



WINNIPEG SCHOOL DIVISION

Annual Report

to the community
2015-2016



MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR OF THE BOARD

During my second year as Chair of the Winnipeg School Division Board of Trustees, I was very pleased with the commitment and cooperation of the Board and Administration. The 2015/16 year was a productive, with a number of new policies and timely changes within the division.

We kicked the school year off with the grand opening of the Queenston School Sheila Sweatman Gym. This is an excellent example of Winnipeg School Division and the City of Winnipeg working together to provide a community-use space. There were many celebrations in the division during 2015/2016, including

the 25 year anniversary of the opening of Children of the Earth High School, the 50 year anniversary of the WSD Nursery Program, and the 80 year anniversary of the first school safety patrols.

The Board approved the addition of three new bilingual language programs to start September 2016. These include Cree and Ojibwe at Isaac Brock School and Spanish at Earl Grey School. These are in addition to the Hebrew and Ukrainian bilingual language and French immersion programs. École Sir William Osler School was re-established as a French milieu school starting with Nursery to Grade 1 students, while École Luxton School was

identified as a new French immersion program school for 2016.

With the addition of a new school and new programs, WSD completed its review of boundaries and made changes for Luxton and Stanley Knowles Schools, as well as École Sir William Osler and École LaVérendrye Schools.

The Board committed to begin a review of all WSD policies and began this process in 2015. In addition, the Board has approved three new policies that enhance WSD's safe and inclusive culture. These are the Certified Service Animal policy, The Suicide Prevention and Non-suicidal Self-injury policy, and the Safe and Caring – Transgender and Gender Diverse Students and Staff policy.

Employee relations was another top focus of the past year and we have

successfully negotiated contracts with UFCW 832 and the Winnipeg Teachers Association (WTA).

The Board regretfully accepted the resignation of Trustee Allan Beach at the end of June due to an unexpected move out of the Winnipeg School Division boundaries. We wish Mr. Beach well in his new home and thank him for his service to the division since 2014.

In April, Manitoba elected a new provincial government with a mandate to "Correct Manitoba's Fiscal Course". The WSD Board of Trustees is looking forward to working with the province to ensure education and support for students in our division is maintained and enhanced. We believe strongly that the future of Manitoba rests upon our work today in developing the strengths of our youth.

Mark Wasyliv
Board Chair (2014 to 2016)



Winnipeg School Division has a strategic plan for 2016 to 2020 – it's a road map that provides direction at a high level for trustees, administration and staff in developing plans and actions that align with WSD's vision to be engaged, confident, inspired and successful learners.

For more information, please see the strategic plan infographic on page 11 of *Our Schools*.

Or visit winnipegSD.ca to learn more.



Please enjoy a sampling of the student banners created for the Everybody has the Right diversity walk shown throughout this report.

FINANCE COMMITTEE CHAIR MESSAGE

As the Chair of the Winnipeg School Division Board of Trustees Finance and Personnel Committee for 2015/2016, it was my responsibility to oversee development of a budget that improves student success in the division, while also aligning resources with needs.

Provincial funding for the 2016/2017 school year was announced early in January, prior to the provincial election that resulted in a new government for Manitoba. The funding announcement is being fulfilled by the new government, and while it does provide WSD with an increase over the previous year, it is a percentage point less than the rate of inflation. Provincial funding in this budget year equals 61 percent of the division's entire expenditure, with revenue from property taxation making up the remainder. A decrease in the division's property tax base, due to City of Winnipeg commercial reassessments, created a considerable challenge for the committee.

