

news release

Calgary Board of Education shares approach to student first budget for 2013-14

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CALGARY—Calgarians will get their first glimpse into how the Calgary Board of Education will optimize student learning while balancing the budget when the budget assumptions report for 2013-14 is published today.

The budget assumptions report is not the budget but it provides details about provincial funding; program and service-delivery decisions; financial and economic uncertainties; and strategies proposed to mitigate the impact of the provincial budget.

The March 7 provincial budget results in the CBE having essentially the same funding for next year as 2012-13. This happens when costs are increasing and the CBE expects to welcome 3,000 more students.

The budget assumptions report highlights how costs are increasing as a result of such factors as inflation, “grid movement” and negotiated increases for unionized employees. Grid movement refers to time-based increases for unionized employees.

The budget assumptions report explains how the CBE plans to increase school-based budgets for 2013-14 by two per cent. The school-based increase depends on cuts in other areas. The most significant cuts are in administration.

The CBE proposes to reduce administration by \$5 million or 12.5 per cent. This would mean the percentage of its operating budget the CBE spends on administration would drop to three per cent from 3.4 per cent—substantially below the 3.6-per-cent limit the province will allow for administration in 2013-14.

Previously, the CBE announced decisions to freeze transportation fees and senior management salaries for 2013-14. The budget assumptions report explains other decisions made to benefit students, schools, programs and parents.

“The CBE faced a \$62-million shortfall when we calculated the full impact of the provincial budget,” says Naomi Johnson, chief superintendent of schools. “Our approach to the budget puts students in classrooms first and looking everywhere else to make cuts.”

The budget assumptions report will be published on the CBE website by noon today.

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Details of a media availability will follow.