



Superintendent

Message

Budget 2024-2025 - May 29, 2024

The 2024-2025 Funding Manual and Funding Profile were released on March 28th, 2024. Since that time, senior administration has been clarifying the specific effects on and potential outcomes for Sturgeon Public Schools. In addition, our Board of Trustees has devoted many hours to reviewing the Division's budget. The 2024-2025 budget was approved at the May 28, 2024, Special Public Board meeting and the approved version will be submitted to Alberta Education by the May 31st deadline.

In line with the [Alberta Education Business Plan for 2024-2027](#), the Division has focused efforts on curriculum implementation, supporting the assessment process to identify learning challenges and monitor student success, targeted interventions to increase specialized learning supports and support complex learning needs, fostering positive student mental health and wellbeing and continuing to efficiently manage all resources to meet financial, governance and administrative needs. The Board believes that the annual system budget and the Three Year Education Plan (also approved at the May 28th Special Public Board meeting), together with school Education Plans, are key planning documents for the continuous improvement of the quality of education for students. The 2024-2025 budget accounts for stakeholder feedback and focuses on providing schools with sustainable supports, services and human resources to ensure student success.

While working through the draft 2024-2025 budget, senior administration:

- reviewed stakeholder feedback from the previous two years; and
- met with Principals individually to review current 2023-2024 staffing and 2024-2025 projected enrolments and staffing.

The 2024-2025 budget includes:

- Support for ongoing growth in enrolment of students with complex and diverse learning needs. This continues to be a challenge in the Division. Budget 2024-2025 allocates \$1.3M to additional supports in the classroom as well as family and student supports outside the classroom.
- Support for Learning Coaches who work directly with teachers to program for student success.
- Mental Health in Schools (MHIN) Pilot Project which focuses on promoting positive mental health while teaching skills to prevent mental health crises. Alberta Education has allocated funding through February 2025.
- School Nutrition funding has increased in budget 2024-2025 and, as a result, each school has been given funds to support School Nutrition Programs.

Over the past two years, Sturgeon Public School Division has been able to use reserves to provide additional support to schools through great initiatives that focused on Mental Health & Wellness and Learning and Counseling Supports. The Division celebrates the fact that, over the last two years, we have been able to provide these additional supports to our students, where many other school divisions could not.

To provide this great opportunity to our students, the Division has been running a budget deficit over the last two years (Deficit info: 2022-2023: (\$2.5M); 2023-2024: (\$4.1M)). As we move into more fiscally constrained times, this is something that the Division will not be able to continue as our planned reserve levels are being exhausted. The Division plans to maintain a \$1.2M deficit in the 2024-2025 budget to help offset reductions required in the 2024-2025 budget to ensure the board upholds its fiduciary duty.



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A Stabilization Funding Grant of \$5.7M, which replaced the Bridge Funding Grant in 2023-2024 to subsidize an otherwise cut in our grant allocations, is being reduced by 25% (\$1.4M) per year beginning the 2024-2025 school year. The Stabilization Grant for the 2024-2025 school year is \$4.2M. This grant will continue to decrease yearly until it ends in 2027-2028.

Overall, the Division's Funding Profile decreased by \$0.5M, \$1.4M in Stabilization which was offset by various other grant increases and a less than 1% increase in enrolment for the 2024-2025 school year. The lack of a funding increase, despite a projected enrolment increase, the depletion of our operating reserves and the increasing costs of various planned expenses has led to a fiscally challenging budget.

Sturgeon Public Schools is in a unique socio-economic and geographical area, and being a public school division, we provide education to all students that register, regardless of any other factors that may be of choice in other Divisions and we stand committed to this. Despite funding reductions, the Division is committed to supporting our students and communities to the best of our ability.

Sturgeon Public School Division is facing a number of risks, including:

- Projected operating reserves that are estimated in April but actuals are not known until November in the following fiscal year which may result in reserve numbers different from actuals;
- Enrolments are estimated based on December projections and any changes in enrolment will mean a lack of funding to support;
- Increase costs for utilities, benefits and inflation; and
- Ongoing growth in enrolment of students with complex and diverse learning needs.

Most of our schools are over 50 years old and have \$64M in outstanding Deferred Maintenance. For 2024-2025, we received the following funding for maintenance and renewal:

- IMR funding is \$688k (2023-2024: \$695k); and
- CMR funding is \$880k (2023-2024: \$355k).

The Division remains underfunded for maintenance and renewal of its school buildings.

The Division continues to ask the Minister to review the Maintenance & Renewal concerns for the Division and develop a funding program for intermediate size projects (between \$1M - \$5M) to address issues such as roof and window replacement.

Despite this challenging budget, we want to emphasize that our Division is fortunate to have exceptional staff across all our schools and across all departments. Their unwavering dedication to the success and well-being of our students is recognized, and it is this commitment that will help us continue to provide outstanding learning opportunities for students.

I hope this information provides clarity.

For more information on the budget and supporting students and classrooms, please visit the Government of Alberta [website](#).

Kind regards,

Shawna Warren, M.Ed
Superintendent



Our Vision

Sturgeon Public School Division: where, through a well-rounded education, students are motivated and supported to pursue their unique path to future success.

Financials

- **Revenues:** Decreased by **\$0.5 million** due to lower funding from Alberta Education
- **Expenditures:** Decreased by **\$3.5 million** due to lower revenues and lower reserves available for operational use
- **Net Deficit Budget:** - **\$1.2 million**

Demographics

Enrolments - Headcount

<u>Program</u>	<u>2024/2025</u> (Estimated)	<u>2023/2024</u> (Actual)	<u>2022/2023</u> (Actual)
Pre K to 12	5,222	5,159	5,153
Alexander First Nation	32	31	34
Home Education	15	13	15
Total	5,269	5,203	5,202



- Ongoing growth in enrolment of students with complex and diverse learning needs continues to be a challenge in the Division. Budget 2024-2025 allocates \$1.3M to additional supports in the classroom as well as family and student supports outside the classroom.
- Sturgeon Public Schools is in year two of the Mental Health in Schools (MHIN) Pilot Project which focuses on promoting positive mental health while teaching skills to prevent mental health crises. Alberta Education has allocated funding through February 2025.
- \$1.0M increase in additional Jordan's Principle Funding (Federal Funding) to Support First Nations students (\$1.8M in total funding).

Certificated Staff to Student Ratios in Schools

<u>Grades</u>	<u>2024/2025</u>
ECS	19.5
Grades 1-3	22.0
Grades 4-6	23.5
Grades 7-9	25.0
Grades 10-12	26.0

- Budget 2024-2025 continues to provide support for Learning Coaches who work directly with teachers to program for student success.
- School Nutrition funding has increased in budget 2024-2025 and, as a result, each school has been given funds to support School Nutrition Programs.

