

December 19, 2022

French Immersion Advisory Committee Report No. 2-2022

FRENCH IMMERSION ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPORT NO. 2-2022

To the Chair and Members
Winnipeg Public School Board:

December 8, 2022

The French Immersion Advisory Committee reports as follows:

1. Acknowledgement of Indigenous Peoples of Canada

The Committee was informed that the meeting of the French Immersion Advisory Committee is taking place on Treaty One Land and the traditional homeland of the Red River Métis.

2. Election of Committee Chair

The Committee was informed that at the Inaugural meeting of the Board of Trustees held on November 7, 2022, Trustee Jamie Dumont was appointed as the Board's representative and Trustee Ann Evangelista was appointed as the Board's alternate representative to this Committee.

The parent representative from École Sacre-Coeur volunteered to chair the meeting.

3. Approval of the Agenda

Trustee Dumont recommended that Policy KMB – Parent Council Lunch Programs be added to the agenda for discussion. The revised agenda for December 8, 2022, was approved by the Committee.

4. WSD 2022/2023 Draft Budget

The Committee was informed that on March 15, 2022, the Board of Trustees approved a budget for the 2022/2023 school year in the amount of \$437,118,200, which included \$13,217,517 in one-time funding and \$525,358 from accumulated surplus to offset a budgeted deficit. Baseline funding decreased by 1.3 percent (or \$2,325,238) and property tax levies for education remain frozen at 2020 levels.

The Committee was informed that on November 18, 2021, the Province of Manitoba announced the creation of a consultant team to guide the development of a new education funding model which was expected to be implemented by school boards for the 2023/2024 school year, however, to date the province has not announced the new funding model.

The Committee was informed that the consultation team is to be made up of government officials and representatives from a number of organizations including (but not limited to) First Nations schools, independent schools, school superintendents, municipal organizations and parent councils.

The Committee was informed that the current funding model was implemented in the 2002-2003 school year. The goals of the review of the funding model include: creating a formula that allocates provincial funding to Manitoba's 37 school divisions; developing a stable, predictable and phased implementation plan to transition from the existing formula to the new in a way that can accommodate the progress of eliminating education property taxes; and ensuring the unique needs of the Division scolaire franco-manitobaine (DSFM) are accommodated in the design of the formula.

The Committee was informed that in previous years, the Board has been able to develop balanced budgets through the combination of provincial revenue as well as revenue from the property tax levy. The Committee was informed that provincial funding has dropped from approximately 61 percent of total costs in 2016, to 57 percent of total costs in 2022.

The Committee was informed that the Board of Trustees continues to send a strong message to government that it is important that the new funding model supports both the basic education and unique needs of our students and communities.

The Committee was informed that the Board of Trustees are now in the process of developing the 2023/2024 budget. The members of the Board want to hear about education priorities for school communities.

5. French Immersion Plan

The Acting Superintendent, Education Services provided an overview of the French Immersion Plan.

The Committee was informed that the French Immersion plan was created by the Principals and Vice-Principals for the yearly school planning. The French Immersion plan is the result of a 5-year study by the Provincial Government and WSD.

The Committee was informed that the French Immersion Plan is divided into four major sections; Creating a French Immersion Setting, Validation of Students' Linguistic and Educational Experience, Educational Staff and Professional Learning and Student Enrolment Trends.

The Committee was informed that the four major sections are divided into subsections that have strategies and actions. Under the Creating a French Immersion Setting section, it is divided in four subsections: Intensive exposure to the French language, Qualified Educational Staff and Personnel, A linguistically Rich Environment and Inclusion and Appropriate Support for all Students.

The Committee was informed that some of the strategies under Creating French Immersion Setting are: conduct early recruitment in the Fall and continue year-round, hire French speaking Clinicians and bilingual staff including Educational Assistants, Clerks, Custodians, collaborate with Association Canadienne des Professionels de l'immersion (ACPI), Université des Saint-Boniface(USB) for effective early recruitment of qualified bilingual personnel, and continue to offer support and activities to promote language for all students.

The Committee was informed that some of the actions/planning going forward for creating French Immersion setting are: continued professional development to familiarize teachers with new curriculum, hire sufficient French Immersion pool of teachers to fill substitute requests, ensure specialists are bilingual, collaborate with Red River College and Université de Saint-Boniface in developing an Educational Assistant program and training course en français, provide funding so French pre-hires can attend English Classes, provide funding to support educators who need to improve their French language skills.

The Committee was informed that recently the Principals and Vice-Principals discussed the topics outlined in the plan with a focus on recruitment and the development of an action plan to address the barriers to the French Immersion program.

The Committee was informed that unfortunately there are not enough French Immersion teachers graduating to provide sufficient staffing for the current programs. The Committee was informed that there is a shortage of French Immersion teachers nation-wide, resulting in other provinces attempting to recruit French Immersion teachers from Manitoba.

The Committee discussed some of the barriers to French-fluent students from the University of Winnipeg and the University of Manitoba from becoming French Immersion teachers. The Committee was informed there is a provincial proficiency exam that deters many students from pursuing practicums in French Immersion classrooms.

