

THE WINNIPEG SCHOOL DIVISION

NORTH DISTRICT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSIONS – Thursday, February 8, 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 AGENDA

The Committee chair expressed concerns that the meeting minutes did not accurately reflect discussions regarding SRO, lunch program and the request for additional meetings. It was recommended that the chair email the Board and Community Liaison Officer to discuss the concerns.

The Committee recommended that the minutes/meeting notes be distributed in advance and that the Committee approve the minutes (please note: a Summary of the Discussion and Report are prepared for review and approval by the Board at the earliest opportunity).

Committee members approved the agenda for February 8, 2024, 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. Committee members were informed that the feedback collected from parents/guardians regarding budget priorities, highlighting a wide range of concerns and suggestions from various school communities. The District Advisory Committees and individual schools emphasized the importance of initiatives such as smaller class sizes, improved classroom instruction, greater academic engagement, increase attendance and higher graduation rates, better maths and literacy achievement, more learning support teachers in schools, universal nutrition programs, phase-in no-fee lunch supervision, replacement of playgrounds annually, build powerful neighborhood schools, enhance school safety measures, improve settlement services for newcomers and expand adult EAL, as well as develop the R.B. Russell Career Lab. These priorities reflect a shared commitment to fostering student success, creating supportive school environments, and strengthening community engagement.

Committee members received a copy of the 2024/2025 Draft Budget for review. Committee members were informed that the province increased 1% (\$2.6 million) of education funding for WSD which does not cover the rising costs experienced by WSD, which includes salary contract settlements, service agreement inflation, and current programs and resources inflation. Despite identifying almost \$4 million in administrative savings for the 2024/2025 budget, additional revenue is necessary to meet the diverse needs of school communities effectively. Committee members were informed that the proposal of a 3.4% increase to the property education tax aligns with the rate of inflation and would enable WSD to maintain current programs and services, while fully funding nutrition and food programs, as well as allocate \$2.6 million toward budget priorities identified by the community.

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Committee members were also informed that alternatively, an increase in property tax of 3% would still maintain current programs and services, but reduce allocations toward community-driven budget priorities. Committee members acknowledged the importance of carefully considering these options to ensure the best outcomes for students, families, and staff within WSD.

Committee members held roundtable discussions on various programs/services, including the nutrition program, school safety measures, and strategies to enhance community support. Committee members raised concerns regarding the allocation of resources and the potential impact of proposed changes for different school communities.

Committee members supported the lunch/nutrition program and school safety. In response to the enquiry regarding School Resource Officers (SROs), the Superintendent clarified that the focus is to reallocate resources to community support workers to assist in addressing mental health needs and neighbourhood-related incidents.

Committee members requested clarification on the implementation of lunch programs. The Superintendent informed Committee members that the no-fee lunch process will be phased in to ensure effective budget management and equitable distribution across schools. Committee members were informed that the schools were chosen due to their need for support.

Committee members requested clarification on the term “building powerful schools”. Committee members were informed that families are enrolling their children in schools outside their catchment area, which potentially leads to the abandonment of other schools. The Superintendent and principals have been asked to engage in conversations with families to maintain balanced enrollment and ensure each school remains a desirable option within its catchment area. Additionally, Committee members were informed that there is a desire to implement International Baccalaureate (IB) programs in schools as part of this effort, although this process may take time to fully develop.

Committee members also discussed the Province’s mandate to reduce class sizes, particularly Kindergarten to Grade 3. Committee members were informed that the Province is suggesting the addition of classroom spaces to alleviate classroom overcrowding and enhance teacher collaboration, as well as improve instructional practices.

Committee members discussed the necessity for school supports in academic subjects like reading, writing, and math, as well as the implementation of Jordan’s Principle to address various student needs. Committee members also discussed concerns regarding the implementation of universal nutrition programs, particularly regarding staffing, tracking, funding limitations, and potential shifts in lunch hour times. Committee members raised concerns about the accessibility of community support workers, noting disparities in access across different schools.

