



## **Message to the New Horizons Charter School Community from Your Board of Directors**

April 9, 2020 – Three weeks ago, the government of Alberta cancelled all K to 12 classes until further notice. This decision, made in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, has significantly impacted our students, families and staff. Since that day, the New Horizons Charter School community has come together and done an extraordinary job of rapidly adapting to our new remote education reality.

It was only a few days following the announcement that New Horizons students were online and engaged in learning. To do so, New Horizons School administration worked tirelessly with teachers, educational assistants, and support staff to ensure:

- our school was clean and organized, processes were in place, and communication was sent to parents so they were informed and could access the building safely to retrieve student's belongings;
- students had access to online learning tools, including home use of Chromebooks as required;
- content that teachers delivered in class was available online for student's to access remotely;
- online strategies and content was developed specifically for engaging students in the remote learning environment; and
- our students adjusted and engaged with their usual enthusiasm and flexibility.

Our entire community pulled together to support each other and continue the pursuit of education in this new reality. The Board of New Horizons Charter School recognizes the extraordinary nature of this transition. With very little notice, our team of professionals was able to adapt to a scenario that none of us could have imagined. Thank you to each and every one of those involved in this transition.

However, our situation continues to evolve. Two weeks ago the Alberta Government announced a temporary 14 percent reduction on the basic education grant (equivalent to \$51,224) to all school boards in Alberta, and a 51 percent reduction on the Transportation Grant (equivalent to \$6,212). The intent of this reduction is to reflect the shift to students receiving a home education program and reducing the number of educational assistants and support staff required. The reduction has significantly affected our school, students and overall morale.

Over the past several days, administration has been working to fully understand the financial and educational impact of this change in funding directed by the Alberta Government. In the final analysis, there are no palatable options, and as a result, very difficult financial choices needed to be made – including temporarily laying off eight (8) educational assistants for the remainder of the school year, effective the end of day April 30, 2020.

Our educational assistants are an invaluable part of our New Horizons Charter School community. The important work that they do ensures that every student has the support they need to realize the expected outcomes of their education.

As we continue to respond to the COVID-19 crisis, we will maintain minimal staff at the school for it to remain open for teachers to access for the remainder of the school year, and to ensure we will be ready to deliver school programs again in September, 2020.

We hope that those impacted by these changes, and the New Horizons Charter School community as a whole, continue to support each other in these unprecedented times. We will continue to ensure students receive the education that they need now and going forward.

*For further inquiries:*

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