

Budget Means Major Challenges for School Boards

School boards in Saskatchewan are dealing with significant challenges as a result of the provincial budget, according to a survey of the member boards of the Saskatchewan School Boards Association released in June.

On average, boards responding to the survey provided a rating of “Not Good” – which equates to about 2 out of 5 – when asked about the overall effect of the budget on their divisions. While boards each have unique needs and circumstances, a high number of respondents cited the lack of funding available to cover increases for teachers negotiated in the provincial collective bargaining agreement, and other pressures, as of major concern.

“School boards are going to do everything in their power to ensure students are not negatively impacted by this situation,” said Connie Bailey, President of the SSBA. “At the same time, many have difficult decisions to make with reduced resources available and issues like increasing student numbers and aging infrastructure.



SSBA Vice-President Ronna Pethick and SSBA President Connie Bailey attended at the Provincial Legislature on June 1. President Bailey gave interviews to numerous media outlets regarding the 2016-17 budget.

“We want to ensure we offer the best educational opportunities possible for our province’s students, by focusing on continuous improvement in the system, ensuring that our teachers are paid and that we can cover general

operating costs – but certainly the timing and reductions in the budget this year pose major challenges for boards of education,” she added.

While boards surveyed cited positives in the budget including

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Budget Means Major Challenges for School Boards (continued)

→ recognition of current-year enrolment numbers and an increase for preventative maintenance and renewal dollars, many noted those changes were offset by the lack of funding for teacher salary increases and other uncontrollable costs. The result is overall funding decreases for many boards and allocations that do not reflect inflation for all.

“The SSBA has eight principles for funding that our members have identified as important and we use those as a basis for our survey,” Bailey said. “This year, we heard overwhelmingly that sufficiency was the principle most lacking. Also of concern, a majority pointed to predictability as lacking, particularly related to the late budget, and many

expressed concern about sustainability for the future considering trends in the approach to funding.”

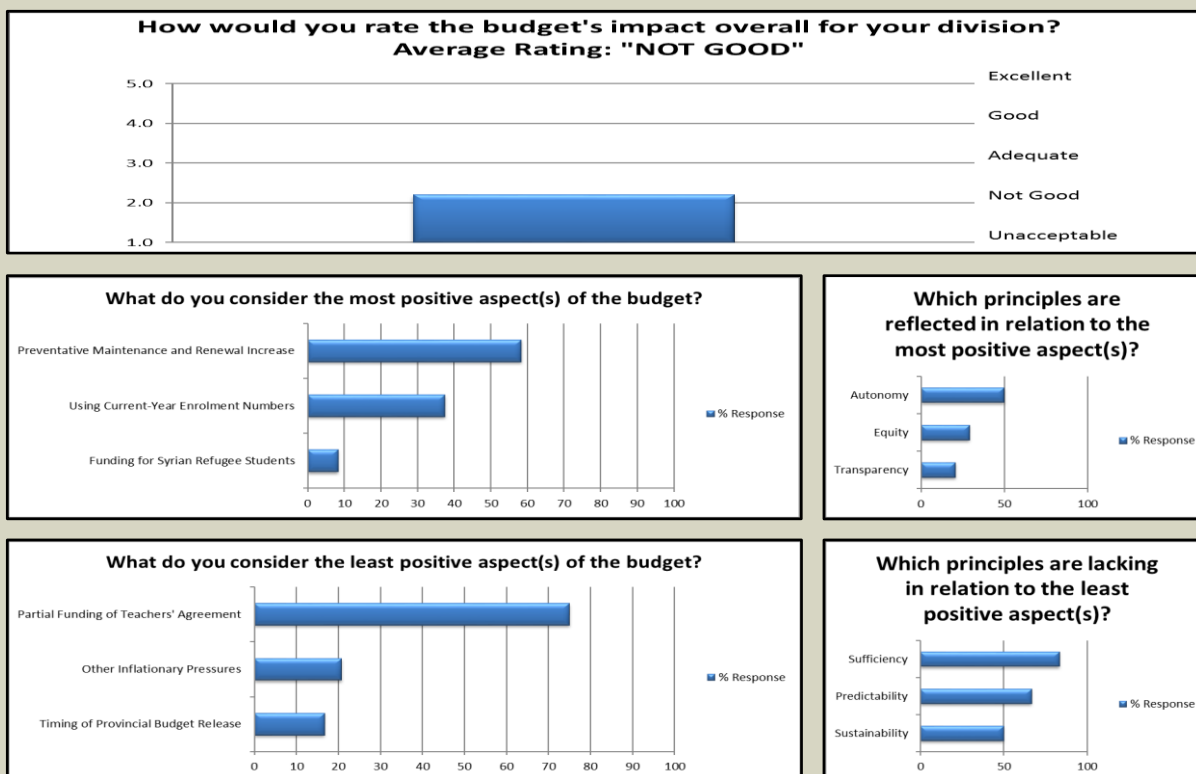
Boards noted that the principle of autonomy remains present in how they can target some of the dollars allocated and authority remains for school boards to act in the best interests of the students, families and communities they are elected to serve.

