

*From Your  
Board of Trustees*



**CALGARY BOARD  
OF EDUCATION**

Dear Parents,

The true impact of a provincial budget on education is not measured in dollars. The impact will be measured by the negative effect it has on our students.

The Calgary Board of Education (CBE) is reacting to the latest provincial budget. In the midst of claims and counter claims about the government's commitment to education, here are the facts. The facts explain why the CBE is forecasting a \$61.7 million shortfall and the impact on more than 100,000 students in Calgary.

At the same time the budget "offers" \$28.3 million to cover contract increases that were negotiated by the provincial government, \$25.3 million is being taken away. Although some of the take-away is earmarked for specific programs, the cuts will affect students everywhere and in all programs. The budget gives to education with one hand and takes away with the other.

When the budget give-and-take is combined with a \$16.4 million carry-forward deficit and \$50.3 million of increased costs—including salaries, the result is devastating. The full financial impact of the provincial budget on the 2011-12 school year is estimated to be a \$61.7 million shortfall for the Calgary Board of Education alone.

To understand what this really means, consider more facts. The shortfall equates to six per cent of our budget, about \$600 per student or 600 employee positions. In theory, we could close the budget gap by increasing fees by \$600 for each and every student but we recognize that would be impossible. Another option is to reduce costs but that has its own challenges.

In a recent online survey, more than 1,455 people told us that class size should be the top budget priority for the CBE. When 77 cents of every education dollar represents people, it's impossible to absorb a budget impact of this magnitude and still maintain class sizes. It is impossible to make decisions about dollars without affecting people, especially students.

The Board of Trustees is counting on administration to build a balanced budget for the trustees to approve. Much work has been done already and the progress is significant. By recommending the

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redesign of centrally-managed programs and support services, administration has identified \$25 million to reduce costs. The impact of this includes cutting the equivalent of 172 full-time positions.

To fully close the budget gap, the Board expects administration will recommend that we apply \$12 million of reserve. Finally, as we promised to do last, schools will be asked to make cuts. The direct impact on schools is estimated to be about \$25 million. Every dollar the CBE spends supports education. The last dollars we cut are the closest to our students.

There is, as we all know, another way to close a budget gap: the government can restore funding. The Minister of Education engaged Albertans in a vision for education. We support that vision for its wisdom and relevance. Unfortunately, a vision cannot be fulfilled without predictable and adequate funding.

We cannot sustainably nourish the minds of our children without predictable and adequate funding. The provincial government can fix the problem by immediately restoring full funding for education. The benefits of this courageous action will not be measured in dollars, but by the positive impact on students. That too is a fact.

Respectfully,

The Board of Trustees of the Calgary Board of Education

Please contact your Trustee if you have questions, concerns or comments. You can also contact the Board of Trustees at [boardoftrustees@cbe.ab.ca](mailto:boardoftrustees@cbe.ab.ca) or 403-294-8487.

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