

news release

Calgary Board of Education proposed 2014-15 operating budget released

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CALGARY— The Calgary Board of Education’s proposed 2014-15 operating budget will ensure funding levels to schools and core programming and services are maintained despite continuing enrolment and system growth.

In order to sustain this level of funding to schools, CBE has had to make some difficult decisions in developing the budget, including: depleting its operating reserves, no longer using instructional dollars to subsidize fees and delaying investments in certain new programs and services.

“This will be a challenging budget but we have avoided significant cuts to programming and service levels and kept dollars in the classroom to support our students,” says Brad Grundy, CBE chief financial officer.

The proposed budget allocates an additional \$28.9 million directly to schools, resulting in approximately 180 additional full-time staff for schools and keeping school staffing ratios close to current levels. The budget also increases other school support funding by \$17.2 million.

The CBE receives 92 per cent of its funding from the provincial government. This is the fourth consecutive year in which Alberta Education funding per student to the CBE has decreased.

This year’s Provincial funding has increased to keep pace with a projected enrolment increase of more than three per cent next school year. However, the additional \$43.6 million is not enough to fund unionized employees’ salary and benefit increases and other projected expenses for 2014-15 such as inflation and other operating expenses.

To address a projected shortfall of \$27.7 million in funding, the Board of Trustees on April 1 approved the use of all of its operating reserve funds based on the direction from Alberta Education. Despite the decision to use all reserve funds, CBE still faced a \$6 million funding gap.

At the same meeting, the Board received the Budget Assumptions Report which stated that consistent with its values – students come first, learning is our central purpose and public education serves the common good – the CBE would no longer use instructional grants to subsidize fees. This decision has provided an additional \$5.2 million to support core programming and services learning.



“While we know increasing fees may pose a hardship on families, we believe it is the right choice in a difficult budget year,” says Grundy. “It’s important to know that no student will be denied access to an education due to the inability to pay fees because the CBE has a comprehensive waiver program to support families who are experiencing financial difficulties.”

The use of operating reserves will allow the CBE to avoid significant cuts to programming and service levels in 2014-15 and to make some strategic investments. In doing this, however, the CBE is essentially depleting its savings account without changing the growing annual gap between funding and expenses.

“More tough decisions will have to be made in future years,” says Grundy.

The budget projects that unless there is a change in funding levels, the CBE will face a \$33.3 million budget deficit in 2015-16 and a cumulative \$61.1 million 2016-17.

“We are starting to plan an extensive public engagement process to address what that will mean to programming and service levels and supports in the future,” says Grundy.

The CBE budget was publicly released today. It goes to the Board of Trustees for discussion on May 6 and for final approval on May 20.

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More information is available on the [CBE budget website](#), including:

- 2014-15 Operating Budget
- Provide budget feedback

See other 2014-15 CBE Operating Budget news releases:

- [CBE operating budget supports students](#)
- [Increases in fees proposed for the 2014-15 school year](#)