

February 24, 2025

To our FSD Community,

Re: Update – Continuity of Learning during Labour Action

Honesty is the foundation of trust and assurance. During our tenure as leaders in the Foothills School Division (FSD) community, we have always been honest and transparent in our communications.

To provide clarity and transparency we are sharing the following update with you.

On Friday, February 21, 2025, we requested that our principals contact many families and ask them to keep their child at home while we planned for labour action affecting our community; and to support families in making plans for the following Monday. This was a difficult step, especially for the families that received this phone call. We recognize this and acknowledge the upset this has caused.

This was necessary to align with Alberta Education direction in contingency planning for students during job action; and to be able to assure the safety of all children in our care.

Labour action disrupts operations

- CUPE local 5040 served 72 hours' strike notice to FSD at 4:00 PM on Thursday, February 20, 2025.
- This means that close to 280 of our staff team will not be at work in their support roles to students as of Monday, February 24, 2025 – close to one third of our team.
- With significantly reduced staffing, to be proactive, and to meet our responsibility towards student safety for children in our care (*Education Act*, Section 33(1)) principals were asked to contact families on February 21, 2025.

Legislation & Ministerial Orders

- In anticipating potential labour action and working under the direction provided by Alberta Education, and in compliance with In-Person Learning Regulation (Alberta Regulation 226/2022), we developed a contingency plan aligned with Section 4 of the regulation seeking exemptions from the Minister for in-person learning.
- As directed, The Foothills School Division submitted a formal labour action contingency plan to Alberta Education on Thursday, February 20, 2025. We were instructed not to submit this plan until strike notice was received.
- Late in the day on February 20, 2025, we became aware that the Province of Alberta (*Kerber v Alberta*) received an injunction from the Court of King's Bench regarding similar exemptions from in-person learning in an Alberta school jurisdiction.
- Early on the morning of February 21, 2025, we inquired with Alberta Education about how this injunction may affect our contingency plan.
- Subsequently, Ministerial approval for our contingency plan was denied at 10:05 PM on Saturday, February 22, 2025, citing the need for compliance with the Court of King's Bench injunction.

Next Steps

- On Sunday February 23, 2025, we began the process of developing a revised plan that aligns with the injunction under the direction of Alberta Education.
- We will communicate this updated plan to our community as soon as possible.

We will continue to work with the province and ask for your cooperation and support as we plan along with our school leaders to assure learning and safety for each learner through current job action.

Yours in learning,



Chris Fuzessy
Superintendent of Schools
Foothills School Division



Theresa Letendre
Chair, Board of Trustees
Foothills School Division