



Balanced Budget Approved for 2008/09

At tonight's public Board Meeting, Trustees approved a balanced budget of almost \$320 million for 2008/09 that will take effect on September 1, 2008 until August 31, 2009.

"The 4.5% increase to the Basic Education Grant was extremely beneficial in helping us to meet the increasing costs of educating the students in the District," said Board Chairperson Cindy Olsen.

Here are a few of the highlights from the 2008/09 Budget:

- The Alberta Government's decision to eliminate Alberta Health Care Premiums for Albertans had a positive impact on this budget, adding \$1.8 million to the 2008/09 Budget.
- The early literacy funding for elementary students has been increased to \$55 from \$50; an increase of 10%.
- A fund of \$450,000 has been established to assist senior high schools with the replacement of 15-seat passenger vans. These vans will be phased out completely in the District by June 30, 2013.
- A fund of \$87,000 has been established to assist in professional development of first year teachers and may include a mentorship program. Specifics of the plan will be developed in the next few months.
- The FNMI (First Nations Métis Inuit) funding to schools has been increased from \$553 to \$585 per student; an increase of 5.8%.

The Board of Trustees will continue to lobby Government for funding in the following areas that remain a serious concern:

- Severe Special Needs funding
- Infrastructure Maintenance Renewal (IMR) Funding
- Transportation
- Curriculum costs

In order to continue supporting 'at-risk' students by offering Full Day Kindergarten, the District will be expanding the program to 20 schools from 17 schools this September. "The District continues to fund these programs from funding normally used for Kindergarten through Grade 12 students," said Cindy Olsen.

"It is important for parents to know that the District's Budget Committee allocates funding to schools first so this maximizes the dollars going into the classroom," said Superintendent Joan Carr.

For more information
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