

THE WINNIPEG SCHOOL DIVISION

SOUTH DISTRICT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSIONS – Tuesday, February 21, 2017

1. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The Committee members approved the Agenda of February 21, 2017, as distributed.

2. 2017/2018 DRAFT BUDGET PRESENTATION

Committee members were provided with an overview of the 2017/2018 Draft Budget. Committee members were informed that Provincial funding for the Winnipeg School Division for 2017/2018 increased by \$2.6 million, or 1.4%, over the 2016/2017 Budget.

Committee members were informed that 2017/2018 provincial funding provides 62% of total revenue while 36% comes from property taxation and 2% from other sources. The total revenue from the Province is projected to be \$245,622,498.

Committee members were informed that the Board develops the budget based on the Winnipeg School Division's Strategic Plan. The plan includes providing robust and comprehensive education, equitable access, diverse opportunity and a supportive learning environment for all students. It includes retaining, attracting and developing valued staff, addressing barriers to learning, enhancing sustainable development initiatives and developing communications and partnerships with the community.

Committee members reviewed the expenditures required in the draft budget for the 2017/2018 school year. Committee members were informed that 81% of the draft 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. Other mandatory expenses are Canada Pension Plan costs, Employment Insurance premiums, payroll tax and the cost of supplies, materials, books and equipment.

Committee members were informed that in order to achieve a balanced budget, the Board of Trustees have proposed three options for a school levy tax increase: A 3% increase would be equal to an annual increase of \$40 on the average assessed value of a home in the Winnipeg School Division; A 3.9% increase equals to a \$52 increase on an average assessed value of a home and a 4.5% increase equals to a \$60 increase on an average assessed valued home.

Committee members were informed that the Education Property Tax Credit is currently \$700 per owner occupied home. Seniors are eligible for an additional credit and renters are also eligible for a credit through their income tax, however, this credit is under review by the current government.

Committee members were informed that in order to achieve a 3% special levy tax, programs/services such as Adult Crossing Guards, the Nursery Program, Library Technical Assistants, changes to the Transportation Policy and mileage expense payments would have to be significantly reduced to achieve savings.

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Committee and Community members were informed of challenges facing the Winnipeg School Division such as aging infrastructure, accessibility deficit, the need for an N-8 school in the Waterford Green area. Committee members were informed that the Division faces further challenges as downtown growth is promoted while businesses receive a break in property taxes resulting in less money collected through property taxation for the WSD.

Committee and Community members were also informed of successes the Winnipeg School Division has achieved. The Division's graduation rate has increased 12% in the last seven years, the Division's leadership in Indigenous Education, as well as a decrease in utility costs due to energy efficiency and environmental measures.

Committee members were informed that administration is reviewing possible models that would determine how the Nursery Program would operate and which schools would continue to offer the program, giving consideration to socioeconomic needs.

Committee members expressed concern that the Board continues to expand the full day kindergarten program while considering reductions to the Nursery program. Committee members were informed that members of the Board find a significant value in providing the full day kindergarten program.

Committee and Community members expressed concern on the proposed reductions to Adult Crossing Guards as well as School Resource Officers. Committee members expressed the importance these roles play in the safety of students. Committee members were informed that the Board has reached out to Manitoba Public Insurance to partner with the Division on the Crossing Guards program, however, MPI does not provide financial support for this type of program. Committee members were informed that the Board continues to advocate all levels of government for additional funding.

Committee and Community members were informed of possible cost saving alternatives to Division transportation such as congregated/community stops. This approach would require students to walk to a local school or designated community bus stop to be picked-up by the bus that would transport them to the school they attend. Committee members were also informed that the Board is exploring the possibility of a walking school bus program as well as reducing special circumstances for families that use transportation on a fee for service basis. Committee members were informed that changes to the Transportation policy will be made in consultation with parents in order to minimize any disruptions that may occur.

In response to an enquiry, Committee members were informed that the budget allocation for Netforce upgrading/replacement would improve the Division's IT services resulting in more efficient data collection.

A Community member expressed concern and suggested that the potential budget allocation to the "pending items based on board motions" be removed from the budget.

In response to an enquiry, the Committee and Community members were informed that administration is currently developing an International Program as an additional revenue source. Committee members were informed that it is imperative that recruitment is successful and that after initial costs, it is projected that revenues will be seen within two to three years.

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In response to an enquiry, Committee and Community members were informed that in addition to the supports currently in place, the Board is discussing improving access to educational and health supports for students on the autism spectrum disorder attending elementary school. Committee members were informed this program would include an Autism Early Intervention Team, composed of Speech Language Pathologists, Occupational Therapists and Inclusion Support Teachers.

