

Working together to support choice and innovation in public education.

December 2012 Issue

New Leadership in Alberta Education



In May, 2012 we welcomed Mr. Jeff Johnson as our new Minister of Education, as well as Mr. Tim Wiles as our new Deputy Minister of

Education. Mr. Johnson is quite well known to the education community since he was very involved with the *Inspiring Education* discussions in recent years. Mr. Wiles comes to Education from his previous role as Deputy Minister of Finance. While some of our schools have had opportunities to meet with Mr. Johnson and Mr. Wiles since their appointments, the association is optimistic that they will attend one of our functions in the new year to meet with all our delegates.

New Education Act

The government's new Education Act (Bill 3 - <http://www.education.alberta.ca/departement/policy/education-act.aspx>) was introduced in the house in November and was passed in December. Following extensive discussions during the tenures of Min. Hancock and Min.

Lukaszuk, the new Act was nearly five years in the making. While the Act recognizes the importance of "choice" for Albertans there is nevertheless one concern the association has with it, and it relates to process. In the Act, individuals/societies who are applying for a charter school are required to first present their proposal to the local school board before it can proceed further. If the local board believes they can accommodate the request through the creation of an alternative program, then the charter school application process ends there. If the local board does not believe they can accommodate the request, the Minister will entertain the application. Recent commentary in the media and in the legislature has pointed out that this is somewhat like requiring General Motors to first go to Ford to get permission to introduce a new product line (see www.troymedia.com/alberta-edition/2012/12/03). Several related questions arise. Does the local board have a responsibility to enact all, some or none of the features contained in the application? Who monitors what has been enacted? Who owns the intellectual property contained in the application?



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The new Act will be fully in place by September 2015. In the interim, consultations will take place concerning the development of the Regulations which will accompany the Act. Our association has been informed by Alberta Education that we will be invited to participate in this process, and we will take full advantage of this opportunity.

Leadership Learning Initiative

Leadership development sessions continue with our administrators on the topic of “Professional Practice Competencies for School Leaders in Alberta”. To date, two sessions have taken place with the final two to take place before May, 2013. Almost 40 administrators have been in attendance. We are grateful to Alberta Education for their support with this project. As part of their expectation, a report will be provided to Alberta Education, as well as to our stakeholders, at the completion of the school year. The report will provide information regarding the process we followed and how it may have contributed to improved

administrator practice in the 7 competencies. This information will be shared with other jurisdictions in the province as they create their own processes for developing leadership competency.

U. of C. Research Project

Under the leadership of Dr. Dianne Gereluk and Dr. Eugene Kowch, researchers from the University of Calgary will soon be contacting charter school superintendents to discuss, among other things, such questions as “What makes your school successful?”; “What does the future hold in store for you?”; “What are the opportunities and challenges you see for charter schools in Alberta?” Such discussions, along with a review of the documents which have been provided to the university by our schools and association, will result in a report in the summer of 2013 which should assist our association in identifying the positives as well as the challenges we face as we move into the future. Our intent is to utilize the information, not just to inform ourselves but also Alberta Education and our other



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partners of the role we believe we can play in advancing the cause of education in Alberta.

Revised Legislative Proposal to the Minister

In recent months, several boards have invited MLA's to visit with them to discuss specific issues at their individual schools. Our association's executive committee would like to also ask our boards to consider referring to the document entitled "TAAPCS Legislative Proposal to the Minister" which was originally drafted in 2008 and then revised in December, 2011. The document asks the Minister to provide "greater equity with school boards... in selected areas". Those areas are:

1. Governance (linking accountability with perceived legitimacy)
 - a. Delegation of authority for superintendents to sign employment contracts or service agreements.
 - b. Public accountability of charter boards – selection of Board members.

2. Equitable funding
 - a. IMR
 - b. Transportation
3. Facilities
 - a. Access to "continuous charter terms" (now is being partially addressed through 15 year terms)
 - b. Access to surplus school reserve land
 - c. Access to funding for new school buildings
 - d. Timely access to appropriate closed school buildings.

Recent conversations at many meetings have indicated to the association's executive that equitable funding and facilities are major concerns for most boards and we encourage this dialogue to continue when meeting with our elected officials and Alberta Education personnel.

Inclusive Education Funding

One area of concern regarding "equity" of funding concerns Inclusive Education. When this year's budget was determined it became apparent that the new method which Alberta



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Education would put in place for funding students who previously were seen to have “special needs” did not work for most charter schools. Historically, special education funding moved from identifying specific students through coding to more recently, determining a “profile” for each school authority upon which funding could be based. Many charter schools have not coded or otherwise identified students and did not have a jurisdictional profile upon which Alberta Education could base “inclusive education” funding. In other words, Alberta Education had little history of our schools having students with exceptional needs. The reality is however, that each of our schools has great diversity and therefore have students needing special programming. With this move to new funding we have made Alberta Education aware of the difficulties we face and they, in turn, have met with each of our schools as well as our Education Advisory Committee in an attempt to become more familiar with our situation. A report will be made to the Assistant Deputy Ministers in January. We are hopeful that this inequity will then be corrected.

Conference 2013

Planning has begun for our next conference to be held on October 24/25, 2013. Thank you to the Calgary Girls’ School for agreeing to host this event. The format which was followed for Conference 2011 proved very successful and therefore will be repeated in 2013. Our intent is to fully explore Alberta Education’s current emphasis upon the “Framework for Student Learning”. Specifically, we will examine the role of charter schools in transforming education in the province as related to the framework. In that regard, we will call upon the expertise within our group as well as within the ranks of Alberta Education as determine the exact nature of the breakout sessions which will be held. More information will be made available in January. Schools are encouraged to consider these dates when setting next year’s calendar.

Odds and Ends

Congratulations to Calgary Science School which is now a “research partner school” with the University of Calgary.



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Congratulations as well to Foundations for the Future and Almadina on your successful moves into new facilities in September.

Welcome to John Picard and Don Falk as new superintendents at Valhalla and New Horizons respectively. As well, welcome to Johnathan Liu, new Secretary-Treasurer at Westmount.

Appreciation

As we approach Christmas and the end of another year, it seems appropriate to extend appreciation to the many individuals in TAAPCS who tirelessly volunteer their time and expertise. In particular, thank you to our executive committee which includes Jay Pritchard and Judy Gray, Co-Presidents; Joe Frank and Don Falk, Co-Vice-Presidents and Meredith Poole, Secretary-Treasurer. Thank you to members of our Education Advisory Committee (the "working committee") who include, in addition to the aforementioned, Garry McKinnon, Heather Christison, Dale Erickson, Sue Ditchburn, Justin Kool, Ian Gray and Johnathan Liu. Finally, thank you to so many other people in this organization who

serve on other committees and are so willing to help out when called upon.

Reminders

January 17/18, 2013 - TAAPCS meeting, Sheraton Hotel, Red Deer



February 5, 2013 – Leadership Learning Initiative Session 3 – Calgary Girls’ School

February 22, 2013 – EAC meeting, Red Deer

April 12, 2013 – EAC meeting, Red Deer

April 15, 2013 – Leadership Learning Initiative Session 4 – Location TBD

May 2/3, 2013 – TAAPCS meeting, Best Western Sunrise Inn & Suites, Stony Plain and Mother Earth’s

 Merry Christmas
and all the best
in 2013! 

Garry Andrews,
TAAPCS Executive Director

