

NORTH DISTRICT ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPORT NO. 3-2017

To the Chair and Members
Winnipeg Public School Board:

November 14, 2017

The North District Advisory Committee reports as follows:

1. Election of Committee Chair

The Committee was informed that at the Inaugural meeting of the Board held on September 11, 2017, Trustee Dean Koshelanyk was appointed as the Board's representative and Trustee Sherri Rollins was appointed as the Board's alternate representative to this Committee.

The parent representative from St. John's High School volunteered to Chair the North District Advisory Committee for the 2017/2018 school year.

2. 2018/2019 Budget Consultation

The Committee received an overview on the Budget Consultation for the 2018/2019 school year.

The Committee was informed that the Board is committed to obtaining feedback from school communities, parent councils, residents and staff groups for the 2018/2019 school budget. The District Advisory meetings will provide parent representatives with an opportunity to share feedback, ideas and questions with the trustees in their local area.

The Committee was informed the 2017/2018 final budget included expenditures of \$406,594,200. The 2017/2018 Budget included much needed programs, although not provincially funded, such as the Nursery Program, Library Technical Assistants, School Resource Officers, Adult Crossing Guards, Summer School, Off Campus Programs, Nutrition and Therapy Services to support students.

The Committee was informed that the two major sources of funding are the Province of Manitoba and the property tax levy. In the most recent budget, provincial funding provided only 62% of the total revenue required to balance the WSD budget. The second major source of funding is from property taxation which provided an additional 36% of the total revenue. The remaining two percent is revenue from other sources such as the federal government, First Nations authorities and other school divisions who use WSD resources.

The Committee was informed that 81% of the budget goes directly to the cost of providing instruction and supports in the classroom. The other 19% covers costs such as student transportation, building maintenance and operations, business administration and support services related to research, planning and technology and other mandatory expenses such as Canada Pension Plan costs, Employment Insurance premiums, payroll tax and the cost of supplies, materials, books and equipment.

The Committee received an overview on the financial challenges faced by the Division in education funding. The Committee discussed the level of funding that is required to assist school divisions in removing the many barriers to education that may impact student outcomes and their continued success in school. Provincial funding continues to lag behind the needs of the students, families, staff and communities of the Division, resulting in an increased reliance on property taxation.

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The Committee was informed that 60% of its school buildings are more than 40 years old and 35% being more than 50 years old. The Board has made significant investments from its budget and from reserve/surplus to address much-needed building repairs and upgrades. Additional on-going/sustained budget allocations are required to address much needed investments such as electrical upgrades and additional outlets, heating and ventilation equipment maintenance, window replacement, galvanized waterline replacement, elevator and upgrades. The requirements far exceed the provincial funding for these types of projects. The challenges in ensuring that the necessary technology infrastructure and classroom technologies are kept secure and up-to-date to support student learning are also very significant and continue to grow.

The Committee was informed that for over forty years, the Division has provided nursery programming as part of an early years learning strategy for students. Implementation of full day kindergarten began with a pilot program in the 2014/15 year. In the 2016/17 year, the program was expanded and is now offered in 11 school locations. These programs allow children to succeed, in particular students and families who benefit from accessing learning opportunities at an early age. There are key cost savings to government and society when there is support for early years education.

The Committee was informed that the Province of Manitoba would continue to fund the Student Resource Officer Program but would not be increasing its funding. The Division and the Province are responsible for paying 50% of the constables salaries, and although not required under the Public Schools Act, the Division is required to increase the Special Levy to support this valuable program and provide the much needed resources that keep our school communities safe for our students. The Committee was informed that the Board has requested a meeting with the Minister of Education and the Minister of Justice to discuss the importance of the School Resource Officer Program, the financial impact on school divisions and the importance of the Department of Justice to financially support the educational component of justice through the School Resource Officers in the public school system and community.

The Committee was informed that the current provincial government has suggested that a review of school division amalgamation will take place after the 2018 municipal elections. The members of the Board will continue to seek clarification from the Minister of Education on the intent of amalgamation and share concerns on the impact an amalgamation will have on the Division's ability to provide unique programs and services that are required to support students.

The Committee received a survey to facilitate discussions on the 2018/2019 Budget which identified 3 main topics for feedback. The topics were WSD programs and services and funding challenges for the Division, what role parents and school communities play to ensure the necessary revenue from provincial funding and property taxation are available and what additional information/resources/process would be helpful to continue dialogue with parents, neighbours and the community.

The Committee discussed the funding challenges for the Division and expressed concern on the necessary programs and services required for students. The Committee discussed the significant costs to have energy efficient building upgrades and meet requirements as identified in the Accessibility for Manitobans Act. The Committee also discussed the need to maintain reasonable size classrooms, educational assistants, non-mandated programs and services and the inclusion support services required for students.

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The Committee also discussed a need for in-school daycares and support services for students who are blind. The Committee discussed the importance of staffing libraries with qualified staff and providing supports for a healthy minds and bodies initiative. The Committee also discussed the importance of providing appropriate funding for students in the Community Access and Life Skills program.

