



TASK FORCE FOR TEACHING EXCELLENCE

PART I: REPORT TO THE MINISTER OF
EDUCATION, Government of Alberta

PART II: WHAT WE HEARD – Community
and Stakeholder Consultation

May 2014

LETTER FROM THE TASK FORCE CHAIR

Dear Minister Johnson:

On behalf of the Task Force for Teaching Excellence, I am pleased to submit our *Report to the Minister*. This report makes recommendations on teaching excellence to ensure that for every child, in every class, there is an excellent teacher.

In all our deliberations, the interest of the student was paramount – the child came first. We were bold in our recommendations and independent in our assessment. As such, we believe our recommendations will help to transform the education system and achieve the vision of *Inspiring Education*.

In presenting this report, we want to acknowledge the 3,000 Albertans who participated in our consultations. The Task Force was grateful for the opportunity to learn firsthand the beliefs of Albertans about teaching excellence. We thank everyone who took the time to participate and provide input.

We also want to thank the many experts and those from stakeholder organizations who took the time to share their views. Their input helped us consider teaching excellence from a variety of perspectives and enriched our discussions. We would be remiss in not acknowledging the support of staff from the Ministry of Education. We appreciated their expertise and the countless hours they devoted to this project.

In closing, the members of the Task Force thank you for the opportunity to be involved in this important project. We share a passion for education. Our varied backgrounds and experiences allowed us to learn from each other, as well as from Albertans. Our positions on issues evolved through discussion and analysis.

For me, this has been a journey of personal discovery. It has deepened my appreciation of the art and craft of teaching and the passion for and commitment to education in this province. For that I thank you.

Dr. Glenn Feltham
Chair, Task Force for Teaching Excellence



*For every child, in every class,
there is an excellent teacher.*

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Submitted to the Hon. Jeff Johnson, Minister of Education, Alberta
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Jeff Johnson, Alberta's Minister of Education, announced the formation of a Task Force for Teaching Excellence (Task Force) on September 11, 2013.

Alberta has a very strong education system – it has served our province and its students very well. So why establish a Task Force on Teaching Excellence? The largest part of the answer rests in *Inspiring Education* – Alberta's long-term vision for education centered on the student. The aspirations set out in *Inspiring Education* can only be achieved by aligning teaching with its vision. The rest of the answer resides in the world around us. Education systems in Canada and around the world are recognizing the importance of teaching excellence, and are evolving to support excellence. Alberta needs to be at the forefront of this change; this will ensure our children have opportunities to succeed in a rapidly changing world. We must determine what is working well and what can be improved. Because teaching is at the core of a successful education system, we must do all we can to achieve teaching excellence.

In establishing the Task Force, Minister Johnson defined the purpose:

The Task Force will make recommendations on how we can better support Alberta's teachers to ensure that every student has the best chance at success. Consultations will give all Albertans the chance to help build the future of our children's classrooms and opportunities for learning.¹

The Task Force comprised 16 members representing a broad cross-section of Albertans including students, parents, teachers and academics, in addition to four Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs).

Consistent with the purpose, the Task Force focused on a goal: *for every child, in every class, there is an excellent teacher*. The Task Force focused on the student, with a fundamental belief that teaching excellence is central to the success of our children and youth.

To inform the recommendations, the Task Force undertook a consultation process that was rich and deep. These consultations included an online survey, regional sessions, an online bulletin board, focused dialogues, written submissions from stakeholders, and one-on-one meetings. More than 3,000 Albertans participated in consultations, including students, parents, teachers, administrators, trustees and other members of the public.

1 News release: <http://alberta.ca/release.cfm?xID=3494688E638B3-F818-2042-38963D68FB752D43>

Albertans told the Task Force that teaching excellence starts with dedicated and talented teachers. But teaching excellence is about more than this. Building a culture of teaching excellence involves the entire system and everyone in it. Four key themes emerged, reflecting the need to:

- Define expectations for teaching excellence
- Enable teachers to achieve excellence
- Define the role of leaders in teaching excellence
- Assure teaching excellence

All recommendations were considered through the lens of Alberta's vision for education – *Inspiring Education* – and always with the student in mind.

Let us describe the recommendations.

Central to achieving teaching excellence is a definition of excellence and clear expectations for practice. Practice standards – the foundation of the profession – provide a framework and principles that inform the attributes, skills, and knowledge required by teachers. The Task Force recommends that the existing practice standard for teachers be revised to align with *Inspiring Education* and with the other recommendations in this report. We further recommend that, for school leaders and district leaders also, practice standards be formally adopted to ensure clarity of expectations and alignment with *Inspiring Education*.

The second theme was how to enable teachers to become excellent. The Task Force examined how to attract and prepare teachers, how teachers enter the profession, how to develop and retain experienced teachers, and how to support teachers.

Who is admitted to teacher preparation programs and how they are educated have a significant impact on the quality of teaching. The Task Force recommends attracting individuals with a broad diversity of skills and talents to the teaching profession. To strengthen teacher preparation programs, the Task Force makes recommendations to ensure their alignment with *Inspiring Education*, and to strengthen classroom experience (i.e., longer and earlier practicums).

To address the high level of attrition in the early years of teaching and to accelerate teacher growth, the Task Force makes two recommendations: the introduction of a mandatory one-year internship (i.e., articling) program, similar to that of other professions, and a provincewide mentorship framework for beginning teachers.

The Task Force recommends revisions to the *Teacher Growth, Supervision and Evaluation Policy* to help achieve teachers' professional growth and teaching excellence. It is also important that practice excellence be recognized in a meaningful and tangible way. A recommendation supports recognition of excellent teachers and encourages them to contribute their talents more broadly.

On how best to support teachers, the most consistent theme expressed by teachers was the provision of time – time for professional learning (professional development), collaboration, sharing of best practices, and empowering innovation. Further, the Task Force believes that the structure of professional learning needs to be effective and aligned with *Inspiring Education*.

Regarding the theme of leadership, principals have the greatest impact on teaching excellence, next to teachers themselves. The right principal can propel a school forward, creating an environment in which teaching excellence flourishes. But there is little guidance on how to select such principals, no required leadership preparation program, and inconsistent access to mentorship. The Task Force makes recommendations in each of these areas to ensure the right people are appointed to leadership positions and are provided the foundation to succeed. The Task Force further recommends the development of frameworks for growth, supervision and evaluation of principals and superintendents, similar to the recommendations for teachers.

The final theme examined by the Task Force was assurance of effective practice: do our assurance systems align with and support teaching excellence? The Task Force had several concerns about the system that assures the conduct and competence of teachers. Conduct relates to the professional behavior of the teacher, while competence relates to the effectiveness of a teacher. As conduct and competence are very different, the Task Force recommends these issues be dealt with through different processes.

For issues of conduct, the Task Force believes that the existing system requires greater openness, transparency, timeliness, fairness and efficiency. If the interests of students truly come first, we require an open and transparent system that is accessible and understandable to parents and students.

On issues of competence, the Task Force recommends a very different system than the one currently in place. We recommend the introduction of a system of maintenance of certification for teachers to assure career-long growth, currency, and competency. An evaluation every five years would determine whether a teacher's certification to teach should be maintained.

The Task Force makes recommendations related to school leaders which parallel those for teachers. There needs to be an accountability and feedback structure for principals similar to that proposed for teachers, including a maintenance of designation for school leaders.

The recommendations of this report envision a far greater human resource role for the principal. The Task Force recommends principals be empowered to support our recommendations.

Finally, several recommendations in this report will require greater involvement by the Ministry of Education in professional functions. The Task Force recommends the current model of shared responsibility for professional functions between the Ministry of Education and the Alberta Teachers' Association be retained, with appropriate modifications to implement the recommendations of this report. If those modifications cannot be made under the existing model, the Task Force recommends that either a Ministry-based model for professional functions or a separate professional teachers' college be considered by the Minister of Education.

The Task Force believes adoption of its recommendations will help Albertans to achieve the vision of *Inspiring Education* and to position our children for success in the world. These recommendations will ensure that:

For every child, in every class, there is an excellent teacher.

1 INTRODUCTION

The role of teaching excellence in Alberta's vision for education

In 2010, Albertans shared their thoughts on the future of education in Alberta, set down in the report *Inspiring Education*. But *Inspiring Education* is more than a report. It's a vision – a new way of looking at education and the world. It reflects the consensus of Albertans that we desire our students to become engaged thinkers and ethical citizens, with an entrepreneurial spirit. We now talk with considerable clarity, not about what is best for the system, but about what is best for the student.

The Government of Alberta has taken positive steps in moving our education system toward the vision of *Inspiring Education*. It has introduced a new *Education Act* and is reviewing and updating programs and policies related to student learning outcomes, curriculum design, high school credentialing, inclusive education and student assessment.

But *Inspiring Education* also put forth that the most important factor in student success, outside of parents and family, is the teacher and teaching excellence. Albertans said teachers have to be more flexible, innovative and learner-centered. They said the role of the teacher must change from that of a knowledge authority to an architect of learning – one who plans, designs and oversees learning activities.

So what does that mean for the teacher as an individual? What does that mean for the broader education community? Our expectations for teachers have changed and will change significantly under Alberta's new vision for education.

The Task Force for Teaching Excellence

To address these questions, Minister of Education Jeff Johnson announced the creation of the Task Force for Teaching Excellence on September 11, 2013. The Task Force comprised 16 members who have a passion for, and a commitment to, education in Alberta. They represented a cross-section of Albertans including students, parents, teachers and academics, and four MLAs. Biographies of Task Force members are included in Appendix B. The Task Force Terms of Reference are included in Appendix C.

The Task Force was asked to make recommendations to better support teaching excellence and to ensure success for every student. The recommendations contained in this report will inform the intent and content of new provincial legislation and related regulations and policies.

Development of the report

The Task Force focused on a goal of:

For every child, in every class, there is an excellent teacher.²

We believe every student is entitled to high-quality learning that is centered on his or her needs. It is through this lens – the needs of the child – that this report was drafted.

In its first meetings, the Task Force agreed its scope should be interpreted as broadly as possible – that everything related to teaching excellence should be on the table – including the role of the teacher, educational leaders, and the broader system. We agreed to be bold and consider all potential opportunities for change. We agreed that discussions and recommendations should be evidence driven, and focused on the long-term fundamentals, and not focused on implementation. That is, we did not focus on political feasibility, or existing collective agreements and legislation. Overall, the Task Force lived by these principles.

Several meetings were spent developing common understandings. We examined information related to Alberta's system of education, and other education systems both within Canada and internationally. We read and read some more – an extensive bibliography is included in Appendix I. We also commissioned two environmental scans to inform our work: *Summary of Professional Disciplinary Processes and Statistics for Selected Occupations in Alberta*, prepared by Applications Management Consulting Ltd., and *An Environmental Scan on Education Professions and Occupations*, also prepared by Applications Management Consulting Ltd.

The consultation process of the Task Force, as discussed in the following section and in the *Part II: What We Heard Report*, was extensive and multifaceted. The process included an online survey, regional sessions, online bulletin boards, focused dialogues, written submissions from stakeholder organizations, and one-on-one meetings. The consultations helped us both to identify issues and inform recommendations.

Finally, we deliberated on our recommendations.

2 The word "class" is used broadly in this statement. It is intended to suggest any environment in which students learn.

2 CONTEXT FOR CHANGE

No education system can remain static. The world is changing rapidly. Technology is transforming our lives. The skills needed in the future will be very different from those needed today.³

Lee Hsien Loong, Prime Minister of Singapore

As all economies grow more knowledge-based, diverse and yet interconnected, the next generation will be called to innovate, create and compete as never before. How will the world respond? How will Alberta respond? We must consider what's happening both at home and abroad.

Inspiring Education

Albertans are fortunate to have a publicly-funded education system widely regarded as one of the best in the world. However, while successful, we can't afford to rest on our past accomplishments. That is why the Government of Alberta, in collaboration with education stakeholders, is pursuing a vision of education called *Inspiring Education*. The vision emphasizes the development of key competencies and cultivates students as engaged thinkers, and ethical citizens with entrepreneurial spirits (the 3E's):

- **Engaged thinker:** one who thinks critically and makes discoveries; who uses technology to learn, innovate, communicate, and discover; who works with multiple perspectives and disciplines to identify problems and find the best solutions; who communicates these ideas to others; and who, as a life-long learner, adapts to change with an attitude of optimism and hope for the future.
- **Ethical citizen:** one who builds relationships based on humility, fairness and open-mindedness; who demonstrates respect, empathy and compassion; and who through teamwork, collaboration and communication contributes fully to the community and to the world.

³ *The Learning Curve: Lessons in Country Performance in Education* (Pearson PLC, 2012) p.38 (<http://thelearningcurve.pearson.com/>)

- **Entrepreneurial spirit:** one who creates opportunities and achieves goals through hard work, perseverance and discipline; who strives for excellence and earns success; who explores ideas and challenges the status quo; who is competitive, adaptable and resilient; and who has the confidence to take risks and make bold decisions in the face of adversity.

To achieve this vision, the entire education system, including the role of the teacher, must undergo significant shifts.

“What” teachers do must shift from the dissemination of information and recall of facts to a greater focus on inquiry and discovery. In the future, teachers will use a curriculum that allows for more interdisciplinary learning, combining the arts and other academic streams. Teachers will continue to focus on supporting students to develop the attitudes, skills, knowledge, and values required for life-long learning.

“How” teachers and the education system function must shift as well, placing children and youth at the centre of all decisions related to learning. Children and youth will be supported as individuals – emotionally, intellectually, physically, socially and spiritually. Their personal interests, curiosities, and strengths will be taken into account. Curriculum will be relevant and available in a variety of forms, and experienced in-person or virtually, collaboratively or independently, and at one’s own pace.

Additionally, the community must become a true partner in education. The community is a source of leadership, expertise, and support. Leadership will be recruited from a variety of organizations including the business community, post-secondary institutions, not-for-profit organizations, and cultural groups.

Through *Inspiring Education*, Albertans were clear that teachers must achieve excellence to inspire the same level of achievement in students. Other than parents and families, Albertans see the teacher as the single most important contributor to student success. How we prepare teachers and how we assure teaching excellence will change to align with the shifts described in *Inspiring Education*.

While *Inspiring Education* establishes the high-level direction for education, it does not lay out how to achieve this vision. It recognizes the importance of teaching excellence to achieving its vision, while being open on how teaching excellence is to be achieved. This report provides further direction.

Alberta’s place in the world

Alberta’s education system is strong. In fact, we have been among the world’s leaders in reading, science and mathematics. Alberta students have met or exceeded overall national and international average results in the following international studies: Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) sponsored by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development in 2000, 2003, 2006, 2009 and 2012; Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) in 2006 and 2011; and Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study in 1995, 1999, 2007, and 2011.

While Alberta continues to perform well internationally, Alberta's average PISA scores have declined over the last nine years. The 2012 PISA results show that Alberta's students continue to do well in math, reading and science, although on a relative basis other countries and provinces have passed or closed the performance gap with Alberta. Simply stated, other jurisdictions are evaluating and changing their education systems to improve educational outcomes.

The pace of change in education systems has increased, with systems around the world critically evaluating what is working, and what can be made better. In a call to action Andreas Schleicher, Special Advisor on Education Policy to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's Secretary-General and Deputy Director for Education, stated:

The world has become indifferent to tradition and past reputations, unforgiving to frailty and ignorant to custom or practice. Success will go to those individuals and nations that are swift to adapt, slow to complain, and open to change. The task for educators and policy makers is to ensure that countries rise to this challenge.⁴

Alberta has a solid foundation to build upon. We are strong in our educational performance, but can become even stronger. Our children can lead in the emerging world. To maintain our standing in the world, we need classrooms and learning environments that are intellectually vibrant and robust, and where imaginative, creative, and discipline-based work engages the hearts, the minds and the hands of students. By supporting teachers to strive for and maintain excellence, we will ensure Alberta students are enabled to lead in a global society. Alberta needs to be at the forefront of change.

To summarize, while Alberta has a very successful education system, there are imperatives for change; we need to achieve the vision and promise of *Inspiring Education* to ensure our children have opportunities to succeed in a rapidly changing world.

⁴ Andreas Schleicher, "The Five Things I've Learned" (Pearson Foundation, 2012) (<http://www.thefivethings.org/andreas-schleicher/>)

3 CONSULTATIONS WITH ALBERTANS

A critical element of the Task Force review was listening to Albertans, including the voices of individual teachers. To maximize participation, the Task Force undertook an extensive series of consultations and used a variety of methods to gather input. Three thousand Albertans contributed to the consultations, including a significant number of teachers and educational leaders. All input was captured and later considered as part of our deliberations. While consultations were originally scheduled to close at the end of November, they were extended to mid-December to accommodate as many Albertans as possible. Albertans had a further opportunity to provide input during the *Inspiring Education* Symposium held in Calgary on February 19, 2014.

Leger - The Research Intelligence Group was contracted to support the Task Force. It assisted with three major components of the consultation – an online survey; regional sessions, including those conducted specifically with First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples; and a series of online bulletin board discussions with Albertans.

Consultation methods

The Task Force used seven different methods to engage as many Albertans as possible:

- an online survey
- regional consultations
- online bulletin boards
- focused dialogues
- written submissions from stakeholder organizations
- one-on-one meetings
- questions posed at the *Inspiring Education* Symposium

Consultations were publicized in a variety of ways to maximize public and educator awareness and participation.

Participation

The **online survey** was open to all Albertans. A total of 2,197 Albertans participated between October 1 and November 17, 2013. The breakdown of participants⁵ included: teachers (22 per cent); parents (17 per cent); former students (14 per cent); district and school leaders (13 per cent); and others including school support staff, employers, current students and the general public.

The number of participants is considered a robust sample when compared to similar studies collecting information on the opinions and attitudes of Albertans. Survey questions focused on teaching, leadership, and the overall system.

Regional consultations were conducted in October and November 2013 with 700 people in attendance. Task Force members travelled in small teams to communities throughout the province, hearing firsthand the views of Albertans. The breakdown of participants included: teachers (37 per cent); school and district leaders (21 per cent); parents (12 per cent) and others including students, employers and the general public.

Consultations were held in: Vermilion, Grande Prairie, Medicine Hat, Lethbridge, Brooks, Red Deer, Hinton, Fort McMurray, Athabasca, Fort Vermilion, Calgary, and Edmonton; and with First Nations, Métis and Inuit representatives in Lac La Biche, Bonnyville and Edmonton.

Online bulletin boards generated discussion among 112 participants representing three distinct groups: educators (68 per cent); parents (19 per cent) and students (13 per cent).

Small groups of Task Force members held **focused dialogues** with senior representatives of stakeholder organizations, including, but not limited to, organizations that represent teachers, parents and system governance. In addition to focused dialogues, stakeholder organizations and individuals made **written submissions** to the Task Force.

Task Force members also held **one-on-one meetings** with individuals who have expertise and/or interest in specific aspects of education.

Eleven hundred participants at an **Inspiring Education Symposium** in Calgary (February 19, 2014) responded to two questions related to teaching excellence.

What we heard

Consultations findings have been incorporated into the recommendations sections of this report. A more complete summary of findings is provided in: *Part 1: What We Heard – Community and Stakeholder Consultation*.

⁵ Only stakeholders with the largest percentage of participants are identified here and throughout this document. As a result, percentages will not add up to 100.

4 WHAT IS TEACHING EXCELLENCE?

Teaching excellence is achieved through a system that ensures that:

For every child, in every class, there is an excellent teacher.

To achieve this goal, we must articulate clear expectations for teacher practice that align with the vision of *Inspiring Education*. These expectations must be set out in practice standards for educators. The standards must underpin a culture of teaching excellence encompassing the entire education system and everyone in it. The standards must enable teachers to achieve excellence, and they must empower leaders at the school and district levels to support and assure teaching excellence.

But first the Task Force examined the role of teachers generally. Of course, teachers are central to a system of teaching excellence. Anyone who has observed a teacher knows that teaching is an enormously complex profession. Teachers are expected to instruct children from all backgrounds, with varying skills, abilities and interest in learning. They are expected to promote effective learning for a diversity of learners within a system that provides varying levels of support.

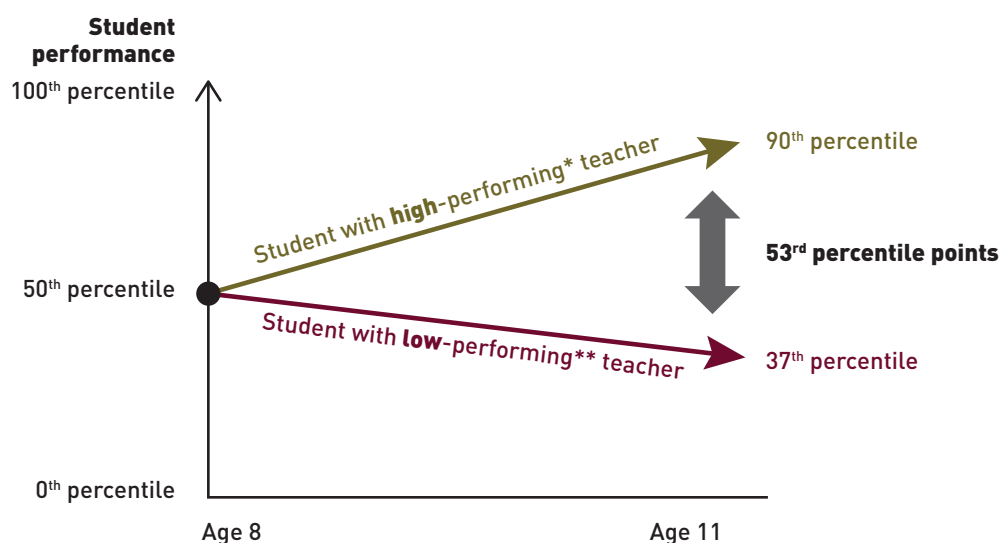
Evidence shows that how teachers do this matters. In fact, the impact of a good teacher can be huge. In a study of 2.5 million American school children, economists Raj Chetty, John Friedman, and Jonah Rockoff found that students assigned to better teachers (as measured by their impact on students' test scores) earned more income as adults, were more likely to attend college, and were less likely to have children as teenagers. They also found that the differences between poor and average teachers can be as important as the differences between average and superior teachers. As they write:

Replacing a (bottom 5 per cent) teacher with an average teacher would increase the present value of students' lifetime income by more than \$250,000 for the average classroom in our sample.⁶

⁶ Raj Chetty, John N. Friedman, and Jonah E. Rockoff, "The Long-Term Impacts of Teachers: Teacher Value-Added and Student Outcomes in Adulthood," NBER Working Paper (National Bureau of Economic Research, 2011).

Another study also found that teacher quality has a substantial impact on student performance. It showed that, on average, two students with average performance (50 percentile) would diverge by more than 50 percentile points over a three year period depending on the quality of the teacher they were assigned. Diagram 1 illustrates the findings.

DIAGRAM 1: The effect of teacher quality⁷



*Among the top 20% of teachers; **Among the bottom 20% of teachers

Analysis of test data from Tennessee showed that teacher quality effected student performance more than any other variable; on average, two students with average performance (50th percentile) would diverge by more than 50 percentile points over a three year period depending on the teacher they were assigned.

Participants in Task Force consultations often cited the key attributes of excellent teachers as competence, expertise, and the ability to build relationships with students. Participants, including teachers, parents, educational leaders and others, all agreed that excellent teachers teach, think and behave in a manner that showcases the best of themselves and brings out the best in their students. Participants in the consultations said that excellent teachers are:

- Passionate about teaching and learning. For example, students participating in Speak Out (an *Inspiring Education*-related forum for students) described a great teacher this way: "If a student doesn't understand a concept, a great teacher will make time to help or find another way to teach it to ensure the student understands. Teachers need to be passionate about their jobs and put the effort into making sure students are learning."⁸

⁷ Sanders and Rivers *Cumulative and Residual Effects on Future Student Academic Achievement*, McKinsey

⁸ Government of Alberta, *Speak Out, What We Heard: Quality Teaching* (2011), p.5

- Enthusiastic, motivational, inspiring and engaging. For example, students participating in Speak Out also described a great teacher in this way: “Teachers who mix things up regularly, move from individual learning to group-based projects or incorporate outdoor workshops, indoor classes, fitness-based classes, etc., help keep students interested and engaged.”⁹
- Knowledgeable, intelligent, and educated. Students participating in Speak Out said this about the ideal teacher: “The ideal teacher is knowledgeable and passionate about the subject he or she is teaching. The teacher is able to bring real life examples into the classroom to make the learning more applicable for students. The teacher is able to incorporate personal knowledge and experience into the lesson plans and is able to effectively respond to student questions.”¹⁰
- Compassionate, empathetic, caring, kind, understanding, and relationship builders. For example, a student participating in Task Force consultations said: “Truly having a good teacher is to be able to connect with him or her and their teaching method. More than just the way he or she teaches, but on a personal level as well. To be able to connect with someone will truly make it easier to understand what they are saying and to comprehend material in depth.”

Many of the stakeholder organizations’ submissions to the Task Force expressed the need for a clear description of teacher excellence that can form the basis of practice standards for teachers. Fortunately, *Inspiring Education* provides us with a clear vision – a vision largely consistent with what is described above. Within an *Inspiring Education* world, teacher excellence is defined by the teacher’s ability to develop students who are engaged thinkers and who have the knowledge and the wisdom to be ethical citizens with an entrepreneurial spirit (the 3E’s). To achieve excellence on an individual level, the professional development and ongoing learning of teachers must be aligned with the 3E’s.

Inspiring Education described two key characteristics of teacher excellence as:

- Expertise as a creator of knowledge. Quite opposed to acting as content experts, teachers must act as architects of learning to achieve the 3E’s:
 - To support students in becoming engaged thinkers, it is expected that teachers will know how knowledge is created through inquiry, reflection, exploration, experimentation and trial and error. Teachers will model, guide, and facilitate knowledge sharing, helping students become creators of knowledge.
 - Similarly, to support students as ethical citizens, teachers must know how to develop environmental, economic, cultural, social and political literacy in students.
 - To support students in entrepreneurship, teachers must know how to identify, develop and bring ideas to life and to take risks in learning.

⁹ Government of Alberta, Speak Out, *What We Heard: Success Through Quality Teaching* (2012), p.8

¹⁰ Government of Alberta, Speak Out, *What We Heard: Quality Teaching* (2011), p.5

- Ability to work with others. As teachers guide the learning of each individual student within an increasingly diverse population, they must collaborate with other educators to identify best practices.
 - To support engaged thinking, they must integrate ideas, subject disciplines, local context, and community values into meaningful and relevant learning experiences.
 - To support ethical citizenship, they must reflect upon action and practice in collaboration with others.
 - To support entrepreneurship, teachers must build community support structures and create innovative learning environments.

The major shifts in teaching under *Inspiring Education* are outlined in Table 1.

Most importantly, the **teacher isn't alone** in this endeavour. It is everyone's responsibility to create a culture that nurtures, supports and sustains learning excellence and teaching excellence. Everyone – from government to the community to every employee in every school, district and stakeholder organization – must be dedicated to achieving the ideals of engagement, ethical behaviour and entrepreneurship.

TABLE 1 – How *Inspiring Education* shifts teaching¹¹

LESS	MORE
▪ Imparting of knowledge	▪ Creation of knowledge
▪ Implementation	▪ Designing, innovating, and inventing
▪ Conventional	▪ Customized and unique
▪ Working alone	▪ Working together
▪ Authority and management	▪ Guidance and empowerment
▪ Reliance	▪ Independence
▪ Static	▪ Dynamic
▪ Focus on content	▪ Focus on competency building through content
▪ Standardized assessment – quantitative measures	▪ Diverse assessment – formative and summative measures
▪ Structured and restrictive	▪ Accessible and participatory
▪ Technology supporting teaching	▪ Technology enabled learning
▪ Participation in Ministry-led initiatives	▪ Participation in local and global initiatives

11 Ministry of Education, *Inspired Teachers* (draft concept paper), 2013.

5 SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

This section provides an overview of the Task Force recommendations. The full recommendations, as well as their rationale, consultation findings and supporting research, are provided in Sections 6 through 9.

As the Task Force discussed opportunities to achieve teaching excellence, four key themes emerged: defining expectations around teaching excellence; enabling teachers to achieve excellence; the role of leaders in enabling teaching excellence; and the assurance of teaching excellence.

Recommendations related to these four themes were informed by the following. First, students came first in all our discussions. Our education system exists for students, and recommendations must be solely in their interest. Second, our recommendations must be consistent with, and empower, Alberta's vision for education from *Inspiring Education*. As stated in the Task Force Terms of Reference:

Recommendations will align with the vision, values, guiding principles and policy shifts of *Inspiring Education* to provide for legislation and practice that will **enable and assure teacher excellence** and ensure educators will be innovative and current in their practice.¹²

An implication of our report is that there needs to be greater harmonization of practice standards and core elements of education affecting teaching excellence. Equally important, and an assumption made throughout this report (sometimes implicit and sometimes stated), is that the community context must also be considered when making decisions that affect students.

Practice standards

Where do we set out what we expect of teachers and educational leaders? This is the function of practice standards.

Practice standards are the foundation of all professions. They define expectations and outcomes. Practice standards provide a framework and principles that inform the attributes,

¹² Appendix C, Task Force Terms of Reference.

skills and knowledge required of professionals. In consultations, there was strong support for formal provincial practice standards – aligned with *Inspiring Education* – for teachers, school leaders, and district leaders.

The Task Force makes four recommendations on practice standards, as presented in detail in Section 6 of this report. The Task Force recommends the existing practice standard for teachers, the *Teaching Quality Standard*, be revised to align with *Inspiring Education* and with the other recommendations in this report (Recommendation 1). We further recommend that practice standards be formally adopted for school and district leaders (Recommendations 2 and 3). An additional recommendation is made to ensure that these practice standards are regularly reviewed and updated (Recommendation 4).

These recommendations ensure that expectations for teachers and educational leaders are clearly articulated and fully aligned with achieving teaching excellence and *Inspiring Education*. Because many of our other recommendations are directly tied to practice standards (e.g., assuring excellence for teachers will be measured against the revised *Teaching Quality Standard*), it is critical that practice standards rigorously and clearly define expectations.

Enabling teaching excellence

The second theme we focused on was enabling teaching excellence. Teachers play a critical role in our society, imparting knowledge and facilitating learning. However, this role is evolving under *Inspiring Education*. How do we enable teachers to achieve excellence in this evolving role?

The Task Force examined three key areas: how we attract, prepare and induct (introduce to the profession) new teachers; how we develop and retain experienced teachers; and how we support teachers. Full recommendations and analysis are provided in Section 7.

Attract, prepare, and induct

The foundation for a successful system is established in who we attract and how we prepare people for the teaching profession. These have a profound impact on our education system.

HOW WE ATTRACT

How do we attract individuals with a diversity of skills and talents to the teaching profession? The criteria for choosing who will enter teacher preparation programs have a direct impact on the profession and on teaching excellence. The Task Force encourages teacher preparation programs to look beyond grades in discerning those who are most suitable for careers in teaching. Other relevant criteria might include the ability of applicants to make connections with students, as well as diversity of backgrounds (Recommendation 5). To further increase the diversity of skills and talents in the teaching profession, the Task Force believes there should be additional pathways to

becoming a teacher, particularly for those in the trades, fine arts, and other professions (Recommendation 6). The Task Force further recommends changes that will provide greater flexibility for schools to use community-based experts. This would occur through revisions to the system of Letters of Authority which authorize those without certification to provide instruction under the supervision of the principal.

HOW WE PREPARE

Alberta's teacher preparation programs have provided a foundation for teaching excellence. However, given the changes envisioned by *Inspiring Education*, the Task Force discussed whether teacher preparation programs are evolving to keep up with those changes. We recommend that the Ministry of Education work with Alberta's teacher preparation institutions to ensure alignment of their programs with *Inspiring Education* (Recommendation 7). This may be accomplished through an annual discussion facilitated by the Ministry of Education.

To prepare those in teacher preparation programs to teach, Alberta requires those students have hands-on classroom experience (practicums). The Task Force recommends students gain experience earlier in their teacher preparation program (or even before entering their program). This would give prospective teachers an insight into teaching and help them determine whether teaching is the right profession for them (Recommendation 8). We further recommend that practicums occur in each year of the teacher preparation program, and that the minimum requirement for successful practicum program completion for teacher certification be extended beyond the current 10 weeks.

INDUCTION

The Task Force is concerned about the high level of attrition in the teaching profession, particularly in teachers' early years. The Task Force believes it is important to provide the greatest opportunity for success, and for growth, in the first years of teaching practice. Therefore, we recommend the introduction of a mandatory one-year paid internship (i.e., articling) program, similar to that of other professions (Recommendation 9). The intern would have a reduced teaching load with commensurate salary. This would give the intern additional time to focus on building competencies, confidence, and teaching skills.

The Task Force further believes that mentorship is critical to teacher development. The Task Force recommends the development of a provincewide mentorship framework for those in the early years of their teaching career (Recommendation 10).

Develop and retain experienced teachers

As with all professions, there is an expectation that teachers will continue to develop their practice to remain current and competent. It is also important that excellent teachers take on other roles through which they can contribute to the profession and Alberta's education system.

ONGOING DEVELOPMENT

Perhaps nothing is more important to achieving teaching excellence than professional growth and development. The Task Force has concerns – widely shared by participants in the consultations – that the current *Teacher Growth, Supervision and Evaluation Policy* is not effective and needs to be significantly modified (Recommendation 11). Specifically, a teacher’s professional growth plan should be jointly developed with the principal, be aligned with the broader goals of the school, district and community, and demonstrate professional growth, currency and competency. Further, the Task Force believes it is critical that meaningful feedback on the teacher’s plan be provided each year.

RECOGNIZING EXCELLENCE

The Task Force believes that truly excellent teachers are not sufficiently recognized and provided opportunities to share their expertise. Consistent with consultation findings, and with practices in many other leading jurisdictions, the Task Force recommends a special designation be awarded to those who consistently demonstrate teaching excellence (Recommendation 12). These individuals would be encouraged to contribute their expertise in areas such as mentorship, collaboration, and in supporting individuals in practicums and internships, with appropriate resources provided.

TEACHER SUPPORT

The Task Force received considerable feedback on teacher supports. We focused our attention on the nature and adequacy of support (Recommendation 13). Clearly, support for teachers needs to be rethought. The Task Force recommends the Ministry of Education engage in consultation with key stakeholder organizations to address these issues.

The most consistent theme expressed by teachers was the need for time – time for planning, professional development, collaborating, sharing best practice, and empowering innovation (Recommendation 14). The Task Force recommends that the professional learning (professional development) structure for teachers be examined to ensure it is effective and aligned with *Inspiring Education*.

The role of leaders¹³ in enabling teaching excellence

The third theme we focused on was leadership. Next to teachers, school leaders, particularly principals, have the greatest impact on teaching excellence. Great principals motivate and support teachers, monitor and evaluate their practice, and assist them with their professional growth. Most importantly, they create an environment and culture that leads to teaching excellence. Several recommendations related to leadership parallel or correspond with recommendations to enable teachers to achieve excellence. The full recommendations are presented in Section 8. The Task Force focused on how school leaders are attracted, prepared and inducted, and how they are developed and retained.

¹³ Throughout this document, unless otherwise specified, school leaders refer to principals, assistant principals, associate principals, and vice principals. District leaders refer to superintendents, assistant superintendents and associate superintendents.

Attract, prepare and induct school leaders

WHO WE ATTRACT

The right principal can propel a school forward, creating an environment in which teaching excellence flourishes. But not all school authorities have the knowledge and resources required to make optimum human resource decisions. The Task Force therefore recommends the development of a provincewide framework for the identification and selection of school leaders (Recommendation 15).

HOW WE PREPARE

Equally important to choosing the right principal is providing the right support for success. The Task Force recommends the development of a mandatory leadership preparation program for school leaders (Recommendation 16). We further recommend the development of a mentorship framework for both school and district leaders (Recommendation 17).

Developing and retaining leaders

There is an expectation that school and district leaders will demonstrate continued competence throughout their careers. The Task Force recommends the development of frameworks for growth, supervision and evaluation of school and district leaders, aligned with their respective practice standards (Recommendation 18).

Assuring teaching excellence

The final theme we examined was the assurance of teaching excellence. Full analysis and recommendations are provided in Section 9. An important question for the Task Force was: do our governance and regulatory systems align with and support teaching excellence? We had several concerns.

CONDUCT AND COMPETENCE

Throughout this report, the Task Force asserts that the interest of students must come first. Nowhere has this assertion been more questioned than in issues related to teacher conduct and competence. Public confidence is low, with only half of Albertans in the Task Force survey confident that complaints about teacher conduct are effectively addressed. Fewer Albertans (37.9 per cent) are confident that complaints about teacher competency are effectively addressed. In fact, in the last ten years, there have been no cases in which a teacher's certification has been cancelled due to incompetence.

While issues of conduct and competence are very different, they are currently dealt with in the same manner. The existing system cannot be modified to deal effectively with issues of competence. We need a different system. The Task Force recommends that issues of conduct and competence be dealt with through different processes (Recommendation 19).

On issues of conduct, we believe that changes are needed to assure greater openness, transparency, timeliness, fairness and efficiency (Recommendation 20). If the interest of students truly come first, our system must be more open and understandable to parents and students. Structures for appeals of decisions also need to change.

On issues of competence, the Task Force recommends a very different system than what is currently in place. We recommend the Minister of Education introduce a system of maintenance of certification for teachers to assure career-long growth, currency, and competency (Recommendation 21). Under this system, teachers would be evaluated every five years to determine whether their certification to teach should be maintained. The teacher would receive annual feedback on his or her progress in qualifying for maintenance of certification. He or she would prepare a dossier of evidence of effective teaching, aligned with provincial practice standards, to support a recommendation.

THE SCHOOL LEADER

The Task Force makes two recommendations with respect to school leaders that parallel those for teachers. Simply stated, we believe there needs to be an accountability and feedback structure for school leaders similar to that proposed for teachers.

The Task Force recommends the introduction of a maintenance of designation for school leaders (Recommendation 22). School leaders would be evaluated every five years to maintain their administrative designation. Further, the Task Force believes that school leaders need annual feedback to assure leadership excellence (Recommendation 23).

EMPOWERING THE SCHOOL LEADER

The vast majority of school leaders, including principals, are members of the Alberta Teachers' Association – that is, they are in-scope (unionized). The Task Force discussed, at some length, whether principals can fully enable teaching excellence while maintaining membership in the Alberta Teachers' Association. Our greatest concern is centered on the question of whether principals, as members of the same professional association as teachers, can be sufficiently empowered to implement and support the recommendations of this report, particularly in assuming an expanded human resource function related to assuring teaching excellence. The Task Force recommends principals be empowered to support the recommendations of this report (Recommendation 24). If empowerment is not possible under the current structure, the Task Force recommends the Minister of Education consider removing principals from the Alberta Teachers' Association.

THE REGULATORY MODEL

Regulatory models for education differ across jurisdictions. For the Task Force, the central issue is where professional functions¹⁴ should reside. These functions can reside with a teachers' association or union, with the Ministry of Education, or with an independent professional college. In Alberta, professional functions are shared between the Alberta Teachers' Association and the Ministry of Education (the Ministry would assume more professional functions as a result of the adoption of recommendations of this report). The Task Force recommends Alberta retain a model of shared professional responsibility, with the regulatory model modified to implement the recommendations of this report (Recommendation 25). If changes cannot be made within the existing model, the Task Force recommends the Minister of Education consider either a Ministry-based model or a separate professional college for teachers.

14 Functions that serve the public interest, including the maintenance and enforcement of standards.

6 PRACTICE STANDARDS: ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Practice standards are the foundation of all professions. Generally, they outline what is expected of members of the profession. In the case of teachers, the *Teaching Quality Standard* describes what effective teachers achieve. For example, an effective teacher is able to draw upon his or her attributes, skills and knowledge to design and customize lesson plans that meet the differing needs of students.

The *Teaching Quality Standard* guides the daily practice of the teacher and the development of teacher education programs. As such, the *Teaching Quality Standard* must align with the vision of *Inspiring Education*.

Most participants in the Task Force survey (80 per cent) said there should be a common practice standard for teachers, with most teachers (69.5 per cent) in agreement. As well, many participants in regulatory review consultations for the new *Education Act* believe the current *Teaching Quality Standard* provides a solid template from which modifications could be made to accommodate *Inspiring Education's* objectives.¹⁵

In its submission to the Task Force, the Alberta School Boards Association commented on the need to update the *Teaching Quality Standard*:

The present *Teaching Quality Standard* is dated and does not necessarily reflect the current needs of our students. The standard should identify the expectations of teachers at the various stages of their career (i.e., interim certification or permanent certification), and in a manner that is consistent with the expectations of parents and students that high quality instruction is provided. The standard must be revised to reflect the role of the teacher in achieving the vision of *Inspiring Education*. School boards, teachers, students, parent organizations,

15 Government of Alberta, *Education Act: Regulatory Review Consultation* (February 2014 draft), p.134.

system administrators, Alberta Education, and post-secondary teacher preparation institutions need to come together to define a new standard.¹⁶

Next to the quality of teaching, leadership is the most important factor in ensuring high-quality learning experiences for students. However, provincial legislation does not specify the competencies required of educational leaders in Alberta; it only requires that a principal be a certificated teacher. Most survey participants (75 per cent) believe there should be common practice standards for school principals and superintendents respectively.

Draft practice standards included in *The Professional Practice Competencies for School Leaders in Alberta* (2011) are widely used as a foundation for the practice of school leaders. The practice standards strive to ensure all schools in Alberta are led by suitable, qualified and effective school leaders who are committed to quality education for all students and to fulfilling the vision of *Inspiring Education*. The practice standards are one of three elements in the *Alberta School Leadership Framework* that was developed in 2011 in collaboration with Alberta's education stakeholder organizations. The three elements are:

- draft *Professional Practice Competencies for School Leaders in Alberta*
- quality indicators for school leader development programs
- stakeholder roles and responsibilities for the implementation of the framework

At this point, no provincial practice standards exist for district leaders. However, the College of Alberta School Superintendents has developed proposed practice standards for its members. The *Practice Standard, Leadership Dimensions and Descriptors* include 12 leadership dimensions – with supporting descriptors – that reflect the Alberta context. The practice standards acknowledge that, due to differences in roles and job responsibilities, the means to demonstrate the dimensions (or competencies) will vary by district.

To ensure every level of the education system is embracing the vision of *Inspiring Education*, the Task Force believes there must be absolute clarity of educator expectations. Practice standards are where this clarity is provided. Practice standards must reflect the shifts desired for the whole system of education: a focus on education and the learner (versus the school and the system); the building of competencies (versus the teaching of content); and the use of technology to support the creation of knowledge (versus the sharing of knowledge).

A competency is an interrelated set of attitudes, skills and knowledge that is drawn upon and applied to a particular context for successful learning and living.

– Alberta Education

Competencies of an effective teacher

The Alberta Association of Deans of Education has identified five key competencies of an effective teacher. An effective teacher:

1. designs academically and intellectually engaging learning
2. engages students in meaningful learning experiences
3. assesses student learning to guide teaching and improve learning
4. fosters supportive learning relationships
5. collaborates to enhance teaching and learning

¹⁶ Task Force for Teaching Excellence, *What We Heard: Community and Stakeholder Consultation* (2014). Appendix E: Alberta School Boards Association's Submission to the Task Force

Given the importance of practice standards, there must be an established process for reviewing and updating these standards. This need is reinforced by rapid change in the world around us, and the impact this change has on teaching, leadership and the education system.

The Task Force makes the following recommendations:

RECOMMENDATION 1: Teaching practice standards

That the *Teaching Quality Standard* be revised to align with *Inspiring Education* and with the recommendations of this report. The Task Force further recommends that the *Teaching Quality Standard* be framed by the ability to achieve and maintain teaching excellence.

Further advice: The Task Force found the five teacher competencies (see sidebar) of the Alberta Association of Deans of Education's *Framework of Effective Teaching for Learning*¹⁷ to be compelling and an appropriate starting point for defining competencies for teacher excellence competencies within the *Teaching Quality Standard*.

RECOMMENDATION 2: School leader practice standards

That the Ministry of Education adopt practice standards for school leaders.

Further advice: The current draft standard, the *Professional Practice Competencies for School Leaders in Alberta*, be reviewed and revised to align with *Inspiring Education* and be consistent with this report. Given the advanced state of the draft standard's development, the Task Force believes there is an opportunity for expedited revisions and adoption.

RECOMMENDATION 3: District leader practice standards

That the Ministry of Education adopt practice standards for district leaders.

Further advice: The standards need to align with *Inspiring Education* and be consistent with this report. The College of Alberta School Superintendents' *Practice Standard, Leadership Dimension and Descriptors* is an appropriate starting point for defining competencies for district leaders.

RECOMMENDATION 4: Review of practice standards

That the practice standards for teachers, school leaders and district leaders be reviewed and updated on a regular basis.

