

School Division – Financial Comparisons

The Beautiful Plains School Division will soon begin its budget deliberations for the 2014-15 school year. Decisions on staffing numbers, supply and equipment purchases, and major repair projects will be weighed against property tax increases once the province announces education funding for Beautiful Plains in late January 2014. One of the documents that the Board of Trustees reviews prior to Budget is the annual FRAME report. This report is a public document that provides detailed financial information from all of the school divisions in Manitoba.

The FRAME report provides financial data on Beautiful Plains spending and clearly identifies where the Division spends more or less than other school divisions and the provincial averages. For example, the Division annually spends an average of \$ 10,927 per student and the provincial average is \$ 11,841. The Pupil to Educator ratio is 13.4 compared to the 13.5 for the province and our rate of taxation (mill rate) is 14.8 compared to 15.3 mills provincially. Another example of information provided in the FRAME report is BPSD expenditures in Regular Instruction (close to 62% of overall spending) which is slightly more than the provincial average. Other functions such as Divisional Administration, Pupil Support Services, School Bus Transportation and Building/Grounds Maintenance all operate at a slightly lower than average cost per pupil compared to the provincial average. The one function that is some eight hundred per pupil dollars lower than the provincial average is Student Support Services. This is the area where all costs associated with Special Needs students are recorded. We know that Beautiful Plains has a lower incidence of Level II & III special needs students than many other divisions and if you examine the numbers further you will see our costs are similar to many divisions with similar demographics. Annual review of the FRAME numbers with the Board of Trustees results in a discussion of the level of services currently provided for all functions.

The FRAME report also includes revenue comparisons by Division. In Beautiful Plains the province provides on average \$ 7,125 per pupil annually. The provincial average is \$ 7,815.

Greater accountability and fiscal transparency for public entities is expected and the FRAME report can be a valuable resource for this purpose. The FRAME report can be found at:
http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/finance/frame_report/index.html

Watch for advertising for the Beautiful Plains 2014-15 Public Budget Consultation meetings in February 2014. Everyone is invited to attend these meetings.

Submitted by Bonnie Sneyzyk; Chair, Board of Trustees, Beautiful Plains S.D.