The Committee discussed what role parents and school communities can play to help ensure the necessary revenues from provincial funding and property taxation are available to fund student programs and services. The Committee agreed that parents should voice their concerns to their local MLAs to ensure appropriate educational resources are available for students. The Committee also suggested that community consultations are helpful to inform parent and members of the community.

The Committee discussed what additional information/resources/process would be helpful to continue meaningful dialogue with parents, neighbours, the community and partners in education. The Committee discussed the benefits of more community meetings; a community-wide newsletter; using social media to distribute information; the use of synervice and handing out budget surveys at parent-teacher conferences. The Committee also indicated the importance of getting information out to the community in advance of meeting dates and to provide the information in different languages.

The Committee was informed that the Board will be holding a public pre-budget consultation scheduled for November 30, 2017 at 6:30 p.m. at Tec Voc gymnasium. Educators, Parent Council and Community members are encouraged to attend the public forum to discuss the challenges in sustaining high quality programs for students.

The Committee was informed that it is anticipated that the Provincial funding announcement will be made in late January / early February. Once the announcement is received, the Finance/Personnel Committee of the Board will prepare final recommendations for approval by the Board of Trustees. Budget information will be distributed to all schools, parent councils, student councils, advisory committees, employee groups and others on request, and posted on Division's website.

The Committee was informed that District Advisory Committee meetings will be scheduled in February to provide an opportunity for dialogue and discussion about the draft budget. A Public Meeting regarding the draft budget will be held on February 26, 2018. The deadline to receive feedback regarding the budget will be received by the Board until March 5, 2018. All feedback will be considered by Finance/Personnel Committee. The Board of Trustees will approve the budget at its meeting to be held March 12, 2018. The Board must finalize the budget by March 15, 2018, as required by legislation.

3. Revised Transportation Policy – EEA

The Committee received an overview of the revised Policy EEA – Transportation of Pupils to include provisions for Courtesy Transportation Services. Courtesy Transportation is offered to those students who meet specified criteria. As with most school jurisdictions, the number of students who are eligible for transportation varies from year to year.

The Committee was informed that the Transportation Policy – EEA meets all of the provincial regulatory requirements to ensure that students who live further than 1.6 km, who have exceptional learning needs or who live in hazard areas are accommodated. The policy provides transportation at no charge to Kindergarten to Grade 6 language and alternative program students, and for Nursery students attending French immersion milieu schools.

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Among the provisions is a mandate that no new bus routes or stops be added to accommodate courtesy seating. Courtesy Transportation seats are not guaranteed for the full school year as students who meet full eligibility requirements, will have precedence over a courtesy seat assignment. The Committee was advised that the number of students requiring transportation changes on a regular basis therefore vacant seats on buses may or may not be available.

The Committee was informed that the Board has also directed administration to conduct a larger study on fee for service and courtesy transportation and make a recommendation for possible implementation in the 2018/2019 school year.

The Committee expressed concern that the policy may limit access to transportation for those students enrolled in Inclusive Education programs and suggested rewording the policy to indicate that the Division is obligated to provide transportation to pupils in inclusion support service programs, as it may currently be perceived that transportation services to these pupils are dependent on other circumstances.

4. Tree Planting/Urban Forest Management Plan

The Committee was informed that at a meeting held March 21, 2017, the Board of Trustees recommended that the Urban Forest Management Plan be distributed to District Advisory Committees for consideration and feedback on the plan.

The Committee was informed the members of the Board would like schools to discuss whether their students and school community would benefit from participating in this educational and ongoing learning opportunity. Please visit the Division's website at <https://www.winnipegssd.ca/About%20WSD/sustainabledevelopment/Pages/default.aspx> to view the WSD School Ground Greening Guidelines for reference purposes.

As outlined in the plan, a budget would be required for the initial 3 year project and after which sustainable long term funding would be required for the continuous maintenance and upkeep of the grounds.

The Committee members were informed the purpose of the Urban Forest Management Plan is to provide guidelines for increasing the number of trees by adding approximately 60 trees a year on WSD properties. The plan will provide direction on developing and caring of the urban forest, implementation framework, budget requirements and other required supports.

The Committee was informed that in order to incorporate a formal tree planting program, a number of factors would need to be considered, such as, the size, type, location of the trees/shrubs, allergies, staffing, and required equipment. A tree planting program will be valuable to the Division which gives consideration to historic issues; maintenance requirements; properly planned projects utilizing the expertise of landscape consultants for larger projects; if the school/stakeholders are involved in a planned development and take ownership of the project; and adequate funding.

The Committee was informed that Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) is at the forefront of curriculum in Manitoba Schools. The incorporation of key themes of sustainable development into the education system will help students become informed and responsible decision-makers, playing active roles as citizens of Canada and the world. These complex concepts can be further illustrated in well-designed school grounds. These traditionally barren landscapes can contribute to social, cultural, environmental, and mental well-being of the entire community.

