



BRANDON SCHOOL DIVISION

MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES, THE BRANDON SCHOOL DIVISION, HELD IN THE J. L. MILNE BOARDROOM, ADMINISTRATION OFFICE, 1031 - 6TH STREET, BRANDON, MANITOBA AT 10:00 A.M., WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 25, 2026.

Trustees Present:

L. Ross, Chairperson	D. Ross, Vice-Chairperson
K. Carr	C. Ekenna
K. Fallis	S. Mozdzen
J. Murray	B. Sieklicki

Also Present:

- D. Labossiere, Secretary-Treasurer
- M. Gustafson, Superintendent/CEO
- S. Gilleshammer, Assistant Superintendent – Student Services
- J. Zilkey, Assistant Superintendent – Curriculum and HR
- J. McBeth, Executive Assistant
- T. Curtis, Communications Coordinator

Regrets:

- L. McConnell
- E. Jamora, Assistant Secretary-Treasurer

The Board met In-Camera from 9:03 a.m. to 10:01 a.m.

CALL:

The Chairperson called the meeting to order at 10:12 a.m. with a traditional heritage land acknowledgment and referred to the Call.

The meeting had been called for the purpose of considering the following:

- A. 2026-2027 Preliminary Budget Presentation
- B. Budget Deliberations for 2026-2027

Ms. Ross welcomed everyone to the meeting and provided opening remarks. She noted that this is one of the most important and challenging tasks that the Board does, and it is a process that they take very seriously. She indicated their goal is to try and find the balance between serving the students and staff while also taking into consideration the tax payers. She noted that coming into this budget this year, the Board is in better shape than many Divisions because of the actions the Board took last year. She reminded the Board that whatever they decide in this budget, has an impact on where the Board will start in the 2027 budget.

Mr. Gustafson also provided remarks. He noted that the approval of the annual operating budget is one of the Board's most important governance decisions. He indicated governance of the Brandon School Division is integral to the legal role of the Board of Trustees. The approval of the annual operating budget is one of the Board's most important governance decisions. The Board's Policy 15, "Fiscal Management," speaks to the Board's commitments, "The Board of Trustees commits to the fiscal stewardship of public funds in an ethical, effective, and prudent manner. This stewardship is characterized by open and transparent public reporting of all financial processes, results, matters, and related issues. This fiscal stewardship is grounded in the value of accountable democratic practice for wise use of the public's funds". Additionally, one of the Board's Governance Goals is to "Implement a multi-year budget strategy to plan for future sustainability and attempt to limit the school property tax impact on a typical home to the sum of inflationary pressures plus enrolment growth. Ability to achieve this goal is dependent upon provincial guidelines and funding support". He added that as an example, last year, the Board's budget deliberations resulted in a reduction of \$2.4 million in staffing to limit the tax increase to 6.78% and a 4.54% tax increase on the next year's budget. The Board took a multi-year approach with strategic prioritizations and anticipation of future salary costs. Without that approach and strategic reductions, the Board would have had an 8.86% tax increase last year with a starting tax increase of 6.94% this year and a shortfall of almost \$10 million. On behalf of the Division, he wished Trustees well in their deliberations and thanked them for their efforts.

A) 2026-2027 Preliminary Budget Presentation

Mr. Labossiere indicated that this presentation and corresponding document provides information for the Brandon School Division Board of Trustees regarding the 2026-2027 Operating Budget. He indicated the information provided is information on the budget development process, accumulated surplus and capital reserves, a review of the preliminary budget including revenues and expenditures, and budget requests. Furthermore, information is provided on special levy and the impact it has on total school taxes.

Mr. Labossiere noted that the objective of the Budget Deliberations meeting is to give tentative approval to the final budget. The local municipalities must be advised of the Division's Special Levy for 2026 on or before March 15, 2026. He added that the the 2026-2027 Preliminary Operating Budget has been prepared in accordance with Board Motion 64/2025 along with the funding received from the Provincial Government as communicated by the Education Funding Branch on February 11, 2026. He indicated that the budget requests brought forward by Trustees and Senior Administration are included in the "Budget Requests" section for Trustee consideration during budget deliberations. The budget requests are not included in the preliminary budget totals and would therefore be additions to the budget.

Mr. Labossiere advised that the Preliminary Budget reflects total operating expenditures and transfers of \$148 million for 2026-2027, an increase of \$7.4 million, of which 97.4% or \$7.2 million is for salaries and employee benefits. He indicated that the special requirement for 2026-2027 based on the expenditures recorded in the preliminary budget including the budget shortfall of \$2.4 million would increase by 4.05% to \$62,429,217.

Mr. Labossiere highlighted the factors impacting the budget considerations and details regarding the budget development process and the directions provided by the Board to Senior Administration. He reviewed how the Division compared to the Manitoba Provincial Average and similar divisions such as St. James and Seven Oaks using the 2024-2025 Provincial FRAME Budget Report. He spoke to enrolment and the development of the staffing budget. He provided detailed information regarding the current status of the accumulated surplus and the capital reserve accounts. He reviewed the changes in the revenue sources and expenditures and also reviewed inflationary increases built into budget.