Further advice: Reviews should be conducted every five years or earlier when there is substantive system change. For transparency, consistency and alignment with *Inspiring Education*, there should be a naming convention across these standards.

17 Alberta Association of Deans of Education, *A Framework for Effective Teaching for Learning* (2012), pp. 15 -17.

7 ENABLING TEACHING EXCELLENCE: ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A main theme of *Inspiring Education* was that, as the world and classrooms change, so too must the role of the teacher. Albertans said teachers must be flexible, innovative and learner-centered, if students are to acquire the skills and knowledge they need to be engaged, ethical and entrepreneurial.

In considering how to enable teaching excellence, the Task Force considered these issues:

- How do we attract, prepare and induct new teachers?
- How do we develop and retain experienced teachers?
- How do we best support teachers?

Attracting, preparing and inducting new teachers

How we attract

An important step in achieving the vision of *Inspiring Education* occurs at the decision point of whom enters the profession of teaching. Ideally, we want a community of teachers with a mix of experience, subject expertise and passion. We want a community of teachers that reflects the diverse communities they serve, with a range of backgrounds and experiences, so they can connect deeply with students. We want a community of teachers with a range of backgrounds and experiences that reflects the diverse communities they serve.

How do we attract and select candidates to the profession today? Alberta's two largest universities – the University of Alberta and the University of Calgary – use high school or post-secondary marks to determine who enters teacher preparation programs. The University of Lethbridge admits students based on marks, submission of a portfolio,

and completion of an introductory teaching course. The six other institutions use marks as well, but they also consider teaching-related work and volunteer experience, interviews, personal essays, and references. (Further requirements are listed in Appendix D.)

In our consultations, a common concern was that a reliance on high school or post-secondary marks does not provide sufficient insight into a candidate's ability to excel in the classroom. Many participants felt that admitting candidates solely on the basis of grades might exclude some truly worthy applicants. For many, great teachers show a passion for teaching before they begin their education to be a teacher. This demonstration could take the form of teaching-related experience, of experience working with children/youth in a range of capacities as a volunteer or in previous employment, or of a focused interview with candidates.

The belief that factors other than grades contribute to teaching excellence was reinforced by the Task Force survey. When asked what traits an individual considering teaching should have, the top answers were patience (36.1 per cent), compassion and empathy (28.9 per cent), intelligence and knowledge (17.5 per cent) and a love of children (15.6 per cent).

RECOMMENDATION 5: Admission to teacher preparation programs

That Alberta's teacher preparation programs be encouraged to look beyond grades, when making admission decisions, to consider other relevant criteria in the spirit of *Inspiring Education*.

Further advice: This may include evidence of the applicant's insight into the profession, ability to make a connection and work with the student, and diversity of experience and background that would enhance the teaching profession.

How we prepare

One of the central elements of *Inspiring Education* relates to the role of the teacher, shifting from that of "sage" to that of "architect of learning". *Inspiring Education* envisions teachers helping students to develop core competencies, including the ability to think critically, to manage information, and to explore new opportunities. Students will be supported as individuals, with full consideration of their unique interests, experiences, and abilities. Teachers will work in partnership with the community and will work more closely with one another.

While participants in the Task Force consultations believed teacher preparation is important, some questioned whether Alberta's teacher preparation programs are adequately equipping their students for the changing classroom. For some participants, there was a desire to see longer practicums and more focus on pedagogy and neuroscience. This desire was

reiterated by participants in the *Inspiring Education* Symposium. When asked what change they would make to ensure teaching excellence in every classroom, one of the top responses was “improved and applicable teacher preparation”¹⁸

Consultation participants also discussed how much Alberta teacher preparation programs should vary. In its submission to the Task Force, the College of School Superintendents offered this advice:

Currently there are considerable differences between the teacher education and pre-service programs that are in place in the province. The College suggests that consideration be given to a provincial approach/model for teacher education. The review of teacher education programs must involve stakeholders, especially system education leaders. Graduating teachers must learn and possess the competencies envisioned by *Inspiring Education* upon completion of a teacher education program.¹⁹

The Task Force noted that there are nine teacher preparation programs in Alberta. Each offers a different method for earning a teaching degree (see sidebar). This can be positive in that it allows students to choose a program that best meets their needs. But, at the same time, it can be challenging to advance new or best practices across every institution. While recognizing the autonomy of post-secondary institutions, the Task Force believes all teacher preparation programs should incorporate content that prepares their students for the shifts envisioned in *Inspiring Education*.

Earning a teaching degree

Alberta’s largest universities offer a variety of methods to earn a teaching degree, with options to study for four years directly after high school, for two years after another degree, or for four or five years concurrent or consecutive with another specialization. The university colleges offer two-year, after-degree programs (the offerings of all teacher preparation programs are summarized in Appendix E).

RECOMMENDATION 6: Alignment of teacher preparation programs with *Inspiring Education*

That the Ministry of Education facilitate an annual discussion among Alberta’s teacher preparation institutions on alignment of their programs with *Inspiring Education*, including its vision, values, principles and policy shifts.

Further advice: The Task Force recognizes that teacher education programs in Alberta are in the process of achieving this goal. It is, however, important that the Ministry of Education be aware of the challenges being faced as well as the differences and similarities in how programs are achieving this goal. The Task Force further believes that this recommendation can expedite a sharing of, and collaboration on, emerging best practice related to *Inspiring Education* among teacher preparation programs.

18 Task Force for Teaching Excellence, *What We Heard: Community and Stakeholder Consultation* (2014). p.126

19 Task Force for Teaching Excellence, *What We Heard: Community and Stakeholder Consultation* (2014). Appendix E: College of Alberta School Superintendents’ Submission to the Task Force. p.190

Expanding pathways to certification

Inspiring Education describes an education system centered on the learner with more participation from the community. It describes a system where a teacher might invite an expert in to instruct a class. The expert might even instruct a class without direct teacher supervision but under the guidance of the principal.

Currently, teachers in Alberta must have a minimum of 16 years of education, including a minimum of four years of post-secondary education. They must have a recognized degree, usually a Bachelor of Education, from a recognized teacher preparation program. Teachers must also declare commitment to the attributes, skills and knowledge included in the *Teaching Quality Standard* and provide evidence of being fit to teach, eligibility to work in Canada, and proficiency in the English or French language. After two years of successful teaching, a teacher is eligible for a permanent certificate. Teachers who meet certification standards are authorized to teach by the Minister of Education.

In addition to these qualifications, most school teachers in Alberta must be members of the Alberta Teachers' Association; the exception is for those who teach in private, charter or band-operated schools.

Issues arise when schools can't recruit certified teachers to instruct specialized subjects such as welding, technology, or Cree. While often an issue in rural or remote communities, this issue is not limited to those areas. In such cases, the school authority may ask the Minister of Education to issue a Letter of Authority which allows a person who has not met certification requirements at that time to teach. The Letter of Authority is issued for one year and may be renewed if the individual upgrades his or her qualifications for certification and receives a recommendation from the school board.

Over half of participants in the Task Force survey said that people with certification in a trade (56.4 per cent) or with sufficient expertise in a discipline associated with the subject of instruction (53.9 per cent) should be allowed to teach. School leaders and teachers are less likely to believe that those with certification in a trade (43.1 per cent of school leaders and 35.8 per cent of teachers) or those with expertise in a discipline (32.6 per cent of school leaders and 29.5 per cent of teachers) should be authorized to teach in Alberta schools.

Some consultation participants noted that teaching is about more than knowledge. An understanding of learning theory, pedagogy and student assessment is also critical. At the same time, it was argued that without the assistance of outside experts, some students may not have access to a full range of learning opportunities. The Task Force agrees it is important to define a single standard for certification, but the Task Force also believes this standard may be achieved in different ways.

RECOMMENDATION 7: Alternative pathways to teaching and Letters of Authority:

To bring people with a diversity of skills, expertise and background into Alberta classrooms:

- 7.1** That alternative pathways to teaching certification be developed for those in specialized areas of instruction including the trades, fine arts, and other professions.

Further advice: In recommending the establishment of alternative pathways, the Task Force wants to affirm that there is a single standard for certification (i.e., the *Teaching Quality Standard*). The nature and duration of teacher preparation, including the practicum and other relevant experiences, and how competence is demonstrated, will vary with each pathway.

- 7.2** That the use of Letters of Authority be revised to increase their effectiveness and to facilitate the employment of non-certificated instructors in an area of specialization. The Task Force further recommends that Letters of Authority be in force for a period appropriate to the circumstance, and the nature of practice supervision of those teaching under a Letter of Authority be at the discretion of the principal who would be responsible for ensuring an appropriate level of supervision.

Teacher practicums

A practicum is the time a student teacher (pre-service teacher) spends in the classroom getting “real world” teaching experience. During the practicum, the student teacher gains an understanding of the skills and knowledge required to be a teacher. Further, practicums can help students determine if teaching is the right profession for them.

Many teacher preparation programs include a practicum at some point in each program year. Alberta’s university-based programs offer between two and four practicums, each from five to 15 weeks in length. The college-based programs offer a wider variety of arrangements, including 10 half-day field experiences and participation in non-instructional activities (e.g., days spent planning classroom activities).

In Task Force consultations, we heard that teacher preparation programs should include longer practicums, provided earlier in the program. This was a common message from school leaders. The Task Force also heard that it is often difficult to secure placements – that “taking a practicum student is still seen by too many schools as a burden, not as a sign of excellence.” The education of teachers is fundamental to the future of the profession, and any impediments to student placements need to be understood and rectified. The Task Force understands that revision to practicum arrangements will require significant discussion with education faculties, the profession, schools and school boards.

Practicums prepare student teachers for life in the classroom and enhance their learning. Further, as noted, practicums are a good way of determining whether teaching is the right choice for those admitted to teacher preparation programs. As such, we support the suggestion that practicums should be longer in length and earlier in teacher preparation programs. To get the most out of the experience, practicums also must be of high quality.

RECOMMENDATION 8: Practicums

That practicums in Alberta's teacher preparation programs:

- 8.1** Provide exposure to the field of teaching in the first year, or prior to entering a program, such that participants can discern their suitability for a career in teaching, and provide context for their theory-based studies.
- 8.2** Provide high-quality opportunities throughout (where possible in each year of the program) with an extension beyond the current minimum of 10 weeks, leading to greater professional independence and awareness.

Further advice: A more formalized process of shared and collective responsibility (of leaders of teacher preparation programs, school authorities, school leaders and teachers) be adopted to ensure there are an appropriate number of practicum placements in the system, and that those supervising pre-service teachers are consistently demonstrating effective teaching practices in accordance with the *Teaching Quality Standard*.

How we induct

For many beginning teachers, the transition from a teacher preparation program to a full-time teaching position can be challenging. Participants in Task Force consultations suggested that beginning teachers are often “thrown to the wolves.” Beginning teachers are given the most challenging assignments or a workload that more senior teachers don't want. It should be no surprise, therefore, that about 25 per cent of teachers leave the profession in the first five years of teaching.

What is the difference between an internship and a practicum?

A teaching internship would offer an extended period of supervised practice following completion of a teaching degree and prior to interim certification. It would not be part of the undergraduate program. A practicum is part of the undergraduate program and offers shorter periods of field experience at varying times during the course of study.

A central question for the Task Force was: how do we accelerate the development of teaching skills in a beginning teacher? How do we ensure the teacher is getting a good start and is well on the way to achieving teaching excellence? While many Alberta jurisdictions have created teacher induction programs, there is a lack of consistency in program access, content and quality. For the Task Force, the answer lies in internships and mentorship.

Internships/articling programs are a hallmark of most professions. Generally they include both a work component and a further development of competencies, all in the work setting. A person who is interning or articling typically receives a reduced salary for a reduced workload.

Participants in the consultations expressed a desire for increased practical education of teachers. The Alberta Teachers' Association, in its submission to the Task Force, stated the following with regard to teacher preparation and induction:

At the present time, there is no transition from completion of a teacher preparation program to teaching practice. Just prior to the onset of the global financial crisis, the ministry, under Honourable Hancock, was poised to introduce a provincial induction/orientation program that would have reduced a first-year teacher's load and would have provided time for mentor teachers, with a combined reduction of approximately .25 FTE teaching. This would be a constructive investment with long-term implications for the development of excellent teachers and would help to retain teachers in the profession, especially in the first three to five years of teaching. There are also implications for teacher preparation programs over time, including instructional strategies and personalizing learning.²⁰

Currently, internships for teachers are not required in Alberta. However, the Task Force believes a mandatory internship would give beginning teachers an opportunity to hone their skills and become more reflective, independent, innovative and confident. Those interning would have their own classrooms, under the supervision of an experienced teacher, without the responsibility of a full-time teaching load. This would accelerate the development of their teaching skills, better prepare them to assume a full-time teaching position, and propel them to achieve teaching excellence.

RECOMMENDATION 9: Internships/articling

That the Ministry consider the introduction of a mandatory one-year paid internship/articling program for all beginning teachers on completion of a teacher preparation program, with a focus on accelerating the development of the competencies included in the *Teaching Quality Standard* and associated with excellence in teaching.

Further Advice: That the duration of probationary contracts of employment and the period for qualification for permanent certification be aligned to accommodate this program.

20 Task Force for Teaching Excellence, *What We Heard: Community and Stakeholder Consultation* (2014), Appendix E: The Alberta Teachers' Association's Submission to the Task Force. p.152

Mentoring

As suggested, a first-year teacher should not be expected to walk into a classroom and perform at the same level as a teacher with 10 years of experience. The experience in the first years will greatly impact a teacher's success and longevity in the profession.

In our consultations, there were calls for more support for beginning teachers, including focused mentorship. Similarly, survey participants mentioned mentoring as important to the professional development of teachers.

Mentorship programs currently exist in an ad hoc fashion throughout the province. The Alberta Teachers' Association provides a model for mentoring. As well, the Ministry of Education is conducting a pilot study *Supporting Beginning Teachers* in northern Alberta school jurisdictions as well as investigating other local, national and international teacher induction programs. The pilot study focuses on identifying and describing promising practices for teacher induction, including mentorship.

The Task Force recommends the establishment of a formal provincewide mentorship program for teachers. We believe experienced teachers have a professional obligation to mentor new teachers, and provide observations and feedback, as well as support. To do so, there must be formal processes for selecting mentors, training mentors, and facilitating opportunities for meaningful interaction. Ultimately, a well-designed mentorship program will allow both new and experienced teachers to learn from one another and better prepare new teachers for future success.

RECOMMENDATION 10: Mentorship

That a provincewide mentorship framework be introduced to support teachers in the first three-to-five years of their career. While the program structure should be consistent across the province, it also needs to accommodate local contexts.

Further advice: The Task Force recognizes the importance of mentorship not just at the start of one's career, but throughout. This is particularly important for individuals going through periods of career transition, including those moving between districts and to Alberta from other jurisdictions. The Ministry is encouraged to work with educational stakeholders to determine how to best meet these needs.

Developing and retaining excellent teachers

The preparation and induction of new teachers provides a foundation for teaching excellence. But equally important is how teachers advance in their careers.

Professional growth

Participants in Task Force consultations acknowledged the critical relationship between professional growth and teaching excellence. There was a strong perception that current

professional development is often of a very poor quality, with no accountability for true practice improvement or career-long learning. Many said that professional growth and development must be better managed.

The primary vehicle for professional development of teachers in Alberta is the annual professional growth plan which is defined in the *Teacher Growth, Supervision and Evaluation Policy*. Every teacher prepares his or her own growth plan. The plan considers the personal learning needs of the teacher, the *Teaching Quality Standard*, and school, district and government goals for education. Principals determine how to best assist teachers in achieving their plans, including allocating time for discussion, dedicating resources for activities, and providing relief time from teaching duties.

The Ministry of Education and the Alberta Teachers' Association develop professional learning resources and fund professional development activities including the annual teachers' conventions. Schools and school divisions also arrange professional development days and activities.

In its discussions, the Task Force noted that professional learning for teachers often consists of short-term, unfocused activities including workshops or conventions. As a result, there are many teachers who are not engaged in high-quality, long-term professional learning.

The Task Force believes professional development must build the individual and collective expertise of teachers. The Task Force believes professional learning practices need to be strengthened in line with those proposed by Peter Cole of the Centre for Strategic Education in Australia:²¹

- Professional learning should be a routine practice within the school, involving all teachers.
- Professional learning should be collaborative with teachers contributing to one another's learning. Teachers with common needs can support one another, and share best practices.
- Professional learning should aim to improve the performance of the whole school, as well as the individual.
- Professional learning should focus on the implementation of teaching strategies and techniques that make the biggest difference to student learning.

Participants in the *Inspiring Education Symposium* were asked what one thing they would change to achieve teaching excellence in every classroom in the province. One of the top five answers was more professional development.

A research study commissioned by the Alberta Teachers' Association found that most teachers (80 per cent) say their best professional learning occurs in collaboration with colleagues.

Teachers reported a need (89.3 per cent) to focus professional learning on becoming better teachers (develop classroom resources, support for their subjects, classroom management, technology skills, and instructional strategies to better meet the needs of diverse students).²²

21 Cole, P. (2012). *Aligning Professional Learning, Performance Management and Effective Teaching*, Centre for Strategic Education, Seminar Series (217), 1-30.

22 Beauchamp, Klassen and Parsons, *Exploring the Development of Teacher Efficacy Through Professional Learning Experiences* (January 2014).

While opinion is divided on how to best manage professional development, almost all participants in consultations agreed that more time and money must be found for the professional development of teachers and school leaders. Some believe this time can be embedded into the school year. Some suggested extending the school year, without adding teaching responsibility, to accommodate the need for professional development. Many suggested better use of technology to support professional development. Many supported the idea of sharing existing best practices throughout the province, as well as looking outside the province for the best ideas.

All believe that the professional development should support and nurture lifelong learning for all teachers. There was a strong belief that introducing accountability into the model is essential and that teacher growth plans should receive meaningful feedback from principals and be used for performance assessment purposes.

The challenge for the education system is to provide the best opportunities for professional growth and development, and to ensure those opportunities are relevant and integrated into the classroom. The Task Force believes professional growth is not just the responsibility of the individual teacher, but the responsibility of teachers collectively, and the employer. It also believes that professional growth must be regularly assessed to ensure the teacher is current and effective. Professional development should not be “one-off” events (e.g., workshops or conventions), but must be embedded in the ongoing work of the teacher and in his or her interactions with colleagues.

RECOMMENDATION 11: Teacher’s annual professional learning plan

That the *Teacher Growth, Supervision and Evaluation Policy* be revised such that:

The teacher’s annual professional learning and growth plan (currently referred to as the *Professional Growth Plan*):

- is jointly developed with the principal or designate
- is aligned with the goals of the school, the district, and the community
- demonstrates professional growth, currency, and competency, leading to teaching excellence

The plan will include a process through which regular feedback is provided to the teacher on his or her progress in achieving the plan goals and a year-end written evaluation of the teacher’s plan by the principal or designate.

Other Advice: Feedback from students, parents, and peers be used to identify and inform the teacher’s goals.

Recognizing teaching excellence

Currently, there are no formal ways of recognizing teaching excellence in Alberta other than the Excellence in Teaching Awards. Salaries are tied to years of teacher education and of service, not to excellence. Opportunities for sharing teaching expertise are limited. There are limited career pathways for teachers to expand their role, other than to leave the classroom.

In our consultations, three primary reasons were presented for the introduction of new teacher designations. The first is that the best teachers in the system could take on greater roles, such as mentorship, without becoming school leaders. The second and third reasons relate to incentives and recognition.

Three-quarters of Albertans (74.5 per cent) responding to the Task Force survey believe that teachers who have demonstrated excellence in their practice should receive special designation. Smaller majorities of school leaders (54 per cent) and teachers (55 per cent) support this opinion.

Internationally, a number of jurisdictions have designations that recognize the professional growth of teachers. For example, Australia recognizes four career stages that reflect increasing levels of professional knowledge, practice and engagement, as do England and Wales (see Appendix E).

The Task Force believes that by recognizing excellent teaching practice, teachers will be encouraged to achieve excellence and to share their expertise with others.

RECOMMENDATION 12: Recognizing and motivating teachers

That the Ministry of Education create and administer a new provincial designation to recognize teachers who consistently demonstrate teaching excellence and mastery in accordance with the *Teaching Quality Standard*. These individuals would be invited to contribute their expertise in areas such as:

- mentorship of other teachers
- leadership in teacher collaboration
- support of student teachers during their practicum and/or articling/internship
- citizenship roles which advance the interests of students

We further recommend that those receiving this designation be allotted time from their teaching duties, additional resources, and/or an honorarium from the Ministry, commensurate with their participation in such areas. A teacher's designation would continue at the pleasure of the Ministry.

Further advice: It is our expectation that all teachers, not just those holding this designation, would contribute their expertise in these areas where appropriate.

Supporting our teachers

In consultations, participants said that our system of support for teachers and the learning environment must change. Participants said that in order for students to excel, supports must respond to the following developments:

- more diverse and inclusive classrooms
- increased use of technology
- the vision of *Inspiring Education*

The Task Force heard that professional learning must evolve and become stronger and more relevant. But, more than anything else, it heard that teachers need time – time for planning, collaborating, sharing best practice, and empowering innovation.

Teachers frequently noted difficulties in accessing qualified educational assistants and external experts, including speech language pathologists. Many of the concerns expressed reflected those previously highlighted in the 2009 Alberta Education report *Setting the Direction*. A central theme of that report, and in our consultations with Albertans, was that as Alberta's student population becomes more diverse the range of student learning needs will increase. The stated goal of *Setting the Direction* was that the "education system is equipped, resourced and ready to support and respond to the needs of all students in an inclusive way." An important recommendation was that Alberta "implement a provincewide expectation that school-based expertise will be in place to support teachers in meeting the needs of students with disabilities and diverse needs within learning environments."²³ It is clear that this has not yet been achieved.

In consultation sessions, the availability and support for technology were often raised as issues. Participants said we need to increase access to technologies to support the learning of students. Equally important, this technology must be appropriately supported by experts in a timely manner. Outdated or non-functioning technology not only impedes but often interrupts student learning. It is clear that if the five policy directions identified in the Ministry of Education's 2013 *Learning and Technology Policy Framework* are to be achieved, the availability and support for technology will need to be addressed.

There was a prevalent belief that there needs to be stronger support for the professional learning of teachers and educational leaders. While participants strongly acknowledged the importance of professional learning, concern was expressed about its relevance, quality and structure. As summarized in the *Part II: What We Heard Report*, participants in our consultations agreed that the path to excellence is in better managed professional growth and development. It is a rare teacher who believes there is nothing more to learn. The challenge for the system revolves around delivering the best possible opportunities for professional growth and development and ensuring new practices are both relevant and integrated into the classroom.

23 Alberta Education, *Setting the Direction* (2009), p.9.

The issue of class size was raised in several consultation sessions. Some participants said class sizes are too big; this concern was most evident in urban centres. Others expressed concern about the added facility and staffing costs of smaller class sizes. While levels of education funding play an important role in creating the conditions for improving student outcomes, Andreas Schleicher, head of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), says that what is important is *how* countries spend their money. It is important to note that Canada spends among the highest amount in the world on Kindergarten to Grade 12 education, with Alberta spending the most per capita of all Canadian provinces. Some of the school systems that perform best internationally have relatively large class sizes and put most of their reform efforts and resources into recruiting, training and advancing the very best teachers:

Parents judge schools on things they can easily observe – the size of the class, number of hours, all of these kinds of things. But if you look at actually what makes a difference, it's quality of teaching. And quality of the education system can never exceed the quality of instruction. If you look at high-performing nations, it's actually a very interesting experience. They tend to prioritise the quality of teachers over the size of the classes.²⁴

While the Task Force acknowledges that class size is a factor in teaching excellence, particularly in the early grades, there are inherent financial tradeoffs. At times a class of 30 or more will be appropriate, given the makeup of the class, the focus of the lesson, and the type of instruction. At other times, however, ten students may be too many; such as when individual students require one-on-one support for a learning activity. Individual class size must reflect the learning needs and the strengths of the students. We would further note that in focusing on supports for teachers, issues such as time for collaboration and professional learning are as important, and perhaps more important, than reducing class size. The Alberta Teachers' Association, in its submission to the Task Force, paid particular attention to the need for "wrap around" services to support students with special learning needs.

Even before teachers express concern about their growing class sizes, teachers express enormous frustration with the inability of government to provide meaningful "wrap around services" to meet each student's learning needs. While teachers generally support inclusion of special needs students, reduced levels of support for front-line teachers make this situation very difficult. Even when supports exist for part of a day, the student's special needs exist all day.²⁵

24 New Zealand Listener: <http://www.listener.co.nz/current-affairs/education/our-place-in-the-education-world-a-qa-with-andreas-schleicher/>

25 Task Force for Teaching Excellence, *What We Heard: Community and Stakeholder Consultation* (2014), Appendix E: The Alberta Teachers' Association's Submission to the Task Force. p.153

The Task Force makes the following recommendations:

RECOMMENDATION 13: Teaching support

That the Ministry of Education improve our system of teaching support, including the availability of technology and related support, access to and adequacy of specialized supports and services for students (particularly during the early grades) and increased efficiency of processes to access supports.

RECOMMENDATION 14: Supports in the learning environment

That teachers be provided appropriate time for planning, collaborating, sharing best practices, and empowering innovation. The Task Force further recommends that the Ministry of Education create a framework for teacher professional learning (professional development) aligned with *Inspiring Education* and the research on effective programming, and work collaboratively with the Alberta Teachers' Association to strengthen the delivery and effectiveness of professional learning.

8 LEADERSHIP'S ROLE IN ENABLING TEACHING EXCELLENCE: ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The quality of teaching is directly affected by the quality of leadership with which it occurs.²⁶ After teaching, leadership has the second biggest effect on raising achievement.²⁷

In considering the role of leaders in enabling teaching excellence, the Task Force examined several issues, including:

- How do we attract, prepare and induct school leaders?
- How do we develop and retain school leaders?

As previously noted, the teacher is not solely responsible for achieving teaching excellence. The entire system must create a culture that nurtures, supports and sustains teaching excellence. School and district leaders play a significant role.

According to Andreas Schleicher, Special Advisor on Education Policy and Deputy Director for Education to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development:

The past emphasized school management; now it is about leadership, with a focus on supporting, evaluating and developing teacher quality as its core, which includes coordinating the curriculum and teaching program, monitoring and evaluating teacher practice, promoting teacher professional development and supporting collaborative work cultures.²⁸

²⁶ *A 21st Century Body for the Education Profession* (New Zealand Government, 2013), p.5 (http://www.minedu.govt.nz/~media/MinEdu/Files/TheMinistry/NZTCReviewProposals2013/NZTC_ReviewProposalsDiscussionPaper.pdf)

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p.7

²⁸ Andreas Schleicher, *"The Five Things I've Learned"* (Pearson Foundation, 2012) (<http://www.thefivethings.org/andreas-schleicher/>)

To do so, we must make appropriate selections in determining who leads and ensuring they are developed and empowered to perform all the functions of leadership. As stated in our consultations by a recent high school graduate:

As a student who just left the K-12 system, I know how essential it is to have excellent principals. Principals literally “make or break” a school.

Like the role of the teacher, the role of school leaders is complex, particularly that of the principal. The principal is the pedagogical leader in the school. Principals are responsible for ensuring all teachers provide quality instruction and all students have the opportunity to reach their full potential. They are responsible for managing the daily activities of the school and maintaining order and discipline. They promote cooperation between the school and the community they serve.

Albertans surveyed most often mentioned leadership (20.3 per cent) when identifying the traits a principal should have. Other common mentions were compassion and empathy (9.1 per cent), and good communication skills (7.6 per cent).

The expectations we have of principals are high. Consultation participants said principals should encourage professional development for and acknowledge and reward teachers. They should provide teachers with mentoring and support but also supervise and evaluate teacher practice, and serve as positive role models in their commitment, attitudes, relationships and daily practice.

Attracting, preparing and inducting school leaders

Who we attract

Acknowledging the critical role of school leaders, some consultation participants suggested the process for selecting school leaders needs to be reconsidered. For example, to become a principal in Alberta, only a valid teaching certificate is required. While many principals have formal leadership preparation prior to assuming the role, many do not. As well, how teachers are chosen to become school leaders varies across the province. Some districts have well-defined processes in place for identifying, motivating and developing potential school leaders. In others, particularly in hard-to-staff locales, school leaders may be chosen primarily on the basis of self-identification and years of teaching experience with minimum leadership qualifications.

In its deliberations, the Task Force considered the vision of the *Alberta School Leadership Framework* as a means of identifying who we want to be our school leaders. The *Framework's* vision is that all Alberta schools be served by leaders who create learning cultures that accommodate each student's learning and developmental needs.

The Task Force makes the following recommendation to ensure Alberta school authorities identify and select the best people to provide leadership in our schools:

RECOMMENDATION 15: Selection process for school leaders

That the Ministry collaborate with school authorities and education stakeholders to develop a provincewide framework for the selection process of school leaders, reflecting best practice and aligning with the competencies defined in the practice standards for school leaders.

Further advice: While the framework would provide valuable guidance in the selection process for school leaders, it is important that the selection process adopted by school authorities meets the unique needs of their respective communities.

How we prepare

An overwhelming majority of participants in the Task Force survey (88 per cent) said principals should be required to complete a preparation program *before* assuming leadership duties (84.2 per cent of school leaders and 87.1 per cent of teachers agree).

As previously noted, a teacher can become a principal in Alberta without any leadership preparation; however, most principals have some formal leadership preparation and experience. According to the *Alberta Leadership School Framework Study* (2011), 69 per cent of principals declared that they have participated in a school leadership preparation program, while 31 per cent say they have not. Further, in some school districts, principals must attain post-graduate degrees or diplomas in education administration or leadership to maintain their designation. For a summary of the principal qualifications required in other provinces, please see Appendix G.

Alberta school leaders have access to a variety of leadership preparation programs offered by Alberta-based universities and offered by universities based in other Canadian provinces and many U.S. states. Additionally, they have access to a variety of school leader preparation programs sponsored by professional associations in Alberta, including the College of Alberta School Superintendents' *Start Right* program and the Alberta Teachers' Association's *Educational Leadership Academy*. School leaders in the larger districts also have opportunities for induction and professional development. According to the findings of the *Alberta Leadership School Framework Study* (2011), principals believe they could have benefited from more preparation related to budgeting, technology, conflict management, long-term planning and administration. They also suggested making structured preparation programs a key component of an Alberta school leadership framework.

The Task Force believes it is impossible to empower leadership in schools without proper preparation and makes the following recommendation:

RECOMMENDATION 16: School leadership preparation

That new school leaders complete a mandatory leadership program with a core curriculum based on the practice standard for school leaders and the responsibilities defined in legislation.

Further advice: The Ministry of Education should set the core curriculum in consultation with key education stakeholders. While it is strongly preferable that the program be completed prior to a person becoming a principal (i.e., aspiring principals), the program should be completed in the first two years of a person becoming a principal.

Mentorship

When asked to identify the most effective means of developing an individual for a career as a principal, the most often mentioned response in our survey was mentorship (10.2 per cent of Albertans; 25.1 per cent of school leaders; and 13.4 per cent of teachers).

There are few formal programs for mentoring school leaders currently available in Alberta. One is the Leader2Leader Project offered by the Alberta Teachers' Association in partnership with Alberta Education. In this pilot project, experienced principals mentor beginning principals using cognitive coaching strategies to promote self reflection and professional decision making. The program includes professional development workshops focused on the draft provincial practice standards, i.e., the *Professional Practice Competencies for School Leaders in Alberta*, as well as face-to-face and online learning that foster provincewide collaboration. Beginning principals enrolled in the program determine their focus for professional growth, based on the provincial practice standards and in consideration of their school contexts. This individual professional growth plan guides the coaching relationships with mentors. The pilot project started in January 2013 and will continue to June 2014.

District leaders can access a comprehensive mentorship program offered by the College of Alberta School Superintendents. Experienced superintendents mentor and support College members new to district leadership positions.

The Task Force considered the above programs and also noted that there is a strong and well supported body of research that supports the positive impact of effective mentorship programs on leadership success. We also noted that, while mentorship does happen informally in various locales across the province, a formal provincial mentorship framework for school and district leaders would ensure all principals and superintendents have the opportunity to learn from more experienced practitioners, and therefore accelerate their development of leadership excellence.

RECOMMENDATION 17: Mentorship program for school leaders and district leaders

That a provincial mentorship framework be introduced for school leaders and district leaders.

Further advice: The Ministry of Education should set the framework in consultation with key education stakeholders.

Developing and retaining school leaders

As part of their role as instructional leaders, principals are required to supervise and evaluate teachers in accordance with the provincial *Teacher Growth, Supervision and Evaluation Policy*. While district leaders are expected to provide ongoing support, supervision and evaluation of principals, there is no provincial policy to guide them. In other words, there are no defined provincial parameters to ensure consistency, fairness, transparency, and growth-oriented practices.

This issue was raised in our consultations with Albertans. Teachers and parents questioned the notion that “once a principal always a principal.” They wanted greater clarity as to whom the principal is accountable and the process for removing an incompetent school leader. One teacher stated that a superintendent’s visit to a school once a year is not enough to determine the practice excellence of a principal.

The Task Force believes principals should provide evidence of meeting practice standards and their suitability for their principal’s designation. A similar policy should be introduced for district leaders.

RECOMMENDATION 18: Growth, supervision and evaluation for school leaders and district leaders

That the Ministry of Education develop a framework for “Growth, Supervision and Evaluation” for school leaders and district leaders aligned with the competencies defined in their respective practice standards and *Inspiring Education*.

Further advice: The Ministry of Education should set these policies in consultation with key education stakeholders.

9 ASSURING TEACHING EXCELLENCE: ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

To achieve *Inspiring Education* and teaching excellence, it is not enough to focus on teachers and leaders – the broader system must also support teaching excellence. In considering the role of the system in assuring excellence and dealing with issues of competence and conduct, the Task Force looked at a number of issues. We examined whether the existing regulatory model assures the professional behavior of teachers and educational leaders – that is, whether it adequately addresses issues of conduct. We further examined whether the model assures teachers' and educational leaders' career-long growth, currency, and competence.

We realize that to implement many of the recommendations in this report, school leaders must be empowered to take on a greater role in assuring teaching excellence, particularly in areas of conduct and competence. This would require changes to the regulatory model.

Finally, there is a question as to whether the overall regulatory model can be adjusted to achieve the recommendations of this report, or whether more substantive change is required. Currently the Ministry of Education and the Alberta Teachers' Association have shared responsibility for professional functions. Is this the right model?

The existing system of assuring conduct and competence

Teacher conduct and competence are distinct issues. Conduct refers to the professional behavior of the teacher, while competence refers to the teacher's ability to meet the requirements of the *Teaching Quality Standard*. Yet the Alberta system tends to deal with these issues in a similar way.

RECOMMENDATION 19: Separation of review of conduct and competence

That conduct and competence be dealt with through separate structures, including separate practice review processes. This would apply to both teachers and school leaders.

The assurance of conduct

Process

Whereas anyone can bring forward a complaint regarding the conduct of a teacher or a school leader, an official investigation that calls into question the suitability of a person to hold a teaching certificate requires a written complaint of misconduct that cannot be anonymous. An exception exists in the case in which a teacher or school leader has been charged with an indictable offence (see Appendix H). In such cases, the judicial system will deal with the disposition of the charge. During that time, the teacher or school leader will likely be suspended from duties pending the outcome. The conviction of the teacher or school leader automatically leads to a hearing on the cancellation of his or her teaching certificate and termination of employment.

In the vast majority of cases, a complaint is brought to the attention of the principal or superintendent by a parent or student. The principal or superintendent then initiates an investigation to determine whether there are legitimate grounds for the complaint. If the complainant is not satisfied with the investigation and its outcome, or if the complaint is of a very serious nature, a written complaint of misconduct may be submitted by the complainant or school authorities to the Executive Secretary of the Alberta Teachers' Association (ATA) for members of the Association (who constitute the vast majority of Alberta's teachers and school leaders) or to the Registrar of Alberta Education (for those employed in charter, private or First Nations band-operated schools). The written complaint can then trigger an official investigation.

Based on the outcome of the investigation, the Executive Secretary or the provincial Registrar takes one of three possible actions: 1) orders a formal hearing of the Professional Practice Review Committee; 2) arranges for an invitation (i.e., an informal dispute resolution process); or 3) dismisses the complaint.

If the investigation determines that the evidence calls into question the suitability of the teacher or the school leader to hold a teaching certificate, the case is referred to a formal hearing of the ATA's Professional Practice Review Committee or its equivalent at Alberta Education. Committee hearings are open to the public unless the complainant or the hearing committee requests privacy. If the Committee determines the accused is guilty of unprofessional conduct, it may choose to issue a reprimand and/or fine or recommend that the Minister suspend or cancel the member's teaching certificate. The ATA's Professional Practice Review Committee may also choose to suspend the member's

ATA membership. Upon conviction, an appeal of the Committee's decision can be made by the teacher or school leader to the ATA's Provincial Executive Council or the Registrar. The ATA's or Alberta Education's Professional Conduct Appeal Committee may quash, vary or uphold the Professional Practice Review Committee's decision or refer the case back to the Professional Practice Review Committee.

If the employing school authority of the teacher or school leader who is convicted of unprofessional conduct decides to terminate or suspend his or her employment contract, and the conviction does not result in the Minister's cancellation of the teacher's or school leader's teaching certificate, the teacher can appeal the school authority's decision to a Board of Reference. A school authority has no choice but to terminate a teacher's or school leader's employment contract if he or she does not have a valid teaching certificate. That decision is not appealable to the Board of Reference.

Every province in Canada has some appeal mechanism for teachers facing termination or suspension of an employment contract. In Alberta the Board of Reference is an appeal process that was established in 1927 to resolve disputes between teachers and school leaders and school boards about termination or suspension of an employment contract. A decision or order issued by a Board of Reference must be filed with the Alberta Court of Queen's Bench; that order has the same force as an order of the Court. The appellant or a school authority that is the subject of a Board of Reference order may further appeal the order to the provincial Court of Appeal.

Concerns with the process

The Task Force noted that public faith in the teacher practice review process is low. About half of Albertans (50.1 per cent) who participated in the Task Force survey said they are confident that complaints about teacher conduct are effectively addressed. On average, there are about 70 complaints of unprofessional conduct brought to the ATA Executive Secretary or the Registrar of Alberta Education each year. Of that number, about one-quarter are referred to a Professional Practice Review Committee.

Concern was raised that the system is not perceived to be open, transparent, timely, or efficient. The belief was that the system of dealing with issues of conduct needs to be revised accordingly.

In addition, concerns were raised about the functioning of the Board of Reference. These concerns were echoed by participants in regulatory review consultations for the new *Education Act*. Only 24 per cent of those surveyed consider the Board of Reference to be necessary or important. Seventeen per cent of respondents thought it should be abolished altogether.²⁹ The Alberta School Boards Association, in its written submission to the Task Force, said:

29 Government of Alberta, *Education Act: Regulatory Review Consultation* (February 2014 draft), p. 18.

In Alberta, when a teacher's employment contract is severed, the end result can be a Board of Reference. Because this is seen to be a costly and ineffective process, it is seldom used. In many cases, due to the time and monetary investment required to take a case to a Board of Reference, school boards instead negotiate severance arrangements that often result in removing a teacher from one employment relationship only to find him/her resurface in another.³⁰

Concern was also expressed about perceived conflicts of interest in having the Alberta Teachers' Association investigate and adjudicate the practice review process while defending its accused members. Noting there are parallels between Saskatchewan and Alberta in how matters of teacher misconduct are managed, the Task Force looked at the recent report by Dr. Dennis Kendel, *For the Sake of Students*, commissioned by the Government of Saskatchewan. The central thrust of his report is that there are insurmountable conflicts of interest created when professions strive to concurrently serve two masters through a single organization. In other words, organizations like the Alberta Teachers' Association and the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation have both real and perceived conflicts of interest when tasked with both protecting the interests of their members (protecting teachers) and protecting the public from risk of harm from their members.

The Task Force shares many of the same concerns expressed by Dr. Kendel. If students are to come first, we must be wary of perceived and actual conflicts of interest. That is, for all professional activities, the focus must be on the interest of the student.

The Task Force makes the following recommendations to remove perceptions of conflict of interest and to improve transparency, timeliness and effectiveness of the practice review process for issues of conduct:

RECOMMENDATION 20: Assuring proper conduct of teachers and school leaders

That the practice review process for addressing issues of teacher and school leader conduct be significantly revised to assure greater openness, transparency, timeliness, and efficiency.

The Task Force further recommends that the practice review process for all teachers and school leaders be assumed by the Minister of Education.

Further advice: The practice review process for assuring proper conduct should be revised to:

- increase public awareness and understanding of what constitutes appropriate conduct
- increase public awareness of the process for initiating and investigating a complaint

30 Task Force for Teaching Excellence, *What We Heard: Community and Stakeholder Consultations* (2014), Appendix E: Alberta School Boards Association's Submission to the Task Force. p.176

- include a protocol for initiating a complaint that is more accessible and understandable to students and parents
- communicate to the public the results of investigations and disciplinary actions, and provide annual aggregate data of these results

The Task Force further recommends that there be changes in the Board of Reference appeal process for teachers and school leaders, including the removal of the power of reinstatement, and limiting severance payment to 12 months of salary. This would improve the timeliness of settlement, and provide greater certainty and fairness to both school authorities and the teacher.

The assurance of competence – accountability for performance

The Task Force recognizes that most teachers are highly competent, and either have achieved teaching excellence or are on the path to excellence. Even though a relatively small percentage of teachers may be considered incompetent or unprofessional, it remains critical that we address these issues effectively and efficiently. If not, their impact on children can be profound.

In all consultations, there was strong support for a more robust system of accountability for teacher performance. Albertans believe the Ministry of Education should create and enforce clear policies, processes and practice standards related to teacher performance. This is not how our system for assurance of teacher competence currently works.

Evaluation process

The system of accountability for teachers is different than that of most other professional settings in that there are no regular evaluations of teacher performance, a critical strategy for promoting and assuring continuous practice improvement in both the public and private sectors. In fact, in Alberta teacher evaluations are only allowed under certain circumstances:

- on the written request of the teacher
- to gather information related to a specific employment decision
- to assess the growth of the teacher in specific areas of practice
- if the principal has reason to believe the *Teaching Quality Standard* is not being met
- for purposes of issuing a permanent teaching certificate or an offer of a continuing contract of employment

Under the provisions of the provincial *Teacher Growth, Supervision and Evaluation Policy*, if the principal initiates an evaluation, he or she must explicitly communicate the following to the teacher: 1) the reason for and purpose of the evaluation; 2) the process, criteria and standards to be used; 3) the timelines to be applied; and 4) the possible outcomes of the evaluation. This is an extraordinary measure –there are no provisions currently for regular evaluations of teacher performance in Alberta.

Process for addressing competence issues

The current process for dealing with issues of competence largely parallels that of misconduct. An official written complaint initiates the process. This may or may not lead to a formal practice review by the ATA (Alberta Education, through the Registrar, investigates the practice of teachers who teach in private, charter and band-operated schools).

But first a complaint is made to the school superintendent who performs an initial investigation. If the complaint is unfounded, no further action is taken. If the superintendent concludes the teacher is not meeting the *Teaching Quality Standard*, the superintendent submits a report to the Executive Secretary of the ATA.

The Executive Secretary then orders a hearing of the case by the ATA's Professional Practice Review Committee. This committee consists of two classroom teachers, one principal or vice-principal, a central office administrator, and a member of the public. The hearing is open to the public.

After hearing evidence, the committee determines whether the teacher is meeting the *Teaching Quality Standard*. The committee may recommend the cancellation or suspension of the teacher's ATA membership. It may also recommend that the Minister of Education cancel or suspend the member's teaching certificate. Before the committee hands down its decision, the teacher may voluntarily request that his or her certificate be cancelled.

The teacher, the superintendent or the ATA Executive Council may appeal the decision of the Professional Practice Review Committee to the Professional Practice Appeal Committee (also under the auspices of the ATA). The appeal committee may quash, vary or confirm the hearing committee's decision. It may also make its own decision or refer the case back to the hearing committee.

Does the current system protect students from poor teachers?

In the past 10 years there have been **no** cases in which a teacher's authority to teach (i.e., teaching certificate) has been cancelled due to incompetence. Given the province has over 40,000 teachers, the Task Force found this statistic almost inconceivable. We acknowledge that some struggling teachers may leave on their own accord.

Task Force members concluded that the current model does not assure teachers' and school leaders' career-long growth, currency, and competence. Albertans agreed, with only 37.9 per cent of Task Force survey respondents (and 51.8 per cent of teacher respondents) expressing confidence that matters related to teacher competency are effectively addressed.

In the Task Force consultation sessions, many participants who identified themselves as educators expressed concern that schools and districts are limited or prevented from removing poor-performing teachers. Many expressed the view that the Alberta Teachers' Association "gets in the way of the process" by protecting under-performing teachers.

