

School Supply Committee Update

June 23, 2020



MEDICINE HAT PUBLIC SCHOOL DIVISION

History

- **Prior to 2017**

- The Division required that all full-time students paid \$100 to cover the cost of supplies provided by the Division, and for some extras such as field trips.
- Elementary students – all supplies were provided by the Division, students only had to show up with a backpack, shoes, etc.
- Secondary students – students were required to provide basic supplies; however, schools were able to keep optional course fees low as a result of the basic \$100 fee.

- **2016/2017**

- Alberta Education brought in new requirements through the School Fees Regulation that limited the Division's ability to charge fees for supplies and other items.
- A new free replacement grant of \$615,000 was created by AB Ed to offset the loss of fee revenue. The grant was the amount reported as fee revenue in the previous year's financial statements.

Budget 2020/21

- **2020/2021 Budget**

- The fee replacement grant of \$615,000 was eliminated by Alberta Education.
- Due to budget pressures, the Division made the decision to **no longer provide supplies to students** and reduce decentralized school budgets accordingly.
- One item that was considered was to charge parents on a cost recovery basis for a package of goods purchased (ex. Hand a package worth \$50 to a student on day 1 and charge them \$50); however, the experience with the \$100 fee prior to 2017, was that collection was difficult and very time consuming for these fees.
- Our neighbor jurisdictions have been requiring parents to provide supplies for several years.
- MHPSD will **require parents to provide school supplies** for 2020/21

Challenges

- We are expecting more of our families in a time that household financial situations are stressed.
- What if a family is unable to afford supplies?
 - There are amounts added into school decentralized budgets based on socioeconomic data by school for schools to purchase supplies for families that are unable to purchase supplies due to financial reasons.
- Not all students will have the same quality of materials.
- Staff pushback – Teachers prefer that all students have the exact same items available, so this will be a change for them as well.

What supplies will parents supply?

- What types of items will parents have to supply?
 - Pens, pencils, paper, whiteboard markers
 - Basic art supplies – crayons, pencil crayons, markers
 - Other consumable items – notebooks, scrap books, agendas
 - Other longer-term use items – scissors, geometry set, calculator, headphones
- What items will continue to be provided by the Division?
 - Enhanced art supplies – paints, clay
 - Specialty items – construction paper, printing paper
 - Technology devices

Next Steps

- A committee was created to work through how to roll out this change to schools and families.
- Committee members: Superintendent, Director of Finance, Communications Coordinator, Principals from DKSS and Ross Glen.
- Committee goals for the development of school supply lists:
 - Reasonability
 - Consistency
 - User Friendly

Supply Requirements

- Grade levels within a school will have the same supply list
 - Example: If a school has multiple grade 1 classes, they would all have the same required list.
- Price range for supplies by grade level

Grade Level	Approved \$ Range
ELP/K	\$40 - \$45
Grades 1 – 3	\$50 - \$55
Grades 4 – 6	\$55 - \$60

How to parents purchase the items?

- Option 1:** Schools will provide a list of items that families need to purchase at a vendor of their choice, or perhaps already have some of these items at home.

Dr Ken Sauer	SCHOOL STUDENT SUPPLY LIST (2020-							
	Grade Specific Items							
ITEM	ELP	K	1	2	3	4	5	6
Pens - Blue medium							2	2
Pencils (HB) 12/box			1	1	1	1	1	1
Erasers White		1	5	5	5	5	3	3
Glue Sticks - JUMBO	1	2	2	2	2	2	1	1
White glue - 118 ml	1	1	1					
Scissors 5" Blunt		1	1	1				
Scissors 5" Pointed					1	1	1	1
Ruler - Clear 12"/30 cm					1	1	1	1
Wax Crayons (24 pack)	1	1						
Pencil Crayons- (24 pack)			1	1	1	1	1	1
Whiteboard Markers thin (pkg of 4)			1	1	1	1		
Whiteboard Markers thick (pkg of 4)							1	1

How to parents purchase the items?

- **Option 2:**

- The Division is working with an Alberta company, School Start, to provide an online shopping option for our families, whereby they select their appropriate school and the appropriate grade, and it puts all the appropriate items as per the supply list in their online shopping basket.
- The prices are affordable and reasonable.
- Parents can do their school supply shopping in less than 10 minutes.
- School Start will donate \$5/kit purchased back to the school to be used towards additional student programming.
- Families have the option to donate \$5,\$10,\$15 back to their child's school to be used towards buying supplies for students that cannot afford it.

How to parents purchase the items?

- **Option 3:**

- The Division will be sharing the completed supply list by grade with Staples so they can have "kits" ready for families to purchase in-store if they choose.
- Families can walk in and walk out quickly knowing they have all the required items.

Did we meet our goals?

- Reasonability - **YES** - the package of goods required is affordable for families. Schools have funds allocated into budgets to provide supplies for families that are unable.
- Consistency – **YES** - The exact items may be different from one school to the next, but the overall cost and expectation will be the same between schools.
- User Friendly – **YES** – there are several options available to families.