

Budget Assumptions Report

2026-27



Calgary Board
of Education

Budget Assumption Report

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A Note from Leadership

A note from the Chief Superintendent of Schools and the CBE leadership team

Our schools are communities—places where students, staff and families work together every day to create the best possible learning experiences.

As we look ahead to next year, our planning continues to be guided by our mission, our values, and the Board of Trustees' priorities of achievement, equity and well-being. These foundations keep us focused on strong learning environments and on advancing the goals of the CBE Education Plan.

Overall enrolment across the CBE remains steady, and at the same time the complexity of student needs continues to grow. Our classrooms welcome learners with an increasing range of backgrounds, experiences and specialized needs. This diversity strengthens our system and creates important opportunities for us to refine our practices and deepen inclusive, responsive learning environments.

On February 12, the government announced funding to support classroom complexity—a core priority in the Board of Trustees' advocacy over many years. Through this announcement, the CBE will receive targeted funding for 118 schools to hire an Alberta Complexity Team, comprising one teacher and two educational assistants. This is a positive step toward meeting the needs we see in classrooms every day.

We now have more than 44,000 students learning English as an additional language and 29,000 students with specialized learning needs. We will move quickly to allocate this new funding and anticipate having all teams in place for 2026-27 school year.

Throughout the budget development process, our commitment remains steadfast: to make thoughtful, student-centered decisions that support strong learning outcomes and ensure staff have the resources required to meet the needs of every learner.

We are grateful for the investment in education outlined in government's Budget 2026. As always, we will continue to prioritize programs, services and staffing that help students thrive—whether that means supporting specialized learning needs, enhancing instructional practices, or providing the tools necessary for effective teaching and learning. At the same time, we continue to plan carefully for rising operational costs to ensure resources remain focused on the classroom.

The CBE educates one in six students in Alberta. Families place high expectations on us, and we share that commitment: every student deserves a world-class learning experience.

We also appreciate the government's continued investment in modern, well-maintained learning spaces. With many of our schools at or near capacity, we look forward to new schools being built closer to where students live. These new learning spaces will reduce travel times for families, ease enrolment pressures, and create more opportunities for students to learn in their own communities.

Concurrently, investing in existing schools has never been more important; with more than 60% of CBE schools over 50 years old, ensuring safe, functional and modern environments remains a priority.

While new schools take four to five years from announcement to completion, school leaders will continue to use space creatively, and we will continue to manage through short-term grade configuration changes and redesignations where necessary.

I am confident in the strength of our school communities and the dedication of our staff. Together—with our families, our partners and our Board of Trustees—we will continue to build welcoming, inclusive and high-performing learning environments where every student can thrive.

Sincerely,

Joanne Pitman
Chief Superintendent of School

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Organization Summary

All budget decisions are aligned with CBE and Board priorities.

Mission

The Board of Trustees' mission for the CBE is:

“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.”

The CBE considers each individual student and their learning needs alongside available financial and other resources. This prioritization process is informed by the CBE's values.

Values

- Students come first
- Learning is our central purpose
- Public education serves the common good

Guiding Documents

The CBE's work is guided by its Education Plan and Board of Trustees' priorities: achievement, equity and well-being.

Decisions are also guided by the:

- *Education Act*
- Ministerial Order on Student Learning Assurance Framework

142,400+ Students



251[^]
schools and
other facilities



44,000+
English as
Additional
Language
(EAL) Learners



29,000+
students with
special needs



6,400+
self-identified
Indigenous
students



28,000+
students in
Alternative
programs



16,000+
employees



27,000+ students
on 626 yellow
bus routes

[^]Evanston Heights School to open Sept/26
*Sept. 30, 2025 figures

Context: Budget 2026-27

The 2026-27 CBE budget is currently under development. The final budget will be shaped over the next several weeks as we finalize allocations to best meet the needs of all students.

The information set out below identifies some of the key factors within the CBE's operational context that will impact Budget 2026-27.

Rate of enrolment growth trends towards the CBE's long term average

- The CBE is forecasting enrolment of more than 143,475 students next year. Growth is expected to follow the long term average, with year-over-year increases of slightly more than 1,000 students. Enrolment projections do not include potential impacts related to changes in Temporary Resident requirements.
- The CBE does not receive additional operating funding for students enrolled after September 30 of the school year. As a result, enrolment increases after this date must be absorbed within existing annual funding or by accessing operating reserves.
- CBE schools are full. Over 70% of CBE schools are full or over capacity. Schools have been resourceful by maximizing all available space as classrooms including common areas and staff rooms. Currently, over 30 schools are overflowing students to schools with available space.

There are more students with greater complexity in our system.

