

THE WINNIPEG SCHOOL DIVISION
SOUTH DISTRICT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSIONS – Wednesday, February 14, 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. ELECTION OF COMMITTEE CHAIR

The parent representative from Brock Corydon School volunteered to chair the meeting.

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Committee members approved the agenda as distributed.

4. 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 reviewed the feedback from parents/guardians which 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.

Committee members were informed that recently the Superintendent sent a letter to all families regarding the 2024/2025 Budget. Parents/Guardians were invited to provide feedback regarding programs/services that matter to their child/family.

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 currently nutrition programs are funded through grants and other resources to ensure that every student who needs a meal receives one.

Committee members were informed that the Division was able to identify approximately \$4

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million in administrative savings. Committee members were informed that a 3.4% increase to property taxes 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 received a Budget brochure which identified the priorities outlined in the feedback from parents/guardians. The priorities were placed into three categories; Improve student success, create “sticky” schools and community supports. Committee members held round table discussions to identify priorities under the three categories.

Committee members were informed that the Division has heard the concerns from the community regarding safety. Committee members were informed that the Division is in the process of considering a program similar to Bear Clan Patrol Inc. The program could patrol areas from Elmwood to Shaunessy Park schools.

Committee members agreed that equity should be an important factor when deciding on how to best use budget funds including decisions regarding which schools will be next to receive playgrounds, before and after programs, French and language programs, and lunch program. Committee members agreed that there needs to be consistency regarding what schools offer to students and families both physically as well as specialty programs and excellent staff, to reduce the need to attend school outside their catchment areas. Committee members were informed that currently approximately 5,000 students do not attend their neighborhood school which equates to approximately \$10 million that is spent on busses that are required to transport students.

Committee members expressed support for bringing librarians back into schools as well as improving music and arts programs. Committee members expressed the importance of teachers sharing their passions to create unique programs.

Committee members expressed support for improved programing for students with inclusive needs including early diagnosis and improved communication, regulation/consistency. Committee members agreed that many students may have a “hidden” learning challenge that requires additional support without a formal diagnosis.

Committee members also suggested funding be provided for sports, arts, outdoor education, drama, dance, visual arts, mental health supports, and summer care programs. Committee members also stressed the importance of decolonizing schools to make them more inclusive and “sticky”.

In response to an enquiry regarding air conditioning in schools, Committee members were informed that many of the older school buildings are not equipped to handle air conditioning units, including window/portable A/C units. Administration is currently developing plans to ensure there are cooler spaces in schools for students to rotate through, however, as the climate continues to change there may be a need to explore alternate options such as starting the school day earlier to avoid the heat of the day.

Committee members were informed that the Board of Trustees is hosting a budget

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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.

5. 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.

6. 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.

7. 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.

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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.

8. ENQUIRIES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS AND SCHOOL REPORTS

Committee members were informed that School Reports are submitted in writing and attached to the Summary of Discussion for the meeting.

SCHOOL REPORTS

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

- NIL

Attendance:

Voting Representatives:

Brock Corydon School
College Churchill High School
Earl Grey School
Gladstone School
Grosvenor School
Harrow School
Kelvin High School
Laverendrye School
Lord Roberts School
Montrose School
Queenston School
Robert H. Smith School
Rockwood School

Regrets:

Carpathia School
Ecole Sir William Osler School
Grant Park High School
J.B. Mitchell School
River Heights School
Riverview School

Administration:

Matt Henderson, Superintendent
Lorelei Bunkowsky, Assistant Superintendent
Amanda Manness, Principal, Carpathia School
Georgia Wells, Vice-Principal, College Churchill High School
Amanda Capina, Principal, École LaVérendrye
Fernando Batista, Principal, Harrow School
Suzanne Mole, Principal, Montrose School
Amanda Tetrault, Acting Vice-Principal, River Heights School
Angela Perez, Principal, Rockwood School
Tarin Howard, Recording Secretary

Trustees:

Lois Brothers
Kathy Heppner (Regrets)

South District Advisory Committee Round Table Discussions

Table 1

- Support playground improvement and lunch program
- Concerned about ensuring equitable practices
- Before and after programs
- Inclusion of students with inclusive needs – more communication and regulation
- Early diagnosis of students with learning challenges
- French in schools
- More sports, arts, outdoor ed
- Air-conditioning in schools

Table 2

- Before and after school programs for over 12 years old
- Equitable programing across families of schools to avoid “shopping for schools”
- Consistency in programs that are offered
- When students are thriving, parents are thriving

Table 3

- Support Music programs
- More support for arts, drama, dance visual arts
- Bring in more teachers that have specialties to create unique programs in every family of schools
- Time for teachers to do things in their day that brings them joy
- Having honours school of choice – encouraging students who excel in a program
- Honouring parents
- Support the return of librarians
- Air conditioning in schools

Table 4

- How do we de-colonize our schools
- Mental health support
- Make schools so engaging students can't stay away

Table 5

- Support lunch program
- Balanced school day to take away lunch program stress
- Too many responsibilities being placed on schools, more outside supports required to provide for basic needs (food, clothing, etc.)