



December 19, 2014

This document is a summary of submissions to CASS in response to a request by CASS for comments about the vision and goals expressed within Inspiring Education and the Ministerial Order on Student Learning (#001/2013) related to the activities that are taking place within their respective jurisdictions.

The responses are categorized under the following titles:

- Inspiring Education
- Inclusion
- High School Success
- Dual Credit
- Curriculum Redesign
- Ministerial Order on Student Learning
- Learning and Technology Policy Framework
- Student Assessment
- Engagement
- New Education Act & Regulatory Review
- Taskforce for Teaching Excellence
- FNMI Collaborative Framework
- General Comments

Thank you to CASS Director of Leadership Learning Mike Barbero for receiving, summarizing and creating this document.

Thank you as well to the following jurisdictions and their superintendents for sharing the work that is happening in their schools and communities.

Calgary Board of Education  
Calgary Catholic School District  
Edmonton Catholic Schools  
Edmonton Public School Board  
Elk Island Catholic Schools  
Evergreen Catholic Schools  
Ft. McMurray Catholic Schools  
Grasslands School Division  
Lethbridge School District  
Living Waters Catholic Schools  
Parkland School Division

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**CASS MISSION STATEMENT**

The College of Alberta School Superintendents (CASS), the professional voice of system education leaders, provides leadership, expertise and advocacy to improve, promote and champion public education.

<b>Values:</b>	<b>Principles of Practice</b>
Students are first	We put forth strong and vocal positions keeping student learning as the reason for making change.
Respect for the individual members	We value each member equally. Each regular member has one vote. We practice collegiality and networking to build a community of practice.
Trustworthiness	We build trust through transparency in our organization. Our organization will be conducted in an open manner with all members having access to operational information. We provide a consistent message on behalf of CASS; speak as if with a single voice
Spirit of collaboration	We seek to involve appropriate partners or stakeholders in our processes. We clearly define the purpose of each outreach at the outset- collaborative or consultative. We practice interdependency, striving to find mutual benefits in our efforts.
Learnedness – respect for research and best practices	We ensure that our positions are based on effective research and quality/defensible information. We stress the life-long learning responsibility of our members.
Integrity	We expect our members to practice their system education leadership in accordance with the Code of Professional Conduct of the College of Alberta School Superintendents.

We were encouraged by the positive comments made by Minister Dirks at the CASS Fall Conference especially with reference to the continuation of a close working with CASS and referenced the direction of the articles featured in the *Fall 2014 CASS Connections*.

In that publication Minister Dirks states *“I am driven to provide students with all the tools they need to thrive in their futures.”* He further states, *“We remain focused on investing in our growing education system, learning from research and best practices and building on our success.”* He also makes a reference to teaching and teacher excellence...*“the best ways to secure a bright future for our children is through our teachers. After parents, teachers are at the heart of a student’s success in learning, which is why we work to ensure teachers have the tools and support they need to do their very best in the classroom.”*

## **INSPIRING EDUCATION**

### Vision

*“To inspire and enable students to achieve success and fulfillment as engaged thinkers and ethical citizens with an entrepreneurial spirit within an inclusive education system.”*

### Values

*“Values describe the ideals we seek to embrace and fulfill in the operation of the education system, these include.*

*Opportunity: Learners are exposed to rich learning experiences that enable them to discover their passions and achieve their highest potential.*

*Fairness: Learners have access to the programs, support services, and instructional excellence needed to achieve desired outcomes.*

*Citizenship: Learners have pride in their community and culture. They have a sense of belonging and work to improve both the community and the world.*

*Choice: Learners have a choice of both programs and methods of learning.*

*Diversity: Learners’ differing needs, cultures, and abilities are respected and valued within inclusive learning environments.*

*Excellence: Learners, teachers, and governors achieve high standards”*

Inspiring Education was established as an interactive conversation with Albertans and designed around the question of what characteristics an educated Albertan should possess twenty years from now. As part of the Dialogue, a series of community conversations with Albertans took place in eight locations across.

Albertans know the importance of education. It's about our children realizing their potential and achieving their hopes, dreams and aspirations. It's about each student belonging in a caring and inclusive network of educators who support them. It's about strengthening our society through the experiences we have in school as students and our relationship to the community as youth, adults and parents.

In Alberta we can be proud that we have one of the finest education systems in the world. This is a testament to the dedication of our teachers, administrators, school board staff and other educational specialists and professionals who are committed to doing the best they can every day.

