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June 25, 2025

Honourable Martin Long
Minister of Infrastructure
228 Legislature Building
10800 – 97 Avenue
Edmonton, AB T5K 2B6

Dear Minister Long,

As a Board, we wanted to draw your attention to concerns we have about Bills 50 and 51, particularly the accelerated timelines for implementation with few details confirmed to date. Our concerns were further elevated following recent stakeholder sessions held jointly by Alberta Infrastructure and Alberta Education and Childcare where different and sometimes contradictory messaging was provided.

Accordingly, we are reaching out to gain further clarity and document our concerns. We would be happy to meet with you to share key areas where we believe additional details are required to support a smooth implementation of these legislated changes.

We still have many questions and concerns related to various aspects of Bill 51. These concerns are rooted in our desire to ensure Calgary Board of Education (CBE) students can continue to receive a world class K-12 education. We strongly believe this is enabled by school boards continuing to have local autonomy to be responsive to the communities we know and serve.

Some key aspects of Bill 51 that require additional definition and clarity include:

Ownership of lands and the impact on long-term planning by school boards.

The absence of Alberta Infrastructure as a party to the Joint Use and Planning Agreement (JUPA), coupled with the removal of the reserve designation from school sites upon transfer, and the uncertainty around lease length and renewals will significantly impede long-term planning.

Therefore, we are seeking clarity for how Alberta Infrastructure will own the land and how improvements upon these lands will impact the ability for

municipalities and school boards to make long-term plans. Under the JUPA, municipalities and school boards undertake long-term planning of municipal and school reserve (MSR) sites. Therefore, it will be important for members of the JUPA to meet with Alberta Infrastructure to hear, understand, and advance government's agenda related to this legislation. Without that, successful implementation will be impeded.

For example, this situation might lead to instances where more than one school board submits a new school request in their Three-Year School Capital Plan (Capital Plan) for the same school site. Without the ability to confirm that the vacant school site in question is designated to the CBE, the CBE will be unable to confirm the grade configurations or school capacity required on other nearby vacant school sites on its Capital Plan.

The removal of reserve designations from MSR sites and the lack of certainty regarding how municipalities will be compensated may reduce a municipality's willingness to establish MSR sites or reduce the amount of land allocated for MSR sites. In either case, school boards will need to plan for larger schools on smaller and fewer MSR sites. These decisions will have an impact on the availability of fields for physical education. Commercial developers may also hesitate to provide reserve land for schools, particularly if the reserve designation will later be removed, thereby opening the possibility that the land might be repurposed for a different use or sold by the owner for fair market value.

Moreover, the remote decision making suggested by the proposed model means that the decision makers (Alberta Infrastructure) are removed from the situation and local context. This is further compounded by the addition of more parties to this new ownership model, significantly increasing the risk of miscommunication and poor decision making.

Finally, it is important for Alberta Infrastructure and Alberta Education and Childcare to hear from the impacted parties, municipalities and school boards, together in a single forum. Such an approach would ensure a more holistic discussion versus the more compartmentalized ones held thus far. Such an approach would foster common awareness and understanding of the legislation and could contribute positively to making the implementation proceed more smoothly.

Clarity around proposed lease lengths and terms.

Over the past three years, the CBE has experienced record enrolment growth, welcoming over 17,000 students or the equivalent of approximately 30 schools into our existing schools. This has driven utilization rates to record highs. With 250 schools, our system-wide utilization rate is 95% and the utilization rate across our 23 high schools is 108%.

To accommodate this massive influx of students, the CBE has had to make numerous changes to schools. This has included relocating or closing smaller

alternative programs through our school closure procedures and later re-opening these schools in a better configured fashion to relieve enrolment pressures faced in other schools and programs. In a lease situation, we are concerned that low enrolment schools may face a lease termination rather than considering the broader system needs and how these schools provide the only available space until such time as new schools are opened in three to four years.

