

February 9, 2018

An Open Letter to Parents and Staff

Re: District Financial Report

Recently CBC journalist Zoe Todd wrote an article stating Grande Prairie & District Catholic Schools reported a \$25 million dollar surplus that has not been allocated or expended. Her article unfortunately paints an inaccurate picture of how the funds were distributed.

Much of the CBC report was taken out of context and not properly explained. We experienced significant growth in the past 5 years (upwards of 25%) and this resulted in an increase in revenue. The Board spent funds on capital, directly benefitting students and staff. The Board paid for numerous links to ensure modular classrooms were attached to the main school buildings. Within those links lockers, washrooms, boot rooms, and conference rooms were also added. Computers and support services for students and staff were also purchased. None of these were funded by the government.

Significant funds were expended to enlarge automotive and welding labs for St. Joseph Catholic High School. A new welding lab and theatre was also funded for St. John Paul II Catholic School. A gym was funded for St. Mary Beaverlodge and modular classrooms were moved at the Board's expense for St. Mary's in Sexsmith and Mother Teresa in Grande Prairie. The modular classrooms at St. Gerard and Mother Teresa allowed our classes extra space to improve the overall learning environment. Vehicles were purchased - mini-buses to safely transport children and trucks/vans for maintenance crews to use. All of these items are included in the **Investment in Capital Assets**.

Each month, financial reports are presented to the Board of Trustees – these meetings are open to the public. In addition, there have been two separate financial meetings held during this school year for Grande Prairie Catholic employees to attend and seek clarification. Finances are audited annually and have been found to be in order – fund distributions have also been adhered to and remain firmly within the allocation requirements that are mandated from Alberta Education. It is unfortunate that within this atmosphere of transparency, inaccurate messages are circulated from those who are not fully qualified to disperse the information. This kind of reporting is unfair to educational stakeholders and the students in their care.

Below is the **Class Size Data** within our district over the past three years. While the CBC article suggests our class sizes have increased, here is the actual data:

Class Size (Average)	K-3	4-6	7-9	10-12
2017-2018	20.4	20.0	19.8	23.2
2016-2017	19.9	19.7	21.4	22.7
2015-2016	20.3	19.3	20.1	17.3

In 2016-17 we rebuilt our budget and reporting systems. We hired more teachers, support staff, and student mental health workers for our schools. We believe that investments in people and capital are critical to the success of one of the fastest growing districts in the province and the country.

We are proud of the services and supports we provide to our families and staff, and we will continue to provide the highest quality of education for our families.

Attached is a financial summary of what our Board of Trustees has approved.

Yours in Catholic Education,

Michael Ouellette
Grande Prairie and District Catholic Schools
Board Chair



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Definitions

Investment in Capital Assets – This includes photocopiers, vehicles, buildings, computers, and other items the district has purchased and owns. It is not cash on hand.

Unrestricted Surplus – This is the actual amount of surplus on hand. These funds have not been allocated in any way at this time. At this time only \$353,733 is unallocated, not the perceived \$25 million.

Restricted Operating Reserves - These are surplus dollars that have already been allocated to a variety of operational areas but have not yet been spent. However, the Board of Trustees has approved these allocations through a formal motion.

Restricted Capital Reserves - These are surplus dollars that have already been allocated to capital projects but have not yet been spent. Again, the Board of Trustees has approved these allocations through a formal motion.



Investment in Capital Assets	\$ 12,353,064
Unrestricted Surplus	\$ 353,733
Restricted Operating Reserves	\$ 7,720,449
Restricted Capital Reserves	\$ 4,487,262
Total Accumulated Surplus	\$ 24,914,508

Investment in Capital Assets **\$ 12,353,064**

Unrestricted Surplus(1) **\$ 353,733**

Restricted Operating Reserves

Instruction

School SGF (School Trust Accounts)	\$ 1,527,957	
Mini-budgets	\$ 536,366	
Teacher PD	\$ 180,031	
JPII Staffing	\$ 715,000	
JPII Celtic	\$ 125,000	
JPII Library	\$ 100,000	
Theatre professional fees	\$ 628,870	
Faith Education Resources	\$ 199,225	
Photocopiers	\$ 115,000	
SPA Start Up F&E	\$ 250,000	
CIF Year 2	\$ 643,000	
		\$ 5,020,449

Operations & Maintenance

School Storage and Site improvements	\$ 475,000	
CKC Campus Stability	\$ 300,000	
MOT Second Floor Addition	\$ 150,000	
JPII Bleachers	\$ 125,000	
JPII Commercial Cooking Lab	\$ 650,000	
JPII Welding Lab	\$ 150,000	
Fleet vehicles	\$ 150,000	
		\$ 2,000,000

Board and System Admin

Facility and Code Upgrades	\$ 500,000	
		\$ 500,000

Transportation

School Bus	\$ 125,000	
		\$ 125,000

External Services

Playgrounds Resurfacing	\$ 75,000	
		\$ 75,000

TOTAL RESTRICTED OPERATING RESERVES **\$ 7,720,449**

Restricted Capital Reserves

Instruction

Operations & Maintenance

Balance Theatre Capital commitment	\$ 2,987,262	
Maintenance Shop (\$604,391 16-17)	\$ 1,500,000	
		\$ 4,487,262

Board & System Admin

Transportation

External Services

TOTAL RESTRICTED CAPITAL RESERVES **\$ 4,487,262**

TOTAL ACCUMULATED SURPLUS **\$ 24,914,508**

(1) ASBA/ASBOA Recommend 2.5% of budget (5 operational days) in Unrestricted Surplus (\$66,558,125 x 2.5% = \$1,663,953)