

public agenda

Regular Meeting of the Board of Trustees

February 23, 2021
12:00 p.m.

Microsoft Teams
Calgary, AB

R-1: Mission |

Each student, in keeping with their individual abilities and gifts, will complete high school with a foundation of learning necessary to thrive in life, work and continued learning.

Conflict of Interest reminder: Trustees must disclose any potential pecuniary interest in any matter before the Board of Trustees, as set forth in the agenda as well as any pecuniary interest in any contract before the Board requiring the Board's approval and/or ratification.

Time	Topic	Who	Policy Ref	Attachment
12:00 p.m.	1 Call to Order, National Anthem and Welcome			
	2 Consideration/Approval of Agenda		GC-2	
	3 Awards and Recognitions		GC-3	
	4 Results Focus			
	5 Operational Expectations			
	6 Public Comment [PDF] Requirements as outlined in Board Meeting Procedures		GC-3.2	
	7 Matters Reserved for Board Information		GC-3	
	7.1 CBE 2020-21 Incremental COVID-19 Costs	B. Grundy	OE-5, 7	Page 7-1
7.2 Shaping the Future of CBE High Schools	M. Martin-Esposito	R-1, OE-8	Page 7-6	
8 Matters Reserved for Board Decision	Board	GC-3		



Time	Topic	Who	Policy Ref	Attachment
	9 Consent Agenda	Board	GC-2.6	
	9.1 Items Provided for Board Decision			
	9.1.1 Meeting Minutes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular Meeting held January 12, 2021 • Regular Meeting held January 26, 2021 (THAT the Board approves the minutes of the Regular Meetings held January 12 and January 26 2021)			
	9.2 Items Provided for Board Information			
	9.2.1 Correspondence			
	10 In-Camera Session			
4:30 p.m.	11 Adjournment			
	Debrief	Trustees	GC-2.3	

Notice |

This public Board meeting will be recorded & posted online.
Media may also attend these meetings.
You may appear in media coverage.

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For questions or concerns, please contact:
Office of the Corporate Secretary at corpsec@cbe.ab.ca.

report to
Board of Trustees

CBE 2020-21 Incremental COVID-19 Costs

Date	February 23, 2021
Meeting Type	Regular Meeting, Public Agenda
To	Board of Trustees
From	Christopher Usih Chief Superintendent of Schools
Purpose	Information
Originator	Brad R. Grundy, Chief Financial Officer
Governance Policy Reference	Operational Expectations OE-5: Financial Planning OE-7: Communication With and Support for the Board
Resource Persons	Ed Sutlic, Director, Corporate Finance Tanya Scanga, Manager, Corporate Planning and Reporting

1 | Recommendation

This report is being provided for information to the Board. No decision is required at this time.

2 | Issue

The Board of Trustees requested information on the additional costs (incremental to budget 2020-21) to the CBE associated with managing the challenges of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

3 | Background

At the time the CBE prepared the 2020-21 budget there was great uncertainty related to how the 2020-21 school year would commence and unfold.

Accordingly, the CBE did not make any provisions in Budget 2020-21 for additional costs related to the COVID-19 pandemic. This position was consistent with other school jurisdictions in the province.

Nevertheless, the CBE did implement a number of prudent spending guidelines for the 2019-20 school year so as to be well positioned, both financially and organizationally, to address 2020-21 COVID-19 related challenges and costs.

4 | Analysis

The Alberta Government made the decision to commence the 2020-21 school year under what was called Scenario 1. Scenario 1 is described as "...near normal operations with health measures in place." That decision provided the CBE with key information necessary to generate a reasonable school re-entry plan. All school jurisdictions in Alberta are operating under Scenario 1 at this time.

In alignment with the CBE's school re-entry plan, this forecast considers the need to provide students with teaching and learning resources through an on-line environment in addition of in-person learning. Within the CBE, the on-line learning environment is called the HUB.

