

Uncertainty Over Education Budget

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE - The Board of Trustees of Grande Yellowhead Public School Division has approved the 2019/20 School Year Budget in its June 19, 2019, Public Board Meeting. The \$60 million budget is built on a funding allocation model that distributes funds to schools based on the needs of all students, while demonstrating fiscal responsibility. The Division is projecting a deficit of \$1.2 million in the 2019/20 school year.

“This is the first time that our board has had to approve a budget without receiving a funding assurance from the province for the upcoming school year,” explained Board Chair, B. Rosadiuk. “We have to make a number of assumptions due to this uncertainty and delay of the provincial budget.”

Some of the assumptions include the potential discontinuation of the Classroom Improvement Fund (CIF), a grant created in 2017 to hire more staff to improve classroom conditions, and the potential discontinuation of the School Nutrition Grant. The Division is also projecting a slight enrolment decline in the 2019/20 school year, which adds pressure on the revenue projections.

A number of cost pressures unfunded by the Funding Framework also contribute to the projected deficit, such as increasing standard costs of teaching and support staff, unfunded TEBA settlement cost and inflationary costs in various service areas.

Chair Rosadiuk continued. “Unfunded cost pressures and the funding uncertainty has also led the board to delay the renewal of some teaching contracts. However, we choose to remain optimistic and believe no drastic measures will be taken in the upcoming provincial budget. Any cuts to education funding will be extremely challenging for rural school boards like us.”