

# the torch



Finance, Facilities and Transportation Committee: trustees Peter Kotyk, Rod Giesbrecht (committee chair), Michael West and Jerry Sodomlak

## Board meets and exceeds government directives in 2018–19 budget

Setting a budget for the school division is always challenging. A new government directive made this year’s process particularly difficult.

Board chair Colleen Carswell notes that this wasn’t an easy budget to attain with the new limit on the special requirement.

“It was a challenge as we’re already a very fiscally responsible division,” she says. “There were many tough decisions and I’m very pleased with the work we’ve done to meet the special requirement of 2 per cent (based on the school year) and also to come in well below the administration cost cap (3 per cent) at 2.7 per cent.”

The board has been resourceful and efficient, with a focus on maintaining current programs, adds Rod Giesbrecht, chair of the board’s finance committee. What nudges the budget up every year are inflationary rises in the cost of utilities, supplies, services and collective agreement requirements.

“Salaries and benefits represent 86 per cent of the division’s total budget,” he says. “Costs are going to go up, and most of our increase in spending is on payroll.”

RETSO has the lowest per pupil spending amount of the city’s six school divisions while still maintaining a high level of

educational programming and services that supports student success across our division.

Supporting quality learning means supporting the programs, services and excellent staff, which come at a cost, says Ms. Carswell. When it comes to per pupil spending, she explained, the reason RETSD comes in lower than anyone else is that the board looks for efficiency year-round, not just at budget time. The division does more with less, offering programming and services to students that are in line with every other urban area school division.

Ms. Carswell hopes taxpayers understand that by investing in the

school division, they’re investing in tomorrow.

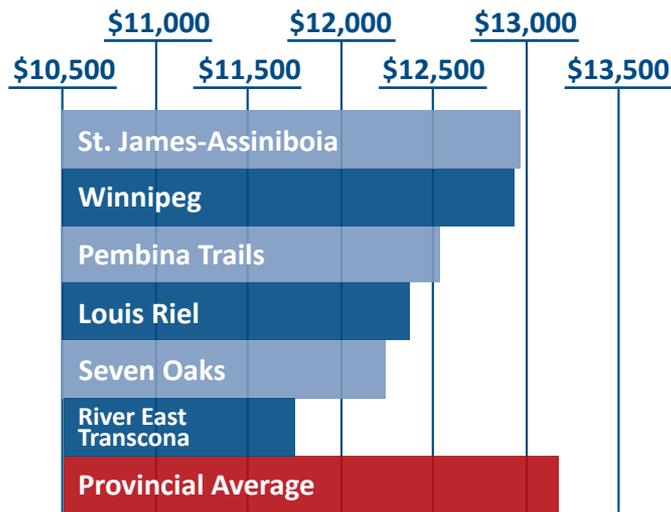
“Studies show that when you invest money in education, taxpayers save money down the road that otherwise has to be spent on health care, justice and an undereducated workforce,” she says. “Our students will be leading our country and trustees are here to support them with the best possible environment for student achievement and success.”

On March 6, the board passed a budget of \$193.6 million. For local taxpayers, that translates into a 2.3 per cent increase in school taxes, or about \$38 more on an average house valued at \$277,900.

# Budget 2018–19 fast facts

- The budget for 2018–19 is \$193,567,026.
- The division receives approximately 49.1 per cent of its revenue from provincial government program support, 12.3 per cent from the provincial government property tax credit, and another 34.6 per cent from the local property tax base. The remaining 4 per cent comes from other revenue sources.
- Based on the 2017–18 FRAME Budget Report, RETSD’s per pupil spending, \$11,759, continues to be the lowest in the metro Winnipeg area. The provincial average is \$13,187.
- River East Transcona is the second-largest school division in the province, with about 16,500 kindergarten to Grade 12 students in 42 schools staffed by approximately 3,000 employees.

## EXPENDITURE PER PUPIL



Source: FRAME Report 2017–18 Budget

## YOUR LOONIE AT WORK



### Salaries & Benefits: 86¢

- 58¢: Classroom instruction
- 10¢: School counselling, resource and library services
- 7¢: School administration
- 8¢: Facility operations, maintenance, and student transportation
- 2¢: Divisional administration
- 1¢: Other

### Supplies & Services: 14¢

- 5¢: School supplies and materials
- 7¢: Facility operations, maintenance, and student transportation
- 2¢: Other

## New teachers will join RETSD in 2018–19

This year the board had many considerations when setting the budget. Enrolment has been steadily increasing, due in part to the division booming with new housing developments.

“We’ve seen an increase in enrolment and have anticipated upwards of 700 new students coming into our division,” says Rod Giesbrecht, chair of the board’s finance committee. “To support this growing enrolment we’ve

included the hiring of 20 new full-time equivalent teachers into the 2018–19 budget.”

RETSD works closely with local developers and government officials to meet the educational needs of students moving into these new communities.

Additional staff is not the only factor the board looked at when addressing increased enrolment. Space for these new students

and staff members is also a consideration.

RETSD is undergoing a number of renovation projects to meet the needs of our growing student populations, including a major renovation and new construction project at Miles Macdonell Collegiate and another one well underway at Dr. F.W.L Hamilton School.

“It’s an exciting time for our division. With growth comes

opportunities, like hiring new teachers,” says Mr. Giesbrecht.

While there are no current plans to add a new school to the division, trustees are watching the numbers carefully as they look ahead to the future.

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For more information about the board of trustees, visit: [www.retsd.mb.ca/yourretsd/BoardofTrustees](http://www.retsd.mb.ca/yourretsd/BoardofTrustees)