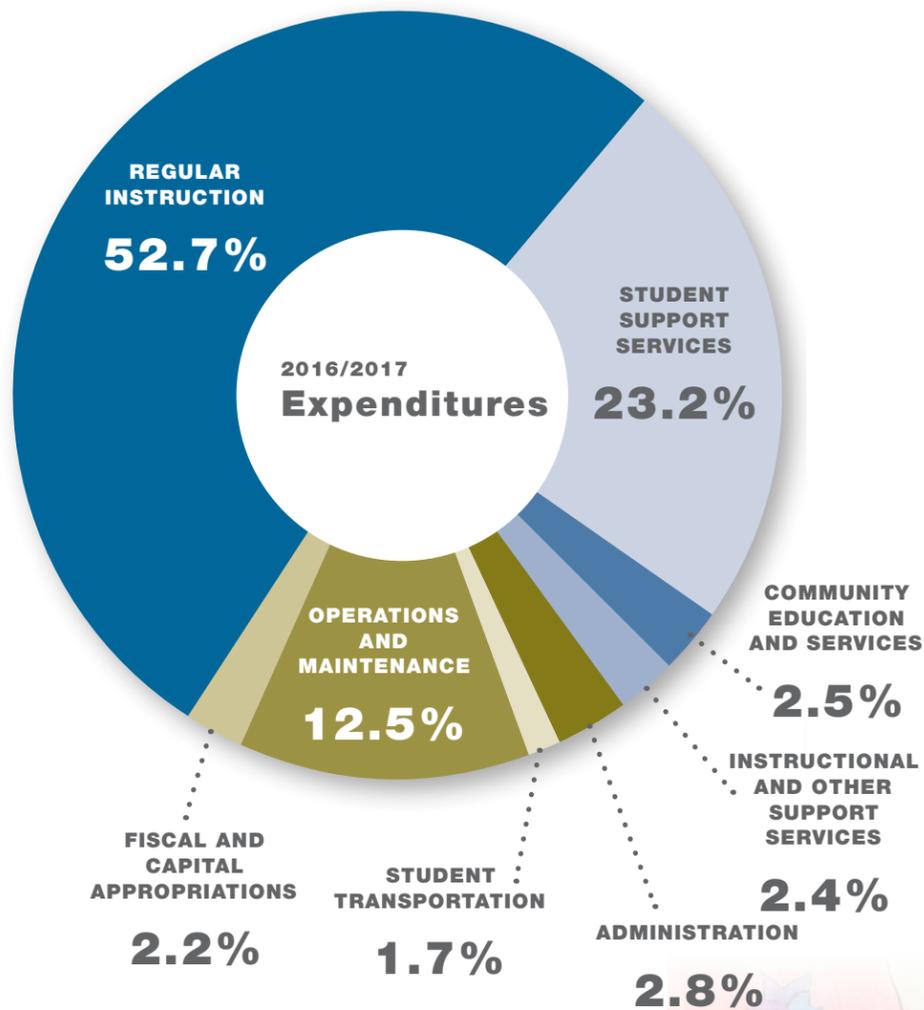
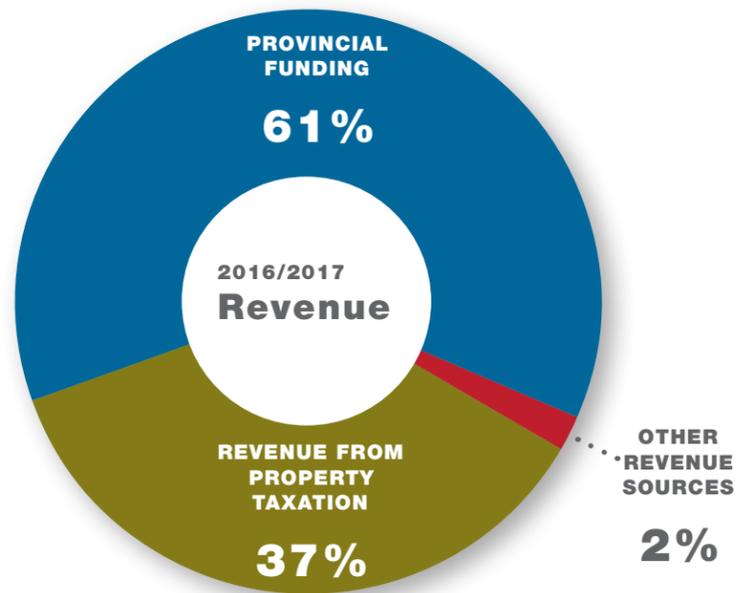
During our consultation process, it was clear that existing supports for students continue to be a key priority for our community. In addition to continued support for science enrichment programs, enhanced literacy programs in high needs schools and Healthy Minds programming, two additional full-day Kindergartens will be added to the division in September 2016. Administration worked diligently to find savings in the budget, and we applied \$587,800 from the reserve fund to ease the residential tax burden.

Sustainability of property taxation and education funding is a significant concern for the WSD Board of Trustees. We continue to advocate for a new model of education taxes while maintaining the independent authority of school boards. This advocacy, along with seeking a predictable formula for provincial funding, is part of our commitment to deliver quality education and ensuring fiscal responsibility.

I would like to thank all the parents, residents, members of the community and staff for their involvement in the consultation process for the 2016/2017 budget. Your input and commitment help to maintain the unique programming that makes WSD a leader in education services.