The Alberta School Boards Association, in its submission to the Task Force, suggested a more effective mechanism be established for addressing issues related to teaching practice:

The present practice review process is ineffective and needs to be reformed. The system is largely unresponsive to marginal or incompetent teaching skills and abilities. In effect, limited to addressing primarily those teachers who violate their code of conduct or do not meet employment standards, the system is not meeting the needs of school boards. The reality is that the current processes unintentionally create a disincentive to dealing with the minority of teachers who are not meeting expectations.³¹

The Alberta School Boards Association further noted that:

Teaching excellence can be assured only if there is an effective means of evaluating the performance of, and supporting the growth of, teaching professionals. The evaluation process must reinforce and contribute to maintaining competencies, but also serve to inspire and recognize the significant efforts and investments teachers make in educating their students.³²

The importance of an effective performance evaluation system was reinforced throughout our consultations with Albertans. Two-thirds of those participating in the Task Force online survey (66.4 per cent) and nearly half of teacher respondents (45.1 per cent) expressed support for one provincewide system for teacher performance evaluation. Further, the majority of respondents expressed a desire for principals having primary input into the evaluation of teachers' performance (83.5 per cent), and that input from students (60.2 per cent), other teachers (57.9 per cent), and parents (57.1 per cent) should also be considered as part of the evaluation process.

There were some concerns expressed that, because teachers are in a position of authority over students, it is difficult for students to give performance feedback directly to a teacher, as indicated in the following comment:

The current method for addressing an issue with a teacher is that the student, parent or coworker talks directly to the teacher before bringing the issue to a higher level of authority, i.e., the principal. This does not work. Students do not want their parents to talk to their teachers about issues as students are concerned about the ramifications. Unfortunately the current method prevents teachers from receiving the necessary feedback and from making the needed change because students are not willing to put their grades and situations at stake.

– Consultation participant

31 Task Force for Teaching Excellence, *What We Heard: Community and Stakeholder Consultations* (2014), Appendix E: Alberta School Boards Association's Submission to the Task Force. p.176

32 Ibid.

Those participating in the Task Force survey said principals should be the first point of contact in dealing with teacher performance issues, including investigating complaints and referring issues to the proper authorities. Further, district leaders should support the principal and act only when an issue is not being handled, at the school level.

Review by other jurisdictions

In reviewing the practice of other jurisdictions, the Task Force noted that the practice of regular teacher evaluation is becoming universally accepted.

The question facing most countries is not whether to have a teacher-evaluation system, but how to get it right.³³

Several jurisdictions, including Ontario, New York State, Singapore, New Zealand, Australia, England, Wales and Northern Ireland, have implemented a comprehensive approach to review teacher performance on a consistent and regular basis.

The Task Force also noted that recertification is a central element governance systems that provide assurance of teacher currency and competence. For example, in New Zealand, teachers are required to renew their registration and license to practice every five years, with a recent recommendation to reduce this to three years. The requirements for renewal center on the applicant having maintained a specified level of practice, the completion of professional development, and an assessment of continued competence as assessed by the principal.

New Zealand is attempting to further strengthen this system by placing more emphasis on “the renewal of the practicing certificate as a way to assess the continued competence of teachers” within a clearly identified scope of practice (e.g., early childhood, secondary).³⁴

Note that in New Zealand recertification is part of a broader system of assuring teacher competence, which includes mentorship and regular assessment of competence. Teachers are assessed by the principal against standards set out by the New Zealand Teachers Council.

While New Zealand and some other jurisdictions³⁵ have introduced teacher recertification processes, it is important to note that recertification is not the general rule – most countries do not have such systems. That is, in most jurisdictions, upon completing a two-year probationary period, teachers receive permanent certificates (i.e., authority to teach). Teachers are not required to participate in regular professional development to maintain their certification. As is the case in Alberta, in most jurisdictions it is a long and arduous process for dealing with issues of teacher competence.

³³ Teacher Quality: The 2013 International Summit on the Teaching Profession, p.23.

³⁴ *A 21st Century Body for the Education Profession*, New Zealand, p.16

³⁵ While there are similarities in other parts of the world, some do things differently. For example, it is becoming more typical in some US states that teacher contracts are of a fixed time frame and require renewal at the end of the contract. Some states, including Idaho and Florida, are now requiring school jurisdictions to award only fixed-term contracts.

Analysis

The Task Force believes that to ensure teacher currency and competency, and ultimately achieve practice excellence, a provincewide system of performance evaluation must be introduced. Whatever system is developed, it must be consistently administered and built on fairness and trust.

Establishing trust is absolutely essential to the development and implementation of evaluation systems – trust in the fairness of the measures, trust in the competence of the evaluators, trust in the purpose of the evaluation, and trust that it will deliver the promised outcomes.³⁶

For many, a recertification process for teachers would require principals to regularly supervise and evaluate teacher practice and would require district leaders to regularly supervise and evaluate the practice of the principal. Also, through recertification, teachers would be expected to remain current in their practice. The Alberta Teachers' Association, in its submission to the Task Force, supports a continuing education requirement that would ensure currency of teacher practice:

Like other professions, it is important that the teaching profession move to a continuous growth model for all certificate holders, tied to the right to practice. It is also important that the profession itself, through the Association and not the government, establish the requirement, maintain it and enforce it. Certificate holders who could not meet continuing education requirements would be unable to remain members of the profession.³⁷

It is important to note that the Alberta Teachers' Association envisions a system that they would maintain and enforce.

Ongoing practice supervision and regular evaluations would give the principal or district leader opportunities to identify and bring recommended areas for growth to the teacher's or principal's attention. In that way, a teacher can improve his or her practice and demonstrate suitability to retain the authority to teach in Alberta.

Rather than a recertification process for Alberta teachers, the Task Force recommends a system of 'maintenance of certification.' In such a system, a teacher's certification would be maintained on the basis of an attestation by a superintendent of schools.

³⁶ *Teacher Quality: The 2013 International Summit on the Teaching Profession*, p.21.

³⁷ Task Force for Teaching Excellence, *What We Heard: Community and Stakeholder Consultations* (20140, Appendix E: The Alberta Teachers' Association Submission to the Task Force. p.151

RECOMMENDATION 21: Maintenance of certification for teachers

That the Ministry of Education introduce a system of maintenance of certification for teachers to assure career-long professional growth, currency and competency.

That the following elements be considered for the system of maintenance of certification for teachers:

- Evaluation for purposes of maintenance of certification would occur every five years (following the interim certification period).
 - Evaluation processes shall follow principles of natural justice and due process, and be aligned with the evaluation process outlined in the *Teacher Growth, Supervision and Evaluation Policy*.
 - Provisions for a one-year extension to the five-year evaluation period would be granted by the Minister of Education under exceptional circumstances (application must be made by the superintendent to the Minister).
- Every year, principals would advise teachers in writing on their progress to qualify for maintenance of certification.
- The Ministry of Education would maintain the certification of a teacher on the attestation of the superintendent. The superintendent's attestation would be informed by the principal who would seek input broadly from parents, other teachers, and students (i.e., 360° feedback), and would be based on the demonstration of continued growth, currency, and competency in accordance with the *Teacher Quality Standard*.
- Teachers would be required to prepare a teaching excellence dossier of evidence of their professional growth, currency and competency.
- The system would include appeal processes, and processes for a teacher to regain his or her certificate.

Assurance of school leaders

In Alberta, and most of Canada, principals are evaluated by district leaders. However, the application of provincial practice standards, the evaluation process, and the frequency of evaluation vary. School authorities in Alberta must develop local policies and procedures for teacher and school leader evaluation on the basis of the provincial *Teacher Growth, Supervision and Evaluation Policy*.

As was the case for teachers, most participants in the Task Force survey (72 per cent) support one provincewide system for the evaluation of principals. Just under half of Albertans indicate a system of annual evaluation should be implemented (similar to

the opinion of Albertans on the frequency of teacher evaluations). It should be noted, however, that district leaders, school leaders, and teachers were less likely than other respondents to support the annual evaluation of principals.

In our consultations, a related theme emerged, summarized as follows:

Principals should have to show professional growth. Their evaluation document should be exactly the same as they prepare on their teachers, only measuring different things.

– Consultation participant

Our recommendations related to the periodic review of a principal's suitability to hold the designation of principal are similar to those related to maintenance of certification for teachers.

RECOMMENDATION 22: Maintenance of designation for school leaders

That the Ministry of Education establish a framework for the maintenance of administrative designation for principals every five years to assure leadership excellence.

RECOMMENDATION 23. Principal performance

That the Ministry of Education develop a provincewide system to provide principals with annual written feedback on their practice to assure leadership excellence in accordance with the school leader practice standard. While the system should be provincewide, it should accommodate any unique circumstances of the individual school or school authority.

Empowering school leaders to assure teaching excellence

Participants in our consultations expressed low levels of confidence in the process of assuring proper conduct and practice competence of teachers, areas in which principals will need to play a greater role if the recommendations of this report are adopted. Thus, while there is a belief among Albertans who participated in the consultation process that principals have an appropriate level of authority (75 per cent), this belief is rooted in the context of their current role and expectations.

Many educators who participated in our consultations expressed concern that principals are restricted in their instructional leadership role, particularly in addressing issues of teacher competence. They cite in particular the professional obligations of principals as co-members with teachers in the Alberta Teachers' Association, and the complexity of current processes for dealing with competence issues. Some participants felt that

removing principals from membership in the Alberta Teachers' Association would remove these restrictions, allowing principals more autonomy to deal with teacher competence issues. This led to Task Force discussions as to whether principals should retain membership in the Alberta Teachers' Association.

For those that believe principals should not remain as members of the Alberta Teachers' Association, the rationale is related to the fundamental issue of conflicting loyalties, i.e., that a principal simply cannot undertake a full managerial role, be answerable to the school authority, and put the interests of students before those of teachers, while retaining membership in the same professional association as teachers:

Principals need to be able to function without mixed loyalties. Principals need to be unencumbered to do their jobs and to be loyal to the educational system, students and parents. As it relates to the human resource function, principals need to be leaders, supervisors and managers of their staff.

– Consultation participant

The contrary view is that there is significant value in principals being part of the same professional association as teachers. The belief is that principals are currently sufficiently empowered to address issues of teacher conduct and competence but lack the confidence and capacity to undertake related duties, something that appropriate preparation and ongoing professional development would address. Concern was also expressed that removal of principals from membership in the Alberta Teachers' Association would restrict their ability to undertake teaching duties as part of their role: this would be of particular concern in small rural schools where principals have both administrative and teaching duties.

What happens in other provinces? In most provinces, principals are members of the same professional association as teachers; however, since 1988, the British Columbia Principals' and Vice-Principals' Association has been an autonomous organization that represents the interests of school leaders. It provides legal services and professional development opportunities for over 2,000 members. In 1998, the Ontario government removed school principals from teachers' professional associations and created the Ontario Principals' Council. The Council advocates for the interests of principals and provides legal services and professional development opportunities for its 5,000 members.

The Task Force believes action must be taken to enable and empower principals to effectively address issues of teacher competence and conduct by eliminating the impediments caused by conflicting loyalties, but believes this can be accomplished without removing principals from the Alberta Teachers' Association. It is also important that, as we further empower principals, they be provided the necessary support to effectively fulfill their related duties.

RECOMMENDATION 24: Empowering principals

That principals be empowered to effectively undertake the human resource function related to teachers in accordance with the recommendations in this report. This may require changes in legislation. If this empowerment is not possible, we recommend consideration be given to removing principals from the Alberta Teachers' Association to ensure this empowerment.

Further advice: Principals should be required to complete a professional learning program, endorsed by the Ministry of Education, to understand and fulfill duties related to this enhanced role.

The regulatory model

Regulatory models for the certification of teachers, governance of the teaching profession and legislation on the role of teachers, school leaders and district leaders, differ across Canada and internationally. The central issue is where professional functions such as practice review, professional development and codes of conduct should reside. These functions can reside with a teachers' association, with the government, or with a professional college that is independent of the union functions of professional associations such as the Alberta Teachers' Association. The current model in Alberta is that professional functions related to teacher practice review are shared between the Alberta Teachers' Association and the Ministry of Education.

The Alberta Teachers' Association is both a professional association and a union, with the latter functions related to collective bargaining of employment contracts and the protection of teachers from unreasonable actions of the public, school authorities and educational leaders; that is, ensuring that the interest of its members is paramount. This leads to a perception, heard throughout the consultation process, that the interests of the Alberta Teachers' Association's members take precedence over the interests of students. The Task Force believes that the interests of students must always come first.

There are three basic regulatory models through which professional functions are governed:

1. A teachers' association that includes union functions.
2. The provincial government assumes governance with an independent teachers' union, or
3. A professional teachers' college with an independent teachers' union.

The first best describes Alberta, the second British Columbia, and the third Ontario; however, the above descriptions simplify the range of regulatory models. For example, in Alberta one of the core professional functions, the certification of teachers, is governed by the Ministry of Education. It is probably best to describe Alberta's model as one of shared responsibility for professional functions.

Some may ask why draw a sharp line between union and professional functions of teachers' associations? Again, the central issue relates to whom the associations serve; i.e., are decisions made in the interest of students or of members? From the standpoint of its union functions, including collective bargaining, the Alberta Teachers' Association is understandably and legally most concerned with the interests of teachers. A potential and perceived conflict arises when the professional arm of the Alberta Teachers' Association espouses to have the best interest of students and the public at the heart of its decisions.

The Kendel Report (For the Sake of Students)

The Government of Saskatchewan recently commissioned a review of its regulatory model for teachers. It is worth noting the findings of the review, as Saskatchewan's regulatory system is very similar to Alberta's system.

The report, *For the Sake of Students*,³⁸ strongly recommends the separation of professional functions from the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation to a professional teachers' college. The interest of the student is central to the recommendations of the report writer, Dr. Dennis Kendal. He expresses a belief that the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation (STF) has a "what's good for teachers is good for students and the public" approach to its role; however, he concludes that it is "governed by teachers for teachers."

He states that generally:

... professionals [i.e., not just teachers] are sometimes shockingly naïve and insensitive to real and perceived conflicts of interest between their goals and aspirations, and the goals and aspirations of the public.³⁹

The strongest evidence for this conclusion provided by Kendel relates to how issues of member conduct and competence are managed. He concludes that the structures and systems safeguard the interests of the member over public interest; for the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation this means that the interest of teachers trumps the interests of students and the public. In examining practice review processes, he concluded that they are not undertaken in the interests of students. He further views the "remarkably small number" of written complaints investigated as further evidence of this inherent conflict of interest.

Kendel acknowledges the power imbalance between teacher and student, concluding that:

The risk of student harm from unethical or incompetent teachers is substantial. In the course of this review I have been particularly attentive to the risks faced by more vulnerable students.⁴⁰

38 Dr. Dennis Kendel, *For the Sake of Students*, 2013.

39 Dr. Dennis Kendel, *For the Sake of Students*, 2013, p.12.

40 Ibid, p.65.

Kendel traced the evolution of teacher professional associations in Canada, including the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation:

Notwithstanding the fact that these associations were effectively teachers' unions, governments accommodated, in part, their requests for regulatory powers.⁴¹

Perhaps because they recognize that provincial teacher associations are effectively professional unions, no provincial government to date has entrusted these organizations with the full spectrum of regulatory powers and responsibilities entrusted to professional regulatory bodies that are committed exclusively to a regulatory mission.⁴²

Kendel goes on to examine the three regulatory models described above. He rejects the existing model, where the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation retains both a professional function and a union function. He recommends a professional teachers' college model over a government model.

So strong is his belief that the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation should no longer function as both a professional association and a union that he recommends that:

If the teaching profession in Saskatchewan is not prepared to support regulation through a College of Teachers, with considerable regret, I would recommend regulation by the Ministry of Education as the alternative option.⁴³

As previously indicated, the Task Force discussed at length the appropriate regulatory model for Alberta. All agreed that the regulatory model must encompass the governance shifts envisioned by *Inspiring Education*, most particularly the shift to more assurance of teaching excellence.

The Task Force prefers to retain a model of shared responsibility between government and the Alberta Teachers' Association to address the issues identified. However, if the necessary adjustments are not possible under a shared model, the model should change.

RECOMMENDATION 25: The regulatory (governance) model

That the professional regulatory model for teachers be modified to implement the recommendations of this report. The Task Force believes that this can be achieved through collaborative transformation of the existing model in which the Alberta Teachers' Association continues to have both union and professional functions. If that is not possible, either a Ministry-based model or a separate professional college of teachers is recommended for consideration.

⁴¹ Ibid, p.41.

⁴² Dr. Dennis Kendel, *For the Sake of Students*, 2013, p.41.

⁴³ Ibid, p. 84.

10 FINAL THOUGHTS

Taken holistically, the Task Force believes the recommendations in this report will enable Alberta to achieve teaching excellence within the vision of *Inspiring Education*. The recommendations will ensure:

For every child, in every class, there is an excellent teacher.

It is the Task Force's hope and belief that the recommendations can be implemented through a consultative process involving all stakeholders. These groups have important roles to play in furthering the vision of *Inspiring Education*. Further, the Task Force believes the Ministry of Education must devote adequate human and financial resources to achieve this transformation.

In consultations, issues were raised that were beyond the scope of the Task Force. Many consultation participants discussed the need for a culture shift in our schools and the need to engage parents in that change. Others suggested the provincial curriculum needs to be more responsive to the needs of students in the 21st century. In this regard, the Task Force is pleased to note that the Ministry of Education is revising the provincial curriculum to align with the vision of *Inspiring Education*. Finally, to achieve that vision, many consultation participants noted that a shift in governance is required. While outside our mandate, we agree that governance issues should be examined and addressed.

11 APPENDICES

A: Glossary

B: Task Force Biographies

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APPENDIX A: Glossary

ASBA – Alberta School Boards Association

Accountability – Being accountable to perform as promised.

ASCA – Alberta School Councils' Association

Assurance – The promise to do something; the measurement and reporting of the performance of a promised action.

ATA – Alberta Teachers' Association

Beginning teacher – A teacher new to the profession.

Citizenship – The quality of an individual's response to membership in a community.

Competency – An interrelated set of attitudes, skills and knowledge that is drawn upon and applied to a particular context for successful learning and living.

Currency – The state of being current; up-to-date.

District leaders – Superintendents, associate superintendents and assistant superintendents.

Evaluation – The formal process of gathering and recording information or evidence over a period of time and the application of reasoned professional judgment by a principal in determining whether one or more aspects of the teaching of a teacher exceeds, meets or does not meet the *Teaching Quality Standard*.

Incompetent professional practice – The inability of a teacher to consistently meet the requirements of the *Teaching Quality Standard*.

Induction – The support and guidance provided to beginning teachers in the early stages of their careers as well as to those teachers new to the province.

Instructional days – Days when both teachers and students are at school.

Internship – An extended period of supervised practice following completion of a teaching degree and prior to probationary certification; not part of the undergraduate program.

Maintenance of certification – Regular study and/or testing to retain a valid teaching certificate.

Mentorship – Regular counsel or guidance provided by a trusted, experienced person.

OECD – Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

Operational days – Days when only teachers are at the school.

Practice review process – A process used to investigate and resolve issues related to conduct and competency.

Practicum – A course of study designed for the preparation of teachers that involves the supervised practical application of previously studied theory; also known as a field placement.

Professional competence – The capacity to function according to applicable standards, i.e., the *Teaching Quality Standard*.

Professional conduct – A mode or standard of personal behaviour in accordance with applicable standards, i.e., the *Teaching Quality Standard*.

Professional functions – Functions that serve the public interest, including the maintenance and enforcement of standards.

Regulatory model – The organizational structure that exercises authority over the profession, whether it be a teaching association, a union, an independent college, or a government body or department.

School authority – The term “school authority” includes school jurisdictions, accredited-funded private schools and private early childhood services operators. The term “school jurisdiction” refers to an Alberta public or separate school district, school division, regional division, Francophone Regional authority, charter school, the Lloydminster Public School Division and the Lloydminster Roman Catholic Separate School Division.

School boards – Statutory corporations elected by citizens to act for the legislature in their local schools and communities. The *Education Act* assigns them mandatory duties, such as to establish policies respecting the provision of educational services and programs, as well to maintain, repair, furnish and keep in good order all its real and personal property. The *Act* also assigns them discretionary duties to charge fees and make rules.

School leaders – Principals, associate principals, assistant principals, and vice-principals.

Standard – A common description or threshold of effective practice.

Superintendent – Similar to a chief executive officer, the superintendent is responsible for educational leadership, financial management, student welfare, board relations, managing staff, planning and reporting, communications, community involvement and other management aspects of running a school authority. The specific role depends on the school authority.

Supervision – The gathering and communication of information to help improve performance. As it relates to teachers it is defined as the on-going process by which a principal carries out duties in respect to teachers and teaching required under Section 20 of the *School Act* and exercises educational leadership.

Transparent – Open and readily understood.

Unprofessional conduct – Behaviour by a teacher that is detrimental to the best interests of students, the public or the teaching profession.

APPENDIX B: Task Force Biographies

Dr. Glenn Feltham - Chair

Dr. Glenn Feltham assumed the role of NAIT's sixth president and CEO on March 1, 2011. He has an extensive academic and professional background. Dr. Feltham holds a Bachelor of Arts from the University of Alberta, a Bachelor of Science with a major in Business Administration and an MBA from the University of Montana, an LLB from Queen's University Faculty of Law and a PhD from the University of Waterloo School of Accountancy. Owing to a unique family history, he brings to NAIT a keen interest in the role of entrepreneurship in strengthening the Alberta and Canadian economy, as well as a deep appreciation of the value of community. Before he joined NAIT, Dr. Feltham was dean of the I.H. Asper School of Business at the University of Manitoba. His career has been defined by service to both his community and profession. His roles and achievements include: Potash Corp. Chair (Chuck and Norma Childers' Chair) for Saskatchewan Enterprise and Department Head of Accounting and at the College of Commerce, University of Saskatchewan; Director of Undergraduate Business Programs in the School of Business & Economics at Wilfrid Laurier University; chair of the board of Canada's Royal Winnipeg Ballet; board member with the Winnipeg Airports Authority Inc.; and board member with the Crown Corporations Council of Manitoba. Professionally, Dr. Feltham holds a designation as a Certified Management Accountant and a Fellowship with the Society of Management Accountants of Canada, is past president of the Canadian Academic Accounting Association, and was previously enrolled as a Barrister and Solicitor of the Law Society of Alberta.

Sandra Jansen – Vice Chair

Sandra Jansen was elected as the Member of the Legislative Assembly for Calgary-North West on April 23, 2012. She was sworn in as Associate Minister of Family and Community Safety on August 1, 2013. She is a member of the government's Operations Committee and serves on the Ministerial Working Group on Families and Communities. Previous appointments include serving as Deputy Government Whip, chair of the Calgary caucus and co-chair of the Alberta Film Advisory Council. Ms. Jansen earned a broadcasting diploma from the Southern Alberta Institute of Technology and later studied French at McGill University. She also holds a master's degree in professional communications from Royal Roads University. Ms. Jansen is an experienced journalist, having spent 23 years in the field, including 10 years as a national news anchor at CTV News Channel in Toronto. She also hosted the City TV Calgary show *Your City* from 2007 to 2010. Ms. Jansen later served as Premier Alison Redford's southern Alberta communications manager from October 2011 to March 2012. A passionate advocate and dedicated volunteer, over the years she has been a spokesperson and a volunteer for the United Way, Calgary Health Trust, and Ronald McDonald House and a board member at the Calgary Girls' School. Ms. Jansen is an acrylic artist and has donated more than 50 paintings to various charities in the Calgary area.

Naresh Bhardwaj

Naresh Bhardwaj was elected to his second term as a Member of the Legislative Assembly of Alberta for Edmonton-Ellerslie on April 23, 2012. In addition to his duties as an MLA, Mr. Bhardwaj is Associate Minister of Persons with Disabilities and serves as chair of the capital region caucus. He also sits on the following committees: the Legislative Review Committee, the Standing Committee on Private Bills, and the Standing Committee on Alberta's Economic Future. Previously, he served as Chair on the Steering Committee for *Setting the Direction*, which recommended a framework to reform the provision of services and supports to Alberta students with special education needs. Mr. Bhardwaj moved to Alberta with his family in 1976. He became a journeyman automotive mechanic in 1983 before going back to school and graduating from the U of A with a double major. He then spent the next 18 years working as a teacher in Pincher Creek, Whitecourt, Red Deer, Calgary and Edmonton, teaching predominantly automotives, mathematics and physical education. Mr. Bhardwaj has been actively involved with Edmonton communities for over 36 years, serving on many associations, establishing Youth Link, a youth employment training program, and coaching soccer at the community league level and for Juventus U-18.

David C. Dorward

David C. Dorward was elected as the Member of the Legislative Assembly for Edmonton-Gold Bar on April 23, 2012. On May 8, 2012, Premier Alison Redford named Mr. Dorward as a member of Alberta's Treasury Board, and he was appointed deputy chair of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts on May 24, 2012. In addition, he is also a member of the Standing Committee on the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund, the Standing Committee on Alberta's Economic Futures, and the Select Special Conflicts of Interest Act Review Committee. Mr. Dorward has also recently been appointed as the Deputy Whip. He is a graduate of the Northern Alberta Institute of Technology and the University of Alberta, and was recognized by NAIT as one of its top 50 graduates of the last 50 years. An experienced Chartered Accountant and Certified Management Accountant, Mr. Dorward founded his own company, Dorward & Company Chartered Accountants LLP in 1994. In 2009, his company was a finalist for the Edmonton Chamber of Commerce's Small Business Owner of the Year Award and he received an honorable mention for the Alberta Outstanding Community Leader Award, presented by the then Lieutenant Governor, Norman Kwong. Throughout his life Mr. Dorward has contributed to his community in many ways. He has served on numerous local and provincial boards, including the Edmonton Epilepsy Association, Basketball Alberta and the Children's Ability Fund. He founded Edmonton's Saville Community Sports Centre (GO Centre), the largest community and sport centre of its type in North America. As well, he serves as president of the Edmonton Grads Basketball Centre, the group that operates basketball programming at the GO Centre. In addition to coaching youth basketball for more than 12 years, he organized the basketball program for many Edmonton-Gold Bar communities. Mr. Dorward has also served as a United Way director of finance and administration.

Everett McDonald

Everett McDonald was elected as the Member of the Legislative Assembly for Grande Prairie-Smoky on April 23, 2012. He also serves on the Standing Committee on Legislative Offices (deputy chair), the Standing Committee on Alberta's Economic Future, the Special Standing Committee on Members' Service, the Select Special Conflicts of Interest Act Review Committee, and the Select Special Chief Electoral Officer Search Committee. Mr. McDonald was recently appointed as chair of the MLA implementation team working on the review and implementation of the retail market review recommendations to strengthen Alberta's retail electricity market. First elected to the County of Grande Prairie No. 1 Council in 1992, Mr. McDonald served in various capacities during his tenure, including as chair of numerous commissions and boards and as deputy reeve. He then served as reeve from 2004 until his election to the Legislative Assembly of Alberta. Mr. McDonald was the chairman of the Crystal Creek Conservation Society and also represented the county on various provincial committees, including the Alberta Growth Summit and the provincial Mountain Pine Beetle Advisory Committee. In addition, he was also a founding board member of Aquatera, a municipally owned utility corporation, the first of its kind in the province.

David Fraser

As Executive Director, Corporate Services with Edmonton Public Schools, Mr. Fraser is responsible for overseeing a number of central departments including Finance, Human Resources, Communications, Planning and Transportation, Facilities, Technology and the District's Foundation. Prior to taking on this role, David was the Managing Director of Human Resources with Edmonton Public Schools. He has been the district's Chief Negotiator for the past ten years, overseeing negotiations with the ATA and three CUPE Locals (support, custodial and maintenance staff). He was a member of the ASBA negotiating team during the 2012-2013 tripartite talks and he has been a member of the External Advisory Committee for Alberta Education's Workforce Planning Initiative for the past five years. David has over thirty years experience in Human Resources in a variety of roles and he holds a Bachelor of Commerce degree in Industrial Relations from the University of Alberta.

Dr. Sharon Friesen

Dr. Sharon Friesen the Vice Dean and the Associate Dean of Professional and Community Engagement in the Werklund School of Education at the University of Calgary. She is also the one of the founding partners and the current President of the Galileo Educational Network. Her research interests include the ways in which K-12 educational structures, curriculum and learning need to be reinvented for a knowledge/learning society. She has specific interests in and a deep passion for: (i) the promotion of deep intellectual engagement, (ii) the ability to create learning environments that require sustained work with ideas (iii) the pervasiveness of networked digital technologies that open up new ways of knowing, leading, teaching, working and living in the world. She is the recipient of numerous awards including: the Pacific Institute for the Mathematical Sciences 2007 Education Prize, the 2007 Calgary Stampede Legacy Award for Innovation and the 1999 Prime Minister's Award for Teaching Excellence. She has co-authored three books, one

which won the 2004 American Education Research Association Book Award for Curriculum Studies. Dr. Friesen was a member of the *Inspiring Education* Steering Committee.

Dr. Irene Lewis

Dr. Irene Lewis became President and CEO of SAIT Polytechnic in 1998 and retired from that position in 2013. Prior to joining SAIT, she was President of an Edmonton college and led its transition to a board-governed institution. Beginning her career as a teacher in rural Alberta, she later worked in Singapore for over five years, where she had a central role in shaping that country's vision for education. Dr. Lewis has written textbooks, and taught in primary, secondary and post-secondary systems. She was named as one of Canada's Top 100 Most Powerful Women for 2010 and 2012. In 2010, she received an honorary Doctor of Laws degree from the University of Calgary - its highest honour. She was presented with the Chair Academy's 2009 International Exemplary Leader Award and was recognized with the 2008 Distinguished Leadership Award from the Council of Advancement and Support of Education. She was named a Woman of Vision by Global Calgary in 2008. She was one of Alberta's Most Respected Corporate Leaders in 2007 and one of Alberta's Most Influential Citizens in 2005. Dr. Lewis received the Premier's Gold Award of Excellence, a Queen Elizabeth II Golden Jubilee Medal and a University of Alberta Alumni Honour Award. She continues to serve as an adjunct Professor for the University of Alberta as well as in advisory roles for various organizations focused on education.

Dr. Craig Loewen

Dr. Craig Loewen is the Dean of Education at the University of Lethbridge. He is a long serving faculty member, U of L alumnus (BEd '84) and mathematics education expert whose research includes how students learn and how teachers can promote and enrich student learning. He has received the University of Lethbridge Distinguished Teaching Award, and the Educational Research Award from the Alberta Teachers' Association, which acknowledged his involvement in pre-service and in-service mathematics education. In addition, he was appointed a Friend of the Mathematics Council of the Alberta Teachers' Association and was inducted into the University of Lethbridge Alumni Honour Society in 2011.

Mackenzie Martin

Mackenzie Martin is a student leader focused on education and public health. In particular, she is passionate about the issues facing girls. As a young feminist, she is an active community leader who has been engaged in spearheading and organizing numerous community events many of which highlight the issues facing girls locally and globally. For example, Mackenzie organized a Conference for 1,400 students to acknowledge the UN's first International Day of the Girl. In recognition of her community service and leadership, Mackenzie has been the recipient of many honors and awards including: the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal; Premier's Citizenship Award; YWCA Young Woman of Distinction Award; Queen's Golden Jubilee Citizenship Medal; TD Scholarship for Community Leadership; John Humphrey Centre for Peace and Human Rights Champion Award (Youth); Millar Western Entrance Leadership Scholarship (University of Alberta); Bill Swift Memorial Scholarship (University of Alberta) and A Friends of the University Entrance Scholarship (University of Alberta). Her perspectives

on policy and the importance of education have also been shaped by working as a Page at the Legislature and her year as a member of the Minister's Student Advisory Panel (Speak Out). She is proud to be an Albertan and attends the University of Alberta where she studies in the field of education.

Brent McDonough

Brent McDonough is a teacher with extensive experience at the secondary school level. He is currently a Sessional/Field Experiences Associate/IB advisor to the Masters in Educational Studies Program in the Faculty of Education, University of Alberta. Globally, Mr. McDonough continues to be involved with educational initiatives with the International Baccalaureate Organization. Mr. McDonough is also a member of the Education Society of Edmonton and an executive member of the Friends of the University of Alberta. He has served a six-year term on the University of Alberta Senate and a three-year term on the University of Alberta Alumni Association, and is past chair of the Edmonton Public Library Board. The province honored Mr. McDonough for his contributions to the community with an Alberta Centennial Medal in 2005. Mr. McDonough was co-chair of the *Inspiring Education* Steering Committee.

Michele Mulder

Michelle Mulder's interest in public education began when her children were in elementary school through her involvement in the school, particularly the school council. She ran for the position of school trustee and was elected in 1989. A trustee for 15 years, Ms. Mulder served as chairman of the Battle River Regional School Division from 1995 to 2000. She was elected to the position of Vice President of the Alberta School Boards Association in 1998 and served as its President from 2001 until 2004. Ms. Mulder also served as president of the Canadian School Boards Association 2003-2004. Today, she is the Executive Director of the Alberta School Councils' Association (ASCA), a provincial organization dedicated to parent engagement in education primarily through school councils. Ms. Mulder's interest and passion are focused in the areas of leadership, policy and governance. She promotes building mutually respectful and beneficial relationships among all participants in public education that will ultimately enhance student learning success.

Andy Neigel

Andy Neigel earned a Bachelor of Science Degree in Forestry at the University of Alberta and a Forestry Diploma at the Northern Alberta Institute of Technology and has provided strong operational and corporate leadership in the forest industry for more than 25 years. Mr. Neigel's career in the forestry business has taken him throughout both British Columbia and Alberta, and includes teaching assignments at the Northern Alberta Institute of Technology and University of Alberta forestry schools. Most recently, Mr. Neigel held a number of positions at Alberta-Pacific Forest Industries Inc., ending his 14-year tenure as the General Manager and Vice President of Operations. He is a Registered Professional Forester both in Alberta and in British Columbia and is a graduate of the Queen's School of Business Executive and Leadership Programs. Mr. Neigel is currently a Board Director and President and CEO of CAREERS: the Next Generation Foundation. Mr. Neigel has served as a member of Alberta Education's *Inspiring Education* Steering Committee and a Board

Director for Athabasca University, the Northern Alberta Development Council, the Forest Products Association of Canada, the Pulp and Paper Institute of Canada, the Forest Engineering Research Institute of Canada and Portage College. Andy and his wife Kathi reside on a farm south of Athabasca.

Shelley Ralston

Shelley Ralston is an executive with sales, marketing, operations, general management and human resources expertise. She is a change agent with strengths in building organizational capacity, strategic planning and excellence in results delivery. Ms. Ralston was appointed to the Red Deer College Board of Governors in June 2010 and in March 2012, she was appointed Chair of the Board. Ms. Ralston is also the Director of Talent and Culture for Xerox Canada and partner in a small business - Graden Systems. She is a past board member of the Red Deer Rotary Club; a board member of the Women's Leadership Foundation, past cabinet member of the Central Alberta United Way and a member with the Alberta Chapter for Room to Read. She was also a committee member for the Central Alberta Leadership Centre. Shelley was the recipient of the Women of Excellence award in 2008. Ms. Ralston, her husband and their two children live in Red Deer County.

Laurie Thompson

Laurie L. Thompson was appointed Principal of Kikino School, on the Kikino Métis Settlement, Northern Lights School Division in 2005. Ms. Thompson began her teaching career at Amisk Community School, on the Beaver Lake First Nation, in 1993 upon graduating from the University of Alberta with a Bachelor of Education Degree. She returned to her home community of Kikino after teaching grade one at Amisk School for five years and continued her teaching career in Kikino. Ms. Thompson completed a Master of Arts in Leadership and Training Masters program from Royal Roads University in 2006. Advocacy for Aboriginal children and families began early for Laurie as she sat on a Special Education Review panel under Dr. Lyle Oberg. She later sat on and then chaired Child and Family Services Authority Métis Settlements for ten years. Recently, Ms. Thompson was a member of the *Inspiring Education* Steering Committee, followed by an appointment to the Northlands Community Engagement Team. She continues to serve her community in various capacities through the church, volunteering, and through many school-community partnerships. Under her leadership, Kikino School has been recognized for Excellence in Inclusive Education practice and was recognized as one of the top 25 Schools in Canada in Today's Parent magazine.

Ron Young

As a teacher and principal in rural Alberta, Ron Young brings significant experience to discussions on education. When faced with the closure of the local school at 4 Wing Cold Lake, he stepped in and organized a successful private school that has been a foundation of success for families at Cold Lake's military base. Shortly after arriving in Grand Centre, Mr. Young ran for town council. He was the youngest councilor ever elected. He went on to win a total of 9 consecutive elections, none by acclamation. He retired from council in 2004, after serving longer than anyone in the history of the city.

APPENDIX C: Task Force Terms of Reference

A. Context

Several major ministry initiatives, including but not limited to *Inspiring Education: A Dialogue with Albertans*, *Setting the Direction for Special Education in Alberta*, *Speak Out: The Alberta Student Engagement Initiative* and *Literacy First: A Plan for Action*, have provided Albertans with an opportunity to participate in dialogues about the kind of education that students need now and in the future. Alberta's new *Education Act* is a significant first step toward bringing to life a vision for education set out in *Inspiring Education*, where all Alberta children become engaged thinkers and ethical citizens with an entrepreneurial spirit and thereby contribute to healthy, inclusive communities and a thriving Alberta economy.

Education in Alberta needs to be delivered differently if Alberta's education system is to become truly collaborative and inclusive. The system must encourage and support creativity, innovation and entrepreneurialism to attain the highest possible standards and to ensure every student's success—academically and developmentally.

In this context, the public discussion will shift from a focus on a new vision for education to a focus on the ways we will achieve the policy shifts identified in *Inspiring Education*:

- more focus on education rather than school
- the learner rather than the system
- building competencies rather than delivering content
- technology to support the creation and sharing of knowledge rather than to support teaching

Student learning is at the center of this profession. Educators should recognize and consider the complexities of the 21st century student. Educators remain the primary variable to student learning and success in the 21st century. Educators should continue to be learners themselves and remain current in sound, research-based practice.

The successful transformation of Alberta's education system, as envisioned by *Inspiring Education*, to arm students with new competencies, to create an inclusive education system and to promote innovation and creativity will not happen with new policies and directives. The transformation as envisioned under *Inspiring Education* requires the commitment, expertise and dedicated service of all members of Alberta's education system; it will also require some realignment and co-ordination of their respective roles and responsibilities and will require an education system that empowers people to be innovative risk-takers and that acknowledges their expertise. Whereas all those involved in the education enterprise are important, it will be critical to have teachers who are inspired, resourced, supported and accountable in making the required, on-going shifts in their mind-sets and practices. The new legislation, which will complement the *Education Act*, is intended to achieve this.

B. Purpose

The Task Force for Teaching Excellence Panel will make recommendations emanating from its examination of relevant, current research, consultation with Albertans and a review of current provincial legislation, regulations and policy frameworks. Recommendations will align with the vision, values, guiding principles and policy shifts of *Inspiring Education* to provide for legislation and practice that will enable and assure teacher excellence and that educators will be innovative and current in their practice. All educators will be empowered to inspire and build strong relationships that fully engage students to aspire to and fulfill an entrepreneurial spirit. The new legislation will assure Albertans that all Alberta teachers and other educators are accountable for putting students first and providing high-quality educational experiences to children, youth and their families.

Mandate

The Task Force will:

1. Be guided by the vision, values, principles and policy shifts identified in *Inspiring Education*.
2. Provide input into a Consultation Plan and the Strategic Communications Plan.
3. Consult with Albertans and education stakeholders to review the existing environment and recommend revisions or make new suggestions to transform Alberta's education system, as envisioned by *Inspiring Education*. The strategic questions below could be used as a guideline for the discussions.
 - a. What are the main contributing factors of excellence in teaching that Alberta should focus its priorities on?
 - b. What is the definition of 'educator'? What does a 'world-class' educator look like in the 21st century?
 - c. What are the characteristics that highly skilled educators demonstrate in providing a 'quality education' for students?
 - d. Who should be authorized to educate students in Alberta? What should be their qualifications?
 - e. What is the role of 21st century teachers? How is that different from the current role? What is their role in relation to others who educate in Alberta?
 - f. Are there currently any barriers to excellence in teaching?
 - g. What should a code of conduct for Alberta educators include?

- h. What mechanisms should be in effect to assure Albertans that all educators, system leaders and administrators demonstrate career-long:
 - competencies
 - quality practice
 - proper conduct
- i. How can we ensure entrepreneurialism is a trait in teachers?
- j. What is the role of the community in the assurance of excellence?
- 4. The Task Force will consider:
 - what educators will need to work in a more flexible, innovative system that sees students reaching their full potential, not only within secondary education, but as lifelong learners; and
 - what processes and mechanisms are in place to ensure there is consistent excellence in teaching and that there will be assurances in place to maintain that excellence.
- 5. Review the adequacy and appropriateness of current provincial requirements for Alberta educators.
- 6. Identify strategies, processes and parameters used by other educational jurisdictions, including the mechanisms in place that assure their publics of the career-long competence, quality practice and proper conduct of all educators, that are worthy of consideration for the Alberta context. Consider strategies and processes used by other professions.
- 7. Identify how its proposed recommendations on policy and practices that lead to transformation of Alberta's education system might challenge the current assumptions and expectations of Albertans.

C. Deliverables

By January 31, 2014 the Task Force will prepare a Report to the Minister with recommendations on:

- 1. provincial requirements for those who are authorized to educate in Alberta's K-12 Education system
- 2. the mechanisms for assuring Albertans that all educators demonstrate career-long competency, quality practice and proper conduct throughout their careers
- 3. the establishment of provincial requirements for the following educators:
 - professionals:
 - teachers
 - school superintendents
 - school leaders

- occupational groups:
 - educational and therapeutic assistants
 - non-certificated instructors
 - school business managers
- 4. the mechanisms to effectively co-ordinate and align the respective roles of those educators
- 5. the establishment of provincial requirements in legislation, regulation and policy for educators, related to their:
 - roles
 - responsibilities/duties
 - qualifications
 - competencies
 - certification/credentialing
 - standards of practice
 - codes of conduct
 - preparation and ongoing professional learning
 - currency of practice
 - practice supervision and performance evaluation
 - employment contracts
- 6. the role of all stakeholders, but specifically the Ministry of Education, in enabling and assuring excellence in education
- 7. the role of the Ministry of Education in directing post-secondary training in the field of education
- 8. any other actions or policy shifts required to attain excellence in the rapidly evolving field of education

D. Membership

Task Force members will bring the perspectives of students, teachers, parents, entrepreneurs, post-secondary institutions, technology experts, education human resources personnel, the business community and government. A number of the members of the Task Force will be former members of the *Inspiring Education* and *Setting the Direction* steering committees to ensure the vision, values and policy shifts of *Inspiring Education* are in the forefront.

The Task Force may also engage with external experts who will be contracted by the ministry to provide advice and information.

The Minister will appoint members by Ministerial Order.

E. Remuneration

Task Force for Teaching Excellence members will be compensated as outlined in Appendix 3, Schedule 1, Part A of the Committee Remuneration Order (O.C. 466/2007). Task Force members will be reimbursed for expenses as outlined in the Subsistence and Travel Allowance Regulation Travel Meal and hospitality Expense Policy TB directive 04/2012.

F. Meetings

The frequency and dates for meetings of the Task Force will be determined by the Task Force Chair to ensure achievement of the Task Force's mandate within the timeline requirements.

G. Support

Ministry staff will provide support to the Task Force for Teaching Excellence throughout the full process as required.

APPENDIX D: Admission to Teacher PREPARATION PROGRAMS

The University of Alberta offers a four-year post-secondary program, a five-year degree program consecutive with another degree, and a post-degree program. Its minimum admission average is 70 per cent for high school applicants and a minimum grade point average (GPA) of 2.0 for post-secondary applicants. However, all admissions are competitive, and actual minimums may be higher.

The University of Calgary offers four-semester, two-year Bachelor of Education post-degree programs in both elementary and secondary education or a five-year concurrent degree program. Admission is competitive and based on GPA, at a minimum of 2.50, as well as specific course requirements.

The University of Lethbridge has broader criteria for its program, which can be completed as a concurrent degree program or a post-degree program. The major ranking criteria are the cumulative GPA and performance in Education 2500, which includes a recommendation from the instructor. Those applying directly from high school must meet the general entrance requirements of the University.

Six other schools, usually known as “university colleges,” consider academic performance as well in admission of students, but they also consider teaching-related work and volunteer experience, personal essays, and references.

APPENDIX E: Teacher Preparation Programs – Pathways to Earning a Bachelor of Education Degree

In Alberta, most teachers have a Bachelor of Education degree from a post-secondary institution or another type of degree plus a Bachelor of Education degree from an approved teacher preparation program.

