

January 16, 2020

Dear parents, guardians and families,

One of the things your Board of Trustees values is transparency: transparency in how we make decisions, in how we spend taxpayer dollars, and about Edmonton Public Schools' current fiscal situation. We are committed to keeping you informed as we work together through these challenging financial times.

Last month, I wrote to you about the difficult decision the Board of Trustees made to increase transportation fees for some families. I've also written to you about the \$34.4 million shortfall we face this year after the provincial government eliminated three crucial grants we relied on.

After using our modest surplus to cushion the shortfall for this school year, we are starting to plan for the 2020-2021 school year. The provincial government has stated the education budget is frozen until 2022. And, although 15,000 new students enrol in Alberta schools every year—3,000 of them in Edmonton Public Schools—there will be no new dollars for education.

With no new funding and more students, our budget shortfall will grow. To prepare for the 2020-2021 budget, we are working on budget scenarios. We anticipate our operating expenses could be reduced by a further \$66.5 million, in addition to the \$34.4 million shortfall we covered with our surplus this year. In other words, we anticipate a potential overall shortfall of approximately \$100 million next year, compared to how we currently operate.

More difficult decisions lie ahead unless the provincial government provides us with adequate, predictable, sustainable funding.

As we plan, we are mindful of our Board's number one priority: supporting our students. We want you to know we're doing the very best with what we're being given. But this growing budget shortfall *will* negatively impact classrooms in the coming school year. Those impacts could include larger class sizes and fewer resources and supports for students.

Public education matters, and you have an important role to play in its future. Your voice matters. I encourage you to get involved with your school council. Call or email your MLA and the Minister of Education, cc-ing your Trustee, with your concerns about adequate public education funding in Alberta.

Sincerely,



Trisha Estabrooks  
Board Chair  
Edmonton Public Schools