Additionally, the engagement sessions held indicated lease lengths would be in the 20-30 year timeframe. This is troubling given more than 56% of CBE schools are 50 years or older; in fact, we have several schools that are 100+ years old. We recommend the lease length to be at least a 99-year duration, or as a minimum reflect the life expectancy of the school building (i.e. 50 years).

Shorter lease lengths will also discourage partnerships with school boards during school construction. For a partner to invest capital into a school, they will require certainty on the long-term nature of the agreement. A 20-30 year lease with termination clauses will not inspire confidence from these partners, thereby reducing the likelihood of partner contributions to new school builds.

Impact on school board ability to plan and undertake recapitalization and maintenance and renewal (M&R) undertakings.

The lack of school board ownership will disincentivize school board capital reserve investment in schools given the uncertainty around the risk of a lease being terminated by Alberta Infrastructure under parameters that have not yet been defined, or simply not renewed upon expiry. This would create added pressure on already stretched M&R funding.

Currently, there is a process to secure approvals from Alberta Education and Childcare for M&R projects. Going forward, Alberta Infrastructure, in your role as building owner, may gradually seek to increase both visibility on modifications made to your schools and ultimately seek to exercise approval authority. This risks increasing red tape. It also reduces a school board's agility to address student accommodation issues and rapidly rectify learning hindrances in the learning environment or convert spaces to increase school capacity.

The importance of school naming and the connection to community.

During the May 29 engagement session, we were also surprised to hear that a school board's role in naming schools in their district was a subject of ongoing discussion by the province and that no definitive answer could be provided. The naming of a school creates a special bond between the school board and the receiving community. This bond starts with the school board working with and hearing from that community when exploring school names. We believe strongly that losing this authority and autonomy will weaken the school board's connection with its community.



We look forward to continuing this conversation.

We trust this letter punctuates the importance for additional dialogue regarding the implementation of the real property governance changes. We will be reaching out to your office to schedule a meeting. If you are visiting Calgary in the near future, we could meet in person with the mutual goal of increasing clarity, confidence and ultimately trust to support a smooth roll out and implementation.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nancy" followed by a long horizontal line and a period.

Nancy Close, Vice-Chair
Board of Trustees

c.c. Minister of Education and Childcare
President, Alberta School Boards Association
Joanne Pitman, Chief Superintendent of Schools
Dany Breton, Superintendent, Facilities and Environmental Services



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September 23, 2025

Honourable Martin Long
Minister of Infrastructure
228 Legislature Building
10800 – 97 Avenue
Edmonton, AB T5K 2B6

Dear Minister Long,

Thank you for the meeting on August 12, 2025. We appreciated the opportunity to convey our concerns and engage in an open dialogue with you. We recognize there are still many details to be confirmed and we look forward to seeing the regulations and other supporting documentation that will capture and clarify the direction moving forward.

As shared in the meeting, we do have concerns in the following areas:

Lease term should be longer to align with the life expectancy of the building. During the meeting, it was explained that the lease length would likely be for a 30-year timeframe. We feel a more appropriate lease term would be one that aligns more closely to the life expectancy of the school (ie. 50 years). A longer lease term may also encourage partnerships, such as a municipal recreation centre associated with a new school.

Longer lease terms would also help alleviate concerns around the length of the subsequent lease renewal. It is our understanding that subsequent lease lengths would be influenced by the facility condition and a “maintenance threshold” that has yet to be defined. In light of continued and limited maintenance & renewal (M&R) funding, this is concerning as it could lead to instances where the Calgary Board of Education (CBE) is required to invest large amounts of M&R funding in these schools to protect our ability to renew the lease. This would mean an imbalance of M&R investments in leased schools up for renewal versus the remaining aging portfolio of CBE schools.

Renewal and termination conditions of a lease continue to create unease. Namely, the ability for Alberta Education & Childcare to terminate a lease without any predetermined parameters creates uncertainty. This is further impacted by the introduction of the aforementioned “maintenance threshold”. School boards will now have to estimate the minimum M&R investment required for these schools to maximize the likelihood that the lease will be

renewed or hold funds and preserve space in other neighbouring schools in case a lease termination is unexpectedly triggered.

