

STUDENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPORT NO. 2-2021

To the Chair and Members
Winnipeg Public School Board:

May 4, 2021

The Student Advisory Committee reports as follows:

1. Election of Committee Chair

Trustee Betty Edel volunteered to chair the meeting.

2. Bill 64 – The Education Modernization Act

Trustee Edel provided an overview on the recent announcement by the Province of Manitoba which included changes to the education system in Manitoba. The Committee was informed that the government spent one million dollars on a review of the education system in Manitoba, however very few of the recommendations from the Commissioners report were reflected in Bill 64.

The Committee was informed that the new governance model includes 15 new regions, plus Division Scolaire Franco-Manitobaine (DSFM) to replace 37 separate school divisions in Manitoba. This would require Winnipeg, St. James, Louis Riel, Pembina Trails, Seven Oaks and River East Transcona School Division to merge into one region for the City of Winnipeg representing 188,540 students. The Committee was informed that local School Boards would be replaced with a Provincial Education Authority.

The Committee was informed that through this new Governance Model School Community Councils would be established in place of Parent Councils. One parent representative of a School Community Council from each of the regions would be elected to the Provincial Advisory Council. This would result in one parent being elected to represent the City of Winnipeg schools and all parents. The Committee was encouraged to share the information with their parents/guardians.

Trustee Edel highlighted some of the proposed changes and the impact Bill 64 may have on programs and services. The Committee was informed that the Province expects \$40 million in savings that would go to frontline education across Manitoba, this equates to one half-time teacher per school in Manitoba.

Trustee Edel provided examples of services and programs that WSD provides to support students and families, such as Nutrition programs, Housing assistance, Health connections, Reading Recovery, Math Pathways, Autism programs, Anxiety Programs, Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) Program.

The Committee was informed that Manitoba Education believes that a complete restructuring of education is necessary to find efficiencies, meanwhile, suggestions of modest and less disruptive changes such as merging services would result in immediate savings.

The Committee was also informed that Manitoba Education claims that Indigenous students are falling behind because only 51 percent of Indigenous students graduate within four-years, compared to 90 percent graduation rate among their non-indigenous peers.

The Committee was informed that pointing to a four-year graduation rate as the indicator of success shows ignorance of the socio-economic and social status challenges students face. WSD supports a large number of Indigenous students who return to school and successfully complete their

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diploma as mature students. Many Indigenous students overcome trauma in order to successfully graduate which may take more than four years to achieve, but is no less a success.

The Committee was informed that they are welcome to voice their concerns to by writing a letter to their MLA's or requesting to appear as a delegation by contacting Manitoba Legislative Assembly to ensure their voices are heard.

3. Provincial Consultation

Committee members received an overview on the timelines outlined by the Province to consult with parents, Parent Advisory Councils, and School Staff regarding the role and processes for School Community Councils and the establishment of the Provincial Education Authority.

The Committee was informed that during the spring/summer of 2021, the Province intends to consult with parents, parent advisory councils, and school staff on the role parents can play in decision making and the role and processes for school community councils. The Province also intends to consult with education staff and stakeholders on priority actions as well as establishing a curriculum review panel, and a new assessment framework.

The Committee was informed that by fall of 2021, the Province intends to release a road map for the implementation of the priority actions and the timelines for change.

The Committee was informed that by November 2021, the Province anticipates having the Provincial Education Authority established along with the changes to the current school trustee system expected by July 1, 2022.

4. MAPC Bill 64 Meeting Invitation

The Committee was informed that MAPC is organizing a coalition of parent councils and allies to save public education in Manitoba. The Committee was informed that they may wish to share the details of this meeting with their parents/guardians.

5. Minister of Education's Student Advisory Council

The Committee was informed that the Minister of Education is receiving application from Students for the Minister of Education's Student Advisory Council. The Student Advisory Council would be comprised of up to 20 Manitoba youth, aged 14 – 18 and would report directly to the Minister of Education. Council members would serve a 12 month term starting in August, 2021 and ending August 2022. Council members would also meet with government staff and education stakeholders via virtual meetings.

The Committee was informed that the Student Advisory Council would discuss and provide input to the Minister on aspects of the education system and how they affect the children and young people who experience it today; bring youth insights to the department and the education sector to help inform the path forward; create a network for students across Manitoba with a way to share their perspectives and advice and; provide feedback on department initiatives and work collaboratively with fellow council members.

Respectfully Submitted,

Betty Edel
Trustee Representative

In Attendance:

Voting Representative

Children of the Earth High School
Daniel McIntyre Collegiate
Gordon Bell High School
Grant Park High School
Tec Voc High School

Regrets

Churchill High School
College Churchill
Elmwood High School
Kelvin High School
R.B. Russell High School
St. John's High School
Sisler High School
Winnipeg Adult Education Centre

Administration

Julie Smerchanski, Director
Brenda Lapointe, Board and Community Liaison Officer
Vinh Huynh, Principal Gordon Bell High School
Adam Dyck, Vice-Principal Tec Voc High School

Trustees

Betty Edel
Chris Broughton (Regrets)