

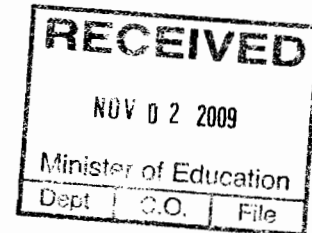
Foundations for the Future Charter Academy

Central Office #240, 688 Heritage Drive SE, Calgary, AB T2H 1M6 Phone: (403) 520-3206 Fax: (403) 520-3209



October 28, 2009

Honourable Dave Hancock
Minister of Education
224 Legislature Building
10800 – 97 Ave.
Edmonton, Alberta
T5K 2B6



Dear Mr. Hancock,

Re: Input Regarding Proposed Amendments to the Alberta School Act

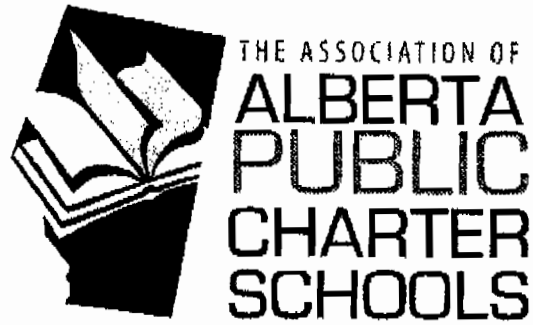
On behalf of the students, parents and staff of Foundations for the Future Charter Academy (FFCA), I wish to thank you for the opportunity to provide our input into potential revisions to the Alberta School Act when it is re-opened in 2010.

In preparing our response, we have reviewed the submission prepared by The Association of Alberta Public Charter Schools, and it is our position that we fully endorse their recommendations. (The TAAPCS document is attached here for your convenience.)

Thank you again for your inclusive approach to the betterment of Alberta's education system.

Sincerely,

Bill McGregor
FFCA Board Chair



The Association of Alberta Public Charter Schools

Input to Proposed Changes

Alberta School Act

Presented on: October 23, 2009

Presented to: The Association of Alberta Public Charter Schools
#240, 688 Heritage Drive S.E.
Calgary, Alberta T2H 1M6

Presented by: Jay Pritchard and Judy Gray
Co-Chairs, TAAPCs
403-520-3206

initiatives to prepare themselves for involvement in a review of the current School Act; charter school superintendents who are members of CASS, and charter school secretary-treasurers who are members of ASBOA have had their voices heard within the context of those Associations' joint initiative in sponsoring a forum to review the School Act. The conclusions identified in the "CASS-ASBOA Membership Input Alberta School Act" document (See Attached) are largely supported by TAAPCS with the additional comments outlined below.

TAAPCS members and schools have contributed individually to the "Inspiring Education" dialogue, and one of the Association's Co-chairs served on the "governance" subcommittee of "Dialogue's" Working Committee. Individual members and schools also contributed to the work of "Setting the Direction for Special Education in Alberta" through participation in focus groups and submission of briefs.

TAAPCS Executive has engaged in on-going discussion about the potential impacts of these initiatives on the operation of charter schools. Within this context, and at the direction of the membership, the Executive undertook a review of the current school act with the intent of providing leadership and support to schools as they prepared their individual submissions regarding changes to the School Act.

Recommendations

TAAPCS suggests that:

- The concepts of choice continue to be embedded in the Act.
- The ideas associated with charter schools as centres of research and innovation is included.
- The new Act provides for the inclusion of wrap-around services for students and families (i.e. cooperation and coordination among various departments of Government, as well as NGO's).
- The new Act is re-written to include delegation of authority to charter school superintendents (current Section 61).
- The processes for implementing compulsory school attendance for students are made more effective.
- The section of the Act dealing with the appointment of the Charter superintendent is changed to reflect that the superintendent's accountability to the Board.
- The Act clarifies the distinction between a "school authority" and a "school jurisdiction".
- There is clarity in terminology regarding "public" schools vs. "charter public schools".

- Section 37 is amended by adding a subsection empowering the Minister to make regulations respecting the appointment of charter board members; further, that the regulation include provision for the Minister to appoint all members of charter boards.
- "Inclusive education" is interpreted within the context of the specific mandate approved by the Minister of Education for each charter school.
- The sections of the Act regarding charter schools are re-written to reflect that "the experiment is over". (Specifically, the notions associated with choice, enrolment caps, five year terms, the accountability processes currently employed, limits on the number of charter schools, accessing capital funding, the value of autonomous governance, etc.) While it is recognized that much of this is regulatory, it is important that it be included on a go-forward basis.

Conclusions

The Association of Alberta Public Schools appreciates the opportunity to provide input to Alberta Education as change to the School Act is contemplated. As a public school organization, TAAPCS is united with CASS and ASBOA in the majority of the conclusions reached at their forum; however, it is also recognized that it is vital to have legislation "catch up" with the unique set of legislative and regulatory circumstances that attend charter schools. This is an opportunity not to be missed, and we thank you for your consideration of our thoughts.