



WINNIPEG SCHOOL DIVISION
INVESTING IN THE FUTURE

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NEWS RELEASE

Trustees release draft budget, sustain programs/services for students and minimize increase in education property tax

The Board of Trustees of the Winnipeg School Division has begun consultations on its draft budget for the 2010/2011 school year. The Board has succeeded in developing a draft budget that will sustain existing programs and services for students while minimizing the increase to education property taxes.

“Our Board believes that its draft budget strikes the right balance for parents and residents in our Division. It will meet the needs of students and will result in a 1.9 per cent increase in property taxes. We are mindful of the current challenges in the economy and the importance of preparing our students for the future,” said Kristine Barr, chair of the Finance/Personnel Committee.

This is the third consecutive year that the Division’s education property tax levy increase will be below 2%. Between 2003 and 2009, for an owner-occupied home assessed at the average of \$76,475, net school taxes have decreased by \$270.

“Despite increasing cost pressures in all categories of expenditures from water and heating costs to salaries and benefits, the overall increase in expenditures in the budget has been kept at 2.5%. The efforts to control costs and utilize resources efficiently are part of an on-going process,” said Ms. Barr. “The Minister of Education’s announcement of funding levels for the 2010/2011 school year has also assisted in keeping the tax levy below 2% and demonstrates the government’s commitment to investing in the future of students.”

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The 2010/2011 draft budget will sustain programs and services for students, but monies for new programs have not been added to the budget; if needed, they will be addressed through a reallocation within the existing budget. Provincial funding is budgeted to increase by 2.7%. The Board will continue to consult with stakeholders throughout February. Trustees will receive the feedback and have further discussions. The Division will make every effort to assist residents in understanding the property tax levy and the complex issue of the impact of reassessment.

Chair of the Board, Jackie Sneesby commented on feedback from a consultation meeting she attended last evening with parents from the South District: "The feedback we are receiving so far has been positive. People want to be better informed especially about the impact of reassessment and we're doing our best to assist them." Ms. Sneesby added: "Our Board remains committed to providing high quality education for students and building stronger children, families and communities."

The Division's budget must be finalized by March 15th.

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For more information:

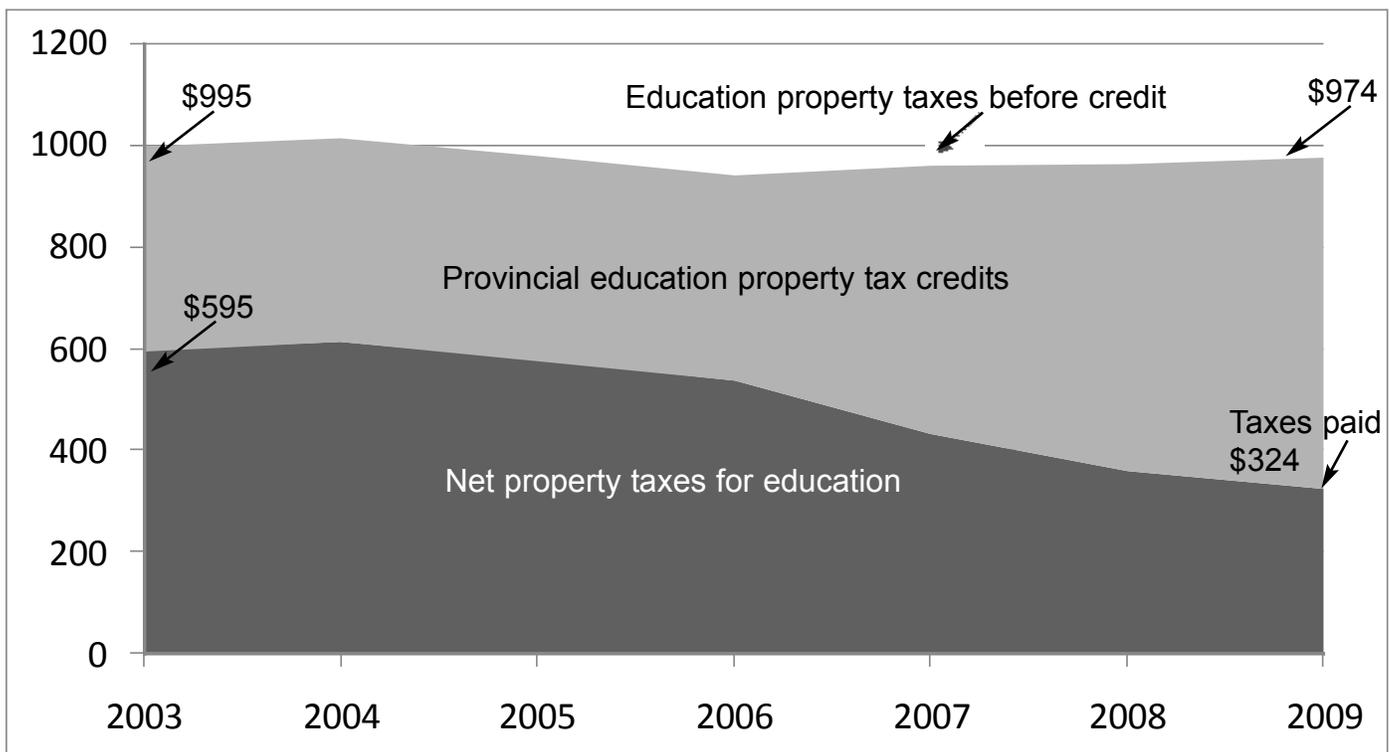
Linda Wilson, information officer, phone: 789-0412

Background information attached

Highlights

- Enrolment increase of 201 students for the 2009-10 school year
- 2010/2011 Draft Budget Expenditures: \$331.1 million

Winnipeg School Division Education Property Taxes



Cost control and expenditure reduction measures taken by the Board of Trustees of the Winnipeg School Division combined with the elimination of the Educational Support Levy, the increase in the Educational Property Tax Credit to homeowners and the Tax Incentive Grant from the Province have combined to mitigate or reduce the education property tax levy in the Winnipeg School Division. From 2003 to 2009, net school taxes on an average assessed home have decreased by \$271.

Based on the draft budget, the increase in the education property tax levy for 2010 will be 1.9%. The average home where the assessed value has increased by the average property reassessment of 73.6% will mean a \$19 increase.

Understanding the Impact of general reassessment of property:

The general reassessment conducted by the City of Winnipeg has resulted in an overall increase in property assessment of 73.6% for properties situated within the Division. The Board recognizes the challenges introduced by the unprecedented changes due to reassessment and the importance of taxpayers understanding the impact of reassessment on their particular property. The impact of reassessment on taxes for individual properties will depend on the increase on assessment for each property relative to the overall reassessment.

A property that has been reassessed by the City of Winnipeg whose assessed value has increased

- by 73.6% will see an increase of 1.9%
- by more than 73.6% will see an increase of greater than 1.9%
- by less than 73.6% will see an increase of less than 1.9% or possibly a decrease

from the 2009 amount, for the education component of property taxes.

The Division will make every effort to assist residents in understanding the issue of the impact of reassessment.

Guiding Principles for developing the budget

- Leading education and innovation
- Providing high quality education
- Educating the whole child
- Practising sustainable development
- Employing qualified, caring and competent staff
- Building stronger children, families and communities
- Ensuring safe learning environments in schools
- Managing tax dollars responsibly