EDUCATION FUNDING IN ALBERTA

KINDERGARTEN TO GRADE 12

2014/2015 School Year
Alberta’s Education System

Alberta has one of the best education systems in the world. We have excellent teachers, centralized high quality curriculum, outstanding learning and teaching resources and an effective standardized testing program. The success of our Kindergarten to Grade 12 education system is reflected in the success of our students, who consistently perform among the best in Canada and around the world.

Today’s families have a range of educational choices. Alberta’s funding model puts decisions in the hands of local school boards with the input and support of parents, students and communities. Our education system is built on collaboration, and we are continually striving to find innovative ways of ensuring learning resources are current and relevant for today’s and tomorrow’s learners. This ensures that students learn within supportive environments and well-maintained schools and that students are transported safely and efficiently.

This booklet is an overview of funding provided by the Government of Alberta for Kindergarten to Grade 12 education. Funding is provided for children as young as 2 ½ years old and students up to and including age 19.

For more information, please visit our website at http://education.alberta.ca.

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Note: This booklet is intended as general information for the public. The 2014/2015 Funding Manual for School Authorities is the authoritative source for funding details.
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How does Alberta fund the education system?

Total operational funding for Kindergarten to Grade 12 (K-12) comes from two sources:
- General Government Revenues – $4.4 billion (68 per cent)
- Education Property Taxes (including opted-out boards) – $2.1 billion (32 per cent).

Can I direct my education property taxes to a private school?

By Alberta law, money collected through education property taxes can only be used to fund the public education system, which includes public and separate schools. Private school funding comes from three sources: provincial general revenues, tuition or instruction fees paid by parents and private fundraising. Common questions and answers about private schools can be found on Alberta Education’s website at http://education.alberta.ca/admin/funding/tax/facts.aspx.
How much funding is available?

Total spending, including capital school facility funding to K-12, is approximately $7.4 billion in the 2014/2015 fiscal year. That means government will spend $37 million every school day on the education of our children.
Increased investment in K-12 education

Since the 2004/2005 fiscal year, funding for K-12 has increased from $4.8 billion to $7.4 billion in 2014/2015. During this period, funding has increased by 54 per cent while student enrolment has increased by 12 per cent.

Total Government Support to the K-12 Education System
Includes education property taxes for opted-out boards

Operational Funding includes education property tax support to opted-out school boards. Excludes funding for the pre-1992 contributions to the Teachers’ Pension Plan which has been transferred to Alberta Treasury Board and Finance.
Who receives support?

- Alberta Education provides funding to school authorities. When it comes to selecting a school, parents and students can choose from a wide range of options. They can select from public, separate, Francophone, private and charter schools. They can also access unique and innovative programs, including home education, online/virtual schools, outreach programs and alternative programs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Type</th>
<th>2014/2015 Student Projection ECS-12</th>
<th>% of Student Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Public School System</td>
<td>611,752</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private School System (private schools and private ECS operators)</td>
<td>32,261</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Funded Students</strong></td>
<td><strong>644,013</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Estimates as of February 2014 student headcounts

- Operating support for school boards will reach over $6.4 billion. This is an increase of $201 million or 3.2 per cent from last year. This increase pays for costs to finish the last five months of the 2013/2014 school year and supports additional costs due to significant enrolment growth.

- Private schools and private early childhood services operators will receive $220 million for the 2014/2015 fiscal year. This is an increase of 3.0 per cent due to enrolment growth and changes in student demographics.

- The government portion of the current services contributions to the Alberta Teachers’ Retirement Fund is $377 million for the 2014/2015 fiscal year. This is an increase of $20 million or 5.5 per cent. In addition, government will contribute $455 million for the cost of the pre-1992 teachers’ pension liability.
Alberta’s funding framework for K-12 education

The funding framework for K-12 education in Alberta is based on three pillars: funding, flexibility and accountability.

*To learn more about accountability in Alberta’s education system, please refer to Education’s website at:


**PILLARS OF THE FUNDING FRAMEWORK**

**Funding**
- The framework consists of approximately 25 different grants.
- The framework is simply a method to distribute funding to school authorities in a consistent and equitable manner.

