

April 29, 2015

Dear Parents and Guardians,

By now, you may have heard about the difficult education budget that the Alberta Government has put forward for next year. We would like to share some information about how this budget will affect your children.

No funding for our growing student population

It's easy to see how fast Edmonton is growing. Over the past few years, this growth has led to a dramatic increase in our student population. By this September, we anticipate up to 3,000 more students will enter our schools. Normally, we would receive money for these new students, but not this year. Instead, this loss of funding will result in a \$17.7 million shortfall to hire the teachers, educational assistants, and other supports our students need. That's equivalent to about 100 classrooms full of students, with zero dollars to teach them.

With no funding for enrolment growth, we will have to stretch the money we receive from the government even further, meaning every child -- even your child -- will receive less.

We will have:

- the same number of teachers working with more students;
- some schools with larger classes; and
- Fewer resources and support for our children.

Cuts to children who need extra support

On top of no funding for enrolment growth, there will also be less funding for our most vulnerable students. Supports have been cut for First Nations, Metis and Inuit students, students who are learning English, students in need of specialized supports and services and our youngest children in early childhood programs.

What about our reserves?

You may have also heard that school districts have savings to help them through difficult times. These savings - which Alberta Education requires us to keep in reserve - represent a very small part of the funding it takes to run our school district.

To cope with this budget we will use our resources, including our reserves, to the extent we can. But this isn't a long-term solution. We need adequate, sustainable and predictable funding.

Get informed, take action

We want you to be informed about the provincial budget and the impact it will have on your children. Please take a look at the attached information. Share your concerns with friends and neighbours. Connect with your school principal to ask what they will do about the budget. Engage your government representatives and candidates about public education.

Together, we can give our students the support they need to experience success.

Sincerely,



Michael Janz
Board Chair