With guidance (COVID-19 Information: Guidance for schools for re-entry Scenario 1) from Alberta Health Services and the Chief Medical Officer of Health, the CBE determined how the school environment would need to be configured to support students and staff safety.

As of the end of January, the CBE has additional information that allows for a refined COVID-19 cost estimate. That estimate is included in Appendix I and totals \$45.740 million (\$46.85 million – Nov 2020).

Note, the COVID-19 pandemic is very dynamic. Circumstances and situations can change and evolve, often very quickly. For example, newly emerging variants of the COVID-19 virus may further complicate teaching and learning practices over the remainder of the 2020-21 school year.

The most significant cost categories include, but are not limited to:

- **Certificated Staff** – provision for an additional 170 certificated staff to address learning needs within the HUB model for the 14,400 enrolled students in Semester 2 (18,000 – Semester 1) and to balance workload with in-person learning staff. Adjustments have been made to the HUB model's certificated staffing levels in response to approximately 3,400 students returning to in-person learning.
- **Substitute Teachers** – provision for additional substitute teachers given the increased number of certificated staff and the realities of conducting school operations within a COVID-19 environment.
- **Cleaning Staff** – provision for up to 240 more cleaning staff to address Alberta Health Services and Chief Medical Officer of Health guidance.

- **Sick Leave** – provision for increased sick leave use by non-certificated staff.
- **Equipment and Supplies** – provision for equipment and supplies including cleaning supplies (custodial), hand soap, hand sanitizer, antiseptic wipes, and personal protective equipment (masks, gloves, face shields, etc.), and related equipment (electrostatic cleaners, hand sanitizer dispensers, Plexiglas barriers, etc.)
- **Capital Equipment** – purchase of additional laptops to be used for students and staff during periods of remote learning as required by Alberta Health Services.

Again, readers are cautioned that the COVID-19 pandemic is highly dynamic. Responding to the evolving situation can, and will, materially impact the forecast presented with this report.

5 | Financial Impact

As noted above, the current forecast for COVID-19 costs is \$45.740 million. Offsetting those additional costs was a forecasted revenue increase of \$44.484 million for funding provided through Alberta Education by the Federal Government. In early February, an additional \$1.2 million was provided bringing the total Safe Return to Schools funding to \$45.684 million. As a result of the increased funding, the budget pressure has been relieved.

Given that the COVID-19 situation is rapidly evolving it is recommended that the budget pressure be seen as a minimum rather than a maximum. CBE administration will update this forecast in late April/early May after another quarter of the school year takes place and the 2021-22 budget deliberations near completion.

Although the Federal and Provincial governments are indicating that all Canadians who choose to be vaccinated will be vaccinated by the Fall of 2021, it is anticipated that COVID-19 will remain a cost consideration for the 2021-22 school year. CBE administration will provide further information on anticipated 2021-22 COVID-19 costs in the April/early May COVID-19 cost update.

The CBE is working to manage these costs against the 2020-21 budget allocation. For example, the CBE is maintaining a range of prudent spending measures to ensure that resources are available to keep students and staff safe.

Should costs increase materially, CBE administration will seek access to available for use operating reserves to cover any unaddressed budget pressure. Access to reserves requires both Board of Trustees and Minister approval. Operating reserves are approximately 3% of prior year total expenditures or \$41.5 million.

CBE administration continues to monitor the situation closely with a focus on the safety, health and security of students and staff.

6 | Conclusion

The serious and dynamic nature of the COVID-19 pandemic is impacting school operations. Costs are forecast to increase by more than 3% of total annual expenditures to the date of this report.

While currently forecast costs of \$45.740 million are manageable in light of the \$45.684 million in allocated Federal funding, the evolving nature of the pandemic may dramatically change the costs in a relatively short period of time.

CBE administration continues to monitor the situation closely and will provide an updated forecast in late April/early May in preparation of budget deliberations.