There are nine colleges and universities in Alberta that train teachers:

- The University of Alberta offers four-year degrees in both elementary and secondary education. It also offers a five-year combined-degrees program, an after-degree program, and an Aboriginal teacher preparation program.
- The University of Calgary offers four-semester, two-year degree programs in both elementary and secondary education. An elementary or secondary degree program can be taken following completion of or concurrent with another degree.
- The University of Lethbridge offers degree programs in both elementary and secondary education. Either program can be completed as a five-year combined degrees program or as an after-degree program.
- Concordia University College of Alberta (Edmonton) offers a two-year, after-degree program in elementary education.
- The King's University College (Edmonton) offers a two-year after-degree program in both elementary and secondary education.
- Canadian University College (central Alberta) offers a four-year degree program in both elementary and secondary education as well as a two-year, after-degree program.
- St. Mary's University College (Calgary) offers a two-year, after-degree program in elementary education.
- Mount Royal University (Calgary) offers a four-year degree program in elementary education.
- Ambrose University College (Calgary) offers a two-year, after-degree program in elementary education.

Also, several post-secondary institutions provide transfer programs for Bachelor of Education degrees.

APPENDIX F: Career Stages for Teachers in Australia, England and Wales

In **Australia**, there are four career stages for teachers:

Graduate teachers are those who have the required academic qualification, have completed approved teacher education and are now beginning their teaching career. If they are permanently employed, they are expected to achieve professional competency and full accreditation by the end of the first year.

Proficient teachers meet the requirements of full registration by having met the standards required at this level, demonstrated successful teaching experience and having successfully undertaken an induction program. Proficient teachers are able to tailor teaching programs to meet the needs of individuals and groups within the class and continue to record effective and ongoing professional development.

Highly accomplished teachers are recognized as very proficient and successful practitioners and seen by other teachers as having in-depth subject knowledge and pedagogy. They keep abreast of professional learning and contribute to the professional learning of others including the mentoring of beginning teachers. These teachers are advocates for the profession and their school.

Lead teachers are committed educators who have a record of outstanding teaching and are committed to enhancing the quality of teaching practice over time. They are knowledgeable about the latest developments in pedagogy and can articulate a vision of education to their students, peers, the profession and the wider community. They have outstanding interpersonal and leadership skills and may be employed in formal leadership positions within schools.

In **England and Wales**, there are four teacher categories:

Qualified teachers must have Quality Teacher Status accreditation.

Post threshold teachers are experienced teachers who are at the high point of their pay scale and wish to remain in the classroom. Crossing the threshold gives teachers access to an upper pay scale; however, it is not an automatic process. To cross the threshold a teacher must be eligible and, by a voluntary application, indicate their wish to be assessed against the post threshold standards. Decision whether a teacher meets the threshold standards rest with the principal.

Excellent teachers have length, breadth, and depth of experience, pedagogic excellence and high level coaching and mentoring skills. Their high level skills make them a role model for less-experienced teachers. In addition to their normal duties in the classroom, excellent teachers have a role in helping other teachers improve their effectiveness.

Advanced skill teachers are expected to take a leadership role in developing, implementing and evaluating policies and practices that contribute to education improvement. These teachers spend about 80 per cent of time in class and 20 per cent doing outreach work in other schools for the benefit of other teachers. Teachers receive this designation by applying for a vacancy and being assessed against advanced skill standards.

APPENDIX G: Principal Preparation in Other Provinces

Principals in Ontario, New Brunswick, Northwest Territories and Nunavut must complete preparatory programs prior to becoming a principal. Generally, the programs focus on leadership, instruction, management, personnel, accountability, and performance.

In Ontario, principals in schools with more than 125 students must complete Part 1 and Part 2 of a Principal's Qualifications Program. The program is 250 hours in length followed by a 60 hour practicum. Prior to acceptance in the program, candidates must have taught for a minimum of five years and must have completed some graduate work.

In New Brunswick, principals must have an interim principal's certificate followed by a permanent principal's certificate. To receive an interim certificate, candidates must have a minimum of five years of experience or the equivalent training and experience. Those with interim certificates must complete specified training plus a one-year practicum to receive their permanent principal's certificate.

In the Northwest Territories and Nunavut, principals require a certificate of eligibility. They are eligible to take an Educational Leadership Program following two years of teaching experience. The program is offered in two phases, one phase a year, during a 10-day block in July. Both phases are 120 hours each and a practicum follows each phase. A certificate of eligibility is valid for five years. Applicants must submit proof of professional development and a criminal record check for recertification.

The remaining provinces and the Yukon do not require school principals to be certificated for the administrative role. Manitoba stands out as a province that provides an opportunity to be certificated, but it is not mandated. Quebec is the only province that does not require school administrators to be certificated teachers, leaving the criteria up to school boards.

APPENDIX H: System of Assuring Conduct and Competence

What happens when a complaint of incompetence is made about a teacher?

The complaint is made to the school superintendent who does the initial investigation. If the complaint is unfounded, no further action is taken. If the superintendent concludes the teacher is not meeting the *Teaching Quality Standard*, the superintendent makes a report to the Executive Secretary of the Alberta Teachers' Association (ATA).

The Executive Secretary then orders a hearing of the case by the ATA's Professional Practice Review Committee. This committee consists of two classroom teachers, one principal or vice-principal, a central office administrator, and a member of the public. The hearing is open to the public.

After hearing evidence, the committee determines whether the teacher is meeting the *Teaching Quality Standard*. The committee may recommend the cancellation or suspension of the teacher's ATA membership. It may also recommend that the Minister of Education cancel or suspend the member's teaching certificate. Before the committee hands down its decision, the teacher may voluntarily request that his or her certificate be cancelled.

The teacher, the superintendent or the ATA Executive Council may appeal the decision of the Professional Practice Review Committee to the Professional Practice Appeal Committee (also under the auspices of the ATA). The appeal committee may quash, vary or confirm the hearing committee's decision. It may also make its own decision or refer the case back to the hearing committee.

What about a complaint about unprofessional conduct?

The Executive Secretary of the ATA investigates the complaint. In extreme cases, the Executive Secretary may temporarily suspend the teacher's membership pending the outcome of the investigation. The member being investigated has the right to appeal the suspension to the Court of Queen's Bench.

Based on the outcome of the investigation, the Executive Secretary takes one of three possible actions:

- orders a formal hearing
- arranges for an invitation, which is an informal dispute resolution process.
- dismisses the complaint

If the case is referred to a hearing of the ATA's Professional Practice Review Committee, the hearing is open to the public unless the complainant or hearing committee requests privacy. If the committee determines that the member is guilty of unprofessional conduct,

it may issue a reprimand, cancel or suspend the member's ATA membership. It may also recommend that the Minister of Education cancel or suspend the member's teaching certificate and/or impose additional penalties, including a fine of up to \$10,000.

The teacher or the ATA Executive Council may appeal the decision to the Professional Conduct Appeal Committee. The Professional Conduct Appeal Committee may quash, vary or confirm the hearing committee's decision. It may also make its own decision or refer the case back to the hearing committee.

The teacher may apply for a judicial review of the decision.

Unprofessional conduct involving an indictable offence⁴⁴

Upon learning that a member has been convicted of an indictable offence, the ATA or Alberta Education, as appropriate, automatically initiates an investigation. All conduct hearings are open to the public unless the complainant or the Professional Practice Review Committee requests privacy. In extreme cases and where the situation warrants, the Executive Secretary of the ATA may temporarily suspend the teacher's ATA membership pending the outcome of the investigation. The member being investigated has the right to appeal the suspension to the Court of Queen's Bench.

The Professional Practice Review Committee considers penalties but not guilt (which is automatic in cases involving indictable offences). The committee may issue a reprimand, cancel or suspend the member's ATA membership, recommend that the Minister of Education cancel or suspend the member's teaching certificate and/or impose additional penalties, including a fine of up to \$10,000.

Either the member or the ATA Executive Council may appeal the decision to the Professional Conduct Appeal Committee which may change the original decision. The member may apply for a judicial review of the decision.

The Board of Reference

Every province in Canada has some appeal mechanism for teachers facing termination or suspension. In Alberta the Board of Reference is an appeal process that was established in 1927 to resolve disputes between teachers and school boards about termination or suspension of a teacher's employment. An order that stems from a Board of Reference hearing must be filed with the Court of Queen's Bench and that order has the same force as an order of that Court. A teacher or a board that is the subject of a Board of Reference order may further appeal to the Court of Appeal.

⁴⁴ Indictable offenses are more serious offences and include theft over \$5,000, break and enter, aggravated sexual assault and murder. Maximum penalties for indictable offences vary and include life in prison. Some indictable offences have minimum penalties.

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TASK FORCE FOR TEACHING EXCELLENCE

PART II: WHAT WE HEARD – Community and Stakeholder Consultation

The *Task Force for Teaching Excellence* held public and stakeholder consultations in Fall 2013. This report summarizes the results of those consultations and reflects the views and perspectives of Albertans from across the province.

May 2014

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1 INTRODUCTION

Background

Jeff Johnson, Minister of Education, announced the creation of the Task Force for Teaching Excellence on September 11, 2013. The Task Force was asked to make recommendations to achieve teaching excellence and to ensure the best chance of success for every student.

The role of the Task Force was directly linked to Alberta's long-term vision for education which is described in *Inspiring Education*. A main theme of *Inspiring Education* is that, as the world and classrooms change, so too must the role of Alberta's educators. Albertans said teachers need to be more flexible, innovative and learner-centered if students are to develop the skills and knowledge they need to become engaged thinkers, and ethical citizens with entrepreneurial spirits (the Three E's of *Inspiring Education*).

The Task Force comprised 16 members who have a broad range of experience in the education system. It included students, parents, teachers and academics, in addition to four MLAs. A Task Force membership list is included in Appendix A.

Purpose of consultations

A critical element of the Task Force review was listening to Albertans, including the voices of individual teachers. Three thousand Albertans, including teachers, students, parents, administrators and others, contributed to discussions about teaching excellence. Although originally scheduled to close at the end of November, the consultations were extended to mid-December to accommodate as many Albertans as possible. Albertans had a further opportunity to provide input during the *Inspiring Education* Symposium held in Calgary on February 19, 2014.

All the input from Albertans was captured, discussed and considered by the Task Force. The input contributed to the Task Force recommendations to the Minister of Education.

Leger – The Research Intelligence Group was contracted to support the Task Force. It assisted with three major components of the consultations: an online survey; regional consultations, including sessions conducted specifically with First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples; and a series of online bulletin board discussions with Albertans.

Methods of consultation

The Task Force used seven different methods to engage as many Albertans as possible:

- regional consultations
- online bulletin boards
- an online survey
- focused dialogues
- written submissions from stakeholder organizations
- one-on-one meetings
- questions posed to participants of the *Inspiring Education* Symposium

Consultations were publicized in a variety of ways to maximize public and educator awareness and participation.

Participation

Regional consultations were conducted in October and November 2013 with 700 people attending. Task Force members travelled in small teams to communities throughout the province, hearing first-hand the views of Albertans. The breakdown of participants included: teachers (37 per cent); school and district leaders (21 per cent); parents (12 per cent) and others including students, employers and the general public.

Consultations were held in: Vermilion, Grande Prairie, Medicine Hat, Lethbridge, Brooks, Red Deer, Hinton, Fort McMurray, Athabasca, Fort Vermilion, Calgary, Edmonton, and with First Nations, Métis and Inuit representatives in Lac La Biche, Bonnyville, and Edmonton.

With 112 participants, **online bulletin boards** generated discussion among three distinct groups: educators (68 per cent); parents (19 per cent) and students (13 per cent).

The **online survey** was open to all Albertans. A total of 2,197 Albertans participated between October 1 and November 17, 2013. The breakdown of participants included: teachers (22 per cent); parents (17 per cent); former students (14 per cent); district and school leaders (13 per cent); and others including school support staff, employers and current students.

The number participating is considered a robust sample when compared to similar studies collecting information on the opinions and attitudes of Albertans. Survey questions focused on teaching, leadership and the overall system.

Small groups of Task Force members held **focused dialogues** with senior representatives of stakeholder organizations, including, but not limited to, organizations that represent teachers, parents and governance organizations. In addition to focused dialogues, **written submissions** to the Task Force were received from stakeholder organizations and individuals.

Task Force members also held **one-on-one meetings** with individuals who have expertise and/or interest in specific aspects of education.

Eleven hundred participants at an ***Inspiring Education Symposium*** in Calgary (February 19, 2014) answered two questions related to teaching excellence.

What We Heard

Summaries of consultation findings are included in the remaining sections of this report. For a full discussion of the Task Force's recommendations to the Minister of Education, please refer to *Part I: Report to the Minister of Education, Government of Alberta*.

2 LEGER RESEARCH SUMMARY

Leger – The Research Intelligence Group was contracted to support the Task Force. It assisted with three major components of the consultations: an online survey; regional consultations, including sessions conducted specifically with First Nations, Métis and Inuit representatives; and a series of online bulletin board discussions with Albertans. Copies of the research instruments are included in Appendices B, C, and D.

The remainder of this section has been prepared by Leger – The Research Intelligence Group.

Methodology

Leger – The Research Intelligence Group is pleased to provide this summary report from the 2013 Task Force for Teaching Excellence consultations with the public and education stakeholders. The consultations provided an opportunity for Albertans of all stripes to give input to the Task Force for Teaching Excellence. Throughout the process we heard from Albertans representing a myriad of voices who are both directly and indirectly engaged in the Kindergarten to Grade 12 education system in Alberta. Those voices included current and former students, teachers, principals, superintendents, trustees, parents, First Nations educators, education students, the Alberta Teachers' Association (ATA) staff members, grandparents, retired teachers, and homeschoolers. This report summarizes those findings and presents the perspectives we heard across the province.

The questions asked in the qualitative research (regional consultation sessions and bulletin boards) and quantitative research (survey) were different, and by nature quantitative and qualitative information provide different kinds of insights. For this reason, this report is separated into quantitative and qualitative sections. In the qualitative research, stakeholder input could be classified into seven major themes. Given the consistency in these seven themes across both the regional consultation sessions and the bulletin board discussion groups, for the purpose of this summary report the qualitative research section focuses on what was heard in the regional consultation sessions. The scope of that component was more extensive than that of the bulletin boards.

Leger conducted regional consultation sessions, bulletin board discussions groups, and an online survey to provide broad and robust stakeholder input to inform the Task Force for Teaching Excellence. Participants were obtained from signups on the Teaching Excellence website as well as through invitations sent and responded to by

a randomly selected, representative sample of Albertans via the LegerWeb online panel, and telephone calls and emails to various school districts and schools as necessary. Telephone calls were made and emails were sent to obtain input from all stakeholder groups. The use of the Teaching Excellence website, the online panel, and telephone calls and emails to targeted stakeholders enabled Leger to ensure a balance of education stakeholders and the Alberta public within the sample.

The goal of the consultation was not to achieve consensus, but to capture as many points of view as possible. While every attempt has been made to do justice to all the voices we heard and present a balanced view, not every comment or idea can be completely captured in a summary document like this. Wherever relevant, we present different perspectives on the topics and reference where those differences exist.

Regional Consultation Sessions

Regional consultation sessions were conducted with 700 participants, in 32 different sessions, in all regions of Alberta. Written submissions were also accepted. The regional consultation sessions were held from October 1 to November 13, and included sessions specifically for First Nations, Métis and Inuit representatives. The sessions were held in Vermilion, Calgary, Grande Prairie, Edmonton, Medicine Hat, Lethbridge, Brooks, Red Deer, Hinton, Fort McMurray, Athabasca, Fort Vermilion, Bonnyville (First Nation, Métis and Inuit) and Lac La Biche (First Nations, Métis and Inuit). The Task Force also held an additional session with students in the Faculty of Education at the University of Alberta in Edmonton.

Online Bulletin Board Discussions

A series of online bulletin board discussion groups was held in four different weeks starting on November 14 with the final sessions completed on December 7, 2013. There were a total of 10 sessions, each lasting three to five days. Participation was lower in this final stage of the consultation, possibly because Albertans already had the opportunity to provide input in the online survey and regional consultation sessions. Nevertheless, 112 participants joined the sessions, with one of the sessions exclusively for students under age 18. The number of participants obtained is typical in terms of the number of voices that would normally be included in a research project involving bulletin board discussions. The number of sessions and weeks available for participants to join provided a high level of access to the sessions.

Online Survey

The online survey was conducted from October 1 to November 17, 2013 with a pre-test held on September 30. An overall sample size of 2,197 respondents was obtained. This is a robust sample of the opinions and attitudes of Albertans. The size and composition of the sample is sufficient to allow for valid and meaningful statistical analysis of findings, for both the total overall sample as well as specific subgroups within the sample such as

specific types of stakeholders and different regions within Alberta. Larger populations, such as the general public, parents and teachers, allow for conclusions to be drawn with greater confidence. Percentages are not shown for small groups where the sample sizes were less than 10 respondents.

Qualitative Results

Summary of Regional Consultations and Bulletin Board Results

While a structured set of questions was used in every consultation, several themes emerged that *cut across the specific questions and united the discussions. From the consultations we have developed seven closely related and interconnected themes that speak to achieving teaching excellence for every student in Alberta.* For ease of understanding, these themes are presented below. In our opinion, these themes often overlap so should not necessarily be considered discrete ideas but rather part of an indivisible whole.

Teacher Preparation	How do we select the best candidates?	How do we prepare them for a career in the classroom?
Collaboration	How do we connect teachers to the best practices of their colleagues?	How do we make collaboration an essential part of each teacher's practice?
Bringing the outside world in and the inside world out	How do we engage with the community to bring practical learning into the classroom?	How do we give students access to the broader world around them?
Culture Shift	How do we get the community to shift their attitudes towards education and the profession?	How do we break down the silos in education to give teachers access to the full scale of resources available?
Supports	What in-class supports do teachers need to achieve excellence in teaching?	What supports outside the classroom are needed to help teachers succeed?
Professional Growth and Development	How do we encourage teachers to become life long learners?	How do we integrate professional development into the teaching practice?
Leadership	What should the role of school leaders be?	How can we enhance the leadership of our schools?

Teaching Excellence

There was remarkable unanimity among all the voices about what teaching excellence looks like. Teachers, parents, school leaders and others all agreed that excellent teachers teach, think and behave in a manner that showcases the best of themselves and brings out the best in their students. Without question, if the goal is to create and support excellent teachers in Alberta, there is clarity on what those teachers will look like.

Participants were clearly able to articulate the attributes of excellent teaching, and by extension, excellent teachers. Excellent teachers are **passionate** masters of both the art and science of teaching. They engage students with their enthusiasm and instil a thirst for knowledge in their classrooms.

The best teachers are **masters of their subjects**. They are well versed in both the curriculum and the broader subject areas in which they teach. At the higher grades especially, teachers need to be prepared for students who are potentially better equipped to access knowledge online than they are. Not only are they masters of their subject, excellent teachers are masters of the **craft of teaching**. They stay aware of, and frequently use all the pedagogical tools at their disposal. They are skilled at understanding which techniques are appropriate and changing their approach as needed.

Excellent teachers are actively **engaged** in their students' learning and bring students along by ensuring they understand both what they are learning and, more importantly, why they are learning it.

The very best teachers continue their education for their entire careers. They demonstrate this **life-long learning** by actively seeking out professional development opportunities, staying up to date on the latest research, and learning from their colleagues, instructional leaders, parents and students.

The best teachers are able to create and maintain strong, healthy and collaborative **relationships** with students, parents, colleagues and the community at large. Maintaining relationships with their colleagues gives them access to tools and resources to enhance their teaching. Equally important, great teachers understand the deeper context of their students' life and challenges at home. Teachers are often called on to be more than teachers (e.g., social workers, counselors, etc.) and they must be prepared to access external resources as well when needed in support of their students.

The very best teachers are **risk takers** and are always trying to improve their practice by trying new approaches, working differently and taking risks, and most importantly, they are not afraid to fail and learn from that failure. Excellent teachers are constantly reinventing their practice and trying something new.

Excellent teachers are respected by their students, peers and the community and they are **inspirational**, being able to bring out the best in their students.

In the end, excellent teaching revolves around the **learner**. Excellent teachers intuitively understand that their "job" is to instil in students a life-long love of learning. Excellent

teachers give students the tools they need to continue to grow and learn and face new challenges. The very best teachers begin with a clear understanding that the student and the student's success is at the heart of everything they do.

THEME 1: Teacher Preparation

Many comments and suggestions revolved around how teachers are being prepared to enter the profession. These included: whether the universities responsible for preparing teachers for the classroom are selecting the right “kind” of students to enter the program; whether the education they are providing is appropriate for today's classroom environment; and whether student teachers receive an authentic teaching experience.

Many participants feel that in order to deliver on the promises of *Inspiring Education*, the universities charged with preparing teachers to enter the profession need to be more careful in their **selection** of potential candidates. A common concern is that a reliance on high school marks or a GPA does not provide sufficient insight into a potential teacher's capacity to work in a classroom. This may include providing evidence of teaching experience (e.g., camp counselor or volunteering in classrooms) or it could include a more focused interview process with potential candidates.

For many, the university **pre-service program curricula** need to be revised to create the teachers of tomorrow, not the teachers of yesterday. To meet this need, there is a desire from some to see more practical education, longer internship periods and more focus on pedagogy and the neuroscience basis for teaching. Tied to this is agreement among all participants that better integration of First Nations history and culture is essential to preparing teachers to teach in Alberta.

For all, especially school leaders, there is a strong belief that the pre-service programs at all the universities should involve longer and more in-depth **in classroom practicum** experience. Earlier and longer practicums, in a variety of grades, give student teachers the opportunity to experience life in the classroom and this may change their mind about choosing education as a career.

Upon entry into the profession many suggest that first year teachers are often “thrown to the wolves” and given the most challenging classrooms or a mix of the workload that the more senior teachers do not want. There are calls for better, more focused **mentorship** for these new teachers.

THEME 2: Collaboration

Much of the discussion in the consultation sessions focused on the need for more active and valuable collaboration between teachers and between principals. Schools and teachers wanting to facilitate greater collaboration face many perceived barriers in terms of access to colleagues, technology, time constraints and money. Many would welcome more collaboration time, but have difficulty seeing how this can be accomplished under

the current structure. In many schools, collaboration is often *ad hoc* or does not occur at all. In cases where collaboration is mandated and built into the school's schedule, this time is often sacrificed to make room for other things (e.g., staff meetings, Christmas concert). In many smaller schools and rural communities, collaboration is difficult to organize due to distance and conflicting schedules. From almost every group, there were calls to "bring back AISI (Alberta Initiative for School Improvement)" as a means to foster better collaboration.

All participants recognize the need for teachers to collaborate more. **Collaboration** is an opportunity for less experienced teachers to learn from their peers and share the workload. Collaboration gives teachers a chance to stay ahead of the best practices of the profession and share their knowledge, skills and advice as well as disseminate learning from other professional development workshops to their colleagues. Many, especially teachers, recognize that their current workloads often prevent having adequate **time for collaboration**. The general consensus is that this time must become part of the 'culture' of the school and time needs to be found and clearly set aside for collaboration.

The challenge for many, even though they recognize the value of more collaboration time, is seeing how this time can be **embedded** into their already full schedules. Teachers especially are keenly aware that their workload includes lesson planning and preparation, extracurricular activities, dealing with parents, marking and other tasks relating to teaching. Collaboration can be better managed and facilitated through the use of technology that allows teachers to connect with colleagues outside of the immediate face-to-face school setting. Many teachers want to be given the autonomy to choose what form their collaboration takes, rather than have it imposed on them.

Some participants, especially educators suggest options for more "out of the box" teaching styles or situations that would encourage excellence in teaching. Almost universally, these ideas revolved around better collaboration and providing opportunities for teachers to not only learn from, but also work directly with, their more experienced peers and colleagues.

Many feel that the **Alberta Initiative for School Improvement** greatly enhanced the ability of teachers to collaborate and encouraged the "bottom up" design of better collaboration and sharing of best practices and learning. This program was seen as a valuable tool to encourage collaboration and professional development and stakeholders think it should be resurrected.

Finally, many participants feel that the **higher levels** of the education strata (e.g., district and province) must take the lead on collaborating and sharing best practices. Many felt that there needs to be better dialogue and learning between the districts and school boards. As well, some feel there is a role for Alberta Education and the Minister to push for more collaboration from the top.

THEME 3: Bringing the Outside World In and the Inside World Out

Almost all participants recognized that schools should be an integral part of the communities in which they function. Over time, many felt that schools have become isolated from the community and have been operating and teaching in a vacuum. All believe that the students and educators benefit from closer ties to the community, be it field trips, invited guest speakers or hands-on in-community learning with Elders. As well, many felt that the economy in Alberta has different requirements for graduates than is presently being provided by the education system and fuller community engagement can help align the curriculum with present-day reality.

Likewise, teachers are facing an added challenge and opportunity with new technology that can bring the whole world into the classroom. For some, the education system is not sufficiently adapted to this new reality and teachers find themselves well behind the curve compared to their students when accessing this broader world.

For many teachers, the challenge has been the restrictions they feel they face when they want to engage with the outside world more.

Members of the public especially pressed for a **greater integration** between the schools and the communities in which they operate. This engagement is especially critical in the First Nations communities where there is a special role for Elders and their wisdom. Many also see strong value in getting students out into the community on field trips and seeing first-hand the world in which they live. However, for some, there are **significant challenges** when accessing their local communities. These challenges range from a lack of skill sets among the teachers to frustrations when arranging for guest speakers to come to the classrooms.

Preparing Students for Productive Lives in Alberta: There is a clear understanding that the education system needs to prepare students for living and working in Alberta. For many, this means understanding that students need to be provided with a broader knowledge of the options available to them (e.g., encouraged to go into the trades) and for others, this means engaging students in the broader, global community. Part of this strategy involves **incorporating technology** into the teacher's tool kit. However, some members of the public are concerned that the school system is relying too heavily on the technology and has drifted away from a focus on the fundamentals like reading and math.

Many recognized that teachers, even the very best ones, can **learn from their own students**. This learning includes using technology (with which the students tend to be more familiar) and drawing on students' own background or experiences to enhance the classroom learning environment.

Finally, for many, **parental engagement** in their children's education is essential and parents express concern that schools have shut them out. There is widespread understanding that more meaningful contact between teachers, principals and parents can only enhance the education system.

THEME 4: Culture Shift

Without question, the biggest challenge to achieving teaching excellence revolves around changing the entrenched culture in the schools and in society at large. For many parents, their frame of reference is their own education and some feel that the system has lost focus on the fundamentals they understood (e.g., “the 3 R’s”). As well, many parents feel that teachers have lost the respect of their students and are prevented from using what parents see as effective classroom management strategies that worked when they were in school (e.g., discipline).

Within the schools and the profession, many express frustration with perceived difficulties around disciplining and/or removing under-performing teachers. As well, many educators lament the silos in which many teachers operate and the perceived lack of support from principals, administration and the education system as a whole. Many complain that the system (within the school, within the broader education system and within the Alberta Teachers’ Association) forces educators to “toe the line” and quashes risk-taking attitudes that are essential to teaching excellence.

Many parents approach education with the perspective they had when they were in school. While this presents a challenge for the system to make the case for change, it does highlight some differences of opinion that could lead to conflict between parents and teachers.

Some, especially those who have been in the profession for a long time, recognize that teaching can be a “lonely” profession where the teacher, as sole facilitator of learning, is called on to be an expert at both the subject matter and the pedagogy. Tied closely to this, from teachers in particular, there is strong emphasis placed on the importance and value of their professional status and they feel that they need to be given more **autonomy** in managing their own practice.

Closely tied to professional autonomy is the desire to create a culture in schools that rewards and encourages **risk taking and innovation** from teachers. Teachers, parents, students and leaders all see the need to re-evaluate the way the curriculum is taught in Alberta. To reach the *Inspiring Education* goals, new methods of teaching, new subjects and enhanced pedagogy are required. Many feel that the **Alberta curriculum** has become overwhelming and is forcing teachers to spend less time on the subject matter just to “get through it all.” As well, the focus on Provincial Achievement Tests and Diploma exams lead many teachers to “teach to the test” and not have enough time to pursue the subject matter in a manner that engages students.

Some members of the general public feel the profession of teaching has been degraded over time and teachers do not get the respect they deserve, while others are concerned that the current system (especially as it relates to how marks are given) is allowing students to pass through the system without evidence of their competence.

Inspiring Education stresses the importance of **cultivating engaged thinkers, and ethical citizens with entrepreneurial spirits**. Most believe teachers can and should be leaders at modeling these behaviours for their students.

Teachers, especially, are cognizant of the pressure they are under to meet all of their obligations to their classrooms, students, parents and superiors. Many feel that extra work gets downloaded onto them and that this extra work does not give them the work-life balance they need.

Many in the education sector express concern that principals and administrators are limited or prevented from disciplining or removing poor performing teachers. The issue is not around teacher conduct, but related to teacher competence. Many express the view that the process takes too long and that the Alberta Teachers' Association "gets in the way of the process" by protecting under-performing teachers. There were several calls for principals to be in a separate union from teachers to give them more autonomy when dealing with poor teachers. Finally, several leaders called for separation of the ATA's responsibilities into a professional college and a union.

THEME 5: Supports for Teachers in the Classroom

Teachers, in particular, keenly feel they lack the physical and human resources they need to truly express excellence in their practice. Challenges include too much time spent on (pointless) paperwork, not enough educational assistant supports, difficulty accessing external experts (e.g., speech and language pathologists, occupational therapists, etc.), and outdated or non-functional technology. A lack of time and resources is also a key challenge, especially with respect to professional growth and development, preparation time, collaboration time, and administrative support.

Many feel this lack of supports adversely affects their ability to teach to their highest potential and ultimately degrades the quality of education they can provide to students. Teachers feel they need **support for technology**, more **educational assistant support**, special training to better assist **special needs students** and freer access to the **professionals** in and around the education system who can support their practice.

As well, teachers feel they need more time for **lesson planning and preparation** and assistance to relieve the **administrative burden** that takes them away from instructional and collaboration time. **Class size** issues remain a much debated topic.

While none dismiss the importance and workload principals already carry, many expressed concern that the workload is taking them away from their primary role as instructional leaders, mentors and teacher support. Principals also have a role in advocating for their teachers in need of support.

There is no question that rural schools face special challenges that their urban counterparts do not. Many of the challenges relate to opportunities for professional development, access to resources and access to qualified and appropriate colleagues

for collaboration. As well, many see extra challenges when recruiting teachers for rural schools and limitations to infrastructure.

Funding for the education system as a whole and for teaching excellence in particular was raised as an issue in every regional consultation. Many, at all levels, expressed concern about the lack of a stable funding model and the impact this has on class sizes and access to resources such as technology.

THEME 6: Professional Growth and Development

All agree that the path to excellence in teaching is better managed professional growth and development. It is a rare teacher who believes they have nothing more to learn. The challenge for the system revolves around delivering the best possible opportunities for professional growth and development and ensuring those practices are both relevant and integrated into the classroom. On the one hand, many teachers feel they are in the best position to know what's best for them and their practice and are frustrated that they lack the autonomy to make their own choices for professional development courses or events. On the other hand, many school leaders are concerned that a "shotgun" approach to professional growth and development does not necessarily meet the needs of the profession.

While teachers recognize that **professional growth plans** can be a valuable tool to guide their own practice and professional development, some leaders believe that these are not created or managed properly and that there is a lack of accountability for their fulfillment. Virtually all participants agree that professional development is essential and that time and funding must be found for it to take place. Teachers, leaders and the public all offered suggestions about enhancing the opportunities to provide more professional development for teachers. Many suggested better use of technology (e.g., online communities, TED talks, etc.) and others believe there is a need for added resources to facilitate the opportunities.

Many educators support the idea of creating and disseminating best practice ideas to the whole profession. There is a strong desire from all to include professional development throughout a teacher's career as well as to look outside the province (e.g., Finland) for the best ideas. All, including education students themselves, believe that the professional development system should support and nurture life-long learning for all teachers.

THEME 7: Leadership

All recognize that school leadership, especially from principals and administrators, plays a critical role in moving towards teaching excellence. Many feel that principals are often distracted from their primary goal of instructional leadership by too many administrative tasks. Others are concerned that school leaders are not evaluated appropriately. Some teachers express dissatisfaction with the quality of leadership and feel that selecting candidates for this critical role needs to be reconsidered.

Quantitative results

The following tables present the results of the online survey conducted between October 1 and November 17, 2013.

Survey results

SUMMARY OF RESULTS

Base: All responses			STAKEHOLDER								
Question	Response	Total	District leader	School leader	Teacher	Support staff	Employer	Parent	Current student	Former student	Other
Q1.		[n=2, 197]	[n=91] ⁴⁵	[n=195]	[n=492]	[n=47] ⁴⁵	[n=147]	[n=366]	[n=25] ⁴⁵	[n=305]	[n=486]
How would you define or describe teaching excellence? Open-ended question	Teach to fit the student/ better learning/environment	27.9%	38.5%	27.7%	30.5%	17.0%	20.4%	31.4%	8.0%	27.9%	25.3%
	Enthusiasm/motivating/ inspirational/engaging	17.8%	20.9%	21.5%	15.7%	19.1%	22.4%	16.9%	12.0%	17.4%	18.9%
	Knowledge/intelligent/ smart/education	7.8%	12.1%	8.7%	7.9%	10.6%	10.2%	9.0%	4.0%	4.9%	7.2%
Q2.		[n=2, 197]	[n=91] ⁴⁵	[n=195]	[n=492]	[n=47] ⁴⁵	[n=147]	[n=366]	[n=25] ⁴⁵	[n=305]	[n=486]
What traits or qualities should a person considering a career in teaching have? Open-ended question	Patience/tolerance	36.1%	19.8%	18.5%	29.9%	38.3%	34.7%	48.6%	32.0%	43.9%	38.3%
	Compassion/empathy/caring/kind	28.9%	38.5%	38.5%	33.7%	27.7%	27.9%	29.5%	12.0%	29.2%	20.0%
	Knowledge/intelligent/smart/ education	17.5%	16.5%	18.5%	19.7%	19.1%	17.7%	16.9%	16.0%	19.0%	15.0%
Q3.	Like/love of children	15.6%	26.4%	11.8%	14.6%	17.0%	8.2%	17.8%	12.0%	13.4%	17.9%
	Passion	11.0%	16.5%	18.5%	16.1%	8.5%	9.5%	11.7%	-	7.2%	5.1%
		[n=2, 197]	[n=91] ⁴⁵	[n=195]	[n=492]	[n=47] ⁴⁵	[n=147]	[n=366]	[n=25] ⁴⁵	[n=305]	[n=486]
How do we attract those persons with the desired traits and qualifications for a career in teaching excellence? Open-ended question	Better pay/salary/money/ compensation/incentives/benefits	21.3%	22.0%	20.0%	20.9%	27.7%	22.4%	24.0%	16.0%	21.0%	19.8%
	Display recognition/show appreciation	7.3%	6.6%	13.3%	10.2%	2.1%	6.1%	5.5%	8.0%	3.3%	7.2%
	Working conditions	7.0%	4.4%	7.2%	8.9%	10.6%	7.5%	5.5%	4.0%	7.2%	6.4%

⁴⁵ Caution advised when interpreting results due to small sample size.

Please also note:

- a) Open-ended question: Totals will not add to 100% due to only the top mentions being shown, multiple responses, and/or not all respondents choosing to provide an answer for all questions.
- b) Sample sizes: the columns to not add to the total sample size due to some respondents not providing their stakeholder classification information.

SUMMARY OF RESULTS

Base: All responses		STAKEHOLDER									
Question	Response	Total	District leader	School leader	Teacher	Support staff	Employer	Parent	Current student	Former student	Other
Q4.		(n=2,197)	(n=91) ⁴⁵	(n=195)	(n=492)	(n=47) ⁴⁵	(n=147)	(n=366)	(n=25) ⁴⁵	(n=305)	(n=486)
How do we develop those persons with the desired traits and qualifications for a career in teaching? <i>Open-ended question</i>	<i>Training/education - through schooling</i>	11.7%	19.8%	15.9%	14.2%	10.6%	9.5%	8.7%	8.0%	9.8%	10.7%
	<i>Mentoring</i>	11.3%	16.5%	15.4%	13.8%	17.0%	9.5%	10.9%	4.0%	6.2%	10.9%
	<i>Training/education (unspecified)</i>	8.6%	8.8%	6.7%	5.7%	6.4%	10.2%	11.2%	28.0%	8.9%	8.4%
Q5.		(n=2,197)	(n=91) ⁴⁵	(n=195)	(n=492)	(n=47) ⁴⁵	(n=147)	(n=366)	(n=25) ⁴⁵	(n=305)	(n=486)
How do we retain those persons with the desired traits and qualifications for a career in teaching? <i>Open-ended question</i>	<i>Good/fair pay/compensation/salary</i>	10.8%	4.4%	4.1%	3.7%	12.8%	10.9%	14.8%	16.0%	15.4%	15.4%
	<i>Good/better/more support</i>	6.3%	12.1%	6.7%	6.7%	10.6%	3.4%	4.9%	-	5.6%	7.4%
	<i>Better/higher pay/compensation/salary</i>	5.6%	3.3%	4.6%	4.1%	4.3%	5.4%	9.3%	4.0%	6.6%	4.7%
	<i>Recognition/acknowledgement</i>	5.1%	9.9%	7.7%	4.1%	2.1%	6.1%	4.9%	8.0%	6.2%	3.9%
Q6.		(n=2088)	(n=89) ⁴⁵	(n=181)	(n=475)	(n=45) ⁴⁵	(n=141)	(n=358)	(n=24) ⁴⁵	(n=290)	(n=462)
Besides those certified to teach in Alberta and student teachers enrolled in an Alberta-based teacher preparation program as is done currently, are there any others that should be authorized to teach in schools in Alberta? <i>Close-ended question</i>	<i>People with university degrees other than a bachelor of education (e.g. Bachelor of science)</i>	43.9%	31.5%	18.8%	17.3%	51.1%	66.0%	53.6%	75.0%	55.5%	57.8%
	<i>People with certification in a trade associated with the subject of instruction (e.g. journeyman in carpentry)</i>	56.4%	56.2%	43.1%	35.8%	73.3%	64.5%	62.8%	58.3%	61.7%	70.3%
	<i>People with professional designation (e.g. accountant, nurse)</i>	39.5%	27.0%	18.8%	17.5%	46.7%	56.7%	46.9%	45.8%	48.6%	54.8%
	<i>People who have sufficient expertise in a discipline associated with the subject of instruction (e.g. musician, artist).</i>	53.9%	47.2%	32.6%	29.5%	60.0%	71.6%	65.1%	54.2%	66.2%	67.1%
	<i>Other</i>	40.2%	53.9%	68.5%	69.1%	40.0%	23.4%	29.9%	16.7%	22.8%	23.4%

⁴⁵ Caution advised when interpreting results due to small sample size.

Please also note:

- a) Open-ended question: Totals will not add to 100% due to only the top mentions being shown, multiple responses, and/or not all respondents choosing to provide an answer for all questions.
- b) Sample sizes: the columns to not add to the total sample size due to some respondents not providing their stakeholder classification information.

SUMMARY OF RESULTS

Base: All responses			STAKEHOLDER								
Question	Response	Total	District leader	School leader	Teacher	Support staff	Employer	Parent	Current student	Former student	Other
Q7.		[n=2081]	[n=88] ^{4,5}	[n=180]	[n=473]	[n=45] ^{4,5}	[n=141]	[n=358]	[n=24] ^{4,5}	[n=289]	[n=462]
Should teachers who have demonstrated excellence in their practice receive a special designation? <i>Close-ended question</i>	Yes	74.5%	71.6%	53.9%	55.0%	66.7%	82.3%	87.2%	100.0%	85.8%	83.3%
Q8.		[n=2081]	[n=88] ^{4,5}	[n=180]	[n=473]	[n=45] ^{4,5}	[n=141]	[n=358]	[n=24] ^{4,5}	[n=289]	[n=460]
What kinds of designation might an excellent teacher receive? <i>Close-ended question</i>	Subject specialist	56.6%	61.4%	48.9%	53.3%	57.8%	58.2%	59.2%	75.0%	61.2%	56.5%
	Mentor teacher	46.0%	60.2%	51.7%	48.8%	60.0%	46.8%	47.5%	29.2%	38.4%	42.0%
	Master teacher	43.9%	52.3%	48.9%	38.3%	26.7%	56.0%	47.5%	45.8%	39.4%	43.9%
	Other	20.3%	26.1%	40.6%	33.4%	13.3%	17.0%	14.0%	12.5%	8.7%	12.8%
Q9.	Don't know/no comment	12.4%	11.4%	10.6%	10.8%	8.9%	13.5%	11.7%	8.3%	13.8%	14.6%
		[n=2,197]	[n=91] ^{4,5}	[n=195]	[n=492]	[n=47] ^{4,5}	[n=147]	[n=366]	[n=25] ^{4,5}	[n=305]	[n=486]
	Continue education/training/professional development	7.5%	9.9%	10.8%	8.9%	4.3%	8.2%	7.4%	12.0%	4.3%	6.4%
	Ability to choose their own professional development course/plans	4.0%	5.5%	5.6%	8.5%	2.1%	2.7%	3.0%	-	1.3%	1.6%
	Learn new techniques/update/up grade/refresh skills	3.8%	2.2%	5.1%	3.5%	6.4%	4.1%	3.8%	-	2.3%	5.1%
Q10.		[n=2,197]	[n=91] ^{4,5}	[n=195]	[n=492]	[n=47] ^{4,5}	[n=147]	[n=366]	[n=25] ^{4,5}	[n=305]	[n=486]
In addition to professional development, what other system supports would ensure that every teacher demonstrates excellence in their practice throughout their career? <i>Open-ended question</i>	Mentoring	4.4%	9.9%	7.2%	7.9%	6.4%	2.7%	3.6%	-	0.7%	2.3%
	Continue education/training/professional development	3.7%	3.3%	5.1%	4.1%	8.5%	0.7%	3.3%	4.0%	3.6%	3.9%
	Student reviews/feedback	3.3%	3.3%	2.1%	1.4%	-	2.0%	5.5%	8.0%	3.9%	4.1%

⁴⁵ Caution advised when interpreting results due to small sample size.

Please also note:

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b) Sample sizes: the columns to not add to the total sample size due to some respondents not providing their stakeholder classification information.

SUMMARY OF RESULTS

Base: All responses		STAKEHOLDER									
Question	Response	Total	District leader	School leader	Teacher	Support staff	Employer	Parent	Current student	Former student	Other
Q11.		[n=2,197]	[n=91] ^{4,5}	[n=195]	[n=492]	[n=47] ^{4,5}	[n=147]	[n=366]	[n=25] ^{4,5}	[n=305]	[n=486]
What is the teacher's responsibility for demonstrating excellence in their practice throughout their career? <i>Open-ended question</i>	Continual learning/education	11.1%	15.4%	17.4%	16.5%	14.9%	7.5%	9.3%	4.0%	5.6%	8.2%
	Learn new techniques/update skills	6.3%	5.5%	6.7%	10.4%	6.4%	4.8%	4.4%	-	4.9%	5.8%
	Continual professional development	5.1%	15.4%	10.3%	10.0%	6.4%	3.4%	3.0%	-	0.3%	2.1%
	Teach well/consistently	5.0%	8.8%	3.1%	7.3%	6.4%	4.8%	4.1%	-	4.6%	3.9%
Q12.		[n=2042]	[n=87] ^{4,5}	[n=178]	[n=463]	[n=43] ^{4,5}	[n=139]	[n=352]	[n=24] ^{4,5}	[n=288]	[n=449]
Should there be one provinciewide system for teacher performance evaluation? <i>Close-ended question</i>	Yes	66.4%	52.9%	60.1%	45.1%	69.8%	77.7%	75.0%	87.5%	78.8%	74.6%
Q13.		[n=2042]	[n=87] ^{4,5}	[n=178]	[n=463]	[n=43] ^{4,5}	[n=139]	[n=352]	[n=24] ^{4,5}	[n=288]	[n=448]
Should teacher performance be evaluated? <i>Close-ended question</i>	First year only	1.0%	-	1.1%	2.4%	-	0.7%	0.6%	-	1.0%	0.2%
	Annually	43.8%	24.1%	10.7%	17.7%	34.9%	61.2%	59.9%	66.7%	62.8%	56.5%
	Every 5 years	18.0%	19.5%	26.4%	20.5%	27.9%	12.9%	15.6%	20.8%	16.0%	15.8%
	Every 10 years	0.5%	-	1.1%	1.1%	-	-	0.3%	-	0.3%	0.2%
	As required	17.3%	20.7%	23.6%	28.7%	18.6%	12.2%	11.4%	12.5%	10.8%	12.7%
	Other	19.3%	35.6%	37.1%	29.6%	18.6%	12.9%	12.2%	-	9.0%	14.5%

⁴⁵ Caution advised when interpreting results due to small sample size.