The need to re-position our education system is clear. Alberta Education has and will continue to champion change. But we cannot do it alone. All of us – from teachers and principals, to educational organizations and associations, to students and parents and all committed Albertans – must pull together to accomplish change. And it was by listening to Albertans that we first set out on this journey.

### **The World Is Changing**

The world around us is evolving at an unprecedented rate—and this speed of change is increasing every day. We don't know what new problems and opportunities we'll encounter tomorrow, let alone in ten or twenty years.

We need to prepare Alberta's students for this unknown and unknowable future. The way we've delivered education in the past is no longer sufficient. So we're changing our way of thinking.

### **We're Taking a New Approach**

We're shifting our focus; investing in our students to empower them and bring out their potential. We are emphasizing the development of key competencies in our students, cultivating engaged thinkers, ethical citizens and entrepreneurial spirits.

We're recognizing that not all students learn the same way, and that textbooks and classrooms are just one way for them to experience education.

### **How We Got Here**

In 2009, Albertans gathered in person and online during Inspiring Education: A Dialogue with Albertans to share their hopes, dreams and aspirations for K-12 education in the 21st century and beyond. Inspiring Education generated rich conversations and thoughtful insight; highlighting values, skills, practices and knowledge that will be vital to our children and grandchildren in a rapidly changing world. Out of these many conversations, a broad policy framework document was developed to describe the overall direction, principles and long-term goals for education in Alberta.

## What's Happening Now

Since the conclusion of the Inspiring Education dialogues, we've been working hard to transform our system and bring the vision of Inspiring Education to life. Some examples of this transformation include:

- A new Provincial Dual Credit Strategy – Creating opportunities for students to earn both high school and post-secondary credits for the same course. These credits could also lead to workplace certification or advanced standing in post-secondary programs.
- Improvements to the provincial diploma exam – Providing students with more flexibility in writing diploma exams through a digital format.
- A high school flexibility program – Empowering students to show learning through mastery of the subject, rather than linking credits to the number of hours at a desk.
- Curriculum Redesign - Building on the success of Alberta's education system and the many innovative educational practices already underway in schools, this process will create curriculum that is more responsive to different learning styles and better prepare students for tomorrow's challenges. Alberta's new curriculum will include the basics and weave 21st century competencies, such as innovation, creativity and collaboration, together with core skills of numeracy and literacy.
- Review and replacement of the old Provincial Achievement Test – Introducing student-friendly assessments to replace existing Provincial Achievement Tests. The new Student Learning Assessments will maintain a strong focus on literacy and numeracy, but will also help educators and parents understand how well students demonstrate competencies such as creativity, critical thinking and problem-solving.
- The Education Act Regulatory Review – Regulations related to the new Education Act will help provide students with the supports and environment they'll need to succeed.
- Learning and Technology Policy Framework - Our vision is for technology to be used not just by teachers to teach, but by students to learn. By encouraging their students to use technology in their learning, teachers and school authorities can create opportunities for all students to participate in more personalized and authentic learning activities, collaborate with their peers in class and around the world, and engage with their learning, their community and the world in ways that previously didn't even exist.

## COMMENTS FROM SCHOOL JURISDICTIONS

Rationale for continued Ministerial Support *(question 4 from CASS survey)*

- Denotes comments received from school jurisdictions

### Inspiring Education

- Inspiring Education represents the voice of the thousands of Albertans that were involved with its development. This engagement included business voice, parents, students and the teacher professionals. It is our role to build the strategies to enact this vision. A change in leadership does not change what Albertan's said. What can change is some of our methods to achieve the goals
- There will always be pressure to try to return to some romanticized past; to move forward we need to be forward thinking and we need the Minister to help citizens understand education better and not assume that the citizenry are all education experts and the professionals are leading them astray.
- Inspiring Education is now the flywheel of progress and engagement in district schools. Notwithstanding our vision and mission, our educational programming, professional development and inclusive education focus are all aligned to Inspiring Education.
- The rationale connects to why we are supporting Inspiring Education. Ministerial support in this area is required to ensure all of our students are successful both in school and in life beyond high school completion.
- We have already gone so far down this road that we cannot go back to our 20th century learning with any integrity. We know what we are doing is right because students tell us this.
- This is a big transformational shift and this type of change takes time. We need ministerial support to truly achieve the goal of Inspiring Education.

