

# THE WINNIPEG SCHOOL DIVISION

## NORTH DISTRICT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

### SUMMARY OF DISCUSSIONS – Wednesday, November 17, 2021

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#### 1. INTRODUCTIONS

Committee members were informed that the meeting of the North District Advisory Committee is taking place on Treaty One Land and the traditional homeland of the Metis Nation.

Committee members were informed that at the Inaugural meeting of the Board held on September 13, 2021, Trustee Linda Schatkowsky was appointed as the Board's representative and Trustee Arlene Reid was appointed as the Board's alternate representative to this Committee.

#### 2. ELECTION OF COMMITTEE CHAIR

The parent representative from Sisler High School volunteered to Chair the meeting.

#### 3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The Committee members approved the Agenda of November 17, 2021, as distributed.

#### 4. WSD BUDGET CONSULTATION 2022/2023

Committee members received an overview on the Budget Consultation for the 2022/2023 school year.

Committee members were informed that on March 9, 2021, the Board of Trustees approved a budget for the 2021/2022 school year in the amount of \$421,039,400. Last year, the Provincial Government directed school divisions throughout the province to freeze property tax levies at 2020 levels, leading to a reduction of 0.54 percent on the property tax levy for WSD homeowners, or a decrease of about \$8 a year on the average assessed home value of \$225,700 within WSD.

Committee members were informed that the province made it impossible for WSD to raise revenue through property taxes to be able to fund programs that are unique and valued within the WSD community.

Committee members were informed that it is anticipated that this year, the provincial government will continue to fund education at the same level as last year and freeze property taxes which may result in a significant loss of programs and services for students. As the Board of Trustees begins its discussions and consultations with the public regarding its 2022/2023 budget, several significant factors must be taken into consideration such as a drop in enrolment, rising labour costs, inflation, provincial funding and cap on property taxes.

Committee members were informed that the September 30, 2018, enrolment count totalled 33,093 which reflected a steady trend of enrolment of approximately 33,000 students per year over the previous decade. However, since then, enrolment has dropped since 2019 (1.05 percent), 2020 (9.62 percent), 2021 (2.32 percent). Committee members were informed that the pandemic contributed to the drop in enrolment due to home schooling. Committee members were informed that the drop in enrolment directly results in a reduction of provincial funding which represents about 60 percent of WSD's overall funding.

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Committee members were informed that the salary and benefit costs represent approximately 87 percent of the budget. Committee members were informed that due to arbitration rulings in the spring of 2020, significant increases in labour costs have occurred for the 2020/21 fiscal year and will have a large impact on the 2022/2023 budget. To date there has been no additional funding from the Province to cover these costs however efforts in appealing for more funding will continue.

Committee members were informed that year-over-year inflation in Manitoba at September 30/21 is 4.66 percent. Committee members were informed that excluding the effect of enrolment, provincial funding has increased at the rate of approximately 0.6 percent over the last few years which is less than the rate of inflation in Manitoba even in non-pandemic years (2018- 2.53 percent, 2019 – 2.27 percent).

Committee members were informed that the property tax revenue that represents about 40 percent of WSD's overall funding has been capped at 2 percent for the past few years. WSD's recent overall funding of approximately 1.16 percent is contributing to the funding pressures.

Committee members were informed that these issues are based on the current information prior to the final Provincial funding announcement in early February 2022.

Committee members were informed that the Board is committed to obtaining feedback from school communities, parent councils, residents and staff for the 2022/2023 budget. The District Advisory meetings will provide parent representatives with an opportunity to share feedback, ideas and questions with the trustees.

Committee members were informed that the members of the Board are interested in receiving feedback on the following:

- a) Does your school have the resources it requires to fulfill its educational mandate? If not, what additional resources are needed?
- b) What is the most important issue for your school?
- c) Winnipeg School Division is facing significant fiscal challenges for the 2022/2023 budget due to rising labour costs and a decline in enrolment, coupled with an inability to raise revenue through property beyond the government imposed cap of 2 percent. Do you have any suggestions as to how WSD might address these challenges?

Committee members were informed that a copy of the WSD Frame budget can be found on the WSD website. Committee members agreed that it would be beneficial to explore alternate revenue streams to avoid being dependent on the province to provide funding.