Please also note:

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b) Sample sizes: the columns to not add to the total sample size due to some respondents not providing their stakeholder classification information.

SUMMARY OF RESULTS

Base: All responses		STAKEHOLDER									
Question	Response	Total	District leader	School leader	Teacher	Support staff	Employer	Parent	Current student	Former student	Other
Q14.		[n=2041]	[n=87] ⁴⁵	[n=178]	[n=462]	[n=43] ⁴⁵	[n=139]	[n=352]	[n=24] ⁴⁵	[n=288]	[n=448]
Who should have input into the evaluation of a teacher's performance? <i>Close-ended question</i>	Students	60.2%	55.2%	34.8%	42.2%	69.8%	62.6%	73.3%	91.7%	76.0%	65.6%
	Parents	57.1%	49.4%	25.8%	33.3%	62.8%	68.3%	76.1%	83.3%	69.4%	67.9%
	Other teachers	57.9%	43.7%	37.6%	50.0%	55.8%	66.9%	65.1%	62.5%	66.0%	63.2%
	Principals	83.5%	94.3%	94.4%	88.3%	86.0%	78.4%	80.7%	70.8%	76.7%	81.7%
	Superintendents	33.0%	63.2%	42.7%	26.4%	30.2%	28.8%	28.4%	54.2%	36.5%	31.9%
	Trustees	12.6%	10.3%	2.8%	5.8%	9.3%	19.4%	17.3%	37.5%	18.4%	13.4%
	Professional organizations	28.3%	23.0%	19.7%	26.8%	23.3%	44.6%	27.0%	37.5%	29.5%	28.8%
	Local community	13.5%	6.9%	3.9%	5.6%	7.0%	18.7%	15.6%	20.8%	20.8%	18.5%
	Other	17.0%	20.7%	27.5%	26.0%	20.9%	12.9%	11.6%	8.3%	9.4%	13.2%
Q15.		[n=2,197]	[n=91] ⁴⁵	[n=195]	[n=492]	[n=47] ⁴⁵	[n=147]	[n=366]	[n=25] ⁴⁵	[n=305]	[n=486]
In your opinion, what should be the role of the teacher in achieving the vision described in <i>Inspiring Education</i> ? <i>Open-ended question</i>	Inspire/motivate/encourage students to learn	9.0%	15.4%	9.2%	10.6%	4.3%	7.5%	9.8%	-	5.9%	8.8%
	Assisting students needs/develop their full potential	4.9%	6.6%	5.6%	4.7%	4.3%	3.4%	6.3%	8.0%	4.9%	4.1%
	Work collaboratively as a team	4.1%	6.6%	6.7%	6.1%	2.1%	3.4%	3.0%	8.0%	2.0%	2.9%
	School board/principals/administrators/co-workers support	10.4%	13.2%	8.2%	11.8%	10.6%	8.8%	10.4%	8.0%	8.5%	11.5%
Q16.		[n=2,197]	[n=91] ⁴⁵	[n=195]	[n=492]	[n=47] ⁴⁵	[n=147]	[n=366]	[n=25] ⁴⁵	[n=305]	[n=486]
What do you see as the most significant enablers to teachers' fulfillment of that role? <i>Open-ended question</i>	Support (unspecified)	8.8%	6.6%	8.7%	13.2%	10.6%	7.5%	7.9%	-	7.2%	7.6%
	Training	7.2%	15.4%	10.3%	8.9%	4.3%	4.8%	7.1%	4.0%	6.9%	4.7%

⁴⁵ Caution advised when interpreting results due to small sample size.

Please also note:

a) Open-ended question: Totals will not add to 100% due to only the top mentions being shown, multiple responses, and/or not all respondents choosing to provide an answer for all questions.

b) Sample sizes: the columns to not add to the total sample size due to some respondents not providing their stakeholder classification information.

SUMMARY OF RESULTS

Base: All responses		STAKEHOLDER									
Question	Response	Total	District leader	School leader	Teacher	Support staff	Employer	Parent	Current student	Former student	Other
Q17.		(n=2,197)	(n=91) ⁴⁵	(n=195)	(n=492)	(n=47) ⁴⁵	(n=147)	(n=366)	(n=25) ⁴⁵	(n=305)	(n=486)
What do you see as the most significant barriers to teachers' fulfillment of that role? <i>Open-ended question</i>	Funding/money/budgets	10.5%	6.6%	9.7%	13.4%	12.8%	6.8%	10.4%	12.0%	10.5%	9.9%
	Time/lack of time	9.9%	9.9%	23.1%	18.5%	14.9%	4.1%	6.6%	4.0%	4.3%	4.5%
	Classroom size too large/too many students	6.2%	2.2%	5.6%	12.0%	4.3%	2.7%	6.6%	-	3.3%	5.1%
Q18.		(n=2,197)	(n=91) ⁴⁵	(n=195)	(n=492)	(n=47) ⁴⁵	(n=147)	(n=366)	(n=25) ⁴⁵	(n=305)	(n=486)
In your opinion, what should be the role of educators in achieving the vision described in <i>Inspiring Education</i> ? <i>Open-ended question</i>	Educate/teach	5.7%	12.1%	11.3%	7.5%	10.6%	5.4%	1.1%	4.0%	3.6%	4.9%
	Inspire/motivate students to learn	3.9%	6.6%	5.1%	4.9%	2.1%	5.4%	4.6%	-	2.0%	2.7%
Q19.		(n=2,197)	(n=91) ⁴⁵	(n=195)	(n=492)	(n=47) ⁴⁵	(n=147)	(n=366)	(n=25) ⁴⁵	(n=305)	(n=486)
What do you see as the most significant enablers to educators' fulfillment of that role? <i>Open-ended question</i>	School board/principals/administrators/co-workers support	8.1%	12.1%	10.3%	10.2%	8.5%	5.4%	9.3%	-	4.9%	6.6%
	Training	5.5%	16.5%	10.3%	5.9%	4.3%	2.7%	4.6%	8.0%	3.3%	4.1%
Q20.		(n=2,197)	(n=91) ⁴⁵	(n=195)	(n=492)	(n=47) ⁴⁵	(n=147)	(n=366)	(n=25) ⁴⁵	(n=305)	(n=486)
What do you see as the most significant barriers to educators' fulfillment of that role? <i>Open-ended question</i>	Funding/money/budgets	10.8%	11.0%	9.7%	14.4%	14.9%	6.1%	10.7%	12.0%	7.9%	10.7%
	Time/lack of time	8.3%	5.5%	21.5%	16.1%	10.6%	5.4%	3.6%	4.0%	1.6%	4.9%
Q21.		(n=1,962)	(n=85) ⁴⁵	(n=171)	(n=440)	(n=40) ⁴⁵	(n=134)	(n=337)	(n=24) ⁴⁵	(n=280)	(n=433)
Do you have confidence that matters dealing with complaints of teacher competency are addressed effectively? <i>Close-ended question</i>	Yes	37.9%	36.5%	50.9%	51.8%	30.0%	32.8%	30.6%	50.0%	30.4%	30.5%

⁴⁵ Caution advised when interpreting results due to small sample size.

Please also note:

- a) Open-ended question: Totals will not add to 100% due to only the top mentions being shown, multiple responses, and/or not all respondents choosing to provide an answer for all questions.
- b) Sample sizes: the columns to not add to the total sample size due to some respondents not providing their stakeholder classification information.

SUMMARY OF RESULTS

Base: All responses			STAKEHOLDER								
Question	Response	Total	District leader	School leader	Teacher	Support staff	Employer	Parent	Current student	Former student	Other
Q22.		[n=2,197]	[n=91] ^{4,5}	[n=195]	[n=492]	[n=47] ^{4,5}	[n=147]	[n=366]	[n=25] ^{4,5}	[n=305]	[n=486]
What should be the role of the principals in dealing with issues of teacher competence? Open-ended question	Evaluations/evaluate teachers	7.9%	13.2%	15.4%	9.8%	2.1%	7.5%	5.7%	8.0%	4.3%	7.0%
	Take issues to the proper authority	4.8%	7.7%	9.7%	5.5%	4.3%	3.4%	5.7%	12.0%	1.6%	3.3%
	Supervise/oversee	4.6%	12.1%	13.8%	3.3%	4.3%	1.4%	4.1%	-	2.3%	3.9%
	First step/first responder/ point of contact	4.4%	4.4%	3.1%	6.3%	2.1%	2.0%	3.8%	4.0%	4.6%	4.5%
Q23.		[n=2,197]	[n=91] ^{4,5}	[n=195]	[n=492]	[n=47] ^{4,5}	[n=147]	[n=366]	[n=25] ^{4,5}	[n=305]	[n=486]
What should be the role of the school board in dealing with issues of teacher competence? Open-ended question	Only when not handled by principal/school level	6.5%	6.6%	6.7%	9.3%	-	6.8%	6.3%	12.0%	4.9%	5.6%
	Provide support to principal	5.4%	2.2%	10.3%	6.1%	2.1%	7.5%	6.3%	4.0%	3.3%	4.3%
	No role/others are responsible (all mentions)	4.6%	7.7%	8.7%	6.9%	4.3%	2.0%	3.6%	-	1.6%	3.9%
	Monitor/observe	4.6%	7.7%	8.2%	5.5%	10.6%	2.0%	3.8%	-	3.3%	4.1%
Q24.		[n=2,197]	[n=91] ^{4,5}	[n=195]	[n=492]	[n=47] ^{4,5}	[n=147]	[n=366]	[n=25] ^{4,5}	[n=305]	[n=486]
What should be the role of the Alberta Teachers' Association in dealing with issues of teacher competence? Open-ended question	Provide support to teachers	8.4%	11.0%	15.4%	13.0%	4.3%	5.4%	4.9%	-	4.3%	7.6%
	Monitor/observe	3.9%	6.6%	7.7%	4.7%	2.1%	4.1%	3.0%	-	2.3%	2.9%
	Enforce accountability	3.9%	1.1%	4.1%	3.9%	4.3%	2.7%	4.6%	-	4.6%	3.9%
	Provide resources (i.e. advice/information/money)	3.8%	2.2%	10.3%	6.3%	4.3%	1.4%	1.9%	-	2.3%	2.5%
	Assist/work with teachers	3.5%	6.6%	6.2%	4.9%	-	2.7%	2.2%	-	3.0%	2.7%

⁴⁵ Caution advised when interpreting results due to small sample size.

Please also note:

a) Open-ended question: Totals will not add to 100% due to only the top mentions being shown, multiple responses, and/or not all respondents choosing to provide an answer for all questions.

b) Sample sizes: the columns to not add to the total sample size due to some respondents not providing their stakeholder classification information.

SUMMARY OF RESULTS

Base: All responses			STAKEHOLDER								
Question	Response	Total	District leader	School leader	Teacher	Support staff	Employer	Parent	Current student	Former student	Other
Q25.		(n=2,197)	(n=91) ^{4,5}	(n=195)	(n=492)	(n=47) ^{4,5}	(n=147)	(n=366)	(n=25) ^{4,5}	(n=305)	(n=486)
What should be the role of the Alberta Education (Government of Alberta) in dealing with issues of teacher competence? Open-ended question	Create/enforce clear policy/process/standards	15.1%	29.7%	14.9%	16.1%	10.6%	20.4%	14.5%	4.0%	10.5%	15.2%
	No role/others are responsible (all mentions)	6.7%	8.8%	8.7%	12.0%	2.1%	2.0%	5.2%	8.0%	2.6%	6.2%
	Provide resources (i.e. advice/information/money)	5.7%	6.6%	5.1%	5.3%	2.1%	6.1%	7.7%	-	3.9%	7.0%
Q26.		(n=1,926)	(n=81) ^{4,5}	(n=170)	(n=433)	(n=40) ^{4,5}	(n=129)	(n=329)	(n=24) ^{4,5}	(n=275)	(n=427)
Do you have confidence that complaints about teacher conduct are effectively addressed? Close-ended question	Yes	50.1%	50.6%	66.5%	66.7%	50.0%	35.7%	40.7%	45.8%	40.7%	44.3%
Q27.		(n=2,197)	(n=91) ^{4,5}	(n=195)	(n=492)	(n=47) ^{4,5}	(n=147)	(n=366)	(n=25) ^{4,5}	(n=305)	(n=486)
What should be the role of the principals in dealing with issues of teacher conduct? Open-ended question	First step/first responder/point of contact	7.1%	8.8%	7.2%	8.1%	6.4%	7.5%	7.4%	4.0%	6.9%	5.8%
	Take issues to the proper authority	4.1%	8.8%	6.2%	5.9%	2.1%	4.8%	4.1%	-	1.6%	2.5%
	Deal with/address issues	3.7%	7.7%	4.6%	3.3%	4.3%	2.0%	4.6%	4.0%	2.6%	3.7%
Q28.		(n=2,197)	(n=91) ^{4,5}	(n=195)	(n=492)	(n=47) ^{4,5}	(n=147)	(n=366)	(n=25) ^{4,5}	(n=305)	(n=486)
What should be the role of the school board in dealing with issues of teacher conduct? Open-ended question	Provide support to principal	5.1%	2.2%	7.2%	6.3%	6.4%	3.4%	4.4%	-	4.3%	5.6%
	Only when not handled by principal/school level	4.6%	5.5%	5.1%	6.5%	2.1%	4.8%	4.6%	4.0%	3.6%	3.3%

⁴⁵ Caution advised when interpreting results due to small sample size.

Please also note:

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- b) Sample sizes: the columns to not add to the total sample size due to some respondents not providing their stakeholder classification information.

SUMMARY OF RESULTS

Base: All responses		STAKEHOLDER									
Question	Response	Total	District leader	School leader	Teacher	Support staff	Employer	Parent	Current student	Former student	Other
Q29.		[n=2,197]	[n=91] ⁴⁵	[n=195]	[n=492]	[n=47] ⁴⁵	[n=147]	[n=366]	[n=25] ⁴⁵	[n=305]	[n=486]
What should be the role of the Alberta Teachers' Association in dealing with issues of teacher conduct? <i>Open-ended question</i>	Monitor/observe	9.1%	17.6%	10.3%	13.0%	8.5%	8.8%	6.3%	16.0%	4.9%	8.2%
	Provide support to teachers	6.6%	7.7%	10.3%	11.4%	6.4%	5.4%	4.6%	-	3.6%	4.9%
	Enforce accountability	5.5%	5.5%	6.2%	5.7%	2.1%	6.1%	5.2%	24.0%	5.2%	4.9%
Q30.		[n=2,197]	[n=91] ⁴⁵	[n=195]	[n=492]	[n=47] ⁴⁵	[n=147]	[n=366]	[n=25] ⁴⁵	[n=305]	[n=486]
What should be the role of the Alberta Education (Government of Alberta) in dealing with issues of teacher conduct? <i>Open-ended question</i>	Create/enforce clear policy/process/standards	10.5%	16.5%	15.9%	12.0%	10.6%	10.2%	11.7%	4.0%	6.2%	8.6%
	No role/others are responsible (all mentions)	6.3%	13.2%	5.6%	8.1%	2.1%	2.7%	6.6%	-	3.6%	6.8%
Q31.		[n=1,898]	[n=78] ⁴⁵	[n=168]	[n=430]	[n=40] ⁴⁵	[n=128]	[n=323]	[n=23] ⁴⁵	[n=270]	[n=421]
Should there be one provincewide standard for Alberta teachers? <i>Close-ended question</i>	Yes	80.9%	82.1%	81.5%	69.5%	75.0%	78.9%	84.2%	87.0%	86.3%	87.9%
Q32.		[n=2,197]	[n=91] ⁴⁵	[n=195]	[n=492]	[n=47] ⁴⁵	[n=147]	[n=366]	[n=25] ⁴⁵	[n=305]	[n=486]
What should be the principals' role in ensuring teaching excellence? <i>Open-ended question</i>	Leader/leadership	8.1%	20.9%	14.4%	7.9%	2.1%	6.1%	9.3%	-	4.3%	7.0%
	Provide support (unspecified)	6.5%	13.2%	11.3%	11.2%	12.8%	2.0%	3.0%	-	2.6%	5.3%
	Mentor	5.8%	6.6%	7.2%	8.1%	2.1%	5.4%	4.6%	-	3.3%	6.4%
Q33.		[n=2,197]	[n=91] ⁴⁵	[n=195]	[n=492]	[n=47] ⁴⁵	[n=147]	[n=366]	[n=25] ⁴⁵	[n=305]	[n=486]
What traits or qualities should a person considering a career as a principal have? <i>Open-ended question</i>	Leadership	20.3%	27.5%	22.6%	18.1%	21.3%	23.1%	23.2%	20.0%	20.0%	18.3%
	Compassion/empathy/caring/kind	9.1%	6.6%	15.9%	12.4%	10.6%	5.4%	6.3%	16.0%	8.5%	7.0%
	Communication	7.6%	8.8%	12.3%	11.8%	2.1%	6.1%	6.8%	4.0%	4.3%	6.0%

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Please also note:

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- b) Sample sizes: the columns to not add to the total sample size due to some respondents not providing their stakeholder classification information.

SUMMARY OF RESULTS

Base: All responses			STAKEHOLDER								
Question	Response	Total	District leader	School leader	Teacher	Support staff	Employer	Parent	Current student	Former student	Other
Q34.		[n=2,197]	[n=91] ⁴⁵	[n=195]	[n=492]	[n=47] ⁴⁵	[n=147]	[n=366]	[n=25] ⁴⁵	[n=305]	[n=486]
How do we attract those persons most suitable for a career as a principal? <i>Open-ended question</i>	Better pay/salary/money/compensation/incentives/benefits	14.5%	20.9%	23.6%	13.6%	4.3%	12.9%	14.5%	20.0%	14.1%	13.4%
	Support	3.8%	11.0%	7.7%	4.5%	4.3%	1.4%	4.1%	-	0.7%	3.1%
Q35.		[n=2,197]	[n=91] ⁴⁵	[n=195]	[n=492]	[n=47] ⁴⁵	[n=147]	[n=366]	[n=25] ⁴⁵	[n=305]	[n=486]
How do we develop those persons most suitable for a career as a principal? <i>Open-ended question</i>	Mentoring	10.2%	20.9%	25.1%	13.4%	8.5%	4.8%	8.7%	-	4.3%	7.0%
	Training/education (unspecified)	8.6%	7.7%	11.8%	6.3%	8.5%	10.2%	8.7%	24.0%	8.2%	9.7%
	Professional growth and development/professional development	4.8%	14.3%	10.3%	7.7%	2.1%	3.4%	3.3%	-	1.0%	2.7%
Q36.		[n=2,197]	[n=91] ⁴⁵	[n=195]	[n=492]	[n=47] ⁴⁵	[n=147]	[n=366]	[n=25] ⁴⁵	[n=305]	[n=486]
How do we retain those persons most suitable for a career as a principal? <i>Open-ended question</i>	Good/better/more support	7.7%	16.5%	16.4%	8.7%	8.5%	6.1%	6.0%	8.0%	1.6%	7.6%
	Good/fair pay/compensation/salary	5.6%	6.6%	3.1%	4.7%	2.1%	4.1%	7.1%	4.0%	5.6%	7.4%
	Pay/compensation/salary (unspecified)	5.3%	8.8%	9.2%	4.3%	2.1%	5.4%	6.6%	-	4.3%	4.9%
Q37.		[n=1,860]	[n=77] ⁴⁵	[n=165]	[n=420]	[n=39] ⁴⁵	[n=125]	[n=315]	[n=22] ⁴⁵	[n=267]	[n=414]
Should principals be required to complete a preparation program prior to assuming their leadership duties? <i>Close-ended question</i>	Yes	88.1%	79.2%	84.2%	87.1%	89.7%	82.4%	89.2%	90.9%	89.1%	92.0%
Q38.		[n=1,858]	[n=77] ⁴⁵	[n=165]	[n=420]	[n=39] ⁴⁵	[n=125]	[n=314]	[n=22] ⁴⁵	[n=267]	[n=413]
Should there be one provincewide practice standard for school principals? <i>Close-ended question</i>	Yes	75.3%	70.1%	76.4%	60.7%	64.1%	76.0%	78.3%	90.9%	83.5%	83.1%

⁴⁵ Caution advised when interpreting results due to small sample size.

Please also note:

- a) Open-ended question: Totals will not add to 100% due to only the top mentions being shown, multiple responses, and/or not all respondents choosing to provide an answer for all questions.
- b) Sample sizes: the columns to not add to the total sample size due to some respondents not providing their stakeholder classification information.

SUMMARY OF RESULTS

Base: All responses		STAKEHOLDER									
Question	Response	Total	District leader	School leader	Teacher	Support staff	Employer	Parent	Current student	Former student	Other
Q39.		[n=1,849]	[n=77] ⁴⁵	[n=165]	[n=415]	[n=39] ⁴⁵	[n=124]	[n=312]	[n=22] ⁴⁵	[n=266]	[n=413]
Should there be one provinciewide system for principal performance evaluation? <i>Close-ended question</i>	Yes	72.4%	59.7%	62.4%	52.8%	74.4%	79.0%	80.1%	81.8%	83.8%	83.1%
Q40.		[n=1,847]	[n=77] ⁴⁵	[n=164]	[n=415]	[n=39] ⁴⁵	[n=123]	[n=312]	[n=22] ⁴⁵	[n=266]	[n=413]
Should principals be evaluated: <i>Close-ended question</i>	First year only	1.1%	5.2%	3.0%	1.7%	-	-	0.3%	-	0.8%	0.2%
	Annually	48.5%	28.6%	13.4%	30.1%	46.2%	67.5%	63.8%	77.3%	62.8%	56.9%
	Every 5 years	19.8%	18.2%	32.9%	23.9%	25.6%	9.8%	17.6%	13.6%	16.5%	17.4%
	Every 10 years	0.3%	-	0.6%	0.7%	-	0.8%	-	-	-	-
	As required	15.9%	14.3%	24.4%	22.4%	12.8%	12.2%	10.6%	9.1%	10.5%	15.3%
	Other	14.5%	33.8%	25.6%	21.2%	15.4%	9.8%	7.7%	-	9.4%	10.2%
Q41.		[n=1,843]	[n=77] ⁴⁵	[n=164]	[n=415]	[n=39] ⁴⁵	[n=122]	[n=312]	[n=22] ⁴⁵	[n=266]	[n=410]
Who should have input into the evaluation of a principals performance? <i>Close-ended question</i>	Students	47.0%	51.9%	41.5%	41.4%	53.8%	41.8%	56.7%	72.7%	53.4%	42.7%
	Parents	60.5%	66.2%	46.3%	50.6%	69.2%	60.7%	76.6%	77.3%	66.2%	58.0%
	Teachers	79.7%	75.3%	72.0%	81.4%	82.1%	77.0%	82.7%	72.7%	80.5%	80.0%
	Other principals	44.0%	37.7%	40.2%	46.7%	41.0%	45.1%	40.4%	50.0%	47.4%	44.4%
	Superintendent	76.0%	96.1%	86.0%	80.5%	76.9%	68.9%	70.8%	68.2%	71.1%	74.6%
	Trustees	25.0%	22.1%	14.6%	18.3%	38.5%	32.8%	29.5%	40.9%	31.6%	24.6%
	Professional organizations	26.3%	19.5%	21.3%	26.7%	30.8%	41.0%	23.7%	36.4%	27.1%	25.6%
Q42.	Local community	17.9%	18.2%	16.5%	10.6%	20.5%	23.8%	19.2%	18.2%	25.6%	17.6%
	Other	9.0%	15.6%	19.5%	14.0%	5.1%	4.9%	5.4%	-	3.8%	6.3%
		[n=1,843]	[n=77] ⁴⁵	[n=164]	[n=415]	[n=39] ⁴⁵	[n=122]	[n=312]	[n=22] ⁴⁵	[n=266]	[n=410]
Do principals have an appropriate level of authority? <i>Close-ended question</i>	Yes	75.3%	81.8%	73.8%	75.4%	74.4%	64.8%	76.0%	81.8%	77.8%	74.9%
	No	24.7%	18.2%	26.2%	24.6%	25.6%	35.2%	24.0%	18.2%	22.2%	25.1%

⁴⁵ Caution advised when interpreting results due to small sample size.

Please also note:

a) Open-ended question: Totals will not add to 100% due to only the top mentions being shown, multiple responses, and/or not all respondents choosing to provide an answer for all questions.

b) Sample sizes: the columns to not add to the total sample size due to some respondents not providing their stakeholder classification information.

SUMMARY OF RESULTS

Base: All responses		STAKEHOLDER									
Question	Response	Total	District leader	School leader	Teacher	Support staff	Employer	Parent	Current student	Former student	Other
Q43.		[n=456]	[n=14] ⁴⁵	[n=43] ⁴⁵	[n=102]	[n=10] ¹	[n=43] ⁴⁵	[n=75] ⁴⁵	[n=4] ⁴⁵	[n=59] ⁴⁵	[n=103]
Do you think principals should have more authority than they do now, or less? <i>Close-ended question</i>	More	67.8%	71.4%	93.0%	66.7%	80.0%	67.4%	68.0%	75.0%	67.8%	56.3%
	Less	7.9%	14.3%	4.7%	11.8%	10.0%	4.7%	8.0%	-	3.4%	7.8%
	Don't know	24.3%	14.3%	2.3%	21.6%	10.0%	27.9%	24.0%	25.0%	28.8%	35.9%
Q44.		[n=2,197]	[n=91] ⁴⁵	[n=195]	[n=492]	[n=47] ⁴⁵	[n=147]	[n=366]	[n=25] ⁴⁵	[n=305]	[n=486]
How should a principal best support teaching excellence? <i>Open-ended question</i>	Allow/offer professional development opportunities	10.1%	19.8%	21.5%	16.3%	8.5%	5.4%	7.4%	-	2.3%	7.2%
	Give recognition/rewards/incentives	5.8%	3.3%	4.6%	6.9%	4.3%	6.8%	6.3%	4.0%	4.3%	6.4%
	Support teachers/staff	5.4%	5.5%	9.2%	7.5%	2.1%	5.4%	4.1%	4.0%	3.3%	4.7%
Q45.		[n=2,197]	[n=91] ⁴⁵	[n=195]	[n=492]	[n=47] ⁴⁵	[n=147]	[n=366]	[n=25] ⁴⁵	[n=305]	[n=486]
What should the superintendent's role, as CEO of the school district/authority, in assuring excellence in teaching? <i>Open-ended question</i>	Provide support to principal	4.1%	6.6%	10.3%	5.1%	2.1%	4.8%	1.9%	-	2.6%	3.5%
	Enforce accountability	4.1%	6.6%	7.2%	4.7%	2.1%	2.7%	4.9%	4.0%	2.6%	3.1%
	Create/enforce clear policy/process/standards	4.0%	6.6%	6.2%	3.7%	-	3.4%	4.4%	4.0%	3.6%	3.5%
Q46.		[n=1,818]	[n=74] ⁴⁵	[n=160]	[n=406]	[n=39] ⁴⁵	[n=122]	[n=308]	[n=22] ⁴⁵	[n=264]	[n=407]
Should superintendents, as CEOs of the school district/authority, be required to complete a preparation program prior to assuming their leadership duties? <i>Close-ended question</i>	Yes	81.0%	74.3%	75.0%	79.3%	84.6%	76.2%	83.4%	72.7%	83.0%	85.3%

⁴⁵ Caution advised when interpreting results due to small sample size.

Please also note:

- a) Open-ended question: Totals will not add to 100% due to only the top mentions being shown, multiple responses, and/or not all respondents choosing to provide an answer for all questions.
- b) Sample sizes: the columns to not add to the total sample size due to some respondents not providing their stakeholder classification information.

SUMMARY OF RESULTS

Base: All responses			STAKEHOLDER								
Question	Response	Total	District leader	School leader	Teacher	Support staff	Employer	Parent	Current student	Former student	Other
Q47.		[n=1,814]	[n=74] ⁴⁵	[n=160]	[n=404]	[n=39] ⁴⁵	[n=122]	[n=306]	[n=22] ⁴⁵	[n=264]	[n=407]
Should there be one provincewide practice standard for superintendents? <i>Close-ended question</i>	Yes	75.7%	68.9%	73.8%	66.1%	84.6%	76.2%	76.1%	72.7%	82.2%	82.6%
Q48.		[n=1,810]	[n=74] ⁴⁵	[n=160]	[n=403]	[n=39] ⁴⁵	[n=122]	[n=305]	[n=22] ⁴⁵	[n=264]	[n=405]
Should there be one provincewide system for superintendent performance evaluation? <i>Close-ended question</i>	Yes	74.9%	54.1%	65.0%	62.0%	89.7%	74.6%	81.3%	86.4%	83.7%	83.2%
Q49.		[n=1,805]	[n=74] ⁴⁵	[n=160]	[n=403]	[n=39] ⁴⁵	[n=122]	[n=304]	[n=21] ⁴⁵	[n=263]	[n=404]
Who should have input into the evaluation of a superintendent's performance? <i>Close-ended question</i>	Students	13.4%	12.2%	13.8%	14.4%	12.8%	11.5%	12.2%	38.1%	15.2%	11.6%
	Parents	35.1%	37.8%	41.9%	35.0%	35.9%	31.1%	39.8%	57.1%	33.1%	30.4%
	Teachers	56.3%	54.1%	55.6%	63.3%	64.1%	45.9%	59.2%	76.2%	57.8%	48.5%
	Principals	75.5%	81.1%	80.6%	78.7%	82.1%	73.8%	75.0%	85.7%	73.0%	71.3%
	Other superintendents	42.8%	24.3%	30.0%	40.4%	43.6%	44.3%	44.1%	38.1%	49.4%	47.8%
	Trustees	64.7%	83.8%	76.9%	66.0%	66.7%	57.4%	62.5%	47.6%	63.1%	61.1%
	Professional organizations	24.7%	14.9%	21.9%	21.8%	28.2%	35.2%	23.0%	23.8%	28.5%	25.7%
	Local community	18.9%	12.2%	13.8%	14.4%	20.5%	20.5%	19.1%	19.0%	25.1%	21.3%
	Other	9.5%	23.0%	13.1%	12.9%	5.1%	10.7%	5.6%	-	5.7%	7.9%

⁴⁵ Caution advised when interpreting results due to small sample size.

Please also note:

- a) Open-ended question: Totals will not add to 100% due to only the top mentions being shown, multiple responses, and/or not all respondents choosing to provide an answer for all questions.
- b) Sample sizes: the columns to not add to the total sample size due to some respondents not providing their stakeholder classification information.

3 OTHER INPUT

In addition to the consultations conducted by Leger, the Task Force invited written submissions from stakeholder organizations and conducted focused dialogues, one-on-one meetings, and gathered input during a symposium on *Inspiring Education*.

Submissions from stakeholder organizations

The Task Force asked stakeholders to consider the following questions:

Question 1: What does your organization believe to be the most important issues related to the assurance of teaching excellence in Alberta?

Question 2: What strategies would you suggest could be implemented to address these issues? Please describe how the strategies you suggest would effectively address each of the issues.

Question 3: What role do you believe your organization should have in the implementation of these strategies?

The following stakeholders provided written responses:

- Alberta Association of Deans of Education
- Association of School Business Officials of Alberta
- Alberta Teachers' Association
- The Association of Alberta Public Charter Schools
- Alberta School Boards' Association
- Alberta School Councils' Association
- Public School Boards Association of Alberta
- College of Alberta School Superintendents
- Association of Independent Schools and Colleges in Alberta

Copies of submissions are included in Appendix E.

Focused dialogues and one-on-one meetings

Small groups of Task Force members met with representatives of stakeholder organizations. Individual Task Force members also met one-on-one with individuals with expertise and/or interest in differing aspects of education.

Input from the *Inspiring Education* Symposium

Two questions were asked of the 1,100 participants attending the *Inspiring Education* Symposium on February 19, 2014 in Calgary. Here are the questions and a summary of the answers:

Question 1: *What is the one change you would make to Alberta's education system to ensure teaching excellence in every classroom?*

The top five responses were:

1. Professional development support and opportunity.
2. Improved and applicable teacher preparation.
3. Flexible and enhanced pedagogy.
4. Stronger administration and leadership support and training.
5. More time and opportunity for collaboration.

Question 2: *What is the greatest strength in Alberta's education system that leads to teaching excellence in every classroom?*

The top five responses were:

1. Recognizing the need for change and continued commitment to excellence.
2. Teachers' dedication and passion for students.
3. Diversity and choice.
4. Commitment to collaboration.
5. Students, parents and educators.

4 CONCLUSION

Approximately 3,000 Albertans participated in the *Task Force for Teaching Excellence* consultations. The Task Force was grateful for the opportunity to learn firsthand what Albertans had to say about excellence and teaching. The Task Force thanks everyone who took the time to participate and provide input.

The Task Force also acknowledges the work of Leger – The Research Intelligence Group in supporting the consultations and contributing to this document.

The results of the consultations, as well as the Task Force's own review of existing research and its deliberations, contributed to *Part I: Report to the Minister of Education, Government of Alberta*.

APPENDIX A: TASK FORCE MEMBERSHIP

- Chair – Dr. Glenn Feltham, President of the Northern Alberta Institute of Technology
- Vice-chair – Sandra Jansen, MLA, Associate Minister of Family and Community Safety
- Naresh Bhardwaj, MLA, Associate Minister of Persons with Disabilities
- David Dorward, MLA Edmonton-Gold Bar
- Everett McDonald, MLA Grande Prairie-Smoky
- David Fraser, Executive Director of Corporate Services,
Edmonton Public School Division
- Dr. Sharon Friesen, Vice Dean and the Associate Dean of Professional and Community
Engagement in the Werklund School of Education at the University of Calgary
- Dr. Irene Lewis, President Emeritus, SAIT Polytechnic
- Dr. Craig Loewen, Dean of Education, University of Lethbridge
- Mackenzie Martin, student, University of Alberta Faculty of Education,
former member of the Minister of Education’s Student Advisory Committee
- Brent McDonough, Field Experience Associate, University of Alberta,
and *Inspiring Education* co-chair
- Michele Mulder, Executive Director of Alberta School Councils’ Association
- Andy Neigel, Board Director, President and CEO of Careers: The Next Generation
- Shelley Ralston, Chair of the Red Deer College Board of Directors
- Laurie Thompson, Teacher and School Administrator
- Ron Young, Teacher and School Administrator

APPENDIX B: REGIONAL CONSULTATIONS DISCUSSION GUIDE

FOCUS QUESTIONS

TASK FORCE REGIONAL CONSULTATION SESSIONS

A. General Public

1.
 - a. What does teaching excellence look like to you?
 - b. How might teaching excellence in 2030 (when this year's Grade 1 student will be graduating) be different?
2. What evidence would assure you that Alberta's education system is excellent in preparing our children and youth to be ethical citizens and engaged thinkers with an entrepreneurial spirit?
3.
 - a. What systems and processes would support teaching excellence for every student in Alberta?
 - b. What systems and processes would support principals' leadership excellence for every student in Alberta?

B. Education Community

1. What does teaching excellence look like to you?
2. What supports would ensure that every Alberta teacher has the confidence, capacity (knowledge and skills) and commitment to sustain teaching excellence throughout his/her career?
3.
 - a. How can collaboration at the school, district and provincial levels be facilitated so that every teacher accesses the excellent strategies of their colleagues?
 - b. How can teachers be supported so that they apply those excellence strategies to their practice?
 - c. How should Alberta teachers provide assurance that their practice is excellent?

APPENDIX C: BULLETIN BOARD DISCUSSION GUIDE

ONLINE

TASK FORCE FOR TEACHING EXCELLENCE ONLINE BULLETIN BOARD QUESTIONS

Question

DAY 1

1. Let's begin by talking about what teaching excellence means to you. What is teaching excellence? What are some examples of what teaching excellence might look like or have looked like in your own experience?
2. When teaching excellence is present, what is it like for the student? What do they do, and how do they feel? Please be specific and as a part of your answer, provide examples of where you have seen teaching excellence happen for students to help us understand your answer.
3. What is the role of the teacher in a teaching excellence model? What kinds of things would the teacher be focusing on and doing? Would you please describe an example of teaching excellence that you are aware of or have seen as a part of your answer?
4. What is the role of the principal in a teaching excellence model? What kinds of things would the principal be focusing on and doing, or not focusing on or not doing, to support teaching excellence? If you have any examples to help us better understand your answer, please share them.
5. What is the role of parents in a teaching excellence model? What kinds of things should they be doing? What are some examples of how parents have supported, or could support teaching excellence?

6. Besides teachers, principals and parents, is there anyone else who has a role in teaching excellence? Who are they, and what should they be doing to ensure teaching excellence? What would be some examples?
7. We've spent some time talking about people in different roles and how they can contribute to teaching excellence. Besides the people and what they are doing, what other things contribute to teaching excellence? What is the school like? What is the classroom like? Is there a school, or a classroom, or is it something else? What kinds of equipment and materials would be used? What kinds of processes would be in place?
8. What are the roadblocks in bringing teaching excellence to every classroom in Alberta? In other words, what factors limit teaching excellence from taking place for every student? Please provide specific examples.
9. Considering the roadblocks you have mentioned that might stand in the way of teaching excellence for every student, what can be done to overcome those roadblocks? As a part of your answer, would you tell us what improvements should be made? How can teaching excellence be made easier to achieve for all students?

DAY 2

10. To begin today, I'd like you to consider how Alberta teachers could provide assurances that their practice is excellent. If teaching excellence is there, or not there, how do we know?

For the next few questions, would you please consider the following scenario:

[PRESENT PAGE 9 *Inspiring Education* (Imagine the Alberta classroom of 2030)]

- 11a. In such a scenario how would the role of the teacher be different than it is today?
As a part of your answer, could you tell us what different things would the teacher be focusing on and doing?
- 11b. Considering the same scenario, how would the role of the student be different from today?
- 11c. Using the same scenario again, how would the role of the principal be different from today?
- 11d. How would the role of the parent be different from today?
- 11e. Using the same scenario again, now consider the members of the community in general, even if they don't have children in school. What benefits can they provide to support learning? What kind of role could they play?
12. Considering that scenario again, what would be the benefits of making such a scenario a reality for any student?
13. If you have any specific examples, please share them.
14. What would the challenges be in providing that scenario?

15. What risks are involved in this scenario?
16. What could be done to mitigate those challenges and risks? Please be specific in your response and provide examples if possible.

DAY 3

17. If you had a 'magic wand,' how would you use it to change ONE thing about Alberta's education system to make it more effective?
18. Why would that be your choice?
19. Next, consider how everyone in the school and the community could achieve teaching excellence by finding new ways of working together, creating partnerships, and sharing. If it truly 'takes a village to raise or educate a child,' how could the related roles of everyone who could be involved at school and in the community be better supported and lead to better collaboration and sharing?

ASK 20 ONLY FOR TEACHERS, LEADERS, PARENTS:

20. As professionals, Alberta's teachers are expected to be knowledgeable about, contribute to and appropriately use research-based best practices to maintain teaching excellence. How should teachers provide assurances that they are fulfilling this professional responsibility throughout their careers?

PRIVATE 1-ON-1

21. Would you like to provide any final comments related to this subject matter? These will not be shared with the group, they only come to me and will also be shared (anonymously) with the Task Force for Teaching Excellence.
22. Thank you for your comments, and for participating in this discussion; it has been a pleasure to have you as a part of this group. We regard your input and sharing as very important and we really appreciate your time and effort over the past few days. I may have some more follow up questions for you, and you may have some comments on others' discussions so I encourage you to keep looking at the discussion and providing input today.

STUDENT

TASK FORCE FOR TEACHING EXCELLENCE

STUDENT - ONLINE BULLETIN BOARD QUESTIONS

Question

DAY 1

1. Take some time to think about the years you have been in school (since kindergarten). Please share an experience you had when you felt strongly that there was someone (teacher, principal, etc.), or something (classroom, equipment, etc.), that did an excellent job of helping you to learn as best as you can. What happened? Why was it excellent? How did you feel? (Remember this is a public board, so, please do not share anyone's names or the name of your school).
2. What kinds of things can teachers do that would be the most effective at helping you learn? If you have any examples of excellent teaching, please share them (no names please).
3. What kinds of things can the principal do that would be the most effective at helping you learn? If you have any examples, please share them (no names please).
4. What kinds of things can parents do that would be most effective in helping you learn? If you have any examples, please share them.
5. What kinds of things can other students do that would be most effective in helping you learn? If you have any examples, please share them.

DAY 2

6. We discussed teachers, principals, parents, and students. Is there anyone else who has a role in teaching excellence?
7. Think about all of the people that live or work in the local community in general, even if they don't have children in school or work in education. How can they make a positive difference in your learning? What kind of role could they play? Do you have any examples you can share?
8. We've spent some time talking about people in different roles and how they can contribute to teaching excellence. Besides the people and what they are doing, what other things contribute to teaching excellence? What is the school like? What is the classroom like? Is there a school, or a classroom, or is it something else? What kinds of equipment and materials would be used? What kinds of processes would be in place?

9. Do you think there is teaching excellence for every student in Alberta?
Why do you say that?
10. What kinds of things (if any) do you think prevent teaching excellence from taking place in every classroom, for every student in Alberta? In other words, what factors limit teaching excellence from taking place for every student? If you have any specific examples, please share them (no names please).
11. How do you think we could make it easier to provide teaching excellence for all students?

DAY 3

For the next two questions, please consider the following scenario:

[PRESENT PAGE 9 *Inspiring Education* (Imagine the Alberta classroom of 2030)]

12. Do you think you would benefit from making this kind of scenario a reality?
Why/Why not? If so, in what way?
13. What possible problems or risks would there be with this kind of scenario?
Is there anything you do not like about it?
14. How can we tell if there is teaching excellence? Can it be measured or evaluated?
If yes, how, and who should be involved? If no, why do you say that?
15. If you had a 'magic wand,' how would you use it to change ONE thing about Alberta's education system to make it more effective? Why would that be your choice?

PRIVATE 1-ON-1

16. Would you like to provide any final comments related to this topic? These will not be shared with the group, they only come to me and will also be shared (anonymously) with the Task Force for Teaching Excellence.
17. Thank you for your comments, and for participating in this discussion; it has been a pleasure to have you as a part of this group. We regard your input and sharing as very important and we really appreciate your time and effort over the past few days. I may have some more follow up questions for you, and you may have some comments on others' discussions so I encourage you to keep looking at the discussion and providing input today.

APPENDIX D: SURVEY QUESTIONS

[EMAIL INVITATION TEXT TO BE SENT TO DATABASE PARTICIPANTS ONLY]

On behalf of the *Task Force for Teaching Excellence*, thank you for your interest in participating in the online survey for Teaching Excellence in Alberta.

[Click the arrow to begin.]

The time it will take to complete this survey depends on your answers. You are encouraged to take time to consider and provide a complete answer for every question. If you prefer to complete the survey in more than one sitting, you can exit at any point and resume at the same place by clicking the arrow above.

The final deadline for completing the survey is November 15, 2013.

Participation in this study is voluntary and all information collected, used and/or disclosed will be used for research purposes only and administered as per the requirements of Alberta's *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* (FOIP Act).

Please note the link you have been provided with can only be used once. If you forward it to others they will not be able to use it to complete the survey. To access the survey, they will need to register their interest at <https://legerweb.com/teachingexcellence>.

For more information on the Teaching Excellence Consultation, please visit <https://legerweb.com/teachingexcellence>.

The *Task Force for Teaching Excellence* was established by the Minister of Education to make recommendations and help inform guiding principles and policy shifts that align with *Inspiring Education*, Alberta's vision for 21st century learning. For more information on *Inspiring Education*, please visit www.inspiringeducation.alberta.ca.

Screening [ASK ALL]

[SCREENING QUESTIONS ON WEBSITE,
IN SURVEY THEY ARE ASKED ONLY OF
LEGER WEBPANEL PARTICIPANTS]

S1. In what city/town do you live?

- ☐ Edmonton
- ☐ Calgary
- ☐ Fort McMurray
- ☐ Grande Prairie
- ☐ Lethbridge
- ☐ Lloydminster
- ☐ Medicine Hat
- ☐ Red Deer
- ☐ Other (please specify): _____

S2. What type of school authority do you or your family belong to? If more than one, select all that apply.

If this question does not apply to you, please indicate what school authority you feel most closely affiliated with.

- ☐ Public school
- ☐ Separate school / Catholic
- ☐ Francophone school
- ☐ Private school
- ☐ Charter school
- ☐ Band operated school
- ☐ Other (please specify)
- ☐ Don't know

S3. All people bring a range of perspectives to education. Please select the following that apply to you:

- ☐ Current student
(junior high or high school)
- ☐ Former student (K-12)
- ☐ Parent of K-12 student
- ☐ Teacher
- ☐ School support staff
- ☐ District leader (superintendents, trustees, etc.) specify
- ☐ School leadership (Principal, Assistant Principal, Associate Principal, Vice Principal) specify
- ☐ Employer/business/industry
- ☐ Francophone
- ☐ First Nations, Métis, Inuit
- ☐ Other (e.g. citizen, taxpayer)

S4. Age group:

- ☐ Under 18
- ☐ 18-24
- ☐ 25-29
- ☐ 30-39
- ☐ 40-49
- ☐ 50-64
- ☐ 65 or over

S5. Gender:

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female

[START SURVEY: ASK ALL]

Inspiring Education envisions a more responsive, flexible and collaborative approach to student learning in which creativity and innovation are central to achieving excellence.