### INCLUSION

(Includes Regional Collaborative Services Delivery)

*"An inclusive education system is one that takes responsibility for all students, focuses on their strengths, and emphasizes what they can do rather than focusing on their limitations. While inclusive education is not about the automatic placement of every student in typical classrooms, it does involve the sharing of a commitment to meeting diverse student needs in all school settings so that all students experience a sense of belonging and acceptance in their learning environments."*

*"Inclusive, equitable access. Every learner should have fair and reasonable access to educational opportunities regardless of ability, economic circumstance, location, or cultural background. Their needs and ways of life should be respected and valued within an inclusive learning environment. Some learners will require additional, specialized supports to fully access these opportunities."*

*"Learner-centred. Decision makers should consider the needs of children and youth first and foremost when making decisions."*

- This concept contributes to strong, supportive and healthy communities and therefore resilient individuals. Only the province can make the jurisdiction model a working reality. We do not have influence with other ministries
- Ministerial support, both philosophical & monetary support, is a critical factor for educators & parents to in turn support inclusion. Globally, we see inclusion flourishing in many societal contexts and inclusion in the educational realm cannot languish; rather it should lead. When we speak about inclusion, we refer to not only those students with special educational needs, but true & meaningful inclusion of all students, the tremendously diverse range of individuals who come to us for education.
- The above supports and services contribute to collaborative or wrap around approach which is necessary to sustain the benefits of inclusive practices for all learners; although at present the support is limited to “enhanced” service from our partners due to funding availability.
- There is not only a need for continued Ministerial support & funding that is adequate to maintain the current level of service, but also consideration given to increased funding in order to allow the availability of “basic” services for all students.
- If the Minister does not support Inclusion, the question becomes, “then what?” Much of this funding goes to the most vulnerable in our society. It is our responsibility to set all students up for success. Without inclusion then we have to move to segregation and institutional programming and possibly streaming of children before their true talents are discovered. It is hard work and needs more supports but turning around is not the answer.
- Ministerial order provides the direction and support for us to continue our work.
- Ministry provides the policy, funding and accountability constructs that set the direction for our work so there MUST be leadership and direction from the Ministry for us to continue.
- We support many of the recommendations outlined in the Blue Ribbon Report that are directed toward the Ministry and feel that these recommendations outline the specifics of future Ministry work.
- Ministerial support in this area is required to ensure all of our students demonstrate growth and experience success. As the diversity in classrooms continue to increase. Continued resource commitments are required to build a system that can support inclusive practices. The impact on workload is high and consideration to how the province will support building teacher capacity in inclusive practices is essential.
- This is a big shift in thinking and in practice. There is a great deal of time and effort that must be invested. We aren’t there yet, but are on the way.
- Not only teachers, but parents, and other jurisdiction services must be prepared to make these shifts.

## High School Success

(Includes: High School Redesign & Dual Credit Strategy)

*“Innovation to promote and strive for excellence. Creativity and innovation are central to achieving excellence in education. Learners, educators and governors must be creative, innovative and entrepreneurial to attain the highest possible standards”*

*“Moving Forward with High School Redesign is about more than simply shifting a timetable. It's about shifting mindsets. While the timetable shift opens the door for schools to create flexible learning environments, the mindset shift leads to changes in practice that ensure the flexible learning environments are used to support increased student engagement in learning, improved student achievement and enhanced teacher practice. The shift in mindset to a focus on student-centered learning happens as a number of key practices are put in place, including personalizing learning, intentionally developing meaningful relationships, creating rigorous and relevant learning opportunities, and supporting mastery learning.*

*Throughout the Moving Forward with High School Redesign initiative, Alberta Education will work alongside jurisdictions and schools in a coaching model designed to support continuous improvement in each school. This initiative recognizes that while the participating schools share common goals, high school redesign will look different in each school, as each school's local context is different.”*

- There is research indicating that those with more education are healthier and wealthier. We need to keep improving high school so that it better prepares students for a world in which they will likely change careers several times – they need to be independent, confident and flexible – none of which are encouraged by a traditional high school program designed to prepare and sort out the minority for post-secondary.
- The changes and new supports in high school delivery have been long overdue. Getting away from the tradition model of credentialing has allowed schools to be flexible in their delivery based on the needs of their population. Student choice and opportunities for success are at the heart of this model.
- The High School Redesign project is successful with the time for people to get together and share across the province and opening up to collaboration. It would be great to continue moving forward in this direction Minister should address the funding model that is being used for schools involved with the High School Flexibility Project, the current model is a disincentive for some schools as the reduction in funds takes away ability to be creative.
- Given that time and space are dynamic aspects of learning, the process of redesigning high school and the prospect of creating improved environments for learning is significant.
- Allows districts to prepare students for an ever changing world, providing opportunities to gain real life skills and experiences which transfer into the real world of work
- The rationale connects to why we are High School completion. Ministerial support in this area is required to ensure all of our students are successful both in school and in life beyond



high school completion. In today's highly competitive world, high school completion is an important stepping stone for young people to succeed in the job market. Provincial support in the area of career pathways through collaboration, infrastructure and resource support will help to transition more students to post-secondary studies or the world of work.

