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SPS Board Focuses Revised 2022-23 Budget on Students

The Saskatoon Public Schools (SPS) Board of Education has approved a revised operating budget for the coming year that focuses new inflation funding on classrooms and instruction.

In mid-July, the province announced \$20 million for Saskatchewan's 27 school divisions to offset rising costs such as fuel for busses and insurance premiums. SPS received \$1,579,400 of the total. The division's original budget, approved in June, contained a number of reductions, including 12.7 full time equivalent (FTE) elementary teaching positions and 6.9 FTE positions in secondary schools, to deal with a \$4.5M shortfall.

"We appreciate the government recognizes we have to draw resources away from our schools in order to cover increasing operating costs," said Board Chair Colleen MacPherson. "Putting most of this money back into instruction will provide some relief but we must be judicious because this is one-time only funding."

The revised budget, approved September 6, includes 6.5 additional teaching positions, seven new educational assistants, additional resource support for students and one additional elementary English as an Additional Language (EAL) teacher. The remaining funding will support various operational expenses including offsetting fuel costs, supporting expansion of the Westmount School Heritage Michif Language and Culture Program, and addressing higher insurance premiums.

MacPherson said even with the added inflation money, SPS and many other school divisions continue to feel the effects of years of underfunding.

"We approved this revised budget with eyes wide open because there is no guarantee this money will show up in the next budget year. In fact, we fully expect to have to deal with another deficit when the provincial budget comes down in spring 2023. Our growing enrolment coupled with inflation challenges everyone – teachers, principals, administrative staff – to do more with less in order to provide the best possible education experience for every one of our students," she said.

Saskatoon Public Schools is the largest school division in the province. It operates 49 elementary schools, 10 secondary schools, one associate school, and one alliance school. It serves approximately 26,000 students and employs more than 2,600 professional and support staff. Learn more at www.saskatoonpublicschools.ca

For more information, contact:

Jennifer Lyons
Manager, Communications and Marketing
Saskatoon Public Schools
Office: 306-683-8325
lyonsj@spsd.sk.ca