“When the government took over responsibility for setting education property tax rates, they also took on responsibility for ensuring that education in Saskatchewan is adequately funded,” Bailey said. “Our member boards are strongly indicating that is

not the case in this most recent budget – and we have a mandate from the public that elected us to advocate for our students. Some member boards will have to find cuts and others are planning to use dollars reserved for major projects for their operating expenses for the coming year.

“As locally elected representatives, we want our communities, families and students to know that there are passionate and committed people working for you in education and there is excellent work being done in the province’s 28 school divisions that we need to shine a spotlight on and build upon for the benefit of every student,” she added.

SSBA 2016-17 Budget Evaluation



Mosaic Extreme School Makeover Challenge Winners Announced

Ten schools across Saskatchewan are each receiving \$10,000 for winning the 10th Anniversary Mosaic Extreme School Makeover Challenge, it was announced in June.

"At Mosaic, we partner with organizations, like the Saskatchewan School Boards Association and Breakfast for Learning, who are making a difference for families and children in our province," said Sarah Fedorchuk, Senior Director of Public Affairs for The Mosaic Company.

"Food security is at the core of Mosaic's mission. We recognize how improved nutrition can have a positive effect on a child's ability to learn and we are excited to empower these Challenge winners with the funds they need to support their kids," she continued.

The 10 winning projects have goals including expanding breakfast and snack programs, establishing indoor and outdoor gardens, furthering family and community involvement and increasing education about nutrition, cooking, food security, fire safety in the kitchen and Indigenous knowledge.

Together with the Saskatchewan School Boards Association and Breakfast for Learning, The Mosaic Company launched the Extreme School Makeover Challenge in 2006

to encourage grassroots initiatives to improve student nutrition.

"Breakfast for Learning is honored to work with The Mosaic Company and the Saskatchewan School Boards Association to help schools take student nutrition and nutrition education to the next level," said Kelly Berlinic, the Director of Programs and Community Development at Breakfast for Learning.

"Through improved facilities and enhanced programming, Saskatchewan students will reap the benefits of the Mosaic Extreme School Makeover Challenge for years to come," she continued.

Schools from across the province submitted their projects for the 10th Anniversary Mosaic Challenge to compete for a total of \$100,000 in prizes. The schools receiving grants are in Saskatoon, Regina, Melfort, Kelliher, Meadow Lake, Preeceville, North Battleford and the Kahkewistahaw First Nation.

"There is great work being done to improve nutrition environments at schools throughout Saskatchewan," said Connie Bailey, president of the SSBA. "We are proud to be able to recognize those efforts with the Challenge, thanks to our partnership with Mosaic and Breakfast for Learning."

