

Working together to support choice and innovation in public education.

June 2015 Issue

Election 2015

Summer 2015 is here, and we trust everyone is ready for rest and relaxation after an interesting and eventful year! Most interesting perhaps is the election of an NDP government after 44 years of PC leadership. This development is of particular interest to our association because it was a Progressive Conservative MLA, Halvar Jonson, who as Minister of Education in 1994, led efforts to establish charter schools in Alberta. The question on many of our minds is, “Will an NDP government still be supportive of charter schools?”

To that end, the executive officers have contacted all MLA’s, those representing the government and those in opposition, asking for the opportunity to meet so we can “tell our story”. We know that individual Boards have also taken a similar step, and we encourage those who have not done so to consider this as well. To date, we have received positive responses from several opposition MLA’s and have either had meetings or arranged to do so. We are hopeful

that MLA’s representing our government will also respond positively.

The message we are conveying is that “we are public schools”, not private or independent, as some in the media have portrayed us. As well, we represent educational “choice” – something in which Alberta has taken pride for decades. In offering choice based upon our mandates, we do not limit enrollment to only the “best” students as some critics would claim, but rather our students come with a variety of needs and talents which we do our best to accommodate. By attempting early on to dispel misconceptions and myths which can arise at a time of significant political change, we are hopeful that we can establish a positive relationship with our new government and its officials. Again, we encourage our members to take the initiative to speak with your MLA’s in this regard.

Conference 2015

Since our last newsletter, we have been busily involved with planning Conference 2015. The theme for the conference is “Charter Schools: Beyond Walls; Beyond Borders”. The conference is being held at the Calgary Girls’ School and at



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the adjacent community center on October 30. We are pleased to have received positive responses from several individuals who will make brief addresses to start our conference, one of whom is Ms. Ember Reichgott Junge, the former Minnesota state Senator who was responsible for writing the charter school law for that state in 1991. Interestingly, that same document was the foundation for the legislation which Halvar Jonson shepherded through the legislation in 1994, and which led to the creation of Alberta's charter schools.

In addition to the brief presentations which will start the conference, we are planning breakout sessions based upon themes related to "Beyond walls; Beyond Borders". Ms. Reichgott Junge, has graciously volunteered to lead one of these sessions for Directors and Administrators. If there is a particular topic which this group would like to have addressed, please let your school's superintendent know.

Strategic Plan

At our January General Meeting, several by-law changes were made and a discussion ensued regarding the need for a formalized strategic plan

to be developed for the association. It was determined that this session would take place as part of our October 29, 2015 General Meeting to be held at the Deerfoot Inn in Calgary.

Appreciation is extended to Dr. Lynne Paradis and Ms. Reichgott Junge for agreeing to jointly facilitate this session.

Halvar Jonson Award

Nominations for the Halvar Jonson Award closed on June 30. This award is in its fourth year and is intended to recognize the contributions of an individual who through his/her leadership, significantly "championed the cause of charter schools in Alberta". The recipient will be informed shortly and will be recognized on October 28 at our dinner to be held at the Deerfoot Inn. Please consider attending in order to say "thank you" to this year's recipient.

Services to Charter Boards

The executive has been approached in recent months regarding the possible services which might be provided to member Boards. Unlike our larger counterparts such as the ASBA or PSBAA, there is no current ability to offer legal services,



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but some of our members have already come together to achieve economies in relation to insurance and benefits, and we continue to investigate other such opportunities. We can, however, provide several services to our Boards through our Executive Director and/or his superintendent and director colleagues. These include: Board and superintendent evaluations, strategic planning workshops, and professional development activities related to Board development. At the present time, there is no extra charge for these services. Please contact the Executive Director for more information.

School Leadership Learning Initiative

We are pleased to report that we will be able to provide a fourth year of leadership development opportunities for charter school administrators and potential administrators. Although the three-year contract with Alberta Education concluded on June 30, 2015, we have received permission to make use of unspent funds to offer a fourth year of in-service. Plans are currently being developed and information will be made

available to our schools and Boards in early September.

TAAPCS Handbook

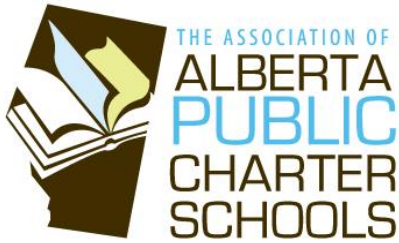
A brief handbook has been developed as a reference document for Board use and/or information. The contents include: TAAPCS By-laws; FAQ's about Charter Schools; Vision, Mission, Guiding Principles and Objectives of TAAPCS; TAAPCS Procedures; Position papers; Board/Superintendent Evaluation Processes; School Review Processes; Best Practices of Charter Boards; and Common Mistakes of Charter Boards.

This handbook will be on the TAAPCS website this summer. For more information please contact the Executive Director.

Election of Officers

As part of our Annual General Meeting in October, we will be electing officers for the upcoming year. In addition to this election, we will again be calling for volunteers to serve on the Education Advisory Committee (EAC). There are





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normally five EAC meetings per year. Meetings are usually held in Red Deer. Please consider how you might serve our association by volunteering.

Appreciation and Best wishes

Appreciation is extended to all those people who have assisted us throughout the past year. Without the hard work of so many committed people, the success we experienced in the past year would not be possible. To those of you leaving us for other opportunities, I hope your time in our charter schools was not only enjoyable but rewarding, and I wish you all the best. For those returning to us in the fall, I wish you a restful, peaceful, safe summer and I look forward to seeing you in September.

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The Association of Alberta Public Charter Schools
June 30, 2015

