

February 3, 2021

Ms Lorrie Jess  
President  
Alberta School Boards Association  
1200, 9925 109 Street  
Edmonton, AB T5K 2J8

Delivered via email to [president@asba.ab.ca](mailto:president@asba.ab.ca)

Dear President Jess,

### **Request to immediately increase advocacy for hold harmless year**

The Province is expected to deliver their 2021-2022 budget in the next four to five weeks. It is crucial that both the government and the public understand how devastating funding decreases would be for school boards, and ultimately our staff and students, if divisions are not held harmless for the enrolment decreases caused by COVID-19. Early estimates indicate that our Division alone could lose over \$15 million.

On October 1, 2020, the Edmonton Public School Board wrote to you to share our concerns about the effect our enrolment decrease would have on funding not only this year but in following years, given the Weighted Moving Average. We asked that ASBA advocate for the Province to hold school divisions harmless for any future years' reduction in funding as a result of the lower than anticipated actual enrolment compared to the projected enrolment due to COVID-19.

We understand that ASBA has received at least 17 letters from other divisions requesting advocacy for holding school divisions harmless for the 2020-2021 enrolment decreases and that the following motion was passed at the ASBA Fall General Meeting on November 16, 2020:

BE IT RESOLVED THAT, school divisions be held harmless by the Government of Alberta for any future year's reduction in funding due to lower than anticipated actual enrolment in the province as a result of COVID-19. Further, that the ASBA advocate for the Weighted Moving Average (WMA) calculation to be amended to use the 2020-2021 Projected Enrolment figures versus the September 30, 2020, enrolment numbers for the upcoming 2021-2022 and 2022- 2023 school years.

We know that the ASBA executive met with Minister LaGrange to discuss this issue on December 11, 2020. Unfortunately, there has not been any commitment from the Minister to hold school boards harmless, nor have we seen this issue kept at the forefront of the Ministry or public concerns.

ASBA's mission is, "To promote and serve member boards in supporting student success." To be successful, our students will need more, not less, funding to support them as we emerge from the pandemic. Your members have asked for your support and time is running out.

We urge you to immediately use every tool at your disposal to send a loud, clear and public message to the provincial government that school divisions must be held harmless. We also ask that you update the ASBA membership in a timely manner about any actions you take. The government is formulating their budget now and it is imperative that they know decreasing funding to schools is not acceptable.

Sincerely,



Trisha Estabrooks  
Board Chair

- c. Hon. Adriana LaGrange, Minister of Education  
Board Chairs of the Alberta Public, Separate and Francophone School Divisions  
Vivian Abboud, CEO, ASBA