



March 13, 2025

### **SVSD and Jordan's Principle Memo**

Over the past several years, Swan Valley School Division has successfully secured funding from Jordan's Principle to cover the cost of educational assistant positions to support our Indigenous learners. We have also used these funds to provide programming and assessments under the domains of occupational therapy, speech language and psychology.

This school year Swan Valley School Division became aware that other school divisions in the nation announced the discontinuation of Jordan's Principle funding. While it is our understanding that some of these announcements were not based on formal notice from the Federal Government, Swan Valley School Division continued to monitor and lobby to maintain the necessary funding. Further, Swan Valley School Division became extra vigilant to the possibility of a funding discontinuation after the Federal Government announced in February of 2025, that the funding of educational assistant positions will be the responsibility of individual Provinces in the future. No information was provided as to the anticipated timing of the proposed funding changes.

Swan Valley School Division currently employs approximately 100 educational assistants, approximately two-thirds of whom are funded through Jordan's Principle service agreements. We have vigilantly lobbied Jordan's Principal and federal politicians to provide clarity on the deadline for the funding to be discontinued. It's unclear at this time if the Division will secure complete funding, partial funding, or will experience a significant reduction in funding.

The Division's information is preliminary, and the Division itself awaits further information. While the Division does not know the outcome or how it will impact staff, the Division felt compelled to notify the staff, students and the community at its earliest opportunity, that if funding is impacted it will result in layoffs.

The Division is committed to supporting our students by attempting to mitigate the impact of the above reduction in staffing. Swan Valley School Division is committed to the reallocation of resources to educational assistant positions and specialized programming services; internal training initiatives to support student social-emotional development (such as the roll out of Responsive Classrooms in all our kindergarten to grade 8 classrooms and the implementation of Dr. Elaine Cook's "Humanistic Approach" at Swan Valley Regional Secondary School next school year); renewed investment in supporting pre-school children and families via tying our Better Beginnings program to all schools that have kindergarten programs; and through targeted school improvement work focusing on literacy, numeracy, and wellness/mental health.

Swan Valley School Division can assure our families that each school will be working to reprioritize educational assistant and teacher supports to ensure we provide equitable and appropriate programming for our students.

While we understand that rumors and speculation regarding this loss of funding, and its impact on services to students and the employment of many dedicated staff have been circulating in the school community, Swan Valley School Division was waiting to provide any definitive information until we had

factual answers from Jordan's Principle and Indigenous Services Canada. At this point we still do not have that information and it is our understanding that decision sits currently in the office of the Deputy Minister of Indigenous Services Canada.

It is our goal to provide updates regarding divisional staffing and programming implications for the 2025/2026 school year.