**Flexibility**
- 98 per cent of funding is flexible, meaning school authorities have discretion to use these funds to meet the needs of their students.
- Only a few of the grants are “targeted” and must be used for the purpose for which they were provided.
- Government does not direct how funding is to be used.

**Accountability**
- Measuring achievement and improvement.
- Using results to improve programs for students.
- Transparency for how school boards use their financial resources.
How can funding be used?

The majority of funding provided has no restrictions on its use. While school authorities have the flexibility to use public funds to best meet the needs of their students, they must ensure the following:

- provide access to education programs for their students;
- follow Alberta Programs of Study (curriculum);
- employ certificated teachers;
- provide students with the required hours of instruction each school year;
- provide the Minister of Education with audited financial statements; and
- provide transportation services for students who reside at a distance of 2.4 kilometres or more from their school.

How are funds distributed?

Funding for K-12 education in Alberta is provided primarily on a per-student basis. The funding framework allocates funding to school authorities based on the demographic, geographic and economic environment in which services are delivered to students.

- **Demographic** – the number and type of students served.
- **Geographic** – area of the province in which the students are being served.
- **Economic** – the economic conditions under which the students are being served.
How are funds distributed? - continued

The funding framework provides four main categories of funding:

A. Base funding
B. Differential funding
C. Targeted funding
D. Capital funding (not provided to private or charter schools)

A. Base Funding

Kindergarten and Grades 1 to 9 students are funded on a per-student basis. Grades 10 to 12 students are funded based on the number of high school credits taken. Base funding represents the largest component of funding within the funding framework for instructional costs, such as teacher salaries and classroom materials.

Class Size Funding

- Class size funding is distributed as a per-student grant with a focus on Kindergarten to Grade 3.
- This methodology directs funds to the earlier grades, where smaller classes make the most impact on a child’s learning experience.
- Since its inception in 2004, $2.2 billion has been invested into class size funding. In the 2014/2015 school year, total class size funding will be $265 million—an increase of $17 million or 6.9 per cent.

Please refer to page 14 for per-student rates.
Class Size Funding—continued

- A class size base rate is also included in the funding for specific Career and Technology Studies courses in high school. This accommodates the need for smaller classes to enhance safety and student learning environments and to meet post-secondary trades training requirements under the revised Career and Technology Studies Programs of Study.

B. Differential Funding

Differential funding is provided in addition to base funding and addresses the unique characteristics and circumstances of each school authority. A selection of the significant differential grants is on the following pages.

The complete grant rate list is outlined in the 2014/2015 Funding Manual For School Authorities on Education’s website at www.education.alberta.ca/admin/funding/manual.aspx.

1. Severe Disabilities Funding—Kindergarten

Also known as program unit funding, this funding supports programs for young children in Kindergarten and pre-school programs who have been assessed as having severe disabilities.

Please refer to page 14 for per-student rates.
2. **English as Second Language**
   English language learners are children/students who are acquiring English as a second or additional language. These children/students come from homes where primary spoken language is not English. Funding is provided to support program planning and instructional supports for English language learners to achieve grade level learning expectations and their academic learning potential.

3. **Francisation Funding**
   This funding is provided to Francophone Regional Authorities and provides targeted instructional support for eligible children/students to assist them in developing French language competencies that will allow them to fully integrate socially, academically and culturally into the community and into Canadian society as a Francophone.

4. **First Nations, Métis and Inuit Education Funding**
   This funding is provided based on the number of self-identified First Nations, Métis and Inuit students.

5. **Socio-Economic Status Funding**
   This funding is based on a Statistics Canada index to identify the proportion of a school jurisdiction’s student population considered to be disadvantaged.

Please refer to page 14 for per-student rates.
6. Northern Allowance Funding
This funding is provided to school authorities in Alberta's north to offset the higher cost of operations. Funding is based on geographical location: the further north the school is located, the higher the per-student grant.

7. Equity of Opportunity Funding
Funding is provided through three components to support equitable access to education programs for students. A per-student allocation provides support for all funded students; a distance funding component recognizes the costs of providing services for rural students who attend schools that are located far distances from major service centres; and a low student density funding component recognizes the costs of providing services for students who attend schools in sparsely populated, remote rural communities.