SECTION ONE: Teaching

A don't know/no comment option is provided for each question in case you feel it is not applicable to you or that you do not know enough about the topic to provide an answer.

1. How would you define or describe teaching excellence?
☐ [Don't know / No comment]
2. What traits or qualities should a person considering a career in teaching have?
☐ [Don't know / No comment]
3. How do we attract those persons with the desired traits and qualifications for a career in teaching?
☐ [Don't know / No comment]
4. How do we develop those persons with the desired traits and qualifications for a career in teaching?
☐ [Don't know / No comment]
5. How do we retain those persons with the desired traits and qualifications for a career in teaching?
☐ [Don't know / No comment]
6. Besides those certified to teach in Alberta and student teachers enrolled in an Alberta-based teacher preparation program as is done currently, are there any others that should be authorized to teach in schools in Alberta? Please check those that apply.
 - ☐ People with university degrees other than a Bachelor of Education (e.g. Bachelor of Science)
 - ☐ People with certification in a trade associated with the subject of instruction (e.g. Journeyman in Carpentry)
 - ☐ People with professional designation (e.g. accountant, nurse)
 - ☐ People who have sufficient expertise in a discipline associated with the subject of instruction (e.g. musician, artist).
 - ☐ Other (please specify): _____
7. Should teachers who have demonstrated excellence in their practice receive a special designation? For example, in other education systems, teachers earn specialty designations to work with English Language Learners or children with special needs, or in specific subjects.
 - ☐ Yes
 - ☐ No
 - ☐ Explain: _____
 - ☐ [Don't know / No comment]

8. What kinds of designation might an excellent teacher receive? Please check those that apply.
- ☐ Subject Specialist
 - ☐ Mentor Teacher
 - ☐ Master Teacher
 - ☐ Other (please specify): _____
 - ☐ [Don't know / No comment]
9. What professional development support would ensure that every teacher demonstrates excellence in their practice throughout their career?
- ☐ [Don't know / No comment]
10. In addition to professional development, what other system supports would ensure that every teacher demonstrates excellence in their practice throughout their career?
- ☐ [Don't know / No comment]
11. What is the teacher's responsibility for demonstrating excellence in their practice throughout their career?
- ☐ [Don't know / No comment]
12. Should there be one provincewide system for teacher performance evaluation?
- ☐ Yes
 - ☐ No
 - ☐ Explain: _____
 - ☐ [Don't know / No comment]
13. Should teacher performance be evaluated:
- ☐ 1st year only
 - ☐ Annually
 - ☐ Every 5 years
 - ☐ Every 10 years
 - ☐ As required
 - ☐ Other (please specify): _____
14. Who should have input into the evaluation of a teacher's performance? Please check those that apply.
- ☐ Students
 - ☐ Parents
 - ☐ Other teachers
 - ☐ Principals
 - ☐ Superintendents
 - ☐ Trustees
 - ☐ Professional organizations
 - ☐ Local community
 - ☐ Other (please specify): _____

Inspiring Education includes a vision of education that is a more responsive, flexible and collaborative approach to student learning in which creativity and innovation are central to achieving excellence.

Educator – A person authorized and employed by a school authority to provide specialized educational supports and services to children, youth, and their families (e.g., library technicians, teacher aides/assistants, therapists).

15. In your opinion, what should be the role of the teacher in achieving the vision described in *Inspiring Education*?

☐ [Don't know / No comment]

16. What do you see as the most significant enablers to teachers' fulfillment of that role?

☐ [Don't know / No comment]

17. What do you see as the most significant barriers to teachers' fulfillment of that role?

☐ [Don't know / No comment]

18. In your opinion, what should be the role of educators in achieving the vision described in *Inspiring Education*?

☐ [Don't know / No comment]

19. What do you see as the most significant enablers to educators' fulfillment of that role?

☐ [Don't know / No comment]

20. What do you see as the most significant barriers to educators' fulfillment of that role?

☐ [Don't know / No comment]

Teacher Competency – The ability of a teacher to consistently meet the requirements of the Teacher Quality Standard, which describes the knowledge, skills and attributes of all Alberta teachers as authorized by the Minister of Education.

21. Do you have confidence that matters dealing with complaints of teacher **competency** are addressed effectively?

☐ Yes/No

☐ Explain

☐ [Don't know / No comment]

22. What should be the role of the **principals** in dealing with issues of teacher *competence*?

☐ [Don't know / No comment]

23. What should be the role of the **school board** in dealing with issues of teacher *competence*?

☐ [Don't know / No comment]

24. What should be the role of the **Alberta Teachers' Association** in dealing with issues of teacher *competence*?

☐ [Don't know / No comment]

25. What should be the role of the **Alberta Education** (Government of Alberta) in dealing with issues of teacher *competence*?

☐ [Don't know / No comment]

Teacher Conduct – the actions, behaviors, decisions and judgments that teachers demonstrate in their professional practice in the best interests of students and in upholding the dignity of the profession.

26. Do you have confidence that complaints about teacher **conduct** are effectively addressed?

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Explain: _____

☐ [Don't know / No comment]

27. What should be the role of the **principals** in dealing with issues of teacher *conduct*?

☐ [Don't know / No comment]

28. What should be the role of the **school board** in dealing with issues of teacher *conduct*?

☐ [Don't know / No comment]

29. What should be the role of the **Alberta Teachers' Association** in dealing with issues of teacher *conduct*?

☐ [Don't know / No comment]

30. What should be the role of the **Alberta Education** (Government of Alberta) in dealing with issues of teacher *conduct*?

☐ [Don't know / No comment]

Practice Standard – A model of effective practice established by the Minister of Education applicable to all practitioners in all contexts.

Educator – A person authorized and employed by a school authority to provide specialized educational supports and services to children, youth, and their families.

31. Should there be one provincewide standard for Alberta teachers?

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Explain: _____

☐ [Don't know / No comment]

SECTION TWO: Leadership

32. What should be the principal's role in ensuring teaching excellence?

☐ [Don't know / No comment]

33. What traits or qualities should a person considering a career as a principal have?

☐ [Don't know / No comment]

34. How do we **attract** those persons most suitable for a career as a principal?

☐ [Don't know / No comment]

35. How do we **develop** those persons most suitable for a career as a principal?
- ☐ [Don't know / No comment]
36. How do we **retain** those persons most suitable for a career as a principal?
- ☐ [Don't know / No comment]
37. Should principals be required to complete a preparation program prior to assuming their leadership duties?
- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Explain: _____
- ☐ [Don't know / No comment]
38. Should there be one provincewide practice standard for school principals?
- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Explain: _____
- ☐ [Don't know / No comment]
39. Should there be one provincewide system for principal performance evaluation?
- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Explain: _____
- ☐ [Don't know / No comment]
40. Should principals be evaluated:
- ☐ 1st year only
- ☐ Annually
- ☐ Every 5 years
- ☐ Every 10 years
- ☐ As required
- ☐ Other [please specify]
41. Who should have input into the evaluation of a principal's performance? Please check all that apply.
- ☐ Students
- ☐ Parents
- ☐ Teachers
- ☐ Other principals
- ☐ Superintendents
- ☐ Trustees
- ☐ Professional organizations
- ☐ Local community
- ☐ Other [please specify]
42. Do principals have an appropriate level of authority?
- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ASK IF Q42=NO
43. Do you think principals should have more authority than they do now, or less? (more, less, don't know)
- ☐ Explain
- ☐ [Don't know / No comment]

44. How should a principal best support teaching excellence?

☐ [Don't know / No comment]

SECTION THREE: System

45. What should be the superintendent's role, as CEO of the school district/ authority, in assuring excellence in teaching?

☐ [Don't know / No comment]

46. Should superintendents, as CEOs of the school district/authority, be required to complete a preparation program prior to assuming their leadership duties?

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Explain: _____

☐ [Don't know / No comment]

47. Should there be one provincewide practice standard for superintendents?

☐ Yes [PUT PRACTICE STANDARD DEFINITION IN DEFINITIONS SECTION]

☐ No

☐ Explain: _____

☐ [Don't know / No comment]

48. Should there be one provincewide system for superintendent performance evaluation?

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Explain: _____

☐ [Don't know / No comment]

49. Who should have input into the evaluation of a superintendent's performance?

☐ Students

☐ Parents

☐ Teachers

☐ Principals

☐ Other Superintendents

☐ Trustees

☐ Professional organizations

☐ Local community

☐ Other [please specify]

Thank you for your time and input, it is greatly appreciated. The *Task Force for Teaching Excellence* will give a voice to all Albertans and ensure that the input and feedback from members of the education community are balanced with the perspectives of other Albertans. For more information, and to take part in our various discussion groups taking place throughout the province, or to join the discussion on our online bulletin board, please feel free to visit the website at <https://legerweb.com/teachingexcellence/>.

Please use this space to share any other thoughts you have relative to supporting and assuring teaching excellence in every classroom for every student.

[RECORD ANSWER]

[CLOSING]

APPENDIX E: SUBMISSIONS FROM STAKEHOLDER ORGANIZATIONS

- E.1. Alberta Association of Deans of Education
- E.2. Association of School Business Officials of Alberta
- E.3. The Alberta Teachers' Association
- E.4. The Association of Alberta Public Charter Schools
- E.5. Alberta School Boards Association
- E.6. Alberta School Councils' Association
- E.7. Public School Boards' Association of Alberta
- E.8. College of Alberta School Superintendents
- E.9. Association of Independent Schools and Colleges in Alberta

E.1. Submission of the Alberta Association of Deans of Education

MEMO TO: Dr. Glenn Feltham, Task Force Chair
 FROM: Dr. John E. Hull, Chair of AADE
 SUBJECT: Submission to the Task Force's three questions
 DATE: December 9, 2013
 CC: Dr. Bob Garneau

The Association of Alberta Deans of Education (AADE) appreciates the personal invitation from the Chair of the *Task Force for Teaching Excellence* to respond to the three survey questions the Task Force is vetting across the Province. We would like to make use of our AADE submission of a framework document (*A Framework of Effective Teaching for Learning*), submitted to Alberta Education in March of 2012, to frame our collective response to the Task Force. Extrapolating from the framework document and the research consulted in its preparation, we raise three issues in a manner that we hope will be helpful in the deliberations of the Task Force.

ISSUE 1: Our Provincial definition of quality teaching should be based on research.

- On page 4 of our Framework document we note that historically our current TQS represented an evolution “from a technical-rational list of 44 discreet characteristics of effective teaching into the more coherent context-based, informed professional judgement construct of quality teaching with one *Standard* and two sets of *Descriptors of Knowledge, Skills and Attributes* (Brandon, 2005).”
- Educational research encompasses particular and necessary complexity in that it arises out of different paradigms or world and life perspectives; any privileged research tradition will shape the meaning of quality teaching according to its own criteria, largely to the exclusion of other perspectives. Our desire to write a TQS that represents a paradigm shift away from the technical, efficiency movement requires a clear understanding of various research traditions and their respective visions for teaching.

Strategy: The writing team responsible for crafting a new TQS that is grounded in a rich research framework should consist of members who have a clear understanding of the competing research traditions that shape the education landscape and who represent multi-stakeholder groups. The Framework document submitted by AADE, would provide background and guidance for such a writing team.

AADE's role: AADE is prepared to participate in this writing endeavor.

ISSUE 2: The definition of quality teaching in terms of competencies poses serious challenges.

- We note on page 8 of our Framework document that the common understanding of the term competency is rather narrow, and seems to connote a personal characteristic related to superior performance of a job.
- To “redeem” the notion of competency, we must pack it with all sorts of meaning that is not normally attached to it.
- We wonder if the term can function well in a TQS document if its meaning is not quite comprehensively understood. We fear that in practice, the more common and narrower meaning will be assumed, and that plans and decisions based on this limited understanding would “shortchange” our vision of quality teaching.
- AADE’s Framework for Teaching was rooted in principles; these principles underpin the competencies derived from them. We feel that these principles must be sustained as points of reference, and guideposts, as the TQS is developed.

Strategy: That the final TQS document reference the underpinning principles from which the competencies (if we keep that term) are derived.

AADE’s role: We have already conducted the research and identified this set of principles. If the need arises that the list of principles be expanded, we would welcome the opportunity to participate in that research endeavor.

ISSUE 3: A robust view of teaching in our new TQS will be limited, if any sector in society dictates to the other sectors what answers are to be given to the ultimate questions of educational concern: What is most worth knowing? Who is the good student? What is good teaching? How should student learning be assessed?

- Educating workers for an information-based economy (with a public face and focus that is seen by some as too economically driven, and at risk of being too narrow) carries with it the risk of also narrowing a more fulsome understanding of the concept of education.
- Gearing the education system to prepare students only for university would also represent a narrow purpose for education.
- Shaping the education system with a view to raising scores on standardized tests represents another distortion of education; one which is consistently under debate.

Strategy: As part of the framework development for the new TQS, identify the educational visions which have answered the question: “What is most worth knowing?” Define quality teaching in a way that acknowledges a diversity of meaning to the purpose of education.

AADE’s role: AADE is prepared to contribute to this investigation.

To conclude, AADE is eager to be actively engaged in the next steps toward writing the new TQS document.

E.2. Submission of the Association of School Business Officials of Alberta

The Association of School Business Officials of Alberta is a professional organization dedicated to supporting its members and providing leadership in school business management. The primary function of a School Business Official is to render leadership and administrative skills in the provision of corporate, financial and business services to local school boards.

Thank you for the invitation to provide a written submission to the Task Force for Teaching Excellence. ASBOA greatly appreciates the opportunity for sharing ideas on behalf of our members in response to the following questions posed.

What do ASBOA members believe to be the most important issues related to the assurance of teaching excellence in Alberta?

Teaching excellence in Alberta will be realized through a professional workforce of highly trained teachers. Teacher development must continue beyond the university training that teachers receive to be certified. Teaching excellence requires appropriate standards for ongoing professional development. This is necessary in order to ensure that teachers continue to develop their professional practice throughout their careers. Without the requirement to be accountable to those standards, there can be no measure of what constitutes teaching excellence. The assurance of teaching excellence in Alberta will also require that teachers who are experts in areas such as CTS and trades are working in our schools.

Like all professionals, teachers need to be provided with the necessary resources to do their jobs. Should ongoing professional development become a requirement to maintain certification, teachers need assurance that they will be provided with the time to do so within the school year. While teachers must bear the responsibility of maintaining their professional status, school boards should facilitate ways in which this can be achieved.

The K-12 Education system can no longer afford to lag behind the world of work. A focus on *Inspiring Education* will assist in achieving the goal of teaching excellence in Alberta. How do schools ensure that students become engaged thinkers, ethical citizens, and develop an entrepreneurial spirit? Given the shrinking budgets of school divisions, the perception is that teachers are expected to do more with less. In order to play a fundamental role in *Inspiring Education*, teachers need to be provided with the right tools and strategies to work smarter not harder. This should result in positive student outcomes.

What strategies would you suggest could be implemented to address these issues?

In order to address the issue of a professional workforce of highly trained teachers, the following strategies may be implemented:

- Continuous appropriate professional development opportunities must be provided by school boards.
- Teachers should seek professional development opportunities based on annual goal setting.
- Focused professional development that directs teachers to common outcomes that will lead to teacher excellence.
- Annual reporting of professional development to a professional body (external to the employer). This parallels other professions who have practice reviews (lawyers, accountants, doctors) to ensure that standards are being met within the profession.
- Professional bodies require that a certain number of qualifying professional development hours be obtained within a certain period of time. These hours are required to be reported annually to the professional body. Documentation that substantiates the claim must be kept in case of audit by the professional body. Audits are conducted randomly each year to verify the professional development of members. This provides assurance to the profession that standards are being met.

School Boards, as employers play an intrinsic role in evaluating teacher performance. As standards for performance are set by both the profession and the school board, accountability must follow suit. If professional standards are not met, then processes need to be in place to hold teachers accountable to this. Teaching excellence will not be achieved without consequence for non-compliance to standards.

As professional standards are implemented, ongoing review of those standards must be done. It is suggested, for example, that a review of current education requirements for CTS teachers be conducted.

What role do you believe ASBOA as an organization should have in the implementation of these strategies?

ASBOA members are leaders in business. ASBOA as an organization will assist in the development of the necessary resources and learning opportunities for its members to carry out their responsibilities within their individual school districts. Any time wholesale changes are made within an organization, or a system, as in the case of the transformation of education in Alberta, business leadership is imperative. Our business is to support our education leaders.

ASBOA has a critical role to play in supporting education leaders in strategic planning, data collection for the restructuring of resources – financial, capital, and human. In addition to this, ASBOA will be a voice in addressing the financial aspects of implementing these strategies. For example, increased professional learning opportunities for teachers within a school district will result in the need for funds to accomplish this.

E.3. Submission of the Alberta Teachers' Association

The Alberta Teachers' Association has made clear to the Minister of Education that it protests his decision to establish a task force, with hand-picked representatives, to review questions almost entirely related to the governance of the teaching profession, without including a representative named by the Alberta Teachers' Association.

Key to the further development of teaching excellence in Alberta is the capacity of the teaching profession (individually and collectively) and the support provided to the teaching profession, not the elimination of teachers' rights, introduction of non-certificated teachers, or enhanced management approaches.

Alberta's education system is considered the best, or one of the very best, in the English-speaking world. In that context, it is interesting to consider why significant changes would be needed to such a high performing system, which in its current form, receives considerable national and international study and acclaim.

The questions and the Association's responses follow.

QUESTION 1: What does your organization believe to be the most important issues relating to the assurance of teaching excellence in Alberta?

The Association identifies five very important issues which directly relate to the assurance of teaching excellence. Each issue is important, and their order is not indicative of priority.

1. **Capacity building.** The directions of *Inspiring Education* require that the teaching profession continue to develop its collective and individual capacity. The profession must be in a position to respond effectively to changes in instructional practice, including assessment practices and the use of emerging technologies to enhance learning. This means that professional development, focused on meeting each teacher's learning needs, will be very important. The successful development of each teacher's professional practice is a key goal.
2. **Support.** The successful delivery of the *Inspiring Education* initiative requires enhanced personalization of teaching and learning. As students' learning needs become more personalized, new approaches to designing instruction will reshape the classroom into a very different system. Support structures, available for the teacher to deploy to advance student learning needs, will be essential.
3. **Systemic articulation and coordination.** While the government has made clear its intent to deliver on *Inspiring Education*, the road map to do so is decidedly unclear. The Association has undertaken research to identify ways to make this initiative come alive for our communities of learning, but to date there is no comprehensive road map from

government nor a plan for effective coordination and communication with the general public. As the Association has actively supported *Inspiring Education*, it has become increasingly clear that the general public does not have a clear conceptualization of how the initiative can expand possibilities for learning. In many respects, *Inspiring Education* is not even within the majority consciousness of the public, many of whom are more comfortable with much more traditional forms of teaching and learning. Further, there are no apparent governance structures in existence to build consensus, aid articulation and assist coordination.

4. **Social realities.** Students present themselves each day to their classroom teacher, and it is teachers who are on the front lines to deal with poverty, economic uncertainty, family upheaval, transience, immigration, the implications of a booming economy, urbanization and rural depopulation. Teaching excellence, as both an individual and collective endeavour, is directly impacted by these and other social realities.
5. **Funding.** While government will trumpet what they report as significant education funding increases, funding has not kept pace with salary increases awarded between 2007 and 2012 related to Alberta Average Weekly Earnings Index (AAWE) and funding increases for 2012-15, promised in the 2012 provincial general election, have been cancelled. The context is a steadily increasing student population with declining resources in public education. The result has been a reduced number of teachers, significantly fewer teachers' assistants and other supports and reduced ability by front line teachers to meet student learning needs, especially with increased personalization of student learning.

QUESTION 2: What strategies would you suggest could be implemented to address these issues? Please describe how the strategies you suggest would effectively address each of the issues.

1. **Capacity building.**
 - a. Continuing education requirement. In 2009/10, the Association initiated discussions with the government concerning a continuing education requirement for all certificate holders, established by the profession through a shared governance model and implemented by the Association. In discussions in the fall of 2010, the Association and government agreed on the basis of such a requirement. In our view, this is a fundamental element in "landing" the *Inspiring Education* initiative. Like other professions, it is important that the teaching profession move to a continuous growth model for all certificate holders, tied to the right to practice. It is also important that the profession itself, through the Association and not the government, establish the requirement, maintain it and enforce it. Certificate holders who could not meet continuing education requirements would be unable to remain members of the profession.

- b. Teacher preparation, including provincial induction/orientation. At the present time, there is no transition from completion of a teacher preparation program to teaching practice. Just prior to the onset of the global financial crisis, the ministry, under Honourable Hancock, was poised to introduce a provincial induction/orientation program that would have reduced a first-year teacher's load and would have provided time for mentor teachers, with a combined reduction of approximately .25 FTE teaching. This would be a constructive investment with long-term implications for the development of excellent teachers and would help to retain teachers in the profession, especially in the first three to five years of teaching. There are also implications for teacher preparation programs over time, including instructional strategies and personalizing learning.
 - c. Improved effectiveness and coordination of professional development programs. A continuing education requirement will also help to drive professional development programs for all certificate holders. One of the most significant issues for teachers is the top down nature of professional development programs and a continuing education requirement would reduce the problem. It would also provide, for the first time, a basis for effective coordination of many professional development vehicles, including individual, school-based, system-based, university, specialist council, teachers' convention and other PD programs and initiatives.
 - d. Reinforce the instructional leadership role of the principal. Working within a collegial culture, the principal assumes a critical role in the school—a role of instructional leadership. Through this role, the principal focuses on student learning, effective teaching practices and student achievement. With *Inspiring Education*, the instructional leadership of the principal plays a significant role in developing the professional capacity of the staff and in encouraging the professional growth of teachers. Practice standards and a practice review process should be established through the Association and professional development opportunities provided to maximize the instructional leadership role.
2. **Support.**
- a. Clarify the central task and roles. A good place to begin with respect to support is to move away from the throw away lines about "it's all about the kids" to an actual meaningful lens from which to organize the system. In Finland, the approach is very straightforward: the job of the teacher is to meet each student's learning needs and the job of the system (the entire system, not just the school board) is to support the teacher to do so. This significantly changes the mantra. How do positions at Alberta Education support the teacher to meet student learning needs? How do positions at central office do the same? Given the collegial, not managerial, nature of teaching, this is even more important in the context of personalized learning initiatives.

- b. Provide “wrap around services”. Even before teachers express concern about their growing class sizes, teachers express enormous frustration with the inability of government to provide meaningful “wrap around services” to meet each student’s learning needs. While teachers generally support inclusion of special needs students, reduced levels of support for front-line teachers make this situation very difficult. Even when supports exist for part of a day, the student’s special needs exist all day. This issue has become much more urgent in the past two years and is now at a breaking point for many teachers. Continued failure to address this will directly impact retention, diminish recruitment and compromise excellence every day.
- c. Clarify ambiguities surrounding the notion of personalization of learning. Personalized learning is not a pedagogic theory nor a coherent set of teaching approaches, but an idea that is struggling for an identity. In the United States, the concept is most commonly associated with differentiated instruction. David Hargreaves, a principal architect of the idea, refers to “personalizing” learning rather than “personalized” learning in order to emphasize that it is a process, not a product. The process involves meeting more of the needs of more students more fully than in the past. When personalizing learning, what are the limits to a teacher’s work? Does anytime, anyplace learning mean anytime service for teachers? Is a teacher to be available 24/7? What are the limitations to providing personalized learning supports to every student, regardless of geography, every day? Once transformation has been realized, what will teachers (and students and principals and central office staff and Alberta Education) be doing differently? Education theorists may have some fuzzy thinking to offer, but teachers have to manage this on the ground each day with real students with real learning needs and with real parents. There are few signs of containment and ample indication of expanding expectations, encouraged by government, central office and others, without the capacity and certainly without the support. Personalization is offered, but limits are not defined and time and support is not provided. Boundaries within a boundless digital era are important for both sustainability and scalability of educational innovations.
- d. Review instructional time requirements for teachers and release time for school administrators. With clear expectations for personalization of learning, what are the implications for instructional time? Lesson preparation is very important and time consuming. If teachers are expected to personalize learning for each student, can teachers continue to teach as much? In many countries, and especially in Asian countries whose performance has improved based on recent international test results, a teacher’s instructional day is significantly shorter than in Alberta. There is much more time for planning, working with colleagues and preparing lessons. Are there no workload limits for Alberta teachers? With respect to school administrators, what release time is necessary to complete expectations focused on instructional leadership, including the principals’ duties relating to growth,

supervision and evaluation of teachers? Instructional leadership takes school time and that time and flexibility needs to be found for school administrators so they can engage in authentic learning opportunities for all students, producing a positive school climate, setting high expectations for all, developing teachers' pedagogical knowledge and involving parents and the community as active participants in the life of the school.

3. **Systemic articulation and coordination.**

- a. Establish a proper consultation structure to manage and coordinate *Inspiring Education*. At the present time, there are multiple initiatives and no road map. There is also little clarity within the structure of Alberta Education. New branches have sprung up (like the Teacher Excellence Branch) and it is now completely unclear who does what. The results-based budgeting process has also muddled the waters, with sectors of the department starting to look at other sectors suspiciously, with intense pressure on resources. It is even more unclear how *Inspiring Education* initiatives that require cooperation from other government departments will be achieved. A ten year strategic planning process has sprung up within Alberta Education, and its relationship to the government's rolling three-year business plan is unclear.
- b. Public policy initiatives will need to include social policy goals in order to achieve the potential of *Inspiring Education*. Social realities aren't going away—and the teacher's job is made much more difficult when students come to school hungry and other basic needs are not met. Equity issues matter.

4. **Social realities.**

- a. Social trends are real and require a government-wide response. Child poverty is real (and a significant blight on our relatively wealthy society). The number of students who require English language instruction is real. Immigration is real. Urban expansion amidst rural depopulation is real. Transience, especially around industrial centres, is real. As noted above, the response on social trends should be coordinated across government. Previous efforts have broken down quickly.

5. **Funding.**

- a. Conduct a proper third-party assessment of real costs to meet student learning needs, including social policy support. So what would it really cost to meet student learning needs? What would appropriate "wrap around services" cost? Full costs relating to the inclusion of special needs students? What funding is required to meet these needs? Now is the time for government to make these investments. With collective agreements in place until the fall of 2016, additional resources will not go toward salaries and can support student learning needs.
- b. In the interim, reinstate funding increases promised by the Premier in the 2012 provincial general election. Again, collective agreements are in place until 2016 and additional money can be used to improve student learning conditions and assist teacher excellence goals.

QUESTION 3: What role do you believe your organization should have in the implementation of these strategies?

The Alberta Teachers' Association represents the teaching profession in the Province of Alberta, as outlined in the *Teaching Profession Act*.

1. Capacity building.

- a. Continuing education requirement. To fully realize the potential of *Inspiring Education*, it will be very important for teachers to continue to focus on professional growth through their careers. It will also be important to grant additional regulatory authority to the teaching profession, through the Association, to ensure that all members of the profession continue to update their professional practice. The Association is committed to such an initiative and would fund its operation from member fees. By enhancing the responsibilities of the teaching profession through the Association, members would accept the initiative. However, should the initiative be imposed on teachers by government and operated by government or through a college of teachers, it would be seen by teachers (and others) as a vote of nonconfidence in the teaching profession.
- b. Teacher preparation, including provincial induction/orientation. The Association will continue to work with teacher preparation institutions in revising programs. The Association will work with government and other education partners on induction/orientation initiatives. The plans that were developed under Honourable Hancock should be updated and implemented, including the reduction of a first-year teacher's instructional load to approximately .75 FTE status. The provincial program would also need a mentorship component and effective links to faculties of education as may be required. We are eager to participate in the development and delivery of such a program.
- c. Improved effectiveness and coordination of professional development programs. A major driver of improved professional development would be a continuing education requirement for all certificate holders. Through such a requirement, it would be possible to set standards for professional development eligible for recognition, to develop and approve programs, to allocate time and to ensure opportunity for individual professional growth. The Association is deeply committed to improving the practice of members and would take on such an initiative.
- d. Reinforce the instructional leadership role of the principal. The Association is committed to the development of practice standards and a practice review process for school leaders, including the principal. The Association is also committed to developing programs that improve the instructional leadership role of principals and has been in discussion with government on such an initiative.

2. Support.

- a. Clarify the central task and roles. The Association will work with government and other education partners to clarify the central task and roles; a sharpened focus can improve the deployment of staff and better achieve education system goals.
- b. Provide “wrap around services”. The Association will work with government and other education partners to establish appropriate structures for the effective delivery of “wrap around services”. Given the cross-ministry nature of this initiative, government will need to take the lead.
- c. Clarify ambiguities surrounding the notion of personalization of learning. The Association will work with government and other education partners on this initiative over time as society becomes more interested in increasing flexibility and personalizing learning experiences for students. We are currently researching the implications of personalization, especially to develop a clearer understanding of how teaching and learning experiences are impacted. A key question for teachers is “what does it look like” and we have been studying and discussing this question within the profession for the past three years.
- d. Review instructional time requirements for teachers and release time for school administrators. The Association will work with government and other education partners on assessing the implications of *Inspiring Education*, especially personalizing learning, competency-based approaches to curriculum, on instructional delivery and impacts on workload. We will also examine how best to support school administrators in the context of *Inspiring Education* and their instructional leadership role.

3. Systemic Articulation and Coordination.

- a. Establish a proper consultation structure to manage and coordinate *Inspiring Education*. While there are ministry advisory structures within various branches or sectors, there is no cross-government structure to coordinate and manage the implementation of *Inspiring Education*. Real success has been made in previous reform efforts with genuine advisory structures which reflect the education partners and are live to their views and suggestions. One of the best examples, over time, was the Board of Teacher Education and Certification. The structure would need to be cross-government in nature, and we would welcome the opportunity to participate actively.
- b. Public policy initiatives will need to include social policy goals in order to achieve the potential of *Inspiring Education*. We are willing to work with government to clarify directions and throughout the process.

4. Social Realities.

- a. Social realities are real and require a government-wide response. We are willing to work with government in this process, but there are important public policy issues here for government.

5. Funding.

- a. Conduct a proper third-party assessment of real costs to meet student learning needs, including social policy support. The Association is willing to participate in such an initiative.
- b. In the interim, reinstate funding increases promised by the Premier in the 2012 provincial general election. The Association would welcome such an announcement and would seek to direct funding to the most urgent student learning needs (most likely support for inclusion).

Additional Questions Posed by the Task Force Chair

Task Force Chair Feltham invited the Association to respond to two additional questions. First, the Association was invited to respond to the issue of the membership of principals, with a view to clarifying how principals can contribute to excellence. The Association was also invited to provide comments on the potential removal of professional functions from the organization and the implications for excellence of such a move.

The Membership of Principals

Membership in the Alberta Teachers' Association includes classroom teachers, school administrators and central office staff, and is automatic for all teachers employed by public and separate school boards, excepting the superintendent of schools and chief deputy, if there is one. The culture of schools in Alberta is collegial, not managerial. Teachers, school administrators and central office staff work together to focus on student learning needs. The focus is student learning needs, not management/labour relations. The focus is student learning needs, not who is required to do what. This does not mean that administrative authority is opposed. Although a collegial culture is the norm, the Association's Code of Professional Conduct recognizes that in certain circumstances it may be necessary for the school administrator to adopt a position of authority. Such a position is accepted by teachers and supported by the Code itself. A collegial culture should not be taken for granted. It is the product of longstanding practices and conventions which have created sustained levels of trust across the system. It is also the product of a unified teaching profession, where all members are subject to the same high standards and work together to achieve them.

While this has been a longstanding reality in Alberta, a collegial culture does not exist in all other jurisdictions. British Columbia operates within a culture of management/labour relations. Principals, who are not members of the British Columbia Teachers' Federation, are seen as agents of the board in each school. BCTF names a grievance officer in each school and contests management decisions through the grievance procedure outlined in the collective agreement. The focus tends to be on who does what and the system makes it more difficult to focus on student learning needs. A major chunk of the principal's time is spent managing labour relations.

In Alberta, the continuing focus has been student learning needs and the principal's emphasis is instructional leadership. With teachers, school administrators and central office staff all subject to the same Code, Alberta has avoided problems created by management/labour relations and has retained a sharp focus on student learning needs. The Code supports the use of administrative authority when collegiality fails. In addition, Alberta has a long history of consensus building and trust in relations. In the bargaining context, Alberta collective agreements are short and do not contain provisions that appear in most other agreements. For example, teacher transfer and termination are dealt with in legislation, as are contracts of employment. The evaluation of teachers is a government policy. The standard on which teaching practice quality decisions are based is a ministerial order. These provisions do not appear as articles in a collective agreement because consensus, relationships and trust matter. This culture is parallel to a collegial culture in schools.

The removal of principals from membership in the Alberta Teachers' Association would destroy collegial relationships in schools and replace them with a regimen of management/labour relations. Such a regimen would replace the instructional leadership role of principals and create additional challenges in the quest for excellence. In the current structure, the principal is able to complete the managerial responsibilities of the position in the context of collegial relations—the principal is seen as the “principal teacher” in the school, not the agent of the board.

In sum, the removal of principals from Association membership puts an end to a unified teaching profession and a culture of collegiality and establishes a structure less focused on teaching and learning and more focused on management/labour relations. Diminishing a school's focus on teaching and learning diminishes the prospects for excellence.

The Governance of the Teaching Profession

Longstanding Alberta government policy allows a profession to choose how it is organized (i.e., one organization or two), as long as there is a clear delineation between union and professional functions and the latter functions respect fundamentally the public interest. The Alberta Teachers' Association has always advocated that the teaching profession be governed by a single organization.

Since 1936, the Association has been responsible for policing the conduct of teachers employed by public and separate school jurisdictions. The *Teaching Profession Act*, last updated significantly in 1996, requires the Association to conduct an investigation into alleged professional misconduct of any member upon the receipt of a complaint. Where there is sufficient evidence of misconduct, a hearing committee is constituted and the Association prosecutes the teacher. The hearing committee includes a member of the public named by the Minister of Education. The hearing committee has the authority to convict (or find innocent) and to impose any sanction up to and including expulsion

from membership. A teacher who is convicted of unprofessional conduct can appeal the decision or the sanction to an appeal committee (which includes a member of the public named by the Minister of Education). The role of Provincial Executive Council in this process is to receive reports from hearing committees and to assess if the public interest is served by the outcome in each instance. Council does have the authority to appeal the decision or the sanction to an appeal committee, and does so when it is of the view that an appeal is in the public interest.

Since 2009, the Association has been responsible for policing the professional practice of classroom teachers employed by public and separate school jurisdictions. The *Teaching Profession Act* allows the Association, with ministerial approval, to establish a Practice Review Bylaw to ensure that the professional practice of classroom teachers meets the practice standard (the *Teaching Quality Standard*). While the Association maintains the process, the Association does not control it. A superintendent of schools can refer a matter to the Association when the superintendent concludes that the *Teaching Quality Standard* is not being met, the teacher evaluation policy has been followed and the investigated teacher's suitability for certification is in question, and the executive secretary is required to order a hearing to be convened within 120 days. The Association prosecutes the teacher. The hearing committee includes a member of the public named by the Minister of Education, two teachers, a school administrator and a central office administrator, and has the authority to determine if the teacher's practice does not meet the requirements of the *Teaching Quality Standard* and can impose any sanction up to and including expulsion from membership. A teacher whose professional practice is found to be unacceptable can appeal the decision or sanction to an appeal committee (which includes a member of the public named by the Minister of Education). The role of Provincial Executive Council in this process is to receive reports from hearing committees and to assess if the public interest is served by the outcome in each instance. Council does have the authority to appeal the decision or sanction to an appeal committee, and would do so when it is of the view that it is in the public interest.

Since its inception, the Association has sought full self governance for the teaching profession and has been willing to restructure as may be required. For example, if the government were to allow the Association to regulate certification, continuing education, professional conduct and professional practice for all certificate holders, the Association would need to revise its governing structure. The *Teaching Profession Act*, as currently established, assigns extensive responsibility for advancing the cause of education and improving the teaching profession through recruitment and selection, adequate programs of preservice preparation, promotion of good working conditions, organizing groups to improve the knowledge and skill of teachers, and activities to maintain and improve the competence of teachers. These are stated as statutory objects and the structure of the Association reflects these functions. While there is clearly an interest in these objects from the perspective of individual members, these objects relate to the interests of the profession collectively and the public interest.

The removal of professional functions would fundamentally change the nature of the Alberta Teachers' Association. The Association would be recast as a pure trade union, like the Alberta Union of Provincial Employees and the United Nurses of Alberta. Its sole guiding principle would be the members' interest. Where this has occurred elsewhere in Canada, there have been fundamental changes. Where government removes professional functions and establishes a college of teachers to manage the professional functions, teachers do not see the college as a structure owned by teachers. Meanwhile, the teachers' organization which remains, gutted of its professional roles, is transformed into a trade union and focuses solely on representing members. Teachers' trade unions become much more aligned with the house of labour (teachers' unions in British Columbia and Ontario are members of their respective provincial federation of labour and the Canadian Labour Congress) and even sign up other education workers (e.g., teachers' assistants) as part of their unions. More significantly, the links to government are seriously compromised as the only point of contact is through labour relations. With the loss of professional functions, teachers do not work closely with government on curriculum or program matters (this becomes a management function of sorts) and the capacity for government to influence what happens in a classroom or education reform is significantly compromised. None of this promotes excellence. Given that a teachers' union protects the members' interests, the role of the teachers' union is to defend teachers whose professional conduct or practice may be considered to be unacceptable.

The governance of the profession is not an irrelevant thing. How teachers are governed has a direct impact on the capacity of the profession. The Association believes that collegiality and a unified teaching profession are of paramount importance, especially in the face of *Inspiring Education*, an initiative that requires personalization and collegiality. The removal of professional functions would be seen as a huge slap in the face for Alberta's teaching profession, whether devolved to a college or to government. The Association makes substantial investments in its professional functions and wants to ensure that the public interest continues to be served through a single teachers' organization. How the Association is governed also affects who runs for office, who is hired to serve on staff and how various programs and initiatives are delivered.

The Association believes that it should be granted full self governance for the teaching profession in Alberta, with the right to regulate certification, continuing education, professional conduct and professional practice for all certificate-holders, including right to scope and right to title, and is prepared to restructure, within a single organization, as may be required to achieve this goal. By its very nature, such a structure for teacher governance is much more focused on excellence—the profession wants high standards. The alternative—the creation of a pure trade union—shifts the focus to the members' interests alone and creates a structure with much less attention on excellence and little or no attention to the public interest.

Concluding Comments

The Alberta Teachers' Association is strongly committed to excellence. In the decade ahead, much will turn on teaching quality. It will be a factor that distinguishes the performance of education systems around the world. Rather than imposing reforms or initiatives, it is very important for government to listen very carefully to the needs and aspirations of the teaching profession in order to be successful with a focus on teaching quality. Just having better teachers in schools does not automatically improve student learning outcomes—we need to consider how we think about teaching as a profession and the role of schools in our society. We need top quality teacher preparation programs, not alternatives that allow anyone to teach. We need public assurance models, not toxic accountability practices that have much more to do with out-of-school factors. We need flexibility in decision-making for teachers, so they have autonomy to do their work and freedom to deliver their lessons in ways that are likely to be successful. We need system articulation and coordination which does not exist today, and we need the funding. We need more support to meet each student's learning needs, especially as personalization of learning becomes an even greater focus. We need to continue to build the capacity of the profession to be successful for every student, and we need to build the teachers' organization so it can better support the profession to do so while safeguarding the public interest.

E.4. Submission of The Association of Alberta Public Charter Schools

December 6, 2013

The Association of Alberta Public Charter Schools (TMPCS) is pleased to offer the following response to the invitation to contribute to the dialogue on what constitutes teaching excellence within the province of Alberta. We have framed our responses to the three questions below.

QUESTION 1: What does your organization believe to be the most important issues related to the assurance of teaching excellence in Alberta?

Although possessing unique goals, guiding principles and approaches to learning and teaching, Alberta's 13 charter schools hold common commitments within the following areas:

- We are committed to the mandate of developing exemplary practices, promoting innovation and research-informed approaches to learning and teaching, and to collaborating with other schools with the goal of learning from each other and learning together.
- We also hold the belief that our success in meeting our individual goals and in fulfilling our charter mandates is closely related to our ability to recruit outstanding teachers and school leaders, and to provide opportunities for them to be successful in these important roles by supporting their continued professional growth.
- We fundamentally believe that it is important to ensure that we are recruiting individuals with the competencies required to successfully implement the *Inspiring Education* agenda and specifically, that we are selecting individuals for teacher preparation programs who are risk-takers, innovators and individuals, capable of meeting the expectations of our charter mandates while addressing broadly the expectations of teaching excellence.
- We eagerly embrace opportunities to partner with universities offering teacher preparation programs to provide meaningful, authentic practicum and other relevant, career-long professional learning experiences.

Charter schools recognize the importance of having individuals in school leadership roles with the appropriate competencies which are in keeping with the (draft) "Alberta Education Competencies for School Leaders" framework. For the past three years, TAAPCS has provided a series of professional learning experience for school leaders based on this framework. Through this experience, we have developed an appreciation

for the efficacy of bringing school jurisdiction and school leaders together as co-learners in exploring the competences and developing their skills and abilities to promote and support the *Inspiring Education* vision.

We have discovered that two key factors related to the success of charter schools are related to “choice” – specifically, choice for parents and choice for students. When parents have the ability to choose what they believe constitutes the best education for their children and to become actively involved in that education, students benefit. Additionally, we have learned that students value the opportunity to choose how they will learn; when provision is made, through the charter goals and guiding principles, for teaching and learning which address these student choices and needs, students know what to expect and are more able to be highly engaged in their learning.

In essence, we believe that the most important issues related to the assurance of teaching excellence in Alberta are related to having exemplary teachers and leaders, hearing student and parent voice, engaging students as learners and actively involving them in decisions impacting learning and teaching. As well, we believe it is vital to provide parents with the opportunity to choose what they believe to be best for their children, and to be active partners in education. Teachers and leaders who come prepared to welcome, live and share this philosophy and learning are those whom TAAPCS wishes to recruit to their schools.

QUESTION 2: What strategies would you suggest could be implemented to address these issues? Please describe how the strategies you suggest would effectively address each of the issues.

1. Recognition should be given to the role of charter schools in developing exemplary innovative practice, and to promoting teaching excellence within the charter schools and beyond. Charter school teachers and leaders are strongly committed to professional learning and ongoing enhancement of their teaching and leadership practices. Charter schools should be supported in their initiatives to provide opportunities for teachers and leaders in Alberta schools and post secondary institutions to learn together and from one another.
2. As centres of innovation, charter schools appreciate the flexibility, as previously articulated in the “School Act”, which provides options in regards to their relationship with the Alberta Teachers’ Association. It is believed that this flexibility supports charter schools in the development of their unique programs, as well as in the creation of excellence in teaching and learning.
3. We would like the Alberta Teachers’ Association to give recognition for the contributions to teaching excellence which currently are being made by charter schools. We believe the ATA should embrace such contributions of charter school

teachers and leaders, as well as recognize their contributions to professional learning initiatives, including the work of Specialist Councils as Associate Members of the Alberta Teachers' Association.

4. Teacher preparation program recruitment and admissions procedures should be reviewed, enhanced and modified to ensure that individuals with the qualities and competencies related to teaching excellence are being selected as future teachers.
5. Charter schools should be provided enhanced opportunities to partner with teacher preparation programs to provide meaningful, authentic practicum experiences and relevant, career-long professional learning experiences.
6. Post-secondary institutions should be encouraged and supported to welcome the research invitations of charter schools.
7. Alberta Education should act as a partner with charter schools and TAAPCS in the dissemination of innovative and effective learning, teaching and leadership practices. An example of a project worthy of this partnership from the Association perspective would be the TAAPCS three-year initiative in developing school leadership. This project contains within it a particular emphasis on the efficacy of bringing school jurisdiction and school leaders together as co-learners in exploring the (draft) Leadership Competencies. The intent of the initiative is to assist these co-learners in the development of requisite skills and abilities to promote and support the *Inspiring Education* agenda. Similarly, individual charter schools will have research experiences to share with the broader educational community and would appreciate the active advocacy and partnership of the Department.
8. Parents should continue to be given the opportunity to choose what they believe to be the best learning opportunities for their children; they should also continue to be provided with roles which actively engage them as partners in the education of their children.
9. Students should continue to be provided with opportunities to choose how they will learn and be given an active voice in, and more responsibility for, their own learning.

