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May 12, 2016

Honourable David Eggen  
Minister of Education  
Office of the Minister  
228 Legislature Building  
10800 – 97 Avenue  
Edmonton, Alberta T5K 2B6

Dear Minister Eggen:

For the 2015-2016 school year, the Calgary Board of Education received \$35 million in transportation funding from the provincial government and spent about \$48 million to provide service to students, which resulted in an approximately \$13 million shortfall.

Following transportation service level changes in fall 2015, the Calgary Board of Education committed to a thorough transportation engagement to inform decisions for the 2016-2017 school year and beyond, which included ways in which to address the shortfall. To date we have held 17 in-person engagement sessions and conducted two online surveys with students, parents, staff and our public. We are currently analyzing the data we have received; however, early results demonstrate that our communities value keeping transportation fees affordable and reducing walk distances to bus stops. Although we share these values, we know that this feedback will not help us to close our gap between the service levels that parents expect and the fees charged to offer the service.

In addition to the transportation engagement, we engaged external consultants to review our transportation model to ensure that we are delivering safe, reliable and cost-effective transportation that is financially sustainable. The review revealed that while some efficiencies were possible, these would only result in small savings; the shortfall in transportation is largely as a result of inadequate funding by the provincial government. The review found the CBE's average cost of transporting a student with exceptional needs at \$7,611 to be 'reasonable' and 'within the expected range'; however, the province only provides \$3,374 per funded student based on severe profile. The total cost for transporting students with complex learning needs is approximately \$16 million. The shortfall is covered by fees which are charged equally to all students who utilize CBE transportation. This has resulted in increasingly higher transportation fees for our families over the years. In 2015-2016 transportation was covered by fees as well as supplementing the transportation budget with learning dollars to cover the growing shortfall.

Trustees have met with all Calgary MLAs and have expressed concerns regarding the need for providing adequate transportation funding for students, particularly those with complex needs. The Calgary Board of Education is requesting financial support from the provincial government to adequately fund transportation service to students with complex needs. Combined with solutions that will result from our community engagement, we believe that adequate funding will allow us to provide safe, reliable, cost-effective and sustainable transportation for our families, without having to pass along funding shortfalls in the form of higher fees.

We look forward to your response.

Yours truly,



Joy Bowen-Eyre, Chair  
Board of Trustees  
Calgary Board of Education