- It is important that students have access to the supports they need to be successful in their learning. Resources are allocated to an increasing number of students with special learning needs, and those needs are becoming more complex.
- Government has taken steps to provide more than \$143 million to address both class size and complexity. Through this allocation, the CBE has been approved for 118 Classroom Complexity Teams comprising 118 teachers and 236 educational assistants assigned to specific schools with a grant of \$35.4 million.
- The Government of Alberta, through Education and Childcare, is making an additional \$300 million available in 2026-27 to support the hiring of more teachers and school-based staff. How those funds will be allocated and for what specific purpose are not known at the time this report was finalized.

Every cent of Alberta Education and Childcare funding supports students.

CBE continually reviews its operations to ensure resources are maximized to classrooms.

- 80 cents of every dollar goes directly to schools and centralized directed supports for schools, with the remainder allocated through targeted grants to operating and maintaining the CBE's 252 schools, transporting more than 27,000 students to school, and other operating cost to keep our schools and systems running efficiently.
- Annual funding supports students served in that school year, and budgets are managed within the dollars received. Increasing costs continue to influence spending capacity.
- Administrative costs are closely managed and remain low at roughly 3% of our budget.

- Our operating reserves are 0.9% of prior year total expenditures at the second quarter of 2025-26. Alberta Education and Childcare requires school boards to maintain operating reserves between 1% and 6%. The CBE is targeting an operating reserve, exclusive of school generated funds and carry-forward balances, of \$35 million or approximately 2%.
- Currently more than 60 per cent of CBE's 252 schools are more than 50 years old. School districts need to redirect dollars, often from instructional grants, to fund operating and maintenance costs for these aging buildings.

Costs continue to rise.

- Salaries and benefits continue to increase in alignment with collective agreements. It is important to balance supporting a growing system with providing fair compensation packages/workloads for employees. Approximately 78% of CBE's costs are directly related to employing people.
- Inflationary costs continue to persist and are significant in the areas of electronic devices such as laptops.
- Lease costs continue to increase on the Education Centre.
- Geopolitical issues are likely to increase costs well into 2026-27.

Revenue Assumptions

An investment in education contributes to a strong Alberta

- Based on publicly available information shared by Alberta Education and Childcare, the CBE is aware of the following funding changes. Note they may not be all inclusive.

Funding Type	% Change
Base Instructional Funding	3%
Distance Education Grants	3%
Home Education & Shared Responsibility Funding	3%
English as an Additional Language	6%
ECS Program Unit Funding Grant	6%
ECS Program Unit Funding Moderate Language Grant	6%
Specialized Learning Support	3%
Refugee Student	3%
First Nations, Metis and Inuit Education	3%
School Technology	3%
Transportation	3%
Operations & Maintenance	5%
System Administration	-5%
Infrastructure Maintenance & Renewal	eliminated

- The CBE will maximize available grant revenue across all grant categories subject to the terms and conditions set out in the 2026-27 Education and Childcare Funding Manual.
- The CBE continues to see more students with complex learning needs. The Alberta government has made a significant investment in complexity programs and supports. At this time the CBE does not have information regarding the allocation of \$300 million in complexity funding nor does it have information on planned literacy, numeracy, and mental health funding.
- System and school fees will cover the direct cost of fee-related programs and services and comply with the *Education Act* and related regulations. The CBE's comprehensive fee waiver program also means that no student will be denied access to a public education due to an inability to pay a fee.
- The CBE's student transportation program remains balanced within the total of Alberta Education and Childcare transportation funding and related fee revenue. The cost of providing special needs transportation services will continue to exceed the available special needs transportation grant.
- The CBE's Operations and Maintenance grant funding does not fully cover all operating and maintenance costs.

- The CBE will maximize investment returns on cash in excess of current need subject to Alberta Education and Childcare guidance. The CBE's investment strategy is predicated on maximizing returns consistent with the preservation of invested capital consistent with the *Education Act, Investment Regulation*.
- The CBE applied prudence in the determination of its 2026-27 Alberta Education and Childcare revenue forecast. If actual revenue exceeds the forecast that incremental revenue will be applied to support an area of greatest system need.

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Expense Assumptions

The CBE believes in meeting the needs of students while being responsible stewards of public dollars.

