

THE WINNIPEG SCHOOL DIVISION
INNER CITY DISTRICT ADVISORY COMMITTEE
SUMMARY OF DISCUSSIONS – Wednesday, February 7, 2024

1. LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Committee members 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 THE AGENDA

Committee members approved the agenda as distributed.

3. WSD 2024/2025 BUDGET CONSULTATION

At the previous meeting, Committee members were 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 for review. The feedback from parents/guardians 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. Committee members were 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. Committee members were informed that a 3.4% increase which equates to approximately \$51 per average household (2024 average home value in WSD \$246,700) 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.

Committee members were 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.

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Committee members held round table discussions to identify priorities under the three categories. Overall, Committee members were in favour of smaller class sizes, however there were also concerns regarding resources and space available for the creation of additional classes. Committee members stressed the importance of increasing attendance and graduation rates especially in the Indigenous community. Committee members also suggested that field trips and classroom activities could assist in providing motivation and engage students to attend school. Committee members agreed that programs such as music and art are important motivation for students, as well as after school programs and sports. Committee members agreed that once students are coming to school for the “fun” programs and interactions, they will stay for the educational programs as well. Committee members were in favour of additional professional development for all staff to improve connection with students.

Committee members expressed support for a universal lunch program that would keep students in school and hopefully improve attendance for afternoon classes. Committee members also suggested improvements to nutrition programs such as inviting community members to share different cultural culinary expertise. Committee members also felt it was important to provide lunch options that cater to different cultures and religions. Committee members expressed support for improved transportation and school safety.

Committee members also made other suggestions such as open gym, continuing school day, continuing/expanding the grade 4 swimming program, bursaries for Inner City students, School Resource Officers (SROs), Artists in school, early speech and language intervention (grade 3), school safety plans, expansion of nutrition programs, mental health supports and resources for staff, students and families, school community hub, music and dance for elementary students, land based learning programs, before and after care, and divisional bulk ordering to save on food costs.

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

4. WSD 123 CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Committee members 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. These divisional plans outline clear outcomes, comprehensive monitoring processes, baseline data, and measurable targets for all students across diverse languages of instruction. The plan also includes strategic utilization of grants, the emphasis on enhancing instructional leadership, and the essential role of stakeholder involvement in developing school division plans.

Committee members were encouraged to share the report with their respective parent

councils.

5. LUNCH PROGRAM PILOT

At a previous meeting Committee members were 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. Committee members were informed that, three schools have begun the pilot. Committee members were informed that WSD has extended the hours for educational assistants to supervise the lunch hour, as well as hiring people who were previously employed by their Parent Councils, where appropriate.

Committee members were 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.

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

6. STAGGERED START TIMES

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

Committee members were 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 while also providing staff with time to come together, determine who they are missing, make phone calls, organize home visits and to strategize about how to make schools rich, deep and welcoming.

Committee members were informed that to accommodate for the loss of an hour per week, June exams will be pushed back to add additional instructional days to the calendar, so students will receive the same amount, if not more, instructional time.

Committee members were 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.

7. ENQUIRIES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS AND SCHOOL REPORTS

SCHOOL REPORTS

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

- Pinkham School
- Sister MacNamara School

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In Attendance:

Voting Representatives:

David Livingstone School
Machray School
Mulvey School
Pinkham School
R.B. Russell High School
Sister MacNamara School
William Whyte School

Regrets:

Argyle Alternative High School
Children of the Earth High School
Dufferin School
Fort Rouge School
General Wolfe School
Gordon Bell High School
Hugh John Macdonald School
John M. King School
King Edward School
Niji Mahkwa School
Norquay School
Strathcona School
Victoria-Albert School
Wellington School

Administration:

Matthew Henderson, Superintendent
Rob Riel, Assistant Superintendent
Mohammad Rezaei, Assistant Superintendent
Jenifer Donachuk, Principal, Children of the Earth School
Claudia Martinez, Vice-Principal, David Livingstone School
Susan Darazsi, Principal, General Wolfe School
Ruben Boulette, Principal, Niji Mahkwa School
Colin Bruce Smith, Principal, Norquay School
Monique Russell, Vice-Principal, Norquay School
Mercy Sackey, Principal, Pinkham School
Paul Krowiak, Principal, R.B. Russell High School
Debbie Lenhardt Mair, Principal, Sister MacNamara
Jeremy Milford, Principal, Strathcona School
Emil Conteras, Principal, Wellington School
Kari Bermuller, Vice-Principal, Wellington School
Daniel Keith, Principal, William Whyte School
Tarin Howard, Recording Secretary

Non-Voting/Resource Members:

Community Support Worker, Pinkham School
Community Support Worker, Norquay School
Community Support Worker, General Wolfe School
Community Support Worker, Niji Mahkwa School
Community Support Worker, Sister MacNamara School
Community Support Worker, Children of the Earth School
Community Support Worker, Strathcona/King Edward School
Community Support Worker, David Livingstone School
Community Support Worker, R.B. Russell High School
Community Support Worker, John M. King School
Community Support Worker, William Whyte School

Trustees:

Dante Aviso
Tamara Kuly
Betty Edel
Lois Brothers
Kathy Heppner
Ann Evangelista