

March 3, 2025

French Immersion Advisory Committee Report No. 1-2025

FRENCH IMMERSION ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPORT NO. 1-2025

To the Chair and Members
Winnipeg Public School Board:

February 19, 2025

The French Immersion Advisory Committee reports 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. Election of the Committee Chair

Trustee Dumont chaired the meeting as there were no parent representative volunteers.

3. WSD 2025/2026 Budget Consultation

The Committee was informed that at the previous meeting, the Board of Trustees requested parents/guardians provide feedback on the following questions; If we had unlimited resources, what would you prioritize in the upcoming budget? What are your top 3 priorities for the budget given that resources are not unlimited? What initiatives or programs/supports should we enhance? Or what should we move away from?

The Board of Trustees received feedback from over 700 families. The common themes outlined in the feedback were increasing staffing, improved instruction, increasing afterschool programming and providing additional technology in schools.

The Committee was informed that WSD is committed to lowering class sizes and having more learning support teachers and Educational Assistants (EAs) for the classroom, as well as providing additional clinical support staff.

The Committee was also informed that in an effort to improve instruction, WSD is prioritizing early mathematics and literacy instruction. Staff will be provided additional learning days and WSD is developing a professional development fund for teachers.

The Committee was informed that WSD will continue to support community partners such as Community Education Development Association (CEDA), Pathways, Winnipeg Aboriginal Sport Achievement Centre (WASAC), Peaceful Village, and Boys and Girls Club of Canada. WSD is also looking at opportunities to extend the school day for Middle Years and Senior Years learners.

The Committee was informed that WSD is in the processes of increasing the number of tablets, Chromebooks and high-definition screens in classrooms. WSD is currently undergoing an upgrade to the network and increasing support to schools.

The Committee was informed that WSD is committed to reducing expenses for families by

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eliminating lunch supervision fees, supporting a universal nutrition program, covering school supplies and field trip transportation fees as well as upgrading aging school play structures so families do not have to fund raise. The Committee was informed that in the 2025/2026 school year, WSD will be upgrading 3 school play structures and installing 5 industrial kitchens.

WSD will also be investing in creative programming including a global issues pilot program at Gordon Bell and College Churchill high schools, developing additional International Baccalaureate (IB) programs, creating an inner-city STEAM lab at Hugh John Macdonald, a career lab at RB Russell and putting on a science fair and historical thinking symposium. The Committee was informed that WSD leads the way in investing in student support and resources amongst Winnipeg metro school divisions. The Committee was informed that the IB program for middle years is based on a philosophy, which is different than the IB diploma program. The Committee was informed that it is anticipated that the federal government will reduce the funding for Jordan's Principle Educational Assistants. WSD has included funding for all Educational Assistants previously funded by Jordan's Principle.

The Committee was informed the province announced a 3.4% overall increase for education. The Committee was informed that WSD received a 2.4% increase. The Committee was informed that the draft budget for the 2025/2026 school year is \$529,418,325 which is an increase of \$49,069,225 over the budget from the current school year. In order to achieve a balanced budget an increase of 3.4% of the current mill rate would be required, which would increase property tax for the average homeowner by approximately \$52 annually or \$4.35 a month. The Committee was informed the Board of Trustees wants to be mindful before requesting any increase to the property levy. The Committee was informed that over the last few years school divisions have been frozen at a 2% increase which did not cover the increase of cost-of-living expenses.

The Committee was provided a QR code to a survey where they could provide additional feedback to the Board of Trustees regarding the budget. The Committee was also invited to attend the public forum at Tec Voc High school on Monday, February 24 at 7:00 p.m. for additional budget information. Anyone wishing to appear as a delegation at the public forum at Tec Voc may register with the Board Office at 204-775-0231 or email board@wsd1.org.