Chris Broughton
Chair, Finance/Personnel Committee 2015/2016

TECHNOLOGY FACTS:
SINCE 2012-
5,000
NEW COMPUTERS AND
2,095
IPADS HAVE BEEN
PURCHASED
ALL WSD SCHOOLS
AND ADMIN BUILDINGS
ARE WIRED FOR WIFI



- INSTRUCTIONAL**
- Regular Instruction**
All subject areas; language programs; English-as-an-additional language; Full-day kindergarten pilot
\$202,365,800
- Student Support Services**
Special Education; clinical services; resources and counseling
\$91,322,800
- Community education and services**
Nursery; adult programs and community use of schools
\$10,103,800
- Instructional and other support services**
Professional development; library services and nutritional program
\$10,432,800
- SUPPORT**
- Administration**
Computer and information services; business and human resources functions; Board and central administration
\$10,669,200
- Student transportation**
Operation of school buses
\$5,492,500
- Operations and maintenance**
Operating and maintaining 77 schools and other facilities
\$48,066,400
- Fiscal and capital appropriations**
Payroll tax; banking charges and capital transfers
\$9,052,100
- Total**
\$387,505,400



GOVERNOR GENERAL MEDAL WINNERS

Argyle Alternative High School—**Lavender Brinkworth**
 Children of the Earth High School—**Celine Ponace**
 Churchill High School—**Alexa Cinq-Mars**
 Collège Churchill—**Alana Ramshaw**
 Daniel McIntyre Collegiate Institute—**Joshua Lingal**
 Elmwood High School—**Celia Dang**
 Gordon Bell High School—**Guadalupe Santos**
 Grant Park High School—**Thais Castillo**
 Kelvin High School—**John Esguerra**
 R.B. Russell Vocational High School—**Janine Twoheart**
 Sisler High School—**Philip Kawalec**
 St. John's High School—**Frances Denise Alpuerto**
 Tec Voc High School—**Wencel Mendoza**
 Winnipeg Adult Education Centre—**Christine Rossman**

WSD POST-SECONDARY SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS

Argyle Alternative High School—**Shelby Broatch**
 Children of the Earth High School—**Andrea Jawbone**
 Churchill High School—**Nicole Arenas**
 Collège Churchill—**Aiden Farrant**
 Daniel McIntyre Collegiate Institute—**Joshua Lingal**
 Elmwood High School—**Michael Knysh**
 Gordon Bell High School—**Guadalupe Santos**
 Grant Park High School—**Jane Petroff**
 Kelvin High School—**Eric Keilback**
 R.B. Russell Vocational High School—**Rose Tobacco-Olson**
 Sisler High School—**Philip Kawalec**
 St. John's High School—**Mary Joy Santos**
 Tec Voc High School—**Deann Romero**
 Winnipeg Adult Education Centre—**April Derksen**

STAFF AWARDS

Charles Bazilewich—Sisler High School, Prime Minister's Award for Teaching Excellence
Louise Shachtay—R.B. Russell Vocational High School, Manitoba Celebration of Excellence in Teaching Award
Colleen Dawson—Lord Selkirk School, Manitoba Celebration of Excellence in Teaching Award (Outstanding New Teacher)



PRIORITY 1: TO STRENGTHEN INSTRUCTIONAL AND ASSESSMENT STRATEGIES FOR ALL STUDENTS USING ALL AVAILABLE RESOURCES INCLUDING THE INTEGRATION OF TECHNOLOGY

THREE NEW BILINGUAL PROGRAMS APPROVED

On March 8, 2016, the WSD Board of Trustees approved plans for three new bilingual language programs – Spanish, Cree and Ojibwe. “We’re very pleased to be offering these bilingual language programs in our division,” said 2015-16 Chair Mark Wasyliv. “I commend the community members who have worked so hard to get these heritage languages in place.”

All of the new bilingual language programs start at Kindergarten with each year adding the next grade. Isaac Brock School is hosting the Cree and Ojibwe bilingual language programs while Earl Grey School hosts the Spanish bilingual language program.

The Board required a strong show of interest through confirmed student registrations in order to move ahead with new bilingual language programs. With Manitoba Education approving the curriculum and the hiring of bilingual language teachers, all three programs were up and running for September 2016.

“Student registrations to date support the establishment of Spanish, Cree and Ojibwe bilingual language programs,” Mr. Wasyliv said. “The Board is confident registration for these programs will continue to expand.”

A NEW HOME, A NEW HOPE

After journeying to Winnipeg from across the world, WSD’s newcomer students from Syria are starting another journey: learning English and settling into their new home country.

Approximately 170 Syrian refugee students came to WSD schools in 2015/2016.

Administrators at schools like Victoria-Albert and Hugh John Macdonald note that they, like every WSD school, have been hosting English-as-an-additional language (EAL) students for many years.

Victoria-Albert Educational Assistant Rosa Messina has been working with the school’s EAL program for 17 years. Ms. Messina builds the foundations of language with a multitude of flashcards with pictures that cover concepts from colours to parts of human anatomy, as well as many other exercises.

