



## Golden Hills School Division No. 75 Board of Trustees Advocacy Plan 2014/15

### Provincial Advocacy Priorities for Golden Hills School Division

**As a Board, the following points describe our beliefs around those points we wish to advocate as priorities to the province**

#### **For our students**

Programming which is delivered in response to our students choices and with the flexibility of our professionals building on the strengths inherent in the communities that populate Golden Hills.

- We believe dual credit programs are highly advantageous to students, support sustainability of rural schools, are highly cost effective provincially and should be expanded.
- Inclusive Education. Golden Hills is proud of the work it is doing to reach the needs of all students that come to us. This means for those students that have greater needs, our support of inclusive education also means the recognition of the need for additional funding support. SHIP funding is critical to the supports and program we offer for kids. Cuts in this area would have a profound impact on Golden Hills' students.
- Golden Hills is a "rural" jurisdiction and this brings with it strengths and challenges. The very real distances between family homes and schools means providing choice to these students also results in increased costs in bussing. Rural communities are very committed to education and opportunities for partnerships are strong.
- Golden Hills is known for innovative programs and innovative approaches to education. Flexibility for our staff working in international markets is necessary to continue the development of this program. Support for innovation and recognition of the global marketplace is critical jurisdictions that maintain operations outside Alberta.
- Smaller rural schools, including our 18 Hutterite schools, must utilize flexible and creative program scheduling and delivery methods. Success in our schools is built on the flexibility of our staff and the ability to work collaboratively in order that our efforts of our team of professional educators will bear fruit.

#### **For our students, we need good facilities that support an environment for learning**

Provincial government funding for the maintenance and updating of Golden Hills schools needs to be significantly increased to meet the provincial standard required for the age of our facilities.

- Provincial funding to maintain facilities is inadequate. As determined by Alberta Education, the backlog of deferred maintenance for Golden Hills Schools is estimated to be approximately 25 million dollars as of their most recent school reviews.

- Golden Hills has 8 regular schools (of a total of 22 regular schools) that are past their original design life cycle of 30 years (average age of those school is 42 years old). These remain unfunded for major renovations.
- In the past 20 years, Golden Hills has been funded for major renovations or “modernizing” (not to be confused with minor facelifts) of three schools. Rockyford, Three Hills and Drumheller Valley Secondary School (approved but yet to be done, Trochu Valley).
- Outstanding is the need for the solution for the students in the schools of East Wheatland, and the communities of Gleichen, Hussar, Rockyford and Standard.

Provincial government funding for new schools for Golden Hills is needed for Strathmore, where there is strong population growth with student numbers exceeding existing public school space. Prompt response is needed given current limited capacity and the time lag from approval to having needed additional space built.

- The only new public school built in Golden Hills since amalgamation in 1995 was Strathmore High School in 2000
- The provincial government has announced the phasing out of the funding for leasing of school facilities.
- Golden Hills has two alternative program schools operating in leased facilities. These are the Prairie Christian Academy in Three Hills and the Lutheran Christian Academy in Strathmore.
- Golden Hills has indicated a willingness to work with Alberta Education to develop a new replacement arrangement to address the phase out of the leasing program. In Three Hills, all parties recognize that it will also take replacement facilities to meet the needs of today’s students and that this need is immediate for the High School in particular.

#### **For our Team of professional educators and support people**

In order to attract the best and allow our professional staff the freedom to grow individually and as a staff we need:

- To provide preferred career opportunities
- To provide a collaborative and supportive learning community
- To reward innovation and celebrate success

#### **Over-arching belief of the Board of Golden Hills**

We believe the best people to establish local priorities, and to make choices for local communities and local stake holders, are local people. The current model, where the province collects all of the money and then makes all of the decisions on the level and the targeted disbursement of funds for education, removes the ability to make many of those local decisions. Provincial officials cannot be expected to know all of the local opportunities and strengths and resulting priorities any more than Federal officials would know better how to manage provincial or municipal affairs than these counterparts.

Along with the ability to establish and pursue local priorities goes the accountability to local stake holders. The Golden Hills School Board is fully prepared to be accountable to our Division community for decisions it would make with respect to locally developed and implemented priorities.

## Areas for discussion for 2014/2015

### Transportation:

- No increase in funding since diesel fuel was at \$.60/litre
- Cut in Fuel price subsidy in 2012/13
- With many small schools, it is more expensive to maintain the same level of service as Boards that bus to central locations
- Even after many changes and efficiency improvements, we have a \$300,000 shortfall in our funding

### Plant Operation and Maintenance (PO&M):

- Funded at ¼ of the industry standard
- Cut \$200,000 in 2013/14
- Have continued to reduce service and staff, as well as undertaken many other efficiencies, but expect a large shortfall in funding this year of approximately \$600,000

### Need a new K-9 school in Strathmore:

- Our schools are full
- We continue to grow
- We have run out of room to add modular on most sites
- We have 150 students currently in leased space in Strathmore and are not receiving adequate lease funding to meet our lease agreement

## Areas for discussion for 2015/2016

### Transportation:

- No increase in funding since diesel fuel was at \$.60/litre
- Cut in Fuel price subsidy in 2012/13
- With many small schools, it is more expensive to maintain the same level of service as Boards that bus to central locations
- Even after many changes and efficiency improvements, we have a \$300,000 shortfall in our funding

### Facilities, Plant Operation and Maintenance (PO&M):

- Funded at ¼ of the industry standard
- Cut \$200,000 in 2013/14
- Have continued to reduce service and staff, as well as undertaken many other efficiencies, but expect a large shortfall in funding this year of approximately \$600,000
- We continue to grow and have run out of room to add modulars on most sites
- We are beginning the design process for new school and rec facility in partnership with the Town of Strathmore and other partners (We have 200 students currently in leased space in Strathmore and are not receiving adequate lease funding to meet our lease agreement)

### Funding Framework Review:

- CEU funding provides support for personalized learning, local decision making, partnership and equitable programming opportunities for small high schools

### Bargaining

- There will be opportunities for discussion concerning new provincial bargaining framework