

Prairie Spirit facing additional \$3 million in budget reductions

The purpose of this communication is to provide information to staff and parents regarding Prairie Spirit's anticipated funding for the 2016/17 school year.

What we know right now:

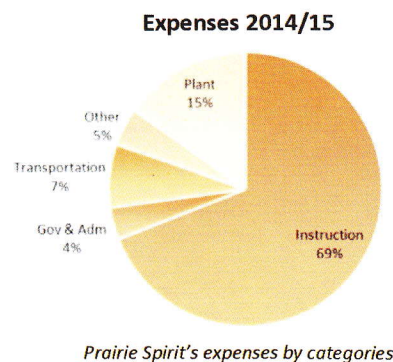
- Last year, more than **\$4 million** in reductions were made to Prairie Spirit's budget due to provincial funding.
- In addition to making budget reductions of over \$4 million, the Prairie Spirit Board of Education was required to use **\$2.5 million** in reserve funds to balance the 2015/16 budget. This was the second consecutive year that the budget was balanced using reserve funds.
- The provincial government is forecasting a budget deficit of over \$400 million. The Ministry of Education has foreshadowed that funding for K - 12 education is unlikely to increase.
- Without an increase in funding, Prairie Spirit's funding shortfall is estimated at **\$3 million or higher**, which includes the \$2.5 million shortfall from 2015/16 that was covered by reserves to fund ongoing operating costs.
- The Board will submit a balanced budget to the Ministry by June 30, 2016, to avoid starting another school year with a deficit.
- Instructional staffing represents almost 70% of the school division's overall budget.

What we can do right now:

- Without a provincial budget, Prairie Spirit must estimate the shortfall for 2016/17 and plan accordingly in order to meet legislated and contract notice time.
- The Board of Education has estimated that **\$3 million** in staffing reductions will be necessary to balance the school division's 2016/17 budget. The Board made this decision with the current information available prior to a provincial budget.
- To reduce the operational budget by \$3 million, up to **75 full-time equivalent (FTE) positions** in Prairie Spirit's 45 schools will be eliminated, representing approximately 6% of Prairie Spirit staff.
- To give staff adequate notice, staffing reductions must be planned before the release of the provincial budget, which we are told will not be available until sometime in May.
- Following the budget announcement in May, the Board will review the funding allocated to Prairie Spirit and make any necessary adjustments to the school division's budget.

The Prairie Spirit Board of Education has worked diligently to allocate the resources needed to maintain high levels of student achievement.

Our students are achieving at rates that meet and exceed the provincial average in all areas. Our teachers and support staff work alongside our students to ensure all students have the opportunity to learn to high levels, with the appropriate supports.



As the Board considers the upcoming budget, challenging decisions will be guided by [principles and commitments](#) that the Board has developed, all in support of the school division's main priorities: **improving student and adult learning**.

These budget decisions have been difficult to make because they will impact our dedicated staff members and, ultimately, our students. The Board will provide information and updates to parents and staff throughout the budget process.