February 1, 2016

Dear WRPS Parents and Staff:

Re: Proposed Board Strategic Direction

The Board of Trustees of Wetaskiwin Regional Public Schools has worked for eighteen months to develop a strategic direction. The purpose of the strategic direction is to implement efficiencies across the Division, providing high quality learning opportunities while ensuring that the Division is financially sustainable. The core value of the strategic direction is to meet the needs of all WRPS students.

The reason the Board has worked to develop a strategic direction is due to the fiscal reality the Division has faced for many years. That reality has now arrived as the Board is projecting an operating deficit in 2015 – 2016 of $1.1 million. If the Division continues to operate in this fashion by the end of 2016-2017 the Board will have depleted its surplus funds. The Board recognizes that it takes 26 students to pay for the cost of one teacher and understands that it cannot spend more than the funding it receives from the Government.

The parameters the Board established related to the previously mentioned goal are:

- The Board’s preference will be to keep schools open; however, the Board will consider grade reconfigurations that achieve efficiencies.
- The Board’s preference is to maintain current programs; however, the Board will consider alternatives that achieve efficiencies.
- The Board’s preference is for staffing efficiencies that benefit students and achieves excellence in learning.
The Board believes that the proposed strategic direction will allow it to:

- Ensure the Division is financially sustainable.
- Hire itinerant teachers to offer programs and services not currently offered consistently within the Division.
- Grades K-8 grade configurations will result in one less transition for students. For example: no transition between elementary and junior high and then junior high to senior high school.
- Provide access to a quality Career Technology Studies programming for all students.
- Have specialized instructors teach in their area of specialization (e.g., French, band, Career Technology Studies, etc).
- Grade 9 students East of QE2 will have increased access to high quality option programs, specialized support services and more opportunities for extracurricular activities.

The Board is committed to a consultation process with parents, staff and community members that is transparent and accountable. As such, the Board will be reaching out to the school community in a variety of ways and welcomes your inquiries and comments.

The Board will also welcome presentations from parents, staff and community members at upcoming regular Board meetings.

Sincerely,

Barb Johnson, Chair
Board of Trustees