Committee members discussed the need for strategies to increase daycare availability and explore potential partnerships with existing healthcare providers to expand daycare services, and utilizing empty school spaces for daycare purposes. Committee members were informed that ongoing discussions are being held with the Minister regarding daycare expansion, with a focus on providing comprehensive childcare solutions and convenient daycare locations.

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Committee members requested clarification on the role of support teachers within the school system. Committee members were informed that within WSD, various roles such as resource teachers and guidance counsellors fall under the umbrella of working support teachers, allowing flexibility in meeting the diverse needs of students. Committee members also raised a concern about the allocation of resources to support high-functioning students who may not qualify for certain programs, highlighting the importance of ensuring equitable access to educational support services.

In response to an enquiry regarding replacing playgrounds, Committee members were informed that the administration submits a five-year capital plan to the Province which requests funding for projects to address larger-scale infrastructure needs, however, play structures did not qualify for provincial funding.

Committee members emphasized the importance of community support for children before and after school, suggesting the utilization of volunteers, such as high school students seeking credits to enhance existing programs and provide additional activities. Committee members also expressed concerns about the reduction in budget for inclusive support workers for children with special needs. In response to an enquiry, Committee members were informed that the Division does not receive provincial funding for nursery program.

In response to an enquiry, Committee members were informed that the goal of R.B. Russell Career Lab is to transform the school into a community college that offers courses and training opportunities for employment. Committee members were informed about the diverse programs available, including culinary and hairstyling, emphasizing the potential for both adults and students to benefit from extended operating hours. Committee members suggested a similar initiative on the North side of the City.

Committee members were informed that the Board of Trustees will hold a public budget consultation on February 26, 2024 at 7 p.m. at Tec Voc High School. Committee members were also informed that feedback on the draft budget can be provided via email to board@wsd1.org, in writing to 1577 Wall Street Winnipeg, MB R2E 2S5, or by registering at 204-775-0231 by February 22, 2024 to attend in person.

4. WSD 123: CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT 2023/2024

Committee members reviewed the WSD 123 Continuous Improvement Report, which provided an overview of the positive impact of WSD programs and services on the lives of 31,000 students during the 2023/24 academic year. Committee members were informed that as part of the educational mandate in Manitoba, WSD diligently addresses high levels of academic achievement in literacy and numeracy through planning with the Kindergarten to Grade 12 Framework for Continuous Improvement. Committee members were also informed that these divisional plans outline clear outcomes, comprehensive monitoring processes, baseline data, and measurable targets for all students across diverse languages of instruction. Committee members were informed that 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.

5. LUNCH PROGRAM PILOT

At a previous meeting, Committee members were informed that a new pilot project in WSD was underway, aiming to address the financial strain on families by eliminating fees for lunch supervision in five elementary schools. The initiative targets the reduction of barriers to attendance and aims to ease the burden of an extra monthly expense during a cost-of-living crisis. Committee members were informed that a total of \$200,000 has been allocated to pay support staff, who will replace parent council recruits in monitoring Kindergarten to Grade 6 classrooms for the remainder of the school year. Committee members were also informed that the pilot has commenced at École LaVérendrye, École Sacré-Coeur, Shaughnessy Park School, Carpathia School, and Isaac Brock School based on the urgent need for resources and flexibility in changing delivery models.

Committee members were informed that the administration will survey families involved in the pilot project, with a recommendation to the Board of Trustees for a potential permanent end to fees as early as the 2024/2025 school year. Committee members were informed that the lunch program pilot will undergo reassessment in May to explore the possibility of project expansion based on its initial outcomes.

6. STAGGERED START TIMES

Committee members were informed that WSD will be implementing either a late start or early dismissal each week for high school students, starting in February. On one day per week, predominantly Wednesdays, classes will either begin an hour later or end an hour earlier. Committee members were informed that the aim of these adjusted class schedules is to remove barriers for approximately 2,500 students who face challenges in attending school while also allowing staff time to address attendance issues and strategize ways to enhance school environments.