8. Inclusive Education Funding
This grant provides funding for supports and services that benefit all students in an inclusive education system as well as additional supports that students require to help them achieve success. Part of the funding is provided through differential modifiers to address diversity factors that vary among boards.

*Private schools and Private ECS Operators do not receive Inclusive Education funding as this will be addressed in Phase 2 of the model.

Please refer to page 14 for per-student rates.
9. Plant Operations and Maintenance Funding
This funding is provided for the daily upkeep and maintenance of school buildings. It addresses the costs associated with lighting, heating and ventilation, grounds-keeping, cleaning and routine maintenance procedures, for example.

10. Transportation Funding
This funding is provided to address the costs of providing transportation services throughout the province. Formulas used to determine this funding are based on the area of the province in which students are being served.

- **When must transportation services be provided?**
  
  Under the *Student Transportation Regulation*, boards are required to provide transportation services for students who live 2.4 kilometres or more from their designated school. Local jurisdictions are free to provide enhanced services if they wish and may charge a fee for that service.

- **Schools of choice**
  
  Parents who choose to have their children attend a school outside of their designated attendance area or a school of choice assume responsibility for the transportation of their children to that school.

Please refer to page 14 for per-student rates.
C. Targeted Funding

Targeted funding is in addition to base and differential funding and is provided for specific provincial initiatives. This funding must be used for the initiative it was intended.

1. Regional Collaborative Service Delivery (RCSD)
Regional Collaborative Service Delivery (RCSD) is intended to provide a regional model for support to schools and community partners to meet the needs of children and youth (ECS to Grade 12), as well as to families who have children and youth with complex needs (birth to age 20). It is also intended to strengthen the capacity of service providers to collaboratively respond to those needs.

2. High-Speed Networking Services Funding
This funding assists school authorities with the basic connectivity costs to access internet in schools.

3. Class Size Funding
Must be used to hire or retain certificated teachers but may be used by school authorities for any grade level.

Please refer to page 14 for per-student rates.
D. Capital Funding

1. School Facilities Funding
   This funding is provided only to public school boards to build new or replacement schools, modernize or renovate existing school facilities, construct steel-framed modular classrooms or relocate existing portables.

2. Infrastructure Maintenance and Renewal Funding
   This funding is provided to maintain safe and healthy school facilities. It is intended to improve and prolong the life of school buildings and to upgrade school facilities in general, including the replacement of roofs, boilers and mechanical systems, water and sewer lines and windows and doors. This funding may also be used to improve the energy efficiency of schools.

A complete list of funding grant rates is available on Education’s website at http://education.alberta.ca/admin/funding/manual.aspx.

