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February 25, 2010

Dear Parents/Community Members:

On February 9, 2010 the Government of Alberta delivered its Budget for 2010 – 2011. Education received no increase in the basic grant rates. Other specific details as they related to Sturgeon School Division include:

The allocation of the Small Class Size Funding that was implemented as per the recommendation from the Alberta Commission on Learning will now be restructured. Beginning September 2010 funding will be allocated on a per student or per CEU basis as opposed to the former lump sum payment provided to school jurisdictions. We have yet to determine the exact impact this will have on Sturgeon School Division but, at this time, we do not anticipate losing funding as a result of the change in process.

Funding that was deleted and affecting our schools consists of:

- Daily Physical Activity Funding--\$1,000/school year/school
- Health Pathways Grant – 3<sup>rd</sup> year--\$450,000 (approx.)

The Minister of Finance also indicated that school jurisdictions would receive a 4.8% increase. This will be applied during the April 1, 2010 to August 31, 2010 period and continues the 4.8% grant increase that was received from September 1, 2009 to March 31, 2010. This is the funding that allows Sturgeon School Division to support the salary increases for our certificated staff during SY 09-10. Until such time as the Minister of Education is able to acquire the funding necessary to absorb the difference between the 4.8% and the 5.99% awarded through arbitration, Sturgeon School Division will be required to increase its deficit to ensure teaching staff is appropriately paid.

In addition, there has been no commitment made by the provincial government to provide school jurisdictions with the funding required to cover salary increases for 2010-2011. At this time, the Alberta Average Earnings Index is expected to be in the range of 3%. Minister David Hancock has assured Trustees he will be meeting with the Treasury Board to request appropriate funding which, in the case of our division, is approximately one million dollars.

Presently, Sturgeon School Division's financial status remains adequate for the current period. We will, however, monitor the Division Budget carefully and review any areas that could be addressed relative to possible financial savings. That said, the Board of Trustees will continue to advocate for the funding necessary to cover costs and is committed to maintaining the integrity of the classroom and the financial stability of the division.

In the coming months it will be critical that we continue to work together as a community with a shared goal of providing the best possible education to the children of Sturgeon School Division.

Yours truly,

Terry Jewell, Chair  
Board of Trustees

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