



# A Year of Champions

TAAPCS Annual Report  
2012-2013

October 24, 2013

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TAAPCS Executive Director  
[www.taapcs.ca](http://www.taapcs.ca)

## **TAAPCS CO-PRESIDENTS' MESSAGE**



Jay Pritchard



Judy Gray

### **OUR THOUGHTS ON 2012-2013**

It is a privilege once again to comment upon the activities of our Association throughout 2012-13. As in the past, we have had a busy but productive year. Along with our colleagues in other jurisdictions, we have faced financial challenges, initiated new programs and engaged in numerous activities which we trust will secure a better future for our schools. As an association we have responded to requests for feedback from Alberta Education in areas such as charter school evaluation processes, budget priority setting, workforce planning initiatives, curriculum redesign, regional collaborative service delivery, high school credentialing, and the Regulatory Review. It has been rewarding to be asked to participate, but it has not been easy. As a small organization, we must call upon the good will and commitment of the same people time after time. To our delight and amazement, our request for volunteers to represent the Association at these functions is met with a consistently positive response. We have great members and great friends, and in 2012, with the creation of the Halvar Jonson Award, we began a formal process of recognizing the "champions" we have had throughout the years.

Too often we take for granted the great work being done in our schools by the everyday champions in our midst. Our schools consistently do well on the various measures applied to performance, and are well regarded by organizations such as the Fraser Institute and the C.D. Howe Institute. More importantly, the growing list of parents wishing to register their children in our schools is evidence that we are doing things right. It is, however, not the time to be complacent. With new Regulations being developed to accompany the Education Act and the ever present criticism from some organizations questioning the existence of charter schools, our voice and opinions must be strong. With the research being conducted by an independent third party, the University of Calgary, we expect to learn more about what has made us successful and what steps we might take in the future to secure our rightful place in Alberta's educational community.

## **WHAT IS TAAPCS?**

The Association of Alberta Public Charter Schools is currently comprised of 13 member schools, which are located throughout the province and are united in support of the following mission:

“Working together to support choice and innovation in public education.”

The Association has been in existence since 1998 and over the last several years has held three meetings annually for the purpose of furthering four primary objectives:

1. To promote and facilitate public charter school education in Alberta.
2. To speak with one voice on behalf of public Charter Schools in Alberta.
3. To provide a forum for public Charter Schools to meet in support of common goals.
4. To advocate for continued innovation and choice within public education.



### ❖ **Charter Board Directors (CBD) Committee:** Jolene Kochendorfer, Chair, 2012-13

Formerly known as Charter Board Chair meetings, our renamed Charter Board Directors' meetings took place three times during the past year. Our intent with renaming the meetings was to increase participation in these events. The mandate of the CBD is to provide assistance with the professional development needs of directors, as well as to assist with developing capacity in the area of government relations. As a newcomer to the chair's position, I was privileged to follow the lead of Mr. Bill McGregor who did the job so well for many years. We did not let Bill go easily into "retirement" however, but rather we called upon his expertise to lead an excellent workshop in March on the topic of Government Relations. Appreciation is extended to Suzuki Charter School for organizing and hosting this workshop. Numerous charter boards also called upon the services of the Executive Director to assist them with either professional development workshops or with Board/Superintendent evaluations. Boards are invited to contact the Executive Director if they wish to have assistance with professional development activities.

Our goal for the upcoming year is to involve more directors in the activities of the Association. Representatives from our Association have been exploring the possibility of more closely aligning ourselves with either the Public School Boards' Association of Alberta or the Alberta School Boards Association. Separate presentations were made to the Executive Committees of both organizations in April 2013 and, while we were warmly and courteously received, more discussion is required within our respective organizations before any firm plans can be made. Thank you to our Executive Committee members for leading this initiative on behalf of the CBD.



### ❖ **New Education Act**

In December 2012, the Legislative Assembly passed the Bill related to the long awaited

Education Act. The next step is to develop the Regulations which will accompany the Act.

To this end, our Association reviewed the current Regulations and, after consultation with our members, produced a set of recommendations to present to Alberta Education for their consideration. Drafting of the Regulations is expected to be completed during the 2013-14 school year. School authorities will then have one year to adjust their policies to be in keeping with the new Act and Regulations before they are fully in place for September 2015.



## ❖ **Budget**

The provincial budget of 2013 was clearly a challenge for all school authorities in the province. In particular, Inclusive Education funding for charter schools continues to be a concern. Personnel from Alberta Education visited all 13 charter schools during the 2011-12 school year in order to gather data regarding how the Inclusive Education funding formula change that year impacted us. While the process was well done and no promises were made, there was hope for re-consideration in the 2013 budget. Unfortunately that was not the case. Efforts to demonstrate our need to Alberta Education continue.

