

Medicine Hat Public School Division601-1st Avenue SW, Medicine Hat, AB T1A 4Y7 | Phone 403.528.6700 | Fax 403.529.5339 | www.mhpsd.ca

October 14, 2026

Office of the Minister
Honourable Demetrios Nicolaides
228 Legislature Building
10800 - 97 Avenue
Edmonton, Alberta T5K 2B6

Via email: education.minister@gov.ab.ca

Re: Formal Request for Capital Project Approval — Crestwood K–9 STEM School

Dear Minister Nicolaides,

I am writing to you as Chair of the Medicine Hat Public School Division Board of Trustees to formally request provincial approval of our division's number one capital priority, the new Crestwood K–9 STEM School. This request is one that I make with great conviction, both as Board Chair and as someone who has a lifelong connection to public education. I recognize the significant financial pressures facing the province and the many competing requests for school capital funding. However, I believe our division has demonstrated the planning, financial responsibility, and commitment necessary to move this project forward.

Public education has always held a special place in my life. My father dedicated more than 33 years to serving as a school board member and was also an educator who inspired and influenced many teachers throughout his career. I grew up witnessing his dedication to students, his respect for the teaching profession, and his belief that strong public schools are the foundation of strong communities. His example has stayed with me throughout my own years of service as a trustee and now as Board Chair. He understood, as I do today, that serving in public education comes with a responsibility to make thoughtful decisions, sometimes difficult ones, that will benefit students long after our time in these positions has ended.

That responsibility has been at the forefront of the decisions our Board has made. Over the past several years, our division has undertaken significant work to ensure that we are making responsible use of the resources entrusted to us. We have completed a value-scoping process involving Alberta Education and project architects to carefully examine our capital needs, evaluate opportunities for efficiencies, and ensure that our planning reflects the responsible use

of public funds. The Board of Trustees has also made the difficult decision to close two schools as part of our efforts to better utilize existing facilities and ensure that our available educational spaces are being used effectively. These were not easy decisions. Schools are important to the families and neighborhoods they serve, and our Board fully understands the impact that closures have on a community. However, we also recognize our responsibility to look at the needs of the entire division and make facility-planning decisions that support long-term sustainability.

I believe this work deserves to be recognized as part of the province's consideration of our Crestwood K–9 STEM School project. Our commitment to responsible financial management is matched by our commitment to providing innovative and meaningful educational opportunities for students. Since 2021, Crestwood STEM School has developed into a well-established K–6 program built around collaboration, communication, creativity, and critical thinking. Through the dedication of school leadership and staff, STEM education has become part of the school's everyday approach to teaching and learning. Students participate in robotics, coding, design thinking, makerspace activities, field studies, and project-based learning that encourages them to explore ideas, solve problems, and connect classroom learning to real-world experiences. Crestwood has also developed valuable partnerships with the Association of Professional Engineers and Geoscientists of Alberta, Medicine Hat College, and local industry partners. These relationships expose students to career possibilities and help them understand the connection between their education and the opportunities that await them.

I am particularly proud that this program was developed through the initiative and commitment of our own educators. They recognized the value of STEM education and worked to create something meaningful for the children in their care. The program is established, the educational direction is clear, and our division is committed to its continued growth. The next step is to expand Crestwood into a K–9 STEM School, allowing students to continue this learning through their middle school years. This expansion would also strengthen the connection between elementary education, high school programming, post-secondary opportunities, and the future needs of Alberta's workforce. I believe this is an important opportunity not only for Medicine Hat Public School Division, but for Alberta. We know that the world our students are entering is changing. Technology, artificial intelligence, engineering, and emerging industries are reshaping the skills that will be required of future generations. Our responsibility is to ensure that students are prepared to meet those challenges with confidence, curiosity, and the ability to think critically.

Minister Nicolaides, I want to emphasize that our Board understands the importance of financial accountability. We have demonstrated that understanding through our actions. We have reviewed our facilities, examined how our spaces are being utilized, undertaken value scoping, and made difficult decisions to reduce inefficiencies within our division. We have done this

because we recognize that responsible stewardship of public funds is not optional. It is a fundamental obligation of the Board. At the same time, fiscal responsibility must be balanced with our obligation to plan for the future. We cannot focus solely on making the best use of the schools we have today without also considering what our students will need tomorrow. We are now asking the province to recognize that work and support the next important investment in our students' future.

As Board Chair, I recognize that meaningful progress requires more than good intentions. It requires careful planning, difficult decisions, and the willingness to stand behind a vision that we believe will benefit children for generations. When I reflect on my father's 33 years of service to public education, I am reminded of the importance of leaving something better for those who follow us. His dedication was never about recognition. It was about doing what was right for students and believing that education could make a lasting difference in their lives. I have tried to carry those same values into my own leadership. I want to know that during my time as Board Chair, I did everything I could to ensure that our division remained responsible with its resources while continuing to move forward and provide the opportunities our students deserve. I believe the Crestwood K–9 STEM School project reflects both of those commitments.

My father devoted more than three decades of his life to strengthening public education. I hope that through my own service, I can continue that commitment by helping secure opportunities that will benefit children long after my years on the Board have ended. Crestwood K–9 STEM School is one of those opportunities. I respectfully ask that you approve this important capital project and work with us to make the new Crestwood K–9 STEM School a reality for the children and families of Medicine Hat.

Thank you for your time, consideration, and commitment to public education in Alberta. I look forward to your response and hope we will have the opportunity to work together to bring this project to fruition.

Sincerely,



Catherine Wilson, Board Chair
Medicine Hat Public School Division