- This takes time, however our goal is to have engaged learners, ethical citizens with an entrepreneurial spirit, and all of the changes teaching, learning and focus require time. What we have noticed is that our students need this and like the work we are doing.
- All of our students respond to the "Tell Them from Me" survey, which clearly tells us that our students crave a more engaging and active learning environment.

### **Dual Credit**

*"The Alberta Government, educational institutions, business and industry support opportunities for high school students to explore future career interests and prepare them for transition from high school to post-secondary and to the world of work. Between 2008 and 2011, the province funded dual credit pilot projects, while, at the same time, individual school jurisdictions and institutions negotiated separate, non-government funded dual credit articulation agreements. Dual credit programming may offer more engaging opportunities to a broad range of students, including First Nations, Métis and Inuit students, those living in remote or rural communities, and those who may be at risk of dropping out.*

*Stakeholders who have provided or currently provide dual credit programming expressed, over the years, a need for greater consistency of support for dual credit programming across the province. An overall framework or strategy with room for flexibility is desired."*

- Allows for diversity in delivery models consistent with the overall goals of Inspiring Education & the Ministerial Order Knowledge mobilization of partnerships and pathways
- Facilitation with post-secondary institutions to create seamless transitions with school districts
- Funding to support initial implementation costs
- Continue work on alignment of post-secondary with secondary programming
- Promote lifelong learning
- Create sustainability for dual credit opportunities at the district and the provincial level
- Expansion of dual credit opportunities
- Strength in partnership with business and industry

## Curriculum Redesign

*“Research informs sound policy and decision-making. Education research underpins system change and is used to create the best possible learning environments for young people. Research that informs policy and practice is critical to the success of our students and to ensuring a bright future for all Albertans.”*

*“Curriculum is a widely used term, which has many interpretations. For the purposes of the dialogue for transformational change in Alberta’s education system, curriculum is defined as having the following interconnected components: programs of study, balanced assessment, and learning and teaching resources. Curriculum is foundational to students’ learning experiences. Alberta students are engaged in activities that are guided by the outcomes in the provincial programs of study, supported by balanced assessment tools, and learning and teaching resources.”*

- Programs of study set provincial standards for students. It is important for students to know and understand what is expected of them and apply what they’ve learned to other contexts. It is critical for students to know how they are progressing in their learning and what they need to do to achieve success.
- Children and youth should have meaningful learning opportunities appropriate to each learner’s developmental stage, including learning that is experiential, multi-disciplinary, community-based, and self-paced.
- The learning opportunities are relevant; the education system must be nimble in responding to the changing needs of communities and the world.”
- Important to continue to build on our learning. Curriculum needs to evolve and change to reflect the times in which we live.
- The changes are research based and provide flexibility in delivering content while decreasing emphasis on memorization.
- Stakeholders are engaged and invested. The field of education is eager and excited to continue this important work. The conversation has been started with parents and students. The momentum has been building for a number of years; the need is evident when we look at our educational system in Alberta in relation to the world education scene. The groundwork has begun and continuing on this journey would be progressive and would honor the work and the voices of ECSD and Albertans towards a transformed relevant and engaged educational landscape.
- The pace of the wholesale change to all of the curriculums at the same time could be staggered or slowed down
- Current program of studies is dated, placing students at risk internationally.
- Curriculum redesign will provide increased success as students must continually prepare for engagement in post-secondary studies or the world-of-work.
- The rationale for continued Ministerial support connects to why we are supporting curriculum redesign. Ministerial support is required in developing quality curriculum and resources. Implementation support will be key as shifts in teaching practices are required. There needs to be resources to support change in practices. For example professional development in pedagogy to support curriculum redesign is required. In addition, as

assessments move towards performance based methods, support to assist with teacher marking time is necessary.

- Working with universities to ensure their training aligns to the new competencies and teaching practice is also required by the Province so that the entire system is working toward best practices in ensuring student success.

