



## Balanced Budget Approved for 2007/08

At tonight's public Board Meeting, Trustees approved a balanced budget of almost \$300 million for 2007/08 that will take effect on September 1, 2007 until August 31, 2008.

"The 3% increase to the Basic Education Grant does not meet the increased costs of educating today's child, so creating a balanced budget for 2007/08 was a very difficult process filled with extremely difficult decisions," said Board Chairperson Debbie Engel.

A shortfall of \$15 million in the 2007/08 Budget puts pressure on a number of areas:

- **Severe Special Needs funding** – In 2006/07, Alberta Education funded the District for 907 students even though the District serves 1,000 special needs students, creating a funding shortfall of approximately \$1.5 million.
- **Infrastructure Maintenance Renewal (IMR) Funding** – This funding has been reduced by 55%; from \$12 million to \$5.4 million.
- **Negotiating process** - Our District is negotiating with the Alberta Teachers' Association, and the Alberta Union of Public Employees and those contracts expire on August 31/07. In addition, the District has just ratified a new two-year contract with the Edmonton Catholic Support Staff Association and will give staff a 4% increase a year in each year of the contract.
- **Transportation** – Costs for providing student transportation continue to increase. The budget increases by almost 8% for 2007/08. Parents (through the purchase of bus passes) will also need to contribute an additional 10% or \$323,000 in 2007/08.
- **Curriculum** – New curriculum costs for 2007/08 will be \$1.5 million.

"In order to continue supporting 'at-risk' students by offering the Extended Experiences (full-day) Kindergarten, the District will continue to fund these programs from funding normally used for Kindergarten through Grade 12 students," said Debbie Engel. "This means that schools will receive about \$28 less per student for each student in Kindergarten to Grade 12," Engel added.

Each school will make their own decisions on how to compensate for this shortfall in funding. A total of \$3.1 million was also reduced from department budgets in the District for the 2007/08 year. "It's important for parents to know that during the Budget process schools were funded first to maximize the dollars going into the classroom," said Superintendent Joan Carr. "This ensures that even with a shortfall in funding, students will continue to receive an excellent faith-based education," Carr went on to say.

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