



**April 15, 2025**

**Press Release: 2025/2026 Swan Valley School Division Budget**

Over the past several years, Swan Valley School Division has been growing in terms of programming. This growth has been focused on providing a wide variety of programming for our children. An important consideration as it relates to programming decisions is funding. The Division is always striving to provide quality education on a cost-effective basis as well as pursuing additional sources of revenue where available.

Our kindergarten to grade 8 areas have added the Sensory Gym initiative which, up until June 2024, was funded by the Teachers' IDEA fund. All of our schools have added Therapeutic Classrooms and corresponding programming to support the development of positive social, emotional, and regulatory behaviors in our children. Swan Valley Regional Secondary School has added Motion Picture Arts, Carpentry, and Heavy-Duty Equipment Technician to its programming. The Northern Lights Institute of Trades and Technology was added to identify and address labour deficits in the trade area and to offer post-secondary training without residents having to leave the valley. This program was made possible by grant dollars from the Teachers' IDEA fund; which grant expires in June 2026.

When Jordan's Principle funding became available to provide one-on-one supports to some of the Division's most vulnerable learners and to provide outside services to address the assessment back log for speech pathology, occupational therapy, and psychology, the Division actively pursued these funds.

However, our current reality is that, while we have agreements for this school year, to date, we have only received one-tenth of the expected payments. As of April 4, 2025, we have received confirmation from Indigenous Services Canada that their commitments will be fulfilled for the remainder of this school year.

As a Division, we need to be responsive to the needs of the community, as well as forward planning to ensure the financial stability of the Division. Compared to many other school divisions in the Province, Swan Valley School Division has an above average percentage of students requiring extra social-emotional, academic and physical supports. We measure these needs via equity factors year to year.

The Division's perspective is that, while we have experienced overall slow enrollment growth, the number of students requiring additional / enhanced supports has increased at a faster pace; whereas, the Division feels that the provincial funding has not reflected our changing and increased programming needs. This factor has made this budgeting process all the more onerous.



In preparing for next year's budget, we have been advised that Jordan's Principle funding will be phased out after this school year for all public-school students. This is an approximate loss of funding of \$2,245,000 for the 2025/2026 school year. The Province of Manitoba has funded Swan Valley School Division approximately \$14,129,309, excluding the homeowners and farm land rebates, for the 2025/2026 school year. The approximation is due to the fact that some funding is dependent on the Division qualifying for various allocation, meaning that those dollars could be reduced to \$13,823,800.

Compared to the funds required to provide the services the Division needs to provide; this amounts to a \$4,347,335 budget shortfall for the 2025-2026 school year.

To offset the budget shortfall, the Division has worked to reduce our expenditures from \$28,797,703 to \$26,263,899 as part of the budget process. Reducing expenditures at a time of increase costs, including labour costs, has been a challenging endeavor.

This resulted in the special requirement amount, which is the dollars raised from our local municipalities, being increased by 10.02% to \$11,757,304. The board has now passed an approximate \$703,308 deficit budget for next school year.

In an effort to meet the needs of our students and budget restrictions, we have made a number of cuts in materials, consumables, and human resources. When our budget is comprised of approximately 19% consumables and 81% payroll, it is hard to make any meaningful progress, without reductions to our dedicated staff.

Next school year we will be reducing our educational assistant hours from approximately 575.5 hours to 408 hours per day. This is a reduction of approximately 28 staff members. The focus will be on allocating our limited resources to supporting our early years learners and our students requiring one-to-one supports.

Our teaching staff will be reduced by 8.5 full time equivalent (FTE) teachers, next school year. All of our schools, except for Taylor School, are seeing a reduction in teachers next school year. The reduction in teaching staff will include: reducing the Presence and Engagement Facilitator by half time, elimination of the half time Information and Communication Technology Facilitator, elimination of a full time Graphic Design teacher and program, elimination of our Sensory Gym program and Better Beginnings facilitator half time position, and a reduction of three quarters of a full-time equivalent teacher in our music programming.

Further, the S.V.R.S.S. will be eliminating one administrative secretary position. The Division will be reallocating the quarter time Workplace Health and Safety position into an existing role.

While we have been a leader in technology integration in the Province, we will be looking at reducing our 1:1 ratio of devices to students and reducing that department by one technician.

The continuation of a Therapeutic Classroom programming is something the Division believes all students need to have access to as part of our appropriate programming. Instead of attempting



to run two Developmental Education classrooms at Heyes School and Ecole Swan River South School, we are going to be staffing one classroom at Heyes School. We are moving the responsibility of our Better Beginnings programming to all schools that have a kindergarten program in an effort to revitalize this program and make early connections with our families that have preschool children.

In the future, we anticipate future budgets will be challenging due to contractual obligations with our employee groups and possible inflation in light of current trade politics. This predictability will provide the Division more time to properly review programing and collaborate with stakeholders on any programs or services that may have to be evaluated for sunseting. While we know that this process is emotional for all of us, we are hopeful that through dialogue, we can make decisions that best meet the needs of our Division and, most importantly, our children.