

## Frequently Asked Questions: The Education Act

### **General Information**

#### **Why do we need a new Education Act?**

As part of the ongoing transformation of Alberta's education system, and following in the footsteps of the *Inspiring Education*, *Inspiring Action*, *Speak Out* and *Setting the Direction* engagement processes, the Government of Alberta has introduced an update to the *School Act* of 1988. The proposed Education Act provides a legislative framework for education in Alberta and provides the necessary conditions which will allow boards and the Ministry to work with educational partners to transform education in Alberta. The Act reflects many of the realities of education in the 21<sup>st</sup> century including increasing societal expectations for high school completion, the need for school boards to have greater flexibility to meet local needs, and the many technological changes, including online learning and cyber bullying, which affect students.

#### **Overall, what difference will a new Education Act make?**

The newly-introduced Education Act is an important part of the transformation of education in Alberta. The proposed Act will provide a provincial framework and expectations for educational excellence in Alberta. At the same time it will strengthen local decision making and place school boards in the best position possible to determine the needs of students and the learning opportunities needed to meet these needs within provincially mandated standards.

#### **What are some of the specific changes included in the proposed Education Act?**

The proposed Education Act will have an impact on Alberta's education system in several ways. One major change is defining a set of responsibilities for students, parents, trustees and school boards. This acknowledges that education is a cooperative process and that all participants must play their part in ensuring student success. The proposed Act sets these responsibilities so that the expectations of all partners in the education of Alberta's students are clear.

Another change is the emphasis the Education Act places on caring, respectful and safe schools, enabling Alberta's education system to better respond to issues and to promote the best possible environment for students to succeed.

The proposed Education Act also raises the age that students are required to attend school, and gives them more time to return and complete high school. This will provide more educational opportunities to more students, which will result in a more educated population and work force in the future.

The proposed Education Act broadens the powers of school boards by providing boards with natural person powers which will allow for greater flexibility and creativity in addressing local needs. Examples include a board's ability to acquire property, the determination of the school day and year, and the provision of greater flexibility when providing transportation to students.

For more information on how the proposed Education Act could affect you, check out the 'What's New' section on the Alberta Education website at [www.education.alberta.ca/educationact](http://www.education.alberta.ca/educationact)

#### **How has the new Education Act been developed and when will it be implemented?**

Over the course of the past three years, Alberta Education has undertaken several province-wide engagement initiatives. Each of these initiatives has contributed to the ongoing

transformation of Alberta's education system and each initiative has had an impact on the proposed Education Act.

After the Act is passed by the Legislative Assembly, a review of regulations and policies will take place. Following this the act will be proclaimed. School divisions and the public will be given appropriate notice of when the act will come into force. Visit [www.assembly.ab.ca](http://www.assembly.ab.ca) to track the progress of the bill.

### **Why are portions of the present act being taken out and placed into regulations?**

The proposed Education Act provides a broad legislative framework and sets expectations for education in Alberta. The majority of decisions about education take place at the local school board level. The proposed act will empower school boards to be more responsive to the needs of their students and their communities.

Within the act, the Minister is given the authority to make regulations related to certain provisions. Regulations further refine the mandate outlined in the Education Act and provide operational guidance and expectations.

As the new Education Act was developed it was determined that some of the content that was in the *School Act* would be better placed in regulations. Once the Education Act has been passed by the Legislative Assembly, a review of regulations will be undertaken and opportunities will be provided to stakeholders and partners to provide input.

### **How does a new act affect the funding for education?**

The Education Act provides a legislative framework for education in Alberta. Currently, funding is provided to school boards through a flexible funding framework. More information on funding is available on the Alberta Education website at [www.education.alberta.ca](http://www.education.alberta.ca).

Funding for education is determined annually through the provincial government's budget process. When the Education Act becomes law, funding changes will be made if necessary and where appropriate to support changes in legislation.