“The biggest thing is gaining their trust and giving them confidence. As soon as they start seeing that they are learning, it gives them the confidence to learn more. And they learn quite quickly,” Ms. Messina said.

By the end of this school year, the Syrian students will already have functional English and will be able to carry on a conversation—despite the fact they had no English previously.

“I see that year after year, they’re able to do it,” Ms. Messina said.

Syrian refugee Ammar Alhariri came to Winnipeg with his wife and four children in January 2016. After being forced to flee Syria, his family spent time in Jordan before coming to Canada, including time in a refugee camp.

Mr. Alhariri said that he was happy his children were getting an education in Canada.

“It is very important to me,” he said, adding that he is also learning English through language classes, television, his cell phone and anything else that will help. “I want to learn the language very quickly so I can get a job.”

His daughter, Hala, is all smiles at school, happily participating in English lessons.

“I like reading,” she said, through an interpreter. “Any kind of book.”

Hugh John Macdonald Principal Vinh Huynh said the new Syrian students have already become a vibrant part of his school.

“They bring a joy for life and a joy for learning...they have that enthusiasm and want to be part of this school community,” he said.



CODE BREAKERS

When it comes learning coding, the time to start is now. “It’s never too early to start coding,” said Keith Strachan, who works in many WSD schools as an Educational Technology Support Teacher. He notes that WSD has been successfully coding students as early as Grade 1 and 2.

“Coding draws upon multiple disciplines: critical and computational thinking, problem solving, math, language skills, sequencing, collaborative skills, communication—there’s lots of different skill sets and parts of the brain that are being engaged.”

There are a wide variety of tools and resources for students to learn coding at any age level. From non-digital tools like binary bracelets, paper and pencil tools, card-based tools or even the squares on a tile floor to digital resources like Hopscotch (a block-programming tool that focuses less on syntax and more on coding logic), Scratch Jr., BeeBots and Spheros, students can learn key coding concepts. Mr. Strachan himself keeps a blog of coding resources at breakingnewground.ca.

Just as Mr. Strachan said its never too early to learn coding, he adds that it’s never too late to learn either: “I came to coding quite late in life and it’s one of my passions now.”

High school students across WSD are also getting opportunities to discover that passion.

Sisler High School in 2016 hosted a coding workshop for Manitoba youth, attracting students from as far away as Dauphin. The April workshop was held as part of Sisler’s partnership with the Vancouver Film School (VFS).

The workshop included intensive game programming training for Grades 10 to 12 students, as well as a series of hands-on coding workshops for students in Grades 4 to 9 at Sisler.

Sisler Grade 12 student Mark Toledo has already been learning coding for two semesters and on his own time, learning Visual Basic, C# and Unity for game design and using Java for Android app development.

“I found an interest in computers and the next natural step was coding,” Mark said.

“When it comes to giving the computer a harder task, you have to be creative with your solutions. What you’re thinking in your head may not be the way a computer interprets it.”

Mr. Strachan said that coding builds problem-solving skills that have far reaching uses.

“There will be times in your life that you’ll require a solution and often there will be none available to you. You’ll have to create a solution. Having some of that literacy under your belt will be beneficial.”



