

FACT SHEET: HOW THE PROVINCIAL BUDGET IS HURTING K-12 EDUCATION

The 2017-18 budget

- The provincial budget cuts \$54 million from school divisions' operating funding – a cut of 2.6% over last year.
- Revenues from education property taxes increased by \$67 million but these revenues are going directly to the government's general revenue fund (GRF) and not to school divisions.
- Capital funding has not been cut: the budget provides \$48.3 million to complete the 18 P3 schools this June and funding for other schools. There is \$43.2 million for preventative maintenance and renewal that must be spent as allocated.

Student enrolment up but provincial funding per student down

- Per pupil funding decreased by \$505 over last year (from \$10,732 to \$10,227).
- Provincial student enrolment has increased by 6.5% since 2010-11.

Changes to the Education Funding Distribution Model

- With this budget the government made significant changes to how education funding is distributed to school divisions, based on a report by Dan Perrins.
- Urban school divisions are negatively impacted by changes to the transportation funding in the funding distribution model. Bus transportation is only available for children who live outside a 1.0 km radius from schools. For the Regina Public School Division, for example, 1,100 previously bused students are now ineligible.

Demand for wage rollbacks

- The government is demanding 3.5% reduction in compensation for all public sector workers, including education workers, followed by a three-year freeze. This is in addition to the massive cuts to school divisions' operating funding.
- When inflation forecasts are considered, this could amount to a 9.5% cut in compensation over four years (inflation could be lower or higher).
- The government wants all public sector workers to agree to a cut, even if their collective agreement is closed. It is not against the law for an employer to ask the union to re-open the collective agreement, but it cannot force the union to do so.

PST now applies to insurance premiums

- The provincial budget expanded PST to insurance premiums, which increases the costs of benefit plan premiums by 6%.

Public sector wages have not kept up with inflation

- Public sector wages have averaged 7.3% over the past five years, while SK CPI increased by 8.2% during the same period.

School board support staff cannot afford wage cuts

- The majority of school support staff work and are paid for ten months/year.
- Administrative Assistants, Educational Assistants, Library Assistants and other ten-month employees make between \$22,000-\$28,000 per year, depending on in which school divisions they work and their annual hours.

Proposed Amendments to *The Education Act*

- In April, the government introduced Bill 63, that amends *The Education Act* to give the Minister of Education more power and reduce the autonomy of school divisions.

School Divisions have already been squeezed for years

- Last year, school divisions collectively found \$19 million in savings to meet government demands for “efficiencies”. The new government target is \$60 million by August 2019.
- In 2016, the government clawed back the \$4.5 million WCB rebate from school divisions.
- The government also downloaded the cost of the last two years of the teachers’ agreement onto the school divisions (a cost of \$9 million in 2016).
- Many school divisions have used some of their reserves in the last two years to cover shortfalls in operating costs. The Minister will not let them do this anymore without his approval.