

Deputy Minister

10th Floor, Forestry Building
9920 - 108 Street
Edmonton, Alberta, Canada T5K 2M4
Telephone 780-422-9526
www.alberta.ca

November 24, 2025

Honourable Irfan Sabir, MLA
Chair, Standing Committee on Public Accounts

Delivered via email to: Warren.Huffman@assembly.ab.ca

Dear Chair Sabir:

Thank you for your invitation to appear before the Standing Committee on Public Accounts on October 28, 2025.

Attached is Indigenous Relations' written response to the Jordan's Principle Letter I committed to provide to Committee Members during the meeting.

Please contact me should you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Donavon Young

Attachment: Jordan's Principle Letter



ALBERTA
EDUCATION

*Office of the Minister
MLA, Calgary - Bow*

AR 127994

December 20, 2024

Honourable Patty Hajdu
Minister of Indigenous Services Canada
Government of Canada
House of Commons
Ottawa ON K1A 0A6

Dear Minister Hajdu:

Jordan's Principle was designed to ensure First Nations children have access to the supports and services they need in a timely and responsive manner.

The federal government's delay to the Jordan's Principle approval process has made this impossible in Alberta and has had a serious impact on First Nations youth, including students who rely on this funding for essential education supports.

Immediate action must be taken to expedite the review process and address delays.

My office has been in contact with a sample of Alberta school divisions this week. Of those we have spoken to, only eight per cent did not apply for any funding under Jordan's Principle. Seventeen per cent had applied and received funding, as per their agreement. Three quarters of the school divisions sampled have applied and are still waiting for approval and funding.

Wild Rose School Division is one of those most seriously impacted by the delays. The division was forced to lay off almost 50 Educational Assistants earlier this week after waiting more than six months for their application to be reviewed.

The division relies on funding through Jordan's Principle to provide support to First Nations students who may have unique learning needs and/or disabilities. This includes access to trained, culturally competent educational assistants in the communities Wild Rose serves. Laying off Educational Assistants will disrupt learning for First Nations students across all grade levels. In rural Alberta, recruiting and retaining staff is already challenging. These layoffs threaten to undo years of work building trust, fostering relationships, and supporting First Nations families within Wild Rose, as well as O'Chiese, Stoney Nakoda, and Sunchild First Nations.

Staff lost during this process may never return, deepening gaps in culturally responsive education and reducing access to supportive, familiar, and effective learning environments. That impact extends beyond the classroom, destabilizing families and communities that rely on consistent, culturally competent educational services.

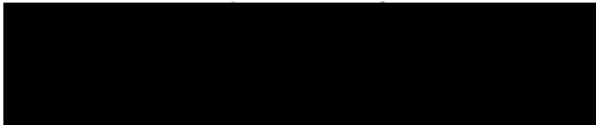
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Even so, I remain hopeful that bringing this issue to your attention will create urgency in your office to address the Jordan's Principle backlog and respond immediately to pending applications, like the one Wild Rose School Division submitted in May 2024, and before the issue expands to impact other school divisions and their students.

My department is available to meet with representatives of your team in the Alberta Region to discuss this issue further and determine how we can work together to find an immediate solution to the backlog. Please have them contact Boris Contreras, Assistant Deputy Minister, First Nations, Métis and Inuit Division, Alberta Education at 780-721-8957 or by email at boris.contreras@gov.ab.ca.

Thank you for your attention to this significant issue.

Sincerely,



Demetrios Nicolaides ECA PhD
Minister of Education

cc: Honourable Danielle Smith, Premier of Alberta
Honourable Adriana LaGrange, Minister of Health
Honourable Rick Wilson, Minister of Indigenous Relations
Honourable Jason Nixon, Minister of Seniors, Community and Social Services
Honourable Searle Turton, Minister of Children and Family Services