### **Ministerial Order on Student Learning**

*“The primary goal of education in Alberta is to inspire all students to achieve success and fulfillment. We want our students to be able to reach their full potential as engaged thinkers and ethical citizens with entrepreneurial spirit. We want them to be ready to contribute to a strong and prosperous economy and society”*

- We request continued Ministerial support for the Ministerial Order because it requires all Alberta Educators to take seriously what it means to change pedagogies, practices and structure to best support students to thrive in an increasingly complex and ever-changing world. The Minister is to set a vision for all to follow. This is the right direction to go.
- Continue the forward momentum focusing on preparing students to adapt for the challenges of the future
- The order has been enacted and is important.
- Continued Ministerial support is required to enable us to meet the goals and expectations for K-12 students. Ongoing support in creating a system in inquiry, discovery and the application of knowledge, while still balancing need for basics essential skills is required.
- The transformational changes that are being asked of our districts require focused direction and support from the Ministry including professional development, tools and resources. In addition the province not individual school districts should be taking the lead on developing and delivering key messages around the shifts in public education so that all stakeholders are supportive of the direction

### **Learning and Technology Policy Framework**

*“Digital technologies have the unique potential to dynamically transform the student learning experience by helping students become engaged thinkers, global citizens, and active learning participants in collaborative social learning environments. Today’s digital technologies enable students not only to do things differently, but to do different things that would otherwise not be possible inside traditional classrooms using traditional learning tools. Technology enables different ways of learning and opens up new opportunities to connect, explore, innovate, and create and share knowledge.”*

- Students and educators need to expand their access to a comprehensive technology platform for learning when and where they need it. This enables students to take greater control of their own learning by using technology to personalize their learning experiences, explore their own directions, and use tools that match their learning styles.

- Students have equitable access and opportunity to use technology seamlessly as an integral part of their learning environment and to have engaging and empowering learning experiences both in and outside of school.
- Administrators are creating dynamic, digital learning cultures which maximize the use of media-rich resources to create relevant and engaging learning experiences. Schools connect with parents in their homes and workplaces, and reach out to the global community in ways never before imagined.
- There are greater opportunities for efficiencies and innovation in administration, professional development, assessment, and the provision of specialized services.
- Need to continue the momentum of the work as curriculum continues to evolve and integrate digital learning
- Digital citizenship is essential – that is where people are living. Many initiatives are much easier with some provincial leadership and coordination.
- More time is needed for the LTPF to become integrated into school-level and classroom-level planning, teaching, and learning
- More support and resources are needed for school jurisdictions to properly support implementation in our schools
- The excellent direction in the LTPF needs to be embedded into new curriculum moving forward
- This is part of the skills and experience that students require in the workplace of today. Without the guided and facilitated use of technology as a tool in school, they are left to flounder in its use as part of the greater society
- The Ministerial Order presents a vision for education and, therefore, provides the catalyst for Inspiring Education and a new Education Act.
- As long as the ministry continues on the track of developing student centered, competency based learning directives, it allows for seamless implementation
- Having students to be able to access, share and create knowledge and develop and apply digital citizenship and technology skills is critical to future success. Continued Ministerial support is required to align curriculum, digital resources, financial support for technology investments and assistance in implementing the five policy directions is essential.
- Need to continue the momentum of the work as curriculum continues to evolve and integrate digital learning.

## Student Assessment

(Includes the NEW Student Learning Assessment Initiative)

*“Albertans must have the assurance that all students are succeeding in their learning and that resources being invested on education are being effectively used. Everyone involved in education is responsible for continuously improving his or her own skills and abilities.”*

*Assessment plays a critical and an integral role in learning and serves several purposes for students, teachers, parents, and the broader education community. Formative assessment, often called “assessment for learning,” is used to provide ongoing, timely feedback to students and teachers to help guide teaching and learning by providing essential information to teachers and students so that learning strategies are effectively aligned with individual student needs. In addition to formative assessments, students, teachers, and parents need to know what has been accomplished through summative assessments, often referred to as “assessment of learning,” that demonstrate achievement of learning outcomes.”*

*“Shared responsibility and accountability for results acknowledges that parents are the primary guides and decision-makers for children, all partners in education should share responsibility and accountability for education outcomes.”*

