

THE WINNIPEG SCHOOL DIVISION

FRENCH IMMERSION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSIONS – Tuesday, May 4, 2021

1. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The parent representative from École Laura Secord volunteered to Chair the meeting.

The Committee members approved the Agenda of May 4, 2021, as distributed.

2. BILL 64 – THE EDUCATION MODERNIZATION ACT

Committee members were informed that on March 16, 2021, the Province of Manitoba announced substantive changes to the education system in Manitoba.

Committee members were informed that the new governance model includes 15 new regions, plus Division Scolaire Franco-Manitobaine (DSFM) to replace 37 separate school divisions in Manitoba. This would require Winnipeg, St. James, Louis Riel, Pembina Trails, Seven Oaks and River East Transcona School Division to merge into one region for the City of Winnipeg representing 188,540 students. Committee members were informed that local School Boards would be replaced with a Provincial Education Authority.

Committee members were informed that through this new Governance Model School Community Councils would be established in place of Parent Councils. One parent representative of a School Community Council from each of the regions would be elected to the Provincial Advisory Council. This would result in one parent being elected to represent the City of Winnipeg schools and all parents.

Trustee Dumont provided an overview of Bill 64 which highlighted some of the proposed changes and the impact Bill 64 may have on programs and services. Committee members were informed that the Province expects \$40 million in savings that would go to frontline education across Manitoba, this equates to one half-time teacher per school in Manitoba. WSD provides services and programs to support our students such as Nutrition programs, Housing assistance, Health connections, Reading Recovery, Math Pathways, Autism programs, Anxiety Programs, Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) Program which may be impacted by Bill 64. Committee members were informed that Manitoba Education believes that a complete restructuring of education is necessary to find efficiencies, meanwhile, suggestions of modest and less disruptive changes such as merging all Winnipeg school busses, shared IT and purchasing would result in immediate savings. Committee members were informed that Manitoba Education suggests that where you live changes how you learn because school funding is based on a district's ability to raise money through property taxes, however WSD receives less than 60 percent of its operating revenue from the Province and has no choice but to rely on property taxes to fund resources needed for important programming for students. The Committee was informed that Manitoba Education claims that Indigenous students are falling behind because only 51 percent of Indigenous students graduate within four-years, compared to 90 percent graduation rate among their non-indigenous peers. Committee members were informed that suggesting a four-year graduation rate as the indicator of success shows ignorance of the socio-economic and social status challenges students face. WSD supports a large number of Indigenous students who return to school and successfully complete their diploma as mature students. Many Indigenous students overcome trauma in order to successfully graduate which may take more than four years to achieve, but is no less a success.

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Committee members were informed that Mulvey School Parent Council has already mobilized and reached out to other parent councils to stand together against Bill 64. A Facebook page, <https://www.facebook.com/Action-Committee-re-bill-64-108846324635392> has been created for those interested, which provides information summarizing the Education Modernization Act as well as events and ways parents can get involved.

Committee members expressed concern that the French Immersion programs could be lost as a majority of the funding for those programs comes from property tax. If property taxes are cut there is no guarantee that alternate funding will be available. In response to an enquiry, Committee members were informed that 75 percent of funding for French Immersion comes from property tax, and although there will be a 50 percent cut to property taxes it will not affect the French Immersion programs for next year.

Trustee Chen informed Committee members that the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternative (CCPA) held a webinar recently where a previous member of the Parent Advisory Council in Nova Scotia provided insight on what can be expected under the new model which is the current model being used in Nova Scotia. The Nova Scotia representative informed the audience that under the new model, parents are left without direction and have focused their questions and frustrations on teachers and Principals who are not the decision makers. The Committee was informed that the webinar can be viewed on YouTube at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jX-K3kvz8eY>.

Committee members voiced concern that one parent representative for the City of Winnipeg could not represent the needs of such diverse communities. Committee members expressed that Bill 64 was not a democracy, but was authoritarian. Committee members expressed concern that there is no guaranteed representation for French Immersion programs within the 15 regions or the School Community Council under the new model.

Committee members agreed that to abolish a system that has been in place for 150 years, with such disregard is disrespectful. Committee members expressed concern that programs that were fought for and built over 40 years could be lost.

Committee members expressed concern that DSFM would provide a more stable environment and that French Immersion teachers may choose to work for DSFM rather than continuing under the new and less reliable model.

Committee members were informed that WSD has been in conversations with the Province, and the province has provided power point presentations stating that they would support the new regions in the delivery of French Immersion programs, however, they have not provided any tangible plan on how the support would be provided.

Committee members were informed that the Division is available to assist with any initiatives by providing information or summarizing documents. Committee members were also informed that Trustees are available to speak to Parent Councils or other groups.

