

# Media Release

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## For immediate release

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## Alberta Liberals commit to a moratorium on school closures

Edmonton - Alberta Liberal Leader Kevin Taft committed today to placing a three-year moratorium on school closures to review the flawed school closure process.

“Too many schools are needlessly or prematurely closed, which has a huge impact on families, students and teachers,” said Taft. “The Alberta Liberals will ensure that we can develop an improved process that works for both parents and school board trustees.”

Speaking outside an Edmonton school, Taft said the Alberta Liberals will build on their reputation as “the education party” by addressing long-neglected needs in the education system and providing students with the tools they need for the best education possible.

“The Alberta Liberals have always supported the valuable role that schools play in their neighbourhoods,” said Taft. “One of the key initiatives in our platform is to enable a ‘community schools’ program. By allowing schools to be converted into centres offering health care, after-school care and social services, we will not only be supporting our students, teachers and parents, we will be supporting our communities.”

Taft said the Alberta Liberal Action Plan for Education will start by honouring the deal to fund the unfunded portion of the teacher’s pension fund.

The plan will also eliminate school fees for essential school supplies.

“Parents and students shouldn’t be forced to fundraise for basics like text books and paper,” said Taft. “The Alberta Liberals will ensure that our students have the resources they need for the best education possible, and that our teachers are supported in their incredibly valuable work.”

“Alberta spends more per capita than almost any other province, yet thousands of children are going to school hungry, our infrastructure is so deteriorated that school roofs are leaking or in danger of caving in, and the high school graduation rate is among the lowest in the country,” said Taft. “This is unacceptable. Our students will form the next Alberta, and if we don’t help them to get the best education possible, then we are squandering our future.”

All of the funding for education was included in the Alberta Liberal Party’s costing announcement last Friday. Through a Core Program Review and better use of the Sustainability Fund, the Alberta Liberals will reallocate \$255 million in operating funding to support public education and over \$500 million in capital dollars to get needed schools built in Calgary, Edmonton and other communities across the province.

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The plan will also help to put at-risk children on a path to success, through initiatives such as:

- Introducing a province-wide school nutrition program so that children at risk of hunger have a healthy meal each day.
- Establishing a full-day kindergarten program and a junior kindergarten program, starting with at-risk children.
- Reducing class sizes, working towards the Alberta Learning Commission's target ratios for class sizes.

"The Alberta Liberals will make sure that every child has the tools they need to do their best in school, regardless of their economic background," said Taft. "This plan will help to ensure our students are able to achieve the brightest future possible."

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