

NORTH DISTRICT ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPORT NO. 1-2017

To the Chair and Members
Winnipeg Public School Board:

February 15, 2017

The North District Advisory Committee reports as follows:

1. 2017/2018 Draft Budget Presentation

Chris Broughton, Chair of the Finance/Personnel Committee was in attendance to provide the Committee with an overview of the 2017/2018 Draft Budget.

The Committee was provided with an overview of the 2017/2018 Draft Budget. The Committee was 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.

The Committee was 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.

The Committee was 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.

The Committee reviewed the expenditures required in the draft budget for the 2017/2018 school year. The Committee was 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.

The Committee was 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.

The Committee was 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.

The Committee was 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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The Committee expressed concern on the proposed reduction to the Nursery program. The Committee also expressed concern that the Board continues to expand the full day kindergarten program while considering reductions to the Nursery program. The Committee was informed that members of the Board find a significant value in providing the full day kindergarten program.

The Committee was 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.

The Committee urged the Board to encourage the Province to support special needs students under the health care system, as there becomes a gap in supports once the student graduates.

The Committee was informed that the members of the Board recently met with the Minister of Education to discuss the reliance on school boards to provide various health related services.

In response to an enquiry, the Committee was informed that segregated schools for students who have special needs has not been the practice of the school divisions for many years. The Division practices a more inclusive philosophy to education.

The Committee expressed concern on the proposed reductions to Adult Crossing Guards as well as School Resource Officers. The Committee expressed the importance these roles play in the safety of students. The Committee was informed that the Board 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. The Committee was informed that the Board continues to advocate to all levels of government for additional funding.

The Committee indicated that they would like to see the CAP testing eliminated as it requires too much resources, both time and money.

The Committee expressed concern that property taxes are increasing and urged the Board to review programs that are not mandated by the Province. 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 money collected through property taxation for the WSD.

The Committee discussed a model that would have pensioners with a disability removed from paying education taxes. The Committee discussed that the method of funding should be based on ability to pay as opposed to being a homeowner. The Committee was informed that the Board proposed a method of taxation through income to the previous government but has yet to receive an update. The Committee was informed that approximately 30% of homeowners in the Winnipeg School Division have children attending a Division school. The Committee was informed that discussions will continue with the current Minister of Education.

The Committee was informed that administration is currently developing an International Program as an additional revenue source. The Committee was 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.

The Committee was 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. The Committee was 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.

The Committee expressed concern on reductions to front line staff and encouraged the Board to review administration reductions. The Committee was informed that the Division's administration cost is at 2.7%, which is well below the provincial mandate of 3.5%. The Committee was also informed that the Board also made a difficult decision of eliminating one superintendent in 2015.

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

The Committee was 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.winnipegssd.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.

Respectfully Submitted,

ARLENE REID
Trustee Representative

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IN ATTENDANCE:

Voting Representatives:

Beth Mason, Andrew Mynarski School
Danielle Kopychanski, Champlain School
Marleen Pollok, Garden Grove School
Isaac Newton School
Catherine Harder, Luxton School
Jennifer Mitchell, Meadows West School
Lindsay Panchuk, Ralph Brown School
Bernice Rempel, St. John's High School
Sharon Machinski, Sisler High School
Stanley Knowles School

Regrets:

Faraday School
Inkster School
Ecole Lansdowne
Lord Nelson School
Prairie Rose School
Robertson School
Tyndall Park School

Trustees:

Mike Babinsky
Arlene Reid
Chris Broughton
Dean Koshelanyk

Administration:

Fatima Mota Superintendent
Paul Kochan, CEO & Secretary-Treasurer
Kathy Ateah, Vice-Principal, Andrew Mynarski School
Lisa Hasselfield, Principal, Champlain School
Andrea Redsky, Principal, Faraday School
Ryan Hughes, Principal, Isaac Newton School
Ken Reimer, Principal, Luxton School
Marsha Missyabit, Vice-Principal, St. John's High School
Madalynne Iannone, Vice-Principal, Sisler High School
Paul Krowiak, Vice-Principal, Sisler High School
Chris Clarke, Vice-Principal, Sisler High School
Darryl Stevenson, Principal, Stanley Knowles School
Evelyn Siddall, Vice-Principal, Stanley Knowles School
Joy Perrott, Vice-Principal, Stanley Knowles School
Gisele Mospanchuk, Principal, Tyndall Park School
Helena Tessier, Recording Secretary

Non-Voting/Resource Members:

Community Members