

**THE WINNIPEG SCHOOL DIVISION**  
**FRENCH IMMERSION ADVISORY COMMITTEE**  
**SUMMARY OF DISCUSSIONS – Thursday, February 18, 2021**

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**1. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Committee members approved the Agenda of February 18, 2021, as distributed.

**2. 2021/2022 DRAFT BUDGET**

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.

Committee members discussed each item and expressed concern regarding the proposed reductions to school budgets. The Secretary-Treasurer informed Committee members that school budgets generally have a surplus at the end of the year and the proposed reduction reflects that surplus. In response to an enquiry, the Secretary-Treasurer informed Committee members that the 20 percent reduction may not be applicable to every school, as it would take into account schools that had larger surpluses versus schools that would require additional funding.

Committee members expressed concern about additional Covid-19 expenditures that may be required to support students/schools. The Secretary-Treasurer informed Committee members that Covid-19 expenditures are considered a one-time expense, the draft Budget reflects ongoing expenditures.

In response to an enquiry, Committee members expressed that any reductions to the Occupational/Physiotherapy program will have an impact on the children and families that need these services and that it would be difficult in the future to get this program back .

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 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 in what other areas reductions could be made to balance the budget.

Trustee Dumont informed Committee members that the Budget has not been finalized, and in the event Occupational/Physiotherapy programs are reduced there will be more discussions to create procedures for families who require assistance to navigate acquiring resources and services for their child.

Committee members agreed that it would be beneficial to lobby the province to provide funding to school boards that takes into account inflation costs to ensure that schools are able to cover these vital programs. Trustee Dumont informed Committee members that they can contact their MLA and the Minister of Education to voice their concerns.

In response to an enquiry whether a reduction in enrolment in Nursery and Kindergarten programs would impact the budget, Committee members were informed that enrolment projections are determined by the WSD research department using a variety of variables.

In response to an enquiry regarding funding for French Immersion programs, the Secretary-Treasurer informed Committee members that the majority of funding for French Immersion Programs comes from Property Tax. In response to an enquiry, Committee members were informed that the WSD's French Language Program expenditures are approximately \$45 million. WSD received approximately \$1 million in revenue from the Province and equalization represent approximately \$6.3 million resulting in a shortfall of \$37 million. Committee members expressed concern that French Immersion programming is mainly covered by special levy and not core provincial funding.

In response to an enquiry regarding an update on the SRO survey, Trustee Dumont informed Committee members that the survey results are still being compiled and will be presented to the Board of Trustees at a future meeting. Committee members were informed 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.

### **3. FRENCH IMMERSION PROGRAM**

The Superintendent of Education Services provided an update on French Immersion programming throughout the Division. Committee members were informed that Virtual programs are available in French and currently there are 82 students participating. Committee members were informed that there is still a shortage of teachers, however WSD has continued recruitment efforts, including pre-hiring teachers pending graduation. WSD has also encouraged teachers to upgrade their French skills to increase the number of teachers available to provide French education.

In response to an enquiry regarding a shortage of Principals for French Immersion schools, the Superintendent of Education Services informed Committee members that vacancies are distributed internally as well as externally. WSD has provided a variety of leadership programs for teachers interested in administrative positions, however, there is a shortage of qualified candidates.

Principals from several French Immersion Schools provided updates on various activities, including preparing students for transitioning from elementary to junior high and junior high to high school. Committee members were informed that transition times are crucial to ensure students continue their French language education. Committee members were informed that teachers have found new and interesting ways of delivering French language programs through virtual classrooms. Students have participated in virtual field trips. Students have also had access to more online programs which has improved French reading and writing skills by up to three levels. Teacher recruitment has continued through virtual fairs, locally and in Sudbury and Ottawa.

#### **4. NEW BUSINESS**

Committee members requested an update on the five-year analysis report, the Build from Within program, and the retention of students. Committee members were informed that the reports have been delayed due to the challenges with Covid-19, however, it is anticipated that information will be provided to the Policy/Program Committee for review in the near future.

In response to an enquiry regarding the renaming of Greenway School, the Superintendent of Education Services informed Committee members that an update will be provided at the spring meeting.

Committee members recommended that the Secretary-Treasurer be invited to attend the Spring meeting to provide more information regarding federal funding of French Immersion programs.

#### **5. MANITOBA ASSOCIATION OF PARENT COUNCILS (MAPC) MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL**

Committee members received information on the renewal for the Manitoba Association of Parent Councils Membership.

#### **6. ENQUIRES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS AND SCHOOL REPORTS**

##### SCHOOL REPORTS

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

- Sir William Osler

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## 7. DISTRICT ADVISORY COMMITTEE DATES

Committee members were informed that the next French Immersion Advisory Committee meeting will be held in April (T.B.D.).

### **IN ATTENDANCE:**

#### **Voting Representatives**

Ecole J.B. Mitchell School  
Ecole Garden Grove School  
École secondaire Kelvin High  
Ecole Lansdowne  
École LaVerendrye  
École River Heights  
École Robert H. Smith School  
École Sir William Osler

#### **Regrets**

College Churchill  
Ecole George V School  
Ecole Laura Secord School  
Ecole Luxton School  
Ecole Riverview School  
Ecole Sacre-Coeur  
Sisler High School  
Ecole Stanley Knowles  
Ecole Victoria-Albert School  
Ecole Waterford Springs School

#### **Administration**

Fatima Mota, Superintendent of Education Services  
Julie Smerchanski, Director  
Paul Kochan, Secretary-Treasurer  
Ruth Schappert, Principal Ecole LaVerendrye  
Ryan Hughes, Principal Churchill High School  
Wade Gregg, Principal Ecole Laura Secord school  
Matthew Couture, Principal Ecole George V School  
Paulette Huggins, Principal J.B. Mitchell School  
Brad Burns, Principal Ecole River Heights School  
Andrea Powell, Principal Ecole Robert H. Smith School  
Dominique Ostermann, Principal Ecole Sir William Osler  
Stephanie Helander, Recording Secretary

#### **Trustees**

Jamie Dumont  
Jennifer Chen

**French Immersion Advisory Meeting February 18, 2021**  
**École Sir William Osler Report**

- Open house- Currently accepting registrations for N-6. All the information that is normally shared during the open house is up on our website along with an open house video and all the necessary registration information and forms <https://www.winnipegsd.ca/schools/sirwilliamosler/communityandfamily/spotlight-news-stories/pages/open-house-2021.aspx>
- Our PAC and playground committee created an “enchanted forest” to encourage outdoor education and play. The kids are loving it!
- Winter fundraiser was held to raise funds towards winter playground equipment. The kids, even the older ones, are loving them!
- Festival Week- classes are doing activities throughout the week in their classrooms along with school wide activities such as trivia, music and dressing up.
- I love to read month activities- Canadian authors, mental health and well-being stories, read-a-loud with the principal
- Polar Bear Club- allows students to enjoy outdoor play even when temperatures drop below -27 <https://activeforlife.com/polar-bear-clubs/>
- FortWhyte Alive visited our grade 1-6 classes. Each class was outdoors for an hour learning about the nature that surrounds our playground and community, and outdoor education opportunities for students and teachers.
- Sir William Osler will be undergoing a planned renovation, school envelope, on the exterior of the building starting at the end of June.