---

## **FRENCH IMMERSION ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPORT NO. 1-2024**

To the Chair and Members  
Winnipeg Public School Board:

February 20, 2024

The French Immersion Advisory Committee reports as follows:

### **1. Acknowledgement of Indigenous Peoples of Canada**

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. Election of Committee Chair**

The Committee member from École Sir William Osler volunteered to chair the meeting.

### **3. Approval of the Agenda**

The agenda for February 20, 2024, was approved by the Committee as distributed.

### **4. WSD 2024/2025 Budget Consultation**

At the previous meeting, the Committee was requested to consult with their school communities to identify priorities for consideration as part of the upcoming budget process.

At a meeting held January 15, 2024, the Board of Trustees received the feedback from parents/guardians which included; smaller class sizes, improved classroom instruction, greater academic engagement, increase attendance and graduation rates, improve maths and literacy achievement, additional learning support for teachers in school, provide universal nutrition program, phase-in no-fee lunch supervision, replace three school playgrounds annually, build powerful neighbourhood schools, enhance school safety, improve settlement services for newcomers and expand adult EAL to the Shaughnessy Park area and develop the R.B. Russell career lab.

On February 1, 2024, the provincial government announced funding for education in the amount of \$104.2 million. WSD received an increase of 1% (\$2.6 million) over last year's budget. The Committee was informed that the 1% increase in funding does not cover the costs related to inflation and operations maintaining staffing, programs and services. The government also invested \$30 million to expand the nutrition program and \$3 million to assist school divisions in reducing class size. The Division currently spends \$5 million on the nutrition program. The Committee was informed that a 3.4% increase, which equates to approximately \$51 per average household on an average home valued at \$246,700. This would allow WSD to maintain current programs, services and provide for fully funded nutrition and food programs as well as provide \$2.6 million to be allocated to budget priorities outlined by the school community. An education tax increase of 3% would allow for a budget that maintains current programs and services as well as a fully funded nutrition program, but would reduce allocations towards budget priorities brought forward by school communities.

March 4, 2024

---

French Immersion Advisory Committee Report No. 1-2024

The Committee was informed that the priorities were identified by the Board of Trustees based on feedback from parents/guardians. The priorities were placed into three categories; Improve student success, create “sticky” schools and community supports. The Committee held round table discussions to identify priorities under the three categories. Overall, the Committee was in favour of smaller class sizes and the addition of learning support teachers to classrooms, however, there was concern about the number of positions available for educational assistants (EA’s).

The Committee was informed that the smaller class structure would not be eliminating the need for EA’s, but rather putting staff in places where they can be more effective and to maximize the support available. The Committee also suggested opening up specialized training for French Speaking EA’s, as there is currently still a shortage of French Speaking substitute teachers. In response to an enquiry, the Committee was informed that smaller classes will be for kindergarten through Grade 8 students.

The Committee expressed support for lunch and nutrition programs and suggested the support be extended to middle years programs as well. The Committee also expressed support for improving transportation for French Immersion students.

The Committee was informed that the Board of Trustees is hosting a budget consultation meeting open to the public on February 26<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 p.m. at Tec Voc High School. Input on the draft budget can be submitted by email to [board@wsd1.org](mailto:board@wsd1.org) or by registering at 204-755-0231 no later than February 22<sup>nd</sup> to appear as a delegation at the February 26<sup>th</sup> meeting. The Committee was informed the Board of Trustees will be submitting the budget to the province by March 15, 2024.

## **5. WSD 123 Continuous Improvement**

The Committee received a copy of the WSD 123 Continuous Improvement report for review and information. The Committee was informed that the report provides an overview on WSD programs and services during the 2023/2024 school year. As part of the educational mandate in Manitoba, WSD addresses high levels of academic achievement in literacy and numeracy through planning with the Kindergarten to Grade 12 Framework for Continuous Improvement.

## **6. Lunch Program Pilot**

At a previous meeting, the Committee was informed WSD has launched the lunch program pilot to address the financial strain on families by eliminating fees for lunch supervision in five elementary schools; École Sacré-Coeur, Shaughnessy Park School, Carpathia School, Isaac Brock School and École LaVérendrye. The Committee was informed that the hours for educational assistants has been extended to supervise the lunch hour, as well as hiring people who were previously employed by their Parent Councils, where appropriate.

The Committee was informed that the cost to implement the program Division-wide would be approximately \$5 million. The Division resources for the pilot is limited to \$2.6 million. It is anticipated the program will be phased in gradually, starting with schools that already have the infrastructure to implement the new program.

The Committee was informed the lunch program pilot will be reassessed in May to determine the possibility of expanding the program for the next school year.

March 4, 2024

French Immersion Advisory Committee Report No. 1-2024

---

**7. Staggered Start Times**

On January 17, 2024, the Committee was informed that many WSD high schools will be implementing either a late start or early dismissal each week beginning in February.

The Committee was informed that one day per week, (mainly Wednesdays), classes will either begin an hour later or end an hour earlier. The purpose of the amended class schedules is to eliminate barriers for approximately 2,500 students who are struggling to get to school for a variety of reasons.

The Committee was informed that exams will be held later in June and additional instructional days will be added to the calendar, so students will receive the same amount, if not more, instructional time.

The Committee was informed that seven schools have already implemented the amended schedules. Administration will assess the success of the amended schedules to determine if it will be implemented on a division-wide basis.

**8. Teacher Recruitment and Retention**

The Committee was informed that recruitment efforts have been successful for French Immersion teachers and will start in the next school year. The Committee was informed that opportunities for French professional development includes EA's and clerical staff.

The Committee was also informed that L'Équipe Jeunesse de Leadership WSD (WSD French Immersion Leadership Team) is a free program where students can develop their French language and leadership skills in collaboration with peers and teacher mentors from all WSD French immersion high schools. Students who join will have the opportunity to strengthen French language and leadership skills, participate in fun and educational monthly French activities (i.e. Outings to a theatre/museum, cooking workshops, paint afternoons etc.). Support is available for students who desire to pursue a career in French Immersion education starting in high school through to post-secondary studies. It is anticipated many of the students who take part in the program will be hired in the Division when they have completed their studies. The Committee was informed that 36 students have already signed up for the program as well as 6 mentor teachers from high schools.

Respectfully Submitted,

JAMIE DUMONT  
Trustee Representative

March 4, 2024

French Immersion Advisory Committee Report No. 1-2024

---

**In Attendance:****Voting Representatives:**

École Laura Secord  
École Luxton  
École River Heights  
École Robert H. Smith  
École Sir William Osler  
École Stanley Knowles

**Administration:**

Shelley Warkentin, Assistant Superintendent  
Amanda Capina, Principal, École LaVèrendrye  
Shannon Unrau, Vice-Principal, École J.B. Mitchell  
Matt Couture, Principal, École J.B. Mitchell  
Dominic Zagari, Principal, École River Heights  
Warren Nickerson, Principal, École Luxton  
Tarin Howard, Recording Secretary

**Regrets:**

College Churchill High School  
École Garden Grove  
École George V  
École J.B. Mitchell  
École Lansdowne  
École LaVèrendrye  
École Sacre-Coeur  
École Secondaire Kelvin  
École Sisler High School  
École Victoria Albert  
École Waterford Springs

**Trustees:**

Jamie Dumont  
Ann Evangelista