CHRISTOPHER USIH
CHIEF SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

APPENDICES

Appendix I: CBE 2020-21 Incremental COVID-19 Costs

GLOSSARY – Developed by the Board of Trustees

Board: Board of Trustees

Governance Culture: The Board defined its own work and how it will be carried out. These policies clearly state the expectations the Board has for individual and collective behaviour.

Board/Chief Superintendent Relationship: The Board defined in policy how authority is delegated to its only point of connection – the Chief Superintendent – and how the Chief Superintendent's performance will be evaluated.

Operational Expectations: These policies define both the nonnegotiable expectations and the clear boundaries within which the Chief Superintendent and staff must operate. They articulate the actions and decisions the Board would find either absolutely necessary or totally unacceptable.

Results: These are our statements of outcomes for each student in our district. The Results policies become the Chief Superintendent's and the organization's performance targets and form the basis for judging organization and Chief Superintendent performance.

CBE 2020-21 Incremental COVID-19 Costs

	End of year Projections	Trend
HUB		
Current	\$ 17,500,000	-
Subtotal	\$ 17,500,000	
Cleaning Staff	\$ -	
Overtime	\$ 2,870,000	▲
Temporary Cleaners	\$ 4,310,000	▲
Subtotal	\$ 7,180,000	
Substitutes	\$ 4,830,000	▲
Non-certificated staff	\$ 920,000	▲
Cleaning Supplies/ PPE	\$ 7,450,000	-
Student Supplies	\$ 900,000	-
Capital Equipment	\$ 4,000,000	-
Certificated Positions Assisting with COVID	\$ 840,000	▲
Facilities HVAC costs	\$ 580,000	-
Summer school	\$ 640,000	-
Transportation - Additional cleaning costs	\$ 900,000	-
Total	\$ 45,740,000	
Anticipated federal funding	\$ 45,684,000	

▲ Indicates costs likely to increase if COVID-19 infection rates continue to increase through 2020-21 school year

report to Board of Trustees

Shaping the Future of CBE High Schools

Date	February 23, 2021
Meeting Type	Regular Meeting, Public Agenda
To	Board of Trustees
From	Christopher Usih Chief Superintendent of Schools
Purpose	Information
Originator	Darlene Unruh, Acting Superintendent, School Improvement
Governance Policy Reference	OE-8: Communicating and Engaging with the Public
Resource Person(s)	Dany Breton, Superintendent, Facilities and Environmental Services Joanne Pitman, Superintendent, School Improvement Marla Martin-Esposito, Chief Communications Officer Karen Drummond, Manager, Community Engagement

1 | Recommendation

This report is being provided for information to the Board. No decision is required at this time.

2 | Issue

The CBE launched a community engagement initiative in May 2019 entitled: Shaping the Future of CBE High Schools. At that time, a detailed engagement plan/roadmap (was developed in alignment with the CBE's Dialogue Framework) and posted on our website. Through this engagement, we committed to the following:



By fall 2021, the CBE will communicate a sustainable system-wide plan for high schools that continues to offer students access, flexibility and choice in programming given available space and resources. The plan will be developed through consultation with affected students, staff, parents and community members, with full implementation of the plan beginning in 2022-2023.

Starting on February 23, we are launching the next phase of active engagement. This phase will be focused on gathering feedback on two possible scenarios for balancing enrolment at CBE high schools. The input gathered on the in-scope factors (boundaries, expansion or contraction of programs, grade configuration and implementation) in fall 2019 informed the development of the scenarios. Feedback gathered on scenarios will, in turn, inform the development of the proposed plan that will be shared by December 2021.

3 | Background

The CBE conducted school engagements in the 2017-18 (Areas 6 & 7) and 2016-17 (Areas 1, 2 & 5) school years for elementary and junior high/middle schools impacted by new school openings in those Areas. High schools were not included in these community engagement initiatives as it was determined at that time that it would be more appropriate to consider all high schools together as a group in making decisions that could affect programming and use of learning spaces at individual schools.

