

MEDIA RELEASE



For immediate release

Date: May 30, 2023

Contact: Avice DeKolver,
Director of Finance, Lethbridge School Division,
Avice.DeKolver@lethsd.ab.ca

Lethbridge School Division:

- Learners are innovative thinkers who are successful, confident, respectful and caring -

2023/2024 Preliminary budget

On May 29, the Lethbridge School Division Board of Trustees approved the 2023/2024 Preliminary Operating Budget. The budget comes in at \$141.83 million, and predicts enrollment will grow by 49 students for the next school year, to a total of 12,006, as the Division is expected to see a large jump in the number of high school students.

Student enrolment is the most significant factor in determining funding, explained the Division's Director of Finance, Avice DeKolver, who added the province's Weighted Moving Average will have an impact on the 2023/2024 budget.

"Our calculations determine that 11,523.5 full time equivalent (FTE) is the Division's Projected enrollment for the 2023/2024 school year," she said. "However, due to the Weighted Moving Average framework, the Division will only receive funding for 11,353 FTE.

The Division will serve 170.5 FTE more students than it will receive funding for. So, while enrolment continues to grow, and is estimated to continue to grow in the next few years, the effects of the Weighted Moving Average will have an impact on the Division's funding."

Of the total budget, 77 per cent of expenditures will go towards staffing, for a Division that is now the fourth-largest employer within The City of Lethbridge. The Division is expected to add 3.5 FTE teachers for the new school year and will also experience a decrease of 19.75 FTE support staff.

"The main reason for this decrease is within the Early Education Program and Program Unit Funding," said DeKolver. "EEP enrollment has continued to decrease and one-time reserves in the program have been used up, so the decision has been made to right-size the program. The decrease in both EAs and other support staff reflect this."

DeKolver added \$300,000 of the budget has been held back to meet enrollment pressures that may present themselves, after the Sept. 30 enrollment numbers are finalized.

"We had a similar amount for 2022/2023 that also went to staffing," she said.

A total of 82 per cent of the budget will be spent on instructional services for students. The Division's Instructional Budget Committee is tasked with allocating funds throughout the instructional programs.

In terms of revenues, those will also total \$141.83 million, which represents an increase of 1.76 per cent as compared to the 2022/2023 school year. Overall, revenues are set to increase by \$2.45 million from the previous school year.

The budgeting process began back in February during the annual Town Hall event, where five main themes emerged from those discussions - Learning (flexibility, technology), Student Support and Resources, Opportunities, Mental Health and Wellness and Diversity and Inclusion.

New for the 2023/2024 was the creation of a budget engagement survey, which sought input into the development of the instruction area of the budget. Using this tool, respondents had the opportunity to provide input into the percentage of the instruction budget that should be allocated to each area. A total of 419 responses were received, and the feedback was considered in the development of the instruction budget.

Common themes from this survey included inclusive learning supports, class sizes, intervention strategies, supporting well-being and technology and materials to support learning.

After final approval by the Board, the budget will now be submitted to Alberta Education by May 31, as required under legislation.

Lethbridge School Division

Communications Officer, Garrett Simmons: 403-380-7396,
garrett.simmons@lethsd.ab.ca

Learners are innovative thinkers who are successful, confident, respectful and caring