

June 10, 2025

The Honourable Demetrios Nicolaides
Minister of Education and Childcare
Members of Executive Council
Executive Branch
228 Legislature Building
10800-97 Avenue
Edmonton, Alberta T5K 2B6

Re: Provincial Funding Request for Compensation for Local CUPE Bargaining Agreement

Dear Minister Nicolaides:

On behalf of the Board of Trustees for Grande Yellowhead Public School Division (GYPSD), we are writing to request the province's support with financial compensation to cover the additional support staff costs as a result of the recent collective agreement signed with CUPE Local 1357.

School boards wish to maintain a predictable, sustainable, and long-term funding model to ensure they can meet the goals and objectives detailed in their Education Plans, and as an essential part of their fundamental obligation to provide an excellent public education system. Items of extraordinary cost that have a significant financial impact on school boards, such as the CUPE collective bargaining agreements, where the province sets a compensation mandate, should be funded accordingly by the province. Given that school boards are predominantly government-funded, covering the cost of collective agreement salary increases will help lessen the potential impact on boards in meeting their education priorities and fiscal responsibilities.

As you can appreciate, the new CUPE Collective agreement will cost the Grande Yellowhead Public School Division an additional \$1.8 million annually. We have limited reserves and this additional cost will quickly deplete the Board's reserves and cause considerable hardship for this school jurisdiction. This comes at a time when this division is still struggling with the Jasper fire and having to pay \$500,000 for our insurance deductible from our reserves.

This school division, like other school jurisdictions, works hard at providing optimal learning support and services to our students. The Board views the expenditure of school funds as a public trust, and the Board must ensure that all funds are expended efficiently, economically, and in the best interest of the students of the Division.


School boards are expected to demonstrate stewardship of system resources with an emphasis on student success, transparency, and fiscal accountability as per the *Education Act*. The Ministry of Education and Childcare allocates funds to school authorities to fulfill their responsibility to provide education programs for Alberta's K to Grade 12 students. This funding targets resources to ensure student success – not only in their educational experience, but also in their after-school endeavours by investing in curriculum needs, health and wellness initiatives, technology, and infrastructure. If left unfunded, the financial impact of almost two million dollars annually to our Board from the CUPE agreement will undoubtedly impact the

level of educational opportunities that we are able to provide our students. If left unfunded, we have no choice but to look for strategies to fund this new agreement, which in all probability will lead to staff impacts. If we are forced to follow this pathway, we will do our best to minimize any impact, but undoubtedly, there will be consequences for staff and for student learning.

The Grande Yellowhead Public School Division truly appreciates your consideration of our request to fund the recently signed CUPE collective agreement. We strive to continue offering a world-class public education for K-12 students, and the Board values our strong working relationships with all levels of government. However, if we are to continue carrying out our stewardship in an effective manner, one that provides for a world-class educational experience for students, we will need funding to cover the extraordinary costs associated with the CUPE collective agreement.

Thank you for your consideration of this request. Please do not hesitate to reach out if you wish to discuss this request further.

Sincerely,


Dale Karpluk (Jun 13, 2025 19:49 MDT)

Dale Karpluk, Board Chair and Jasper Trustee

Cc: Board of Trustees
Dr. Dennis Parsons, Superintendent of Schools/CEO
The Honourable Martin Long, Minister of Infrastructure, MLA for West Yellowhead
Mr. Shane Getson, MLA for Lac Ste. Anne-Parkland
Alberta School Boards Association
Public School Boards' Association of Alberta

