



**BLACK GOLD
REGIONAL
DIVISION NO. 18**

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

School board concerned about provincial education budget

The Board of Trustees of Black Gold Regional Division No. 18 (BGRD) is concerned about the impact the 2015 provincial budget will have on its students, staff and families.

On March 26th, the provincial budget revealed that school boards:

- will not receive funding for increased student enrollment;
- must cut 2.7% from non-instructional costs; and
- will require Ministerial approval to use any school board reserves, even if they have been previously earmarked for specific needs that were identified by school boards and their communities.

“The lack of flexibility the Board is faced with, surrounding the recent budget announcements, is disconcerting”, stated Johnette Lemke, Board Chair, Black Gold Regional Division No. 18. “Every year BGRD has been growing its student population and in 2015, there will be no additional provincial funding to support that growth”. The recent announcements would mean that new students would not be funded, despite the number of students a division grows by. With that being said, without asking for Ministerial approval, school boards are then no longer able to access their reserves to offset the shortfall. This puts the BGRD in an extremely challenging position, as the Board, along with the community, had already strategized and planned on how to use the reserves to support student success for future years.

“It is extremely frustrating. The BGRD has been fiscally resourceful and responsible in its spending in the past. We have continued to rise to the challenges faced with providing for students, despite inconsistent provincial education budgets”, stated Trustee Barb Martinson. “As Trustees, we have been elected by our local community to represent their interests, and by the government freezing our reserves, it makes our job very difficult. BGRD had already planned and strategized regarding reserved funds, and now our plans have to be reviewed and may even be annulled.”

“BGRD will continue to address these ongoing challenges”, Trustee Sandy Koroll ensured. “It is all about the students and the students will come first”. Koroll continued stating, “Trustees will work diligently to ensure students in Black Gold are provided with excellent learning opportunities”.

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About Black Gold Regional Division No. 18

Black Gold Regional Division No. 18 (BGRD) is located directly south of Edmonton, extending from the New Sarepta area in the east, to the Warburg area in the west. It includes the municipalities of Beaumont, Devon, Thorsby, Calmar, the City of Leduc and Leduc County. With approximately 10,000 students enrolled in 30 schools, BGRD teachers and support staff are committed to “inspiring success” in all students. For more information on Black Gold Regional Division No. 18 and our schools, visit: www.blackgold.ca.

For more information, or media inquiries, please contact:

Johnette Lemke | Board Chair | Black Gold Regional Division No. 18
Email: johnette.lemke@blackgold.ca | Website: www.blackgold.ca