



November 22, 2019

News Release

STAR Catholic School Division sees \$2.1 million loss in provincial funding

Leduc — After the unveiling of the provincial government's budget, St. Thomas Aquinas Roman (STAR) Catholic School Division is announcing a net loss of \$2.1 million in provincial funding.

The loss comes in the form of the elimination of several provincial grants, which have been reallocated to maintain base funding in accommodation of enrollment growth. The eliminated grants were previously used to reduce class sizes and help alleviate transportation fees.

The \$2.1 million loss equates to \$510 per student, and is compounded by unrelated external factors, such as a 174 per cent increase in school insurance fees.

At its November meeting, the STAR Catholic Board of Trustees moved to allocate \$1 million of its \$1.1 million contingency reserves in order to overcome a large part of the shortfall. The remaining \$1.1 million shortfall was recovered through determining administrative efficiencies, central office supports, and accessing funding reserves at the school level.

Board Chair Michelle Lamer said the STAR Catholic Trustees are grateful staffing levels have been maintained, but notes using division funding reserves and finding ways to significantly reduce costs at central office will not be feasible options in the future.

"The Board did not wish to lessen shortfall by raising school fees or reducing staff, especially at this point in the school year," Ms. Lamer says. "Unfortunately, utilizing our reserve funds in such a significant way will not be possible after this year, and we will be forced to consider other options."

Ms. Lamer went on to explain STAR Catholic will continue to evaluate expenditures, search for ways to maximize efficiencies, and advocate for the needs and well-being of its students.

"This is certainly a distressing position to be in, and we understand divisions across the province are feeling similar effects. The Board of Trustees has no doubt about the amount of work to be done and the difficult decisions to be made. As always, we will make those decisions with the best interests of our students, staff, and their families in mind."

Based in central Alberta, Saint Thomas Aquinas Roman (STAR) Catholic School Division represents 12 schools that serve the communities of Beaumont, Drayton Valley, Lacombe, Leduc, Ponoka, and Wetaskiwin. The STAR Catholic Schools team of teachers and support staff are committed to giving more than 4000 students across our division every opportunity to achieve their potential in a caring, safe and Christ-centred environment.

- 30 -

For more information, contact:
Caitlin Kehoe
Manager of Communications
STAR Catholic Schools
(780) 986-2500
caitlin.kehoe@starcatholic.ab.ca