

THE WINNIPEG SCHOOL DIVISION

SOUTH DISTRICT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSIONS – Thursday, February 11, 2021

1. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The Committee members approved the Agenda of February 11, 2021, as distributed.

2. 2021/2022 Draft Budget Discussion

The Secretary-Treasurer was in attendance to provide an overview on the draft Budget for the 2021/2022 school year.

Committee members were informed that on February 4, 2021, the Province of Manitoba announced an increase in education funding of \$20.8 million dollars. This resulted in a decrease in funding from the province of 1.6% or \$2.9 million dollars and an additional reduction from other revenue resources such as the Federal government of \$1.3 million dollars. As a result, the Board of Trustees is required to reduce almost \$5 million in programs in order to achieve a balanced budget of \$421,039,405. As directed by the Provincial Government, the property tax levy for WSD home and business owners will be frozen at 2020 levels or a decrease of about \$6 a year on the average assessed home value of \$225,700 within in WSD.

Committee members were informed that the reduction in the provincial budget along with the two percent cap on the special levy has created a deficit that requires WSD to reduce programs and/or services in order to achieve a balanced budget for the 2021/2022 school year.

Committee members were informed that the Board of Trustees drafted a proposed list of reductions to be made including School Resource Officers, Unfilled divisional support position vacancies, Occupational/ Physiotherapy, Milk Subsidy Program, Utility savings, School Budgets (non-salary), and School Clerk positions(12 month to 10 month).

In response to an enquiry, Committee members were informed that a list of non-mandated programs is available under Financial Facts on the WSD website.

School Resource Program

Committee members requested an update on the results of the SRO program survey. The Superintendent of Education Services informed Committee members that the survey was completed February 5, 2021. The results of the survey are still being tabulated and will be presented to the Board of Trustees for their review at a future meeting.

Trustee Dumont informed Committee members that the proposed reductions are programs/services that are not mandated by the Public Schools Act and the Division does not receive provincial funding. Trustee Dumont informed Committee members that although each of the programs are invaluable to WSD, the Board of Trustees identified programs that would have the lowest amount of impact on schools and students. The results of the survey will be valuable as the Board begins discussions with the Province and the City of Winnipeg on alternate options for the SRO program.

In response to an enquiry Trustee Dumont informed Committee members that any program on the non-mandated list of programs could be consideration as a possible reduction.

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In response to an enquiry Trustee Dumont informed Committee members that it is typically not possible to make reductions in areas based on specific school needs as most programs/services are based on a total cost.

In response to an enquiry regarding the SRO program, Trustee Dumont informed Committee members that initially the SRO program began as a tripartite agreement between the City of Winnipeg, the Province of Manitoba and WSD, for the delivery of service and was equally funded by all parties. In recent years, the province does not provide funding to support for any increases and WSD has supplemented the difference to support the continuation of the program. The Board of Trustees will continue discussions with the City and Province regarding alternate options for the SRO program.

Unfilled divisional support position vacancies

In response to an enquiry regarding the vacancies, the Secretary-Treasurer, informed Committee members that the unfilled positions are administrative. Committee members were informed that four positions would remain unfilled.

Occupational/ Physiotherapy

In response to an enquiry regarding Occupational and Physiotherapists in schools, the Director of Student Services informed Committee members that that WSD has a contract with the Rehabilitation Center for Children that provides a range of supports for working with students with physical barriers. Six Occupational Therapists and three physiotherapists work in the Division, providing services like educational workshops for teachers, designing and customizing equipment for students, completing assessments of students, assisting students with issues paying attention, learning to listen, learning to calm down, learning new play skills, eating, dressing, moving, etc.

Committee members expressed concern regarding the proposed reduction to Occupational/ Physiotherapy programming. Trustee Dumont informed Committee members that the Board discussed the possibility of the program being subsidized by Health Services. The Board of Trustees will request a meeting with the province to request that funding be provided by the WRHA for the delivery of the program.

