

the torch



RETSD Board of Trustees Approves 2026–27 Budget

On March 11, 2026, the River East Transcona School Division Board of Trustees unanimously approved a \$278.7 million budget for the 2026–27 school year. The revenue available for this year’s budget, including provincial funding, totals \$140.4 million, which leaves a difference of \$138.3 million that must be raised by increasing taxes to balance the budget.

The enhanced status quo budget passed by Trustees maintains the level of programs, programming, and services for students and staff based on a small, estimated increase in student enrolment for the 2026–27 school year. This budget includes increases for collectively bargained salaries, insurance costs, utilities, and statutory benefits. In addition, the budget will provide funding for improved safety measures related to school access, upgrades to cyber security, additional school-based student

services personnel, increased clinical supports, and unfunded items for the new school being built in the Devonshire area.

“Our community has entrusted us with delivering excellent public education while balancing the financial constraints on our taxpayers. The provincial funding did not cover even the basic expenditure increases such as utilities, insurance, and salaries,” said Trustee Colleen Carswell, Board Chair. “At one time, the government funded public education at 64 per cent; it has now dropped to 50 per cent.”

For 2026, RETSD has the lowest special levy increase for the six city school divisions and the second lowest increase to the average homeowner. The recently approved budget will result in a property tax increase of \$54.01, or \$4.50 a month, on the average home in our

community assessed at \$361,700; the mill rate will increase approximately 7.3 per cent in the City of Winnipeg. This amount includes the Homeowners Affordability Tax Credit announced by the province last year. This credit is applied directly to the property tax statement and only applies to a taxpayer’s principal residence. The credit has increased from \$1,500 to \$1,600 for 2026.

“The persistent lack of political will to make changes to the inequitable funding formula, which has been demonstrated to disadvantage RETSD, is why we find ourselves continually turning to the taxpayer to make up the shortfall,” said Trustee Brianne Goertzen, Chair of Finance, Facilities, Transportation, and Technology Committee.

Impact of taxes on homes in the City of Winnipeg portion of RETSD

School Division	Mill Rate Increase	Special Levy Increase	Impact on Average Home (annually) after HATC
Louis Riel	9.99%	11.79%	\$153.60
Pembina Trails	9.61%	11.7%	\$149
Winnipeg	9.32%	9.46%	\$66
St. James-Assiniboia	8.87%	9.83%	\$67.04
River East Transcona	7.3%	4.8%	\$54.01
Seven Oaks	2.36%	6.01%	\$25.32

- The average homeowner in RETSD, with a home valued at \$361,700, will see an increase in taxes of \$4.50 a month, before the Homeowners Affordability Tax Credit (HATC) rebate.
- For a principal residence valued under \$266,000, the taxes payable will be zero after the HATC rebate.
- For a principal residence valued at \$500,000, the taxes payable will be \$1,407.76 after the HATC rebate. This is approximately \$117 monthly.
- For a principal residence valued at \$1,000,000, the taxes payable will be \$4,415.51 after the HATC rebate. This is approximately \$368 monthly.



Fixed costs are increasing

- Insurance
- Utilities
- Technology
- Cyber security risks
- School Buses
- Fuel

“There are increased financial pressures related to tariffs and cyber security risks that we must take into account when building the budget,” said Elise Downey, Secretary-Treasurer/CFO. “These uncontrollable and unavoidable expenses must be incorporated into our planning.”

Keeping community informed

The Board of Trustees held two virtual Budget Meetings to provide information on the budget, to answer budget-related questions, and to solicit feedback from community members. The first meeting was held on January 29, 2026, and focused on the budget process and next steps of budget deliberations for the Board of Trustees.

The second follow-up meeting was held on March 5, 2026. This meeting provided more specific details on the budget and its impact on taxpayers.

In the spirit of open, transparent, and honest communication with our community, you can find the questions and responses from both meetings on our website. Below you will find one question from each meeting.

January 29 Virtual Budget Meeting

Q: *Why has it been so difficult to get a more equitable funding model?*

A: It requires political will to change the funding formula. The Board of Trustees has made numerous presentations to MLAs, both current and past, along with Ministers of Education and Early Childhood Learning. We remain committed to providing them with even more information, if they require it.

We implore the provincial government to review the funding formula to make it more equitable for all divisions in this province, but most notably for RETSD and our taxpayers in this vibrant, growing community.

March 5 Virtual Budget Meeting

Q: *Is there a specific dollar amount the division is asking the province for? And what would an equitable funding model look like?*

A: The amount of funding we require from the province is directly tied to the real increases in our operating costs. To maintain our current level of services—the “status quo” budget—we would need just over \$8 million in additional provincial funding. This year, we received just \$4 million, the same as last year, and \$4.2M less than two years ago. If we were to move beyond maintaining the status quo and enhance support for students, that number would increase to approximately \$10.4 million.

When we speak about an equitable funding model, we are referring to the need for the province to take its existing funding formula and distribute funds in a way that reflects the diverse and unique needs of all school divisions. For RETSD, equity means ensuring we receive the resources required to serve our students effectively based on enrolment, demographics, program needs, and the actual costs of educating the students in our community.

In short, an equitable model is not about every division receiving the same amount—it’s about ensuring every division is funded fairly, so all students, regardless of where they live, have access to high-quality learning opportunities.

To view the Q&A or PowerPoint from either meeting, scan the QR code.



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The Board of Trustees meets the first and third Tuesday of each month. You are welcome to attend, either in person or online. For more information about the Board of Trustees, visit: www.retsd.mb.ca > Your RETSD > Board of Trustees