



Key Communiqué

News for School Councils

Issue | April 24, 2020

One of the most significant ways parents and community members can make a meaningful difference in the lives of our students is through school councils. By connecting students, schools and communities, school councils help nurture and inspire our students to achieve their full potential.

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Feel free to contact us with any suggestions or comments.

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COVID-19 Has Changed Our Lives

The COVID-19 global pandemic has changed the way we live, the way we work, and the way we interact with one another. Suffice it to say, the world has changed – and it continues to change daily! Our students, staff and families are dealing with this challenge in real time.

On March 15, the provincial government announced the cancellation of classes across the province until further notice. With the cancellation of classes comes a new way of delivering learning to more than 125,000 students in our school division. This is a monumental task. We are adapting to a new reality of working and delivering learning remotely.

Classes look a lot different these days – for all of us. Students are now engaged in learning in different ways, demonstrating resilience, flexibility and compassion. We appreciate that families are supporting student learning while juggling work and other responsibilities. Our teachers are checking in with students regarding not just their learning, but also about how they are feeling. When needed, we are connecting families to supports including technology, mental health, food and other community resources.

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 on [our website](#). Visit this page often as information is updated regularly.

The most recent items are posted at the top of the list.

Fee Refund Process for Families

Thank you for your patience as we work through the fee refund process after COVID-19-related class cancellations. We are working as fast as we can to return funds paid for the period of March 16 - June 30, 2020. We understand many of our families have lost income and need access to these refunds.

[Refunding fees](#) for so many families has never been done before. While we finalize our processing and refund options, we and our business partners are also facing the same issues as many Canadians. The need for social distancing, self isolation and global transitioning to a work from home model means a longer response time for us and all of our partners.

Refunds for Lunchroom Supervision and Transportation fees will be issued in the coming weeks. Refunds for other fees will follow.

If you have questions **after** you receive your refund, please email studentfees@cbe.ab.ca. Thank you.

All School-based Ceremonies, Celebrations, Events and High School Graduations are Cancelled

The CBE has made the difficult decision to officially cancel all school-planned celebrations, ceremonies, events and High School graduations for the remainder of the 2019-20 school year.

We know this is especially sad news for our Grade 12 graduating students and their families.

Schools are considering different opportunities for our graduands to receive yearbooks and certificates and potential video tributes in June. Each high school will also share information regarding graduation fee refunds as it becomes available. Please see our [website](#) for more information.

Learning from Home

As we continue ongoing learning for all our CBE students, the 'classroom' looks a lot different – for all of us. Parents have taken on new roles to help their children maintain continuity of learning through this pandemic. Thank you.

The most recent information on ongoing learning is posted on our [website](#). Your best source of information is still your child's teacher.

Transportation Survey

In January 2020, the Board of Trustees directed CBE administration to balance transportation costs using only provincial funding and user fees. They also asked that feedback be gathered in support of the development of a balanced 2020-21 transportation budget. As a result, an online survey was available in March 2020.

The purpose of the survey was to gather feedback from parents, students, staff and other stakeholders on how the CBE can provide a safe, reliable and cost-efficient transportation program, with a specific focus on closing the 2020-21 budget gap and meeting the board's direction to close the gap without redirecting dollars from the classroom.

In community engagement initiatives, it's important to provide stakeholders with the opportunity to offer feedback on all the possible options they can influence in decision-making, not just some. Those options include raising fees, reducing or eliminating services, or doing a combination of both. The option of having different fees for different programs was also provided. As a feasible option in setting fees for the upcoming school year and knowing that some other school boards already use a differentiated fee, it was an important option to offer for feedback. Any decisions that are made will consider the feedback provided.

The [survey results](#) (pdf) are posted on [our Community Engagement web page](#) and indicate a preference for balancing the budget through a combination of increasing fees and reducing non-mandated services. That feedback will guide us in the decisions we make about the 2020-21 transportation budget and services. A decision will be communicated to families by May 14, 2020.

Instructional Calendars for 2020-21 Adjusted and Approved April 2020

The instructional calendars for the 2020-21 school year, for both traditional and modified schools, have been adjusted. Please be sure you are referring to the **April 2020** version. If previous versions were downloaded, they should be discarded. The **April 2020** versions are posted on the calendars webpage on the corporate site [Instructional Calendars | 2020-21 School Year](#).

If you have trouble seeing this publication please [click here](#).

School Council Meetings

At this time, in-person School Council meetings cannot be held. If School Council and or Parent/School Societies have business that they NEED to attend to, please conduct these meetings using technology such as Skype, email or telephone calls. Fundraising activities may also proceed, but as is our usual practice, parent societies and the school principal or designate must agree upon fundraising goals and events.

For the safety of everyone, please follow the guidelines and direction set by AHS and the government and do not meet in schools until classes resume.

If School Councils are holding a meeting via an alternate format, as per usual, the school principal or delegate must be present.

Access to CBE Schools and Buildings

Schools are open, but to protect the health and safety of our community, we are not able to accept visitors.

We would be happy to connect with you on the phone or email. Please visit the contact us section of the school website for email details for teachers and staff. Please email to coordinate a time to pick up resources or personal items. You will be welcome to come inside if you are healthy.

We will ask you to reschedule if you have:

- a cough, fever, or are generally not feeling well,
- travelled outside of Canada in the past 14 days.