- We need help in educating the public about good practice; not resistance based on feedback from those who have not studied assessment. We can report on behavior and things like attendance, apparent work ethic, prompt arrival etc. but they do not belong as part of a measure of a student’s learning. Punitive grading, retention of students, streaming, and failure have been proven time and again to be de-motivating but the practices persist.
- Moving away from the PATs and the ranking that results from this type of testing system is positive for teaching and learning. We have to work with the ministry to ensure that the new provincial assessments remain of high quality, are useful tools for educators and become an embedded part of their overall assessment practices.
- We have a well-respected and highly experienced team in the assessment branch at Alberta Education. The shift from ‘test’ to ‘assessment’ is one that will require time and support from the ministry. For example, districts will need support from the ministry for professional development so that teachers are supported all the way through implementation of new assessments.
- Despite some challenges with the implementation of the new SLAs, overall it is a solid direction in assessment, backed by research, and one which provides for additional information to support improved student learning
- Research based best practices in Assessment and Reporting should be supported by the Minister. I am not sure the value of autonomy in this area. A provincial standard that is supported by Alberta Education is important. It seems that change requires a global response in this area.

- SLAs reflect the direction set in Inspiring Education and are more aligned to a competency-informed pedagogical model.
- The current SLA tool aligns with research in the effective use of assessments
- Continued Ministerial Support is required so that assessment is understood and implemented consistently across the province. Provincial key messaging around this topic is essential if our public is to understand how assessment links to student engagement, accountability and success. With respect to SLAs, more work
- Is required to conceptualize how to implement in a manner that respects teacher workload

## **Engagement**

(Includes the Student Engagement Initiative: Speak Out & Priority for Improved Public/Parent Engagement)

*“Children learn first from their parents. The role that parents and the broader community play in education is critical. Parents are central motivators, influencers, decision makers and nurturers of their children and have a critical role in the foundational years of their children’s development. Parental engagement plays a significant role in a child’s future success. It enables children to acquire knowledge, learn to think, and discover their skills, aptitudes, abilities and passions. But, parental engagement in the education of children is not in and of itself a universal remedy”.*

- Necessary to continue the path of ensuring that assessment plays a productive role in the learning process.
- Emphasis on the three R’s suggests that students do not develop skills in communication, numeracy through project-based engaging instruction. That is not true.
- Education is a partnership. In order for it to be successful, all of the stakeholders, including government, need to be actively and continuously engaged. Ongoing Ministerial support ensures that we have appropriate modeling of the need for engagement and that the expectation of stakeholder involvement is clear to everyone.
- Minister should focus on increasing engagement at every level. The important thing to remember is that the public should voice the “what” ....professionals need to do the “how.” This has been blurred
- Engaged learners are productive learners
- Continued Ministerial support connects to why we support improved engagement. Ministerial support is required in assisting school boards with the development of common tools, processes and evaluation strategies for measuring the impact of engagement strategies.
- Minister’s office could provide more materials on different matters for divisions to use as we engage the parents and the community.

## NEW Education Act & Regulatory Review

*“The new Education Act brings to life the vision for education that thousands of Albertans shared through Inspiring Education and subsequent consultations. It will help ensure that all Alberta children get a chance to reach their full potential and become engaged thinkers and ethical citizens with an entrepreneurial spirit.*

*All Alberta students deserve a welcoming, caring, respectful and safe place to learn, a place where bullying is simply not tolerated. Alberta families deserve options about what kind of educational experience are right for them and their children. The Education Act provides that and helps ensure your children have the supports and environment they need to succeed.”*

- Need to continue the momentum of the work. In general the Education Act aims at reflecting current reality.
- There are outstanding questions regarding how Alberta Education will support districts regarding complex students remaining until the age of 21 – this has significant implications regarding facility and resources
- The impact of many of the two fold – those that can be anticipated at this time, and those that are difficult to anticipate. Both forms require ministerial support.
- Anticipated changes, like the increase in enrollment that will be brought on by the changes in residency requirements and the expansion of the age range for access to education, will require increased funding in terms of day to day operations and facilities.
- The impact of other changes is more difficult to anticipate, and ministerial support will be required not only in terms of likely funding needs, but also in terms of advice and direction when those impacts come to light. For example, the impact of the requirement to have a trustee sanction process embedded in board policy will require ministerial support not only in terms of what those provisions should look like, but also with the inevitable issues that arise as a result of the implementation of those sanction processes.
- Change of this magnitude emanating from the Minister must come with the requisite support to ensure efficient and consistent practices throughout the province.
- Time for the Government to finish this project and allow us to move forward in areas that are stalled
- Ministry needs to become stronger in leading assurance and softer on compliance and accountability - we need to promote engagement and find better ways to demonstrate that we are making a difference because we are doing things differently.
- A reformed Education Act and accompanying regulations will enable Alberta School Divisions to better prepare their students for the future and, therefore, increase provincial prosperity
- Ministerial Support in releasing the regulations attached to the Education Act would be helpful as school districts contemplate next steps in aligning their policies and processes to the contemplated changes