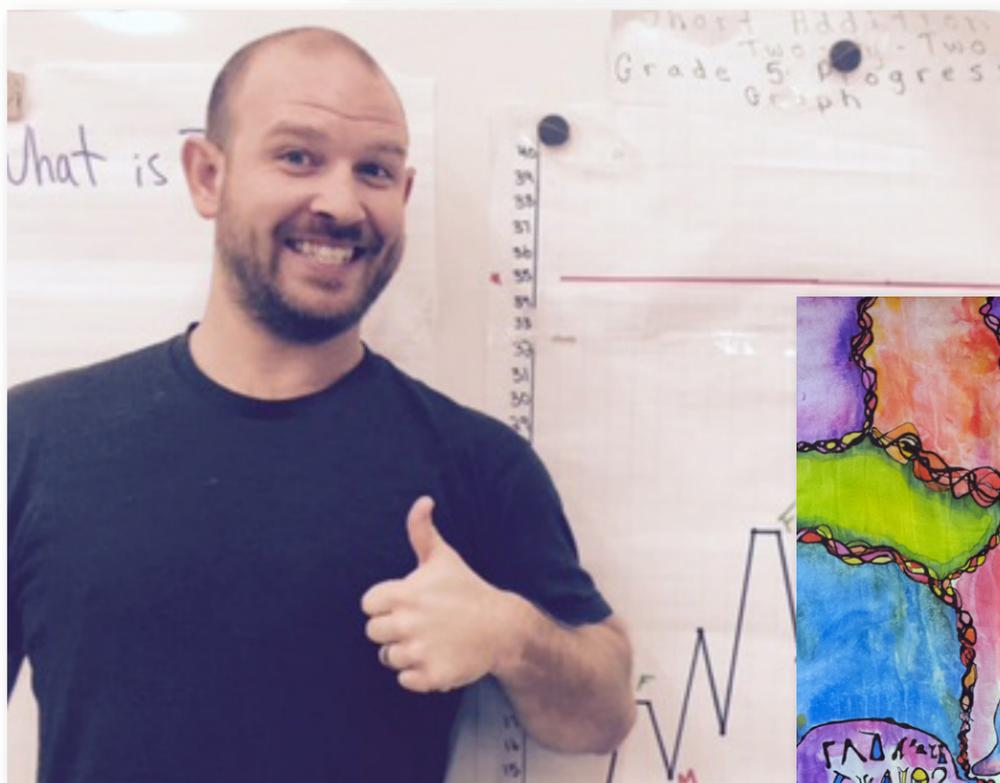
WSD TEACHING AND LEARNING MATH

Winnipeg School Division has been providing teachers with ongoing professional learning and training. Teachers, Principals and Vice Principals are enhancing their math knowledge and teaching skills as part of the division's Math Course, a blending of private sector innovation and public sector dedication that benefits students and teachers, the first of its kind in Canada.

"The Department of Education revised the Kindergarten to Grade 8 math curriculum framework with implementation in 2013," said Julie Smerchanski, Director of Instruction and Assessment. The revisions to the curriculum clarified expectations for fluency, knowledge of facts, skip counting, understanding and use of operations when problem solving with whole and rational numbers.

"WSD staff gathered research and information from various sources to build our understanding about why our students were not all demonstrating expected mathematics ability. Research, focus groups, analysis of work samples and teacher plans and one-on-one interviews were all gathered and analysed. We found that teachers were frustrated and unclear about what and how they were expected to teach mathematics. Teaching was focussed primarily on strategies without the understanding of and between concepts. Math anxiety in both staff and students was also highlighted; as was the need to address fact fluency and automaticity," said Smerchanski. "The Math Course was a response to these findings and provides the training and support to help our educators be successful and confident in teaching mathematics." WSD has also entered into a partnership with the University of Winnipeg, which is recognising the WSD Math Course for credit toward a Post Baccalaureate in mathematics education.

The WSD Math Course was co-created with Spirit of Math Schools and piloted in 2013. The year-long course focusses on numeracy and is provided for all teachers in Grades 4 to 8, with teachers selecting when they take it. The course is complemented with monthly half-day or full-day professional learning sessions focussed on teacher planning and practices. A system for math drills to address fact fluency and automaticity is also provided



for teachers to use with students.

To date, 143 teachers have completed the course with 77 of these teachers earning credit toward a Post Baccalaureate in mathematics education. The WSD Math Course has positively impacted student confidence, improved fact fluency and automaticity and shown students are taking greater risks in mathematics. Teachers share they are more confident in their knowledge and in supporting students with connecting concepts and problem solving.

"Our goal is to create mathematical thinkers in all of our classrooms. To do this we need to ensure great teachers of math and excellent mathematics programming. We will continue to use data and information to continuously improve classroom instruction, student learning and program effectiveness. In the meantime, we have students who have discovered things they never thought they could do in math. It's really exciting."



PRIORITY 2: TO IMPROVE ACADEMIC AND BEHAVIOR SUPPORT SERVICES FOR STUDENTS WITH ADDITIONAL NEEDS

INCLUSION SUPPORT SERVICES

In 2015-16, WSD's Special Education Department officially changed its name to Inclusion Support Services.

"The name change was long overdue; the education system all over North America has gradually changed terminology," said WSD Inclusion Support Services Director Donald Teel. "Special education was deemed to be exclusive. All children are special, but the need shouldn't define who the students are by their additional needs."

The new name of the department stems from its primary goal when working with students.

"As a group of teachers, we felt our primary focus should be on inclusion of students with additional needs in the setting that is the least restrictive and the most enabling," Mr. Teel said.

Inclusion Support Services offers a continuum of supports for almost 2,000 students.

Students may access some supports while attending classes in their community school; others may attend low-enrolment programs in other WSD schools. There is even a small number of students requiring intensive supports outside of WSD in specialized facilities. But the starting point is always the student's community school.

"Our philosophical outlook is really that a child should start school in their home school, with the Manitoba curriculum being used to establish objectives. Based on the needs that child has for additional supports, let's see what we can do in the child's home school to make them welcome, to make them a member in that school community.