Three new high schools have opened in the past seven years (Robert Thirsk, Nelson Mandela and Joane Cardinal-Schubert) and a fourth new high school in the north of the city is currently under construction; these openings have and will result in lower student numbers in other high schools. The significant difference in enrolment numbers and utilization rates at high schools can create challenges in providing access, flexibility and choice to all students. In schools with small student populations it may not be possible to offer the same range of complementary/option courses and extracurricular activities as in larger schools. Conversely, schools with large student populations may be limited by space constraints in what they can offer. The CBE is committed to providing similar access to learning opportunities for all our high school students in keeping with the expectations of Alberta Education and the CBE High School Success Strategy.

In May 2019, the CBE launched the Shaping the Future of CBE High Schools engagement. An engagement plan (or roadmap) was shared at that time, outlining the decision to be made, what will be considered as part of the decision, what factors are out of scope, key dates, and other key considerations. The roadmap has been updated along the way and is posted on our website.

The current timeline for gathering input and feedback on possibilities is outlined below. The timeline has been adjusted during the process to respond to system priorities. We have remained committed to making a decision in the fall of 2021 so students and families can make decisions in advance of the following school year.

The current timeline is:

Phase 1: Engagement Design	Sept. 2018 – April 2019
Phase 2: Awareness & Education	May 2019
Phase 3: Active Engagement, In-Scope Aspects	May – Oct. 2019
Phase 4: Input Analysis & Scenarios Developed	Nov. 2019 – Jan. 2021
Phase 5: Active engagement, Scenarios	Feb. – March 2021
Phase 6: Feedback Analysis & Proposed Plan Created	April – May 2021

Phase 7: Active Engagement on Proposed Plan
Phase 8: Feedback Analysis
Phase 9: Communicate Decision

June - September 2021
Oct. – Nov. 2021
By December 2021

The process includes three key phases of active engagement, with each phase building on the previous one. The input gathered on the in-scope factors (boundaries, expansion or contraction of programs, grade configuration and implementation) in fall 2019 has informed the development of the scenarios. Feedback gathered on scenarios will, in turn, inform the development of the proposed plan.

We have invested significant resources to support this engagement process. The CBE struck a cross-functional high school engagement planning team in 2019 made up of staff from Communications and Engagement Services, Facilities and Environmental Services (Planning), and School Improvement. This team meets regularly to work through all the various aspects of this engagement and work to improve other processes and policies that have an impact on balancing enrolment and providing all students with quality learning opportunities.

A high school engagement advisory group was established, which includes staff, students and parents; this group meets at key points along the way. Toolkits have also been developed for schools to share information with students, parents and staff. There have been regular meetings with Superintendents' Team, principals and education directors to discuss this initiative. In addition, we provide ongoing updates to the Board of Trustees and provide opportunities to share thoughts and perspectives.

Further information about the high school engagement can be found on the CBE website at cbe.ab.ca/highschoolengagement.

4 | Analysis

There was much to consider in developing two possible scenarios to balance enrolment at CBE high schools. This work was focused on developing a sustainable system-wide plan for high schools that continues to offer students access, flexibility and choice in programming given available space and resources. We know we have a diverse student population and that perspectives and priorities differ from family to family. The scenarios needed to reflect this diversity but they also reflect some of what we share in common.

To develop the scenarios, we were guided by the following:

- CBE values: students come first, learning is our central purpose and public education serves the common good.
- CBE planning principles:
 - minimize disruptions for students
 - provide program continuity from kindergarten to Grade 12
 - keep cohort groups of students together
 - allow students to attend school as close to home as possible
 - provide long term sustainability
 - use space and resources effectively
 - provide equitable access for all students to quality learning environments and choice of programs
- Input provided by families, students and staff through the engagement process in fall 2019.

Common themes emerged from the fall 2019 feedback :

- Make sure all high schools offer quality learning opportunities.

