

## **RETSD board passes stand-pat budget for 2017-18**

(March 8, 2017) School taxes in River East Transcona will go up 2.7 per cent in 2017. The increase translates into approximately \$44 more on an average house valued at \$273,300.

The \$187.7-million budget was approved by the board on March 7. The budget maintains current programs, services and staffing levels. No new initiatives were included.

“We’re pleased with our combined efforts this year,” says Jerry Sodomlak, chair of the board’s finance committee. “I think as a division, we’ve been resourceful and efficient while still being progressive and innovative in the way funds are used to support quality learning, and that’s reflected in this budget.”

“We took a very responsible approach,” says Colleen Carswell, chair of the board. What nudges the budget up every year, she says, are inflationary rises in the cost of utilities, supplies and services. However, the biggest impact on the budget is salary increases to meet collective agreement requirements. Salaries and benefits represent 85 per cent of the total budget.

“We have almost 3,000 employees and 16,150 students,” says Mrs. Carswell. “We’re the second largest school division in the province. Costs are going to go up, and most of our increase in spending is on payroll. Our challenge is always to balance fiscal responsibility with creating the best possible environment for student achievement and success.”

Says Mrs. Carswell: “By investing in our quality staff, programming and services, you’re investing in our children’s education and our collective future. We all need to play our part.”

### Fast facts:

- The mill rate for the 2017-18 budget is estimated at 13.356
- The division receives approximately 48.6 per cent of its revenue from provincial government program support, 13.4 per cent from the provincial government property tax credit, and another 34.6 per cent from the local property tax base. The remaining 3.4 per cent comes from other revenue sources.
- Based on the 2016-17 FRAME Budget Report, RETSD’s per pupil spending, \$11,677, is the lowest in the Metro Winnipeg area. The provincial average is \$13,016.
- River East Transcona educates approximately 16,150 kindergarten to Grade 12 students in 42 schools and employs approximately 3,000 employees.

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