

portion of their property taxes, the Education Property Tax Assistance for Seniors program was introduced. The program provides an annual rebate to senior homeowners who have an increase in the education portion of their property taxes.

The Government of Alberta also provides financial assistance to low-income seniors through the Alberta Seniors Benefit. The Alberta Seniors Benefit provides monthly cash benefits, which can help seniors with their property taxes or other expenses. It provides support in addition to the federal benefits received including Old Age Security and Guaranteed Income Supplement.

### **Can I direct my education property tax to a private school?**

No. By provincial law, money collected through the education property tax can only be used to fund the public education system, which includes public and separate schools. Private school funding comes from three sources: provincial general revenues, tuition or instruction fees paid by parents, and private fundraising.

### **Why are property owners asked to declare their faith?**

The Constitution of Canada guarantees Protestant and Roman Catholic citizens' minority rights to a separate education system. In communities where there are separate school jurisdictions which have opted-out of the ASFF, property owners must declare their religious affiliation, either Protestant or Roman Catholic, to determine what education property tax dollars should be directed to those separate school jurisdictions.

## **For more information...**

**Contact your municipality** regarding:

- the assessed value of your property,
- market value assessment,
- declaration of school board support, or
- paying your taxes through a prepayment plan.

**Contact Alberta Seniors and Community Supports** toll-free at 1-800-642-3853, or 427-7876 in Edmonton, or visit the ministry's website at [www.seniors.gov.ab.ca](http://www.seniors.gov.ab.ca) for more information on:

- the Education Property Tax Assistance for Seniors program,
- the Alberta Seniors Benefit, or
- other provincial programs and services for seniors.

**Contact the Government of Alberta Education Property Tax Line** toll-free by dialing 310-0000 and then 422-7125, or (780) 422-7125 regarding the education property tax.

Details of the Alberta School Foundation Fund are published in the Alberta Education Annual Report, available online at: [www.education.alberta.ca/apps/annualreport](http://www.education.alberta.ca/apps/annualreport)

View Education funding information at: [www.education.alberta.ca/admin/funding.aspx](http://www.education.alberta.ca/admin/funding.aspx)

April 2009



# **Education Property Tax**

## **Facts and Information**

April 2009



## Facts...

Total support for the K-12 education system increased to \$6.3 billion in the 2009/2010 fiscal year, of which \$1.7 billion will be funded from education property taxes.

Although education property tax rates will be reduced by about 16.1 percent in 2009, government will collect \$85 million more in education property tax revenue as a result of real property improvements and newly built homes and businesses.

Excluding school facility construction or renovations, about 31 percent of K-12 spending will be supported by the education property tax.

This will be the 16th year that education property tax rates were lowered or frozen. The province's commitment to low education property tax rates is a key reason why property owners in Alberta continue to pay among the lowest property taxes in the country.

To ensure separate accounting of education property tax funding, the Alberta government established the Alberta School Foundation Fund (ASFF) in 1994. This fund makes certain that the education property tax is accounted for separately from general revenues.

## You asked us...

### How does the province collect the education property tax?

Every year the province calculates, based on assessment value, the amount each municipality must contribute towards the public education system.

Municipalities collect the education property tax from ratepayers and then forward it to the province for deposit into the ASFF.

### How is my share of the education property tax calculated?

Your share is based on the assessment value of your property and the local education property tax rate. The assessed value of your property multiplied by your local education property tax rate determines the amount of education property tax you must contribute. A decrease in the local education property tax rate can help lessen the impact of assessment value increases on your individual tax bill.

### Where does the education property tax go?

The money collected from the education property tax goes to fund Albertans' priorities in education. The education property tax is pooled into the ASFF and then distributed among Alberta's public and separate school boards on an equal per-student basis.

All separate school boards in the province have opted-out of the ASFF, which means they requisition and collect property tax money from the municipalities directly. Any difference between what an opted-out board collects and what they are entitled to receive is adjusted for so there is no financial gain to a school jurisdiction that opts out of the ASFF.

### What does the tax pay for?

The education property tax supports all public and separate school students. The education property tax helps pay for

instructional costs including teacher salaries, textbooks, and other classroom resources. This tax is not used to fund government operations, capital expenditures like school facility construction or renovations, teachers' pensions, private, charter, or Francophone schools.

### Why is education partially funded through a property tax?

The education property tax provides Alberta's education system with a stable and sustainable source of revenue. Pooling the education property tax in the ASFF ensures that students receive a quality education regardless of their municipality's assessment wealth.

### Does everyone pay the education property tax?

All property owners pay the education property tax (with some exceptions, such as non-profit organizations and seniors' lodge facilities). People who rent or lease property may also contribute indirectly through their monthly rent or lease payments. As the education system benefits all Albertans, people without children in school also pay the education property tax.

Every Albertan benefits from a quality education system. The education property tax supports an education system that is producing the workforce of tomorrow.

### Do seniors have to pay the education property tax?

Seniors who own property must pay the education property tax. In recognition of concerns raised by senior homeowners about year-to-year increases in the education