

media statement

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Statement Regarding Provincial Budget 2019-20

Statement from the Board of Trustees:

The CBE has reviewed the Province's 2019-20 budget. We can now say with certainty that the provincial budget will significantly impact Calgary students and their learning.

In June, the CBE's 2019-20 budget was submitted to the province as required. Despite increasing enrolment and other inflationary costs, we decided to plan our budget on the assumption that our funding would be frozen at 2018-19 school year levels. We felt that this was a prudent approach, taking into account government statements in the legislature that educational funding would be maintained and that student enrolment growth would be funded.

Now, we are dismayed to find out that the CBE will be receiving at least \$32 million less this school year than last year. This funding cut comes despite our enrolment increasing by nearly 2,400 students, the equivalent of four large elementary schools. This cut is in addition to the reductions already reflected in our June budget submission to the government.

While we agree that base funding per student remains unchanged, base funding only represents 66 per cent of our overall budget. While the Province funded enrolment growth at a cost of \$29 million, they also eliminated three grants totaling \$85 million and only partially replaced this cut with a one-time transition grant of \$24 million.

As this \$32 million cut comes in the midst of the school year, the impact will be much larger. We are estimating we will need to reduce spending by at least \$48 million to balance our budget by the end of the school year.

Announcing this budget after the school year has already commenced means we must make changes. Quickly. These unexpected changes will be disruptive to our students, their families, and our staff. All options are being explored including larger class sizes, service cuts, staff layoffs, use of reserves and fee increases. The CBE will carefully review every option before finalizing our budget to minimize the impacts to student learning. Despite the changes we will have to make, our commitment to students and a strong public education system will not waiver.

– 30 –

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**Calgary Board
of Education**