



March 31, 2022

Dear families,

As you may be aware, the provincial budget was released on Wednesday, March 23, providing a 0.7% increase in funding for Chinook School Division, an additional \$560,000 from the previous year. However, this did not cover projected teachers' salary increase, other support staff salary increases, or any other inflationary costs for the upcoming year, totalling \$1.5 million dollars. The Chinook Board of Education will have a \$5.1 million dollar deficit to start the 2022-2023 school year.

At this point, the board has no alternative but to address the structural deficit that has developed over several years of provincial underfunding. Presently, approximately 78% of the division budget is allocated for staffing across the division. In 2016, the board was faced with a similar situation to find efficiencies with reduced provincial funding of around \$5 million. Resources and staff were significantly reduced out of central office in an effort to minimize the impact on classrooms. With limited options available to reduce costs, we are left with no choice but to make reductions in staffing.

In order to address the inadequate provincial funding and follow the staffing formula, approximately 20 teaching positions will need to be reduced throughout the division. Many of these reductions will be handled through attrition as a result of the board's decision to offer a one-time retirement incentive for teaching staff. Another area that will be impacted by the budget shortfall is our educational assistants. In order to protect EA positions and meet budgetary requirements, their working schedules will be reduced by 30 minutes a day for full time positions.

The division will be implementing other reductions throughout various departments in an effort to further offset the deficit for the upcoming school year. This will include the removal of the sub allocation from school budgets, the reduction of curriculum resources and a decrease in the number of buses purchased in 2022-23. Depending on future funding from the province, in order to ensure the long term financial viability of the school division, the board may have to look at additional solutions to reduce the remaining deficit.

These decisions have been very difficult and we regret having to make any reductions. We want to sincerely thank all Chinook staff for their hard work and dedication in supporting students, and thank you to parents and caregivers for supporting schools and staff through this challenging time.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mark Benesh".

Mark Benesh
Director of Education

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kim Pridmore".

Kim Pridmore
Chair, Board of Education