



Media Release

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Board Approves 2011-2012 Budget

The Wetaskiwin Regional Public Schools Board of Trustees approved the 2011 - 2012 Budget during the Regular Board meeting held on May 31, 2011. The Board faced some difficult decisions in preparing this budget as programming and staffing levels for the 2011 - 2012 school year had to be reduced and reserves depleted.

The Government of Alberta announced its 2011 budget on February 24, 2011. The government made education a priority against the backdrop of very difficult fiscal times but the Board was still faced with a \$1.1 million dollar anticipated deficit. The 4.54% increase to some core funding like the basic instructional grant paid for the teachers' salary increase negotiated with the Government of Alberta. Cuts to other grants however resulted in a loss of funding to the Division.

Some of the grants cut included the Alberta Initiative for School Improvement (AIS) that provided funds to encourage innovation in the classroom to improve student learning. AIS was reduced by 50% beginning September 1, 2011. "AIS funding provides our students and staff with a high level of support" said Dr. Terry Pearson, Superintendent of Schools. "Our students are experiencing success because of the initiatives born from AIS and the reduction in AIS funding and other grants will impact the classroom."

Over the next two years the Relative Cost of Purchasing grant, Stabilization grant, Enrolment Decline grant, and Intra-Jurisdictional Distance grant will be reduced and then eliminated. The overall reduction in funding forced the Division to reduce staffing levels to be consistent with student enrolment and to meet the teacher salary increase of 4.54%. Additional costs to the Board for 2011 – 2012 included an increase of 2.96% to the rates for the Alberta School Employee Benefit Plan (ASEBP), a 4.4% increase to the rates for the Local Authorities Pension Plan and a 4.54% increase in salaries for support staff.

"This has been a very complex and challenging budget," said Board Chair Deanna Specht. "The Board of Trustees worked hard to develop a budget that maintains supports and programming to students under extremely difficult fiscal circumstances."

-30 -

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