



May 14, 2020

Dear Parents / Guardians:

Re: Status of Year Round Program

In a letter dated May 8, 2020 I informed you that I would be recommending the elimination of the Year Round 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.

Students who currently attend the Year Round Program at Queen Elizabeth School may continue to attend that school, as the attendance boundary for Queen Elizabeth will not change. The first day of school for students at Queen Elizabeth School is Wednesday, September 2, 2020. The start date for students is contingent on the COVID-19 situation and a decision of the Government and the Chief Medical Officer of Health.

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,

Dr. Terry Pearson
Superintendent of Schools
Wetaskiwin Regional Public Schools