



Working together to support choice and innovation in public education.

December 2014 Issue



Recently while at a meeting, a colleague read a quote which said "As human beings we share a tendency to scramble for certainty whenever we realize that everything around us is in flux". As we near the end of another year with Alberta's political scene in "flux" like most of us have never seen before, we may start to long for the good old days when things seemed more certain. We wonder about many things which only a few months ago seemed pretty certain - "Inspiring Education" was our focus, funding for future endeavors was not a serious question, and personnel we knew were in place to support us. The challenge for us as an association is to balance the impulse to try to cling to the certainty of some of the old ways with being confident enough to adjust to something new. As we look forward to a new year, we will endeavor to support that balance, beginning with our January meeting in Red Deer. In the meanwhile, it is appropriate to look at some of the happenings over the past six months.

Political Changes

With the election of Premier Prentice in October and the appointment of Mr. Gordon Dirks as

Minister of Education, as well as the recent announcement of Ms. Lorna Rosen as Deputy Minister, there will no doubt be adjustments as to how business is conducted in the Ministry. In the past, Minister Johnson and his Deputy, Greg Bass, were strong supporters of "Inspiring Education". Since they have moved on to other portfolios there has been little government public reference to this initiative although we are told that the various strategies and approaches which flowed from it have not changed and are therefore proceeding. That being said, one wonders if there is a "champion" for this endeavor given what appears to be a lack of public comment by the Ministry. In the new year, we hope to meet with the Minister and Deputy Minister in order to come to a better understanding of their priorities for education in general, and for charter schools specifically. We wish Mr. Dirks and Ms. Rosen every success in their new roles and look forward to meeting them in the near future.

Education Act Implementation

Alberta Education has appointed Randy Clarke as the director in charge of determining the supports required for school divisions and charter schools as they adjust to the requirements of the new Act. Randy is well known to charter schools

















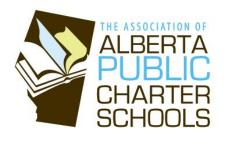














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and will no doubt provide excellent support to our association as we proceed to get ready for the September 2015 implementation of the Act. More information will be provided at our meeting in Red Deer on January 16.

Regulatory Review

On December 16, we received information from Alberta Education that 16 regulations have been drafted and feedback is being requested from organizations and individuals. The regulations have been posted on Alberta Education's website at http://education.alberta.ca/edu-act. Information received indicates that "the Education Act includes 35 regulation-making powers", however Albertans have requested that fewer regulations be in place in order to be less prescriptive and more enabling to school authorities. Therefore 16 regulations have been presented by the Regulatory Review Committee. Further, information from Alberta Education states that 4 of the 35 regulations which the Act allows for were "outside the scope of the Regulatory Review Committee". Chief among these is the Education Professions and Occupations part of the Act which involves Practice Review, Board of Reference, Certification of Teachers and Superintendent of Schools Regulations. These are considered out of scope because of the current agreement which does not expire until August 2016. The deadline for submitting comments on the regulations is January 31, 2015.

Strategic Directions

At our October general meeting we spent considerable time discussing the "next steps" following the release of the University of Calgary's research report on charter schools (The Impact, Capacity and Adaptability of the Alberta Public Charter School System, February 2014).

The responses to discussion questions were collated and shared at our December 12 Education Advisory Committee meeting. Several suggestions resulted and these will be presented to the TAAPCS general meeting on January 16 in Red Deer.

TAAPCS has been dealing with funding issues surrounding Inclusive Education. We have provided input to Alberta Education regarding the need for a model that takes into account the wide variance in how our charter schools provide appropriate supports and service for all students.

Leadership Learning Initiative

Professional development for charter school administrators/leaders is continuing for a third year. Over 40 individuals are involved in this

















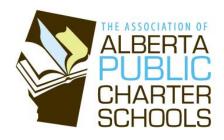














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initiative. On November 21, our facilitator Dr. Jim Brandon and Suzuki Charter School Principal, Karen Spencer, made a presentation to the Deputy Minister's Dialogue on Teaching Excellence. It was well received. We have also been invited to make a similar presentation at the upcoming CASS/Alberta Education Conference in Edmonton from March 11-13, 2015.

TAAPCS Leadership

At the October AGM, the membership confirmed the following Executive Officers:

Co-Presidents: Judy Gray and Roger Nippard,

FFCA

Co-Vice-Presidents: Don Falk, New Horizons;

Yvonne DePeel, Almadina

Secretary-Treasurer: Meredith Poole, FFCA

Executive Director: Garry Andrews

In addition to the Executive Officers, the following individuals agreed to serve on the **Education Advisory Committee**: Dale Erickson, Calgary Arts Academy; Denise Budgen, FFCA; Dianne McBeth, Calgary Girls' School; Lynne Paradis, Suzuki; Heather Christison, Suzuki; Joe Frank, Westmount; Johnathan Liu, Westmount; Susan Chomistek, Connect; Phil Butterfield, Connect; Issa Mosa, Almadina; Anita LeMoignan, Mother Earth.

The **Charter Board Directors' Chair** is Jolene Kochendorfer, Valhalla Community School.



As noted earlier, although we find ourselves in a state of flux and uncertainty, if we continue to "live" one of our association's guiding principles and remain nimble as well as flexible, I am confident TAAPCS will continue to grow in its role as a supporter of public charter school education in Alberta.

On behalf of the Executive Committee and the EAC, please accept my thanks for the support you have provided our association over the past year. Have an excellent Christmas break. We will see you in Red Deer in January.

Season's Greetings,

Dr. Garry Andrews, Executive Director



























