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April 8, 2020

Dear Parents, Guardians and Families,

We acknowledge these are unprecedented times. The Board hopes that all our students, parents and staff are healthy and safe. We look forward to the day students are able to attend classes once again at CBE schools.

Funding Reduction Announcement and Staffing

On Saturday, March 28, the government announced \$128 million in education funding reductions and directed school boards to reduce staffing levels for educational assistants, substitute teachers, other support staff and bus drivers.

This announcement came as a surprise to us. We were disappointed that as the democratically elected board of trustees we were not consulted on this decision or given the opportunity to share the vital work that many of these CBE staff have been doing in support of our learning plan for students. Although in-school classes have been cancelled, schools remain open and learning must continue. Staff are working hard to connect with students and their families to identify needs and create resources to support students in this challenging new environment. In addition, staff are also working to ensure that schools are safe and clean for the staff that are still working in our schools and in preparation for the eventual return of students.

On Tuesday, March 31, the CBE was informed that our funding would be reduced by \$21 million.

We are doing as much as possible to minimize the impact of this in-year funding cut on staff and students, but layoffs will be necessary in order to balance our budget. As a school board we cannot have an unfunded deficit at the end of the year.

Technology for Students

CBE has a limited number of devices that can be loaned to students in need. The demand far outstrips the supply. In response, EducationMatters, Calgary's trust for public education, has set up a fundraising campaign for the purchase of technology to ensure that all students are able to participate in ongoing learning while classes in schools remain cancelled. You can find more information about this campaign or how to donate [here](#).

The Electronic Recycling Association is also accepting donations of computers and laptops, more information about this program is available [here](#).

CBE technology lending program for students and information to acquire internet access is available [here](#).

Frequently Asked Questions

Families have many questions about fees, diploma exams, the nutrition program, final marks and more. You can find answers to frequently asked questions here. Visit this [page](#) often as information is updated regularly.

Health and Wellness – Supporting Your Child

We know that this situation is a stressful time for you. Home life has changed dramatically. If you are feeling overwhelmed and are looking for tools to support your child through this situation, resources are available on the [CBE website](#).

Budget 2020-21

We are also looking ahead to the 2020-21 school year. According to the school jurisdiction profiles released by Alberta Education in February, 2020, the total funding to the CBE is expected to increase by \$13.5 million to \$1.16 billion for next year. However, CBE's final funding for 2020-21 will not be confirmed by Alberta Education until the end of April.

For 2020-21 enrolment growth is forecast to be approximately 2,300 students, or the equivalent of four large elementary schools. With increased enrolment and a new [funding model](#), this will mean a reduction in per-student funding. This reduction in per-student funding will have an impact. We continue to review how to best deliver programs and services within the funding we receive. Our first priority is always to support students and their learning.

We are in this Together

To our students – we miss you. We look forward to having you back inside our schools with you and your and friends. We are thinking of you each and every day. Please continue doing whatever you need to do to remain healthy and to continue learning. Your teachers are here for you. You may reach out to them whenever you need extra support. You are not alone.

We thank all of you for your patience during this time. Even though we are separated, we are working together: each student, every day, no exceptions.

Should you wish to contact your Trustee, their contact information is available [here](#).

Sincerely yours,

CBE Board of Trustees

