

Board NEWS



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE - May 22, 2020

At the May 20, 2020, Public Board Meeting, the Board of Trustees for Grande Yellowhead Public School Division approved the Division's budget of 63 million dollars for the 2020-2021 school year. Despite a struggling economy and the impact of the COVID pandemic, the Division worked with principals and central office leadership to ensure schools had budgets similar to 2019-20 levels to limit impacts to staffing and student programming – including the decision to maintain full-day kindergarten programming for the 2020-21 school year.

As noted by Secretary-Treasurer Sean Nicholson throughout the budgeting process, “The new Funding and Assurance model is a significant change in the way school divisions are funded.” Alberta's school divisions will no longer be funded on a per-student allocation. Rather, the new model uses a Weighted Moving Average (WMA) methodology that replaces the per-student allocation. The WMA ties a percentage of Division funding to past enrolment. The WMA calculation for the 2020-2021 school year is based on 20 per cent of 2018-2019 enrolments, 30 per cent of 2019-2020 enrolments and 50 per cent of projected 2020-2021 enrolments from this spring.

The addition of Interim Bridge Funding and the Rural Small School grant allowed GYPSD's funding to remain flat for the 2020-2021 school year - even in the cases of changes in enrollment numbers - principals received a 2020-21 budget similar to their 2019-2020 budgets. In cases where school enrollments declined, the Division created an Equalization Allocation to ensure that all the schools in the jurisdiction have a relatively stable budget.

Under the direction of the Superintendent, the Finance Team worked across all Division departments and with school principals to complete an exhaustive analysis of past budgets, current and prospective student needs, program equity, staffing requirements, and areas for efficiencies. Following the Board's vote to accept the 2020-21 Budget, Board Chair Brenda Rosadiuk shared her appreciation for the Division's efforts. “The Budget process is the most important aspect of the trustees' work, and this year's budget – within the context of so many unknowns – is presented well and maintains our focus on students in the classroom.”

School jurisdictions across the province anticipate that the decrease in bridge funding for 2021-2022 will necessitate many difficult decisions.

-30-