The Committee was informed an updated will be provided at a future meeting.

6. French Immersion Program Review

At a previous meeting the Committee received a copy of the five-year analysis report that was developed to provide information on student enrollment. The report included information on student transition to the International Baccalaureate and Advanced Placement programs as well as the feasibility of offering these programs in French.

The Committee discussed retention and recruitment strategies for French Immersion Teachers used in the Winnipeg School Division (WSD) and the requirements to establish a program to mirror the Build from Within Teacher Development Program for Indigenous students.

The Committee was informed that WSD has experienced a steady growth in enrolment with a high retention rate, particularly in the milieu settings. This is attributed to French Immersion being viewed as a strong and excellent program.

The Committee was informed that despite the many efforts by schools to promote the program, statistics show a decrease in enrolment as students move from elementary to junior high school and then to high school. This trend is consistent Province-wide, and according to the French Language Education Review, an initiative of the Bureau de l'éducation française (BEF), the main challenges influencing retention are student learning difficulties in earlier grades, while attrition during the transition years and limited options account for losses in Grades 8 to 12. WSD has responded to these challenges by hiring more French speaking Resource Teachers and qualified teachers to teach different options and subject areas.

The Committee was informed that WSD has three high schools offering the French Immersion Program to students from six feeder schools. As presented in the enrolment analysis, there is a decrease in the number of students moving from the jr. high French Immersion Program to the high school. Two major reasons for the decrease are that there is a tendency for teenagers to follow friends enrolled in different programs or schools, and the more limited number of option courses being offered in French at the high school level, in comparison to English. A small number of students opt to continue their education in the International Baccalaureate (IB) and Advanced Placement (AP) Programs.

The Committee discussed the trends in student retention for French Immersion and the potential for more blended programs.

The Committee was informed an updated will be provided at a future meeting.

7. RENAMING OF SCHOOLS

The Committee was informed that during the 2021/22 school year, the Board of Trustees approved a motion to review all schools named after individuals with a history of actions that are not in accordance with WSD values of inclusiveness, diversity, reconciliation and respect for the human rights and human dignity of others.

The Committee was informed that all schools, parent councils, families, community members and organizations may submit recommendations and/or feedback to the Board of Trustees regarding schools named after individuals.

The Committee was informed that the Board of Trustees recently reviewed and revised the renaming process to provide criteria and outline the process for renaming a school. The process may be initiated in response to a request from staff, students, parent councils, community members or a member of the Board of Trustees. All requests must be submitted to the Board in writing and include contact information and a rationale which includes a narrative explaining the basis for the request, the actions of the namesake that are not in accordance with WSD values as well as the sources and strength of evidence of the actions, the harm the continued use of the name may inflict on WSD and its community and any attachments to support the renaming request.

The Committee was informed that renaming request will be referred to the Building/Transportation Committee for review and consideration.

8. POLICY KMB – PARENT COUNCIL LUNCH PROGRAMS

The Committee was informed that at a meeting held May 2, 2022, the Policy/Program Committee agreed to refer draft Policy KMB – Parent Council Lunch Programs to the District Advisory Committees to review with their respective parent councils and to provide feedback no later than January 31, 2022.

The Committee was informed that the policy was developed to provide guidance and support on the responsibilities and acceptable practices for Parent Councils providing lunch programs in schools. The Committee was informed that parent councils had requested support/guidance for the operation of their respective lunch programs as well as concerns regarding consistency for staffing, fees, salaries etc.

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The Committee was encouraged to review the policy with their respective parent councils and to share their thoughts via email to the Board and Community Liaison Officer at brlapointe@wsd1.org for review and consideration by the Board of Trustees. Parent Councils may also contact the Board and Community Liaison Officer directly for assistance.

The Committee suggested the draft Lunch Program Policy be added to the Education Equity Committee agenda for discussion as equity contributes to the operation of lunch programs.

Respectfully Submitted,

JAMIE DUMONT
Trustee Representative

In Attendance:

Voting Representatives:

College Churchill High School
École Secondaire Kelvin
École Lansdowne
École Laura Secord
École Lavenrendrye
École Luxton
École River Heights
École Riverview
École Robert H. Smith
École Sacre-Coeur
École Sisler High School

Regrets:

École Garden Grove
École George V
École J.B. Mitchell
École Sir William Osler
École Stanley Knowles
École Victoria Albert
École Waterford Springs

Administration:

Rob Riel, Acting Superintendent Education Services
Ryan Hughes, Acting Director
Nathan Tocher, Vice-Principal, College Churchill High School
Nancy Karpinsky, Principal, École Garden Grove
Melanie Charbonneau, Vice-Principal, École Secondaire Kelvin
Amanda Capina, Principal, École Laverendrye
Joy Perrott, Principal, École Luxton
Dominique Ostermann, Principal, École Sir William Osler
Recording Secretary, Tarin Howard

Non-Voting/Resource Members

Employee Group Representative, W.A.N.T.E.

Trustees:

Jamie Dumont
Ann Evangelista