"I think we do a good job of offering parents a choice, and offering students a school experience that makes them feel like a kid in a school."

Inclusion adds another important component to the diverse makeup of WSD classrooms. For example, students who have challenges speaking, hearing or have who have other language difficulties can often be taught to use a graphic interface on a tablet or computer to answer and communicate with others.

Others may use American Sign Language with the aid of an interpreter.

"They are learning to interact with the world so they can satisfy their needs without an adult always having to intervene."

Buildings and playground equipment are continually being reviewed and designed to enable all students to interact as much as possible.

"Children learn just as much, if not more so, from their peers, just in terms of social skills, making friends and developing a sense of who they are."

MANAGING ANXIETY

WSD opened a new program in 2015-16 to assist students who have anxiety that is interfering with their attendance and success in school.

Located at Kelvin High School, the Anxiety Management Program (AMP) is a low enrolment classroom that includes a kitchen space, private washroom, and a comfortable discussion area to complement the classroom setting.

Grades 9 to 12 students attend five days a week. Students work with a teacher, a school social worker and an educational assistant in the AMP setting, in conjunction with their home school team and work toward getting school credits where applicable.

Tim Thorne-Tjomsland, Service Director for WSD's Clinical Support Services, said the new program was created to address an identified need in the student community. In the WSD's 2013-2014 Tell Them from Me Survey of students, anxiety was identified as a factor for some youth.

In Grades 4 to 6, 20 percent of students (girls 23 percent, boys 16 percent) reported having anxiety or "Intense feelings of fear, anxiety, or worry about particular events or social situations."

For Grades 7 to 12 students, the overall rate rose



slightly to 22 percent (30 percent girls, 14 percent boys).

"There is certainly an awareness among students in WSD that they experience anxiety and depression to a degree," Mr. Thorne-Tjomsland said. "So there is a need there."

Feedback from students has been positive:

- "This program has honestly changed my opinion on school, and my opinion on my anxiety. I have so much support now, and I have people that I can trust, and people that I can talk to about my problems."
- "I would say the anxiety has gotten better because of AMP, and all of the skills that I have learned."
- "This is the first year that I am not feeling sad about the end of the year and failing. It feels weird this year because I'm actually passing my classes and still coming to school."



PRIORITY 3: TO STRENGTHEN AND ENHANCE EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES THAT ADDRESS ENVIRONMENTAL, SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC ISSUES WORLDWIDE

THE MAYORAL CHALLENGE

Winnipeg School Division started Everybody has the Right in 2014 with a week-long celebration of human rights, diversity and equity to coincide with the opening of the Canadian Museum of Human Rights. The inaugural week was a huge success and WSD has made it part of division-wide programming to celebrate diversity and learn about human rights throughout the school year.

Everybody has the Right 2015-16 started off with a week of activities Oct. 13-16. St. John's High School hosted student delegates from schools across WSD at a special kickoff event that included Mayor Brian Bowman.

Mayor Brian Bowman issued them a challenge:

"I challenge every student in the Winnipeg School Division to find a way to educate yourselves and each other to increase our understanding of diversity; to celebrate the rich cultures of our people, those who are the roots of our city and nation, and those who have chosen Canada as their home," said Mayor Bowman. "Together we must identify the issues and outline a path to success for all citizens in our journey toward unity and behaving as one Winnipeg – a diverse and inclusive city."

The students and Mayor Bowman set a summit date for January to share their school's activities and initiatives toward meeting that challenge.

THE JANUARY SUMMIT

Some 320 WSD students checked-in with Mayor Bowman and other delegates on Jan. 12. The Mayor and other special guests lead smaller group discussions in which students shared their human rights explorations and projects from their respective schools.

"Mayor Bowman's challenge made me want to find a way to change the negative image of our city," said St. John's High School student, Syllas Parenteau. "I believe we all have a responsibility to help beat racism through knowledge." Parenteau, who is Métis, feels everyone is born without racist thoughts and he believes awareness, starting at a young age, will help prevent racism from developing.

"The Mayor's challenge has created an opportunity for dialogue in safe classroom settings, where students are learning about and sharing their naturally receptive attitudes toward inclusiveness of all Canadians, regardless of colour, race or religion," said Fatima Mota, WSD Superintendent of Education Services, Equity & Diversity, Inclusive Education.

Mayor Bowman praised WSD students and staff for their efforts.

"I want to congratulate all the students at St. John's High School and across the Winnipeg School Division for their leadership and commitment to teaching empathy and growing understanding," he said. "All of your efforts are an important part of changing the future of our city by educating the next generation to be empathetic and inclusive, and ensuring we are all heard and treated equally. You are helping us move forward as one community."

