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For Immediate Release

Prairie South Board of Education Maintains Prekindergarten Programs

The Prairie South School Division Board of Education maintained 10 prekindergarten programs in 7 communities at their meeting in Moose Jaw on May 2nd, 2017 by using surplus funds achieved through previous budget savings. Trustee Giselle Wilson spoke in favour of maintaining the programs at the meeting, but said that she understood the reasoning of other Trustees. "Prairie South has built a world class prekindergarten program, including an innovative move into rural magnet programs last fall," Wilson said. "I know that these programs are outside of the K-12 mandate for Prairie South School Division, and I understand the concerns raised around sustainability of funding programs outside of the operational budget." Wilson observed that there is a misalignment between outcomes in the Education Sector Strategic Plan (ESSP) and funding provided by the provincial government. "We have built an innovative system to meet the Early Learning Outcome in the ESSP," said Wilson. "It's a shame that our funding has been reduced to a level where we have to use surplus funds to provide this service for our children and families."

Director of Education Tony Baldwin observed that the decision to maintain prekindergarten programming was a difficult one for the Board of Education. "There isn't one Prairie South Trustee who doesn't believe in kids and families," Baldwin stated. "The challenge faced by the Board today was whether to maintain programming that is outside their mandate with funding that is intended for K-12 education." Baldwin went on to support the decision of the Board. "I have watched the Board as a whole and each of the Trustees wrestle with this decision over the past month, and I know that the vote was based on a thorough understanding of the situation; this is a good example of how the system is supposed to work."

Prairie South School Division received a 4.2% reduction in funding from the Ministry of Education for 2017-2018 in spite of an anticipated increase in enrolment.

The provincial budget was presented on March 22nd by Finance Minister Kevin Doherty.

For additional information, please contact Board Chair Dr. Shawn Davidson at (306)741-5588.