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## PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 18, 2020

### **Rainy River District School Board passes balanced budget**

At the August 18, 2020 Special Board Meeting, the Rainy River District School Board approved the 2020-2021 balanced budget of \$54,556,282, with a draw from accumulated surplus for Board funded capital and retirement gratuities obligations.

The budget process begins in January of each year with the development of school enrolment projections, which form the basis of the budget. Throughout the year, programs are assessed, and planning for the following year occurs, with student achievement and well-being as the primary goals as supported through the Board's Strategic Plan. This year, budgets were also reviewed in light of the pandemic and the reopening of schools this fall.

The budget includes allocations for school reopening during the pandemic. Allocations have been made for possible increases in operating costs for enhanced cleaning and use of sick leave. There are also allocations to cover operating in the adapted and remote models of education for instructional supports such as technology, and transportation.

As identified during budget consultations, the budget also contains supports for student mental health and special education, such as continued support for mental health professional services in the schools and continued support for Autism Support Workers and Behavioral Therapists for all elementary schools. There will also be continued support for students through our Speech Language Program, Reading Recovery Programming for our students experiencing challenges with literacy acquisition, and TechWays, which provides students in Grades 7 and 8 career/pathway planning support with opportunities for increased hands-on/experiential learning.

Funding has been allocated to support ongoing training and professional development for school staff, through Math Coordinator, an OYAP/Experiential Learning Coordinator, a Technology Enabled Learning, Reading Recovery Leader, and Literacy Coordinator. As well, in 2020-21, we continue our Indigenous Education focus, with funding to support an Indigenous Education Leader, an Indigenous Education Curriculum Coordinator, an Indigenous Graduation Coach at Fort Frances High School, and an Ojibwe Language Coordinator.

School allocations per pupil have remained the same, with the exception of a reduction in school-based field trip allocations due to the pandemic. With the continuation of the Rural Northern Education Fund, allocations will be made to support breakfast programming in all schools, expand the Makerspace pilot to all elementary schools, and to enhance our literacy programming at schools with the addition of a Literacy Coordinator.

Input on the 2020-2021 budget was sought from school councils, from Board advisory committees, schools, and through an online survey for parents/guardians. The 2020-2021 budget reflects the input received.

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Mission: ***"Together, we empower all students to believe in themselves, to achieve, and to dream."***

Vision: ***"The Rainy River District School Board is an innovative community, nurturing hearts and minds, to build a foundation for tomorrow, today."***

*This publication is available in accessible formats upon request.*