

MEDIA STATEMENT

Date of release: June 28, 2022

Prairie Spirit Board approves 2022/23 budget

The Prairie Spirit Board of Education approved its 2022/23 budget at the last Board meeting of the school year on Monday, June 27.

The balanced budget – described as a “maintenance” budget in an unprecedented time – was achieved through past and ongoing strategic reductions, conservative budgeting practices and the use of internally restricted reserves. These reserves were set aside to support student learning goals as outlined in the interim provincial education plan. The funds will be used to support initiatives including: mental health and well-being, pandemic response, student and family engagement, attendance supports and distance education.

In 2022/23, Prairie Spirit will receive an increase of 2.03% in provincial funding over the previous year. This increase will fund the 2% salary increase for teachers as part of the provincial Teachers’ Collective Bargaining Agreement but will not fully cover other inflationary costs like gas, support staff salaries and utilities. In total, approximately 70% of Prairie Spirit’s budget is dedicated to instruction.

“We are concerned about sustainability because we’re using reserves to balance the budget,” said Bernie Howe, Board Chair. “We know our students will need ongoing, additional supports following the pandemic.”

The Division’s funding is based on a projected enrolment of 11,929 students, an increase of approximately 150 students over last year. Over the past 10 years, Prairie Spirit made significant budget reductions in response to provincial funding levels, despite increasing enrolments in Division schools during that time.

Darryl Bazylak, Director of Education, said there will be no Division-wide reductions to staff assigned to schools, although there will be the usual adjustments and changes made to school staffing, based on enrolment.

“We appreciate the stimulus funding we have received from the province to fund crucial renovation and repair projects in our schools,” Howe added. He also expressed the Board’s appreciation for the provincial funding for the new school project in Blaine Lake, which will be open for students in 2023.

The Board continues to be concerned about the funding of the locally negotiated teacher contract with Prairie Spirit teachers, which includes teacher preparation time. “This is an issue of fairness, as Prairie Spirit is not receiving the provincial funding needed to fully fund the teacher preparation time in the contract,” explained Darryl Bazylak, Director of Education.

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Prairie Spirit School Division serves approximately 12,000 students in 47 schools and 28 communities surrounding the City of Saskatoon.

For more information, please contact:

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