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## **Protecting Core Investments a Priority as Louis Riel School Division Shares Draft Budget at Public Meeting**

WINNIPEG, MB – The Louis Riel School Division (LRSD) presented its 2020–2021 draft budget to its community on Tuesday, Feb. 11. At the public meeting, the LRSD Board of Trustees shared that as a result of the recent Manitoba government announcement on school funding, LRSD will see a 0.9% decrease in provincial funding compared to the previous year’s budget.

“Unfortunately, the decrease in funding from the province is not keeping up with the cost of living or enrolment that is projected to increase by 216 students to reach 16,004 in 2020-2021,” said Pamela Kolochuk, Finance and Audit Committee Chair, LRSD Board of Trustees. “In this fourth year of funding restraints, we face very difficult decisions to achieve a balanced budget.”

To help reduce the impact of the reduction in funding, the Board of Trustees is considering a 2 per cent increase to the Special Requirement, which is in line with the Minister of Education’s request to limit the increase to 2 per cent. Based on current assessment information, this would result in a 1.12 per cent or \$22.56 increase to a property taxpayer of an average home valued at \$343,700 in LRSD. Considering all revenue sources, the Board of Trustees is proposing a budget of \$196,265,953 for the 2020-2021 school year.

“Overall, the budget will increase by 0.97 per cent, but taking into account the cost of living and projected enrolment increases, we will need to make sacrifices to protect what is at the core of all we do—student learning and well-becoming,” said Christian Michalik, LRSD Superintendent.

To achieve a balanced budget that protects front line services, such as teachers and educational assistants, LRSD will be looking at several cost saving measures including further reductions to staffing furthest from the classroom, operating expenses and repairs to facilities. The Board of Trustees also continues to seek clarification from the government on its directive to reduce core management by 15 per cent.

While sacrifices to some areas are necessary to protect students and recent investments to support equity and inclusion, highlights of the proposed budget include continued local funding for:

- Full-day kindergarten pilot project (\$487,000)
- Indigenous Education (\$1.6 million)
- An additional 5.65 increase in full-time equivalent (FTE) teachers (\$530,000)

“We are committed to doing everything we can to protect our core investments,” said Sandy Nemeth, Chair, LRSD Board of Trustees. “This means no increases in overall class sizes and no reductions in the number of teachers or educational assistants.”

LRSD serves more than 15,700 students, along with their parents, and the wider community, in 40 schools in the southeast quadrant of Winnipeg. Its Mission is to provide a safe, inclusive, and engaging environment, where personal and collective learning are valued, and each one of us reaches our full potential.

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