



June 15, 2021

Board passes 2021-22 budget

The Saskatoon Board of Education has approved its operating budget for the upcoming academic year, which will see expenses of \$287.7 million, an increase of \$9.4 million over last year.

Provincial government operating funding increased two per cent (\$4.6 million) for the year, which mainly covers the provincially negotiated salary increase for teachers. However, contracted increases for other staff, inflationary costs and rising students needs are not addressed by this funding, resulting in an \$8-million shortfall.

“This shortfall is the result of chronic underfunding from the provincial government, particularly for the inflationary pressures we face every year – our utilities bills are going up, our insurance premiums have increased and our growing enrolment requires resources,” said Board Chair Colleen MacPherson. “If we look at per-student funding adjusted for inflation, we’re receiving \$344 less per student today than we received in 2016-17. As a board, we are frustrated but determined to advocate for sufficient, sustainable and predictable funding for education.”

The 2021-22 budget includes the following changes to address the shortfall, including:

- Reduction of 14 FTE for Central Office positions and 2 FTE for business functions;
- A 0.5 increase to the division’s staffing ratio, resulting in a reduction of 13.5 FTE for elementary teachers and 7 FTE for secondary teachers;
- Elimination of secondary career facilitators, impacting 2.25 FTE;
- Reduction of 2.75 FTE for secondary teacher librarians;
- Reduction of 7 FTE for English as an Additional Language teachers (1.5 FTE secondary and 5.5 FTE elementary);
- Reduction of 18.4 FTE school support positions, including reduction of elementary library technicians and community school educational assistants; and,
- 10 per cent reduction to school budget lines and 15 per cent reduction to Central Office budget lines.

At least one layoff is anticipated but the majority of impacted staff will be redeployed. The budget will add one elementary school counsellor and one elementary resource teacher.

MacPherson noted that trustees will continue to push the provincial government to change how funding is distributed for supports for learning, which encompasses educational assistants, special education programs, English as an Additional Language teachers and much more.

“Every school division is treated as having a similar percentage of students requiring additional supports. But our numbers show this is absolutely not the case. We are spending about \$11 million more on supports for learning than we receive in funding. We will continue to press for changes that ensure the money flows where it’s needed, no matter where students attend school,” said MacPherson.

Saskatoon Public Schools is the largest school division in the province. It operates 49 elementary schools, 10 secondary schools, one associate school, and one alliance school. It serves approximately 26,000 students and employs more than 2,600 professional and support staff. Learn more at www.saskatoonpublicschools.ca

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