All Rentals Cancelled Until June 30, 2020

To continue to align public access to CBE facilities with that of the City of Calgary, all public rentals and CBE permits for outside groups within CBE schools have been cancelled from March 13 to June 30, 2020, with potential for extension.

See the Rentals website for further information. We are committed to keeping our Rentals website updated with the latest information, as decisions are made that affect all rentals in CBE Schools. All future updates on Rental Status will be posted there for your information.

Year-End Annual Report

Under the *School Act*, school councils are responsible for submitting an annual report to the Board of Trustees. This report helps the Board of Trustees measure and be accountable for parent and community involvement.

The annual report template can be found on the [School Councils webpage](#) in the right hand margin, under supporting documents.

The school council chair is responsible for submitting the report to the Board of Trustees **by the end of June** (each school year). Although the *School Act* states a Sept. 30 deadline, Trustees would appreciate receiving the report prior to the end of June. A copy of the report should also be provided to the school principal.

Please send your report to the Board of Trustees, via email to boardoftrustees@cbe.ab.ca or by Canada Post to the Office of the Board of Trustees, Calgary Board of Education, 1221 – 8 Street SW, Calgary, AB T2R 0L4.

ASCA AGM

Thank you to those school councils who are registered to participate and vote at the ASCA virtual AGM on Sunday, April 26. Please note that, **CBE parent, Sheila Hobday, from Sam Livingston School Council** is running for a position on the ASCA board of directors. Profiles of all candidates for the Board of Directors can be found at [ASCA website](#).

Nutrition Supports for Families during COVID-19

1. Alberta 211 - Call 211 for urgent food support
2. [The Calgary Food Bank](#) - Request food hampers by calling 403-253-2055.
3. [Brown Bagging for Calgary Kids](#) - \$20 grocery gift card for children who recently received a free lunch at school through BB4CK. Families are requested to complete information online at <https://bb4ck.org/help>.
4. [Salvation Army Community Support Services](#) – Can provide emergency food hampers and diapers/formula • call: 403-220-0432 or email: cssinfo@salvationarmycalgary.org
5. [SE Calgary Community Resource Centre](#) - Can provide families with basic resources such as food. They have requested that you please call first 403-720-3322.

New Provincial K to 12 Education Funding Framework for 2020-21

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.

Government Announces Education Funding Reductions for 2019-20

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, for the rest of this school year would be reduced by \$21 million.

As a result, on April 9, the CBE temporarily laid off about 1,900 employees. These positions included breakfast and lunch supervisors, part-time cleaners and other positions not directly connected to supporting ongoing learning.

ASCA Online Learning Resources

In the new reality of online delivery, Alberta School Councils' Association (ASCA) has increased digital resources, virtual interactions and opportunities for school councils to utilize in operations.

ASCA is restructuring delivery of services, workshops and supports by offering online learning resources for school councils.

Starting April 20, ASCA will host [Meeting Mondays](#) – online engagement creating a forum for school council parents to share information, learn from and support each other. [Webinar Wednesdays](#) will commence on April 22, presenting interactive online training sessions, focused on topic areas specific to the work of school councils. (Click for [schedule](#) details).

Informative web clips (shorter, distinct information; 2-4 minute videos) and [webcasts](#) (longer information videos; 5-7 minutes in length. With a beneficial range of topics are being developed to assist school councils and will be posted as they become available.

First available, is "[Refocusing School Council Work during COVID-19](#)", a vital webcast, developed to address the current reality and key considerations for the work of school council.

1. Meeting Mondays

One Hour virtual meetings starting April 20. Online engagement for school council parents to share information and support each other. Offered at 11 a.m. and 8 p.m. [Register here.](#)

2. Webinar Wednesdays

One hour online training sessions for school councils starting April 22. Topic specific each week. Offered at two times: 11 a.m. and 8 p.m. [Register here.](#)

CBE Three-Year Capital Plan

The Three-Year School Capital Plan 2021-2024 is an analysis of the Calgary Board of Education's (CBE) forecasted school capital needs, as assessed at the present time.

The [Three-Year Capital Plan 2021-2024](#) was presented to the Board of Trustees on March 3, 2020 and approved March 10, 2020. The approved report is posted on our [website](#).

Avoid COVID-19 Phishing Scams

There has been a noticeable increase in phishing and online scams related to the COVID-19 pandemic. Scammers often take advantage of health scares like COVID-19, tricking recipients into clicking on harmful links or attachments in emails, text messages or social media posts.

Some examples of COVID-19 scams to be wary of include:

- Fake websites showing maps and dashboards of COVID-19 cases.
- Charitable organizations claiming to help victims of the virus that may not be legitimate.
- Information on protecting yourself and family members that may contain malicious links or email attachments.
- Misleading advertisements regarding masks, hand sanitizer or other protective gear used to help combat the virus.
- Fabricated notices from health organizations.

Please be extra vigilant when opening emails that contain links or attachments related to the COVID-19 pandemic. People should be highly skeptical of emails and websites that claim to provide information or goods that are related to the pandemic. If you receive a phone call asking for credit card information, you should hang up immediately and call the non-emergency line for local law enforcement.

The [Canadian Centre for Cyber Security](#) has additional resources on ways to protect you from falling prey to these types of scams. Additional information for mitigating cybersecurity threats can be found at:

- [Alberta.ca](#)
- [Better Business Bureau](#)
- [Trend Micro AV](#)
- [US Department of Homeland Security-COVID-19 Information](#)