



WINNIPEG SCHOOL DIVISION

# WINNIPEG SCHOOL DIVISION

2020/2021  
ANNUAL REPORT  
TO THE COMMUNITY







## OUR PURPOSE

Winnipeg School Division provides a learning environment that fosters the growth of each student's potential and provides equitable opportunity to develop the knowledge, skills, and values necessary for meaningful participation in a global and diverse society.

## OUR VISION

Is for current and future people learning and working within Winnipeg School Division to be: **Engaged, Confident, Inspired, and Successful Learners.**

# MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

The 2020/2021 school year will be part of the historical reference when it comes to reflecting on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic around the world. The challenges of the year on students, staff and parents/guardians cannot be overstated. We came through it, however, even though there is much to do in the areas of student learning, mental health, healing and support for our school communities.

For high school students, the pandemic meant remote learning for three or four days out of the six-day school cycle. Many of our junior high and elementary students were also learning remotely to help reduce the risk of spreading the virus. Overall, our efforts in schools and homes have been successful, resulting in a limited number of cases in schools and very few in-school transmissions. On behalf of the board of trustees, I thank all WSD staff, students and families for your cooperation and your dedication to learning that made such a difference in a challenging year.

Despite the pressures of the pandemic, the school division continued to function and several noteworthy items came out of the 'virtual' board meetings. A motion was approved to review the name of Cecil Rhodes School, in light of the heightened awareness around the Black Lives Matter movement. The

results of community consultation proved to be very close on whether to rename the school or remain unchanged. Based on the slight majority in favour, and the Board's own values, the motion to rename the school was passed and steps in that direction are taking place in the 2021/2022 school year.

The Board of Trustees also established a Newcomer Education Committee and an Indigenous Education Ad Hoc Committee, recognizing the division's responsibility to represent the diverse cultural backgrounds of our almost 33,000 students.

A major topic of discussion as we entered the second half of the school year was the province's introduction of the Education Modernization Bill 64. The unified efforts of education stakeholders throughout the province resulted in public pressure on the provincial government to withdraw Bill 64 before it ever went to third reading in the legislature, however, a legacy of concern raised by this proposed bill remains. The WSD Board of Trustees recognizes that there are many areas that can be improved in our education system, areas that we, as a Board, have worked on to the best of our

ability. We might embrace provincial involvement in these areas, such as addressing mental health and the impact of poverty, if we can ensure that the unique and local needs of our community are taken into account. With the passing of Bill 71, also known as the Education Property Tax Reduction Act, how schools will be financed is largely unclear. As you will see in our Finance Chair's message, restrictions from the province on how we can raise revenue to meet the needs of our students has already resulted in reductions to staffing and other resources. It remains to be seen how this will continue to impact our budget decisions going forward.

In closing, the WSD Board of Trustees is very grateful to our many community partners. We also extend our thanks to the many other organizations who support our schools throughout the year, including The Winnipeg Foundation, Winnipeg Harvest, Children's Variety, Indspire and far too many to list here.

Thank you.

## **Betty Edel**

Chair, Winnipeg School Division Board of Trustees 2020/2021



# MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF SUPERINTENDENT AND CEO

The 2020/2021 school year, a full year of education during a pandemic, is one that history will likely never fully capture. It was a year of optimism, uncertainty, success and disruption.

The school year started optimistically as we came out of a low COVID case summer. Enhanced safety measures were implemented from day one, including blended remote/in-school learning for high school students to ensure physical distancing in classrooms. The second wave of the pandemic quickly moved in and by October 2020, schools across the province moved to a higher level (Orange) on the pandemic response system. Going to the Orange level required some WSD junior high and elementary schools to offer remote learning to students in order to ensure a full two metre physical distance between children of critical services workers who continued to learn in-school. We remained at the Orange level for almost the entire school year, until we moved to the Red level when the third wave of the pandemic hit in mid-May 2021 to the end of the school year, resulting in all students who were not children of critical services workers to learn remotely.