Please refer to page 14 for per-student rates.
# Selected Funding Rates *

*For the 2014/2015 School Year*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Base Instruction Funding</th>
<th>Public School System</th>
<th>Private School System</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ECS Base Instruction</td>
<td>$3,280.84</td>
<td>$3,280.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECS Class Size</td>
<td>$745.92</td>
<td>not eligible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 1 to 3 Base Instruction</td>
<td>$6,581.68</td>
<td>$4,593.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 1 to 3 Class Size</td>
<td>$1,491.84</td>
<td>not eligible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 4 to 9 Base Instruction</td>
<td>$9,581.89</td>
<td>$4,593.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grades 10 to 12</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Tier 1 Credit Enrolment Units earned</td>
<td>$1,874.48</td>
<td>$1,131.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Tier 2 Credit Enrolment Units earned (Including class size funding)</td>
<td>$2,000.06</td>
<td>not eligible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Tier 3 Credit Enrolment Units earned (Including class size funding)</td>
<td>$2,222.95</td>
<td>not eligible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Tier 4 Credit Enrolment Units earned (Work Experience/Special Projects)</td>
<td>$1,124.48</td>
<td>$78.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home Education</td>
<td>$1,841.27</td>
<td>$1,841.27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Differential Funding                          |                      |                       |
| Equity of Opportunity                         | per formula $70.70   |                       |
| Inclusive Education                           | per formula not eligible |                       |
| Severe Disabilities - Kindergarten (Program Unit Funding) | $226,061.20 | $226,061.20 |
| Mild/ Moderate Disabilities - Kindergarten (see Inclusive Education grant) | not applicable | $2,498.75 |
| First Nations, Inuit and Inuit Education      | $1,176.10            | $924.67               |
| English as a Second Language and Francisation | $1,176.10            | $924.67               |
| Northern Allowance                            |                      |                       |
| Lower Zone - school between 56th and 57th parallels | $471.24 | $329.87 |
| Intermediate Zone - school between 57th and 58th parallels | $705.84 | $484.09 |
| Upper Zone - schools north of 57th parallel   | $1,080.80            | $742.56               |
| Plant Operations & Maintenance                |                      |                       |
| Kindergarten to grade 6                       | $374.30              | $367.43               |
| Grades 7 to 9                                 | $375.18              | $347.05               |
| Grades 10 to 12                               | $375.38              | $348.99               |
| Outreach (per program)                        | $62,972.76           | not eligible          |
| Transportation                                | see Funding Manual    | not eligible          |
| Francophone Equivalency Access (Francophone school boards only) | $624.24 | not eligible |
| Socio-Economic Status                         | $471.24              | not eligible          |
| Small School By Necessity Allocation          | see Funding Manual    | not eligible          |

| Targeted Funding                              |                      |                       |
| SuperNet Service - per approved site          | $800.00              | $800.00               |
| Regional Collaborative Service Delivery       | see Funding Manual    | see Funding Manual     |

| Capital Funding                               |                      |                       |
| School Construction and Modernization         | per approved project  | not eligible          |
| Infrastructure, Maintenance and Renewal       | see Funding Manual    | not eligible          |

* All rates are per student, except where noted. Refer to Section 8 of the 2014/2015 Funding Manual for a complete list of funding rates and other allocations provided.
Putting Students First

Education is an important investment for Alberta

- With Budget 2014, Education is following the path we set out with last year’s budget.
- We are continuing to invest in Alberta’s families and communities through increased funding for education.

Supporting Alberta’s booming student population

- Education’s budget is increasing to accommodate Alberta’s booming student enrolments and changing demographics.
- Every new student coming into the system is being funded.

Smart spending to benefit all students

- We are putting students first by ensuring they have access to leading-edge learning opportunities now and in the future.
- We are putting students first by making smart and strategic investments in their education.
- We are increasing funding for smaller classes, which can be of particular benefit to our youngest learners.
- We are increasing funding for inclusive education to support the needs of every school, classroom and student.

Building Alberta through strategic capital investments

- One of the cornerstones of the province’s Building Alberta Plan is education and preparing kids for the future.
- Modern facilities are also essential to achieving the goals of Inspiring Education and will help ensure that Alberta’s students receive a world-class education.
- We are protecting our investment and planning for the future by maintaining and enhancing our school infrastructure.
- We are increasing funding for infrastructure maintenance and renewal to ensure Alberta students have school facilities that support their success.

Online Resources

Alberta Education Website
http://education.alberta.ca

2014/2015 Funding Manual for School Authorities
http://education.alberta.ca/admin/funding/manual.aspx

Alberta Education Business Plan
http://education.alberta.ca/department/businessplan/

The Guide to Education
http://education.alberta.ca/admin/resources/guidetoed.aspx

Resources for Parents:
• An information resource for parents.
  http://education.alberta.ca/parents.aspx

• The Learning Team – A Handbook for Parents with Special Needs Children
  http://education.alberta.ca/admin/supportingstudent/engagingparents/learningteam.aspx

• My Child’s Learning.
  www.mychildslearning.alberta.ca (English)
  www.apprentissagedemonenfant.alberta.ca (French)

Resources for Students:
• Learning Resources for Students
  www.LearnAlberta.ca

• Speak Out: Alberta Student Engagement Initiative
  www.speakout.alberta.ca

• Alberta Learning Information Service
  www.alis.alberta.ca
For more information
call Alberta Education at
780-427-2055
(toll free at 310-0000)
or visit www.education.alberta.ca