- CBE spending on programs, services, supports and operations will align with Alberta Education and Childcare funding.
- The CBE will spend the funding received for the 2026-27 school year on students enrolled in CBE schools for the 2026-27 school year (Appendix II).
- CBE administration will continue to monitor the CBE's Accumulated Surplus from Operations to ensure it maintains sufficient operational flexibility to meet unanticipated costs or opportunities.
- The CBE will meet health, safety, legal and learning environment needs.
- The CBE will allocate resources to ensure compliance with provincial legislation and collective agreements including general wage increases, employee salary grid movement and benefits changes.
- The CBE will increase Resource Allocation Method (RAM) rates sufficient to maintain school-based delivery after factoring in recent collective agreement changes. The increases to the RAM will occur within a balanced CBE budget.
- The CBE will adjust centrally provided services and supports to students consistent with available financial resources and subject to identified needs.
- The CBE will continuously apply program evaluation aligned to Board policy linked to efficiency, economy and effectiveness. Any necessary changes are implemented in alignment with CBE policies.
- The CBE maintains the ability to attract, train, retain and pay employees.
- The CBE will not rely on one-time funding sources, such as operating and capital reserves, to cover recurring expenses.
- The CBE will apply Alberta Education and Childcare's targeted/restricted instructional funding for the specified purposes it is intended to address. Any new targeted funding will be deployed in alignment with Alberta Education and Childcare's direction.
- The CBE will work with the provincial government, provincial organizations such as the Association of School Business Officials of Alberta, and other school jurisdictions to identify cost-saving strategies where opportunities exist.
- The opening of new schools, modulars and modernizations will have a significant draw on capital reserves. New school commissioning covers the fit-up costs of opening a new school and include items such as learning resources, musical instruments, laptops and smartboards. As a result of the *Real Property Governance Act*, school boards do not have the ability to replenish their capital reserves through the sale of buildings.
- Board-funded capital investments support the maintenance of learning spaces and systems as well as the replacement of vehicles, equipment, and technology hardware necessary to maintain operations.

Risks

We use control mechanisms to manage risk and increase public confidence in the CBE’s financial health

The CBE has processes and controls in place to identify and manage risks to an acceptable level. While these measures are designed to reduce risk, there is still the possibility that one or more risks could affect operations beyond what is anticipated.

Inherent risks are assessed based on management’s judgment, informed by subject matter experts, and reflect the level of risk before any mitigating actions are taken.

Risks identified below are management’s judgement on the most likely risks to influence the 2026-27 school year. These identified risks change year-over-year in step with changes to the CBE’s operational context.

Financial and Operational Compliance Risks

The CBE exercises prudent financial oversight, monitors the use of allocated funds, and maintains adequate reserves to support long-term fiscal stability.

The CBE’s goal is to ensure that government, the public, staff and students have confidence in the CBE’s ability to maintain teaching and learning programs over time. This is achieved, in part, by maintaining operating reserves sufficient to ensure the continuity of teaching and learning in the face of unanticipated events.

Operating Reserve Requirements Exceed Available Balance	Likelihood	Moderate	Consequence	Moderate
The cost of responding to unexpected events or adjusting services to new funding levels may exceed available operating reserves. Insufficient reserves could require the CBE to reprioritize initiatives mid year and may limit the ability to invest in required capital without affecting teaching and learning.				
Capital Reserve Requirements Exceed Available Balance	Likelihood	Higher	Consequence	Moderate
The cost of known capital needs exceed available capital reserves. Insufficient reserves could require the CBE to reprioritize initiatives and may limit the ability to invest in required capital without affecting teaching and learning.				
Public Expectation Exceed Funded Capacity	Likelihood	Higher	Consequence	Moderate
Public expectation for public education exceeds capacity of the CBE to provide within allocated funding levels. Ongoing communications with families will highlight funding available and where funds are allocated.				
Targeted Government Funding	Likelihood	Moderate	Consequence	Moderate
CBE’s flexibility to address evolving student needs quickly and effectively may be impacted by targeted funding.				
System Administration Cap	Likelihood	Higher	Consequence	Moderate
A 5% reduction to the system administration cap increases pressure on a constrained budget. Leasing costs continue to rise, and further staffing reductions are not feasible.				
Costs for New School Opening Unfunded	Likelihood	Higher	Consequence	Higher
Many commissioning costs for new or modernized schools are not fully funded, requiring draws on finite capital reserves and potentially affecting quality of learning spaces.				

Staffing and Contractual Risks

Staffing comprises approximately 78% of CBE expenditures. Grid movement and negotiated salary and benefit increases can have a significant impact on CBE operations. The Government of Alberta has primary responsibility for collective bargaining with the Alberta Teachers' Association. The CBE bargains with unions and manages exempt employee compensation following the provisions of the *Public Sector Employers Act*. Non-ATA salary increases are funded from the CBE's base grants. The Board of Trustees approves all collective agreements and related terms and conditions of employment on behalf of the CBE.