4. Strategic Plan

At a previous meeting, the Committee was provided a timeline which outlined the development of the Strategic Plan. In November to March 2024, Trustees worked with consultants to develop a shared understanding of strategic planning process, which examined existing data, methodology and actions for data gathering. From April to June 2024 the Trustees launched multiple sessions and different processes to gather guidance and feedback from families, community organizations, staff and students. Over the summer from June to August, the data was analyzed by an external team of researchers and in meetings held early in the school year trustees shared data analysis the families, community organizations, staff and students to validate and correct any misunderstandings.

The Committee was informed that Trustees, Administration and consultants worked together to develop the WSD Strategic Plan 2025-2030 based on the data collected. The Committee was informed that there were three (3) main themes that came out of the data, Joy (creating a sense of community), Love (supporting a sense of belonging) and Rigour (preparing learners for excellence). The Committee was informed that WSD is committed to providing opportunities for

learners to feel confident in the future, inspired, fulfilled, engaged and full of hope. WSD is committed to creating a sense of belonging where every learner is known by multiple adults and they feel safe, respected and free to express their true selves. WSD is also committed to preparing learners for excellence, where every learner feels supported and challenged to excel every day through meaningful activities and lessons to achieve their goals.

The Committee was informed that the Strategic Plan also outlines four (4) High-level strategies. The first strategy is to seek truth and reconciliation by answering the calls to action related to the cultivation of culture, community, language and land in WSD schools. WSD is committed to removing barriers for Indigenous people to lead WSD and contribute to the WSD community.

The second strategy is to build community schools that are barrier free. WSD is committed to eliminating barriers to education, including all exclusionary practices, creating sticky schools that extend the day and keep learners close and to nurture neighbourhood schools that support all learners.

The third strategy is the to develop a culture of thinking and shared sense of responsibility for all children. WSD is committed to developing the capacity in school leaders to unleash the power of the classroom teacher and to cultivate the conditions for the highest quality teaching and deepest learning.

The final strategy is equitable distribution of resources. WSD is committed to distributing resources so that they have the maximum impact for the learners who need them most and to empower and support schools to shift resources for maximum impact.

The Committee was informed that the Administration has begun to develop tangible and measurable activities as part of the public reporting process.

5. Teacher Recruitment Efforts

The Committee was informed that recruitment of French Immersion teachers has been an ongoing struggle nation-wide. The Committee was informed that recently a group of principals travelled to Sudbury, ON, and were successful in recruiting quality French immersion teachers. WSD has been focusing on early years teachers and developing recruitment efforts such as increasing WSD engagement in French publications and on social media, developing youth leadership programs, looking internationally and developing partnerships with outside organizations to assist in recruitment efforts. The Committee was informed a provincial recruitment plan is being developed but has not been announced yet.

The Committee was informed that WSD is exploring the option of reviewing language requirements for French teachers. The Committee was also informed that University St. Boniface is exploring the option of developing a French program for Educational Assistants.

6. Inclusion in the Context of French Immersion

The Committee was informed that WSD continues to prioritize professional learning and building inclusive classrooms. The Committee was informed that WSD administration is exploring what inclusive practices mean in the context of French Immersion and how to build capacity and competency.

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Respectfully Submitted,

JAMIE DUMONT
Trustee Representative

In Attendance:

Voting Representatives:

École Secondaire Kelvin
École LaVénrendrye
École Luxton
École River Heights
École Riverview
École Robert H. Smith
École Sir William Osler
École Sisler High School
École Stanley Knowles

Administration:

Shelley Warkentin, Assistant Superintendent
Nathan Tocher, Vice-Principal, College Churchill High School
Nancy Karpinsky, Principal, École Garden Grove
Lauranne Benoit, Vice-Principal, École Secondaire Kelvin
Jessica Mayor-Rodrigues, Principal, École Lansdowne
Dominique Ostermann, Principal, École Sir William Osler
Sara Tham, Teacher, École Sir William Osler
Tarin Howard, Recording Secretary

Regrets:

College Churchill High School
École Garden Grove
École George V
École J.B. Mitchell
École Lansdowne
École Laura Secord
École Sacre-Coeur
École Victoria Albert
École Waterford Springs

Trustees:

Jamie Dumont
Kathy Heppner