- Keep Grades 10-12 in all high schools (except Queen Elizabeth High School, which is currently 7-12).
- Schools should be easy to get to or close to home.
- Transportation impacts opportunities for students.

To develop the scenarios, education directors, other CBE leaders and a group of principals came together in late fall 2019 to review the detailed feedback gathered and establish some guidelines that would influence how scenarios were constructed. These guidelines were applied to the scenario development sessions that later took place in early 2020 with all education directors and members of the high school engagement planning team.

In addition to considering the fall 2019 input and the CBE values and planning principles, discussions and choices were guided by the following: providing access, flexibility and choice for students; available space and resources; sustainability; and the importance of providing quality learning opportunities in a cost-effective way. The significant work accomplished related to the Ministerial Order has reinforced the importance of making changes to ensure the sustainability of supports and services for students within the resources available.

The scenarios were not arrived at easily. They are the result of intense debate, lively discussion and thoughtful consideration. It is a balancing act to arrive at scenarios that consider all the factors and provide equitable learning opportunities across the system.

It was a complex undertaking to develop two scenarios that provide quality learning opportunities that allow students to meet the requirements to complete high school. It was important that each scenario:

1. Provides a more equitable learning experience for all high school students.
2. Maintains a regular program at every high school.
3. Allows for alternative programs and academic enrichment when possible.

Offering students an equitable learning experience will be accomplished in a variety of ways:

- Providing similar class sizes across programs.
- Enabling student access to a range of programming within the regular program across the system.
- Managing the physical spaces of buildings in a way that avoids overcrowding and limitations on scheduling classes.
- Programming for a small percentage of students in a way that does not have a significant impact on learning opportunities for the whole.
- Ensuring all students have the opportunity to complete high school.

In late January 2021, we provided high school principals access to all the public materials. This gave them time to review the materials with their assistant principals and discuss the scenario details with education directors and members of the high school engagement planning team. Based on feedback, we made adjustments to materials prior to the public launch on February 23, 2021.

School administrators have been provided with various materials to help them understand the scenarios and support their families and staff with their questions and concerns. High-level information has also been created about the scenarios overall as well as school-specific data and information.

We have developed information in a variety of formats - interactive, digital form and in printable formats. It is important that participants be informed about the scenarios prior to providing their feedback. Materials provided include:

- Video - high level scenario information
- Printable scenario overview - more scenario details and rationale than video
- Story Map - most comprehensive scenario information (maps, projections etc.)
- Printable PDFs of enrolment projections and maps
- Printable infographic heat maps that show utilization rates across high schools

Principals, education directors, trustees, superintendents and other CBE leaders had the opportunity to review the materials and offer feedback. The feedback gathered was considered in all the materials that will be released publicly on February 23, 2021.

Participation is only meaningful for people if they have all the information they need. That is why we have developed a variety of materials. Participants can choose to go through all the materials for all schools or focus in on key schools they are most interested in for providing feedback.

We have also developed a comprehensive engagement strategy for this phase of active engagement to provide people with a variety of ways to participate. We have adapted our engagement tactics to work virtually since in-person sessions are not an option. In addition to all the materials listed above that will be available on our website, families, staff and students will be able to share their feedback through virtual sessions, online idea boards and online surveys. These opportunities allow participants to share their feedback in different ways, as follows:

- Virtual sessions: there are four sessions for parents and the public (March 2, 4, 8, 10) and two sessions for staff (March 3 and 12). In advance of the sessions, participants can identify the questions they are hoping to have answered at the sessions. This will allow us to tailor the presentation to address top questions.
- Online idea boards: there are online idea boards available March 1 – 12 for parents and the public to share questions and comments. There are eight boards organized by program (academic enrichment, Arts-Centred Learning, French Immersion, Spanish Bilingual, and four regular program boards organized by geographic school groupings).
- Online surveys: there are three separate surveys - one for students, one for staff and one for parents and the public. Questions will address the scenarios overall as well as school-specific aspects. All questions will provide participants with the opportunity to choose the response they feel is appropriate from a list of options. Open-ended comments can be provided through the online idea boards, rather than on the surveys.