## Taskforce for Teaching Excellence

*“Inspiring Education envisions an education system that supports students into the future; an education system that explores new ways to support educators and ensure every student benefits from an excellent teacher.*

*To best support these students, there is a need to examine the roles and responsibilities of teachers and educators. The Minister of Education established a Task Force for Teaching Excellence, consisting of educators, school leaders, educational consultants and community leaders who used their combined knowledge and experience to make recommendations to achieve teaching excellence and to ensure the best chance of success for every student.*

*Extensive research from Alberta and top-performing education systems around the world and significant consultation with close to 3,000 Albertans, informed the Task Force as it made bold recommendations to build capacity and empower teachers and leaders.”*

*“The nature of learning and teaching is changing. The professional teacher is a learning leader, a collaborative partner, a researcher, a reflective practitioner, and a change agent with expertise in recognizing and responding to the academic, cognitive, affective and emotional learning needs of students. Teachers facilitate flexible, innovative, and personalized approaches to learning by creating environments that engage students in compelling and authentic work. Today’s teachers are student-centred and future-focused, helping students learn to be responsible, caring and productive citizens. Teachers recognize that the strength of the education program is fundamentally a reflection of the strength of a learning community committed to student learning and achievement, where all members share in the responsibility of the education system to support and respond to the needs of all students.”*

- Major strides have been made to ensure that teachers provide strong leadership and effective instruction to energize, challenge and excite students about learning. Teachers continue to create innovative and authentic learning environments and activities that engage and enhance student passions, interests, and abilities.
- Inspiring education enables teachers to be leaders of learning communities, skilled at relationship building, and know how to access the services and supports of teacher assistants, health professionals, social workers, community members, and parents for the benefit of students.
- Teachers strengthen their competencies, remaining current and vibrant in their teaching methods by engaging in professional development, supported by strong school and system leadership.
- Teachers capitalize on the use of emerging technologies to engage students in their learning.



- District is supporting teachers, by the provision of time – time for professional learning (professional development), collaboration, sharing of best practices, and empowering innovation.
- Teachers’ ongoing learning is a cornerstone of student learning and achievement.
- Ongoing teacher professional development is the most strongly correlated factor with quantitative and qualitative measures of students’ academic success in school (Hattie, 2008, 2012; OECD, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007; William, 2006). From 2000-2013, the Alberta government supported teachers’ ongoing learning and Alberta ranked second only to Finland in reading for more than five years (OECD, 2006,2007, 2008, 2009, 2012), and Alberta was a top performer internationally in Math and Science (PISA, 2008, 2009, 2010). In short, prior to the cut of government funding of teacher PD, Alberta’s teachers were amongst the best in the world and their students were international superstars. Given the above reported research, it is no coincidence that such impressive student results happened at a time when the Alberta government supported teachers to engage in cutting-edge professional learning for more than a decade. Further, since March 8, 2013, when such government funds were suddenly and immediately cut, Alberta students began to fall in PISA scores and are no longer second runner up in reading scores internationally. Because of the research results cited above that verify positive correlation between teachers’ ongoing learning and student results, at minimum, government support of ongoing teacher learning is a notable factor in student performance on all measures of academic stamina internationally.
- We cited how students, too, witnessed this drop in performance in 2012-2013. We also showed that with an intensive focus on providing teachers with session-based PD followed with intensive in-school coaching, that changes in teaching practices actually happened. We know this because every teacher who was coached also shared with at least one other school what they did and how it improved student results. In addition, in 2013-14, student results started to improve and we attribute this improvement in part to the investment of our Superintendent in ongoing teacher learning at a time when government funding was cut. Our school jurisdiction is managing Transform on a budget one-fifth the size of what we had been funded previously through Alberta Initiatives for School Improvement (AIS). While we are seeing some improvements in student learning, district consultants are too few and too overworked to work long enough or intensely enough in schools to support teachers to differentiate teaching for the highest performers (who should be performing at or above the province in the Excellence Standard), and our diverse learners and often most disenfranchised students (our ESL, special needs and FNMI students). Given that we see such populations increasing at a rapid rate in our school district, we argue that teachers require more professional development in the form of sessions and coaching, such as that provided by our Transform PD framework. Alberta teachers reported needing this specialized PD support in a survey of all Alberta teachers done in 2012, and in a survey of our teachers done last year as part of the C2 Committee work.