What I've summarized in the paragraph previous hardly describes the full impact and disruption that the COVID pandemic has had on students and staff. I applaud the heroic efforts of our school communities in making sure that our students continued to learn, despite the uncertainty of their learning environment from one week to the next. Within the first few weeks of the school year, WSD had distributed an additional 7,850 electronic devices on top of the 3,000 distributed in the spring of 2020, for students to use both at home and in school, helping to provide the connectivity needed to continue learning.

The fiscal austerity measures of the current Provincial government have continued to have a major impact on Winnipeg School Division students. In March 2021, the WSD Board of Trustees passed a budget that required a number of reductions that will, over time, have a direct impact on our students.

Despite the difficulties of a pandemic and fiscal austerity, Winnipeg School Division students continue to grow as engaged and successful learners. Mental health programming has proven to be more important than ever, and our work over the past few years in Healthy Minds is continuing to serve our students in finding their own flexibility and learning strength. It was a highly unusual year and, while we are proud to share this annual report to our community with you, we recognize that it is a different kind of report. Gatherings and events were limited and we have focused on providing a snapshot view of the division over the 2020/2021 school year.

**Pauline Clarke**  
Chief Superintendent and CEO  
Winnipeg School Division

# WSD CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

The COVID-19 pandemic over the past year had a definite impact on continuous improvement among Winnipeg School Division students. The disruption caused by blended and remote learning caused a mixture of responses from students with some thriving in a remote learning environment while others struggled with the loss of direct daily contact with their teachers and peers.

Grade 12 standards test was not implemented in the 2020/2021 school year, however, WSD teachers and

administrators continued to assess students based on key indicators. These include course completion, in class participation, English Language Arts and Maths assessments based on grade levels. Due to variable assessment during pandemic learning, detailed data is unavailable for the most recent school year.

WSD is committed to continuous improvement for its students and school staff. Throughout the 2020/21 school year, the WSD Professional Support Services (PSS) team

continued to work with schools across the division to provide coordinated, job-embedded, consistent support for instruction, professional learning, assessment and sustainability. PSS support in schools is a contributor to WSD continuous improvement gains through facilitating learning conversations, engaging in data exploration in classroom planning and generally supporting the development of plans to sustain teaching and learning.



## ACTS OF KINDNESS

One day in late November 2020, Earl Grey teacher Catherine Tattersall and her Grades 2 and 3 students walked a few blocks to The Convalescent Home of Winnipeg to wave at the seniors and staff.

That one act of kindness became a daily habit, with Tattersall and her students waving at Convalescent Home residents and staff every day at 1:45 p.m.

"I remember watching the news and seeing a musician who would

stand outside a senior's home and play the violin," Tattersall said.

"I thought 'Oh my goodness, we could walk and wave.' And now the students have taken ownership of it."

On December 17 2020, Earl Grey students made an extra special visit to Convalescent Home. Escorted by a Winnipeg Police Service vehicle, the students pulled a wagon full of After Eight mint chocolates to the care home to gift to the residents and staff.

In addition to waving and hand heart gestures, the students did a charming choreographed dance to *You're a Mean One, Mr. Grinch*.

Convalescent Home was experiencing a COVID-19 outbreak, so its residents weren't able to come to the windows on Dec. 17. However, staff members showed their appreciation to the students by waving back and pressing pictures of pink hearts up against the windows.

# HONOURING MMIWG2S

Red dresses were on display in the St. John's High School courtyard to honour missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls and two-spirit people (MMIWG2S).

St. John's chose to observe the province's MMIWG2S Honouring and Awareness Day over two days so both student cohorts at the school could participate.

The red dresses in the courtyard were created by students and staff with materials donated by the West End Women's Centre.

In 2010, Métis artist Jaime Black created The REDress Project as an art installation at the University of Winnipeg to create awareness of the MMIWG2S epidemic in Canada.

The empty red dresses are meant to evoke the missing women who should be wearing them. Black has said, "there is a presence in the absence."

In addition to the red dresses, St. John's started the days October 2 and 5 with a reading of the poem *Dear Indigenous Woman* by M. Talia White over the school's intercom. The poem was followed by the song *Remember Me* by the Plains Cree/Salish singer Fawn Wood.