As outlined in the timeline above, all the feedback gathered on the two scenarios will be evaluated as we develop the proposed plan. Families, students and staff will have an opportunity to provide feedback on proposed plan and a decision will be communicated by December 2021. The proposed plan could be either Scenario 1, Scenario 2 or a blend of both (where feasible). The proposed plan will not introduce any new possibilities not identified in the two scenarios.

5 | Financial Impact

While student learning is at the centre of all the decisions we make, it is also important that we provide quality learning opportunities in a way that is fiscally responsible and sustainable.

There will be some short-term costs for moving and phasing out programs over two years at school locations. In instances where programs may move locations, phasing out would permit students to complete the program at the school location where they started. We will provide program phase-out to students where costs and resources allow in order to

minimize disruptions for families. A minimum number of students will be required in some instances for this to be possible.

By balancing high school utilization within the 85 to 100 per cent range for more high schools, the amount of operating and maintenance funding derived from the government can be maximized and funding for schools can be more evenly distributed and greater equity is possible across our system. The scenarios we have developed help to balance the utilization at our high schools.

The engagement process has been managed with in-house resources. It has been led by an internal team including representatives from School Improvement, Planning, and Communication and Engagement Services. The team has reached out and collaborated with others across all service units and with external experts throughout the process so far and will continue to do so until a decision has been communicated.

Both high school scenarios provide long-term cost savings that far outweigh any short-term costs we may incur.

6 | Implementation Consequences

We have three possibilities for the proposed plan for CBE high schools, which will be developed considering feedback on the two high school scenarios:

1. Scenario A is chosen for the proposed plan.
2. Scenario B is chosen for the proposed plan.
3. A blend of elements from Scenario A and from Scenario B, where they can co-exist together, form the proposed plan.

For any of these three options, we are confident the scenarios provide strong learning opportunities for high school students into the future.

The decision will be made by December 2021 with implementation of any changes happening beginning in the 2022-23 school year. We are committed to working with families to ensure this is as smooth a transition as possible.

7 | Conclusion

We have created a number of opportunities for students, staff, parents and community members to share their perspectives on the scenarios. The high school scenarios developed have considered input we have gathered, our CBE values, planning principles and other factors. The scenarios reflect a responsible and sustainable approach to allocating resources where they will have the most positive impact for students overall. They also provide a more equitable learning experience for all high school students into the future.

The feedback gathered will be evaluated, a proposed plan will then be developed for further feedback and a decision will be communicated by December 2021.



CHRISTOPHER USIH
CHIEF SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

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**report to
Board of Trustees**

Correspondence

Date	February 23, 2021
Meeting Type	Regular Meeting, Public Agenda
To	Board of Trustees
From	Patricia Minor, Corporate Secretary
Purpose	Information
Governance Policy Reference	Operational Expectations OE-7: Communication With and Support for the Board

1 | Recommendation

This report is being provided for the information of the Board.

2 | Background

The following is a summary of the correspondence provided to the Board:

- Letter dated December 21, 2020 to The Hon. A. LaGrange, Education Minister re: COVID impacts on Weighted Moving Average Funding.
- Letter dated February 3, 2021 from The Hon. A. LaGrange, Education Minister re: COVID impacts on Weighted Moving Average Funding.

Attachments: Relevant Correspondence





Board Chair

Marilyn Dennis Wards 5 & 10

Vice-Chair

Althea Adams Wards 3 & 4

Trustees

Trina Hurdman Wards 1 & 2

Board of Trustees Wards 6 & 7

Richard Hehr Wards 8 & 9

Julie Hrdlicka Wards 11 & 13

Mike Bradshaw Wards 12 & 14

December 21, 2020

Honourable Adriana LaGrange

Minister of Education

10800 – 97 Avenue

Edmonton, AB T5K 2B6

Dear Minister LaGrange:

Re: COVID impacts on Weighted Moving Average Funding

On behalf of the Calgary Board of Education’s Board of Trustees, I would like to thank you for your ministry’s efforts over the past number of months in support of all school boards to ensure a safe return to school for students and staff in the face of this unprecedented global pandemic.

