

NEWS RELEASE

WSD Board of Trustees votes unanimously in favour of expanded voting rights for residents

November 22, 2018 (Winnipeg, MB) – The Winnipeg School Division Board of Trustees has voted unanimously in favour of a motion that calls for the Province of Manitoba to allow all adult residents, regardless of citizenship, the right to vote in future municipal and school board elections. The motion also supports school board voting rights for those aged 16 to 18, which the Board views as a key time for youth to acquire a good habit of voting.

"We've had an incredible amount of immigration to Winnipeg, and it's changing the face of our city. These are our residents - people who go to our schools and buy property in the school division. They pay school division taxes, but currently don't have a say in who leads the division or the city and that is neither right nor fair," said Mark Wasyliw, Winnipeg School Division Trustee, who introduced the motion.

According to Immigration Partnership Winnipeg, there are 67,000 permanent residents in Winnipeg who don't have the right to vote because they aren't full citizens. That organization has previously advocated for extending the right to vote in municipal elections to permanent residents.

"Many of these people are engaged in their communities, contribute to their communities, they're taxpaying citizens in every other way," said Chris Broughton, Chair, WSD Board of Trustees. "But they don't have a voice to city council and to school boards – which is what we want to see changed."

Winnipeg School Division administration will draft a letter on behalf of the Board of Trustees seeking a meeting with Manitoba Education Minister Kelvin Goertzen to discuss the changes.

WSD was established in 1871 and currently has 78 schools, 33,000 students and 6,000 employees. Its purpose is to provide a learning environment that fosters the growth of each student's potential and provide equitable opportunity to develop the knowledge, skills and values necessary for meaningful participation in a global and diverse society.

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