



Aspen View PUBLIC SCHOOLS

“Aspen View Public Schools is committed to preparing our students to achieve success and reach their unique potential through the provision of meaningful learning opportunities.”

Board Highlights

from the special meeting held Thursday, March 23, 2017
at the Aspen View Division Office



Reaction to Provincial Budget 2017

The Board of Trustees reiterated its frustration with 2017 Provincial Budget announced on March 16, as Superintendent Mark Francis provided more information on specific elements within the budget that significantly impact Aspen View in particular, and rural education in general:

- Alberta Education has maintained a per-student funding formula which, because of declining enrolment in Aspen View, results in an estimated loss of provincial funding of \$372,000.
- Consecutive zero-per-cent increases in per-student grants leave base funding at the same level. “When you give us zero per cent, it is automatically a decline because our staffing costs go up,” Francis explained. “Our staffing costs are up approximately \$1.2 million from four years ago with no additional money to do it.”

• To offset the reduction of school fees, Alberta Education will provide funding based on fees collected in 2015-16. The Aspen View Board of Trustees has consciously strived to keep fees low, forgive school fees in hardship cases, and not limit students’ access to programs due to non-payment. Other school divisions charge much higher fees, are more stringent in their collection practices, and limit students’ access to programs if fees are not paid. As a result, those divisions’ compensatory funding will be significantly higher.

• The reduction in school fees is being funded, in part, by lowering the cap on funded Credit Enrolment Units (CEUs) for high school students from 60 to 45 per year. Aspen View has aggressively expanded its programming and encouraged students to take additional credits to expand their educational horizons. The new cap, based on 2015-16 CEUs, translates to a \$205,000 loss of revenue to Aspen View, expected to be

significantly higher once 2016-17 CEUs are calculated. “The cap on the CEUs will jeopardize a number of programs,” Francis said, including Aspen View Summer School, Land-Based Learning, Marine Biology, etc.

Trustees voted unanimously to invite the three MLAs who represent Aspen View to meet with them to discuss the implications of Budget 2017 to Aspen View and rural Alberta.

“To say that we’re profoundly disappointed is an understatement,” Board Chair Dennis MacNeil said. “They obviously weren’t listening, and we need to send them a message that we’re disappointed and we need to take some action.”

“They need to hear this, the real things that are going to happen now because of that budget,” Trustee Donna Cherniwchan added.

Trustee Resignation

The Board of Trustees voted to accept the resignation of Ward 4 (South West) Trustee Patricia Pedersen, who no longer resides within the division boundaries. Trustees also voted to leave the Ward 4 position vacant until the municipal election in October 2017. In the interim, Trustee Nancy Sand has been appointed as the liaison to the Rochester Parent Advisory Council; and Trustee Elohne Chizawsky to the Thorhild School Council.

International Learning Trips

Superintendent Mark Francis advised the board that three upcoming International Learning Trips to Europe are being monitored in light of the March 22, 2017 incident in London. Advice has been sought from the tour operators, insurance providers and the Government of Canada. While some changes to itineraries may be considered, at this point no trips have been cancelled.

Next Board Meeting:

Thursday, April 6, 2017
10 a.m. - Rochester School

Upcoming Events:

March 27-31: March Break
(No School)

April 5-13:
April Diploma Exams

April 14: Good Friday
(No School)

April 17: Easter Monday
(No School)

Trustees:

- Ward 1 (North West): Nancy Sand
- Ward 2 (North Central): Anne Karczmarczyk
Dennis MacNeil (Chair)
- Ward 3 (North East): Candy Nikipelo (Vice Chair)
- Ward 4 (South West): Vacant
- Ward 5 (South Central): Elohne Chizawsky
- Ward 6 (South East): Donna Cherniwchan

Division Office:

3600 48 Ave.
Athabasca, AB T9S 1M8
Phone: 780-675-7080
www.aspenview.org
email: info@aspenview.org
Facebook: @aspenviewschools

Engage Learning. Ignite Potential. Inspire Success.