

## **Edmonton Examiner Column #4 – July, 2010**

Dear Constituents:

On June 24, 2010 the Government of Alberta revealed that it had collected an additional \$181 million in education property taxes from property owners on top of the \$1.536 billion forecast. At the time of this announcement, the Edmonton Public School Board had announced they would have to cut teaching and support positions in order to fund the three percent wage increase owed to teachers, and both Edmonton and Calgary's public and separate school boards faced shortfalls amounting to tens of millions of dollars. At a press conference on June 24, 2010, I requested that the Government use the additional tax revenues to cover underfunding to Alberta school boards. "This money would undoubtedly ease the pressure on Alberta's school boards if the government would actually *use* it for schools: There is no reason whatsoever to deprive our children of a good education, not when the additional revenues from education property taxes more than cover the government-created shortfall."

I was pleased to see that the Alberta Government recently announced a cash infusion of an extra \$63 million for Alberta school boards, to be divided among them according to student enrollment. However, by the time this much needed extra cash infusion was announced, the Edmonton Public School Board had already eliminated 119 teaching positions and hundreds of support staff, as they were not prepared to go into debt to cover their budget shortfall. The EPSB has announced they will use some of the new cash to hire back young teachers, but this situation illustrates serious communications problems between the Government and the Province's school boards.

School boards must be provided with stable funding that they can count on in advance year-to-year and the Alberta Government must live up to its contractual obligations to fund the system adequately.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Hugh MacDonald". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large, prominent initial "H".

Hugh MacDonald, MLA

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