



Prairie Spirit Update: **Budget 2017/18**

Prairie Spirit School Division received its 2017/18 budget information as part of the provincial budget announcement on March 22. The Prairie Spirit Board of Education has reviewed and analyzed the budget information. The following details have been confirmed and we are sharing them with Prairie Spirit staff, parents and stakeholders to describe the budget's impact on the school division.

- Prairie Spirit's overall discretionary operational budget for 2017/18 has been reduced by \$1.6 million, a decrease of 1.2% (the Division's overall budget is over \$107 million).
- With inflationary costs, the funding reduction and other factors, Prairie Spirit is estimating a budget shortfall of **\$4.5 million** for 2017/18.
- Prairie Spirit will balance its budget for 2017/18 with a commitment to avoid reductions that directly impact the classroom, recognizing that any reductions will diminish classrooms supports. This commitment was established by the Board of Education in October.
- The budget reduction strategy will be shared with staff and our learning communities in the next two weeks.
- The Prairie Spirit Board is pleased that the education funding model review recommendations were implemented in the 2017/18 budget. This review was the result of the Board's advocacy for equitable funding for students in Prairie Spirit. Prairie Spirit's funding as calculated by the funding model reflected an increase. However, this small funding increase will be negated by the overall reduction in funding to school divisions.
- The Division's Preventative Maintenance and Renewal funding for 2017/18 is \$1,935,612, an increase of \$234,612 over last year.
- The Provincial Sales Tax (PST) rate change from 5% to 6% will increase costs for the 2017/18 fiscal year. The expanded scope of the PST to include construction projects will add significant costs to maintenance work.

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- Prairie Spirit's Board of Education is pleased with the Ministry's funding to start the new school project in Rosthern, which was announced as part of the 2017/18 provincial budget. There are currently two schools in Rosthern: Rosthern Elementary School and Rosthern High School. The new school project will consolidate the two schools into one facility with Pre-Kindergarten through Grade 12. The Board will ensure work begins on this urgently-needed project as soon as possible to serve the students and staff in Rosthern schools.
 - The Ministry has indicated that potential school division boundary changes around Saskatoon and Regina and in the North will be discussed over the next few months as part of a consultative process. Any possible boundary changes would be determined by the end of May and implemented in August 2018.
- The Ministry has directed school divisions to negotiate an overall compensation reduction of 3.5%.

Prairie Spirit has had to make difficult budget decisions over the past several years. Over the past three years, the Board of Education directed the use of \$5.5 million of reserve funds to balance the budgets. In addition, reductions of over \$5 million in administration were made in 2015, with \$3 million in school staffing reductions in 2016. Staffing levels in all areas of the school division have been reduced over the past several years.

Despite these challenges, Prairie Spirit is regarded as a highly effective and efficient school division, with strong student achievement results. The Board of Education is committed to ensuring ongoing student success in Prairie Spirit School Division.

The school division will submit a balanced budget to the Ministry of Education by June 30.

Larry Pavloff, Chair, Prairie Spirit Board of Education
John Kuzbik, Director of Education
Prairie Spirit School Division