



## NEWS RELEASE

### **Winnipeg School Division committed to public awareness – launches new online ‘budget simulation tool’**

**Feb. 8, 2016 (Winnipeg, MB)** – The Winnipeg School Division (WSD) is the first school division in Canada to offer an online budget simulation tool, aimed at raising understanding and awareness of how local education tax dollars are spent. The tool allows users to create and submit a simulated budget by adjusted expenditure and income items toward creating a balanced budget.

“Our first priority with the budget simulation tool is to help build awareness, but we are also interested to see how members of our community would prioritize dollars in their simulations,” said Trustee Chris Broughton, Chair of the WSD Finance Committee. “The submissions will show us some trends in priorities and also allows for additional comments that we may not get through our traditional online survey.”

Try out the online app linked from the Winnipeg School Division budget website: [winnipegsd.ca/budget](http://winnipegsd.ca/budget)

Users are encouraged to click on an information button for each expenditure grouping (the groupings are determined by the Manitoba Education Frame report) to learn about what is included in each budget item. For example, the largest expenditure is *Regular Instruction* – clicking on the information button (i) gives a level of detail about costs many people are interested in.

On the revenue side of the app, *Revenue from Taxation* has the only moveable bar, which has been set from minus \$10 million to plus \$10 million, allowing users a chance to see how that would affect their annual property tax bill (based on an average assessed home in Winnipeg School Division). Simulated budgets must balance within a plus or minus \$500,000 in order to be submitted.

“The simulation tool is an interactive way to engage our public stakeholders in the budget, which can be a fairly dry topic to many,” said Radean Carter, Public Relations Services. “Trustees wanted something easy to use and understand, that made appropriate use of the technology we have at our disposal.”

WSD was pleased to work with local web design and application programming specialists at Modern Earth Inc. to develop the application for the WSD Budget Simulation Tool.

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