3. PROVINCIAL CONSULTATION

Committee members received an overview on the timelines outlined by the Province to consult with parents, Parent Advisory Councils, and School Staff regarding the role and processes for School Community Councils and the establishment of the Provincial Education Authority.

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Committee members were informed that during the spring/summer of 2021, the Province intends to consult with parents, parent advisory councils, and school staff on the role parents can play in decision making and the role and processes for school community councils. The Province also intends to consult with education staff and stakeholders on priority actions as well as establishing a curriculum review panel, and a new assessment framework.

Committee members were informed that by fall of 2021, the Province intends to release a road map for the implementation of the priority actions and the timelines for change.

Committee members were informed that by November 2021, the Province anticipates having the Provincial Education Authority established along with the changes to the current school trustee system expected by July 1, 2022.

Committee members were informed that the Province plans to strengthen French Immersion Program delivery by launching a provincial online high school for the Français, French Immersion and English programs, including summer school to allow more students to graduate with French Immersion diplomas. The Province also intends to develop a strategy to recruit and retain more French language teachers, although no details of what that plan would look like have been released. The Province intends to connect students to each other and to French culture by forming a French language student network to connect French learners across the province, as well as to use virtual workshops to provide French language learners more opportunity to interact with French culture. Committee members were informed that the Provincial Education Authority intends to ask for input on the needs of the French Immersion Program across the province and the context and issues of French language education.

Committee members were informed that Bill has to pass through the Committee level of the Manitoba Legislative Assembly, any community members who oppose Bill 64 are encouraged to register to speak. Community members interested in speaking on this bill in the fall can register at 204-945-3636 and can find more information at <https://www.gov.mb.ca/legislature/about/faq/fact5.pdf>.

4. MAPC BILL 64 MEETING INVITATION

Committee members were informed that MAPC is organizing a coalition of parent councils and allies to save public education in Manitoba. Parent Councils are being invited to participate in zoom meetings to discuss and develop a campaign to stop Bill 64.

Committee members were informed that any interested participants can RSVP to info@mapc.mb.ca with "Save Public Education Coalition" in the subject line. A virtual meeting will be held May 5, 2021 at 1:00 p.m.

5. MINISTER OF EDUCATION'S STUDENT ADVISORY COUNCIL

Committee members were informed that the Minister of Education is receiving application from Students for the Minister of Education's Student Advisory Council. The Student Advisory Council would be comprised of up to 20 Manitoba youth, aged 14 – 18 and would report directly to the Minister of Education. Council members would serve a 12 month term starting in August, 2021 and ending August 2022. Council members would also meet with government staff and education stakeholders via virtual meetings.

Committee members were informed that the Student Advisory Council would discuss and provide input to the Minister on aspects of the education system and how they affect the

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children and young people who experience it today; bring youth insights to the department and the education sector to help inform the path forward; create a network for students across Manitoba with a way to share their perspectives and advice and; provide feedback on department initiatives and work collaboratively with fellow council members.

Committee members were informed that more information on the Minister of Education's Student Advisory Council and instructions on how to apply to visit <https://bettereducationmb.ca>.

Committee members were informed that the deadline for applications is Monday, May 10, 2021 and successful applicants would be announced in June 2021.

6. FRENCH IMMERSION UPDATES

Committee members received an overview of the French Immersion Program over the last 15 years.

Committee members were informed that the French Immersion Program has been showing consistent growth with a more substantial increase in the last five years. Winnipeg School Division (WSD) has the highest number of French Immersion schools in Manitoba, outside division scolaire franco-manitobaine, with approximately 4,750 students enrolled in the French Immersion Program. The French Immersion Program is currently offered in eighteen schools. The Committee was informed French Language Programs are offered in two instructional settings, Dual track setting, where both the French Immersion and the English Programs co-exist in the same school; the Single Track or Milieu setting, where French Immersion is the only Program in the school. The curricular outcomes and expectations are the same in both settings. However, in Milieu schools students are immersed in the language throughout the day, and most school activities, such as announcements, assemblies, and meetings are conducted in French. The French Immersion Program provides instruction in most subject areas in the French language, with minimum time expectations in Kindergarten, Grades 1 – 8, and a minimum of 14 credits (WSD expects 15 credits) from courses taught in French. The French Immersion Program starts in Kindergarten or Grade 1 in the Dual Track setting, and in Nursery, Kindergarten or Grade 1, in the Milieu setting. One junior high school offers the Late Immersion Start at the Grade 7 level.

Committee members were informed that the statistical analysis of the IB Program demonstrates that there is a low number of French Immersion students selecting to enroll in the IB Program, and those who wish to continue enhancing their French skills, already have the opportunity to enroll in French courses in the IB Program at École secondaire Kelvin High School. Given the current recruitment challenges, any additional implementation of French courses and/or Programs would further augment the difficulty in recruiting qualified staff to teach them.

