



May 29, 2020

STAR Catholic Board of Trustees approves 2020-2021 budget

Leduc — During a special meeting on Thursday, May 28, the STAR Catholic Board of Trustees approved the 2020-2021 operating budget as presented by administration, which projects \$51.2 million in revenue and \$51.3 million in expenses for the Division.

The budget was calculated using the Government of Alberta's new funding framework for education, which is based on a weighted moving average. The budget also factors in a total projected student enrollment of 4,327— an increase of 3.3 per cent from the previous school year.

Guiding principles in the budget's creation were upholding Catholic education and faith formation of both students and staff, maximizing frontline workers, the well-being of the Division as a whole, and maintaining Board priorities. Consultation with Trustees, school councils, administrators, and staff was also taken into account.

The 2020-2021 budget is one of particular fiscal restraint. In late 2019, the Board of Trustees opted to allocate the majority of its contingency reserves to overcome a shortfall of funding. The reserves were greatly depleted, and utilizing them in such a significant way will not be a possibility going forward.

The budget was also created under the premise that traditional school operations will resume as usual in the fall, which Board Chair Michelle Lamer notes may not be the case.

"The COVID-19 pandemic is a rapidly changing and evolving situation that brings uncertainty to many aspects of life, not the least of which is education. It's not yet known what school will look like come September, and the possibility of there being considerable changes to the way we typically operate is a significant one," Ms. Lamer says.

"As we wait for direction from the Government of Alberta as to what scenario to expect in the fall, we will continue to prepare as much as possible while committing to being flexible and adaptable to whatever developments may occur. In any scenario, the well-being and success of our students will guide every decision we make."

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.

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