As the CBE navigates through these extraordinary times there is growing concern over the potential impact of some aspects of the weighted moving average mechanism (the WMA) within the Funding and Assurance Framework (the Framework). Specifically, the CBE is concerned that anomalous changes in student enrolment for the 2020-21 school year, due almost entirely to the COVID-19 global pandemic, will negatively impact funding allocations for the 2021-22 and 2022-23 school years.

Background

The CBE, like many school jurisdictions across Alberta, saw an unanticipated drop in year over year enrolment. For the CBE, actual enrolment came in 4,838 below the projected enrolment provided to Alberta Education. Until that time, the CBE has experienced more than a decade of continuous growth of between one and three percent.

In discussions with Alberta Education staff, CBE administration understands that across the province, enrolment growth was projected to average 2.5 percent for 2020-21. Actual enrolment changes across the province saw an average decrease of 1.5 percent. This represents a 4.0 percentage point adjustment between projected and actual for the 2020-21 school year.

For the CBE, our review confirms that nearly all of the difference between projected and actual enrolment (a decline of 4,838 students) can be attributed to families and students choosing to remain outside of the public education system due to safety concerns directly linked to the global pandemic.

Approximately three-quarters of the difference in enrolment is explained by families of pre-kindergarten and kindergarten students keeping their students at home. The optional nature of pre-kindergarten and kindergarten programming and concern related to student health and the family members who care for these students in a global pandemic appear to be the key decision drivers.

For the remaining one-quarter of the difference, concerns related to the global pandemic also appear to be the key decision drivers for families. Primarily noticeable in the high school years, many students who during normal years would have remained to complete requisite courses or to raise their grades may have chosen to postpone this. The CBE is currently in the process of contacting families who have kept their students out of the public education system to support an orderly return to school. That work is ongoing.

That said, the CBE has every reason to believe that many students who are not attending school in 2020-21 will attend for the 2021-22 school year.

The Challenge

Based on information shared with school jurisdictions, it is our understanding that the Framework was designed for “normal course of event” changes in student enrolment. That is, the Framework is based on the premise that school jurisdictions see orderly and gradual changes in enrolment over time. For example, metro school jurisdictions have seen steady growth in enrolment over time. Some rural jurisdictions have experienced slow enrolment declines over time while others have seen little change. This is the context under which the Framework and the WMA mechanism were created.

Unfortunately, in the face of an unforeseen event such as the global pandemic, the Framework, and the WMA specifically, create what the CBE believes are unintended outcomes.

As noted above, the Framework and the related WMA were designed to fund school jurisdictions operations in normal times. What school jurisdictions, including the CBE, are seeing in this global pandemic are anything but normal times.

The WMA was not constructed to address the sort of short-term, sharp, and reversing changes in enrolment that are being experienced by school jurisdictions. Reductions in enrolment this year are, in our view, temporary; it is highly likely that school jurisdictions will also see significant increases in enrolment in 2021-22 once students and families feel the pandemic is under better control due to the wide distribution of vaccines and other public health measures.

Of specific concern is the funding recovery mechanism in the Framework that would see Alberta Education recover funding from school jurisdictions in 2021-22 where the projected enrolment is above the actual enrolment for 2020-21. For the CBE this recovery is estimated to be \$18.4 million, all other factors remaining equal.

The purpose underlying the funding recovery mechanism is to address situations where school jurisdictions have overestimated their enrolment resulting in the school jurisdiction attracting more funding than what is expected based on actual enrolment. The Framework would then recover this “overpayment” in the following school year.

