

## Cornerstone COVID-19 Responses By The Numbers

September 16, 2020 Regular (Public) Meeting of the  
South East Cornerstone Public School Division (SECPSD) Board of Education



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### *Submitted by Norm Park, Contracted Reporter for SECPSD*

Financial figures, program deliveries, school and distance education numbers were a part of a September 16 school board meeting and media interview process for the South East Cornerstone Public School Division in Weyburn.

Prior to the start of the general business meeting, Lynn Little, director of education, and Shelley Toth, chief financial officer for the division, met with media to talk about financial relief packages that were being offered by the provincial and federal governments to help school divisions combat the COVID-19 virus on an ongoing basis.

The provincial government has provided a \$41 million relief package for Saskatchewan school divisions. The federal government has since added to that grant program.

“But first, we had to show them what savings we had due to the early shutdown in March,” said Little.

Toth said estimated savings due to COVID are \$2M which includes: \$1.1 million in sub salaries for teachers and school based staff; \$600,000 in transportation; \$264,000 in travel, PD and supply budgets; and \$76,000 in plant for water & electricity savings while the schools were closed.

Then the additional needs start accumulating with the current status of schools re-opening under new safety and health guidelines.

“We have increased our custodial staff by 25 per cent,” said Little. “This is to address the additional cleaning processes and is based on school enrolments and square footage.”

“That’s going to be an additional \$884,000,” said Toth.

A further \$364,000 was added for additional cleaning/sanitization supplies & equipment that will be needed for this year. The division’s Cyber Stone online learning system has increased its outreach to include Kindergarten to Grade 8 students, therefore a further expense for an additional 8.0 full time equivalent (FTE) teaching positions has been incurred.

Additional staffing to support 10, 20, 30 credit courses is being adjudicated dependent on enrolments. There has been a significant increase in students and thus they indicated increased staffing will be required.

This will come at a cost of about \$760,000, they said.

Additions for new technology materials to meet the growing demands for online learning, will come at a cost of about \$157,000.

“The offering is for full time, or just a few credit courses if they wish,” said Little.

Earlier in her report, Little noted that within the region 7,411 students engaged in supplemental learning in April following the school shut downs. At the conclusion of the school year at the end of June 5,792 students out of a potential 7,959 were still participating in supplemental learning. Since September 14, she said, 238 students were enrolled in Cyber Stone in grades Kindergarten to 9 and another 130 are enrolled in taking fully on line, the Grades 10 to 12 offerings. An additional 570 credit hours are also being distributed to 342 students at the Grade 10-12 levels. Home schooling enrolment is up to 279 now, an increase of 107 from June.

The applications for other online courses and credits are still coming in, said Toth, who added that Cornerstone would be eligible to reapply for further grant assistance, this time with federal funds being engaged. The deadline for this second application is December 1.

“We are not sure whether this will be a shared provincial and federal program moving on, but we will apply,” said Little.

Although a formal count of student enrolments in SECPSD is not to be taken until September 30, Little said the current count indicated a decrease in school population of about 100 compared with projections, but they are still tracking some of those students and families who may have moved while some may have moved to other education providers.

“The Ministry’s funding adjustment for actual enrolments will happen after September 30 and may not be completed until as late as mid-winter,” said Toth, reflecting on the new pressures being exerted on the administrations’ financial and logistics departments due to the pandemic.

Marilyn Yurkiw, from the division’s financial sector provided further details and financial breakdown numbers during her report to the trustees during the open business session.

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For more information, please contact:

**South East Cornerstone Public School Division**

80A-18<sup>th</sup> Street N.E., Weyburn, SK S4H 2W4

Telephone: (306) 848-0080

Website: [www.secpsd.ca](http://www.secpsd.ca)

Email: [contactus@secpsd.ca](mailto:contactus@secpsd.ca)