

Date	March 3, 2026
To	Board of Trustees
From	Ron Thompson, Superintendent of Schools
Subject	Approval of Class Size and Complexity Team Grant Funds Expenditure
Originator	Todd Burnstad, Chief Financial Officer and Kathy Muhlethaler, Assistant Superintendent
Reference	Board Policy CO.BP Fiscal Oversight and Accountability Board Policy CHA.BP Delegation of Authority

ISSUE

On February 12, 2026, the provincial government announced a \$143 million investment aimed at supporting Alberta's most complex classrooms. Edmonton Public Schools' share of this grant is \$30.3 million. Administration estimates the portion of this expenditure for the 2025-2026 school year will not exceed \$8.7 million.

Administration is requesting board approval for the expenditure of the grant in the 2025-2026 school year, in accordance with Board Policy [CHA.BP Delegation of Authority](#), which states that: *"The Board reserves to itself the authority to make decisions regarding new unanticipated expenditures that exceed \$1,200,000 and have not been accounted for in the current annual budget"*.

RECOMMENDATION

In accordance with Board Policy [CHA.BP Delegation of Authority](#), that the Board approves the Division to incur additional expenses during the 2025-2026 school year in support of the Class Size and Complexity Grant not to exceed \$8.7 million, knowing any unspent grant funds can be carried forward to the 2026-2027 school year.

BACKGROUND

In accordance with the *Education Act*, the Board is responsible to ensure effective stewardship of the Board's resources. [Board Policy CO.BP Fiscal Oversight and Accountability](#) provides direction for the Division in support of this responsibility, and includes direction:

- For the management of Division finances to be based on a foundation of integrity, prudence and public accountability.
- For the Board to approve:
 - The annual distribution of funds and any updates that are required throughout the year.
 - The annual operating budget and any expenditure of \$1.2 million or more that is not accounted for in the current year budget (in alignment with Board Policy [CHA.BP Delegation of Authority](#)).

The Class Size and Complexity Grant is intended to cover expenses that will be incurred in excess of the 2025-2026 approved operating budget. Even though these expenses will be offset by the grant, in compliance with Board Policy [CHA.BP Delegation of Authority](#), these need to be approved by the board.

Purpose of the Class Size and Complexity Grant

The Government of Alberta's Class Size and Complexity Grant funding is designed to address the increasing diversity of student needs, recognizing that classroom compositions have become more complex due to rapid growth and a wider range of academic, behavioral, social, and emotional requirements. The primary goal of this grant is to provide direct, in-class support to address the needs of students in Kindergarten to Grade 6 with the highest reported levels of complexity. This may include:

- Providing extra support for students who are learning English as an additional language
- Providing support to help calm students and manage emotions in a safe and supportive way
- Offering additional enrichment activities to extend and support coded students

Grant Expenditures

The Division's \$30.3 million allocation is designated to hire 101 complexity teams.

- Team Composition: Each team consists of one certificated teacher and two educational assistants (EAs), totalling 101 teachers and 202 EAs across the Division.
- Staffing Priorities: The Division must prioritize the hiring of teachers and EAs first.
- Flexible Funding: Any remaining funds can be utilized for additional specialized supports, such as occupational therapists and speech-language pathologists.
- Targeted Schools: While 101 of our schools have been initially identified for these teams based on high-priority metrics (class size, composition, and occurrence ratings), the Division has a total of 167 schools that offer K-6 programming.

The grant funds can be used for the duration of the current school year, with the balance intended to be used during the 2026-2027 school year. As this grant is intended to cover a total of 14 months of instruction. Administration prorated this to estimate approximately \$8.7 million for 2025-2026, leaving \$21.6 million for 2026-2027.

RELATED FACTS

Division Implementation Plan

A primary concern for the Division is the availability of qualified staff to fill these 303 new positions in a competitive labour market and at this time of the school year. To mitigate this, the provincial government allows for flexibility where, if recruitment challenges prevent full staffing this year, funding can be carried over into the 2026-2027 school year.

Furthermore, while 101 of our schools will be impacted by this provincial grant, the Division remains committed to supporting all students. As part of our comprehensive plan, we will continue to utilize the Equity Fund to enhance support, where needed, for the remaining elementary schools.

Reporting Requirements

The Division must adhere to specific provincial reporting timelines and requirements to demonstrate the impact on classroom complexity:

- March 2026 - Collection of baseline data via a survey to all school authorities
- June 2026 - Submission of Year-End Reporting
- Ongoing Monitoring - Reporting will continue through the 2026-2027 school year
- The 2025-2026 Funding Manual will be updated by the end of February to provide further details on these accountability requirements.

NEXT STEPS

Upon approval of the recommendation, the Division will move forward with the expenditure and implementation of the grant, in alignment with provincial requirements.

TB:ja