

# ***Education Today***

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## **School Staffing Policies (for publication during or after the week of March 30 – April 3, 2009)**

Sun West, like most school divisions across Saskatchewan, uses a staffing formula to determine annually how many teaching positions will be assigned to each school. The primary determinant in the staffing formula is school enrollment and put it the simplest terms, the more students a school has, the more teaching positions there will be in that school. School enrollments are not static and, so, the number of teaching positions is adjusted annually to reflect increases or decreases in enrollment.

The school staffing formula is reviewed annually with superintendents and school principals who advise the Director of Education and the Supervisor of Human Resources about potential adjustments. By January 31 each year, schools are required to provide the Division Office with their projected enrollment for the next school year including the number of children projected to enter Kindergarten in the upcoming fall. Kindergarten projections are based on figures provided by the Heartland Health District concerning births in each school's attendance area. The staffing formula is then applied to each school based on the January 31 and birth rate statistics to determine teacher allocations for each school.

Base staffing for each school is one full-time equivalent (FTE) teacher for every 18 students in grades 1-3 and one FTE teacher for every 22 students in grades 4-12. As Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten students do not attend school every day, a 0.5 FTE teacher is assigned for every 10-12 Pre-K students and 11-25 Kindergarten students. One FTE teacher is assigned if there are 26 or more Kindergarten students.

A school's base staffing can be further increased through a number of programming factors. Schools that offer a full grade K-12 program are provided

with an additional 1.75 FTE teacher, while those schools without a high school component (offering only middle years and/or elementary programs) receive 0.25 FTE for each multi-grading grouping (providing there are at least 3 grades) in their school. Additional recognition is provided to account for Special Education, Band programs, Technology Lead Teacher assignments, Career and Work Exploration programs/Career Development and school-based administrator assignments.

Once the staffing formula has determined a school staff allocation for the upcoming school year, Superintendents meet with Principals to discuss the school program plan based on staffing allocation. The school program plan is the framework for how the programming needs at each grade level will be met. Declining enrollment may result in a lower staff allocation, which may require multi-grade classes, while increasing enrollment may require additional staff. Even when overall enrollment in a school remains stable, some changes may be needed to account for factors such as a particularly large or small grade. It is the school-based administrators (Principals and Vice-Principals) in consultation with school staff and with the area Superintendent approval that determines class configuration and teaching assignments.

During these discussions it is very helpful when the school division is aware of the plans and wishes of teachers in each school. The number of teachers superannuating or planning to leave teaching, hoping for transfers elsewhere in the Division, seeking work in other divisions, wanting a change in teaching time or going on leaves impact the school division's ability to allow teachers to work where they would like to work. However, in the past, when teaching allocations have been reduced due to declining enrollments, Sun West has been able to find positions for all staff members who wished to continue working with the School Division.

It has not been the practice to reduce the number of teachers in a school when actual Fall enrollments turn out to be significantly less than the projections the staffing formula was based on. On the other hand, when there was a significant

positive difference in enrollment compared to projections, such as in the Fall of 2007-08, some schools received an increase in staffing. The improved economic conditions in Saskatchewan, including rural Saskatchewan, may lead some to believe that school enrollments will increase, however, even during 2007-08, overall enrollments declined compared to the previous year, although they did not decrease as much as projected. Lower enrollments are projected well into the future because of the trend towards smaller families, which are occurring in both rural and urban settings. The only parts of Canada that are experiencing higher enrollments are the areas where significant numbers of new Canadians are immigrating. Therefore, while the current economic conditions are positive and encouraging, they do not translate into increases in school enrollments.

If you have any questions about the school staffing formula or education in general in Sun West, please contact me at [info@sunwestsd.ca](mailto:info@sunwestsd.ca) or go to our website at [www.sunwestsd.ca](http://www.sunwestsd.ca) for more information.