

Board Highlights

Wetaskiwin Regional Public Schools

Board Meeting Highlights

January 14, 2020



Board Members

Lynn Ware, Chair
 Leanne Axelsen, Vice Chair
 Karen Becker
 Randy Ermineskin
 Dave Gursky
 Barb Johnson
 Rhonda Peters
 Jayne Pettifor

Transportation Review

The Board reviewed the existing policies and administrative procedures relating to student transportation services and were apprised of areas of concern and recommendations for revision. The Transportation Department will be looking at all cost saving options for the 2020-2021 year and looking for efficiencies in the development of bus routes and bus stops.

A review of transportation fees was provided and presented in comparison to fees charged by other school boards. This information was presented as a precursor to future considerations when determining the transportation fees for the 2020 – 2021 school year.

The Transportation Department will provide the Board with three scenarios for future consideration at the March 10, 2020 Board meeting.

Budget Planning Process 2020 – 2021

The Division will be required to reduce or eliminate its projected deficit as part of the budget planning process for the 2020 - 2021 school year. Currently our projected deficit will total **\$2,620,633**. The Alberta Education funding manual states that school boards spending adjustments must be equivalent to the accumulated operating deficit. This means we will have to cut a minimum of \$2.6 million from the 2020 - 2021 budget. That number could be more or less once we know what the new K - 12 funding model is going to be.

Administration will begin the 2020 - 2021 budget planning process and is requesting direction from the Board regarding spending adjustments that must be made to submit a balanced budget to Alberta Education for the 2020 - 2021 school year.

To submit a balanced budget spending adjustments must be made in the following areas:

- Staffing
- programs, and services

To make these spending adjustments, the Superintendent requested input from the Board on some of the proposed spending adjustment areas that could be investigated:

- Transportation route efficiencies
- Implement a transportation fee for all students being transported by the Board,
- Elimination of programs that receive a financial subsidy
- Elimination of services that receive a financial subsidy
- Early Retirement Incentive open to all staff to reduce expenditures
- Release FNMI funding currently internally restricted for Indigenous Programming
- Centralize ECS programs to eliminate very small class sizes and reduce large class sizes
- Closure of schools that receive a financial subsidy
- Salary reduction by a specific percentage for all support staff

The Division was faced with cuts to programs, services and staff effective January 1, 2020 due to a reduction in provincial funding, a decline in student enrollment and insurance premium increases. To limit the impact on classrooms, six (6) staffing positions were cut from Division Office and the Facilities Department. Also, \$413,850 was cut from services, contracts and fees and \$210,000 from technology. The Minister also approved the one-

time use of \$400,000 from Infrastructure Maintenance and Renewal (IMR) funding. In addition, the Board committed to using the entirety of its \$1.5 million accumulated surplus to cover the remainder of the \$3,341,947 deficit for the 2019 - 2020 school year. The reduction in staff positions at Division Office and Facilities Department will continue into the future, but we will not have access to the one-time use of funds from IMR.

The Board will be meeting on January 23, 2020 at 4:30 p.m. with the Minister of Education to discuss the fiscal situation.

2020-2021 & 2021-2022 DRAFT School Year Calendars - Feedback

WRPS consulted on the design of school calendars with stakeholders for the upcoming two school years. Draft calendars were circulated November 1, 2019. Feedback was required by December 20, 2019. Stakeholders were advised that the Board would review the feedback at the January 14, 2020 Regular Board Meeting and consider amendments. Stakeholders were also informed that proposed calendars will be presented at the January 28, 2020 Regular Board Meeting for consideration.

The Leadership Team reviewed the draft calendars at their meeting on December 5, 2019. Amendments were provided, reflecting some significant changes from the circulated calendars. Trustees will discuss the amendments proposed by the Leadership Team at the January 28, 2020 Regular Board meeting, and may recirculate the calendars for stakeholder feedback before final approval.

For more information contact:

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