The $372,730 deficit in the PWPSD 2019-2020 budget stems from the Board's decision to maintain existing services provided to students.

Board approves 2019-2020 deficit budget

The Board is required to approve the spring budget for submission to Alberta Education. This year's submission deadline is June 30, 2019.

The Board voted to approve the 2019-2020 deficit budget with operating revenues of $84,013,882 and operating expenditures of $84,386,612, and to request Ministerial approval to fund the 2019-2020 budgeted transportation deficit of $780,281 from Capital Reserves.

Despite the budget's shortcomings, the PWPSD Board has committed to maintaining existing instructional programming and services for students, even with the discontinuation of the Classroom Improvement Fund (CIF).

The $372,730 deficit stems from the Board's decision to maintain existing services provided to students.

Transportation continues to be an area of concern for PWPSD. The growing deficit in this area is a direct result of inequities in the province's Rural Transportation Funding Grid that fails to reflect the unique realities of minority rural districts.

Student enrolment is projected to decrease by 1.1 per cent at PWPSD schools in the upcoming year.

The budget was prepared with the assumption that there will be no significant increases to salaries and no significant changes to provincial grant rates, based on the proximity of the April election to the end of the school year. Under normal circumstances, school boards would be made aware of any major changes to grants before April.

Board seeks AB Ed confirmation that requirements for school site approval have been met

PWPSD Administration has written to Dr. Curtis Clarke, Deputy Minister of Education, seeking confirmation that the recent letter of support from the County of Grande Prairie regarding land at Five Mile Hall is sufficient proof that a site for a new PWPSD school has been secured.

In the past, Alberta Education has required school boards to first show proof of a serviced building lot in order to be considered as a candidate for a possible new school project. The letter of support from the County states, within 12 months of a new school announcement, and barring any unpredictable circumstances, they will provide PWPSD with legal title of the land at the Five Mile Hall, complete all required zoning, bring services to the property line, and provide adequate road access for construction to begin.

PWPSD expands Leadership Development Program

“We regularly experience turnover in our leadership,” said Deputy Superintendent Darren Young in his presentation to the Board. “By providing intentional and structured leadership development, we are proactively preparing future leaders in accordance with our mission, Educating today for success tomorrow. Effective leadership is an essential element of student, school and system improvement as we continue to learn and grow together.”

The new Leadership Explorations Program, an addition to PWPSD’s existing comprehensive Leadership Development Program, is intended for teachers not currently in a leadership position, with an interest in exploring educational leadership.

Candidates will complete an application starting in late August. Successful applicants will complete pre- and post-reading assignments, participate in related online discussions, attend five in-person Saturday learning sessions, and possibly job shadow a role of interest.

PWPSD provides comprehensive leadership development for current leaders through supports such as formal mentoring, targeted professional development and District Office support, in addition to existing opportunities offered by the College of Alberta School Superintendents (CASS) and the Alberta Teachers’ Association (ATA) which are integrated into PWPSD’s leadership development model.
Education Act: What is changing?

The Board reviewed an email from the Minister of Education announcing that Bill 8, The Education Amendment Act, 2019 was introduced in the Legislature on June 5, 2019, and an accompanying chart outlining what is changing from the current School Act to the Education Act with the proposed amendments from Bill 8.

Government initially gave the Education Act royal assent in 2012 but did not proclaim it due to incomplete accompanying regulations.

Alberta Education has set the Bill 8 implementation date as September 1, 2019. PWPSD forms, administrative procedures and policies will be updated over the summer to reflect the coming changes in legislation.

New policy approved – Recognition of Indigenous Lands and Peoples

In September, the Policy Review Committee was tasked with drafting a land acknowledgement policy to provide resources to assist in respectfully recognizing and acknowledging Indigenous Lands and Peoples at special events.

The committee consulted with Brigitte Benning, PWPSD’s Indigenous Educator, and Joy Joachim, Horse Lake Representative, as well as the broader community, to draft the policy and related exhibit.

The exhibit also included feedback from within PWPSD and the broader community.

The Board voted to approve Policy AJ – Recognition of Indigenous Lands and Peoples and Exhibit 1 – Opportunities for Recognition as presented.

Locally developed courses approved

The Board approved a number of Alberta Education-approved locally developed courses for offering at all PWPSD high schools.

Courses offered during September 1, 2019 - August 31, 2023:
- Advanced Acting/Touring Theatre 15, 25, 35
- Applied Graphic Arts 15, 25, 35
- Audio 15, 25, 35
- Creative Writing & Publishing 15, 25, 35
- Journalism 15, 25, 35
- Myth-Busting Science 25
- Painting (Advanced Techniques) 15, 25, 35
- Performing Arts 15, 25, 35
- Theatre Appreciation 15, 25, 35
- Yoga 15, 25, 35

Courses offered during September 1, 2019 - August 31, 2022:
- American Sign Language (LA) 35-5
- Technical Theatre 15, 25, 35

Courses offered during September 1, 2019 - August 31, 2020:
- Film Appreciation 15, 25
- History Through Film: Fact and Fiction 25
- Popular Culture 25, 35
- Professional Studio Arts 15, 25, 35
- Study of Film 35

Courses offered during September 1, 2019 - August 31, 2019:
- Professional Studio Arts 15, 25, 35
- Popular Culture 25, 35
- History Through Film: Fact and Fiction 25
- Professional Studio Arts 15, 25, 35
- Study of Film 35

Local fire departments nominated for PWPSD Friends of Education Award

The recipients were selected for the support they provide to PWPSD schools through fire protection, education and response services: Birch Hills County Fire Departments, Central Peace Fire and Rescue Commission, City of Grande Prairie Fire Department, County of Grande Prairie Regional Fire Service, M.D. of Greenview Protective Services Department, and Saddles Hills County Regional Fire/Disaster Services.

Trustee Knull reported that Horse Lake First Nation is hosting their annual student recognition night on June 28.

Feedback on Red Tape Reduction

The Board will respond to the ASBA request for feedback and suggestions by June 28, 2019, sharing their thoughts on how the new Associate Ministry for Red Tape Reduction can ease the level of bureaucracy for school boards.

Committee and meeting reports

Trustees Knull and Clarke reported on the PSBA Spring General Assembly.

Trustee Knull reported on the Rural Caucus of Alberta School Boards Meeting.

Trustee Anderson reported on the ASBA Spring General Meeting.

Secretary-Treasurer Paquin presented the Health and Safety Report.

The Board approved trustee attendance at the ASBA webinar, Trust Me, offered on June 12; the ASBA Alberta Education webinars on the Education Act, and a full-day workshop by Dr. Jody Carrington during PWPSD’s Professional Learning Day for teachers on November 22, 2019.

Clause added to motion

For clarity, the Board will add the clause ‘under Policy GGG – Personnel Policy: Non-Teaching Staff’ after eligible staff as an amendment to Board Motion 201904530.1014.

For more good news, see the News & Announcements section at www.pwpsd.ca.