



BOARD HIGHLIGHTS

June 24, 2015 Board Meeting

Trustees: (back row) Sherry Cooper, Ron Fisher (Vice Chair), Colleen Butler (Chair), Superintendent Kurt Sacher, Connie Huelsman
(front row) Sheldon Ball, Trudy James, Jackie Swainson, Holly Bilton, Gordon Kerr

Budget 2015-2016:

The Chinook's Edge Board of Education approved a \$127 million balanced budget for the 2015-2016 school year, with reserves expected to remain below three percent of the total budget. The initial provincial budget which had been announced in late March had presented the division with significant challenges and resulted in spending cuts in transportation, facilities and maintenance, administration and central services. This earlier budget had funded teacher salary increases previously negotiated, but reduced most other grants by 3.1 percent, capped funding at 2014-2015 enrolment levels, placed restrictions on teacher staffing reductions and restricted the spending of reserves.

A subsequent budget update provided by the Honourable David Eggen, Minister of Education, on May 28th restored those original provincial cuts, funded enrolment growth expected for 2015-2016, and removed the other restrictions that had been imposed in the March budget. The Board voiced appreciation to Minister Eggen and the Government of Alberta for placing a high priority on education.

Transportation, Facilities and Maintenance:

While presenting the budget, the Finance Committee highlighted the significant, ongoing funding challenges in both the Transportation Department and the Facilities and Maintenance Department. Although the provincial government has provided sufficient operational funding, the budget did not cover capital costs—particularly replacement costs for new school buses. There is a high need for capital reinvestment in both departments, and the Board continues to voice concern that the deficit funding in these areas will begin to impact resources for classrooms. Transportation funding was restored to 2014-2015 levels, but this is not sufficient to cover the costs of transporting students in a large rural division. As a result, the Board was required to increase Transportation Fees and to transfer \$863,000 from the instruction budget to the transportation budget. The Board will continue to express concerns to the Minister and advocate for adequate funding in transportation and facilities.

Superintendent's Evaluation:

The Board has completed an annual evaluation of Superintendent Kurt Sacher, which provides extensive evidence of his strong role as the educational leader of this division. The Board Chair has expressed the Board's support in an Executive Summary letter, provided here

<http://www.chinooksedge.ab.ca/Board.php>

Westglen School Breakfast for Learning:

The Board approved a Breakfast for Learning agreement at Westglen Middle School in Didsbury, which will involve a grant for kitchen upgrades to better deliver the program. Trustees acknowledged that the program at Westglen has had a highly positive impact on the school and the community since it was instigated one year ago. It has grown beyond simply providing food to providing a sense of community for many students, and the Board congratulated Westglen staff on their exemplary work on this program.

Safety at roadway crossing:

It was decided that the Board Chair will write a letter to the Minister of Transportation and to Red Deer County, in response to a parent concern about the level of safety at a roadway crossing in the community of Spruce View. The Board will advocate that steps be made to increase safety at this roadway crossing.

Sylvan Lake and Area Attendance Boundaries:

With construction of the new Sylvan school underway, a broad process has begun to review the attendance boundaries around the three elementary schools that serve Chinook's Edge students before they arrive to École Fox Run Middle School. A fully developed plan is expected to be mapped out and presented to the Board by December.

Trip requests:

The Board approved in principle the following trip requests: Innisfail High School trip to Denmark in August 2016 and an Olds High School trip to Scandinavia in April 2016.

This was the final Board Meeting for this school year. An organizational meeting of the Board of Chinook's Edge School Division No. 73 is scheduled to take place on Wednesday, September 9, 2015.

For more information please contact:

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