## SISTEMA STUDENTS SUCCEED ON NATIONAL STAGE

Sistema Winnipeg's rendition of Oscar Peterson's Hymn to Freedom finished third in the Junior Instrumental category of CBC's 2020 Canadian Music Class Challenge.

Sistema Winnipeg is a partnership between Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra, Winnipeg School Division and Seven Oaks School Division.

In its 10th year, the after-school program provides free musical

training to students every day, with participants starting in Grade 2 and continuing until their high school graduation.

WSD's Sistema program is based out of King Edward Community School, with training also happening at Isaac Newton School and St. John's High School.



# COMMUNITY GIVING BUILDING BEDS

Tec Voc has teamed up with Sleep in Heavenly Peace, a non-profit charity that provides beds for youth aged three to 17.

It's an unfortunate reality that there are students in WSD who sleep on the floor or are without a bed of their own. The COVID-19 pandemic has greatly impacted many families and the need in the community is overwhelming.

Educators witness the impacts of sleep-deprived children in our schools. A bed is a basic need for the proper physical, emotional and mental support of a child. A new bed provides dignity to the family, as well as warmth, comfort and a sense of self-worth to a child.

The Tec Voc Carpentry program, along with students from the Learning Assistance Centre (LAC), built 150 beds for Sleep in Heavenly Peace.

The students are learning the safety aspects of all machines and equipment, while still achieving curricular outcomes. Students have learned how to use various hand and power tools to assemble the beds. Students are also learning how to stain the bed frames using a dip tank containing a mixture of vinegar and steel wool. Not only does it leave the frame a beautiful colour, it is also a natural bed bug inhibitor.



Beyond the curriculum and hands-on training, Tec Voc students are learning about the importance of helping others in our community. Our goal as educators is to promote citizenship and community involvement. The lessons learned by these students will hopefully stay with them as adults in our society.



# BUILD FROM WITHIN A BETTER FUTURE

Over a quarter of Winnipeg School Division students are self-declared Indigenous. Many of those students however, haven't crossed paths with an Indigenous educator, a fact WSD is working hard to change.

WSD launched Build From Within – Ozhiton Onji Peenjiiee in November 2018. The teacher development program is a collaboration between WSD, Indigenous charity Indspire and the University of Winnipeg's Faculty of Education.

The primary goal of Ozhiton Onji

Peenjiiee is to develop a path for Indigenous high school students to become educators within the division.

The Build From Within program supports its participant's university tuition fees with bursaries, while also providing a monthly bus pass, cultural activities, mentors and summer job opportunities.

The program looks at the whole child when supporting them. It's not just the academic part, also support emotionally, mentally, spiritually, and academically.

Students enrolled since 2018	<b>52</b>
Students completed the EA program to date	<b>23</b>
Students enrolled in University to date	<b>27</b>



## WSD OFFERS VIRTUAL SCHOOL

The WSD Virtual School delivered lessons via online platforms like Seesaw, Google Classroom and Microsoft Teams, which students accessed from their homes.

Officially opened on Sept. 14, 2020, Virtual School was created to address the demand for distance learning during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

Students in Virtual School are either immunocompromised or medically excused from attending regular classes.

Students are provided Google Chromebooks or Apple iPads with cellular connectivity if they lack the technology necessary for attending Virtual School.

WSD Virtual School changed from K to 12 at the end of June 2021 to Grades 9 to 12 for the 2021/2022 school year as MB Education took over virtual learning for K to 8 students.

# SUPPORT ACROSS THE PRAIRIES

10

Champlain School saw an opportunity for a valuable Indigenous teaching moment.

Champlain teacher Catherine Siller came across a news article about Isabella Kulak, a Grade 5 student in Kamsack, SK and member of Cote First Nation, who was criticized by a non-Indigenous educational assistant for wearing a traditional ribbon skirt to school on “formal day” in December, 2020.