Committee members expressed concern on another significant property tax increase. A Community member also expressed that the calculated tax increase of \$40 on an average assessed home is not compatible to the increase that will be seen by many due to their larger assessed home value.

In response to an enquiry, Committee members were informed that the Division employs approximately 2,100 teachers, 5,000 employees including 81.25 administration positions, with a student population of approximately 33,000.

A Community member requested that a list of administration along with their job description/duties should be made available to public and encouraged the Board to identify savings within administration. Committee members were informed that the Division's administration costs are 2.7%, which is well below the provincial mandate of 3.5%. The Committee was also informed that the Board made a difficult decision of eliminating one superintendent in 2015.

A Community member expressed concern on the level of provincial funding resulting in the increase of Syrian refugees settling into the Winnipeg School Division. Committee members were informed that the Board continues to have discussions with the Minister of Education who is also responsible for immigration.

A Community member requested that the Board review language programs as cost savings measures. The Committee was informed that, although not mandated by the province, the Division offers language programs such as Spanish, Cree and Ojibway and Tagalog due to community requests.

In response to an enquiry on academic achievement, Committee members were informed that the grade 12 level is at or above provincial averages in Math, English and Language Arts.

Committee members were informed that the Budget presentation is available on the Winnipeg School Division's website along with a Budget simulator, property tax calculator and survey.

Committee members were informed that in addition to budget presentations at District Advisory Committee meetings, information is available on the Division's website. A Public meeting will also be held on February 27, 2017 at Administration Building No. 1, 1577 Wall Street East at 7:00 p.m. to provide budget information to the general public and receive feedback from individuals or groups that may wish to attend as well there is a survey posted on the Division's website www.winnipegdsd.org. The deadline to receive feedback regarding the budget will be received by the Board until March 6, 2017. All feedback will be considered by the Finance/Personnel Committee. The Board of Trustees will approve the budget at its meeting to be held March 13, 2017.

3. FOR INFORMATION

3.1 District Advisory Reports and Summaries of Discussions

Committee members were informed that at a meeting held December 5, 2016, the Board of Trustees received the South District Advisory Committee Report and Summary of Discussions as information. The Summary of Discussions have been distributed to Committee members the week of December 5, 2016. Committee members were informed that once reviewed by the Board, District Advisory Committee Reports and Summaries of Discussions are posted on the Division's website under the Family and Community tab.

3.2 School's Parent Council Website

Committee members were informed to notify their school administrator, should their Parent councils wish to create a parent council web page within their school's website.

Committee members were informed that Information that may be shared on the page may include Parent Council meeting dates, meeting minutes, events, fundraising and other pertinent information related to parent council activities. Committee members were reminded that a Parent Council tab has been created on the Division's website that provides information on areas of interest such as District Advisory Committee Dates, Advisory Reports and Summaries of Discussions, information on Manitoba Association of Parent Councils as well as information the Board of Trustees may want to share will Parent Councils.

<https://www.winnipegssd.ca/Parents/Parent%20Council/Pages/default.aspx>

Committee members were informed that if any assistance was required on the creation of a school's Parent Council web page, to contact the Board Office at 204-789-0469 for information.

4. NEXT MEETING DATE

The next meeting of the South District Advisory Committee will be held Tuesday, May 2, 2017.

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IN ATTENDANCE:

Voting Representatives:

Carpathia School
Beth Smyth, Collège Churchill
Tanya Sigurdson, Earl Grey School
Andrea Villeneuve, Grant Park High School
Lorne Hanks, Grosvenor School
Judy Grossman, Ecole J.B. Mitchell School
Amanda Plante, Lord Roberts School
Catherine Ledlow, Queenston School
Jodie Sie, Ecole Riverview School
Robert H. Smith School
Deanna Betteridge, Rockwood School

Regrets:

Gladstone School
Ecole LaVerendrye
River Heights School

Trustees:

Chris Broughton
Mark Wasyliv
Sherri Rollins

Administration:

Celia Caetano-Gomes, Superintendent
Julie Millar, Director of Student Services
Paul Kochan, Chief Financial Officer & Secretary-Treasurer
Gordon Armstrong, Principal, Carpathia School
Andrea Powell, Principal, Grosvenor School
Paulette Huggins, Principal, J.B. Mitchell School
Maria Silva, Principal, Kelvin High School
Cree Crowchild, Vice-Principal, Kelvin High School
Russell Antymis, Vice-Principal, École River Heights School
Tom Rossi, Principal, École Robert H. Smith School
Karen Loveridge, École Sir William Osler
Helena Tessier, Recording Secretary

Non-Voting/Resource Members:

Community Members