Mr. Labossiere reviewed the special requirement, the effect of the school year budget on the special levy, and the budget requests. He provided two scenarios showing the school tax impact for the Preliminary Budget shortfall of \$2,429,708 and one showing the school tax impact for the Preliminary Budget shortfall and budget requests of \$4,019,270. For approximately every \$1,000,000 change in expenditures (1.67% special requirement), school taxes change by approximately 0.80% or \$15.25 annually for 2026 and 0.99% or \$19.80 annually for 2027.

Mr. Labossiere concluded that the 2026-2027 Operating Budget was now the Board's budget to deliberate and give tentative approval to the Operating Budget.

B) Budget Deliberations for 2026-2027

The Budget Requests recommended for consideration were presented as follows:

Budget Requests:

Senior Administration Requests	\$896,840
Trustee Requests	\$3,122,430
Total Budget Requests for 2026-2027:	\$4,019,270

The Budget Requests from Senior Administration and Trustee and Board Committees were discussed, with Trustees speaking for or against each recommended item with the following results:

a) Maintenance Workers (2.00 FTE) - \$133,110

Mr. Gustafson and Mr. Labossiere reviewed this Senior Administration budget request and the rationale for the request. Trustees asked questions for clarification and agreed unanimously to support this request, and to have it added to the budget.

b) Facility Maintenance and Adaptations - \$250,000

Mr. Gustafson reviewed this Senior Administration budget request and the rationale for the request. Trustees agreed unanimously to support this request and have added it to the budget. They also agreed to re-visit this request at the end to discuss increasing the amount.

- c) Carpenter (1.00 FTE) - \$100,260
Mr. Labossiere and Mr. Gustafson reviewed this Senior Administration budget request and the rationale for the request and answered Trustees questions. Trustees agreed unanimously to support this request, and to have it added to the budget.
- d) School Safety - Controlled/Monitored Access - Home School Liaisons (9.00 FTE) - \$302,150
Mr. Gustafson reviewed this Senior Administration budget request and the rationale for the request. Trustees asked questions for clarification and agreed unanimously to support this request, and to have it added to the budget. They also agreed to add an additional half hour to the supervision at lunch for K-8, to have a full one hour of lunch supervision for a total of 10.73 FTE, \$360,140.
- e) Security as a Service - \$111,320
Mr. Gustafson reviewed this Senior Administration budget request and the rationale for the request and answered Trustees questions. Mr. Labossiere indicated that Senior Administration received an updated quote for this request and that the amount has been reduced to, \$66,460. Trustees agreed (7-1 vote) to support this request, and to have it added to the budget in the amount of \$66,460.

A lunch break took place at 12:02 p.m., and the public portion of the meeting recommenced at 1:07 p.m.

- f) Add back teachers reduced in the 2025-2026 budget through the Pupil/Teacher ratio - (5 FTE) Grade 4-8, (10 FTE) Grades 9-12 (15.0 FTE) - \$1,575,750
Trustee Carr spoke to his Trustee budget request and indicated he would like to see the 15 teachers removed from last years budget, be added back gradually over 3 years. Trustees discussed this request and agreed unanimously to add 5 FTE, \$525,250, into the budget.
- g) Education Assistants - Change model used for EA Ratio (18.37 FTE) - \$616,680
Trustee Carr spoke to his Trustee budget request and indicated he would like to see this request added back into the budget gradually over 3 years. Mr. Labossiere answered Trustee questions. Trustees discussed this request and agreed unanimously to change the ratio to 1 EA for every 5.5 ratio teachers and to add 6.39 FTE, \$214,510, into the budget.
- h) Instructional Support - \$930,000
Trustee Carr spoke to his Trustee budget request and indicated he would like to see this request be added in over 3 years. Mr. Gustafson answered Trustee questions for clarification. Trustees discussed this request and agreed unanimously to add 1.5 FTE, \$157,580, into the budget.

After deliberating all 8 budget requests, the Board revisited the Facility Maintenance and Adaptations budget request of \$250,000 and unanimously agreed to increase it by \$25,000 for a total of \$275,000.

Mr. Labossiere provided the Board with the following tentative budget summary:

- Maintenance Workers (2.00 FTE) - \$133,110
- Facility Maintenance and Adaptations - \$275,000
- Carpenter (1.00 FTE) - \$100,260
- School Safety - Controlled/Monitored Access - Home School Liaisons (10.73 FTE) - \$360,140
- Security as a Service - \$66,460
- Add teachers (5 FTE) - \$525,250
- Education Assistants - Change model used for EA Ratio (6.39 FTE) - \$214,510
- Instructional Support (1.5 FTE) \$157,580

Total - \$1,832,310

Ms. Ross asked for an informal vote by show of hands, regarding the summary provided by Mr. Labossiere; the Board **AGREED** unanimously.

Mr. Labossiere further summarized the Boards decision. He stated that for 2026, school taxes would increase by 7.25% or \$138.49. He added that the starting point for 2027 would be 4.12% or \$84.39. He also indicated that after applying the Homeowners Affordability Tax Credit of \$1600, Net School taxes would increase by \$38.49 on an average single family principal residence valued at \$301,300 for 2026.

Ms. Ross thanked the Board and Senior Administration for their hard work and thanked everyone in attendance.

K. Fallis - K. Carr

That the Board do now adjourn at 2:51 p.m.

Carried

Chairperson (L. Ross)

Secretary-Treasurer (D. Labossiere)