CELEBRATING DIVERSITY

Everybody has the Right 2015-16 culminated with over 2,000 WSD students parading around the Canadian Museum of Human Rights on May 20. With students and staff from many cultures walking as one united group, it was an impressive public example of WSD's diversity—and the future of Winnipeg.



School groups created spectacular parade banners depicting the students' voice on human rights and equity. The silk art banners were created during several months of workshops at Luxton School, under the tutelage of WSD Arts Consultant Joe Halas.

Before and after the parade, students celebrated human rights through song, dance and spoken word before the crowd amassed at The Forks Festival Stage.

The event marked the finale of another successful year of incorporating Everybody has the Right programming into WSD's everyday curriculum and learning.

WSD BOARD APPROVES SAFE AND CARING – TRANS AND GENDER DIVERSE STUDENTS AND STAFF POLICY

Mirroring the work of students and staff in WSD schools, the division's board of trustees also took steps to ensure safe and inclusive schools for everyone.

On June 20, the Board approved a policy for Safe and Caring – Trans and Gender Diverse Students and Staff implemented throughout Winnipeg School Division effective September 2016.

"It is important that we have a clear and comprehensive policy on trans and gender diverse students and staff," said WSD Board Trustee Mark Wasyliv. "The intent of this policy is not to set any group apart from another, but instead to foster inclusion and understanding for all."

The policy provides support for all students, employees and the school community based on current practices identified in research and educational literature. Inclusive policies and nurturing practices help to build a learning environment in which our most vulnerable students and staff feel safe and valued.

"I'm extremely grateful for the months of hard work WSD administration has put into developing this policy and the public for providing extensive feedback," said Lisa Naylor, WSD Board Trustee and author of the motion to adopt a Safe and Caring policy. "We are taking strong and definable action in making our schools a place of safe, trusting and respectful learning for all students."

The new policy, IGAAB, is consistent with WSD Safe Schools and Discipline and Discharge policy, as well as the Manitoba Human Rights Code and the Charter of Rights and Freedom.

UNESCO SCHOOLS

Becoming critical thinkers and compassionate leaders. Winnipeg School Division is proud to acknowledge



its four UNESCO schools. Brock Corydon, Niji Mahkwa, Laura Secord and Churchill High School (charter school).

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) was created in 1945. Canada was one of its 20 founding members, all with the goal of world peace.

The 25 UNESCO schools in Manitoba, including those from Winnipeg School Division, meet three times a year with grade 5 and 6 students, teachers and administrators. During these meetings they work on the four pillars of UNESCO:

- Learning to do
- Learning to know
- Learning to be
- Learning to live together

This ties into the three pillars of Winnipeg School Division's Education for Sustainable Development, which are environment, economy, human health and well-being.

PRIORITY 4:

TO FURTHER IMPROVE SCHOOL ATTENDANCE AND GRADUATION RATES THROUGH THE EXPLORATION OF ADDITIONAL PROGRAMS AND STRATEGIES

GRADUATION COACHES

Looking to improve graduation rates among Aboriginal students, WSD created a graduation coach program in the 2015-2016 school year. Children of the Earth, Grant Park, St. John's and Tec Voc high schools each have a full-time graduation coach working with students.

Using a team-based approach, the coaches are building a support network around each student starting in Grade 9.

"I'm working closely with all of the staff in my school, community agencies like Boys and Girls Clubs of Winnipeg, resources like tutoring and the other students," said Lindsey Trudeau, grad coach at Children of the Earth. "We're always trying to bridge these different partners, build networks and resources for each student. A lot of this job is also just getting to know the students and sharing an interest in them as a person."

The coaches will work closely with each student until graduation.

"We're really building these students up as young people while they're in school, and getting them ready for that transition to the outside world," Ms. Trudeau said.

WSD Director of Aboriginal Education Rob Riel said graduation is just one indicator of success for the program.

"There are many goals along the way to graduation, whether its improving attendance, participating and volunteering in the school community or the greater community-at-large, becoming a mentor to younger students or other areas," he said. "When you have an accumulation of successes, they build off each other and it leads to graduation. And that's the ultimate indicator that the program is working."

HEALTHY MINDS

Just as physical activity and nutrition are important, mental health is an equally crucial pillar in the positive well-being of students and adults alike.

Since 2013, WSD has embarked on numerous mental health initiatives, through its Mental Health Steering Committee. This includes PRACY (Preventing and Responding to Anxiety in Children and Youth), a pilot project that included professional development around school-based mental health interventions (mindfulness), classroom instruction (prevention), small group intervention (targeted), data collection, parent sessions and a communication strategy.