The CBE takes no exception to this funding recovery mechanism in principle. In the face of a once in a lifetime Act of God, however, the CBE has significant concerns.

First, the CBE, like most other school jurisdictions, has fully deployed the “overpayment” (estimated at \$18.4 million) in the 2020-21 school year to support teaching and learning in the classroom and in the online environment and to ensure

the safety and security of staff and students through the pandemic. Therefore, those dollars are not available for repayment in 2021-22.

Second, the CBE expects the students who have opted out of public education for perceived safety reasons to return for the 2021-22 school year. Unfortunately, at the same time that most, or all, of those 4,838 students return to the CBE, we would be required to return \$18.4 million under the funding recovery mechanism. These necessary dollars would provide the school based certificated and non-certificated staff necessary to support those returning students.

The Request

The CBE asks that it be held harmless from the impacts of the global pandemic on the impacts of the WMA for the 2021-22 and 2022-23 school years. The Board of Trustees would appreciate an opportunity to engage with you in finding a viable solution to this challenge. We understand the challenging economic times that the global pandemic has created. Accordingly, we would be interested in exploring options that may see the CBE held harmless, or for the repayment of \$18.4 million either recovered over time or recovered from school jurisdiction operating reserves where those reserves exceed 3% of expenditures.

We would be happy to discuss this further and to explore other options that will mitigate the impact on students attending in the 2021-22 and 2022-23 school years.

Thank you in advance for your time and attention to this urgent matter.

Sincerely,



Marilyn Dennis, Chair
Board of Trustees

cc: Lorrie Jess, President, ASBA
Dr. Vivian Abboud, Chief Executive Officer, ASBA
Christopher Usih, Chief Superintendent



Office of the Minister



AR114711

JAN 29 2021

Ms. Marilyn Dennis
Chair
Calgary Board of Education
1221 - 8 Street SW
Calgary AB T2R 0L4

Dear Ms. Dennis: *Marilyn,*

Thank you for your December 21, 2020 letter on behalf of the Calgary Board of Education regarding the board's enrolment and budget concerns due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Under the new Kindergarten to Grade 12 funding model, many of the grants are allocated based on a weighted moving average approach, which smooths out sudden fluctuations in enrolment. All school authorities, whether they are growing, shrinking or remaining the same size, will benefit from much greater funding predictability and sustainability under this new model. School authorities will no longer have to wait until they have a confirmed number of students—typically at the end of September when the school year is already underway—to determine how much funding they will have for the year.

The advantages of the weighted moving average approach have been particularly evident during the COVID-19 pandemic. The funding allocations school authorities received as part of Budget 2020 are based on the weighted moving average calculations and the enrolment projections that authorities provided. In most cases, decreases in enrolment this fall will not result in significant changes to funding within the school year. This level of certainty supports school authorities as they allocate resources to meet the needs of their students.

The department allocated \$250 million of the funding provided by the federal government directly to school authorities based on a per-student model. Funding is provided to support costs for ensuring Alberta students continue to receive world-class programming. School authorities can use this additional funding for COVID-19-related expenses, including staffing, adaptation of learning spaces, personal protective equipment needs, cleaning and safety considerations for schools and buses, supports for students who require additional supports and services, and online learning and related teacher training.

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Ms. Marilyn Dennis
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The implementation of the new funding model is a priority for Alberta's government. However, as you have noted, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, it appears that some school authorities are anticipating lower enrolments than projected but others are experiencing growth.

I recognize the Calgary Board of Education's concerns and suggestions regarding funding for the 2021/22 and 2022/23 school years. Alberta Education is exploring options to mitigate the consequences of pandemic-related enrolment changes. The department will communicate the final decisions to school boards as part of the Budget 2021 announcements.

I appreciate you taking the time to share your concerns as we continue our work together to enhance Alberta's education system.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Adriana LaGrange". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial "A".

Adriana LaGrange
Minister