Staff Attrition Costs Higher than Assumed	Likelihood	Higher	Consequence	Higher
Retirements, resignations, and replacement staffing may occur at higher-than-expected rates. Increased attrition in key school and service-unit positions can create administrative delays and service gaps.				
School-based Staffing	Likelihood	Higher	Consequence	Higher
Increased hiring of teachers and educational assistants, alongside increased complexity funding, will strain the CBE's ability to attract, recruit, train.				
Collective Agreement Implementation	Likelihood	Lower	Consequence	Higher
The implementation of collective agreements have financial and administrative impacts. Collective agreements for the ATA, Staff Association, CUPE, and Trades expire in August 2028. The impact of a labour action should always be assessed.				

Operational Risks

The operational risks set out below reflect those events that are most likely to have an impact on CBE operations. The table below sets out the inherent (unmitigated) risks.

Deferred Maintenance Backlog Increase	Likelihood	Moderate	Consequence	Moderate
Unanticipated increase in the deferred maintenance backlog or unforeseen equipment failures could require unplanned resource reallocation or disruption of service.				
Service Unit Operations Hindered	Likelihood	Moderate	Consequence	Moderate
Limited resources in a growing system may hinder service unit operations, resulting in slower response times, delayed or terminated projects, and reduced support for schools.				
Actual Costs Exceed Estimates	Likelihood	Moderate	Consequence	Lower
Costs may rise faster than assumed during budget development, requiring reprioritization of initiatives and supports to maintain financial sustainability.				
Full Schools and Classroom Complexity	Likelihood	Lower	Consequence	Higher
Persistent enrolment growth combined with increasing classroom complexities may exceed the CBE's staffing and space capacity.				
English as an Additional Language (EAL)	Likelihood	Moderate	Consequence	Moderate
Growing proportions of EAL students, particularly those entering later in their academic journey, may place downward pressure on graduation and completion rates over time.				
Inflation and Foreign Exchange	Likelihood	Higher	Consequence	Higher
Volatile energy prices, global trade disruption, and inflationary pressures increase costs for goods and services. Current funding does not directly address inflation or foreign exchange impacts, placing additional pressure on operating budgets.				
Mid-year Funding Adjustments	Likelihood	Moderate	Consequence	Higher
Funding changes made outside the normal cycle impede long-term planning and may negatively affect the efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery.				
Funding Lag to Growing System	Likelihood	Lower	Consequence	Higher
Provincial funding may not keep pace with system growth, reducing the quality and availability of programs, services, and supports for students.				
Delayed or unfunded refugee students	Likelihood	Higher	Consequence	Lower
Funding for refugee students is only provided once status is confirmed. Delays or lack of funding increase reliance on internal resources to ensure full student support.				

Appendices

Appendix I: Funding Profile

The Calgary School Division		
Projected Operational Funding - as of March 2026		
	Funding Framework Grants	Budget 2026
Base Instruction	Grade ECS	\$29,470,110
	Grades 1 - 9	\$652,787,410
	High Schools	\$269,631,397
	Rural Small Schools	\$0
	Home Education & Shared Responsibility ¹	\$1,085,392
	Outreach Programs	\$360,500
	Distance Education (Non-Primary)	\$0
	Sub-Total	\$953,334,809
Services & Supports	ECS Program Unit Funding (PUF) Grant	\$7,206,856
	ECS Program Unit Funding (PUF) Moderate Language Delay Grant	\$786,235
	Specialized Learning Support	\$125,645,715
	First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Education	\$11,001,334
	English as an Additional Language	\$42,714,159
	Francisation	\$0
	Refugee Student	\$30,096,532
	Institutional Programs (EPI)	\$12,616,842
	Classroom complexity	\$7,919,690
Schools	Operations & Maintenance Grant	\$140,767,436
	School Technology	\$3,500,846
	Transportation	\$53,045,415
Community	Socio-Economic Status	\$9,603,965
	Geographic	\$1,534,800
	Fort McMurray Allowance	\$0
	School Nutrition Program	\$3,137,690
	Francophone Equivalency	\$0
Jurisdictions	System Administration	\$49,957,779
	Teacher Salary Settlement	\$97,581,515
A	Budget 2026 - Projected Operational Funding	\$1,550,451,620
B	2025/26 School Year - Estimated Operational Funding ²	\$1,508,808,787
C	2025/26 Funding Adjustment	-\$18,276,272
D = B + C	2025/26 Total Operational Funding ²	\$1,490,532,515
E = A - D	\$ Increase/(Decrease)	\$59,919,105
F = E/D	% Change	4.0%
Financial Health of the School Division (2024/25 School Year)		
	Operating Reserves	\$23,614,000
	ASO % of Operating Expenses (Provincial ASO - 3.9%)	1.44%
	Capital Reserves	\$67,225,000
Notes:		
¹ . Home Education and Shared Responsibility Grant estimates will be updated using the September actual enrolment count for the 2026/27 school year.		
² . 2025/26 Operational Funding estimate includes eligible in-year adjustments.		