

THE WINNIPEG SCHOOL DIVISION

NORTH DISTRICT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSIONS – Tuesday, April 27, 2021

1. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The Committee members approved the Agenda of April 27, 2021, as distributed.

2. BILL 64 – THE EDUCATION MODERNIZATION ACT

Committee members were informed that on March 16, 2021, the Province of Manitoba announced substantive changes to the education system in Manitoba.

Committee members were informed that the new governance model includes 15 new regions, plus Division Scolaire Franco-Manitobaine (DSFM) to replace 37 separate school divisions in Manitoba. This would require Winnipeg, St. James, Louis Riel, Pembina Trails, Seven Oaks and River East Transcona School Division to merge into one region for the City of Winnipeg representing 188,540 students. Committee members were informed that local School Boards would be replaced with a Provincial Education Authority.

Committee members were informed that through this new Governance Model School Community Councils would be established in place of Parent Councils. One parent representative of a School Community Council from each of the regions would be elected to the Provincial Advisory Council. This would result in one parent being elected to represent the City of Winnipeg schools and all parents.

Trustee Reid provided an overview of Bill 64 which highlighted some of the proposed changes and the impact Bill 64 may have on programs and services. Committee members were informed that the Province expects \$40 million in savings that would go to frontline education across Manitoba, this equates to one half-time teacher per school in Manitoba. WSD provides services and programs to support our students such as Nutrition programs, Housing assistance, Health connections, Reading Recovery, Math Pathways, Autism programs, Anxiety Programs, Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) Program which support our families. Committee members were informed that Manitoba Education believes that a complete restructuring of education is necessary to find efficiencies, meanwhile, suggestions of modest and less disruptive changes such as merging all Winnipeg school busses, shared IT and purchasing would result in immediate savings. Committee members were informed that Manitoba Education suggests that where you live changes how you learn because school funding is based on a district's ability to raise money through property taxes, however WSD receives less than 60 percent of its operating revenue from the Province and has no choice but to rely on property taxes to fund resources needed for important programming for students. The Committee was informed that Manitoba Education claims that Indigenous students are falling behind because only 51 percent of Indigenous students graduate within four-years, compared to 90 percent graduation rate among their non-indigenous peers. Committee members were informed that pointing to a four-year graduation rate as the indicator of success shows ignorance of the socio-economic and social status challenges students face. WSD supports a large number of Indigenous students who return to school and successfully complete their diploma as mature students. Many Indigenous students overcome trauma in order to successfully graduate which may take more than four years to achieve, but is no less a success.

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Committee members were informed that Mulvey School Parent Council has already mobilized and reached out to other parent councils to stand together against Bill 64. A facebook page, <https://www.facebook.com/Action-Committee-re-bill-64-108846324635392> has been created for those interested, which provides information summarizing the Education Modernization Act as well as events and ways parents can get involved.

Committee members were informed that the government spent one million dollars on a review of the education system in Manitoba, however very few of the recommendations from the Commissioner were reflected in Bill 64.

Committee members were informed that under the new model the responsibilities of the Parent Advisory Council are unclear, and that the education system needs to be operated by educators and not by appointed officials.

Trustee Chen informed Committee members that the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternative (CCPA) held a webinar recently where a previous member of the Parent Advisory Council in Nova Scotia provided insight on what can be expected under the new model which is the current model being used in Nova Scotia. The Nova Scotia representative informed the audience that under the new model, parents are left without direction and have focused their questions and frustrations on teachers and Principals who are not the decision makers. The Committee was informed that the webinar can be viewed on YouTube at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jX-K3kvz8eY>.

Trustee Reid informed Committee members that under Bill 64 parents are defined as legal guardians which excludes foster parents, grandparents, aunt or uncles as they would have no voice in Education. The Minister of Education would have ultimate decision-making power. A Committee member expressed that although they have no school-aged children, they still care a great deal about Education in Manitoba.

Committee members were informed that under the new model there would not be any parent councils in the traditional sense, which would mean there would be no treasurer and no way for schools to conduct fundraisers which would result in loss of playgrounds, lunch programs etc.

In response to an enquiry, Committee members were informed that the Board of Trustees has sent a letter to the Provincial government outlining concerns related to parental involvement and governance.

Committee members were informed that the Division is available to assist with any initiatives by providing information or summarizing documents. Committee members were also informed that Trustees are available to speak to Parent Councils or other groups.

Committee members were encouraged to act now and get involved by joining coalitions, letter writing campaigns, writing letters to their MLA's or requesting to appear as a delegation by contacting Manitoba Legislative Assembly to ensure their voices are heard. Committee members were informed that it is important to act quickly as waiting until the new school year may be too late to evoke change.

3. PROVINCIAL CONSULTATION

Committee members received an overview on the timelines outlined by the Province to consult with parents, Parent Advisory Councils, and School Staff regarding the role and processes for School Community Councils and the establishment of the Provincial Education Authority.

