

SOUTH DISTRICT ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPORT NO. 2-2025

To the Chair and Members
Winnipeg Public School Board:

April 24, 2025

The South District Advisory Committee reports as follows:

1. Land Acknowledgement

The Committee 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. Lunch/Nutrition Program Update

Katherine Armstrong, Program Director of Nutrition, was in attendance to provide an update on the in-school nutrition program.

The Committee was informed that there are over 30,000 students enrolled in WSD in 78 schools. There are 193 instructional days per year, which equates to approximately 5.79 million meals a year, assuming each school provides one meal per day. Committee members were informed that many schools provide multiple meals per day (breakfast, snacks and lunch) as well as providing take-home meals. Committee members were informed that previously funding for nutrition programs in schools was limited, therefore student participation was also limited, however, with the implementation of the Universal Nutrition program all students are now eligible to participate.

The Committee was informed that prior to the implementation of the Universal Nutrition program, many schools already had established robust food programs. These programs were funded through a patchwork of external grants, volunteers were required to run the programs and there was limited structure, resources or centralized supports available. The Universal Nutrition program was developed to provide structure, resources, and funding to ensure programs are run as efficiently as possible.

The Universal Nutrition program receives funding from the provincial and federal government to employ staff to operate the programs, as well as purchase food and equipment. During the 2024/2025 school year WSD hired approximately 50 food coordinators. The Committee was informed that providing adequate staffing is the biggest challenge for operating the program. The funding provided by the provincial government stipulates that 65% of funding must be spent on food while 35% is allocated for staffing and equipment. WSD is advocating for schools to have autonomy to allocate funding based on the needs of the school.

The Committee was informed that WSD has exceptionally high standards for staff, as well as equipment, and meets and/or exceeds the standards set out by Manitoba Public Health, the Manitoba Moving Forward with School Nutrition Guidelines, Canada's Food Guide and the Child Nutrition Council of Manitoba.

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The Committee was informed that WSD has developed open contracts with a variety of food supply vendors, many of them local, so that schools can order directly from vendors that meet their needs best. WSD has also invested in storage areas, as well as freezers and fridges in schools. Committee members were also informed that WSD has developed partnerships with various universities which allows dietetic students to do internships in schools, assisting in developing menus and gaining experience in all aspects of the nutrition program. WSD is also collaborating with all metro school divisions to discuss challenges, best practices and working together to ensure funding for this program continues for years to come.

The Committee was informed that the number one goal is safety as there is zero tolerance for unsafe food handling. Committee members were informed that schools can connect directly with vendors to get their supplies delivered directly to the schools. Food vendors are responsible for food recalls and communicating with schools to provide instructions and information on restocking supplies.

The Committee was informed that WSD is recommending every school operate a snack program before expanding services to offer a breakfast program. The Committee was informed that operating a lunch program can be difficult if the school does not have adequate space, equipment or ventilation. The Committee requested an update on the number of schools transitioning to offer a lunch program in the 2025/2026 school year.

The Committee shared concerns that the communication regarding universal access to food differs from classroom to classroom. The Committee was informed that communication will be one of the main focuses next year. WSD will ensure that any barriers for accessing the program are removed for families.

The Committee was informed that WSD is looking for feedback to better understand the core values of staff, students, parents and the community to assist in the development of long-term goals for the program. The Committee was asked to provide feedback on the following questions: what impact do you see this program having 5, 10 years from now? What does an accountable and transparent program look like to you? What do you value in a school food program? What voices might not be heard that we should know about? Feedback can be submitted to wsdnutritionprogram@wsd1.org.

3. Guidelines for Board Advisory Committees

At a meeting held February 12, 2025, the Board of Trustees reviewed the feedback from District Advisory Committees regarding the revised Guidelines for Board Advisory Committees. The Trustees agreed that additional feedback was required.

The Committee received a copy of a survey to identify some key priorities regarding the role and structure of District Advisory Committees to make meetings more inclusive for families.

The Committee was encouraged to share the survey with their school communities and to provide feedback to the Board by June 2, 2025, for consideration. The Committee was informed that surveys can be emailed to Board@wsd1.org.

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The Committee indicated that the proposed Guidelines for Advisory Committees would result in splitting the advisory committees into Early Years, Middle Years and Senior Years, which would increase the amount of meetings that parents would have to attend on a yearly basis.

The Committee suggested that the Terms of Reference be revisited so that members can learn what purpose and their roles as a member. The Committee indicated that they were not aware of the parameters of their roles as Chair and Voting Representatives. The Committee was informed that Voting Representatives can make motions to create items on the Agenda once Quorum has been met.

4. Future Agenda Items

The Committee agreed to add Lunch Program to the next meeting.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jamie Dumont
Trustee Representative

In Attendance**Voting Representatives:**

École LaVérendrye School
École Sir William Osler School
Grant Park High School
Grosvenor School
Harrow School
Queenston School
Robert H. Smith School
Rockwood School

Regrets:

Brock Corydon School
Carpathia School
Collège Churchill High School
Earl Grey School
Gladstone School
École J.B. Mitchell School
École Secondaire Kelvin High School
Montrose School
École River Heights School
École Riverview School
Lord Roberts School

Administration:

Lorelei Bunkowsky, Assistant Superintendent
Shelley Warkentin, Assistant Superintendent
Amanda Maness, Principal, Carpathia
Angela Perez, Principal, Rockwood School
Dominic Zagari, Principal, École River Heights School
Georgia Wells, Principal, Collège Churchill High School
Jamie Hutchison, Principal, Grant Park
Lauranne Benoit, Vice-Principal, École Secondaire Kelvin High School
Nathan Tocher, Vice-Principal, Collège Churchill High School
Nicole Kurtz, Principal, Grosvenor School
Sonya Williams, Vice-Principal, Grant Park
David Vo, Administrative Clerk, Board Office

Trustees:

Jamie Dumont
Lois Brothers