



## NEWS RELEASE

Tuesday, August 25, 2009

### Board of education passes 2009-10 operating budget

**SASKATOON, August 25, 2009** – The Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools Board of Education has approved a \$133.3-million operating budget for the 2009-10 school year.

The operating budget, based on a moderate enrolment increase, was passed at the Board's regular meeting on Monday. It maintains current staffing levels, program offerings and division facility maintenance.

"Ensuring we protect the number of classroom teachers is always a critical priority for our board. It obviously has a direct effect on the quality of education we offer our students and on their achievement," said Board Chair Diane Boyko.

This is the first operating budget trustees have passed since the provincial government's budget last spring, which introduced significant changes for education funding and the property tax system. The provincial government now determines the mill rates to be levied for publicly funded school divisions by setting province-wide tax rates for each of the three major property classes – residential, commercial and agricultural. Minority faith school boards like Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools retain their constitutional right to set a different rate, but if they choose to set a higher rate, any increased revenue will be subtracted from their provincial grant. If it is lower, the government will assume the board's funding requirements have decreased and it will adjust its grant accordingly.

The provincial government and school divisions are now working together to create the new formula used to calculate each school division's annual operating grant from the province. Having a grant structure that will see the provincial government fund the actual cost of educational programs and services is an important goal for Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools.

"It is critical that all school boards receive the resources they need to achieve the outcomes the provincial government has set out in the Continuous Improvement Framework," said Boyko.

The operating budget accommodates the construction of the new St. Mary Elementary School, Humboldt Collegiate in partnership with Horizon School Division, as well as the renovation of E.D. Feehan Catholic High School. There was no capital funding provided to renovate a number of schools that are facing critical space shortages or for new school construction to meet the increased growth of Saskatoon neighbourhoods.

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***Cont'd: Board of Education passes 2009-10 operating budget***

“Our board has several urgent projects in our Five-Year Capital Plan. We know students and families are disappointed that we are not able to move forward with these projects,” said Boyko. “We’ll continue to make a strong case to the provincial government that these facilities are a necessary investment in our young people.”

Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools has 45 schools and approximately 15,000 students in Saskatoon, Humboldt, Biggar and Viscount. We not only help students do their best in school, we show them how to reach out and make the world a better place. At Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools we are Rooted in Faith, Growing in Knowledge, Reaching Out to Transform the World.

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