Kulak’s story quickly made the rounds on social media, where people across the world showed their support for her by sharing photos and videos of themselves wearing ribbon skirts or shirts.

Siller said she has Indigenous students in her classroom who are very active in their culture. She said Champlain was designated a Gord Downie & Chanie Wenjack Legacy School in 2019, a national initiative that promotes reconciliation and reconciliACTION.

Champlain students Darasimi, Mason and Layla understand that

it’s not OK to shame someone for their dress or their culture.

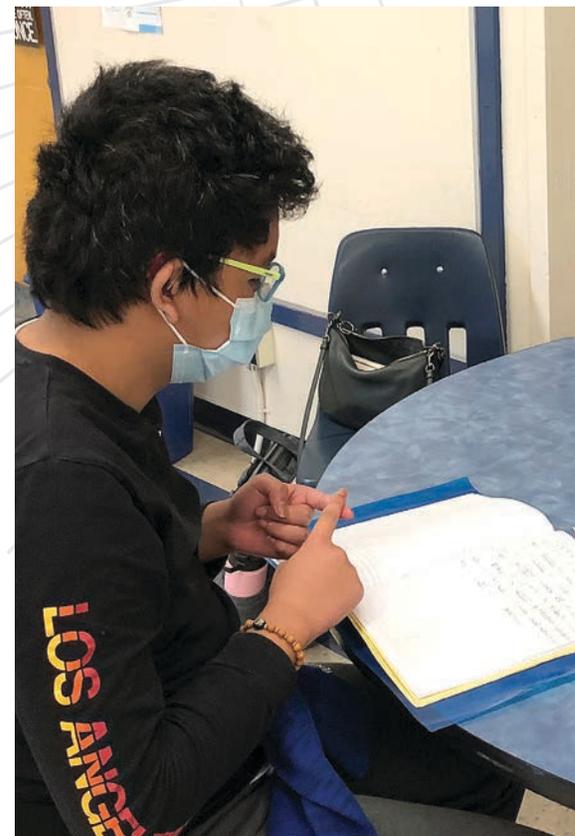
“What something looks like is not important, it’s the meaning behind it that matters the most,” Darasimi said.

“I don’t think anyone should be made to feel bad about who they are or their culture,” Mason said.

“If you don’t understand someone’s culture, never be rude,” Layla said. “You can ask in a kind way, like ‘Hey, I’ve never seen that type of skirt before, can you tell me a little bit about it?’”

Siller said she’s also in touch with a person in Saskatchewan who will teach Champlain students more about the ribbon skirt and Indigenous culture.

“If we just got to know people and opened with kindness, if we actually spent some time and got to know each other, how much more of a positive place and environment would we be in?” Siller said.



# HAIRSTYLING AND HORTICULTURE IN HARMONY AT R.B. RUSSELL

R.B. Russell Vocational High School's Hairstyling and Horticulture departments put their heads together to create a unique project focused on student mental health.

Hairstyling students haven't been able to experience stylist/client interactions due to COVID-19 restrictions. Instead of hair care, on Feb. 4 and 5 Hairstyling students focused on plant care and self-care.

"We have mannequin heads that we practise cutting hair on. Typically they'd be thrown out afterward or maybe used as wig holders," said Hairstyling Instructor Barbara Parkin.

"We decided maybe we could do something different and partner up with Horticulture. We sawed the tops of the mannequin heads off with the help of the Carpentry program, dug out the insides and created planters. Then we asked our art teacher if we could borrow paints and all of a sudden we had a little project."



The project took the form of a mental wellness initiative, with Hairstyling students painting the mannequin head planters as a form of self-expression.

Parkin said the project also reduces R.B. Russell's eco-footprint by repurposing the used mannequin heads.



## WSD SUPPORTS DEAF/HARD OF HEARING STUDENTS

Winnipeg School Division students who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing are supported by a team of school professionals that aim to address the individual needs of each student.

Patti Craven, Support Teacher for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, said WSD is one of only two school divisions in Manitoba that employs a teacher of the Deaf.

