

# THE WINNIPEG SCHOOL DIVISION

## SOUTH DISTRICT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

### SUMMARY OF DISCUSSIONS – Tuesday, April 26, 2016

#### 1. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

As there were five voting representatives in attendance and nine are required to form a quorum, the parent representatives agreed to proceed with an informal meeting.

#### 2. SAFE AND CARING POLICY – TRANS AND GENDER DIVERSE STUDENTS AND STAFF

Committee members 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.

- Direction on how to maintain student records for Trans and Gender Diverse students;
- Communication with parents or guardians;
- The right of students and employees to be addressed by their preferred name and pronoun;
- How to minimize gender segregated sorting – whether it is educational, recreational or competitive;
- Access to all-gender washrooms and appropriate change rooms; the use of an all gender washroom is a matter of choice and not mandatory;
- Arrangements for overnight trips, excursions and camps to provide accommodations that best address the needs of the students;
- Access to activities and sports regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity or expression;
- And school dress codes that ensure students have the right to dress in a manner consistent with their gender identity or expression.

Overall, Committee members felt the draft policy addressed the needs of students and staff and included a process to assist schools in ensuring that all students and staff are supported in an inclusive environment.

A Committee member expressed concern that the policy may limit information to parents when a child is need of support. The concern was based around the Division's liability and parents' right to open communication with the school and encouraged the Division to research avenues for parental involvement. Committee members were informed that it is always encouraged that parents are part of discussions to support the child.

In response to the concern on parental involvement of trans and gender diverse students, Committee members were informed that the safety and well-being of the student is a priority. The Winnipeg School Division recognizes everyone's right to privacy and confidentiality. An individual's right to discuss and express their gender identity and/or expression openly and to decide when, with whom, and how much private information to share shall be respected. Committee members were also informed that the Division has undertaken a legal review on the draft policy.

In response to an enquiry, Committee members were informed that gender identity is part of the health curriculum, as well, staff are being introduced to more training and additional resources will be available in the schools.

A Committee member expressed concern on the level of comfort children may have on the common use of bathrooms. Committee members were informed that this has been the practice of the Division and the implementation of the policy will assist by having guidelines in place.

In response to an enquiry, Committee members received clarification that all students, regardless of their sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression have the right to participate in all curricular and extra-curricular activities in a safe, inclusive and respectful environment. Any student may participate in gender segregated sports teams in accordance with their gender identity and skill level.

Committee members were 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](http://www.wsd1.org). The deadline to receive feedback regarding the draft policy is May 20, 2016.

### **3. FOR INFORMATION**

#### **3.1 District Advisory Reports and Summaries of Discussions**

Committee members were informed that at a meeting held March 7, 2016, the Board of Trustees received the South District Advisory Committee Report and Summary of Discussions as information. The Summary of Discussions have been distributed to Committee members the week of March 7, 2016. Committee members were informed that once reviewed by the Board, District Advisory Committee Reports and Summaries of Discussions are posted on the Division's website under the Family and Community tab.

SOUTH DISTRICT ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
SUMMARY OF DISCUSSIONS – Tuesday, April 26, 2016

- 3 -

---

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

**Voting Representatives:**

Becky Conia, Earl Grey School  
Lisa Smit-Beiko, Harrow School  
Miles Barber, Kelvin High School  
Matthew Cosway, Ecole LaVerendrye  
Amanda Plante, Lord Roberts School  
Dayna Distasio, Ecole Riverview School

**Regrets:**

Trustee Rollins  
Brock Corydon School  
Carpathia School  
College Churchill  
Grant Park High School  
Ecole J. B. Mitchell School  
Montrose School  
Queenston School  
Ecole River Heights School  
Ecole Robert H. Smith School  
Rockwood School

**Administration:**

Julie Millar, Director of Student Services  
Rob Riel, Director of Aboriginal Education & Newcomer Services  
Andrea Powell, Principal, Grosvenor School  
Linda Berry, Vice-Principal, Ecole J.B. Mitchell School  
Maria Silva, Principal, Lord Roberts School  
Shane Fox, Vice-Principal, Lord Roberts School  
Russell Antymis, Vice-Principal, Ecole River Heights School  
Helena Tessier, Recording Secretary

**Trustees:**

Chris Broughton  
Mark Wasyliv