

Working together to support choice and innovation in public education.

December 2013 Issue



“Connecting the Dots”

With another year about to conclude, it is timely to review a number of the issues and initiatives which have been part of our Association’s “life” in 2013. Not surprisingly, much of our time was spent discussing, reacting to and planning for Alberta Education’s “transformation of education” agenda, specifically *Inspiring Education*. What follows is a modest attempt to “connect some of the dots” between many of the initiatives.

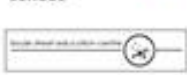
New Education Act

As 2012 ended, we were informed the New Education Act was passed in the legislature. The new Act was several years in development and is clearly the result of two major initiatives, the first of which began in Alberta over a decade ago. The first initiative was the Alberta Commission on Learning, which under the leadership of the Hon. Lyle Oberg, conducted province wide consultations with stakeholder groups. The report was released in 2003. It contained 95 recommendations, many of which were immediately put into place, while some were not approved and others reappeared in slightly

altered forms in the subsequent *Inspiring Education* consultations. The second initiative was *Inspiring Education*. It was under the leadership of the Hon. Dave Hancock, and also sought feedback from Albertans. The report was released in 2010 and is now serving as our blueprint for educational reform. The report had 8 categories: Ready to learn; What students learn; The schools we need; Success for every child; Making the grade; Technology plus; Excellent teachers and school leaders; Good governance.

Regulations for New Act

As noted, *Inspiring Education* is concerned with “good governance”; the result is the new Act, as well as the Regulations which must now accompany it. Alberta Education spent a good part of 2013 in consultation with stakeholder groups soliciting feedback on what the Regulations might be. Our Association participated in many of these meetings and also presented our own brief related specifically to the “Charter School Regulation”. The Regulations will be drafted over the next year with implementation expected in 2016-17.



Working together to support choice and innovation in public education.

Curriculum Redesign

One of the key features of *Inspiring Education* is how to prepare learners for the 21st century (“What students learn”, “The schools we need”, “Making the grade”, and “Technology plus”). What will learners need to know? What skills and attributes will they require? What will they require as supports? From this came the concept of having each student graduate with evidence of being an “Engaged learner”, and an “Ethical citizen with an Entrepreneurial spirit” (3 E’s). Throughout 2013, we have been involved, individually and often collectively, in a number of “sub-categories” which fall under the “Curriculum Redesign” heading. A partial list includes:

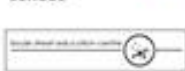
- High School flexibility program
- Dual crediting strategy
- Review of high school credentialing requirements
- Career and Technology Foundations (CTF)
- Improvements to provincial diploma exams
- Review of old Provincial Achievement Tests (Student Learning Assessments vs. PAT’s)
- School Library Services Initiative
- Curriculum development prototyping

Inclusive Education

Inspiring Education challenges us with its emphasis on “Success for every child”. Again, our schools have individually and collectively been involved in putting the principles of inclusive education in place. A partial list of the sub-categories includes:

- Differentiated instruction
- ESL
- Early Learning
- Collaborating with parents
- Learning coaches
- Learning technologies
- Literacy and numeracy
- Response to Intervention (RTI)
- Peer mentoring
- FNMI

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.



Working together to support choice and innovation in public education.

Teaching Excellence

As noted earlier, *Inspiring Education* stresses the importance of having excellent teachers. Accordingly, in 2013 a Task Force for Teaching Excellence undertook consultations with Albertans, and more than 2700 people responded online or in meetings. Our members provided input. A report is expected in 2014 regarding how to align the teaching profession with *Inspiring Education*. Whether the results will lead to the development of new Teacher Quality Standards will likely be addressed in the report.

Administrator Quality Standards

As with teaching excellence, there is an expectation that administrators will also be excellent. Accordingly, 7 dimensions of leadership have been developed by Alberta Education and these dimensions have formed the basis for TAAPCS' leadership initiative for the past two years. We are fortunate to have nearly 40 administrators from all our schools participating in this government-funded initiative.



Bits and Pieces

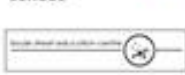
Not directly related to *Inspiring Education*, TAAPCS has once again had a good year.

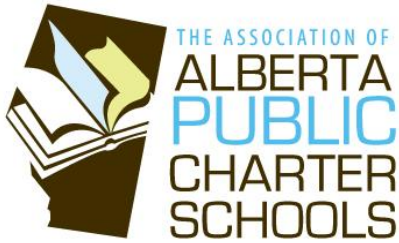
Minister Jeff Johnson spoke to our delegates at our May meeting and voiced strong support for charter schools. He noted that a number of the needs we have expressed, especially with regard to facilities, will be addressed in the upcoming months. It is reassuring to see that the Minister's comments appear to be acted upon by Alberta Education.

As noted earlier, we have received funding from Alberta Education for our Leadership learning initiative and this is proving to be a very successful endeavor. Appreciation is extended to Alberta Education.

We also sponsored a provincial conference in October and although we expected only 300 delegates from around the province, we were pleasantly surprised to have 540 attend. Thank you is extended to the staff, students, administration and board of the Calgary Girls' School for volunteering to host this event.

Leadership for the Association continues to be strong with Jay Pritchard, Judy Gray as Co-Presidents and Don Falk and Yvonne DePeel as





Working together to support choice and innovation in public education.

Co-Vice Presidents. Appreciation is extended to Joe Frank who, after several years as a Co-Vice-President is taking a break. Thankfully, Joe will continue as a member of the Education Advisory Committee. Jolene Kochendorfer of Valhalla Community School has now assumed the chair's position of the Charter Board Directors' group, taking over from Bill McGregor of FFCA. Thankfully, Bill's wisdom is still available to us as he continues to attend the CBD meetings.

Volunteerism is alive and well in TAAPCS. It is always a pleasure to see how readily people come forward when a request is made to represent our association at a meeting or on a committee. As a small organization we are blessed to have so many committed individuals who do such good work without any expectation of remuneration. Thank you.

Wishing you all the best for a great Christmas season and an excellent start to the new year, I am,

Dr. Garry Andrews,
Executive Director
TAAPCS



Upcoming Dates

January 16/17, 2014 - Regular Meeting, Sheraton Hotel, Red Deer

May 8/9, 2014 - Regular Meeting, Edmonton

Oct. 23/24, 2014 – Regular Meeting, Calgary