- Principals, in a recent survey of Canadian Principals (2014) also reported that they found supporting teachers' needs for ongoing learning in areas just identified were one of their hardest challenges as instructional leaders. Hence, we are on the right track with our Transform PD model, but we require government support of teachers' ongoing learning to make a sustained difference to student learning, especially for our most needy and highest growing student populations.
- The recommendations were made only recently. The intent is to look at the current system and move forward. This must continue in order for Alberta's education system to continue its advanced and well recognized excellence in student learning.
- It seems that every document that is controversial has been scrapped of late. We need leadership from the province on some of this issues outlined by the task force.
- The Taskforce document identified structural changes to education that are envisioned in the Inspiring Education document.
- Further Ministerial support is required in engaging the teaching profession more broadly
- Conceptualizing how to enhance teaching excellence in the province. Working collaboratively with all stakeholders will ensure this outcome is achieved.
- Minister must be working with ASBA, and ATA to reach understanding here.

### **FNMI Collaborative Framework**

*“The Collaborative Frameworks serves as a guide to strengthen collaborative processes between school authorities, parents, communities and other stakeholders, as they work together to improve the educational outcomes of First Nations, Métis and Inuit students.”*

*“The digital model of the Collaborative Frameworks was designed in partnership with Alberta Education and the Alberta Regional Consortia. The model serves as an implementation tool to support school authorities as they develop their own First Nations, Métis, and Inuit education frameworks and/or evaluate their existing supports.*

*“The provincial government, in collaboration with Aboriginal leadership, the federal government, school authorities, and communities is working to create new ways to enhance educational opportunities for Aboriginal students. The recent establishment of a Ministerial First Nations, Métis and Inuit (FNMI) Education Partnership Council and the signing of an historic Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on First Nations education will provide Alberta with a common vision for strengthening learning and educational success for FNMI students. The MOU signed by the Government of Canada, the Government of Alberta and the Assembly of Treaty Chiefs in Alberta, provides a framework for collaboration and will support a range of First Nation education-related issues including parental and community engagement, Treaty and cultural awareness, and ongoing work on tuition and education service agreements.*

- Need to continue the momentum of the work.
- Someone at the provincial level needs to work to better coordinate education at provincial and federal levels – from funding on through the systems.
- Rationale – The Order focuses on the child’s (FNMI) educational “best” when making decisions about the child’s education/future. This Order also, examines the pedagogy of the program delivery. The student-centered focused learning model, which we call “**Transform**” in our jurisdiction, is an effort to enhance the FNMI student’s interest in education and a passion for learning through PBL. This model has given our FNMI students the opportunities to be leaders of change in their schools and communities by involving them in the decision making of their education.
- With the primary goal of this Ministerial Order - education within Alberta is to “Inspire” all students, this including FNMI students, to achieve success and fulfillment within the education system of Alberta. The primary focus of this order is instilling our FNMI students to reach their full potential as engaged thinkers and ethical citizens with entrepreneurial spirit.
- With the new model “to Inspire” and to “engage” our FNMI learners - they will become the new generation of youth, who will be ready to contribute to our economy and society in our prosperous province of Alberta.
- Keep this going and finding ways to support the work. With the growth in the FNMI population in Alberta, we have to be responsive and more importantly proactive.
- Ministry provides the policy direction, funding and accountability constructs necessary to support our ongoing work.
- Ministry must work with their Federal colleagues to streamline policy, supports and funding between provincial and federal students.
- We want to continue the effectiveness and improvement of our programs to meet the needs of our FNMI students and community
- Supporting the success in FNMI students across our province is necessary. Further Ministerial support to assist school districts in the planning and implementation of strategies and developing a shared responsibility for FNMI success is critical.

### **General Comments for the Minister's Consideration**

- Districts need direction regarding implementation of Education Act – particularly in relation to potential impact on resources and facilities
- We have heard many comments that would lead us to believe that there is a drive to not just slow down initiatives but go back in time to skills and language from the 1980's. The old system failed many students and we have come so far. It is important to remember that not everyone that complains about the current system is even involved with the system. More importantly, I don't go and ask the general public how a doctor should do brain surgery, just can he get the tumor out. We should not be asking the general public how to educate students but rather what skills they need to achieve to be successful today and for tomorrow.
- Continually do the right thing for our students.
- We must make Inspiring Education a priority and support the work in all school districts and with every community