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For immediate release

**Students should be first in line for extra funding
Additional funds needed to reverse education cutbacks - CUPE**

EDMONTON – The Alberta government should take no comfort in improved fiscal results released today if those results come at the gutting of education in the province.

Marle Roberts, President of the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) Alberta Division said the government’s refusal to reverse recent education cuts amounts to giving up on a generation of young people. CUPE Alberta represents 7,500 K-12 employees in the province.

“This government’s underfunding of education will mean 1,000 fewer teachers in September,” said Roberts. “That means 1,000 fewer classrooms for the same number of students.”

“Adding to those problems are the layoffs of our members, the Educational Assistants, who will not be able to assist those teachers with the special needs kids,” added Roberts. “It will now fall upon the teachers to assist the special needs kids at the same time they are given larger class sizes – everybody will lose in this scenario.”

Roberts called on the government to use some of its new revenue to fill the education funding gap.

“If they really believe in education, in smaller class sizes, and in support for special needs students – they can fix this problem today.”

“Anything else is neglect, bordering on abandonment of schools.”

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