

Reductions to address provincial funding shortfall

The purpose of this budget update is to provide a summary of the reductions already confirmed by the Prairie Spirit Board of Education prior to the finalization of Prairie Spirit School Division's 2015/16 budget. These reductions are being made in response to the school division's \$7.1 million funding shortfall.

The Board established and committed to four budget reduction priorities last fall, in anticipation of a significant budget shortfall for 2015/16. These priorities illustrate the Board's consistent "student first" approach to decision making. The priorities are:

- Improving student learning
- Improving adult learning to support student learning
- Maintaining current staff
- Maintaining current class sizes

These four priorities are intended to keep as many teachers as possible in classrooms working directly with students.

The school division's \$7.1 million funding shortfall and the four budget reduction priorities present a challenging mandate to the Board of Education.

Over the past two years, Prairie Spirit has eliminated \$2 million in expenditures by reducing funding for programs and technology initiatives and by reducing teacher and educational associate staffing levels in schools. The Board of Education used \$3 million of limited reserve funds to balance last year's budget, with the assurance that the funding model would be reviewed and adjusted to address significant inequities.

Following extensive advocacy, the Ministry of Education has finally agreed to undertake a review of the funding formula. Unfortunately, any changes in funding as a result of the review will not take effect until September 2016, at the earliest.

Prior to the implementation of the new funding model in 2012, Ministry of Education statistics show that Prairie Spirit's costs were \$1,000/student below the provincial average. Since then, Prairie Spirit's funding levels per student have continued to decrease in comparison to other school divisions.

Prairie Spirit School Division continues to be a careful steward of the provincial funding it receives for student learning.

Prairie Spirit's
"student first" approach
Despite extreme budgetary pressures, Prairie Spirit maintains the commitment to improving student learning

The confirmed reductions for 2015/16 are listed below. This is not a complete list of the reductions, as more are required to balance the budget. This work will continue until the budget is approved by the Board later in June.

- Reduction of one Division Office Learning Superintendent
- Reduction of one Division Office Coordinator
- Reduction of one Division Office Capacity Building Special Education Resource Teacher
- Reassignment of Division-based teaching staff to vacant school-based positions
- Reduction of one Division Office Executive Assistant
- Reduction of one Division Office Receptionist
- Reduction of Division Office career and work exploration staff
- Reduction of Division Office staff supporting early learning
- Reduction of Division Office student support services staff
- Reduction of Division Office Home-Based Education Program Facilitator time
- Reduction in Division supports for English as an Additional Language (EAL) students
- Reduction of Division Office administration budgets
- Reduction of three Facilities staff positions
- Reduction in Board governance budget
- Reduction in school division staff supporting community pre-schools (where provincial funding was not provided to the school division)
- Reduction in Teacher Librarians; staff will be reassigned to classroom teaching positions and others will be transitioned to new Learning Facilitator positions (net reduction of eight positions)
- Reduction of funding for school-based budgets
- Reduction of 21.5 educational associate positions in schools
- Reduction of staffing levels in response to enrolment growth
- Reduction of two vice-principal positions
- Combination of small classes, where possible

At present, the level of reductions outlined in this update fall within the four Board priorities.

Prairie Spirit's goal is to provide high quality educational opportunities for our students and to support student learning. Our concern is that our lack of adequate provincial funding will impact our strong student achievement results.

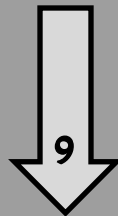
Please visit our budget website: budget.spiritsd.ca
for more detailed information.

Funding and enrolment facts since 2009

Much has been said about the funding increases Prairie Spirit has received, especially in relation to the school division's enrolment growth. The following facts from the Ministry of Education clearly demonstrate the funding inequity for Prairie Spirit School Division.

Prairie Spirit's overall funding increase since 2009:	21.6%
Prairie Spirit's enrolment increase since 2009:	14.6%
Difference between funding and enrolment increase:	7%*
<i>*This calculation will be used for the comparisons in this document.</i>	

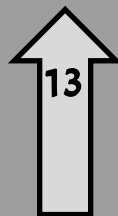
Number of school divisions with an enrolment decrease since 2009:



Of the 9 school divisions with an enrolment decrease...

- 8** received **more than** Prairie Spirit's 7% funding increase
- 6** received **more than double** Prairie Spirit's 7% funding increase
- 2** received **more than triple** Prairie Spirit's 7% funding increase
- 1** received **less than** Prairie Spirit's 7% funding increase (a 6% increase)

Number of school divisions with an enrolment increase since 2009:
(excluding Prairie Spirit)



Of the 13 school divisions with an enrolment increase...

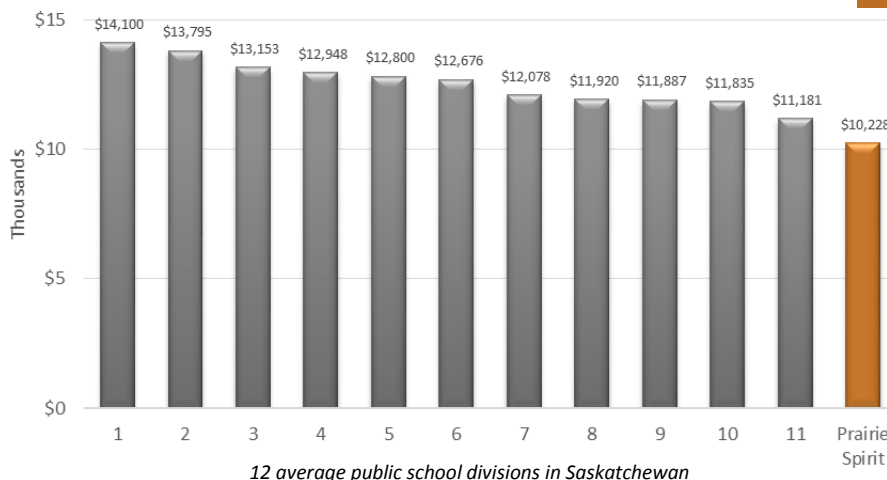
- 10** received **more than** Prairie Spirit's 7% funding increase
- 5** received **more than double** Prairie Spirit's 7% funding increase
- 3** received **more than triple** Prairie Spirit's 7% funding increase
- 2** received **less than** Prairie Spirit's 7% funding increase (a 6% increase)
- 1** received **the same** increase

Number of school divisions* with an enrolment percentage increase greater than Prairie Spirit since 2009:

1

One school division had an enrolment increase of 2% above Prairie Spirit's increase, but with a funding increase of **more than double** Prairie Spirit's increase.

Saskatchewan School Division Funding Per Student
2014/15 budget year



It is understandable that school divisions are funded differently based on a variety of factors. As a result, the funding amount per student will vary from school division to school division.

However, the current funding variance between Prairie Spirit and other similar school divisions is too great and this is not right.

Prairie Spirit is not suggesting that other school divisions are funded too high, but that Prairie Spirit's funding is inequitable.