"In our division, we've got 400 or so students with hearing loss," Craven said. "There's a huge range. It can be a very mild loss where the student doesn't even wear hearing aids to a significant loss where the student is Deaf and uses sign language."

Craven sees approximately 35

of those 400 students regularly throughout the school year. She said that group of students requires more supports to be included in the classroom.

"Many of them would work with either an interpreter or an educational assistant (EA)," Craven said. "It can be students who are using sign language in the classroom or students who have a note-taker. We have students with cochlear implants in the division."

WSD is well-equipped to address the unique needs of Deaf or Hard of Hearing students. In fact, it's the only division in Manitoba that has Educational Audiologists on staff.

# CLASS OF 2021

## ACADEMIC AWARD WINNERS

The Governor General's Medal is presented to the graduate who achieves the highest academic standing at their high school. The WSD School Board Post Secondary Scholarship Awards, which were established in 1972, present \$1,000 scholarships to a student at each high school. Both are among the highest honours a student can receive upon their graduation from a WSD high school. Congratulations to the following graduates:

### GOVERNOR GENERAL MEDAL WINNERS

Argyle Alternative High School  
**Liul Zergaw**

Children of the Earth High School  
**Skylah McLean**

Churchill High School  
**Jordynn Friesen**

Collège Churchill  
**Georgia MacKinnon**

Daniel McIntyre Collegiate Institute  
**Aaron Herrera**

Elmwood High School  
**Bareera Kamran**

Gordon Bell High School  
**Sadaf Saberi**

Grant Park High School  
**Jamie Xie**

Kelvin High School  
**Gabriel Young**

R.B. Russell High School  
**Chloe Greenwalt**

Sisler High School  
**Eliane Yvonne Paglicauan**

St. John's High School  
**Darlene Sofia Cuevas**

Tec Voc High School  
**Sasha Houle**

Winnipeg Adult Education Centre  
**Darren Bird**

### WSD POST-SECONDARY SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS

Argyle Alternative High School  
**Wyatt Littlejohn**

Children of the Earth High School  
**Skylah McLean**

Churchill High School  
**Jordynn Friesen**

Collège Churchill  
**Elissa Hall**

Daniel McIntyre Collegiate Institute  
**Aaron Herrera**

Elmwood High School  
**Diego Chacon Vega**

Gordon Bell High School  
**Phrankie Huynh**

Grant Park High School  
**Claire Davis**

Kelvin High School  
**Charlotte Huculak**

R.B. Russell High School  
**Morgyn Rudolph**

Sisler High School  
**Eliane Yvonne Paglicauan**

St. John's High School  
**John Santos**

Tec Voc High School  
**Alexandra Moog**

Winnipeg Adult Education Centre  
**Jose Briones**





## FACTS AT A GLANCE

### Total number of students

Total number of students (as of Sept.30, 2020)	29,593
Elementary (N – Grade 8)	19,630
Secondary	9,963
Total number of schools	78
Elementary (N – Grade 8)	65
Secondary	13
Number of graduates (as of Sept. 30, 2020)	2,091
Number of nursery students	1,136
Students in language programs:	
French Immersion	4,573
Hebrew Bilingual	197
Ukrainian Bilingual	23
Spanish Bilingual	64
Cree Bilingual	31
Ojibwe Bilingual	38
Students identified as English-as-an-additional language	4,850
Students transported to school	1,624
Total number of full-time staff	4,284

# FINANCE COMMITTEE CHAIR MESSAGE

The Winnipeg School Division (WSD) Board of Trustees is committed to the continuous improvement of our students in becoming the engaged and successful learners who will succeed both now and in the future. Student support and education is our top priority, and that is what directs our decisions in creating a budget for the division each year.

The budget we developed during the 2020/21 school year is implemented in the 2021/2022 school year. Our efforts have continued to be severely hampered by the fiscal austerity of the current provincial government and the restrictions it has placed on school divisions to raise revenue. The budget my colleagues and I approved in March 2021 is not the budget we would have wished for our students, but it is what our school division must work with for the coming year.

