



Good Spirit School Division No. 204

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~ MEDIA RELEASE ~

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**SCHOOL DIVISION CUTS ADMINISTRATIVE TEAM
TO MAINTAIN FUNDING FOR TEACHERS AND STUDENTS**

The Good Spirit School Division (GSSD) has implemented some significant funding cuts to its' administrative division, in an effort to address recent provincial funding reductions to school divisions.

"Our focus is on placing students first, and on leading from the top. To us that meant we needed to do as much as we could to maintain funding to those individuals and programs which are directly focused on educating our students. It also meant that to address the shortfall we had to make cuts to our administrative division," said Quintin Robertson, Director of Education, GSSD.

Robertson said the administrative cuts weren't easy ones to make.

"Our team is very lean. It is imperative that we have people to set and implement direction for the division; to hire, support and pay school employees, to assist schools in implementing Ministry of Education direction and more. We've cut deeply into this area, but we felt it was important to do this in order to reduce cuts at the school and student level," Robertson said.

This has meant that the majority of permanent employee positions were retained. Maintaining positions however required the division to reduce hours for some contract positions.

"One of our key goals was to maintain as many of our permanent employees as possible. It is really unfortunate that we've had to reduce hours for some positions, but we are very gratified that we were able to maintain positions overall. It's because we've been able to retain positions, that we've also been able to maintain a low Pupil Teacher ratio, which is so important in providing quality education to our students," said Lois Smandych, Board Chair.

In addition to cuts to the administrative division, the budget also implemented \$264,000 in cuts to board governance expenditures, a reduction of 46% from last year.

Budget deliberations began in early December in anticipation of funding reductions and other expected changes from the Ministry of Education. Numerous meetings were held with both senior administration and board members, and with Ministry officials before the final budget was determined.

"This was by no means an easy process, and there will be challenges this year as a result of the cuts we've had to make, but we are relieved to have been able to maintain funding for employees and student programming," said Sherry Todosichuk, Deputy Director of Corporate Services.

Highlights of the 2017/2018 budget include:

- majority of permanent employees retained;
- student programming maintained;
- 46% reduction in Board governance expenditures;

- elimination of two senior leadership positions on the Administrative team (Superintendent of Education and Human Resource Manager);
- reduction in time allotted for various administrative division support positions in accounting and payroll services;
- assignment of 2.8 coaches back to classroom roles;
- reduction of approximately 3.5 temporary educational assistant positions to address emergent needs during the year;
- vacancies of an educational psychologist and occupational therapist being partially filled through contracted service providers;
- increase in the Pupil Teacher ratio by 0.55 to 15.04. This remains one of the lowest Pupil Teacher ratios in the province;
- change in the delivery model of career guidance, from contractor delivered, to teacher delivered;
- increase to the Preventative Maintenance and Renewal (PMR) funding allocated by the Ministry allowing the division to address more facility deficiencies over the next year.

The Government of Saskatchewan's Vision 2020 played an important role in the GSSD budgeting process. The division is focused on addressing the significant Saskatchewan Growth Plan targets of:

- reducing the difference in graduation rates between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students by 50 per cent, by 2020; and
- leading the country in Grade 12 graduation rates by 2020.

"We need to make key investments now to make these goals a reality. We have seen tremendous progress in these areas recently, we need to ensure we continue to target funds to literacy and absence management so that we are able to sustain improved learning outcomes for students, which will assist us in achieving these important graduation rate targets," said Robertson.

The Board of Education passed the 2017/2018 budget at its' regularly scheduled meeting on Thursday, June 15, 2017. This year's budget includes anticipated revenues of \$75.3M, expenditures of \$73.9M and repayment of long-term debt and capital leases of \$1.4M and resulting in a balanced budget. The 2016/2017 budget, in comparison was for \$77.2M in revenues with \$76.3M of expenditures and \$1.5M of debt repayment with a planned cash deficit of \$578,900.

For further information, contact Quintin Robertson, Director of Education at 306-786-5500.

The Good Spirit School Division strives to provide safe, caring, welcoming schools for children. Our primary objective is to foster a respectful learning environment to achieve student success and well-being in each of our 29 public schools throughout East-Central Saskatchewan. Our values of belonging, respect, responsibility, learning and nurturing ensures "Students Come First". Visit us at www.gssd.ca; contact 306-786-5500 or 1-866-390-0773.

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