QUESTION 3: What role do you believe your organization should have in the implementation of these strategies?

TAAPCS believes the strategies which we have proposed are representative of our mandate and what we are hoping to achieve as charter schools. We would welcome any opportunity to become actively involved in the successful development and implementation of these strategies and to contribute to successfully achieving the ultimate goal of assuring teaching excellence in Alberta schools.

Respectfully submitted,

Jay Pritchard,
Co-President,
TAAPCS

Judy Gray,
Co-President,
TAAPCS

cc: Charter School Superintendents
Dr. Garry Andrews, Executive Director, TAAPCS

E.5. Submission of the Alberta School Boards Association

December 2013

Introduction

The Alberta School Boards Association strongly supports the vision and aspirations stemming from the *Inspiring Education* initiative and is pleased to provide the following submission, for consideration by the Minister of Education's *Task Force for Teaching Excellence*, as a support to ensuring Alberta's public education system continues to transform in a manner that is student centered, and in the best interests of students and our communities.

The Minister of Education, the Hon. Jeff Johnson, has been quoted in the media indicating, "the task force will make recommendations on how we can better support Alberta's teachers to ensure that every student has the best chance at success." Furthermore, the Minister was cited as indicating the task force will consult with parents, students, teachers, support staff, school leaders, stakeholders, community and business representatives and all interested Albertans to forge recommendations and help inform guiding principles and policy shifts that align with *Inspiring Education* – Alberta's vision for twenty-first century learning. Consistent with this consultation initiative and in fulfillment of its legislated powers and purpose, the Alberta School Boards Association provides this submission.

Stewardship role of school boards

As locally-elected governments, Alberta's school boards are entrusted with the responsibility to foster excellence in public education. In fulfilling this crucial governance role, school boards are connected with, and responsive to, their local communities, ensuring all students – each of whom has the fundamental right to be educated – receive the best possible education. Theirs is the voice most reflective of local context. Theirs are the decisions made in the best interests of the students and communities they serve, ever-mindful that the dollars allocated to public education come from the public purse.

Building on the solid foundation of what is already a world-class education system; school boards are uniquely placed to ensure the very best outcomes for all students in a future shaped by *Inspiring Education* and the *Education Act*.

One of the key ways school boards achieve these outcomes is by employing and supporting excellent teachers.

School boards are stewards of public education. Preparing for a future where all students are engaged thinkers and ethical citizens with an entrepreneurial spirit, in an education system centered on the learner and ever-more responsive to local direction, this stewardship role has never been more important.

Guiding principles for school boards

To assist in providing context for our submission, the Alberta School Boards Association offers the principles that have guided our advocacy with respect to transformation of the education system. These principles, or lenses as we commonly reference them, require that transformation:

1. Is student-centered and provides enhanced opportunities for student success;
2. Is financially sustainable now and in the future; and,
3. Retains flexibility for school boards to shape the delivery of education in order to meet the needs of their local communities.

These lenses offer a perspective we believe is, or could be, supported by all education stakeholders, and are certainly central to the decision making process of the Alberta School Boards Association and Alberta's school boards.

Commitment to transformation

Alberta is already regarded as having a high performing education system and the quality of teaching in our schools is certainly central to this. It is without question that excellent teachers, and therefore teaching excellence, are essential to successfully transform the education system and enhance student success. Simply noting this is not enough. The Alberta School Boards Association recognizes teaching excellence is not the result of mandated action or legislation. Teaching excellence can only be achieved through coordinated, intentional commitment, at all levels of the education system, to excellence. This requires, among other things, the will and intent of teachers and a committed effort by the entire system to support teachers.

For transformative initiatives to be successfully implemented, systemic changes will be required. Teachers must be committed to the outcomes, and support for teaching excellence must reach into and beyond the classroom. Further, commitments and support offered to teachers will need to protect and reflect a shared interest in ensuring the integrity of the teaching profession is upheld and celebrated, ensuring excellent teachers are instructing students.

To ensure an excellent education system, excellence must be present at all levels: teachers, school and system administrators, school boards and the government. It is noted that where this submission references teachers, comments are also made in consideration of the various roles teachers play in our system, including school administration. As we seek to define the role of a teacher and articulate teaching excellence, so must we define the roles of school administrators and articulate excellence for these roles. Ensuring excellence at all levels will be fundamental to any systemic change.

As leaders implementing the principles of *Inspiring Education*, school boards recognize transformation has the potential to change many facets of the current system, and that such changes would benefit from a continued and ongoing dialogue on how we transform the system together.

Teaching excellence

Transformation focused on system improvement is a priority in order to ensure our high performing education system continues to meet the evolving needs of students. While teaching excellence remains an essential component in this effort, teaching excellence may be interpreted differently by each of us. Where teaching excellence is the expected outcome, understanding all its components is critical.

As system governors, school boards have a perspective on teaching excellence that envisions engaged teachers, with the requisite skill, ability and commitment to ensure each student has access to the very best instruction. Excellent teachers are engaged and build genuine rapport with students to help each student realize his/her full potential. Facilitating student learning, in a collaborative, empathetic and nurturing learning environment is critical to ensuring greater opportunities for student success.

This may require a culture shift for some. Teaching excellence can be assured only if there is an effective means of evaluating the performance of, and supporting the growth of, teaching professionals. The evaluation process must reinforce and contribute to maintaining competencies, but also serve to inspire and recognize the significant efforts and investments teachers make in educating their students.

An evaluation process is an integral component of a system that acknowledges the expectations of a teacher, recognizes the many successes a teacher has, and then contributes toward developing a coordinated, shared plan for developing additional skills and knowledge for further supporting students.

It would be unfair and unrealistic to expect teaching excellence if we cannot articulate the standard. The standard needs to delineate, with specificity, the teacher's roles and responsibilities. With related initiatives currently underway discussing issues related to teacher development, practice, efficacy, and workload, it is critical that questions around boundaries be addressed. The system would benefit from a shared understanding of what are the duties of a teacher and what reasonable parameters exist to guide their employment.

The present *Teaching Quality Standard* is dated and does not necessarily reflect the current needs of our students. The standard should identify the expectations of teachers at the various stages of their career (i.e. interim certification or permanent certification), and in a manner that is consistent with the expectations of parents and students that high quality instruction is provided. The standard must be revised to reflect the role of

the teacher in achieving the vision of *Inspiring Education*. School boards, teachers, students, parent organizations, system administrators, Alberta Education, and post-secondary teacher preparation institutions need to come together to define a new standard.

A shared concern of teachers, school boards, parents, administrators, and other education stakeholders, stems from experience. Not all children arrive at school with the tools and supports required for learning. Many have complex issues related to their health and wellbeing; some face challenges at home; some are malnourished; some lack many of the basic necessities others might take for granted. Numerous resources have been developed to assist in such instances, but providing equitable access, in all communities, remains a challenge. Recognizing schools are a convenient, logical location for accessing the majority of children, many of the social, health, judicial, and related resources seem to arrive at the door of the school. Teachers, caring for their students as they do, often end up assuming responsibility for providing or supporting additional services that extend beyond what would traditionally be considered 'educational services.' To the extent the role of the teacher is defined to exclude responsibility for some of these services, resources and supports need to be available, and reasonably accessible to students, so teachers may focus on their role.

When it comes to supporting children, it is easy to get caught in a cycle of assuming additional responsibilities. Teachers, school administrators, and school boards often go far beyond instructional responsibilities to make even greater impacts on the lives of students. Where do we draw the line of what is reasonably expected of the education system? This emphasizes the need for a clear articulation of roles and responsibilities. School boards are ultimately responsible for ensuring excellent teachers are instructing students, but there are limits to what can be asked of teachers. Assessment of resources and initiatives, on a cost-benefit basis, is required to ensure limited resources are being used optimally, to maximize the benefit of all children.

It is with that view that the Alberta School Boards Association developed this submission. Identifying teaching excellence as a desired outcome requires a commitment to supporting teachers in their work. While this will certainly require continued dialogue and collaboration with all education stakeholders, the task force is encouraged to consider the following elements of this submission as they contribute to promoting teaching excellence:

- I. Preparation for teaching excellence**
- II. Support and development for teachers during their career**
- III. Supporting and protecting the teaching profession**

I. Preparation for teaching excellence

Teaching excellence is largely dependent upon developing the very best teachers and preparing them for the greatest chance of success in the classroom. The Alberta School Boards Association believes that a comprehensive teacher education program, with multiple and extensive opportunities to gain real classroom experience, would best prepare and inform student teachers about what they may expect from a career in the teaching profession.

Responsibility and accountability

The responsibilities and accountabilities borne by teachers in educating students necessarily require establishment of, and adherence to, high expectations. Setting high expectations is fair only if such expectations are obtainable. Teachers require and will need to continue to be supported and encouraged in their pursuit of reaching, and in most instances, surpassing these expectations for excellence. Unfortunately, this may not always be enough. As is the case with many professions, there may be a small percentage of the teaching population who may be unable to achieve teaching excellence and further a very small minority who may not be willing to put in the effort required to provide excellence in teaching.

Classroom experience

According to *A Transformation in Progress: Alberta's K-12 Education Workforce 2012/2013*, published by Alberta Education, only seventy-five percent (75%) of the graduates who successfully complete a teacher preparation program in Alberta will go into teaching. The remaining twenty-five percent (25%) choose alternative paths including further education, teaching in other provinces or countries, or other occupations. Additionally, there are teachers who leave the profession within the first few years of teaching. Appreciating the reasons may be many, a significant percentage of the teachers leaving the profession at this early point likely results from the realization that teaching is not a career they would find themselves successful in or satisfied with. Perhaps additional exposure to classroom experiences at various points in their education program may have led them to the same realization, but prior to commencing their career and at a point where transitioning to an alternate career may be more easily accomplished. This emphasis on providing access to legitimate classroom experiences throughout the teacher education program would serve the dual purpose of ensuring the very best are attracted to the profession and that they are prepared to achieve success as an excellent teacher.

Supports and resources

Students engaged in preparation for the teaching profession must have the requisite will and ability to teach consistent with the expectations placed on them and their chosen profession. In addition to understanding the high standards set for teachers, they should be aware of the supports and resources that are available to them to ensure the greatest

chance of their success. Equally important, prospective teachers need to be cognizant of what the teaching profession realistically entails to ensure we have the best teachers, with the truest desire for providing excellent teaching, in front of our students.

Teacher education

Currently in Alberta there are a variety of approaches to teacher education. For example, the length of time required to obtain an undergraduate degree is dependent upon which post-secondary institution the person attends. It is uncertain as to whether or not this variety best serves the needs of students and therefore warrants further consideration. Relevant questions to guide future discussions on teacher training may include:

- Should this be standardized in some manner?
- Should there be a screening process for admission to a teacher preparation program, which goes beyond high school marks, which ensures those individuals with the greatest chance of success are admitted?
- Should the length of a program vary? Does it take four, five or six years to prepare someone as a teacher?
- How long should practicums be? How many practicums should there be over the course of the teacher preparation program?
- Should there be a preferred approach for assigning teachers in their first few years of employment?
- How would these standards be applied to teachers developed outside of Alberta?

Irrespective of any specific recommendations education stakeholders would promote through a specific and separate consultation on this matter, it is essential that teacher education programs be practical, prepare teachers for success in the classrooms of today, and instil a commitment to continually develop excellent teaching practices to meet the needs of the classrooms of tomorrow.

The overarching interest is to assure that any teacher instructing students is capable of providing excellent teaching.

II. Support and development for teachers during their career

The education of students, in a student-centered model, is an evolving and dynamic process that must keep pace with their evolving learning needs. Though an effective teacher education program is critical to the success of a teacher, the ongoing education of a teacher must continue beyond the education program.

Teaching, and more importantly teaching excellence, requires an ongoing commitment to continuing education and constant improvement; a concept integral to maintaining the integrity of the teaching profession.

Professional development: a shared responsibility

There is a shared interest in continued education and training of teachers. This commitment is echoed in the language of the *Framework Agreement* that was enacted by the provincial legislature in the spring of 2013:

“... teachers must engage in ongoing professional development that considers School Jurisdiction, school, and personal goals.”

Furthermore, the *Framework Agreement* commits the provincial government, school boards and the ATA to ensuring time is dedicated to enable classroom teachers to:

- Collaborate with their colleagues in a professional learning community setting to benefit student learning and mitigate teachers workload; and
- Address the goals of their Personal Professional Growth Plan.

The partnership in this effort is recognized by school boards. As a shared responsibility, carving out time and opportunities for professional development falls to both the teacher and the teacher’s employer. An intentional plan must be established to ensure teachers, already made aware of the expectations for their role as a teacher, have the supports and resources which enable them to successfully meet those expectations. The plan must strike a balance between the needs of the teacher, the needs of the school, the needs of the school jurisdiction, and the needs of Alberta’s K-12 education system.

It is reasonable to expect the professional development available to teachers, beyond anything the teacher themselves may pursue on their own, ought to provide a direct benefit to students and student learning. Furthermore, as part of a learning community, it is expected that the learning by one teacher will be used to promote the learning of other teachers. The supports and resources required by one teacher may differ from those required by another. The profession of teaching is as much an art as a science and each teacher has his/her own unique talents and abilities. Although the supports needed to assist each teacher may vary, the expectations for teaching excellence do not; and electing to not meet the expectations cannot be an option. Focus on mastery of the professional role and accountability should be driving the need for continual improvement and the contents of teacher professional growth plans need to reflect the goals of *Inspiring Education*.

Building on the solid foundation of what is already a world-class education system, school boards are uniquely placed to ensure the very best outcomes for all students. It is expected that school boards foster opportunities for unique and innovative responses to challenges facing their local communities; to the benefit of students. To promote teaching excellence and facilitate a culture of lifelong learning, school boards provide various support mechanisms including both formal and informal mentorship programs, professional development opportunities, and the considered assignment of teachers new to the profession. School boards are committed to leading the informed transformation of the education system.

Teacher recertification

The Alberta School Boards Association continues to support the certification of teachers by the provincial government. Additionally, we believe the concept of ongoing recertification is worth exploring. Consistent with the concept of maintaining competencies as a professional, is the notion of supporting the evaluation and professional development priorities of educators through a recertification process.

In previous tripartite discussions (attempts by the Minister of Education, school boards, and the Alberta Teachers' Association to reach a long term collective agreement), the notion of developing a continuing competency model for teachers was raised. Though the *Framework Agreement* did not address this point, the conversation was informative and we believe worth exploring further. Further engagement of stakeholders, including other stakeholder associations, to determine a continuing competency model that would strengthen the teacher growth and evaluation process, demonstrates a commitment to a standard of teaching excellence and provides context to the assurance that students have access to the very best instruction.

As the Council on Alberta Teaching Standards will soon be replaced with the Teacher Development and Practice Advisory Committee, it would be advisable to revisit a concept that was previously entertained by COATS: a recommendation that teaching performance be judged as meeting the standard, marginal or incompetent. The assessment would drive subsequent actions that recognize the varying needs of the teacher and contemplate reasonable efforts to support and develop improvements in teaching practice.

Teacher evaluation

As students' learning needs evolve, so to must the skills and knowledge of teachers. Today's classroom, and more so the classroom of tomorrow, reflect greater diversity of student needs; for example, there will be larger populations of English language learners and First Nations, Métis and Inuit students, a greater focus on inclusion of all students, and further integration of technology into learning. A supportive model of evaluation is envisioned that would serve to better the system as a whole and articulate the accountabilities of the profession.

The best evaluation models are ones that provide affirmation of skill and ability, commendation for success and a reference to opportunities for further growth. The evaluation is a generative process where the documentation should reflect the process and discussions that take place throughout the evaluation period; there should be no surprises and the committed efforts of both the employer and the employee should be evident in the documentation. Evaluation of teachers should be a positive experience; focusing primarily on affirmation and commendation along with identification of growth and improvement opportunities. It is important to note the

The Alberta School Boards Association and school boards support a culture in the education system that embraces the evaluation and development of teachers with a commitment to ensuring each student has an excellent teacher instructing them.

The best evaluation models are ones that provide affirmation of skill and ability, commendation for success and a reference to opportunities for further growth.

identification of growth opportunities is not necessarily a criticism of the teacher, but rather an acknowledgement that continual growth is an expectation and that the students and the profession are worth the investment.

Support and accountability

This submission strongly emphasizes support for teachers. This is an important and a key component for bringing about change. However, a second complementary requirement is accountability, which is also necessary to bring about change in any system.

It bears repeating that Alberta is already widely recognized for having great teachers. Our education system is regarded as high performing and we need not start from scratch. Our view, throughout this submission, is on how to continue to evolve and better our system for the benefit of students.

Currently accountability is assured by probationary contracts and temporary contracts, progressive discipline, evaluation processes, the Alberta Teachers' Association's requirements for professional conduct, board interests in establishing standards for excellence, provincial assessments, interim certification, and several others. There must be an appropriate balance of support and accountability for meaningful change to occur; too great a focus on accountability may lead to compliance rather than commitment; too much support and there may be little impetus for change. Therefore, school boards as the employer, the Alberta Teachers' Association as the professional association, and government, must strike an appropriate balance of support and accountability.

Teaching excellence can only be achieved where there is both ability and commitment to meet that standard. It is acknowledged that it is not always that simple. Excellent teaching may not occur if a teacher lacks the skill to meet expectations. Skill alone is not in itself sufficient. A teacher may have the ability to teach with excellence but may lack the will to do so. Employers are obligated to determine whether an employee is capable of doing their job and if not, what may be the cause. This is perhaps why traditional means of managing employee performance differentiate between issues that are wilfully motivated as opposed to those that are innocent (culpable vs. non- culpable matters).

Consider the following scenarios:

- a. An experienced math teacher with a history of providing excellent teaching is assigned to instruct a new math curriculum. Without any intervention or support, poor performance could result though the teacher may still have their same level of commitment and desire to provide excellent teaching. Supporting such a teacher with additional professional development and support through their individual growth plan would likely result in the teacher growing as a skilled professional, and assist in facilitating excellent teaching.
- b. Assigning a teacher, fresh out of their education program and who has majored in the Sciences, to instruct a French class, may be unrealistic and likely unsuccessful; performance determined to be marginal or incompetent in such an instance might

be deemed non-culpable in that the employee may not be capable of excellent French teaching. A reasonable investment of time and resources still may not result in excellent teaching in this example. Similarly, addressing the matter as resulting from intentional poor behaviour also would not produce a satisfactory result either. Approximately forty percent (40%) of teachers in Alberta do not teach their major or minor from University. This is a significant consideration and speaks, in part, to the need to best support teachers in ways that provide them with opportunities for success that translates into enhanced opportunities for student success.

- c. The same teacher from scenario A is assigned as above, however, is no longer committed to providing excellent teaching. Although this teacher has the skills and abilities to meet the expectations established for teaching, without the commitment to teaching excellence, there is likely no reasonable amount of support or resources that will enable such a teacher to provide excellent teaching.

Appreciating the examples above call upon some extreme circumstances, they are provided to illustrate the point that teachers, in order to be successful and meet the standard of excellence, require both the skill and commitment to teaching excellence. These scenarios also speak to the need for school boards as the employer, the Alberta Teachers' Association, and government to have accountability processes and tools to bring about positive change.

The Alberta School Boards Association strongly supports enhanced teacher preparation and a commitment to support teachers during their careers to promote teaching excellence. It is also recognized that both the teaching profession, and most importantly students, deserve protection from teachers that are incapable, or unwilling, of providing excellent teaching. When there is a lack of will, the mechanisms that assure accountability must direct an appropriate response. When there is a lack of skill, more support may be warranted.

III. Supporting and protecting the teaching profession

Focused and committed effort to best support and encourage the success of teachers with the appropriate will and skill to meet the expectations set for teachers will assist in transforming the education system and ensuring excellent teachers are instructing students. In this effort, protecting the interests of students, and other teachers, ensures teaching excellence is not compromised or diluted with teaching that does not meet the standard for excellence.

The Alberta School Boards Association submits an effective and enhanced teacher education program, as previously described, in partnership with sustained commitment to supporting teachers in their continual development and pursuit of excellent teaching would minimize instances of unacceptable teaching. Nonetheless, there must be mechanisms and procedures for addressing instances where a teacher is unable to meet the expectations set for all teachers, or is otherwise unwilling to teach at that standard.

Where best efforts are unsuccessful

The prospect of disciplining a teacher, even to the extreme of removing them from their employment, is a significant act and as such requires careful consideration. Procedures need to ensure all steps are taken to encourage and support the success of the teacher. However, after all reasonable steps have been taken, should the teacher still be unable or unwilling to provide acceptable teaching services, there ought to be a more efficient, cost effective mechanism for addressing the situation than the current process.

Review of the Board of Reference

Teaching excellence is founded on the basis that every teacher is inspired and provides teaching that meets or exceeds the standard of excellence. Tenure as a teacher is not meant to be a shield from those expectations.

In Alberta, when a teacher's employment contract is severed, the end result can be a Board of Reference. Because this is seen to be a costly and ineffective process, it is seldom used.

In many cases, due to the time and monetary investment required to take a case to a Board of Reference, school boards instead negotiate severance arrangements that often result in removing a teacher from one employment relationship only to find him/her resurface in another. In other instances, school boards have committed themselves to following the process but are left unsatisfied with the outcome. To illustrate, one school board invested four (4) years and countless hours and financial resources, to engage in a hearing that called upon more than thirty (30) witnesses to address the performance issues of a single teacher. In a time of fiscal restraint, resources intended to support student learning ought not to be redirected to such processes.

The present practice review process is ineffective and needs to be reformed. The system is largely unresponsive to marginal or incompetent teaching skills and abilities. In effect, limited to addressing primarily those teachers who violate their code of conduct or do not meet employment standards, the system is not meeting the needs of school boards. The reality is that the current processes unintentionally create a disincentive to dealing with the minority of teachers who are not meeting expectations.

The Board of Reference process requires further consideration, which should include a review of experiences of school boards in this area. We believe education stakeholders would have valuable insight as to how this aspect of the system could be improved and we ought to capitalize on our collective knowledge. Our submission envisions the Board of Reference process as a component of a system where ample, fair and necessary supports and considerations are afforded teachers, such that any continuing unacceptable performance is addressed in a manner which is collaborative (where appropriate), timely, cost effective, efficient, and ultimately serves the best interests of students. The focus on teaching excellence must be kept at the forefront to ensure teachers in front of

students are providing excellent instruction at all times. Albertans must be assured that unacceptable teaching will be addressed and corrected in a timely manner. The Alberta School Boards Association believes such a model can be developed and supported by all stakeholders.

Closing remarks

Building on the solid foundation of what is already a world-class education system, school boards are uniquely placed to ensure the very best outcomes for all students. School boards foster opportunities for unique and innovative responses to challenges facing their local communities; students benefit. School boards are committed to leading the informed transformation of the education system.

Consistent with this submission, the Alberta School Boards Association believes they are offering a vision of what might lead to more specific changes in our current legislated context.

The dialogue that we hope would stem from this point would, at some point, turn to more specific amendments and we anticipate the opportunity to introduce specific amendments at that time, and as informed by the discussions that will have occurred.

The Alberta School Boards Association looks forward to continued dialogue and collaboration with education stakeholders in considering teaching excellence.

The Alberta School Boards Association understands the *Task Force for Teaching Excellence* is discussing matters related to defining separate roles and functions for teachers' professional association distinct from the union and is also questioning the appropriateness of including school administrators in the same bargaining unit as classroom teachers. Any change in these two areas should proceed cautiously. We have elected to not address these two complex matters in this submission. However, should the Task Force, or the provincial government, wish commentary in these two areas we would be pleased to provide the same.

Recommendations

1. In addition to the direction provided to the task force by the Minister of Education, that concepts contained in the Alberta School Boards Association lenses are applied to the task force's deliberations – namely, that recommendations and resulting decisions:
 - Are student-centered and provide enhanced opportunities for student success;
 - Are financially sustainable now and in the future; and,
 - Retain flexibility for school boards, as employers, to shape the delivery of education in order to meet the needs of their local communities.

2. Review the present Teacher Quality Standard to reflect the role of the teacher in achieving the vision of *Inspiring Education*.
3. The provincial government should review post-secondary teacher preparation programs to ensure they prepare teachers for success in the classrooms of today, and instil a sense of commitment in their graduates to continually develop excellent teaching practices to meet the needs of the classrooms of tomorrow.
4. Education students should have more time devoted to classroom experiences during their education program.
5. A continuing competency model that would strengthen the teacher growth and evaluation process and demonstrate a commitment to a standard of teaching excellence should be developed. The model should be linked to an ongoing recertification process.
6. Reconsider the concept previously entertained by the Council on Alberta Teaching Standards that teaching performance be judged as meeting the standard, marginal or incompetent. The assessment would drive subsequent actions that recognize the varying needs of the teacher and contemplate reasonable efforts to support and develop improvements in teaching practice.
7. That school boards develop an accountability system that provides an effective and timely means of supporting continual improvement and positive change. With a clearly articulated role of a teacher and expectations for teaching excellence, an effective evaluation model that is directly connected to system improvement and the desired objectives of *Inspiring Education* should be developed by the Alberta School Boards Association, in consort with other education stakeholders.
8. That the government review the current Board of Reference process.

E.6. Submission of the Alberta School Councils' Association

Background

The ASCA Board of Directors has developed its submission from the following sources:

- ASCA policy
- One-on-one conversations with school council parents
- Board meeting discussions
- And the report prepared and submitted to them from the ASCA Advisory Panel on Teaching Excellence

ASCA Advisory Panel on Teaching Excellence

The ASCA Board of Directors struck the **Advisory Panel on Teaching Excellence** (APTE) in September 2013. The Panel's mandate was to provide the ASCA Board of Directors with parent perspectives on teaching excellence, and share ideas on teaching quality assurance.

The Panel was comprised of a group of parents from school councils who shared an interest in teaching excellence for every Alberta student. The Panel met face-to-face in October and November to discuss what changes are needed to better support teachers, so that teaching excellence is the norm for every student. In their discussions the group referred to reports, current research, policy and processes which guide teaching in Alberta.

In addition, panel members spoke with peers one-on-one and at school council meetings and Council of School Councils (COSC) meetings.

To better understand the views of Alberta parents on this important topic two short surveys were developed, posted on the ASCA website, and communicated to a broader audience through Twitter. The rich and thoughtful responses of parents on the topic of teaching excellence provided fertile ground on which to base the Panel's report to the ASCA Board of Directors. Elements of the report are incorporated into this submission and the report in its entirety is appended to this submission.

ASCA Submission

As the education stakeholder organization recognized as the 'voice of parents', ASCA is pleased to offer the following thoughts framed by three questions provided by the Task Force for Teaching Excellence.

What does your organization believe to be the most important issues related to the assurance of teaching excellence in Alberta? That is, what one to three important issues do you believe the Task Force should focus on in making its recommendations to the Minister?

Three main issues have been identified by ASCA:

1. Preparation of education students, their transition into practice, and their ongoing support to promote excellence in teaching and learning

This includes:

- The uptake of potential education students – entrance requirements – who qualifies, what is the standard for entry?
- Training program elements – practical knowledge gained through experiential opportunities versus theory and classroom time – what is the right balance?
- Transition into practice -- how new teachers are inducted, mentored, and supported in the early years, including development opportunities for new teachers.
- Teacher support in early, mid and late career, including teachers teaching outside of their area of expertise/training; veteran teachers moved to new positions – are there supports in place to assist them?
- The use of coordinated ongoing professional development to encourage better practice.

2. The definition of “teacher” and clarification of role of the teacher

This includes:

- Who can be defined a ‘teacher’ in the classroom (e.g. others with subject area expertise but no Bachelor of Education degree), including teacher certification.
- An individual’s personal investment and the collective investment of teachers to assure the learning success of students.
- The definition of teacher ‘work’ – a common definition of what elements are included in teaching (lesson prep, face-to-face teaching time, professional development, teachable moments, supervision, etc.).
- Ensure the ‘right’ people are teaching in the ‘right’ positions because of their skill sets and passions, not because of seniority.

3. Teaching excellence assurance and teacher accountability

This includes:

- Teachers' personal investment to continuously strive for teaching excellence.
- A regular formative and summative assessment of individuals' teaching; a means to remove those individuals whose performance is not to standard, including.
 - The role of the principal in teaching excellence assurance, and strengthening the ability of a principal to deal with incompetent teachers.
 - The role of parents and students in teaching performance review.
- The re-certification of teachers at regular intervals throughout their career.
- Formal recognition of teaching excellence.
- The role of the teachers' union in supporting excellence.

Second, what strategies would you suggest could be implemented to address these issues?

- Review and amend teacher preparation program entrance requirements—raise the bar and ensure the right people are accepted into the program.
- Review and adjust teacher preparation programs to include an apprenticeship model of learning—a system that provides more practical support and knowledge.
- Define the role of the teacher; define what is included in teacher's work (not 'workload').
- Empower principals with tools to support formal assessment of teaching excellence; implement policies, structures and promote practices to deal with those individuals who do not aspire to or demonstrate teaching excellence over time.
- Introduce provincewide incentives to recognize and promote teaching excellence.
- Separate union issues from professional issues.
- Introduce a re-certification process for teachers.

What role do you believe your organization should have in the implementation of these strategies?

- Partner with stakeholder organizations in providing advice on teacher prep programs, as well as determining and defining the role of the teacher and who can teach.
- Partner with stakeholders to develop materials for parents/school councils on issues of instructional leadership, board governance and roles, K-12 funding, parental support in classrooms and schools etc.
- Raise awareness among parents and school councils of policies, definitions, practices and structures regarding teacher evaluation, performance issues, and expectations. Give parents a role in teaching evaluation and assessment.
- Assist parents with deepening understanding and awareness of importance of ongoing teacher development and learning.
- Provide parents with opportunities to increase their individual and collective knowledge about the K-12 system.
- Promote meaningful, respectful understanding and discussion of children's learning between school staff and parents.
- Promote greater discussion of aspects of teaching excellence through school councils.
- Promote understanding among teachers that parents have an important role to contribute to children's learning success.

Respectfully submitted by the Alberta School Councils' Association Board of Directors
December 20, 2013

Report to Alberta School Councils' Association (ASCA) Board of Directors From the ASCA Advisory Panel on Teaching Excellence (APTE)

It is with great pleasure the ASCA Advisory Panel on Teaching Excellence submits their report to the Board of Directors. Our discussions have been lively, informed by research, existing legislation, policy and the views of parents.

Background

The APTE is of a group of parents from school councils who share an interest in teaching excellence for every Alberta student. The panel met face-to-face in October and November to discuss what changes are needed to better support teachers, so that teaching excellence is the norm for every student. In their discussions the group referred to reports, research, current policy and processes which guide teaching in Alberta.

In addition, panel members spoke with peers– one-on-one and at school council meetings and Council of School Councils (COSC) meetings.

To better understand the views of Alberta parents on this important topic two short surveys were developed, posted on the ASCA website, and communicated to a broader audience through Twitter.

What follows is information about the questions we posed and our subsequent findings and observations.

Observations – Survey Responses

The initial survey asked parents to consider the following:

What qualities are demonstrated by an excellent teacher? What impacts teaching excellence?

Over 110 complete responses were received from parents. The comments reflected knowledge of the system, an understanding of work related issues from the teacher perspective and a strong desire for their children, because they will have benefited from teaching excellence, to be successful in school.

Comments on the qualities of an excellent teacher can be summarized in three areas:

1. Competence (i.e. confidence, expertise, ability, flexibility),
2. Communication (i.e. as demonstrated by/through the engagement of students, respect, clarity, empathy) and
3. Commitment (i.e. reflective practice, diligence, dedication and personal investment).

Interestingly enough, comments that fit within each of these three categories are in many ways representative of the themes of *Knowledge, Skills and Attributes* – categories which exist in the current Teaching Quality Practice Standard.

Comments on the impacts on teaching excellence can be summarized under three main themes:

- 1. Environment (includes both physical and sociological factors)**
- 2. Supports (includes human and financial resources)**
- 3. Commitment (includes perspectives and attitudes of individuals and collectives)**

There was an inclination on the part of some responders to revert to describing characteristics of excellent teachers in these responses as opposed to describing system-wide teaching excellence. It is clear however that system-wide teaching excellence is dependent on individuals each striving to achieve professional mastery and accept the assistance and role of others in the system that have a vested interest in the learning success of students. The whole is only as good as the sum of its parts.

The responses from the first survey were so encouraging that the panel determined a follow up question was in order.

The second survey asked parents to provide feedback on:

How could I and/or my school council support/advance teaching excellence?

Although fewer complete responses were received (100), the statements support that parental understanding of the role they play as individuals or through school councils could be a contributing factor in the development of provincewide teaching excellence.

Parents have a desire to support teaching excellence by being recognized by teachers and administrators as willing and contributing partners in the learning successes of their children. Parents are also seeking recognition from school leaders for the contributions they can make from their 'place at the table' through school councils.

Parents identified that as individuals and as school council members they have a responsibility to acquire and gain an understanding of the school and system as well as the factors that impact teaching excellence.

In addition, comments point to parents wanting to advocate for their children both individually and as members of a school community. In the bigger picture, parents recognize that an opportunity and ability to network with other parents in the province will increase awareness and knowledge about supports for a system of teacher excellence.

Observations – Panel Members

The discussions of Panel members can be captured under the following themes:

Teaching Excellence Assurance and Teacher Accountability

Panel members felt strongly that teaching excellence is more than a “nice to have”. As their children’s first and primary educators, parents need assurance that teaching excellence is something to which each and every teacher strives, and therefore is something that must be both supported and evaluated.

Teaching excellence begins with an individual teacher’s fundamental passion to be the best they can be. While it is not realistic to assume every teacher can achieve ‘teaching excellence’, parents need to know teaching excellence is being promoted, assessed and addressed with individual teachers on an ongoing basis.

In addition, panel members (and some survey respondents) felt parents have an important role in the performance assessment of teachers. While the role of parents was not defined, it was felt that parent (and student) involvement in evaluating teachers was missing and could add value and considerably benefit individual teacher professional growth.

Recognizing and Rewarding Excellence

While it was generally recognized that there are ‘degrees’ of teaching excellence, panel discussions also focused on incentives and recognition for positive teacher evaluations, either financially or through other employment initiatives. The role of teacher includes mentor, coach, guide and role model as well as one who imparts knowledge and encourages academic success in his or her students. The notion of ‘master teacher’ was also discussed, however no conclusion was reached as to how or when teaching excellence would be recognized and/or rewarded.

Panelists did agree though, that the concept of teaching excellence was comprised of many and varied elements and should not be assessed against single indicators (such as standardized test results).

The Role of the Principal and a Learning Partnership Model

Panel members discussed the role of the school leader in creating an environment that promoted teaching and learning excellence. The principal as instructional leader should be empowered to establish evaluation frameworks that promote and support teaching excellence and reward those who achieve it. The school principal could also use various approaches with teachers who are struggling to achieve excellence, including recommendations for remediation or removal. It was recognized, however, that principals are also teachers within the same union group, and that this perhaps would need to be addressed in order to provide that ‘empowerment’ to school leaders.

The concept of the school supporting a “learning partnership” was also explored by the group. Principal, teachers, support staff, school council and parents are colleagues in a type of ‘joint venture’ that exists to support students and their learning. The teacher plays an integral role in this partnership, but the partnership is also an essential component to teacher and teaching excellence.

Conclusions

From the responses received from the three questions the panel asked parents, from the discussion of the panel members themselves, and based on the discussions they were able to have in their respective school and district communities, the following conclusions can be drawn:

Individual teachers contribute to a system of teaching excellence

Teaching excellence rests with individual teachers who have the characteristics, personal investment and passion to commit to lifelong learning – both for themselves and their students. A teacher's competence, expertise, confidence and ability to be flexible is gained in a variety of ways – including their preparation to become teachers, their introduction to the classroom, their development professionally through formal ongoing training, mentoring, collaboration with peers and support from their superiors/supervisors. Recognizing and rewarding teaching excellence could provide an incentive to teachers to pursue a career-long course of action to constantly improve practice.

The need for a formal, regular teacher evaluation process

Although it was recognized that individual teachers need support (mentoring, guidance, networking, collaboration and professional development), it was felt a process of evaluating teachers formally would be a key factor in assuring excellence over time. Panelists and parents alike were surprised that teacher growth plans were not used for evaluative purposes, and that there was no formal, regular evaluation process in place. Re-introducing a formal process, and providing principals with the tools to take action in cases where teaching excellence was not evident would go a long way to providing parents and the public with assurance that teaching excellence was expected and supported for every Alberta student.

It was also apparent that participants on both the panel and through the survey felt the individual teacher's pursuit to provide teaching excellence should be unmistakable, and demonstrate a willingness on the teachers' part to learn from an evaluation process comprised of many elements, including feedback from parents and students.

Attitudes/Environment contribute to teaching excellence

A system of teaching excellence is possible when teachers recognize and respect others' contributions as partners in the learning journey of students. This includes all those who are engaged in the education enterprise, including parents and school councils. Everyone who interacts in a school, but particularly the principal, is key in creating, nurturing and sustaining an environment that supports teaching and learning excellence. That environment and the attitude of those who are in it, including teachers' interactions with parents and school councils, impact and contribute to a system of teaching excellence. The notion of a "learning partnership" existing within a school to promote and support excellence was also an 'environmental' factor in teaching excellence.

*Respectfully submitted to the ASCA Board of Directors by the
Advisory Panel on Teaching Excellence*

E.7. Submission of the Public School Boards' Association of Alberta

November 28, 2013

Dr. Glenn Feltham,
Chair Task Force for Teaching Excellence
11762 - 106 Street NW
Edmonton, AB T5G 2R1

Dear Dr. Feltham

Thank you for your letter of 13 November 2013 extending an invitation, for the Public School Boards' Association of Alberta, to provide written feedback to the Task Force for Teaching Excellence. The Member Boards of the Public School Boards' Association of Alberta were very pleased to have the opportunity to discuss the work of the Task Force as part of our 2013 Annual General Meeting deliberations on Friday 15 November 2013.

Our Members believe that excellent teachers play a significant role in creating the many opportunities for the children within our collective care, to achieve their dreams and realize their potential.

Our Association believes strongly in the autonomy and authority of Alberta's Public School Boards; in fact, we believe that the best decisions are made closest to the students, by locally elected Public School Trustees. Thus it is our Members within their own jurisdictions whom in the best position to comment upon, that which they and their communities believe to be excellence in teaching.

It is most unfortunate that despite our continued encouragement to our Member Boards that they actively participate in these consultations, our Members reported to us, that while they completed the online registration process to attend the Consultations, they were not selected to attend and were asked to complete the online survey instead. Our Members' collective interest is that of engaging in a responsive, grassroots, community engagement and conversation, unfortunately for many, this was not possible.

Despite this challenge, I can advise that we have continued to encourage our Member Boards to participate in the consultation process surrounding the Task Force for Teaching Excellence; to find ways by which the voices of the students within our collective care may be part of the conversations.

On behalf of the Members of the Public School Boards' Association of Alberta, thank you again, for the invitation to participate in this important conversation.

Sincerely,
Arlene Hrynyk, President
c: Executive Committee, PSBAA Member Board Chairs
Mary Lynne R. Campbell, Executive Director

E.8. Submission of the College of Alberta School Superintendents (Executive Summary)

Message from the CASS President

On behalf of the Board of Directors and all members of the College of Alberta School Superintendents (CASS), I am pleased to provide a submission to the *Task Force for Teaching Excellence*.

In this submission we will respond to the following three questions:

1. What does CASS believe to be the most important issues relating to the assurance of teaching excellence in Alberta?
2. What strategies would CASS suggest that could be implemented to address these issues?
3. What role should CASS have in the implementation of these strategies?

Included with this submission are a number of Appendices which I believe demonstrate the powerful impact CASS has had and will continue to have in supporting System Education Leaders, and through them school based administrators and teachers, in their pursuit to grow professionally in order to ensure every student in our province is supported “emotionally, intellectually, physically, socially and spiritually,” as outlined in *Inspiring Education*.

For many years the College of Alberta School Superintendents has strived for legislation that recognizes our profession. CASS continues to advocate that our status as a professional organization be recognized in legislation and that all System Education Leaders in Alberta be members.

Larry W. Jacobs, PhD. CASS President

CASS Response to the Questions Posed by the *Task Force for Teaching Excellence*

- 1. What does CASS believe to be the most important issues relating to the assurance of teaching excellence in Alberta?**
- 2. What strategies would CASS suggest that could be implemented to address these issues?**

The responses to the first two questions posed by the *Task Force for Teaching Excellence* will be integrated in order to provide continuity of thought.

The Specificity of Teaching Excellence

It is widely held that the single variable that educators and educational systems have control over and which has the most impact on student learning is the quality of the teacher in the classroom. Feedback from CASS members suggests that there is a lack of specificity of what defines teaching excellence. CASS recommends that competencies such as formative assessment, instructional strategies, collaboration and others be more clearly defined in the *Teaching Quality Standard*.

Clear and concise language should be in place with reference to essential learning elements such as, but not limited to, culture and expectations, individual learning goals, pre-assessment, pre-planning (utilizing a backwards design framework), utilization of rubrics and exemplars, introduction and developing a deeper understanding of new knowledge, tracking and communicating achievement of outcomes and individual learning goals, formative assessment, supports and pyramids of intervention, and summative assessment.

Two examples from the current *Teaching Quality Standard* (Ministerial Order (#016/97)) are provided which are representative of lack of specificity. The first example is from the Descriptors of Knowledge, Skills and Attributes Related to Interim Certification, while the second is from the Descriptors of Knowledge, Skills and Attributes Related to Permanent Certification. It is suggested that phrases such as “developing a variety of classroom and large scale assessment techniques and instruments,” “Teachers *appreciate*,” and “They *recognize*” are too ambiguous in nature. Specific examples of expectations should be outlined in the *Teaching Quality Standard*.

■ Example 1

As situations warrant, teachers who hold an Interim Professional Certificate are expected to demonstrate consistently that they understand:

k) the purposes of student assessment. They know how to assess the range of learning objectives by selecting and developing a variety of classroom and large scale assessment techniques and instruments. They know how to analyse the results of classroom and large scale assessment instruments including provincial assessment instruments, and how to use the results for the ultimate benefit of students.

▪ **Example 2**

d) Teachers know there are many approaches to teaching and learning.

Teachers appreciate individual differences and believe all students can learn, albeit at different rates and in different ways. They recognize students' different learning styles and the different ways they learn, and accommodate these differences in individuals and groups of students including students with special learning needs.

Teachers understand the fluidity of teaching and learning. They constantly monitor the effectiveness and appropriateness of their practices and students' activities, and change them as needed.

Teacher Education and Pre-Service Programs

Currently there are considerable differences between the Teacher Education and Pre-Service Programs that are in place in the province. CASS suggests that consideration be given to a provincial approach / model for Teacher Education. The review of Teacher Education Programs must involve stakeholders, especially System Education Leaders. Graduating teachers must learn and possess the competencies envisioned by *Inspiring Education* upon completion of a Teacher Education Program.

Enhancing the Pre-Service or practicum components of the Teacher Education Programs will enhance the level of competency of beginning teachers and also the confidence they will have upon completion of the Teacher Education Program.

CASS suggests that within the Pre-Service model there should be a minimum of three practicums and that the final practicum should include the start up at the beginning of a school year and be of a minimum of four months in length, as currently is in place in some Teacher Education Programs.

Another possibility for consideration is a standard period of internship, similar to the year of articling that a law student completes. This would benefit the teacher in training and also his / her students upon graduation.

CASS accepts that System Education Leaders must work closely with school administrators to ensure that supervising teachers selected to mentor practicum students / interns must possess and demonstrate the competencies outlined in *Inspiring Education*.

The Teacher Growth, Supervision and Evaluation Policy

As stated on the Alberta Education website, the *Teacher Growth, Supervision and Evaluation Policy* aims to ensure that each teacher's actions, judgments and decisions are in the best educational interests of students and support optimum learning. School authorities, Early Childhood Services (ECS) operators, superintendents, principals and teachers are responsible for facilitating quality improvement through each teacher's career-long professional growth.

CASS recommends that this policy needs to be reviewed so that it is clear, focused and manageable. The policy should be such that it ensures professional growth plans align with jurisdiction goals. Further the process for evaluation on a regular basis would provide assurance to the public that teachers possess the competencies required to achieve the vision outlined in *Inspiring Education*.

CASS accepts that System Education Leaders must provide the supports and training for school based administrators so they possess the attributes of an instructional leader, and are able to mentor, coach, support and evaluate teaching staff. CASS is prepared to provide such professional learning for System Education Leaders and school administrators, many of whom will become the System Education Leaders of the future. CASS can develop this capacity in school administrators so that assurance of teacher quality or excellence is achieved through supervision and evaluation of trained and confident school based administrators.

