



**Town of St. Paul Community Grants:** The Board expressed appreciation to the Town of St. Paul for the newly-revised Community Grant. This grant offers support for a qualifying individual or team representing the Town to participate in a competitive activity at the provincial or national level. This could include a Division student or team. It is important to note that expenses for Division students to compete at the provincial or national level are not covered by provincial education funding.

**Council of School Councils (COSC) - Alberta School Councils' Association Conference (ASCA):** An email has been shared with all school councils to gather interest for the upcoming ASCA conference to be held virtually on April 23-25, 2021. As the conference is online this year, the Board will sponsor the registration for one school council member from each active school council.. Expressions of interest are due by Friday, April 2, 2021.

**Assurance Model:** The Department of Education has introduced a new assurance model that accompanies the new funding framework implemented this year. Important changes in this new model include more local flexibility and stakeholder engagement. The Division's Education Plan is due on May 30, 2021. The Board will be considering additional engagement activities to be conducted in early April. An initial draft of the plan will be shared with the Board at the April 21, 2021 meeting and the final draft will be presented for approval at the Regular Board Meeting on May 5, 2021.

**Board Policy 16-Board Operations and Policy 7-Recruitment and Selection of Personnel:** Trustees passed a motion approving revisions to these two policies, as presented by Trustee Cook. All board policies can be viewed on [the Division website](#).

**Transportation Committee Recommendations:** The Transportation Committee met with bus contractors on March 8, 2021 to discuss a number of concerns, notably the increasing costs of insurance, as discussed at previous board meetings. In their motion for school bus contractors, the Board has agreed to the following: a 2% increase on the In-Town Bus Daily rate (retroactive to September); a 2% increase on the Rural Monthly Basic rate (retroactive to September); a \$0.02/km increase on the Rural Grid (retroactive to September); a one-time lump sum payment covering 85% of the increase to the insurance premiums for spare and regular buses in the current term; and removal of the age limit policy of school buses.

### Superintendent's Report

- Recent announcements related to Step 2 of 'The Path Forward' have not introduced any changes to school COVID procedures.
- Family Choice of At-Home Learning or In-Person Learning: Throughout the year the Division has been flexible in responding to families' choices to move between in-person and at-home learning. Due to the requirements of year-end achievement reporting, families will be asked to stay with their choice of either at-home or in-person learning for the final three months of the year, this will take effect on April 6, 2021. In order to continue to support our students and families, extenuating circumstances will be reviewed on an individual basis.
- As part of the COVID pandemic response, the regional health inspector has inspected a number of Division schools. The feedback received has been very positive, and recommendations were shared as learning with other schools. The Division would like to thank custodial staff, school personnel and our students for their efforts to keep our schools clean and safe throughout the year.
- The Division has experienced a shortage of substitute teachers and educational assistants during the pandemic. We are currently recruiting for educational assistants for casual and substitute positions.
- Special recognition goes out to our substitute teachers during Substitute Teacher appreciation week March 8 to 12, 2021. "Thank you for all you do!". Thanks also to the education assistants for their tremendous contribution to the Division.
- The Division recently conducted a review of the inclement weather policy. The policy will continue to focus on meeting the needs of students as learners by providing valuable learning and ensuring that students who are not at school have a chance to get caught up.



### Financial Report

- Trustees reviewed cheque and financial information.
- Although the provincial budget was announced February 25, 2021 the Division will not receive a detailed funding profile for the upcoming year until March 31, 2021. Divisions have been told that overall funding will not be reduced. The Division budget process will proceed once the funding profile has been received.
- A review of the Division's financial profile over the past five years shows a decline in revenue which is mostly related to a slight trend in declining enrollments. Reduced revenue combined with inflation has led to five consecutive deficits and drawn down reserves. The Board approved these deficit budgets as part of a plan to have a more strategic transition to lower enrolments. As reserves are dwindling, a shift to more balanced budgets will be necessary.
- The Division expressed thanks to the Town of St. Paul for their generous commitment of \$15,000 to support the Family School Liaison Worker program.
- A summary of the Division's Critical Worker Benefit submission was provided indicating that 284 support staff should qualify.

### Reports

**Alberta School Boards Association (ASBA):** Trustee Rajoo provided an update from the Zone 2 & 3 ASBA meeting on February 19, 2021. The ASBA will be moving forward with a planned governance review. Trustees are invited to a Zone 2 / 3 Meeting with the Education Minister on March 26, 2021. The Edwin Parr Award sponsored by the ASBA closes on March 19, 2021. This award recognizes outstanding contributions of first year teachers across the province.

**Trustee Attendance Schedule:** Trustees reviewed upcoming meetings and commitments.

**Alberta Catholic School Trustees' Association (ACSTA):** Trustee Wiebe provided a report on the status of the GRACE program (Grateful Advocates of Catholic Education), which the ACSTA has been supporting for the past number of years. The ACSTA's 2021 S.P.I.C.E. (Sharing Purpose in Catholic Education) and Blueprints conference will be offered virtually on April 29 and 30, 2021. Registration is open until the end of March.

### Correspondence

- Information from the Deputy Minister about an initiative aimed at enabling youth to explore careers in trades and technologies through collaboration with CAREERS: The Next Generation. To support this initiative, CAREERS will increase the number of paid internships and full-time apprenticeships to 6000 by 2023. The information will be shared with school administrative teams.
- Information from the Minister about a government-led review of Alberta government procurement process and project delivery practices. This review will look at eliminating waste and duplication and exploring opportunities for joint purchasing.
- An update from the chair of the Rural Caucus of Alberta School Boards.
- Correspondence from the Edmonton Public Schools board to the Minister of Education advocating for the Department of Education to restore Program Unit Funding to at least the 2018 per-student levels.
- A call from Minister LaGrange for students to participate in the Minister's Youth Council. Successful students will serve a one-year term. [For more information see the Alberta Education website.](#)
- The ASBA is collaborating with the Department of Education to get information on mental health best practices to understand COVID-19-related supports and challenges. Each board will submit one survey.
- A letter from the Minister announcing a new [COVID-19 Youth Mental Health Resource Hub on Jack.org](#).