



Wetaskiwin
Regional
Public
Schools

3315 - 47th Avenue
Wetaskiwin, Alberta T9A 3S3
780.352-6018 phone | 780.352.7886 fax
www.wrps.ab.ca

May 14, 2020

Dear Parents / Guardians:

Re: Status of French Immersion Program

In a letter dated May 8, 2020 I informed you that I would be recommending the elimination of the French Immersion Program as part of the 2020 – 2021 budget process. The draft budget was submitted to the Board at its meeting on May 12, 2020. The Board discussed and debated the budget recommendations at great length.

As school boards have until May 31 2020, to submit their 2020-2021 school year budget to the Minister of Education, the Board was faced with many difficult decisions that pertain to keeping all schools open and approving a balanced budget.

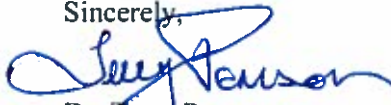
Wetaskiwin Regional Public Schools has been operating a deficit budget for several years. Underfunded programs were subsidized and depleted the Board's operating reserves. The new Provincial Funding Model mandated changes to budget allocations and the Board still faces an additional \$550,000 funding reduction from Alberta Education in 2021-2022.

The 2020-2021 budget discontinued or reduced the number of underfunded programs, leading to the elimination of 20.59 teaching positions and 56.03 support staff positions. The transportation department cut parent choice transportation routes in the City of Wetaskiwin to create needed efficiencies. The Home Education program is not sustainable and was eliminated. Programs of choice, such as Year-Round Education and French Immersion, were cancelled. The Board committed to exploring interim language options for the 2020-21 school year.

Students who currently attend the French Immersion Program at Queen Elizabeth School may continue to attend that school, as the attendance boundary for Queen Elizabeth will not change. In addition, we are working with the school to determine how to offer French Language learning opportunities for the 2020 – 2021 school year. The Board will also be consulting with parents during the 2020 – 2021 school year to determine how a nine-year (9Y) French as a second language program can be offered that meets the needs of students but does not require a subsidy to operate.

I understand that you will not find this decision to be satisfactory but given the fiscal challenges, the Board was forced to make some very difficult decisions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Terry Pearson", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Dr. Terry Pearson
Superintendent of Schools