Committee members were informed that during the spring/summer of 2021, the Province intends to consult with parents, parent advisory councils, and school staff on the role parents can play in decision making and the role and processes for school community councils. The Province also intends to consult with education staff and stakeholders on priority actions as well as establishing a curriculum review panel, and a new assessment framework.

Committee members were informed that by fall of 2021, the Province intends to release a road map for the implementation of the priority actions and the timelines for change.

Committee members were informed that by November 2021, the Province anticipates having the Provincial Education Authority established along with the changes to the current school trustee system expected by July 1, 2022.

4. MAPC BILL 64 MEETING INVITATION

Committee members were informed that MAPC is organizing a coalition of parent councils and allies to save public education in Manitoba. Parent Councils are being invited to participate in zoom meetings to discuss and develop a campaign to stop Bill 64.

Committee members were informed that any interested participants can RSVP to info@mapc.mb.ca with “Save Public Education Coalition” in the subject line. Virtual meetings will take place April 21, 2021 at 7:00 PM or April 22, 2021 at 2:00 PM. Additional Virtual meetings have been scheduled for April 28, 2021 at 7:00 PM and May 5, 2021 at 1:00 PM.

5. MINISTER OF EDUCATION’S STUDENT ADVISORY COUNCIL

Committee members were informed that the Minister of Education is receiving application from Students for the Minister of Education’s Student Advisory Council. The Student Advisory Council would be comprised of up to 20 Manitoba youth, aged 14 – 18 and would report directly to the Minister of Education. Council members would serve a 12 month term starting in August, 2021 and ending August 2022. Council members would also meet with government staff and education stakeholders via virtual meetings.

Committee members were informed that the Student Advisory Council would discuss and provide input to the Minister on aspects of the education system and how they affect the children and young people who experience it today; bring youth insights to the department and the education sector to help inform the path forward; create a network for students across Manitoba with a way to share their perspectives and advice and; provide feedback on department initiatives and work collaboratively with fellow council members.

Committee members were informed that more information on the Minister of Education’s Student Advisory Council and instructions on how to apply to visit <https://bettereducationmb.ca>.

Committee members were informed that the deadline for applications is Monday, May 10, 2021 and successful applicants would be announced in June 2021.

6. RENAMING OF CECIL RHODES SCHOOL UPDATE

Committee members were informed that the Board of Trustees received an overview of the results and confirmed that the school community and the community at large did not speak with one voice. In respecting the two different voices a conclusive recommendation was not

reached however, the members of the Committee felt that naming schools after individuals lends itself to conflicting ideals as societal values continue to be in constant flux.

Committee members were informed that the results of the survey for the Renaming of Cecil Rhodes School have been referred to the Building/Transportation Committee for review and consideration.

5. WSD 150th ANNIVERSARY

Committee members were informed that on October 20, 2021, WSD will be turning 150 years old. As part of the celebration schools are being invited to participate by creating a school banner that will be installed on lamp posts along Main Street and Portage Avenue. School Principals will provide more information at a later date.

6. ENQUIRIES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS AND SCHOOL REPORTS

SCHOOL REPORTS

Parent representatives from the following schools provided a written report on school activities: (attached):

- NIL

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In Attendance:

Voting Representatives

Andrew Mynarski School
Champlain School
Faraday School
Garden Grove School
Inkster School
Meadows West School
Ralph Brown School
Robertson School
Sisler High School
St. John's High School
Tyndall Park School

Regrets

Isaac Newton School
Lansdowne School
Lord Nelson School
Luxton School
Meadows West School
Prairie Rose School
Shaunessy Park School
Stanley Knowles School
Waterford Springs School

Administration

Fatima Mota, Superintendent of Education Services
Tony Marchione, Director
Brenda Lapointe, Board and Community Liaison
Doug Taylor, Principal St. John's High School
Gisele Mosphanchuk, Principal Tyndall Park School
Jude Guzzi, Principal Robertson School
Ken Romaniuk, Principal Prairie Rose School
Nancy Karpinsky, Principal Garden Grove School
Pat Graham, Principal Shaunessy Park School
Paulo Teixeira, Principal Champlain School
Rosanna Guzzi, Principal Ralph Brown School
Daniel Keith, Vice-Principal Lord Nelson School
Joanne Sabourin, Vice-Principal St. John's High School
Lucas Buller, Vice-Principal Andrew Mynarski School
Steven Nikkel, Vice-Principal Shaunessy Park School
Susan Drysdale, Vice-Principal Waterford Springs School
Thomas Locke, Vice-Principal St. John's High School
Amanda Ferbrache, W.A.N.T.E. Representative

Trustees

Arlene Reid
Linda Schatkowsky
Jennifer Chen