We welcome full transparency between the CBE and Alberta Infrastructure regarding the condition of Alberta Infrastructure-owned schools. In the meeting we raised concerns about potential reporting and approval requirements for school boards related to facility condition and planned M&R investments. Our goal remains to invest every dollar possible directly to classrooms to support student success rather than administrative work and reporting requirements. We appreciated seeing in the FAQ document released by Alberta Infrastructure on August 28, 2025, indicated that no new reporting requirements will be required. We look forward to further clarity on this matter.

Collaboration between Ministries, municipalities and school boards is critical for success. We hope that you might further consider the possibility of scheduling a meeting that would bring all the primary entities involved together. Such a forum would allow both Alberta Infrastructure and Alberta Education & Childcare to provide the latest clarifications and details on the real property governance model, thereby helping alleviate some concerns by shedding light on some of the unknown that currently exists, while concurrently allowing for a comprehensive discussion that considers all aspects the changes are impacting.

Thank you again for your time. We look forward to continuing this important conversation that impacts the learning environment of the 144,000 students we serve today and the accommodation planning of the many additional thousands we will serve tomorrow.

Yours sincerely,



Patricia Bolger, Chair
Board of Trustees

c.c. Honourable Demetrios Nicolaidis, Minister of Education and Childcare
Marilyn Dennis, President, Alberta School Boards Association
Joanne Pitman, Chief Superintendent of Schools
Dany Breton, Superintendent, Facilities and Environmental Services



ALBERTA
INFRASTRUCTURE

Office of the Minister

AR 59336

December 1, 2025

Patricia Bolger
Chair, Board of Trustees
Calgary Board of Education
1221 - 8 Street SW
Calgary, AB T2R 0L4

Dear Patricia,

Thank you for the August 12, 2025, meeting and September 23, 2025, follow-up letter on behalf of the Calgary Board of Education (CBE). I appreciate the CBE taking the time to outline the Board's concerns with lease terms and conditions for new schools under the *Real Property Governance Act*. As Minister of Infrastructure, your thoughtful approach and your continued engagement on this important initiative is valuable to me.

I recognize the significance of longer-term leases in fostering stable partnerships and supporting school jurisdictions' long-range planning efforts. With that in mind, our team is actively reviewing the lease length issue. The intent is to ensure new school leases reflect program-use terms that offer the same level of continuity and clarity as ownership, aligning with our shared goal of supporting educational programming across Alberta. I will be able to confirm our lease lengths and renewal terms with you and other school boards shortly.

I also understand the concerns raised around lease renewals and termination provisions. Renewals will follow Infrastructure's standard leasing processes, and for schools, this will include input from Education and Childcare through its program reviews. This collaborative approach is designed to ensure long-term planning needs are met, and that educational excellence remains sustainable.

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Patricia Bolger
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Regarding lease termination, I agree decisions of this nature should be made with care and mutual understanding. Any consideration of a termination would involve collaboration between Education and Childcare and the respective school jurisdiction. For example, a mutual understanding is required for instances where a facility is no longer needed or no longer serves an educational purpose.

To support clarity throughout the lease term, the leases will outline expectations related to maintenance and capital renewal. Importantly, these leases will not introduce additional maintenance or reporting requirements beyond what is already in place between Infrastructure, Education and Childcare, and school jurisdictions.

My department remains committed to working closely with you and our partners in Education and Childcare to determine the best timing and approach for addressing concerns raised by school jurisdictions and are available to meet at your convenience. If you have any questions, please contact Yvonne Edo-Olotu, Manager, Receivable Leasing at 587-385-7148.

Thank you again for your engagement and support. Your continued collaboration is invaluable, and we look forward to finding solutions that support Alberta's students and communities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "M. Long", with a horizontal line extending to the right from the end of the signature.

Martin Long
Minister

cc: Honourable Demetrios Nicolaidis
Minister of Education and Childcare