

Prairie Spirit School Division budget update

The purpose of this communication is to provide updated information to staff and parents regarding Prairie Spirit's 2016/17 budget.

Based on provincial funding, current staffing levels and student enrolment, the Board must reduce expenditures by **\$3 million** to balance the 2016/17 budget. Although the Board appreciates a funding increase of \$1.8 million, this increase falls short of covering the additional costs associated with Prairie Spirit's student enrolment increase of 600 students over two years (6%) and provincially-negotiated teacher salary increases.

Though challenges exist in our province, Prairie Spirit's priority continues to be investing in our students and supporting their achievement. We are proud that our students are achieving at rates that meet and exceed the provincial average in all areas.

Ongoing supports for classrooms

Educational Associate (EA) Allocation

For the 2016/17 school year, Prairie Spirit will be staffed with 220 Educational Associates in the Division's 45 schools. Approximately half of these positions will be assigned to students with intense medical needs and to specific programs. The remaining EAs will be distributed to schools according to their student population and diverse needs.

Pupil-Teacher Ratio

On average, there are currently 15 students for every teacher in Prairie Spirit schools. This calculation is referred to as Pupil Teacher Ratio (PTR). With our upcoming teacher staffing reductions, it is estimated that the PTR in our schools will increase to 16.

It should be noted that classes may be smaller or larger than the average PTR.

More staff for younger students

By design, our youngest students will continue to have smaller class sizes and more EA support. Our Kindergarten to Grade 6 classes have the lowest PTR in the Division.

Larger schools will have a higher PTR because they have greater flexibility to accommodate students with more alike grades. This also reflects how school divisions are funded.

Next steps

The Board of Education remains committed to finding opportunities within these challenges to continue to improve upon our successful practices, made possible by our dedicated staff.

The Board continues to advocate and work collaboratively with the Ministry of Education on your behalf.

Expenditure reductions of \$3 million for 2016/17

Instructional salaries represent approximately 70% of Prairie Spirit's budget and are the school division's largest expenditure, as they should be.

The Board's priority is to have as many teachers working side by side with students as possible.

In addition, the Board is committed to providing appropriate supports for students and teachers while ensuring the effective operation of the school division.

Since 2012, the Board has made budget reductions in a [variety of areas](#), designed to minimize the impact at the classroom level. The following reductions to instructional staffing are required to balance the 2016/17 budget:

- **14 Teaching positions** will be reduced for 2016/17; this reduction will be achieved through attrition.
- **60 Educational Associate positions** will be reduced for 2016/17; approximately one-third of these reductions will be achieved through attrition, with the remainder through layoffs.
- **No new Teaching positions** will be added to respond to an enrolment increase of approximately 300 students this fall (an enrolment increase of 3%).