

STUDENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPORT NO. 2-2016

To the Chair and Members
Winnipeg Public School Board:

May 12, 2016

Your Student Advisory Committee reports as follows:

1. Safe and Caring Policy – Trans and Gender Diverse Student and Staff

Your Committee received a video presentation on the Safe and Caring Policy – Trans and Gender Diverse Students and Staff. Your Committee was informed that the Winnipeg School Division strives for students to receive a high quality education in a safe, equitable and inclusive school environment. The Division is committed to providing learning opportunities, dignity, respect and equity for all. Your Committee was informed that the Safe and Caring Policy – Trans and Gender Diverse Students and Staff is intended to support all students and employees. The policy compliments existing provincial legislation, including the Public School Act and the Safe Schools Charter. In addition the policy strives to encourage the positive mental health among trans and gender creative students within the Winnipeg School Division and staff.

Your Committee was informed that the draft policy includes a comprehensive list of definitions and terms. All employees, students, volunteers and trustees are responsible for ensuring their conduct contributes to a welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning and working environment for everyone. The specific responsibilities outlined in the draft policy will ensure effective and respectful support for individual needs.

Your Committee was informed that the Winnipeg School Division Code of Conduct is a key supporting document for the policy and essentially requires everyone to respect the rights of all students and staff with regard to their gender identity and gender expression, and be aware of unacceptable behaviours, such as bullying, harassment, violence or discrimination. Your Committee was informed that the policy also includes guidelines for dealing with conflict.

Your Committee was informed that students' and staff safety is the highest priority for the Winnipeg School Division.

Your Committee was informed that there are eight guiding principles for administering the policy consistently within all schools across the Winnipeg School Division.

Your Committee was informed that the video to clarify the intent of the policy as well as a survey is posted on the Division's website www.wsd1.org. The deadline to receive feedback regarding the draft policy is May 20, 2016.

2. Aboriginal Culture Education

At a previous meeting, your Committee agreed to discuss Aboriginal Culture Education in the Winnipeg School Division. Mr. Rob Riel, Director of Aboriginal Education & Newcomer Services was in attendance to provide an outline of the initiatives undertaken by the Division.

Your Committee was informed that the Winnipeg School Division has implemented a wide variety of initiatives to support Aboriginal education, Aboriginal students and Aboriginal staff.

Your Committee was informed that in 2009, the WSD began a pilot to implement the Treaty Education Initiative (TEI) in all elementary schools (Grade 6) beginning in 2011. The goal of this provincial program is to increase the knowledge and understanding of the treaties and the treaty relationship and their impact on the creation of Manitoba, while building bridges between all peoples.

Your Committee was informed that every school in the WSD is involved in the Aboriginal Academic Achievement Initiative, which allows schools to support Aboriginal students and encourages understanding of Aboriginal culture by all students through the development of support documents, integration of Aboriginal perspectives in the curricula, provision of opportunities for cultural activities and enhancement of the involvement of parents/guardians. Fifteen schools participate in Building Student Success with Aboriginal Parents initiative, which promotes parent engagement activities that aim to improve student success at school.

Your Committee was informed that ongoing professional development in Aboriginal education and the integration of Aboriginal perspectives in all curriculum areas is offered to teachers and administrators in WSD. To increase the number of Aboriginal teachers in WSD, the Community-Based Aboriginal Teacher Education Program (CATEP) was created in collaboration with University of Winnipeg and Seven Oaks School Division during the 2005/06 school year. The program gives Aboriginal employees in the Winnipeg School Division the opportunity to study education at the University of Winnipeg over a six-year-period. Fifteen teachers graduated from the first two classes of CATEP. Presently, the WSD has 29 staff enrolled in the program.

Your Committee was also informed that in 2015, the Board of Trustees established an Aboriginal Council on Indigenous Education to provide feedback to the Winnipeg School Division Board of Trustees on matters relating to the teaching, learning and cultural needs of First Nations, Métis and Inuit (FNMI) students in the Winnipeg School Division as contemplated by its Aboriginal Education Policy (IGABA).

Your Committee was informed that the Division has a program called AYLP – Aboriginal Youth Leadership Program offered to students which they can earn credits. Students get together and participate in activities, medicine picking, and elder teachings.

3. **Dress Code**

At a previous meeting, your Committee agreed to discuss the Dress Code in the Winnipeg School Division.

Your Committee was informed that the Winnipeg School Division's Code of Conduct states students should dress appropriately for classes and school activities. Schools often have school specific dress codes or requirements.

Your Committee was informed that in most schools, the dress code is outlined for all students at the first all-school assembly of the year and reminders are done at following assemblies. Students are also verbally told of the dress code during homeroom on the first day of classes. Issues are addressed on an individual basis when they occur.

Your Committee discussed some of the school-based dress codes which mainly refer to; the wearing of any head wear except for religious or cultural reasons, display of colours or symbols which are considered threatening or offensive to others; shorts or summer wear; or overly inappropriate clothing.

Your Committee also discussed whether students dressed inappropriately should be asked to change clothing or instructed to go home to change. In most cases, students felt they should not be sent home to change.

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Your Committee discussed the dress code within their specific schools and suggested that the dress code should be universal for both females and males. Your Committee also discussed that in order to prepare ourselves for the workforce, all students should dress appropriately and that the dress code should be reasonable and consistent in all schools.

Your Committee was informed that administration is reviewing the possibility of including dress codes in the "Tell them from Me Survey" next year.

4. **Everybody has the Right**

Your Committee was informed that over 2,000 Winnipeg School Division students are walking a circle around the Canadian Museum of Human Rights on Friday, May 20th the marks the finale of another successful year of incorporating Everybody has the Right programming into WSD's everyday curriculum and learning. Schools created silk art banners and will be carried as they walk along the walking path. Your Committee was informed that the master of ceremonies will be Ace Burpee, and Kevin Lamoureux, Member of Parliament, and Kevin Chief, Member of Legislative Assembly will also be in attendance.

5. **Twitter**

Your Committee was encouraged to use twitter which is an excellent way of communicating if something is happening in your school and you want everyone to be aware of it. So many good things are happening in our schools and we would love to know everything.

On behalf of the Board of Trustees, Trustee Freedman thanked the students for their time and continuous dedication to the Committee. Certificates of Appreciation will be distributed to students at the end of the school year.

Student Representatives:

Argyle Alternative High School
 Elmwood High School
 Gordon Bell High School
 R. B Russell Vocational High School
 Sisler High School
 Technical Vocational High School

Trustees:

Kevin Freedman

Administration:

Rob Riel, Director of Aboriginal Education & Newcomer Services
 Gil Richard, Staff Advisor, Argyle Alternative High School
 Justin Dyck, Staff Advisor, Gordon Bell High School
 Katharine Thiessen, Staff Advisory, R.B. Russell Vocational High School
 Karen Stuart, Recording Secretary

Regrets:

Trustee Lisa Naylor
 Children of the Earth High School
 Churchill High School
 Daniel McIntyre Collegiate Institute
 Kelvin High School