



BLACK GOLD  
REGIONAL  
DIVISION NO. 18



Calgary Board  
of Education



CALGARY CATHOLIC  
SCHOOL DISTRICT



EDMONTON  
CATHOLIC SCHOOLS



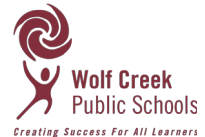
EDMONTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS



Grande Prairie  
Catholic Schools



St. Albert  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 20, 2015

## Growing Alberta school districts express shared concern

**Alberta** – As 19 growing school districts representing approximately 65 per cent of students in Alberta, we have a shared concern about the significant effect the government's 2015–2016 budget will have on student success and the overall education system in our province. We understand and support the goal of achieving a balanced budget and building long-term success for Alberta. However, the effect on education cannot be underestimated; we believe education is key to the overall success and future of our province.

According to provincial projections, there will be 12,000 additional students in Alberta next year and approximately 36,000 over the next three years. According to the provincial fiscal plan, this growth in student population is not, and will not, be funded. By not funding growth, we are effectively reducing the per pupil funding for every student while increasing class sizes. Growing districts are forced to attempt to provide the same level of service for more students with less funding.

Student success is at risk under the current budget despite the honourable intent to protect front-line classroom teachers. Growing districts will be forced to make reductions to support services to schools while ultimately increasing teacher workload and at the same time, reducing the support for some of our most vulnerable students. These students will be further disadvantaged by increasing class sizes.

With this budget, trustees locally-elected to govern education have lost the flexibility to make the decisions that will minimize the negative impacts on their particular district. Specifically, the outlined framework hampers the boards' ability to use their resources as they see fit to reduce the impact of these cuts and best meet student needs under difficult circumstances.

We believe that the new fiscal strategy being applied to growing school districts by the province will have unacceptable negative short-term and long-term consequences for students and the effective functioning of Alberta's public education system. For a number of years now in response to challenging education budgets, school boards have been living within a frugal fiscal framework and have already cut back in many areas.

As growing districts, we ask the government to reconsider and to work with our school districts on a collaborative approach to restraint that will sustain student success, support student growth and provide enough autonomy and flexibility for local board officials to address the most pressing areas of concern for their districts.

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