In a response to an enquiry, Committee members were informed that in the event that WRHA is unable to subsidize the costs of the Occupational/ Physiotherapy program the Board of Trustees would need to re-examine the list of non-mandated programs to determine what other areas reductions could be made to balance the budget.

Committee members encouraged the Board and the administration to consider other options to retain the program in the event that Health Services is unable to subsidize the program.

Milk Subsidy Program

In response to an enquiry, Committee members were informed that the Milk Subsidy program provides milk at a reduced cost which is available to any students who wish to participate in the program. Trustee Dumont informed Committee members that the Board of Trustees was able to maintain the nutrition programs for schools, which provides students with a breakfast and or lunch, as well as snacks for Nursery programs.

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Committee members recommended providing milk at a reduced cost only to lower income families. Trustee Dumont informed Committee members that a targeted approach to the Milk Subsidy program would be difficult to manage. Committee members agreed that it was important to maintain the nutrition programs.

Reduction in Utilities

Committee members were informed that utility budget has a surplus this year, in part due to the milder winter. In response to an enquiry regarding whether or not more money could be saved from utilities, the Secretary-Treasurer informed Committee members that the utilities surplus has been used to balance the budget in previous years and is the maximum amount recommended at this time.

Technical/ Clerical

Committee members were informed that the reduction to the Technical/Clerical budget would represent approximately 10 percent of staffing. Parent Representatives expressed concern that there would be an increased need for technical support for students participating in remote learning. Trustee Dumont informed Committee members that this reduction would not affect technical support for remote learning.

School Budgets (non-salary)

Committee members were informed that school budgets would be reduced by 20 percent. Schools are able to meet the educational requirements and often accumulate a small surplus at the end of the year. In response to an enquiry, Committee members were informed that school funds are used for a variety of items such as furniture, supplies, and equipment, etc.

School Clerks

Committee members were informed that most clerical staff in schools are 10 month positions, however there are some clerical staff who hold 12 month positions. It is proposed that these positions be reduced from 12 to 10 months positions. Committee members expressed concern that reducing these contracts could result in issues when students require course changes etc. prior to the school year starting. The Superintendent of Education Services informed Committee members that most schools operate with only 10 month clerical staff. Committee members were informed that in schools with 10 month clerks there are additional flexible weeks beyond the school year.

Committee members discussed and agreed that any reduction of Occupational/Physio Therapists would directly impact students. In response to an enquiry regarding other divisions programs for Occupational/ Physio Therapists, the Director of Education informed Committee members that other school boards employ Occupational/ Physio Therapists and that the administration could review whether this is an alternative option.

Trustee Dumont informed Committee members that creating the proposed list of reductions was a very difficult task for the Board of Trustees and the administration, as all of the programs on the list are vital to WSD. Trustee Dumont informed Committee members that although there are many reductions being proposed, the Board and the administration worked hard to preserve many other important non-mandated programs.

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Committee members were informed that there will be a meeting on February 22, 2021 for delegations and that the Board of Trustees will be approving the 2021/2022 budget prior to March 15, 2021.

3. NEW BUSINESS

3.1 WI-FI

In response to an enquiry requesting better Wi-Fi services for the schools, Trustee Dumont informed Committee members that the Board of Trustees has not had any specific discussions regarding Wi-Fi, however, Trustees will request that this topic be added to a future Board Agenda for discussion.

3.2 K-12 Education Report

In response to an enquiry regarding the release date of the Kindergarten to Grade 12 report, Trustee Dumont informed Committee members that the Board of Trustees is expecting that the province will release the report in the next few weeks.

3.3 Covid-19

In response to an enquiry regarding the status of the Covid-19 response and the hiring of more support teachers, Trustee Dumont informed Committee members that the Board of Trustees has not yet hired the full complement of supply teachers. The main issue is finding enough qualified candidates to fill the positions. Trustee Dumont informed Committee members that school staff are not being prioritized by the province to receive vaccinations.

3.4 Cecil Rhodes School

Committee members requested an update on the renaming of Cecil Rhodes School. Committee members were informed that the surveys have been completed and that the administration is reviewing the results of the survey. Committee members were informed that there were thousands of responses to the survey. The results of the survey will be presented to the Board of Trustees at a future meeting for review and consideration.