The final budget submitted to the province was \$421,039,400. Provincial funding to WSD dropped by 1.6 percent or \$2,926,520 for the 2021/2022 school year. In addition, the Provincial Government has directed school divisions throughout the province to limit property tax levies at a two percent increase over the 2020 level, leading to a reduction of 0.54 percent on the property tax levy for WSD homeowners, or a decrease of about \$8 a year on the average assessed home value of \$225,700 within WSD.

As a result, WSD has cut \$4,457,395 from its budget despite feedback from our communities that supported a small property tax increase in order to maintain programs and services. As a Board, we are concerned about the impact these cuts will have on safety, nutrition and student supports, however, WSD classroom-based support in both regular instruction and student support services continues to be among the strongest in Manitoba.

Among the reductions are the School Resource Officer (SRO) program (\$537,174) and WSD will be reviewing the safety outcomes related to increased 30 kph zones around schools in order to reduce the number of adult crossing guards. This is expected to result in savings of approximately \$164,250 in the annual budget.

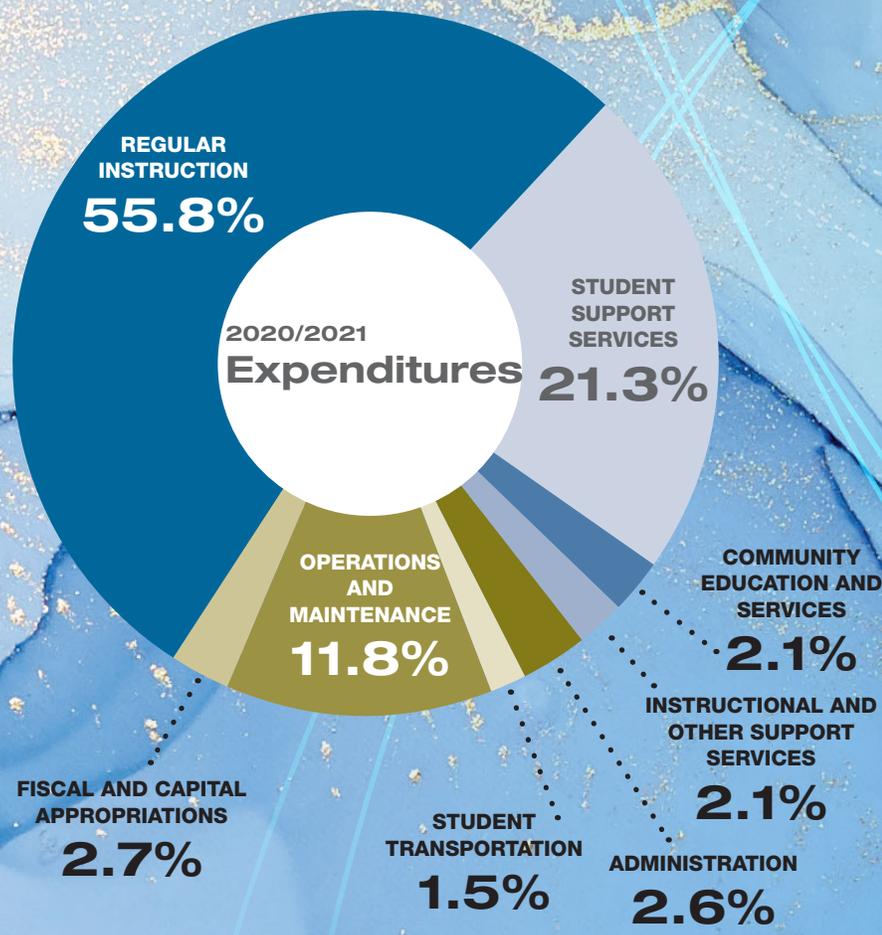
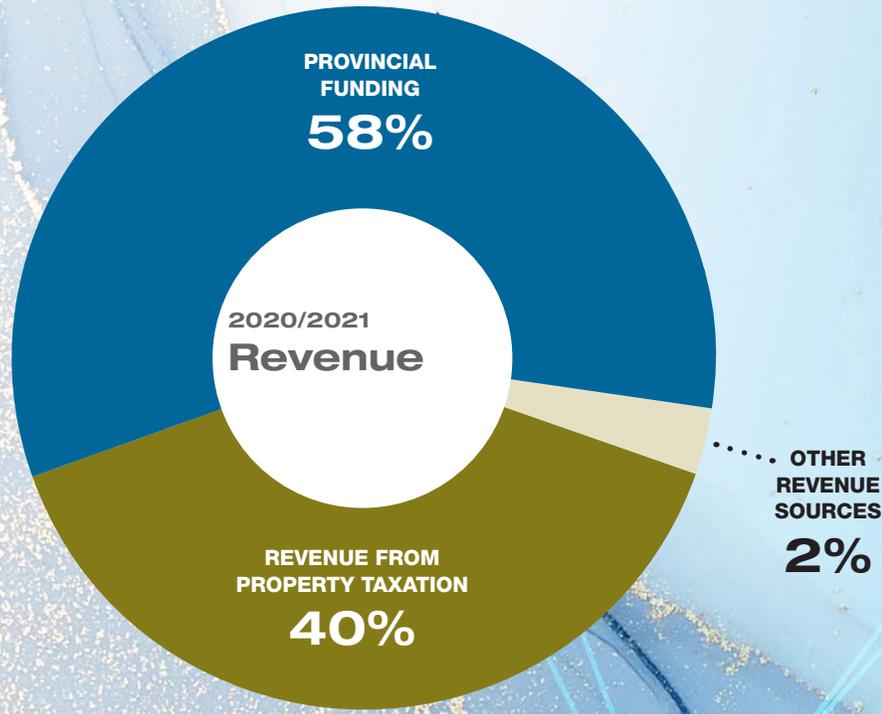
Also cut from the WSD budget was \$210,000 for a milk subsidy, which has been covered for the 2021/2022 school year by a donation from Schroeder Foundation. Other necessary cuts have been made to non-salary expenses in schools from 20 percent to 14 percent, for a savings of \$1,033,267. Savings in utilities, unfilled support position vacancies, cell phone reimbursements, enrolment reductions and converting 12-month clerical positions in schools to 10-month positions adds another \$2,414,260 to the required budget cuts for 2021/2022.

