



# News Release

For Immediate Release: February 8, 2010

## WRPS Schools Lose an Additional \$300,000

Arbitrator Andrew Sims Q.C. ruled February 2 that Alberta teachers are owed a 5.99 per cent wage increase and not the 4.82 per cent that the Government funded school boards to pay teacher wages in September 2009.

The arbitrator's decision settles an argument between the provincial government and the Alberta Teachers' Association about how much teachers' salaries should have increased in 2009. The government argued it was 4.82 per cent – the Alberta Teachers' Association said they were owed 5.99 per cent. The 1.17 per cent difference will cost WRPS approximately \$300,000.

The loss of \$300,000 is in addition to the \$591,905 already lost in September of 2009 as a result of the Government's deficit of \$6.9 billion and their reduction in funding to education of \$80 million for the current school year.

In 2007, the provincial government and the provincial Alberta Teachers' Association negotiated a salary increase tied to a formula: Alberta's Average Weekly Earnings Index. The provincial government promised to fund that number. In August 2009, government advised school boards it would only fund a 4.82 per cent increase. The decision by the Government led to a dispute with the Alberta Teachers' Association that resulted in the dispute going to arbitration.

This latest decision comes days before the Government of Alberta announces the provincial budget for 2010. On Tuesday February 9 school boards will be informed of next year's cuts to education funding. If the levels of cuts allocated across government departments are in proportion to their expenditures, K-12 education face cuts of \$340 million dollars or approximately \$570 per student. Such cuts are beyond the capacity of school boards to absorb without substantial negative impact on students.

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