In response to an inquiry, Committee members were informed that school boards cannot fundraise to offset budget expenditures. Committee members were informed that the Children's Heritage Fund accept donations in support of school programs and student activities.

Committee members were informed that WSD recognizes that schools may wish to supplement their school budget in support of student activities throughout public fundraising for special projects, school activities and charitable causes.

Committee members were informed that fundraising may support school programs and may also be used to reduce student costs for materials, equipment, school related activities such as field trip expenses, camps or uniforms that are not ordinarily available through School Board expenditures.

Committee members were informed that to achieve the best possible educational results, parents/guardians, school staff, students and community members are encouraged to work together to achieve fundraising success from various initiatives and school projects. School fundraising projects should be coordinated on a yearly basis, in consultation with parent councils.

Committee members suggested that savings could be achieved by WSD purchasing school supplies in bulk. Committee members were informed that WSD participates with other Metro School Division to purchase supplies and materials in bulk. Parents were encouraged to raise the bulk purchasing of school supplies with their Parent Council and Principal.

A parent representative suggested that parents should talk to MLAs to support an increase in provincial funding.

Committee members expressed concern that some programming being offered to students should be transferred and funded by Manitoba Health.

## **5. EDUCATION MODERNIZATION ACT UPDATE**

Committee members were informed that on September 1, 2021, the Honorable Kelvin Goertzen was appointed as the interim Premier of Manitoba due to the recent resignation of the Honorable Brian Pallister. The interim Premier of Manitoba announced that Bill 64 - The Education Modernization Act will be removed from provincial business in the fall due to public concerns expressed regarding various components of Bill 64, namely the proposed governance model.

Committee members were informed that the withdrawal of Bill 64 allows Winnipeg School Division (WSD) to continue to provide valuable services and programs such as Nutrition programs, Housing assistance, Health connections, Reading Recovery, Math Pathways, Autism programs, Anxiety Programs, Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) Programs, all of which are vital services to support our students, families and community.

Committee members were informed that although, Bill 64 – The Education Modernization Act has been withdrawn by the provincial government, the Minister of Education has publicly stated that the proposed governance model outlined in Bill 64 appeared to be the most significant concern for parents and stakeholders.

Committee members were informed that the Minister of Education also stated the commitment to implementing the three pillars outlined in the “Better Education Starts Today” (B.E.S.T.) strategy; under the headings High Quality Learning and Outcomes, Future Ready Students and Excellence in Teaching and Leadership.

Committee members were informed that while WSD supports some of the key priority actions outlined in B.E.S.T. strategies to improve student outcomes, any changes to the delivery of education in Manitoba must be piloted by the government to ensure that new initiatives will contribute to the educational success of the child. The outcomes must demonstrate an ability to benefit the unique needs of supporting our students and school communities.

Committee members were informed that as the largest school division in Manitoba, WSD will continue to be engaged in discussions with the Province to maintain programs and services for our students. WSD remains committed to putting students, teachers and public education first.

## **6. COVID - 19**

Committee members were informed that public health officials announced new public health orders that came into effect on October 5, 2021. While the province has moved to the restricted (orange) level of the Pandemic Response System, schools will remain at caution (yellow). Public health officials will continue to recommend school-specific approaches if increasing risk is identified.

Committee members were informed that staff and students will continue to follow the health and safety measures as per public health guidance. The Board of Trustees worked closely to develop, enhance and implement COVID – 19 protocols.

Committee members were informed that to ensure students remain in school as much as possible, current provincial guidelines for public and independent schools will continue to be followed.

Committee members were informed that masks are required in all indoor public spaces. Masks may be removed indoors where there is physical distancing of 2 meter (6 feet) for the purpose of eating, drinking, and for short, infrequent mask breaks. Mask use during extracurricular school sports should follow public health guidelines for sports in place at the time. Masks can be removed when outside for brief mask breaks.

Committee members requested information on whether the Division received its total allocation of provincial funding for Covid-19 budget expenditures.

Committee members were informed that all employees, including teachers, educational support staff, school administration staff, custodial staff, bus drivers, child care staff working in school-based early learning and child care facilities, clinical and health care related occupations in schools; volunteers; and post-secondary practicum students, are required to provide proof of full vaccination or submit testing up to three times per week.

A parent representative expressed appreciation to all staff for their efforts during Covid-19 pandemic.

