

# media advisory

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Media Relations  
403-819-2317

mediarelations@cbe.ab.ca

## CBE offers options for parents with financial need

CALGARY—The Calgary Board of Education reminds parents that no one is ever denied access to education based on their ability to pay their school fees.

The CBE announced on May 6, 2013 that most fees paid by parents and students will be kept flat for the 2013-14 school year. Though this decision provides stability for CBE families, there will always be families in circumstances where paying school fees may be a financial hardship.

Formal fee waivers are provided by the CBE for families if they meet certain income guidelines, or fall into certain groups, including government sponsored conventional refugees, independent students and those with treaty status who are low income. Families who are low income and receive the Alberta Child Health Benefit are also eligible for fee waivers. Information about these waivers can be found on the CBE website or by talking to the school directly.

CBE principals are also empowered to offer informal fee waivers if a family does not qualify for a regular fee waiver and declares financial hardship. Principals work with families, without prejudice, to create a solution for their particular circumstance, which may include waiving fees in full or in part, or a partial payment schedule.

“The CBE understands and is sensitive to the impact fees have on thousands of Calgary families,” says Naomi Johnson, chief superintendent of schools. “We do everything we can to support them if they are having difficulty making ends meet.”

Feedback from parents in 2011 indicated that awareness of options for families struggling to pay their fees was low. The CBE has worked to raise awareness of fee waiver options, and from October 2011 to October 2012, the number of fee waivers processed increased by 30 per cent.

“We hope that by making applying for fee assistance a little easier, we will help lessen some of the stress these families feel. Financial circumstance should never stand between a child and their education,” says Johnson.

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