

For Immediate Release
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Louis Riel School Division Board passes 2020-2021 budget that protects the core but comes at a cost

WINNIPEG, MB – The Louis Riel School Division (LRSD) Board of Trustees adopted its 2020–2021 budget on Tuesday, March 10, 2020. The total budget for the upcoming school year is \$196,448,204 and will result in a 1.38 per cent property tax increase (approximately \$27.97) on the average assessed home in LRSD valued at \$343,700.

“After the government school funding announcement was released on January 30, which works out to a 0.9 per cent reduction (\$771,910) in provincial funding to LRSD, we were informed of an additional 8 per cent reduction (\$107,800) to our French Language Education grants,” said Christian Michalik, LRSD Superintendent. “While one budget cut was going to be challenging to implement because of our growing student population and cost of living increases, having another reduction imposed, especially in a division where 35 per cent of our enrolment is in French Immersion and is the highest amongst all school divisions in the province, forced us to make further sacrifices to other areas in order to protect the core of everything we do—student learning and well-becoming.”

Through extensive review of all expenditures in the division and with a thorough understanding of the need to protect and invest in front line services such as teachers and educational assistants, the Board was able to increase funding for full-time equivalent (FTE) classroom teachers (4.5 FTE), educational assistants (6.51 FTE), transportation (1.91 FTE) and library personnel (0.65 FTE). The Board was also able to continue funding the full-day kindergarten pilot project and Indigenous Education in schools. However, to achieve a balanced budget, reductions of more than 23 FTE positions were made in some areas to support necessary growth in others.

“A commitment to protecting our core investments means jobs have been lost and programs will be impacted,” said Sandy Nemeth, Chair, LRSD Board of Trustees. “While we work hard to mitigate the job loss through attrition and reassignment, the Superintendent and Senior Leadership Team are having difficult conversations with folks. It’s hard to put on a happy face when talking about a decrease in provincial funding, but at the end of the day we will make it work. Our schools and our school division are led by innovative and compassionate people. Collectively we remain committed to ensuring students have what they need to flourish and succeed.”

The Board also continues to seek clarification from the government on its directive to reduce core management by 15 per cent.

“We held a public draft budget meeting in February that gave us the chance to present our plan to the people who packed into our conference centre to hear what the upcoming school year could mean to them and their families,” said Michalik. “They were passionate, engaged and had valid concerns about how this budget doesn’t address all of their needs. We listened to their feedback and did the best we could to accommodate, but the reality is that when you have more students and growing community needs and you’re allocated less funds to address them, sacrifices have to be made.”

LRSD serves more than 15,700 students, along with their parents, and the wider community, in 40 schools in the southeast quadrant of Winnipeg. Its Mission is to provide a safe, inclusive, and engaging environment, where personal and collective learning are valued, and each one of us reaches our full potential.

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