

March 20, 2023

The Hon. Adriana LaGrange, Minister of Education
Office of the Minister, Education
228-Legislature Building
10800-97 Avenue, Edmonton, AB T5K 2B6
education.minister@gov.ab.ca

Dear Minister LaGrange:

Re: Increases to Education Funding and Curriculum Implementation Timelines

On behalf of the Board of Trustees for Grande Yellowhead Public School Division, I want to share our appreciation for increases to the funds in Education. Just recently, our Board added a fourth priority – *System Health and Wellness*. Within our Board Policy 20, *Health and Wellness*, we embrace the five dimensions of wellness as described in Alberta Education's *Framework for Kindergarten to Grade 12 Wellness Education* (2009): **emotional, intellectual, physical, social and spiritual**. We want to thank your ministry for recognizing the impact of the global pandemic on our students – the increased funds for Education will positively impact how our schools address these elements of wellness.

Specifically, the **Learning Losses Grant** will address gaps in skills and comprehension caused by the COVID interruptions, which, for some of our rural stakeholders was compounded by a lack of stable internet, or some of our stakeholders' decision to disengage from education all together. The increase to the **School Nutrition Grant** will ensure every one of our students has the nutritional foundation they need to learn – and for some of our more economically impacted children, this access to nutritious food is necessary to their overall ability to function at school. Finally, our Board wants to share our deep appreciation for the **Mental Health in Schools Grant**. As a small rural Board, Grande Yellowhead Public School Division strives to ensure a comprehensive range of supports are in place for our students. This grant allocation will allow GYPSD to expand and deepen our Division's focus on school-based universal supports and tiered resources – including specialized staff - for students who are struggling.

Through the lens of system health and wellness, we would once again urge your ministry to consider the pace of new curriculum implementation on our teachers and especially on our students. We ask that you consider slowing the implementation of new curriculum to one grade per school year. Our educators are passionate and committed to student learning; they want to take the time to thoroughly unpack each of the outcomes and consider the best way to design engaged learning experiences, so every student is successful. The pace of implementation, paired with addressing learning gaps, is a considerable source of stress for our educators. An implementation schedule that focuses on one grade per school year would make a substantial difference to their workload. We hope you will consider this request.

Thank you for the increases in Education funds, as noted above. Your consideration of request for a slower pace of new curriculum implementation is greatly appreciated as all of us consider the impact of comprehensive wellness and positive mental health in our learning and working environments.

Sincerely,



Dale Karpluk (Mar 20, 2023 08:58 MDT)

Dale Karpluk, Board Chair

Cc: C. Lewis, Superintendent of Schools
Board of Trustees
Mr. Martin Long, MLA for West Yellowhead
Mr. Shane Getson, MLA for Lac Ste. Anne-Parkland
ASBA
PSBAA