3.5 Agenda Items – next meeting

Committee members requested updates on the following: Wi-Fi in schools, K-12 report, Covid-19 response and the renaming of Cecil Rhodes School for the next advisory meeting.

4. MANITOBA ASSOCIATION OF PARENT COUNCILS (MAPC) MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

Committee members reviewed the Manitoba Association of Parent Councils Membership Renewal information.

In response to an enquiry regarding who was responsible for the MAPC fees, the Superintendent of Education Services informed Committee members that the Board of Trustees would cover the registration fees for any Parent Councils interested in becoming members of MAPC.

A Parent representative informed Committee members that MAPC had been a great resource for their Parent Council and encouraged others to consider joining.

5. ENQUIRIES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS AND SCHOOL REPORTS

SCHOOL REPORTS

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

- Ecole Riverview School

6. DISTRICT ADVISORY COMMITTEE DATES

Committee members requested the next meeting date for the South District Advisory Committee be held on Thursday, April 8th. Committee members were informed that the requested date has been noted, however the date is subject to change.

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In Attendance:

Voting Representatives

Earl Grey School
Ecole LaVerendrye
Ecole River Heights
Harrow School
J.B. Mitchell School
Kelvin High School
Queenston School
Riverview School
Rockwood School

Regrets

Brock Corydon School
Carpathia School
Churchill High School
College Churchill
Gladstone School
Grant Park High School
Grosvenor School
Lord Roberts School
Montrose School
Ecole Sir William Osler
Robert H. Smith School

Administration

Celia Caetano-Gomes, Superintendent of Education Services
Julie Millar, Director
Brad Burns, Principal Ecole River Heights
Cinzia Caputo, Principal Riverview
Dominique Ostermann, Principal Sir William Osler
Dominic Zagari, Vice-Principal Kelvin High School
Nicole Kurtz, Vice-Principal J.B. Mitchell School
Suzanne Mole, Principal Montrose School
Susan Christiuk, Principal Carpathia School
Ryan Hughes, Principal Churchill High School
Jamie Hutchison, Principal Grant Park High School
Evelyn Siddall, Principal Harrow School
Paulette Huggins, Principal J.B. Mitchell School
Ruth Schappert, Principal LaVerendrye School
Michelle Namaka, Principal Queenston School
Andrea Powell, Principal Robert H. Smith School
Kathy Ateah, Principal Rockwood School
Warren Nickerson, Vice-Principal Robert H. Smith School
Tarin Howard, Recording Secretary

Trustee

Jamie Dumont
Chris Broughton (Regrets)



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Telephone: 284-5983 Fax: 284-8326
Principal: Cinzia Caputo
Vice Principal: Samuel Tougas
www.winnipegssd.ca/schools/riverview

South District Report:

There have been many challenges during this pandemic in all schools. It has been challenging to maintain a high level of student engagement within the limitations of social distancing and mask wearing and also difficult to have students work collaboratively when they can't be in close contact. The staff has been extremely proud of the resilience of all the students at Ecole Riverview School and continue to be impressed with their ability to be flexible learners during these times.

Ecole Riverview School has had French Immersion classrooms that have had a high level of teacher turnover this year due to uncontrollable circumstances such as illnesses or Covid-19 related concerns. As resilient as the students have been they have been left with inconsistency and uncertainty in their learning and in their daily lives. Parents in the community, in general, have been understanding and supportive but the continued unavailability of French speaking teachers takes its toll.

There have been many adjustments made to our daily lives and maintaining connections with each other remains a priority for all. Even if we can not physical be together in the same space we can virtually join together and celebrate. Ecole Riverview school has its very first virtual assembly recently and it was a great success! We plan on continuing this connection monthly where each classroom will have the opportunity to lead the assembly and celebrate our school together. Our world has changed drastically but the important things such as a feeling a sense of belonging are always significant.

Respectfully submitted,

Cinzia Caputo- Principal

*Respectful, Responsible, Kind
Raccoon Pride!*

