

FRENCH IMMERSION ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPORT NO. 1-2017

To the Chair and Members
Winnipeg Public School Board:

November 29, 2017

Your French Immersion Advisory Committee reports as follows:

1. ELECTION OF COMMITTEE CHAIR

The Committee was informed that at a Board Meeting, Trustee Mark Wasyliv was appointed as the Board's representative and Trustee Chris Broughton was appointed as the Board's alternate representative to this Committee.

The parent representative from École Laura Secord School volunteered to Chair the November 29, 2017 French Immersion Advisory Committee.

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 that 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.

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 constable's 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 a number of concerns and issues such as quality of French instruction, shortage and retention of French teachers, shortage of French support staff, flexible work hours to attract French speaking teachers, expanding the Milieu program in more schools such as Robert H. Smith.

The Committee was informed that the Division is committed to recruiting quality French teachers and that the Division makes every effort to employ local teachers and graduates from Université de Saint-Boniface. The Division also created a recruitment team that travel across Canada throughout the year and attends University career fairs to recruit French teachers for the Division. The Committee was informed that there is a great demand for French teachers for all Western provinces. The Division offers teachers permanent contracts and competitive salaries to retain quality teaching staff. In response to an enquiry, the Committee was informed that the Division designates funds specifically for Recruitment.

The Committee expressed an interest in converting École Robert H. Smith School into a milieu school to support neighbouring schools. The Committee was concerned that French students at École Robert H. Smith School are being transferred to the English program due to the shortage of supports for students in the French program.

The Committee was informed that approval from the province is required to build new schools.

The Committee discussed ways to increase revenue, such as whether the Division could recover costs from speeding tickets given to drivers in school speed zones, and the formation of a think tank where students brainstorm ideas, research what is working elsewhere, in order to generate revenue for the Division.

The Committee was informed that the Board of Trustees approved a motion that the administration prepare and research the feasibility of establishing a WSD Endowment Fund to invest and grow future funds to support schools. The Committee was informed that the Division faces further challenges as downtown growth is promoted while businesses receive a break in property taxes resulting in less revenue collected through property taxation for the Division.

In response to an enquiry, the Committee was informed that there has been no discussion within the Division to cap enrollment spaces in French Immersion schools.

The Committee discussed the importance of supports in schools to assist new immigrant students and families with the tools and resources to succeed and engage in school activities.

The Committee was informed that the Board held a public pre-budget consultation scheduled for November 30, 2017 at Tec Voc High Gymnasium. Educators, Parent Council and Community members were 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 also informed that in addition to Budget presentations at District Advisory Committee meetings additional information is available on the Division's website including a Budget tool and property tax calculator. A survey is posted on the Division's website www.winnipegssd.ca. The Committee was advised that the members of the Board are interested in receiving pre budget feedback.

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.

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. Courtesy seats are currently available at no cost.

The Committee was informed that the budget for transportation was growing fast at a cost to the Division. The fee for service was not earning enough money to cover the additional costs and a portion of the riders could not afford to pay. The Division was expanding bus routes, it became too costly to continue with this type of service, therefore fee for service, and exceptions were eliminated.

The Committee also expressed an interest in implementing Before and After School Care programs in schools to help alleviate transportation costs.

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.

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 was 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.

The Committee received a survey to provide feedback on the benefits and challenges of implementing a Tree Planting/Urban Forest Management Plan program. The Committee separated into small groups to discuss the benefits and challenges of implementing a Tree Planting/Urban Forest Management Plan program. The Committee had many concerns such as the overall maintenance, the placement of trees and the cost of the program.

The Committee expressed an interest in the Urban Forest Management Plan, however, the members were concerned with the cost to support the program and believe that funds to support important programs and services should remain the priority.

The Committee was informed that the Division's goal is to become fully sustainable and the next step to becoming sustainable is to maintain the physical grounds. The Committee discussed creating gardening clubs and applying for grants to assist with the expenses on sustainable school initiatives. The Committee also discussed initiating a fundraising program such as "leave a tree legacy".

The Committee supported the idea of training students to assist in maintaining the trees. The Committee also supported the idea of hiring a consultant to assist with grants and conceptual plans of the placement of trees on school grounds.

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 Barrier-Free Manitoba 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 Committee was informed that 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 reaffirming 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 indicated that families also have barriers that are preventing them from participating in school and community events.

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

The Committee was advised that for more information on the Winnipeg School Division's Accessibility Plan can be found on the Division website: <https://www.winnipegsd.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

North District Advisory Committee
7:00 p.m.

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

French Immersion Advisory Committee
7:00 p.m.

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

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

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

South District Advisory Committee
7:00 p.m.

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

Student Advisory Committee
4:00 p.m.

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

Respectfully Submitted,

MARK WASYLIW
Trustee Representative

IN ATTENDANCE:**Voting Representatives:**

Julie Strong, Collège Churchill
Scott Colburn, École Garden Grove School
Heather Pachet, École J.B. Mitchell School
Sharon Kirk, École secondaire Kelvin High School
Debbie Purganan, École Lansdowne
Lucy Payette, École Laura Secord School
Joelle Remillard, École LaVérendrye/École River Heights School
Maria Pochailo, École Riverview School
Lauren Hope, École Robert H. Smith
Alan Cunningham, École Sacré-Coeur
Laurie Kozak, École Victoria-Albert School

Regrets:

Trustee Chris Broughton
École Sir William Osler
École Stanley Knowles School

Administration:

Fatima Mota, Superintendent of Education Services
Mile Rendulic, Director of Buildings
Dominique Ostermann, Vice-Principal, École Robert H. Smith School
Nelia Husack, Principal, École Victoria-Albert School
Lorraine Spence, Recording Secretary

Trustees:

Mark Wasyliw

Non-Voting/Resource Members:

Brittany Morrison (WANTE Rep)