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The Committee was provided with a survey to share with their parent councils to provide feedback on the benefits and challenges of implementing a Tree Planting/Urban Forest Management Plan program.

In response to an enquiry from a parent regarding concerns on tree planting surrounding playgrounds on city property, the Committee was informed that the Division works closely with the City.

In response to an enquiry, the Director of Buildings informed the Committee that schools who have already begun urban planning will still be considered and further assisted under the proposed Urban Forest Management Plan.

The Committee indicated that the program has benefits to the schools and community, but would not be agreeable to use funds allocated for important programs and services such as inclusion support and educational assistants. The Committee also expressed concern that the implementation of the plan would result in another property tax increase.

5. Barrier-Free Manitoba

The Committee was informed that as a result of the recent Accessibility Legislation, school divisions received provincial direction regarding the requirements to meet accessibility legislation, the Human Rights Code, Workplace Safety & Health Act and other legislation and regulations.

The Committee was informed that at a meeting held October 2, 2017, the Board of Trustees was informed that Barrier-Free Manitoba is requested that school divisions provide their support by signing a letter campaign to the provincial government to develop an accessible education standard under the landmark Accessibility for Manitobans Act.

The Division responded to the request from Barrier-Free Manitoba and provided a copy of the Division's Accessibility Plan and Strategic Plan to outline achievements, goals and objectives and reaffirm our commitment to continuing to address barriers in schools.

The Committee was informed that although, the Division has been successful and progress has been made in meeting the requirements, school divisions are concerned that new regulations may incur additional costs for school divisions which may be unfunded by the government.

The Committee was informed that Barrier-Free Manitoba is working on targeting not only schools but the general public. For more information on the Barrier-Free Manitoba or to provide feedback visit <http://www.barrierfreemb.com>

Information on the Winnipeg School Division's Accessibility Plan can be found on the Division website:

<https://www.winnipeg.sd.ca/AccessibilityPlan/Pages/default.aspx>

6. 2017/2018 Advisory Committee Dates

The Committee was informed of the following schedule of the District Advisory Committees for the 2017/2018 school year:

Central District Advisory Committee
7:00 p.m.

Thursday, November 9, 2017
Wednesday, February 21, 2018
Thursday, May 3, 2018

Inner City District Advisory Committee
6:30 p.m.

Wednesday, November 15, 2017
Thursday, February 15, 2018
Wednesday, April 25, 2018

North District Advisory Committee
7:00 p.m.

Tuesday, November 14, 2017
Tuesday, February 13, 2018
Tuesday, April 24, 2018

South District Advisory Committee
7:00 p.m.

Tuesday, November 21, 2017
Tuesday, February 20, 2018
Tuesday, May 8, 2018

French Immersion Advisory Committee
7:00 p.m.

Wednesday, November 29, 2017
Thursday, February 22, 2018
Thursday, May 10, 2018

Student Advisory Committee
4:00 p.m.

Tuesday, November 28, 2017
Wednesday, March 6, 2018
Tuesday, May 15, 2018

Respectfully Submitted,

DEAN KOSHELANYK
Trustee Representative

North District Advisory Committee Report No. 3-2017**IN ATTENDANCE:****Voting Representatives:**

Josh Muehling, Faraday School
Marlene Pollok, Garden Grove School
Dwayne McIvor, Inkster School
Sherry Shorting, Isaac Newton School
Lynn Kammerlock, Ecole Lansdowne
Kelly Kuryk, Luxton School
Crystal Courtland, Ralph Brown School
Ellen Hrabchak, Robertson School
Bernice Rempel, St. John's High School
Roma Spence, Shaughnessy Park School
Terry Burr, Sisler High School
Natalia Klumper, Stanley Knowles School

Alternate Representatives:

Tamara Kelly, Luxton School
Nathan Wild, Luxton School
Melissa Critch, St. John's High School

Regrets:

Andrew Mynarski School
Champlain School
Lord Nelson School
Tyndall Park School

Administration:

Fatima Mota, Superintendent
Chris Rhodes, Director, Career Education
Mile Rendulic, Director of Buildings
Greg Bouchard, Principal, Andrew Mynarski School
Kathy Ateah, Vice-Principal, Andrew Mynarski School
Ryan Hughes, Principal, Isaac Newton School
Rosanna Guzzi, Acting Principal, Ralph Brown School
Tony Marchione, Robertson School
Marsha Missyabit, Vice-Principal, St. John's High School
George Heshka, Principal, Sisler High School
Madalynne Iannone, Vice-Principal, Sisler High School
Chris Clarke, Vice-Principal, Sisler High School
Paul Krowiak, Vice-Principal, Sisler High School
Joy Perrott, Vice-Principal, Stanley Knowles School
Garth McAlpine, Vice-Principal, Tyndall Park School
Helena Tessier, Recording Secretary

Trustees:

Dean Koshelanyk
Sherri Rollins

Community Members

Sharon Machinski

Non-Voting/Resource Members:

Kim Robson, Shaughnessy Park School (Community Support Worker)
Amanda Ferbraché, W.A.N.T.E. Representative