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March 4, 2026

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

Dear Minister Long,

On behalf of the Calgary Board of Education (CBE), we are writing to express concern regarding the removal of the Sustainability requirements (including LEED Silver Certification) for provincially funded new schools and modernizations. Instead, it is our understanding that the National Energy Code for Buildings (NECB) 2020 Tier 1, the minimum required by the Alberta Building Code, will be used by Alberta Infrastructure as the contractual design requirement for energy performance.

**Need for Framework to Address Gaps Created by Removing LEED Certification**

We offer that a shift away from LEED certification should be accompanied by a clear replacement framework that preserves critical performance outcomes. This includes:

- requiring NECB Tier 2 energy performance compliance with a target performance improvement of at least 30%, to match existing new school performance targets (new schools with LEED Certification commonly show a 30% improvement compared to NECB 2020 Tier 1);
- targeted envelope performance standards that exceed code minimum, such as the Thermal Envelope Demand Intensity (TEDi) developed by the Zero Carbon Building Standard; and
- the retention of select industry best practice building criteria related to thermal comfort and material VOC emissions.

Without such measures, moving solely to code minimum represents a step backward in ensuring the operational efficiency, resilience and long-term value of publicly funded school infrastructure.

We respectfully request clarification on how the province intends to address the performance and lifecycle gaps created by the removal of the LEED certification requirements and would welcome the opportunity to work collaboratively with Alberta Infrastructure on a practical, made-in-Alberta approach that balances cost discipline with long-term operational performance.

### **Reducing Immediate Term Costs, Administrative Burden and Expediting Construction Delivery Timelines**

We recognize the province's objective to reduce immediate costs and administrative burden with the objective of expediting school construction delivery timelines. However, we are concerned that this approach removes several foundational best practices that directly affect long-term operating costs, building durability and the learning environment.

Decisions being made today on the design and construction of new school facilities will determine operating cost exposure well into the future, when price volatility may be significantly higher and financial flexibility more constrained. As a result, the long-term operating performance of new school facilities is becoming increasingly critical. Energy, maintenance and facility costs directly compete with funding for instructional programming and student supports. Designing new schools to minimum code standards increases exposure to future operating risk over a 50 to 75-year asset life in addition to ultimately resulting in government "paying twice".

### **Impacts of Weakened Requirements**

As background, the NECB 2020 establishes a minimum compliance threshold at design, as referenced under the Alberta Building Code 2023. It does not ensure that schools are delivered with verified design energy performance, nor does it replace key elements embedded within LEED and/or the deleted sections of the Technical Design Requirements (TDR) for Alberta Infrastructure Facilities. Of greatest concern is the removal or weakening of requirements related to:

- thermal envelope performance, which impacts both energy use and the thermal comfort of students, thereby impacting the learning environment;
- ongoing commissioning plans that allow building operators to effectively manage the energy use of school facilities;
- selection of materials with low volatile organic compound (VOC) emissions, that improve the indoor air quality and therefore impact the learning environment;
- construction waste management practices that demonstrate responsible environmental practices to students; and
- clear accountability for enforcing best practices through the prime consultant.



The inability to enforce these best practices will result in higher operating and lifecycle costs borne by school boards.

### **Limited Ability for School Boards to Absorb Long-term Operating Costs**

Province-wide data compiled by the Association of School Business Officials of Alberta (ASBOA) indicates that utility costs across school jurisdictions increased by approximately 20-21% over the past three years, representing a significant and persistent operating cost pressure. Over the same period, school boards have drawn down their operating reserves by about 46%, reducing their ability to absorb future cost exposure. These trends highlight the increasing sensitivity of education budgets to growing operating expenses coupled with the limited capacity of school jurisdictions to absorb avoidable long-term operating costs.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. We appreciate the Government of Alberta's ongoing commitment to fiscal responsibility and expedited construction of educational facilities. Please do not hesitate to contact Olena Olafson, Manager, Energy & Sustainability at [olafson@cbe.ab.ca](mailto:olafson@cbe.ab.ca) if you have any questions, or for support in developing the new standards.

Sincerely,



Laura Hack, Chair  
Board of Trustees

cc: Honourable Demetrios Nicolaidis, Minister of Education and Childcare  
Shali Baziuk, President, Alberta School Boards Association  
Joanne Pitman, Chief Superintendent of Schools  
Dany Breton, Superintendent, Facilities & Environmental Services





ALBERTA  
INFRASTRUCTURE

*Office of the Minister*

AR 60121

March 25, 2026

Laura Hack  
Board Chair  
Calgary Board of Education  
1221 - 8 Street SW  
Calgary, AB T2R 0L4

Dear Laura:

Thank you for your March 4, 2026, letter regarding the removal of LEED certifications for provincially funded new schools and modernizations. I appreciate you taking the time to share your suggestions with me and I value the Calgary Board of Education's (CBE) perspective.

Alberta Infrastructure remains committed to delivering durable, efficient, and cost-effective public infrastructure. After careful consideration, we have decided to discontinue mandatory LEED certification for new capital projects.

Discontinuing LEED is anticipated to reduce capital costs primarily by allowing flexibility in materials, technologies, and design approaches that may not align with LEED requirements. It will also streamline the administrative process by reducing the separate documentation and registration required for certification. Resources can then be reallocated toward design and construction, representing a more efficient use of public funds while still meeting operational efficiency and resiliency objectives.

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LEED was originally adopted when there was no minimum energy efficiency standard within our building codes. However, Alberta Infrastructure has adopted the National Energy Code of Canada for Buildings 2020 (NECB) as the minimum province-wide energy standard. NECB provides a tiered performance framework that supports progressive improvements in energy efficiency. All projects will meet Tier 1 as a baseline, with higher tiers considered on a project-by-project basis.

While LEED has historically provided a valuable framework, it also increased administrative burden. Further, many areas that provided points did not make sense for Alberta's rural and northern environments. Accordingly, we believe that adherence to NECB standards will continue to ensure high-performance outcomes. These codes and requirements establish minimum standards for energy efficiency, durability, and life cycle cost considerations, aligning with our commitment to fiscal responsibility and long-term value.

We acknowledge the CBE's concerns regarding life cycle costs and operational performance. Our approach will continue to incorporate life cycle cost assessments and strategies to minimize long-term operating expenses.

CBE's ongoing efforts to advance efficient building practices are valuable, and we welcome future collaboration on initiatives that support innovation within Alberta Infrastructure's portfolio.

Thank you for taking the time to write.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Long', followed by a horizontal line.

Martin Long  
Minister

cc: Honourable Demetrios Nicolaides  
Minister of Education and Childcare

Shali Baziuk  
President, Alberta School Boards Association

Joanne Pitman  
Chief Superintendent of Schools, Calgary Board of Education

Dany Breton  
Superintendent, Facilities and Environmental Services, Calgary Board of Education