

June 14, 2018

Prairie Valley Board Focuses on Classroom Instruction in 2018-2019 Budget

At its June 13 regular meeting, the Prairie Valley Board of Education (Board) approved the 2018-2019 school year budget, allocating more resources to classrooms, increasing student access to technology and increasing preventative maintenance and renewal (PMR) facilities work.

“When planning for the 2018-2019 school year budget, the Board prioritized classroom instruction,” said Board Chair Janet Kotylak. “We know that effective teachers are the most important factor contributing to student learning and achievement.”

The Prairie Valley School Division’s operating grant increased by \$1.7 million to \$91.1 million in the Provincial Budget in April as part of the \$30 million increase in operating grants for school divisions. PMR funding also increased by \$273,000 to \$2.2 million. “This bump in funding gave the Board more flexibility when planning for next year,” said Kotylak. “Ensuring students have what they need to be successful was the Board’s top priority.”

The Board added a \$1.3 million investment in front-line staffing and 15.2 teacher full-time equivalents (FTEs). This drops our pupil-teacher ratio (PTR) formulas in Grades 1 to 3 from as high as 30 down to 24. It also ensures sustainable employment for our staff and opportunities for recent teacher graduates. Other staffing adjustments relate to enrolment changes, additional intervention supports in four high schools and enhancements to school-based administration staffing allocations. “We heard from our front line staff that enhancing teacher staffing by reducing PTRs is their top priority also and we were able to make it happen,” Kotylak said of the reduced PTR.

The 2018-2019 school year budget also improves student access to technology over the next four years. The division is reducing the technology hardware ratio from 3:1 to 2:1, meaning one laptop or iPad per two students. “Technology plays a significant role in student learning. Improving access means greater learning opportunities for our students,” said Ben Grebinski, Director of Education and CEO.

The increase in PMR funding means improving learning environments for students. The additional \$273K infusion allows the division to complete more projects such as painting classrooms, refinishing gym floors and modernizing instructional spaces. “Modern, functional and welcoming learning environments help to serve the needs of students and staff and we are very pleased to accelerate the pace of infrastructure work,” Grebinski said of the division’s PMR plans.

In addition, the budget continues curriculum resource renewal, phased refresh of classroom sound field systems and furniture, completion of the division-wide Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) rollout and bus and fleet vehicle renewal.

Prairie Valley School Division serves almost 8,500 students in 39 schools throughout southeast Saskatchewan. In support of the vision “Leadership in Learning and Life”, the Division offers a high-quality education that provides students with the tools to reach their potential.

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Alana Johnson, Manager of Communications
306-949-6395 (office)
306-551-4245 (cell)
alana.johnson@pvsd.ca



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