

**The Honourable Demetrios Nicolaides**

Minister of Education  
228 Legislature Building  
Edmonton, AB  
T5K 2B6

June 26, 2024

**Re: Increase to Specialized Learning Support Grant**

Dear Minister Nicolaides:

On behalf of the Board of Trustees of Grande Yellowhead Public School Division, I am reaching out to advocate for a change in how funding for students requiring specialized learning supports and services is determined and accessed.

As it stands, the Weighted Moving Average and Multi-disciplinary Supports allocation does not adequately provide the necessary funds to support students with complex needs in small, rural jurisdictions. The grant amount that the jurisdiction receives does not expand to meet the many more children being identified, perhaps as a result of the pandemic, as requiring specialized supports and services.

Our Board wishes to share our appreciation for the addition of the Low Incidence Supports and Services grant. However, the time and staff required to complete the granting application process is a challenge for small jurisdictions.

The allocation formula, the unpredictability of funds, combined with the great distances between our communities, makes it very difficult to arrange for and provide timely assessments, build a responsive system, monitor program success, meet with parents, arrange for specialists, and build capacity across staff.

As you know, we are passionate about our role to ensure excellent public education in rural Alberta. Small boards with small enrolments do not have the economy of scale needed to ensure optimal learning environments in inclusive classrooms. We do not want our rural special needs children being left behind because of where they live.

Thank you for considering our request.

Sincerely,

  
Dale Karpluk Jun 26, 2024 11:47 MDT

Dale Karpluk, Board Chair (Jasper)

Cc: Board of Trustees for Grande Yellowhead Public School Division  
Mr. Martin Long, MLA for West Yellowhead  
Mr. Shane Getson, MLA for Lac Ste. Anne-Parkland  
Alberta School Boards Association  
Public School Boards' Association of Alberta  
Dr. C. Lewis, Superintendent of Schools