10th Anniversary Mosaic Challenge Winners

SCHOOL	PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS
Arcola Community School (Regina) Regina Public School Division	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include fire safety in parent / student cooking program • Offer advanced cooking classes for students • Expand <i>Food Experience</i> program beyond pre-K
Brunswick School (Melfort) North East School Division	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase snack program to three days per week • Expand nutrition education experiences to all students • Renovate kitchen and purchase new appliances
Chief Kahkewistahaw Community School Kahkewistahaw First Nation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide parent and community involvement in programs • Enhanced student nutrition education • Purchase key kitchen equipment
Confederation Park Community School (Saskatoon) Saskatoon Public School Division	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand outdoor classroom • Refurbish and expand outdoor community garden • Support continued community involvement
E.D. Feehan Catholic High School (Saskatoon) Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teach students about local and global food security • Develop indoor garden and expand outdoor garden • Ensure curriculum integration using garden activities
Kelliher School (Kelliher) Prairie Valley School Division	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhance nutrition education and competency for students • Increase snack program to daily offering • Increase use of kitchen as learning space
Lakeview Elementary School (Meadow Lake) Northwest School Division	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase number of students in cooking opportunities • Expand existing nutrition programming • Purchase key kitchen equipment
Mother Teresa Middle School (Regina) Regina Catholic School Division	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrate Indigenous content and principles • Teach students how to grow their own food • Expand community kitchen opportunities
Preeceville School (Preeceville) Good Spirit School Division	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer Newcomer Nutrition Outreach program • Expand free, universal breakfast Café • Increase parent, student and community involvement
St. Mary School (North Battleford) Light of Christ School Division	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teach all students basic cooking skills • Provide age appropriate nutrition education to all grades • Facilitate student developed videos



Collaboration Critical Before Changes Considered

Collaboration with democratically, locally elected school boards is essential before any 'transformational changes' in education are considered, the Saskatchewan School Boards Association stated publicly in May.

"We work collaboratively with all of our partners to meet the bold targets in the Saskatchewan Plan for Growth and the Education Sector Strategic Plan to improve student outcomes," said Connie Bailey, president of the SSBA. "We are collaborating to review the funding model and we continually work hard to find efficiencies. School boards are always willing to work with the provincial government to ensure we have the best education system for our children. They are our future."

The 28 locally elected school boards have a vital role in serving Saskatchewan's education system. For more than 100 years, the longest lasting and most fundamental responsibility of schools boards has been to bring the voice of the public to publicly funded education. Boards of education provide families, communities and students a crucial connection to democratic decision-making in their school systems.

"The work of the SSBA and its member boards is deeply rooted in the belief that all children in Saskatchewan, regardless of where they live or their personal circumstances, must have the resources and supports they need to achieve and succeed," Bailey said.

SSBA members have eight top priorities they will be looking to see reflected in the 2016-17 provincial budget. Those eight principles are: sufficiency, autonomy, equity, engagement, predictability, reciprocal accountability, sustainability and transparency. Last year, boards began evaluating the budget based on these principles.

"We heard from our members that better engagement to understand local priorities was a top area for improvement and that sufficient funding, including using projected enrolment numbers instead of the previous year's numbers, is essential to meet the changing needs and growing number of students in many divisions," Bailey said in May.

Work Underway for Teacher Time Report Committee

The Saskatchewan School Boards Association received the final report on Teacher Time in March. The report was developed by the Chair.

The Task Force on Teacher Time, which included representation from the Government of Saskatchewan, the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation and the Saskatchewan School Boards Association, was chaired by an independent consultant, Andrew Sims.

"The Saskatchewan School Boards Association has received the report on behalf of its members and is committed to working with its members, staff and other partners to gain feedback and review the recommendations," said SSBA President Connie Bailey in a

statement in June.

"The report makes recommendations on very important and complex issues that need to be considered carefully," she added. "No decisions have been made at this time."

As a next step in the process, a Teacher Time Report Committee has been created, to work on behalf of, and in the interest of boards of education in Saskatchewan.

Representatives of the Saskatchewan School Boards Association, of the League of Educational Administrators (LEADS), Directors and Superintendents of Saskatchewan and of the Saskatchewan Association of School Business Officials (SASBO) are

serving on the committee and their role is to review the findings of the report and provide advice to the SSBA Executive for boards of education going forward.

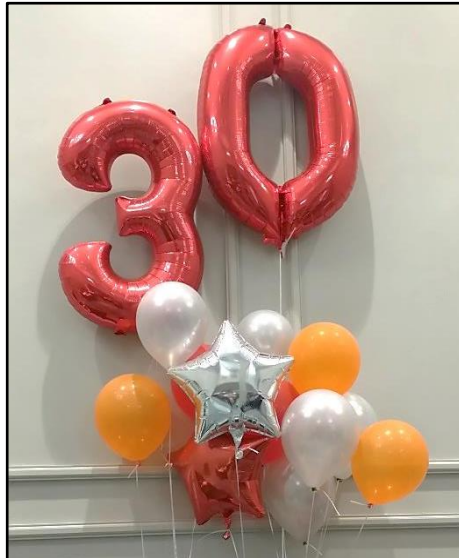
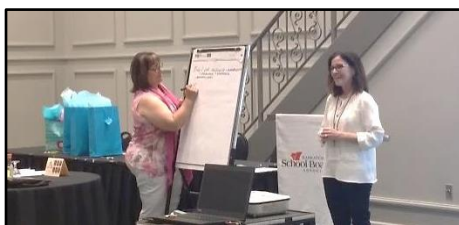
"Boards are fully committed to taking the time to work with their senior management to understand the recommendations and the potential next steps," Bailey said.