Another area of concern for charter schools relates to capital funding needs and access to facilities in order to address increasingly long waiting lists of students wishing to attend many of our schools. The Minister has stated that he recognizes these concerns and indicated that steps will be taken to assist.



## ❖ **Alberta Education Support**

Despite concerns regarding budget, we continue to receive strong support from our colleagues in Alberta Education. We appreciate that we are invited to participate in various forums where initiatives/issues such as High School Credentialing, Regional Collaborative Service Delivery, Regulation Reviews, Deputy Minister/Deans of Education meetings and Workforce Planning are discussed. As well, Alberta Education personnel regularly attend our EAC and regular meetings and provide excellent reports and updates for our members.

As an association we were also pleased to have Minister Jeff Johnson speak to our general meeting in May and to hear his positive comments about our association. Minister Johnson said that "charters are here to stay" and indicated that our schools have a role to play in transforming education in Alberta. Not only do our schools provide for parental choice, but with our focus on research and innovation we are well positioned to assist with the transformational process. We need, however, to be cognizant of how to convey to others that we have good things happening in our schools, and that we are prepared to share. Further, where equity is concerned, he remarked that rural areas might also benefit from charters.

## ❖ Members' Support

Attendance at our EAC and regular meetings is strong, and a willingness to take on such volunteer roles as serving on various committees is much appreciated. Throughout the past year the EAC met six times, while there were three regular meetings and our AGM. The average attendance at each EAC meeting was 10 while the regular meetings had an average of 38 attendees.



## ❖ Halvar Jonson Award



*Award recipient Janet Wees (L)  
with nominator Denise Budgen*

In 2012 the Association created an award to annually recognize those individuals who played a significant role in "championing the cause" of charter schools.

The award is named after Halvar Jonson, the Minister of Education in 1994 who was instrumental in creating Alberta's charter schools.



*Award recipient Dr. Lyle Oberg (R)  
with nominator Judy Gray*

There were four recipients in 2012. They are: Ms. Janet Wees, Dr. Lyle Oberg, Ms. Megan O'Hara, and Dr. Lynne Bosetti. Unfortunately, Dr. Bosetti was unable to be there in person to accept her award.

Our congratulations and heartfelt thanks to all our "champions" for their unwavering support and encouragement!



*Award recipient Megan O'Hara (R)  
with nominator Melanie Guglielmin*

❖ **Conference 2013**

Although there was initially some concern that with tight budgets our planning for Conference 2013 would be discontinued, our member boards determined that it should go ahead. Accordingly, throughout the winter and spring, planning for the October 2013 Conference proceeded. The title of this event is "Charter Schools: Living the Challenge of Transforming Education". The response to our request for facilitators and registrants was once again overwhelming, demonstrating the quality of people who work in and support our schools. Appreciation is extended to the Calgary Girls' School for agreeing to host the event, and to the representatives from our schools who served on the Conference Planning Committee.



❖ **School Leadership Learning Initiative**

During the 2012-13 school year we were fortunate to receive a \$50,000 grant from Alberta Education in order to conduct leadership training with our charter school administrators. The intent of the project was to explore leadership development processes which might be replicated elsewhere in Alberta. Over the year, 39 administrators participated as we concentrated on developing expertise in the 7 leadership dimensions which Alberta Education has said school leaders need to master. Participants attended the four sessions in Calgary and further, as part of the initiative's requirement, engaged in visitations to other charter schools throughout the province. Dr. Jim Brandon of the University of Calgary served as the project's facilitator while members of our administrators group provided leadership at each of the sessions. Dr. Brandon's evaluation report was submitted to Alberta Education in August, 2013. The results were very positive.

We are now entering the second year of the leadership initiative and again have been privileged to receive another \$50,000 grant from Alberta Education to continue the work we began.



❖ **Charter School Research Project**

Drs. Dianne Gereluk and Eugene Kowch of the University of Calgary were contracted by our Association to conduct an extensive research project throughout 2012-13. The intent of the research is to identify factors which contribute to the success of charter schools, as well as to determine what direction our schools and the association might take in the future as we strive to assist with transforming education in Alberta. The report will be released in January 2014 at our regular meeting.

❖ **PSBAA and ASBA Discussions**

Members of our Executive Committee met with their counterparts in the PSBAA and the ASBA in April 2013. The purpose of the discussions was to explore the possibility of more closely aligning ourselves with their organizations, possibly as Associate Members. Both organizations have extensive professional development programs, as well as access to other services such as legal and insurance. The PSBAA has agreed to discuss this issue at their October 2013 AGM. The ASBA indicated they will wait until after the October 21 election to decide on further action. Ensuing discussions will be required with our Association's members in the upcoming year. No action is anticipated before the 2014-15 school year.

Respectfully presented by  
Dr. Garry Andrews, Executive Director  
The Association of Alberta Public Charter Schools  
October 24, 2013