Committee members were informed that WSD has partnered with the University of Winnipeg and Inspire to develop the Build From Within Teacher Program that provides Indigenous high school students with the opportunity to receive support while studying to become teachers. WSD recommended that a partnership with the Université de Saint-Boniface be established to actively recruit and place former WSD students in schools for their practicum. WSD also recommended that a data base of French Immersion students who enter the Faculty of Education be established to maintain connections with them with the possibility of providing practicum placements.

Committee members suggested that offering an incentive program to encourage French teachers to stay in Winnipeg might be beneficial.

7. RENAMING OF CECIL RHODES SCHOOL UPDATE

Committee members were informed that the Board of Trustees received an overview of the results and confirmed that the school community and the community at large did not speak with one voice. In respecting the two different voices a conclusive recommendation was not reached however, the members of the Committee felt that naming schools after individuals lends itself to conflicting ideals as societal values continue to be in constant flux.

Committee members were informed that the results of the survey for the Renaming of Cecil Rhodes School had been referred to the Building/Transportation Committee for review and consideration. The Building/Transportation Committee presented their recommendation to the Board of Trustees at the Board meeting on May 3, 2021, where the Board voted in favour of the name change. It is anticipated the name change would be implemented by September, 2022.

8. RENAMING OF GREENWAY SCHOOL

Committee members were informed that at a Board meeting held April 12, 2021, the Board of Trustees referred the request to rename Greenway School to the Building/Transportation Committee for review.

Committee members were informed that at a meeting held April 28, 2021 the Building/Transportation Committee reviewed the request and agreed that more information needed to be collected before making any recommendations.

Committee members were encouraged to provide any information they felt would be relevant to Trustee Dumont or Trustee Chen.

9. WSD 150th ANNIVERSARY

Committee members were informed that on October 20, 2021, WSD will be turning 150 years old. As part of the celebration schools are being invited to participate by creating a school banner that will be installed on lamp posts along Main Street and Portage Avenue. School Principals will provide more information at a later date.

10. ENQUIRIES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS AND SCHOOL REPORTS

SCHOOL REPORTS

Parent representatives from the following schools provided a written report on school activities: (attached):

- Sir William Osler School

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In Attendance:

Voting Representatives

Ecole George V School
Ecole J.B. Mitchell School
Ecole Secondaire Kelvin High School
Ecole Laura Secord
Ecole River Heights
Ecole Riverview
Ecole Robert H. Smith
Ecole Sir William Osler

Regrets

College Churchill
Ecole Garden Grove School
Recole Lansdowne
Ecole LaVerendrye
Ecole Luxton
Ecole Sacre-Coeur
Sisler High School
Ecole Stanley Knowles School
Ecole Victoria Albert School
Ecole Waterford Springs School

Administration

Fatima Mota, Superintendent of Education Services
Julie Smerchanski, Director
Brenda Lapointe, Board and Community Liaison Officer
Nancy Karpinsky, Principal Ecole Garden Grove
Ruth Schappert, Principal Ecole LaVerendrye
Maria Silva, Principal Ecole Secondaire Kelvin High School
Brad Burns, Principal Ecole River Heights School
Dominique Ostermann, Principal Ecole Sir William Osler
Amanda Capina, Vice-Principal Sisler High School
Nathan Tocher, Vice-Principal College Churchill
Warren Nickerson, Vice-Principal Ecole Robert H. Smith
Amanda Ferbrache, WANTE Representative
Tarin Howard, Recording Secretary

Trustees

Jamie Dumont
Jennifer Chen

French Immersion Advisory Meeting May 4, 2021
École Sir William Osler Report

- Currently accepting registrations for N-6. All the information that is normally shared during the open house is up on our website along with an open house video and all the necessary registration information and forms <https://www.winnipegssd.ca/schools/sirwilliamosler/communityandfamily/spotlight-news-stories/pages/open-house-2021.aspx>
- FortWhyte Alive visiting our grade 1-6 classes. Our school received a wellness grant to support outdoor education. FortWhyte Alive is spending 3.5 days with our staff, students and daycare. Each class will be heading outdoors to learn about the nature that surrounds our playground and community, and outdoor education opportunities for students and teachers.
- Sir William Osler will be undergoing a planned renovation, school envelope, on the exterior of the building starting at the end of June.
- Enrolment continues to increase from 147 this school year to 170 for the 2021-2022 school year.
- We have 2 classrooms that have incorporated “Active Start” into their morning routines. Active Start allows students and staff to begin the first 15-35 minutes of their school day with movement! Teachers have noticed an increase in: focus and attention, mood levels, time on task, self esteem, engagement and a higher level of thinking. Not to mention, students love the chance to be active and get some extra socialization in before the day begins! For more information on “Active Start” please see the following link: <https://activestartpembinatrails.weebly.com/>