## **7. SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICER PROGRAM**

At a meeting held November 1, 2021, the Board of Trustees approved a motion to distribute the results of the evaluation of the School Resource Officer (SRO) Program to all District Advisory Committees for information.

Committee members were informed that as part of the 2021/2022 Budget discussions, this matter was referred to the Finance/ Personnel Committee for consideration. On March 9, 2021, the Board of trustees removed the SRO program from the budget effective July 1, 2021.

Committee members were informed that the School Resource (SRO) program was initiated in Winnipeg School Division (WSD) in 2002, initially called “The North End School Resource Office Partnership Initiative”. In response to concerns raised about the role of police officers in schools across Canada, the Board of Trustees requested a review of the SRO program which was launched in January 2021.

Committee members were informed that the goal of the survey was to review the merit of the SRO program in school including: support for safe and caring schools; impact of SRO program on safety for students, parents and staff; influence of SROs on student, staff and community ecosystem; program enhancement potentials and provide feedback to the Board of Trustees whether the SRO program should continue.

Committee members were informed that the survey data shows support for the SRO program to continue with 36 percent of students, 57 percent of parents/guardians, 74 percent of staff and 100 percent of SROs indicating so. A third of students (35 percent), 47 percent of parents/guardians and 10 percent of staff members were unaware of the program or were not sure if the program existed in their school. The results indicate that the SRO program and objectives require more awareness and understanding by students, staff and parents/guardians.

In response to an inquiry, Committee members were informed that Cadets are not trained to replace the SROs. Committee members were informed that the roles and responsibilities of SROs have been modified over time and vary across jurisdictions. A diverse range of duties have been incorporated into the SRO job description including public safety, education, relationship building and positive role modeling, community liaison problem solving and law enforcement. SROs play an important role in developing positive policing relationships with the school community including students, parents, school staff and administrators.

Committee members discussed the need for schools to have SROs back in school for the safety of students, schools and community.

Committee members suggested that the Board of Trustees continue discussions with the Winnipeg Police to develop a plan to promote students and staff safety.

## **8. ENQUIRIES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS AND SCHOOL REPORTS**

### SCHOOL REPORTS

NIL

## **9. MANITOBA ASSOCIATION OF PARENT COUNCILS MEMBERSHIP**

Committee members were informed that WSD pays for the membership fee for the Manitoba Association of Parent Councils. Committee members were encouraged to complete and submit the membership form.

## **10. GUIDELINES FOR BOARD ADVISORY COMMITTEES**

Committee members reviewed a copy of the Guidelines for Board Advisory Committees for information. Committee members were encouraged to direct any questions to the Board and Community Liaison Officer.

Committee members were informed that the Guidelines for Board Advisory Committees is available on the Winnipeg School Division website.

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**Voting Representatives**

Andrew Mynarski School  
Faraday School  
Inkster School  
Meadows West School  
Lord Nelson School  
Ralph Brown School  
Robertson School  
St. John's High School  
Sisler High School  
Stanley Knowles School  
Tyndall Park School

**Regrets**

Landsdowne School  
Garden Grove School  
Isaac Newton School  
Luxton School  
Waterford Springs  
Prairie Rose School

**Administration:**

Fatima Mota, Superintendent  
Tony Marchione, Director  
Navinder Basra, Assistant Secretary-Treasurer  
Brenda Lapointe, Board and Community Liaison Officer  
Cristina Da Mata, Principal, Andrew Mynarski School  
Paulo Teixeira, Principal, Champlain School  
Jennifer Cox, Principal, Faraday School  
Nancy Karpinsky, Principal, Garden Grove School  
Paul Ong, Vice Principal, Garden Grove School  
Julye Rogoski, Principal, Inkster School  
Joy Perrott, Principal, Luxton School  
Wayne Wyke, Principal, Meadows West School  
Melissa Asmundson, Principal, Lord Nelson School  
Trevor MacVicar, Principal, Ralph Brown School  
Jude Guzzi, Principal, Robertson School  
Douglas Taylor, Principal, St. John's High School  
Tanis Westdal, Principal, Shaughnessy Park School  
Pat Graham, Principal, Sisler High School  
Andrea Powell, Principal, Stanley Knowles School  
Gisele Mospanchuk, Principal, Tyndall Park School  
Elisa Solomon, Recording Secretary

**Trustees:**

Linda Schatkowsky  
Arlene Reid