"We are also very committed to continuing to work with all of our partners, including the Ministry of Education, the STF, LEADS and SASBO, on these important issues, with the goal of ensuring all students have the resources they need to succeed, regardless of where they live or personal circumstances," she continued.

30th Anniversary Employee Benefits Plan Seminar – Moose Jaw



School division employees participated in the 2016 Benefit and Pension Summit from May 4-6 in Moose Jaw.



Presentations included a variety of topics of interest to HR and benefits administrators and payroll personnel, to increase their knowledge of benefits and pension plan components, administration and best practices.

Trustee Academy 2016 – Cypress Hills



Trustees from across the province participated in this year's Academy, held May 26-27 at Cypress Hills.

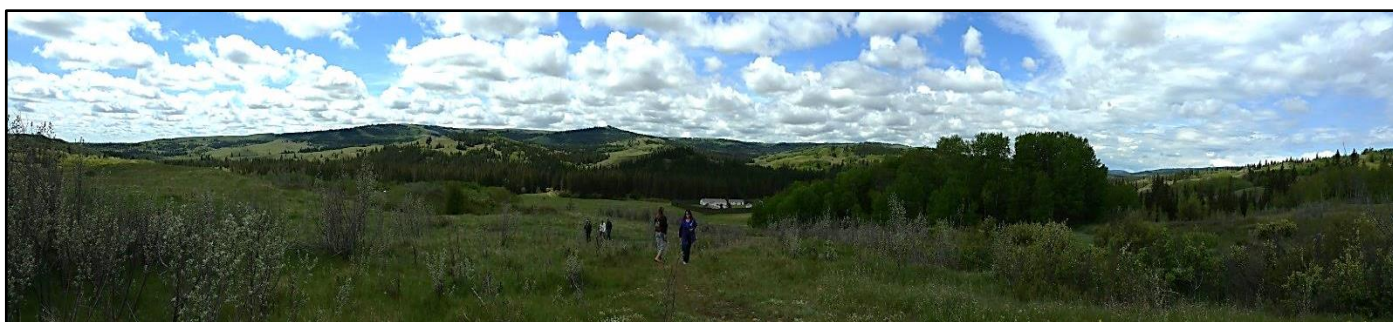


Trustees took part in a full day of presentations from SSBA staff and other experts on topics including Conflict of Interest (Geraldine Knudsen), Enterprise Risk Management (Garry Benning and Jeff McNaughton), Media Relations (Jill Welke, Joe Couture, Joanne Booth) and Compensation Policy (April Blondeau with Insightrix).



Trustees honed their communications and media relations skills during a breakout group activity.

Trustee Academy 2016 – Cypress Hills (continued)



Trustees participated in an educational tour of the Parks Canada Fort Walsh National Historic Site.



Trustees participated in The Blanket Exercise, an interactive learning experience that helps develop understanding about the historic and contemporary relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in Canada.



"The mission of the SSBA is to provide leadership, coordination and services to member boards of education to support student achievement."

President:

Connie Bailey

Vice-President:

Ronna Pethick

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Vernon J. Linklater

Catholic Constituency:

Jerome Niezgoda

Central Constituency:

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If you would prefer to receive *The School Trustee* by hard copy, please contact the Association at the email address above.

Calendar Update

Upcoming Events in 2016:

National Trustee Gathering on Aboriginal Education & Canadian School Boards Association Annual Congress

July 6-9

Winnipeg (Delta Hotel)

SSBA Fall Members' Council

Sept. 22-23

Saskatoon (Sheraton Cavalier)

For more information, see the SSBA website under [Events](#).

Aboriginal Youth Entrepreneurship Program



Event sponsors were recognized on signage during the Gathering in May.



Workshops were held at the Wilson Centre for Entrepreneurial Excellence.



Recipients of \$500 business start-up grants from Affinity were recognized.