With current direction from the provincial government WSD will continue to face program and personnel reductions. Provincial policy and wage settlement trends will mean even more drastic cuts over the next two budget years.

As we begin budget discussions this autumn, the Board is faced with many unanswered questions regarding Bill 71, the Education Property Tax Reduction Act. Bill 71 was passed as legislation before the government withdrew Bill 64 Education Modernization Act. The intent of Bill 71 relied heavily on the elimination of local school boards, centralized administration and other aspects of Bill 64, proposed changes that resulted in Bill 64's demise.

While my colleagues and I agree that a better method of funding education is urgently needed, Bill 71 isn't it, and we will continue to lobby this government to repeal Bill 71 and collaborate with school divisions to find a better alternative – an alternative that will ensure appropriate levels of funding for all students in Manitoba.

**Chris Broughton**  
Chair, Finance/Personnel Committee  
2020/2021



**INSTRUCTIONAL**

**Regular Instruction**

All subject areas; language programs; English-as-an-additional language  
\$244,624,352

**Student Support Services**

Special Education; clinical services; resources and counseling  
\$93,554,967

**Community education and services (including adult learning centres)**

Nursery; adult programs and community use of schools  
\$9,333,542

**Instructional and other support services**

Professional development; library services and nutritional program  
\$9,390,874

**SUPPORT**

**Administration**

Computer and information services; business and human resources functions; Board and central administration  
\$11,432,709

**Student transportation**

Operation of school buses  
\$6,402,729

**Operations and maintenance**

Operating and maintaining 78 schools and other facilities  
\$51,812,703

**Fiscal and capital appropriations**

Payroll tax; banking charges and capital transfers  
\$12,039,582

**Total 2020/2021 expenditures**

\$438,591,458



If you have any comments, questions,  
or concerns please contact:

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