

April 19, 2017

Darcy Eddleston  
Chair  
Rural Caucus of Alberta School Boards  
Buffalo Trail Public Schools  
1041 – 10A Street  
WAINWRIGHT, Alberta  
T9W 2R4

Dear Mr. Eddleston:

On behalf of Northern Gateway Public School Division, I am writing to issue our concern related to the recent announcement of a 45 credit enrolment unit per pupil funding cap on high school students, the attendant loss of revenues and the impact on programming, particularly that of dual credit programming.

We understand that the Rural Caucus executive will be meeting with the Minister of Education in the near future and we would ask that you share our school board's concerns.

Sincerely,



Judy Muir  
Board Chair

JM/gk





**Northern Gateway**  
Public Schools

## **IMPACT OF THE 45 CEU PER PUPIL CAP ON DUAL CREDIT PROGRAMMING IN NGPS**

Over the past three years, Northern Gateway Public School Division has worked hard to establish a robust Dual Credit program offering across the region it serves. This has seen partnerships built with post-secondary, with business, with local government and with neighboring school divisions to offer the unique program opportunities that are the core of the provincial dual credit concept. The dual credit program has costs, in some cases significant costs, but yields a return on investment that cannot be overstated. These program opportunities have taken root and the excitement across our high school parent and student population continues to grow.

The introduction of the 45 credit per pupil cap has placed this and other off campus programming at risk. Using the Northern Gateway experience we would offer the following illustrations of the impact of this per pupil cap on dual credit program viability.

### **Example 1 - Dual Credit - Oil and Gas Production Operation A**

When we have to pay \$1,800.00 per student and can only recoup 3 credits for PRS2020, PRS3020 and PRS2060 @\$227.00 plus 2 Work Experience credits @\$114.00 we fall far short of the tuition cost. We receive \$909.00 in CEU funding after paying \$1,800.00 in tuition to provide some excellent work force readiness experience and training for our students. With 10 students attending the session our cost was \$18,000.00 for tuition, \$5,000.00 for accommodations, another \$1,000.00 for travel and \$2,250.00 for the teacher supervisor subs.

The total cost to provide this very valuable opportunity for our students was \$26,250.00 our expected CEU revenue is \$9,090.00 for a net loss of \$17,160.00. For us to continue to provide these opportunities we have to generate additional CEU credits for these and other students to make up the shortfall.

### **Example 2 - CTS Auto Mechanics**

In a school like Fox Creek that does not have an auto mechanics teacher we can only provide auto programs by bringing a second instructor into the school. Where that person is a non-certified teacher we have to provide teacher supervision for that class thus doubling the cost of that program. Students in the program will generate 3 CEU's or \$681.00 each for a total of \$10,215.00 for a class of 15 students. The instructor plus teacher

supervisor cost for the course is in excess of \$15,000.00 depending on the rate charged by the journeyman.

As a result the students can only be offered this program if they or their classmates have the opportunity to generate other CEU revenue to cover the double cost of this program.

### **Example 3 - Locally Developed Course Driver Education**

Local employers have told us they want all new hires and even summer students to have a valid drivers license. We currently use AMA instructors and vehicles at a cost of \$839.00 per student. We generate revenue of 3 CEU's per student leaving a shortfall of \$158.00 per student or \$3,160.00 for a class of 20 students.

### **Example 4 - Low Enrollment Academic Courses**

In rural schools it is difficult to meet the needs of all students in a single course, yet in courses like Mathematics, Physics or Chemistry it is not unusual to have enrollments of 6-10 students. Even in a class of 10 students the maximum CEU revenue is \$9,500.00 yet the teacher cost for that block is \$14,500.00 for a shortfall of \$5,000.00 in just that course. The only way smaller rural schools can provide a mix of academic required courses and at least a few CTS offerings is to have students complete more than the usual 45 credits thus generating additional revenue to support even the basic of academic program offerings.

The overall impact of the 45 CEU per pupil cap for funding at the high school level will see a reduction of more than \$200,000.00 in CEU funding for the 5 Northern Gateway High Schools. Such a cut in high school funding will severely limit the ability of the division to support any kind of a dual credit program but more importantly dual credit opportunities that lead to direct entry employment of our students as they graduate grade 12. New programs such as our planned Pulp and Paper Operator dual credit program with partners NAIT and Alberta Newsprint Company will have to be reviewed. Important trades related CTS programs that require a journeyman to instruct will disappear severely limiting curriculum options for students with an interest in pursuing any kind of a trades related career. The impact for our students involved in Registered Apprentices Programs will be negative because many of these students generate more than the 45 CEU's which then allows their school to assign the Alberta Education required teacher to do the workplace inspections and observations of their students. RAP has grown in NGPS over the past couple of years, this growth in an important employment area will be jeopardized with the 45 CEU per pupil cap.