

Student Services Monitoring Report

Bob Vavra, Superintendent of Learning

Student Services supports students that need more than what the average classroom can provide. Most of these students have an Inclusion and Intervention Plan (IIP) that helps guide their learning. The IIP is developed in May or June for the next year and is created by support teams made up of school and division personnel, including student services teachers, teachers, coordinators, psychologists, speech language pathologists and occupational therapists. Support in transitions is also provided for students with high needs or exceptionalities who are moving from school to school, either within our division or coming in from outside of the division.



Chinook has 124 students receiving specialized supports in medical, safety, behavior, academic, speech and language, occupational therapy, or transition plans among other areas. Student Services Coordinators review all IIPs and ensure they are being implemented with fidelity in all schools. As successful students move out of IIPs, they progress to Individual Learner Profiles or classroom interventions. Intensive supports are also provided in the areas of Behaviour, Early Literacy and Early Math.

Chinook has Division Support Teams in the areas of anxiety, autism and behaviour. Coordinators lead planning groups to create teams to support schools in a nimble and effective manner. Braille support, training and specialized equipment is provided and low vision supports are implemented for students in the classroom and school.

Teacher Assistance Teams continue with coordinators and specialists available to support teachers with students that need more. There has been policy development in the areas of mental health, doctor's requests, restraining devices, tragic events, technology, specialized equipment and service dogs.

Violence Threat Risk Assessment training has been provided to all counselors and school administrators, with over 100 staff trained in Level 1 and 2 this spring. VTRA is a process that walks schools/teams through the appropriate response and supports in a violent and/or threatening situation. Non-Violent Crisis Intervention Training is also done with teachers and educational assistants every year.

COVID-19 Response

Supports for Schools and Parents

- Websites/resources
- Support Plans for Intensive Needs Students
- Online meetings with coordinators and specialists to assist with at home learning
- Process for planning for transitions

Supporting Students at Risk

- Counselor connections with at risk students

- The division has hired an additional 2.7 FTE to support the needs of students, with 1.2 from temporary Covid funding

Assessments

- Educational psychologist assessments at CEC
- Contracted additional assessments to deal with backlog

Speech and Language

- Gave teachers the tools to screen students for support
- Moved to doing blocks by video
- Some Face-to-Face with PPE

Occupational Therapy

- Focused on priorities for Face-to-Face
- Backlog due to Covid and maternity leave
- Some services picked up by Health (Physical Therapist)

Moving forward, supporting the Chinook Mental Health and Well-Being plan will be important particularly in the areas of counselling, supporting intensive needs students, and providing supports for staff and students. The division will be providing training to build capacity for student services teachers and school administrators to work with students that need additional support with more online specialized training.

We will continue to connect specialists to division initiatives such as mental health and well-being; as well as literacy, math and key outcomes. Mental Health First Aid training will be provided for one person in every school as a liaison to professional mental health supports.

The work of the Student Services department has become more systematic to support students that need it the most, and we will continue to adjust how we do things to utilize technology and reduce travel, moving to online support when possible. The division may still be working within COVID-19 parameters to start the year, so we must remain flexible. Chinook will continue to use a student-centred approach to work with students and families.

Chinook Board Approves Difficult Budget for 2021-2022



At the regular Board Meeting on Monday, June 14, 2021, the Chinook Board of Education approved a budget for the upcoming 2021-2022 school year, with the division facing a shortfall once again. Revenues from grants and other will be \$83.35M, which incorporates the \$481,795 additional revenue provided by the provincial government.

The total operational expenditures are \$90.26M, including salary increases and inflationary costs for insurance, fuel and utilities, resulting in a deficit of \$6.9M of which \$4.19M will be funded out of reserves to balance the cash budget. This draw on reserves will continue to reduce available resources in future years.

“This was a very difficult budget to approve, as evidenced by the Board’s divided vote,” said Board Chair, Kim Pridmore, “Drawing in excess of \$4M from unallocated reserves to balance the budget is just not sustainable. Chinook relies almost completely on provincial grants, which have not kept pace with increasing costs. The Board is gravely concerned that, without

significant new funding in future budgets, drastic expenditure cuts that will impact students in the classroom will be inevitable.”

An additional \$754,641 was included in expenditures for Chinook’s Learning Response plan, offset by restricted reserve funds. This funding will assist the division in addressing learning needs and supporting interventions, which have increased during the pandemic. *“We are thankful for the additional funds that we are able to use for interventions in September as part of the Learning Response, as well as for mental health supports,”* said Mark Benesh, Director of Education, *“This allows us to maintain and implement additional supports identified as needed in schools to offset the various impacts of COVID-19. We will continue to keep our focus on student learning along with supporting the health and safety of all students and staff.”*

Chief Financial Officer, Rod Quintin noted that the division received Preventative Maintenance and Repair (PMR) funding for the upkeep of facilities. *“On a more positive note, the provision of \$2.26M of Preventative Maintenance and Repair funding enables Chinook to keep our buildings in good condition,”* Rod stated, *“However this is offset by a roughly 16% shortfall in funding for the provision of student transportation services.”*

Rural school divisions like Chinook have high fixed costs that require sufficient and adequate resources to continue to deliver quality programming for students. Every year, Chinook conducts thorough reviews of programs, central office, personnel and supports with changes and efficiencies made to reduce expenditures where possible.

In addition to approving the 2021-2022 budget, the Board also passed a motion to request the Government of Saskatchewan to fully return and enable local school board taxing authority to Chinook School Division by the 2022-2023 school year. Chinook has experienced underfunding as a rural school division by the Government of Saskatchewan and has previously sought to address the funding formula inequities with the provincial government and the SSBA. The Chinook Board encourages all Saskatchewan School Boards to fully advocate for students and schools by passing similar motions.