During the last two years, there has been a strong focus on providing Mental Health Literacy (MHL)—which is an understanding of mental wellness and illness and knowledge about how to promote positive mental health and how to prevent mental illness—workshops to all WSD staff. As of June 2016, almost every school in WSD has had an MHL workshop.

WSD also aligned with the Canadian Mental Health Association's Mental Health Week (May 2 to 6) to raise awareness of mental health and wellness across the division. The week included activities for students, staff and parents.

"WSD is on board with supporting mental health initiatives and mental health literacy amongst our students and families, and promoting mental wellness," said WSD Student Services Consultant Jón Olafson. "An integral component of this week is to raise awareness about mental wellness and assist with reducing the stigma when talking about mental health concerns."

During the week, youth care specialist Charlie Appelstein conducted workshops for parents and staff on strength-based parenting. Students and schools



NUMBERS FOR 2015/2016:

- 33,048** STUDENTS
- 22,229** ELEMENTARY (N-G8)
- 10,961** SECONDARY
- 77** SCHOOLS
- 64** ELEMENTARY
- 14** SECONDARY
- 2,032** GRADUATES
- 1,786** NURSERY STUDENTS
- 4,449** STUDENTS IN LANGUAGE PROGRAMS
- 6,671** STUDENTS IDENTIFIED AS ENGLISH-AS-AN-ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE
- 2,597** STUDENTS TRANSPORTED TO SCHOOL

took part in a Gallery Walk to share their different mental health initiatives and staff took part in yoga, mindfulness workshops and a "Lighten Your Load" stress workshop. And on the final day, students took part in a division-wide Mental Health moment; activities included mindfulness moments, snack breaks, group walks or other events.

OFF CAMPUS PROGRAMS OFFERS OPTIONS TO STUDENTS

WSD's off-campus programs provide opportunities for students to continue their learning, an innovative alternative for students who may not be able to regularly attend and achieve success in the mainstream classroom setting.

The first of WSD's current off-campus programs began in 1981, when the St. Ignatius Association started the WiWabigooni Alternative Program for students who were having attendance difficulties and not having their needs met in a mainstream program. WSD assumed full responsibility of the program in 1984 and it is now run as an off-campus program to École Victoria-Albert for Grades 2 to 6 students.

Today, WSD runs 13 off campus programs:

- Joining WiWabigooni in serving First Nations and

Métis students is the Niji Mahkwa's Songide'ewin program for Grades 8 to 11 students, Hugh John Macdonald's Eagle's Circle program for Grades 7 to 9 students.

- Gordon Bell's Fresh Start program provides a low-enrolment setting for students who may be on income assistance and experiencing other social issues.
- The Resources for Adolescent Parents (RAP) program, an off-campus for Gordon Bell and New Directions, offers classes for pregnant or parenting young women.
- R.B. Russell's Ndinawe program offers education to Grade 9 to 10 students who may have had gaps in their learning and would benefit from a smaller environment in an off campus setting.
- Gordon Bell's Rising Sun program is for Grade 9 to 12 students who are academically able, independent workers but have difficulty in a larger school setting.
- Gordon Bell also has a Senior High off-campus program for Grades 9 to 12 students (mainly 16 to 19 years of age) who are not functioning well in a larger environment and have tried Grade 9 in a mainstream setting.
- The Central Senior Years Off-Campus is for students from Tec Voc, Daniel McIntyre and Elmwood seeking Grade 9 to 10 credits but having difficulty attaining success at their high schools. Elmwood also has an additional off-campus for students with attendance issues who are seeking Grade 9 to 10 credits.
- The Central District's Middle Years Off-Campus program, administered through Cecil Rhodes School, works with academically capable Grade 7 to 9 students who may have issues such as: a family in crisis; limited social skills; sporadic attendance; unable to cope in regular school setting; gaps in academic skills; risk of gang involvement.
- The South District Off-Campus program serves Grant Park, Kelvin and Churchill schools for students with issues such as non-attendance, anxiety, alcoholism and family issues.
- The North District Off-Campus program, administered through Isaac Newton School, offers Grades 7 to 9 instruction for students who are not attending school or are disengaged from school.

"The students in our off-campus programs often have factors in their lives that hold them back from attending school on a regular basis," said Chris Rhodes, WSD's Director of Career Education. "Off-campus programming can provide that flexibility in a low-enrolment setting to help meet their needs."

Students can work from modular lesson plans that allow them to resume their learning in the event of interruption. Students can still learn through group projects as well, working to meet the curricular objectives of their grade level.

The off-campus classrooms offer a safe, welcoming environment where students may also get breakfast or lunch if needed.

"There's a consistency to these programs. Often what is offered in the program may be the one stable thing in that student's life," Ms. Rhodes said.