Committee members were informed that to compensate for the loss of instructional time due to the altered schedules, June exams will be postponed. This adjustment will enable additional instructional days to be added to the calendar, ensuring that students receive at least the same amount, if not more, instructional time overall. Committee members were informed the decision reflects WSD's commitment to prioritizing student well-being and addressing attendance challenges while maintaining the integrity of the academic calendar and ensuring educational quality.

7. ENQUIRIES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS AND SCHOOL REPORTS

A Committee member noted an overall improvement in transportation services and suggested improving communication by implementing robocall notifications in case of route cancellations to ensure that parents/guardians are promptly informed and can make necessary arrangements if their children cannot be picked up by the school bus.

SCHOOL REPORTS

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

- NIL

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Attendance:

Voting Representatives

Andrew Mynarski School
Champlain School
École Lansdowne School
Faraday School
Garden Grove School
Lord Nelson School
Ralph Brown School
Robertson School
Shaughnessy Park School
Sisler High School
St. John's High School
Tyndall Park School

Regrets

Inkster School
Isaac Newton School
Luxton School
Meadows West School
Prairie Rose School
Waterford Springs School

Administration

Matt Henderson, Superintendent/CEO
Celia Caetano-Gomes, Assistant Superintendent
Marsha Missyabit, Divisional Kookum
Christina Da Mata, Principal, Andrew Mynarski V.C. School
Paulo Teixeira, Principal, Champlain School
Jessica Mayor-Rodrigues, Principal, École Lansdowne
Melissa Asmundson, Principal, Lord Nelson School
Warren Nickerson, Principal, Luxton School
Trevor MacVicar, Principal, Ralph Brown School
Jude Guzzi, Principal, Robertson School
Tanis Westdal, Principal, Shaughnessy Park School
Pat Graham, Principal, Sisler High School
Gisele Mospanchuk, Principal, Tyndall Park School
Ryan Erichsen, Vice-Principal, Tyndall Park School
Maria Manzano, Vice-Principal, Waterford School
Michelle Lejano, Recording Secretary

Non-Voting/Resource Members

Case Support Worker, Shaughnessy Park School
Service Coordinator, Gordon Bell High School,
Case Support Worker, Winnipeg School Division

Trustees

Ann Evangelista

The Winnipeg School Division
North District Advisory Committee
Roundtable Discussions
Tuesday, February 8, 2024

North DAC Roundtable Discussions:

- PRIORITIES:
 - Agree with smaller class sizes
 - High Schools – need more capacity overall
 - Ensuring kids get the help they need
 - Increased supports for high-functioning kids with additional needs
 - Programming considerations for kids working above grade level (prevent boredom and mitigate behaviour)
- OBSERVATIONS:
 - Teachers as lunch program operators doesn't mean bang for our buck (giving them lunch at staggered times disrupts day)
 - One EA supervising 3 lunch room increases liability and risk (student needs have increased – no full-time supervision won't meet needs)
 - No-fee lunch can't be both equitable and equal
 - Not all schools have industrial kitchens to support nutrition
- QUESTIONS:
 - What does more learning support teachers in school mean?
 - What does no-fee lunch program look like?
 - Operationalizing a universal lunch program?
 - Opt-in to nutrition program? Kids ask? Parents ask?
 - What do you mean resource?
- School Supports needed:
 - Tutors, one-on-one support (to improve reading, writing, math)
 - Jordan's Principles (Transportation, lunch, school supplies, camp)
- Universal Nutrition Program
 - Method? (Shifting lunch hour time to cover supervision)
 - Staffing?
 - Tracking?
 - Limitation on funding?
 - What will happen to the current lunch program coordinators?
- Shaughnessy shared their lunch program pilot, registration has increased from 80 students to 140 students
- Community support worker (not every school has one)
 - Ex. Tyndall, right now, vice-principal makes the sandwiches and drives errands