Human Resource Management

CASS recommends that a number of aspects related to human resources management be reviewed. These include:

- The length of probationary contracts, currently one year, should be two years. This period of time would then coincide with the minimum period of time required for a teacher to earn permanent certification. If there are still aspects of the Knowledge, Skills and Attributes that have not been demonstrated by a teacher, an opportunity to extend a probationary contract beyond two years should be available.
- In order to provide assurance of ongoing competency and currency, CASS recommends a structure which would have an expectation of ongoing recognized learning in order for a teacher to remain certified. It must be noted that CASS feels this should be in place for all educators including teachers, school based administrators and system leaders
- A School Board should be enabled to delegate the authority to transfer and/or terminate employment to a Superintendent. The ability to transfer an employee is essential when seeking to maximize the strengths of personnel and ensuring students are taught by teachers with the appropriate background and experiences.
- CASS believes that the current Board of Reference process is too arduous and exhausting in terms of human and financial resources. CASS accepts that all employees must be afforded due process if an evaluation of current competency is being undertaken. It is recommended that a new process must be developed; one that ensures due process but within a reasonable time period and which allows for termination of employment if identified concerns are not addressed despite guidance and supports put in place.

- CASS accepts that there is a responsibility for System Education Leaders to provide school based administrators opportunities to develop and grow the skills and competencies to address Human Resource Management matters, and for CASS to be supportive of this goal.

There is an accepted responsibility by CASS to ensure System Education Leaders are current and knowledgeable with respect to aspects of human resources management, such as contracts, teacher certification and ensuring due process occurs when employment issues develop. This will be achieved through developing professional learning modules and making them available for CASS members in a variety of delivery options. Continued development of the CASS Induction program will ensure new System Education Leaders will have mentors to provide guidance and support.

Teacher Efficacy

Teacher efficacy is the confidence teachers have about their individual and collective capability to influence student learning. Research suggests powerful effects resulted from the simple idea that a teacher's belief in his or her ability to positively impact student learning is critical to actual success or failure in a teacher's behavior.

Teacher's with a strong sense of efficacy:

- tend to exhibit greater levels of planning and organization
- are more open to new ideas and are more willing to experiment with methods to better meet student needs
- are more persistent and resilient when things do not go smoothly
- are less critical of students when they make errors
- exhibit a greater enthusiasm for teaching and learning
- have a greater commitment to teaching and learning
- are more likely to stay in teaching

A challenge often cited currently by teachers is 'a lack of time.' CASS recommends that it may be appropriate to review current models of delivery to determine if there are ways to decompress the current teaching schedule. Ensuring there can be opportunities for collaboration between colleagues at the school level, jurisdiction level and inter-jurisdictionally will enhance teacher efficacy.

Ongoing and embedded teacher professional learning is virtually universally accepted as being more apt to enhance teacher efficacy and teacher practice, therefore that model of professional learning should be the goal of all school jurisdictions and all schools.

As the capacity of a school based administrator to be an instructional leader grows, the level of teacher efficacy will increase. System Education Leaders, through the College of Alberta School Superintendents, can support the professional growth of school based administrators so they can better assure teaching excellence is occurring.

Graduate Study Programs in Education

Associated with the value of strong Teacher Education Programs is the need for graduate study programs which are relevant to realities of education in our province and which are readily accessible to aspiring school and system leaders. These realities include, but are not limited to, educational leadership, understanding of student services, curriculum, and human resource management within the Alberta context.

CASS has participated in the development of graduate programs in Alberta and believes that CASS members are valuable assets for the ongoing redesign of leadership development programs at the graduate level. Alberta's System Education Leaders bring the knowledge of what teacher excellence assurance looks like in practice.

Enhancing the Communication Plan

CASS believes that it is necessary for all stakeholders in Alberta's education future to have a strong communication plan in place in order to provide the public with a clear message about the initiatives that are being put into place at all levels. This provides assurance that their children will benefit from excellent teaching and learning experiences.

The collaboration of all education stakeholders including teachers, students, parents, school based administrators, system leaders and the public is critical. While educators may have a growing understanding of *Inspiring Education*, parents, students and community members need to be more informed.

Some components of the communication plan could include:

- continued definition of 21st century skills and understanding of the vision within *Inspiring Education*
- clearly explaining the contents and expectations of the 2013 Ministerial Order by teachers, school based administrators and System Education Leaders, and the public
- defining, providing exemplars, gathering and sharing models of effective teaching and teacher excellence
- explaining how education will change in Alberta; how teaching and learning will look different and what parents can expect in the future
- providing guidance so school based and system leaders can define assurance for schools and stakeholders
- common language and understanding
- better definition of Knowledge, Skills and Attributes and the *Teaching Quality Standard* for all stakeholders. There needs to be a deeper understanding among staff members, school administrators, system leaders and members of the community

CASS Response to the Questions Posed by the *Task Force for Teaching Excellence*

3. What role should CASS have in the implementation of these strategies?

Inspiring Education presents a vision for education in 2030. Achievement of the vision requires a broad-based transformation in educational practices, programming, governance and structures, and a broader repertoire of competencies for educators. System Education Leaders are key to successful transformation in developing school leaders and teacher professional capital; i.e. their confidence in, commitment to and capacity for reform through innovation. The foundational idea of Leithwood (2008) is that district leadership does, in fact, have a significant role to play in improving student learning.

According to Hargreaves & Fullan (2012), a transformed education system requires re-culturing the profession and practice of teaching at the school and district levels by identifying a professional repertoire of expert, empirically-based best practices that apply to most contexts. Ways that CASS can play a role in the re-culturing of education are outlined below:

Planning

The College of Alberta School Superintendents will participate in continued efforts to better define all facets of teaching excellence. Our members are uniquely qualified, having served as teachers, school administrators and System Education Leaders.

CASS members have a broad spectrum of partner relationships they can bring to the discussions.

Communication

CASS members have knowledge of unique communication opportunities within their communities. They can gauge the appropriateness of communication from a front line perspective. It is very important that parents and students understand teaching excellence and any adjustments they may see in teaching practice as a result. It is also an opportunity to communicate with the broader community.

System Education Leaders can facilitate the communication with school based personnel and in fact may use jurisdiction Professional Learning to help teachers and school administrators better understand what is being asked through the assurance model/ teaching excellence.

System Education Leaders can continue the process to integrate *Inspiring Education* and make its vision part of student learning.

Internship Program

Many school jurisdictions have instituted a form of teacher internship to help new teachers with the sometimes overwhelming demands they face at the beginning of their careers.

CASS advocates for a province wide internship program, similar to the year of articling which lawyers complete as part of their professional training. CASS believes a consistent and common internship program would increase teacher efficacy and reduce the percentage of teachers who leave the profession in their first five years of teaching. A province wide program would also help address inequities between communities.

The College of Alberta School Superintendents would assist with the development of a provincial internship program and members would introduce it into their jurisdictions.

Professional Learning for School Based & System Administrators

As outlined in Appendices 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, and 11, the College of Alberta School Superintendents currently offers a number of professional learning programs for new and aspiring school and system level administrators. Ongoing modification to these programs currently takes place, and will be made in the future in order to provide professional learning focused on the changes that result from the work of the Task Force.

In addition, the College of Alberta School Superintendents is uniquely positioned to work independently and/or with partners on a provincial professional learning program for school administrators.

Such a program must be created so student success isn't affected by the absence of the school administrators from the school. Effective use of technology and development of local cohorts are strategies for offering professional learning for school administrators. Evidence of participation could be an aspect of a Professional Growth Plan.

Professional Leadership to Support System Education Leaders

The College of Alberta School Superintendents is a professional organization with a member approved Code of Professional Conduct and CASS Practice Standards.

CASS bylaws are a reflection of the original legislation that was prepared for presentation to the legislative assembly by then minister, Dr. Lyle Oberg. This proposed legislation was research based, similar to the LEADS Act in Saskatchewan (Appendix 14) and involved legal staff from both the ministry and CASS. Extensive consultation with stakeholders was part of the development process. Included in the original legislation and now embedded in the CASS bylaws are the elements of continuing competence, professional conduct and discipline.

CASS supports System Education Leaders through professional learning, induction programs, advocacy and provincial representation on issues. CASS promotes partnerships throughout its activities and has a firm belief that all stakeholders are working on behalf of student success.

The College of Alberta School Superintendents continues to advocate that its status as a professional organization be recognized in legislation and that all System Education Leaders in Alberta be members of CASS.

Ongoing Competency for System Education Leaders

The Leadership Learning branch of the College of Alberta School Superintendents has developed and continues to create professional learning modules for System Education Leaders. With the findings of the *Task Force for Teaching Excellence* and the subsequent changes to policies and regulations, the Director of Leadership Learning will lead the development of materials to help System Education Leaders refine their skills to address changes and new challenges. CASS has operated on the basis of assisting System Education Leaders retain currency and competency and will continue to do so in the future.

Overview of Appendices

APPENDIX 1 - CASS Handbook

The members of the College of Alberta School Superintendents have created a collegial organization of system education leaders to meet broad common interests and goals. To demonstrate their professionalism, the members have modeled the College bylaws on the standards required of a legislated professional organization.

As outlined in the Member's Handbook, the values of CASS are:

- Students are first
- Respect for the individual members
- Trustworthiness
- Spirit of collaboration
- Learnedness – respect for research and best practices
- Integrity

APPENDIX 2 - CASS Code of Professional Conduct

The College of Alberta School Superintendents requires high standards of conduct from its members to maintain the honour and dignity of the profession. It is acknowledged that the actions of CASS members will be viewed and appraised by professional colleagues, trustees, staff members, students, parents, guardians and the community-at-large. With this in mind, the College of Alberta School Superintendents has established a Code of Professional Conduct that makes explicit the principles and obligations of the profession. Violation of the Code may constitute an independent basis for investigation and possible disciplinary action by the College of Alberta School Superintendents.

APPENDIX 3 - CASS Code of Ethics

The code of ethical behaviour for those in the school superintendency is designated to promote a quality of behaviour that reflects honour and dignity on the profession. It serves to measure the propriety of behaviour and professional competence in the members' relationships with students, staff, colleagues, trustees, parents and the public.

APPENDIX 4 - Overview of Leadership Learning

The CASS Director of Leadership Learning coordinates and facilitates a wide range of professional learning opportunities for CASS members. The position of Director of Leadership Learning was implemented in 2008 and since that time CASS' ability to coordinate and facilitate professional learning opportunities for members has grown exponentially. This document provides detail of the responsibilities of the Director which include:

- Mentorship Training Workshop (1½ days)
- Induction Program for New Superintendents and Second Level System Leaders
- New Members' Academy (1½ days)
- Leadership Learning Network
- CASS Network of 21st Century School Systems
- Team Leadership Academy (2½ days)
- Assist System Education Leaders
- Module Development
- Research Academy

APPENDIX 5 - CASS Practice Standard, Leadership Dimensions & Descriptors

Membership in the College of Alberta School Superintendents (CASS) requires a commitment to serving the public interest by providing exemplary educational leadership. This commitment requires a high standard of practice that maintains the honour and dignity of CASS. The CASS Practice Standard and its eight leadership dimensions – with supporting descriptors – reflect the Alberta context. The eight dimensions are:

- Visionary Leadership
- Instructional Leadership
- Human Resources Leadership
- Ethical Leadership
- Effective Relationships
- Organizational Leadership and Management
- External Influences on Education
- Chief Executive and Chief Education Officer Leadership

APPENDIX 6 - Professional Learning Module: Leading a Knowledge Organization

CASS is in the process of developing Professional Learning Modules for its members. CASS members are committed to ongoing professional learning and remaining current in their knowledge and practice. This is the first Professional Learning Module that has been developed and made available to members.

APPENDIX 7 - Professional Learning: Instructional Leadership

CASS provides professional learning opportunities for current and aspiring school based administrators. This is one example of a class offered to a cohort of current and aspiring school based administrators from three central Alberta school jurisdictions.

APPENDIX 8 - Professional Learning: The 7 Disciplines of Governance Excellence

CASS provides professional learning opportunities for superintendents to assist them in their role of working with their respective school boards as the 'First Team' for school jurisdictions. This initiative is especially critical at this time in that, primarily due to retirements, approximately 2/3 of Alberta jurisdictions have had a change in superintendents in the past four years.

APPENDIX 9 - CASS Induction Program Handbook 2013

CASS has a formalized induction program for new members, and the Handbook outlines the various components of the program. These include a new member's academy, mentorship training and facilitation of a mentorship program. After having implemented a very successful Superintendents mentorship program four years ago, CASS has now initiated a 'Second Level System Education Leaders' mentorship program with approximately 50 members involved in the 2013/14 cohort.

APPENDIX 10 - CASS Connection Magazine: Fall 2013

CASS publishes a magazine twice each year, providing an opportunity for CASS members to share effective practices within their respective jurisdictions. The theme for the Fall 2013 CASS Connection was "Is Education Inspiring our Communities?"

APPENDIX 11 - Team Leadership Academy 2013 Agenda

CASS hosts an annual Team Leadership Academy which provides teams of System Education Leaders, school based administrators and Alberta Education staff an opportunity to work with world renowned educational researchers. Featured presenters and team facilitation leaders in 2013 included Michael Fullan and Andy Hargreaves.

APPENDIX 12 - Vision in Action: Seven Approaches to School System Success: Editors Dr. Jim Brandon, Dr. Paulette Hanna, Kath Rhyason (Published by CASS in 2013)

This book provides an overview of six research studies involving a total of seven Alberta school jurisdictions, urban and rural, with a focus on the system leadership teams' efforts to create and sustain conditions to enhance student learning in their respective setting. A copy of the book will be provided for members of the *Task Force for Teaching Excellence*.

APPENDIX 13 - The Alberta Framework for School System Success: Dr. Jim Brandon, Dr. Paulette Hanna, Rick Morrow, Kath Rhyason, Sig Schmold, Foreword by Dr. Ken Leithwood (Published by CASS in 2013)

This book is designed to support the efforts of educators and policy makers who are looking to benefit from the increasing body of evidence linking school system leadership to student learning. A copy of the book will be provided for members of the *Task Force for Teaching Excellence*.

APPENDIX 14 - The League of Educational Administrators, Directors & Superintendents Act, 1991 (Saskatchewan)

Proclaimed in 1991, the League of Educational Administrators, Directors & Superintendents (LEADS) Act recognizes system education leaders in Saskatchewan in legislation. All system education leaders in the province are members of LEADS, which has established bylaws of continuing competence, professional conduct and member discipline.

E.9. Submission of the Association of Independent Schools and Colleges in Alberta

December 16, 2014

Introduction

The Association of Independent Schools and Colleges in Alberta (AISCA) appreciates the opportunity to share its views and recommendations with the *Task Force for Teaching Excellence*.

In accord with *Inspiring Education: A Dialogue with Albertans'* (2011) valuing of “diversity” (21) and Section 32 (a & b) of the *Education Act*, AISCA believes that, student and parental educational rights must be balanced with government’s right and obligation to ensure that all Alberta students, whether enrolled in public or independent schools, have the opportunity to learn the competencies they need to realize their individual potential and aspirations as well as to participate as fully as possible in the economic, social and political life of Alberta. In this context, AISCA views independent (private) schools as an essential part of Alberta’s education system and believes that in a democratic and diverse society parents have the right and responsibility to educate their children through schools that reflect parents’ worldviews and educational philosophies. Consistent with the values of Alberta’s democratic and diverse heritage, AISCA’s objectives include the deeply held understanding that independent schools must foster democratic values, tolerance of differences and reject any advocacy of “racial or ethnic superiority, or religious intolerance, or social change through violence” (AISCA 2010, p. 1).

As identified in *Inspiring Education*, and reflected in the Task Force’s “Terms of Reference” (2013), Alberta’s education system will only achieve excellence in teaching and learning through policy shifts that focus on:

- education rather than the school
- the learner rather than the system
- building competencies rather than delivering content
- technology to support the creation and sharing of knowledge rather than to support teaching (p.2)

As is the case with the stated policy shifts of the Task Force, central to the vision of independent schools is the notion of the focus on the learner rather than on the system – indeed, insofar as independent schools advocate the idea of school choice as a fundamental precept of Alberta’s diversity, they have long stood for the notion that the focus should not be on “the system” but rather on the particular needs of students and parents’ prior right to make flexible choices for their children’s education. Likewise, fundamental to the vision of the independent schools that AISCA represents is the

notion that the school must cater foremost to the needs of the particular learner and the fulfillment of their educational competencies, whatever their worldview, and by whichever educational philosophy enables them to achieve their potential.

Consistent with current research that strongly emphasizes the role of teachers, AISCA, along with Albertans generally, “see[s] the teacher as the single most important contributor to learner success” (*Inspiring Education* 2011, p. 7) Furthermore, as noted in the Task Force’s “Terms of Reference:”

The transformation as envisioned under *Inspiring Education* requires the commitment, expertise and dedicated service of all members of Alberta’s education system; it will also require some realignment and co-ordination of their respective roles and responsibilities and will require an education system that empowers people to be innovative risk-takers and that acknowledges their expertise. Whereas all those involved in the education enterprise are important, it will be critical to have teachers who are inspired, resourced, supported and accountable in making the required, on-going shifts in their mind-sets and practices. The new legislation, which will complement the *Education Act*, is intended to achieve this (2013, p.2).

Based on educational research literature as well as consultations AISCA conducted on November 22, 2013 with some twenty experienced independent school leaders who regularly evaluate teacher practices and work with teachers to further enhance the quality of teaching provided to students, AISCA identified a number of issues that should be addressed by the *Task Force’s* recommendations to the Minister of Education in pursuit of teaching and educational excellence.

Consistent with *Inspiring Education’s* focus on the learner rather than school or the system, AISCA believes the following current systemic issues must be addressed:

1. The standards of practice as well as supporting competencies of teachers and principals must be updated so that all Albertans can be assured that those individuals in the frontline of teaching and learning anywhere in the province have the capacities to enable students to achieve excellence.
2. Given the responsibility of school boards and independent school authorities under the *Education Act*, all school authorities should be enabled to exercise the maximum local flexibility to engage the services of required specialists, non-certificated instructors and teaching assistants and aides appropriate to the local context consistent with the responsibility “to deliver appropriate programming to meet the needs of all students enrolled in a school operated by the board and to enable their success” (*Education Act*, Section 33(1)(b)).
3. Provide school boards and other authorities a labour relations and employment regime so that employers – boards and other authorities – have reasonable and sufficient authority to ensure that their employees – teachers, principals, and others – “consider the needs of children and youth first and foremost when making decisions”

(*Inspiring Education*, 2011, p. 31) to promote student well-being and success so that governing boards can be, in fact, accountable for student learning outcomes as expected under Section 33(1) of the *Education Act*.

4. The governance of the teaching profession must focus on the best interest of students as well as the public interest generally, not primarily on the interests and aspirations of the teaching and other educational professions.

ISSUE 1: Educator Competencies

Central to *Inspiring Education's* vision is the recognition for the need to ensure students have the needed "competencies" to enable them to become critical thinkers as well as ethical and entrepreneurial citizens. To achieve this vision, teachers and school leaders in the frontline of providing students with the best possible learning opportunities require teaching and school leadership competencies. AISCA believes that the starting point to support excellence in teaching and learning is the updating of the competencies and standards of practice that teachers are expected to meet and the regulation of the competencies expected of school leaders (principals and assistant principals) and possibly strengthening the standard of practice leaders are expected to meet.

Together with other Alberta education partners, AISCA fully supports Alberta Education's desire to articulate the competencies expected of Alberta teachers. It is AISCA's hope that the reasoned and informed application of teacher competencies in practice will result in learning excellence, that is, optimum student learning.

In this context, the Association of Alberta Deans of Education's (AADE) *Framework of Effective Teaching for Learning [Framework]* is a key document. Researched and written in 2012 at the request of Alberta Education's Registrar, Mr. Marc Prefontaine, the AADE's paper identifies teacher competencies needed in the context of the vision, goals and objectives of *Inspiring Education* (2011). In AISCA's view, the AADE's paper is an excellent starting point for further work among educational partners aimed at ever-greening the competencies needed by Alberta teachers in the 21st century.

The AADE's Framework describes the complexity of teaching, the inter-relatedness of teacher competencies and the multiple paths that teaching and learning may follow. As stated in the AADE's paper:

Each [teacher] competency is an area of teaching expertise that involves the ability to meet complex demands, by drawing on and mobilizing psychosocial resources (including skills and attitudes) in a particular context. Competencies involve a mobilization of cognitive and practical skills, creative abilities, and other psychosocial resources such as attitudes, motivation and values. [...These competencies] "serve as a vital support to students and educators on the multiple pathways towards the realization of Alberta Education's vision of the kind of education that students will need in the 21st Century" (2012, p. 18).

The AADE paper identifies five broadly described teacher competencies, each of which is further elaborated in terms of “sub-competencies” or sub-criteria, which could be used as indicators to measure the practice of an aspect of each competency. However, it is important to note that the *Framework* also states that each competency “can include, but is not limited to” these sub-competencies. This suggests that the Framework was not meant to be an exhaustive statement of the competencies expected of teachers.

While AISCA believes the AADE *Framework* paper may well serve as a starting point for further consultations among education partners, the Association also believes that further work needs to be done. Specifically, the Association would ask that the Task Force consider recommending to the Minister of Education that he request education partners to provide him with recommendations concerning:

- Ways in which the AADE framework could be further developed such that the sub-competencies could be expressed as competency indicators and how these competencies and indicators should inform teacher preparation, teacher certification, teacher growth, supervision and evaluation policies.
- How the AADE framework could be applied by teacher preparation institutions when recommending graduate education students for certification and used to identify teachers whose practice is sufficiently competent such that they may be granted professional level certification, which in turn should possibly be renamed professional certification rather than “permanent” professional certification.
- How a more practical and more enforceable benchmark of competent teaching practice could be articulated, possibly similar to that found in many contracts for professional services, for example, by including in any new Ministerial Order a standard stating that a teacher’s teaching meets a standard of practice generally expected of teachers practicing at similar levels and in comparable circumstances.
- How the competencies, expected standards of practice and directions about teacher preparation, certification, growth, supervision and evaluation may best be enforced – through policy, Ministerial Order, or Regulation.

To further support excellence in teaching, AISCA believes that the Task Force should re-visit *Alberta’s Commission on Learning Report: Every Child Learns. Every Child Succeeds* (2003), specifically Recommendation 71: “Require school jurisdictions to adapt the first-year experience and provide effective coaching for beginning teachers” (p. 118). The Commission on Learning recommended that school jurisdictions should provide beginning teachers with modified assignments, additional time to develop skills, and the support of experienced teacher mentors. These recommendations should be re-considered by the Task Force in pursuit of fostering teaching excellence. Of course, any such re-consideration also has resource implications which must be considered.

Besides establishing provincial competencies and supports for excellence in teaching, AISCA is also supportive of the *Alberta Professional Practice Competencies for School Leaders* (2011). This document, developed by Alberta Education in consultation with education partner representatives, articulates the responsibility on the part of school

leaders to “create learning cultures [in which] each student has an opportunity to engage in quality learning experiences that lead to the achievement of the goals of education and address the student’s learning and developmental needs.” (p.1). The *Alberta Professional Practice Competencies for School Leaders* include both competencies, sometimes termed dimensions of school leadership, as well as indicators of practicing the dimensions. The latest iteration appeared to have the support of education partners.

The one concern AISCA continues to have with the *Alberta Professional Practice Competencies for School Leaders* is that its benchmark for competent school leadership practice may not be sufficiently explicit. Therefore, the Task Force may wish to recommend to the Minister of Education that this document be revisited to include a more transparent standard of expected competent practice. Such a standard of practice should be articulated in more legally enforceable language, modeled on competency expectations often stated in contracts for professional services, similar to the notion outlined above with respect to expected standard of practice for teachers.

The *Alberta Professional Practice Competencies for School Leaders* document requires that “school leaders must annually develop and complete a professional growth plan, in accordance with the school authority’s policies and processes.” (p.8) In recognition that all members of the school community are responsible for optimum student learning, school leaders’ professional development plans, in turn, must include plans for the development of the competencies of all the teachers within a school. AISCA believes that school leaders, as educational leaders, must be certificated teachers. As such, they should be knowledgeable about, able to practice and coach their colleague-certificated teachers about ways and means to further enhance the quality of student learning opportunities.

AISCA supports the notion that school authorities, in turn, should facilitate the competency development of school leaders; school authorities should “establish and make public the policies for school leader professional growth, supervision, and evaluation. These policies and processes must align with the Competencies, Indicators, and Procedures as well as other applicable provincial legislation, regulations and policies” (*Professional Practice Competencies for School Leaders*, 2011, p.8).

ISSUE 2: Enabling Local authorities to Engage Non-Certificated Personnel

What about the competencies required of professionals and educators who do not hold teacher certification but whose services are required to provide an appropriate education to all students? In keeping with *Inspiring Education*’s desire to enable rather than regulate all aspects of education, AISCA is of the view that local school authorities are in the best position to determine the qualifications of non-teaching personnel needed to support the education of students.

After all, under Section 33(1) of the *Education Act*, school boards have the responsibility, among other elements, to:

- (a) Deliver appropriate education programming to meet the needs of all students enrolled in a school operated by the board and to enable their success. [...]
- (e) Provide a continuum of specialized supports and services to students that is consistent with the principles of inclusive education.
- (f) Collaborate with municipalities, other boards and community-based service agencies in order to effectively address the needs of all students and manage the use of public resources.

Independent schools have comparable responsibilities “to meet standards of the Minister” under section 29(1) of the *Education Act*.

The determination of an appropriate education in respect to individual students is a matter local authorities must determine in consultation with parents. The specialized supports needed to provide an appropriate education must also be determined based on professional judgments about the specialized supports required given the situation and the community-based (including municipal and other agency) supports that may be available and brought to bear in specific circumstances.

In AISCA’s view, school authorities must be empowered to determine and bring to bear on individual students the specialized and continuum of supports possessed by individuals other than teachers and school leaders. In this context, and based on consultations with experienced school administrators, AISCA is of the view that school authorities should be entrusted to develop and implement policies about the qualifications required by personal support assistants, teaching assistants, specialists (learning specialists, therapists, psychologists) and non-certificated instructors.

The survey of independent school leaders conducted by AISCA found support for the notion that non-certificated personnel can and should work with teachers and school leaders to broaden the range of learning opportunities available to students. Respondents were of the view that individuals with certain trade certifications, professional designations, as well as competent individuals who have sufficient and recognized expertise in a discipline associated with a content or skill area (e.g. musicians, artists) are well positioned to deliver educational experiences. This is especially so given that non-certificated instructors often have current, practical and marketable experience that may benefit students.

Individuals with specific content skills also may be employed to assist the maximization of student learning, particularly in subjects or content areas where there might be a shortage of certificated teachers, for example, in the provision of foreign language instruction.

AISCA survey respondents noted that teaching assistants can effectively be used to maximize learning in special circumstances, for example, supporting special needs students who may require ongoing individualized, learning assistance. Non-certificated

instructional personnel have a place in the education of the young insofar as they provide substantial benefit by enhancing student learning experiences, developing supportive relationships with students, and bringing community resources to bear on student learning.

Specialized supports will vary depending on the needs of individual students. School authorities should not be encumbered by overly restrictive provincial requirements that may stand in the way of delivering quality education to students. At most, AISCA believes that the province may wish to legislate measures aimed to ensure the safety of students, for example, through policy measures requiring criminal record checks of all individuals entrusted with the custody of students. The province may also wish to define what constitutes adequate supervision of non-certificated personnel and instructors as well as how instruction, if provided by them, should be assessed to ensure a high quality of learning. Other than these broad kinds of provincial policy, AISCA believes that innovative and flexible learning opportunities envisioned by *Inspiring Education* are best served by empowering local authorities to provide a range of learning opportunities through a range of means.

Inspiring Education's and the Task Force's mandates are to encourage education centered on the learner rather than the "system." By ensuring that all school authorities employ certificated teachers and school leaders who hold the required competencies, the province can ensure that all Alberta students benefit from a consistent quality of education no matter where they are in the province. By enabling and entrusting local authorities to establish policies about the qualifications of non-certificated personnel needed to provide the appropriate education to students, government may: encourage and recognize a more broad conception of what constitutes an education; support the provision of instruction that young people see as more relevant and timely; and, better meet the needs of local job markets. Also, including non-certificated personnel in education will serve to realize the notion that learning is a social activity that should engage the larger community.

AISCA submits that it is at the local, contextual level that the expertise needed to enable students to develop required competencies are brought to bear, and it is at the local level that the guiding principles that are the foundations of student learning can genuinely be implemented. The experience of independent schools speaks to this experience, as independent schools embody a community-based approach to learning based on the needs of different communities who come together to form independent school societies. Furthermore, as the *Commission on Learning* noted, improved student achievement is related to:

school-level control, [a] focus on student learning and instruction, a commitment of time and resources to implement development over an extended period of time, and the development of professional development styles that engage teachers collaboratively [as part of a school community] rather than focusing on them as individuals (Ullrich C. Reitzug, 2002, p. 124, quoted in *Commission on Learning*, 2003, p. 119, italics added).

This concept to which the *Commission on Learning* drew attention serves to reinforce the point that it is the development of a collaborative approach to teaching at a school-level that maximizes effective student learning. This in turn suggests a maximization of the autonomy of school authorities to determine the best approach to student learning, as long as the requirements of the Minister are met.

Such autonomy should include school authorities' freedom to employ specialists, non-certified instructors, teaching assistants and aides who have the competencies needed to best support students in local contexts. This relative autonomy entails that school boards and other school authorities should be enabled, that is, be given maximum flexibility, to provide appropriate programming to meet the demands of the local context. This is consistent with the mandate of the *Education Act*, in which school authorities are given the responsibility "to deliver appropriate programming to meet the needs of all students" (Section 33(1)(b)).

In summation, with regards to policies governing the employment of non-certificated teaching personnel, AISCA proposes that this is a matter that is best left up to local authorities. They are best positioned to determine the qualifications needed of non-teacher certificated personnel given decisions about the education appropriate to students. In this regard, perhaps the Task Force could consider a recommendation to the Minister that current legislation be extended to enable the employment of non-certificated personnel subject to measures aimed at ensuring the safety of students and that any instruction provided by non-teacher staff is supervised to ensure sound instruction and assessment of learning outcomes.

ISSUE 3: School Authorities Have Sufficient Authority to Ensure that Teachers they Employ Practice Competently

Under the *Education Act*, Section 11(1) a school board "shall ensure that each of its resident students is provided with an education consistent with the requirements of this [*Education*] Act and the regulations. Sub-section (2) elaborates this requirement by explicitly requiring that "a board shall provide to each student enrolled ...the opportunity to meet the standards of education set by the Minister."

Similarly, all independent schools are expected to "meet standards of student achievement acceptable to the Minister" (*Education Act*, Section 20(1)(b)) and accredited independent schools must deliver "education programs approved by the Minister" (Section 20(2)(a). This means that accredited independent schools must deliver the same or equivalent approved programs of study as do public schools:

Clearly, in the light of legislation, school authorities are legally responsible for providing students the best possible learning opportunities to meet the Minister's standards of achievement. As the Task Force mandate states, school authorities need "teachers who are inspired, resourced, supported and accountable" for "making the required, on-going shifts in their mind-sets and practices"

(Task Force, 2013, p. 2). The issue, however, is: do school authorities, public and independent, have sufficient authority over their teacher-employees to make the shifts envisioned as necessary for the transformation of education in the 21st century?

Many school board and independent school leaders and governing bodies currently believe they have limited control over the teachers they employ (Sutton Trust, 2011, p. 5). Alberta's Commission on Learning identified this reality clearly in its 2003 Report, *Every Child Learns. Every Child Succeeds*. The Commission wished to strengthen the powers of employing authorities to improve the quality of teaching. Under the rubric "Ensure competent teachers for every student" the Commission made two recommendations:

Recommendation 74: Ensure that policies and regulations on supervising and evaluating teachers are well understood and effectively implemented.

Recommendation 75: Replace the current Board of Reference process with an arbitration process that is consistent with models in place for employees who have the right to bargain collectively in the province. (p. 121)

In respect to Recommendation 74, the Task Force should consider re-iterating the 2003 Commission's recommendation, as well as recommending implementation of the findings of the latest research about effective teaching.

That research recognizes that teaching is too complex "for any single measure of performance to capture it accurately" (Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, 2013, p. 10) and consequently, the Gates Foundation's Report, *Ensuring Fair and Reliable Measures of Effective Teaching* proposes that high stakes teacher evaluation should be based on information from multiple sources:

- Student learning improvement over time as measured by standardized tests.
- Observations of teachers by their school principals as well as by external administrators and/or trained teacher-peers from schools other than the schools where the teachers being evaluated work.
- Student surveys measuring the degree to which students perceive the individual teachers' teaching challenged and supported student learning. (p. 10)
- The Gates Foundation Report authors noted that their research showed that teachers who "excelled on the composite measures had better [learning] outcomes" than those with more teaching experience or Master-level degrees (p. 13), both measures currently used to financially reward teachers through annual increments under provisions of collective agreements in Alberta and elsewhere in North America. While labour intensive and complex, the introduction of multiple-sourced evaluation for teachers would ensure that students are served by the best possible quality of teaching.

Ensuring that all students are supported by effective teachers is critical. Research in the United Kingdom found that "teachers are the most important factor within schools that

policy makers can directly affect to improve student achievement” (The Sutton Trust 2010, p. 5). The same study found that “bringing the bottom 10% of teachers in the UK up to the level of average” would lead to a “sharp improvement in the UK’s international ranking (p. 2). More radically, “replacing 12 % of the least effective teachers nationally would bring the U.S. to the level of Finland in the international rankings, an improvement of 26 places” (The Sutton Trust, p. 7). In the interests of excellence in teaching, the Task Force should consider recommending to the Minister of Education that teacher evaluation processes in Alberta should be reviewed and new improved processes be implemented in light of the latest research.

With respect to the Learning Commission’s Recommendation 75, teachers employed by independent schools are not subject to the Board of Reference process available to teachers employed by public authorities. However, the Task Force may wish to ask itself whether the process as it currently works is really in the best interests of student learning, or in the interests of teachers and whether it provides undue protection for teachers. The Commission on Learning’s report noted that employing boards found the Board of Reference process “frustrating;” the Commission itself characterized the process as “cumbersome at best” and understandably appeared to be concerned that school boards “can be required to reinstate a teacher” whose performance was deemed questionable or highly problematic (pp. 121-122).

Of concern to all school authorities are teacher annual professional growth plan provisions under the current *Teacher Growth, Supervision and Evaluation Policy* (2008). Under this Policy, teachers are expected to develop and implement annually professional growth plans that only require the teacher to take “into consideration the education plans of the school, the school authority and the Government, or the program statement of an ECS operator” (Section 3,(b)(iii)). Teachers are currently not obliged to ensure that their professional development plans explicitly support the education goals and objectives of their employers. Despite this, employing authorities are accountable for ensuring that students have the best possible opportunities to meet the standards of the Minister.

Is it reasonable to hold school authority employers accountable for providing the best possible learning opportunities to students and at the same time fail to provide them with the authority to ensure that the professional growth of their teachers is consistent with teacher competency development deemed necessary to enable improved student learning? AISCA suggests that consideration should be given to amending the *Teacher Growth, Supervision and Evaluation Policy* along the lines of Recommendation 73 of Alberta’s Commission on Learning. The Commission proposed that all teachers have “targeted annual professional development plans that are directly linked to their school improvement plans” (p. 120). The Task Force should re-consider this recommendation and support its implementation through the amendment of current policy.

In summary, AISCA proposes that the Task Force recommend that the Minister: implement, by regulation, a new teacher evaluation process reflective of the latest effective teaching research; amend teacher employment legislation to ensure that

employing authorities have sufficient powers to allow them to fulfill their legislated responsibilities and accountabilities; and amend policy whereby teacher professional growth plans must be directly linked to school improvement plans.

ISSUE 4: Teacher and Education Profession Governance

In the best interests of students and the public interest generally, AISCA is of the view that the teaching profession and teaching should be regulated and governed by the Minister of Education. This is owing to the special role of teachers in preparing the young for their future as citizens.

It is often said it takes a village to educate a child. By extension, it is only reasonable that the education of the young, in the final analysis, is the responsibility of all Albertans and the government that speaks for them. *Inspiring Education* supports this notion when it states “all partners in education should share responsibility and accountability for education outcomes” (p. 31).

Both in the education literature and through the courts, Canadian society has recognized the key role of teaching in our democratic system. Alberta’s now defunct Council on Alberta Teaching Standards (COATS) clearly recognized that “teachers are key and critical to the provision of quality education to students” (2010, p.). Research concerning the key role that teachers play in student learning has found that the quality of teaching is second only to socio-economic factors in influencing positive student learning (Darling-Hammond 2000, p. 37).

Among the professions, teaching is unique. It is in large part through teaching and the education afforded to the young that society equips future citizens with the knowledge, skills and attitudes they and society need to prosper economically and to uphold cultural values and aspirations (Robinson 2010).

The legal system, including the Supreme Court of Canada, has recognized the key role of teachers and teaching:

In our society the role of the teacher is second in importance only to the parent. I dare say that the parent views the teacher as being in his or her place while the child is away from the control of the parent. The parent entrusts the teacher with the parent’s responsibilities, preparing the youths to compete and to contribute and to develop their individual talents in this very difficult world, both in our own community, in our national community and in the international community, [in] an extremely difficult time for young people and their parents (R. v. Audet, Supreme Court of Canada, 1996).

Further, the courts have also recognized the role of government in ensuring that young people receive an efficient or effective education. The Supreme Court of Canada found that provinces, in this case Alberta, have a compelling interest in

...the “efficient instruction” of the young, a requirement that a person who gives instruction at home or elsewhere have that instruction certified as being sufficient is demonstrably justified in a free and democratic society. Such a requirement constitutes a reasonable limit on a parent’s religious convictions concerning the upbringing of his children. So is a subsidiary requirement that those wishing to give such instruction apply to the appropriate authorities for certification that the instruction given complies with provincial standards of efficiency (R. v. Jones, Supreme Court of Canada, 1986).

Noteworthy is the Court’s comment that teaching, or instruction, at home “or elsewhere” must be “certified as being efficient is demonstrably justified in a free and democratic society.” Clearly, education of the young and by extension regulation of teaching is sufficiently important in a democratic society, in the view of the courts, such that government has a legitimate role in ensuring that education is “efficient,” in the words of the court, in “preparing the youths to compete and to contribute and to develop their individual talents in this very difficult world.”

Given the importance of the instruction of the young to society at large, the regulation and governance of teaching – all matters related to the preparation of teachers, the certification and registration of teachers and the standard of practice expected of teachers – must be carried out in the public interest by the government and the Minister of Education. For in our democratic society, it is only government and its Ministers that speak on behalf of society as a whole. Ultimately, elected government represents and speaks in the public interest.

The notion of public interest has long been recognized as a benchmark of public policy. Though sometimes used as a rhetorical device, as a justification by some to support or oppose government policy (Edwards 2008, p. 2), it serves as the “fundamental criterion for establishing” (Methot 2003, p. 1) the legitimate exercise of power. The public interest is the test which all public policy, including the governance of the teaching profession, ought to meet, and not because “the public interest” necessarily provides a constant normative standard. Indeed, in our pluralistic society, articulating the public interest given the diversity of philosophical and cultural views may be considered virtually impossible if it is considered as a normative standard. Rather, the requirement that the public interest ought to be the criterion for making public policy decisions aims to “foster a participatory political culture and education in order to integrate as much of the population as possible in informed debate” (Methot 2003, p. 4).

In the context of the issue of the governance of the teaching profession, AISCA is of the view that Alberta’s teacher regulation and governance should be carried out by the Minister of Education with the advice and support of all education partners, not just the teaching profession and its representatives.

The Minister, on behalf of government, is ultimately responsible for teacher governance, and until recently the Minister formally exercised that power in conjunction with the guidance provided to him by COATS. This body was mandated to provide him with

recommendations on all “matters related to teaching, including: teacher certification, teacher preparation, induction and professional growth, practice review, excellence in teaching and other matters of interest to the Minister (COATS 2010).”

The eleven members of COATS represented the general public, school authorities, the ATA, teacher preparation institutions (universities), Alberta Education, and included five practicing teacher-members, one of whom was a private school teacher. Though a small advisory body, COATS reflected the notion of shared responsibility for the education of the young, of which *Inspiring Education* speaks.

In addition to this formal body through which the Minister received advice concerning teacher governance, the Minister’s role in government ensures that he is constantly informed about concerns and issues related to teaching and teachers. When he visits schools and communities, engages with representatives of teacher preparation institutions, meets with schools boards, reads and addresses the many letters forwarded to him, engages with his elected colleagues as well as with Albertans generally, the Minister is constantly involved in an “informed debate” about the needs of Alberta’s education system and matters concerned with the regulation and governance of teachers and teaching in the province. This wide exposure provides the Minister with a notion of the “public interest” and enables the “participatory” informed debate about teacher governance that no other body in Alberta or anywhere else enjoys.

As emphasized above, AISCA believes that the Minister speaks on behalf of the public interest and with the advice of all education partners, and therefore the Minister is best positioned to make decisions about teachers and teaching in the 21st century. It is in this context that AISCA has major concerns with Section 4 of the May 2013, *Framework Agreement* entered into by government and the Alberta Teachers’ Association (ATA). This section, in AISCA’s view, undermines the collaborative responsibility and governance of education in Alberta and may also weaken the ability of the Minister of Education to make decisions about teachers and the teaching profession in Alberta.

Section 4 of the *Framework Agreement* creates the Teacher Development and Practice Advisory Committee (TDPAC), half the members of which must be ATA members, including the President and Executive Secretary. Section 4c(i) states that the TDPAC will advise the Minister “on any matter that would support or define the role of the teacher and the profession for the 21st century.” This provision is telling. It does not speak about *Inspiring Education’s* (2010) guiding principle of considering the needs of children and youth “first and foremost” (p. 31); instead, it speaks of defining the role of teachers! Furthermore, contrary to the spirit and letter of *Inspiring Education* which clearly states that “partners should share responsibility and accountability for education outcomes” (p. 31). Section 4 of the *Framework Agreement* entrenches the ATA in a dominant advisory role about teaching and teachers.

Section 4 of the *Framework Agreement* also provides that the TDPAC will advise the Minister on “continuing education requirements for all certificated holders to be

administered by the Association [ATA]" and "on changes to legislation, regulation or policy that would allow greater access for non-certificate holders to provide instruction to students (Section 4c(iii))."

Essentially, Section 4 provides the ATA and its teacher members with powerful levers to influence education in Alberta and at the same time reduce the influence of other partners. The objective of advising the Minister about continuing education for all certificate holders and administering the process places the ATA in the dubious position of determining continuing education requirements, not only for its members, but also for certificate holders like superintendents of schools and independent school teachers, neither of whom are members of the ATA.

Is it reasonable for an agreement between government and the ATA to place on the agenda of the TDPAC, dominated by the ATA, proposals that would determine the continuing education requirements for independent school teachers? Hardly! ATA policy has historically opposed independent schools and continues to do so as reflected in its *Long-Range Policy* (2013) 18.A.20 which recognizes only the "public and separate school systems" as legitimate. In addition, ATA, *Long-Range Policy* 7.A.22 continues to oppose any public funding for private schools. Yet the Association wishes to advise on independent school teachers' continuing education and to administer any process developed to monitor such education! This, to say the least, is presumptuous. Equally presumptuous is the ATA's aspiration to advise and administer the continuing education of school superintendents who, while certificated, are not members of the Association.

The TDPAC's mandate under the *Framework Agreement* to provide advice on any legislative and policy changes "that would allow greater access for non-certificated holders to provide instruction to students" (Section 4c(iii)) promises to provide the ATA with a platform it may use to delay or even significantly impair the provision of education to young people in non-traditional ways.

In AISCA's view, the TDPAC represents the ATA's determination to control and dominate the future direction of Alberta's education system. To do so in the interests of teachers may be a legitimate goal for an organization representing teachers. However to do so in ways that are not supportive of *Inspiring Education's* directions, is not. Regrettably, it appears to AISCA that the ATA, through the TDPAC hopes to limit *Inspiring Education's* aspiration that education "should expand beyond the school and integrate the community, the environment and the 'real world'" (p. 23). Rather than encouraging flexibility and innovation, the ATA appears to seek to maximize its influence, and possibly exert greater control over the evolution of student learning in 21st century Alberta.

Of course, under the terms of the *Framework Agreement*, the Minister may reject advice from the TDPAC; however, the current and future Ministers of Education when faced with recommendations prepared by the ATA-dominated TDPAC will be placed on the defensive. They will be hard pressed to reject Committee recommendations they believe may be in the interest of teachers but not necessarily in the best interests of learners or the public.

AISCA believes that the ATA already enjoys a very powerful a role within Alberta's education system. It already has a number of powers normally associated with a self-governing profession, but does so with little transparency.

Under the terms of the *Teaching Profession Act* (2000), the ATA has the authority to issue a Code of Professional Conduct and to investigate and address breaches of conduct on the part of teacher members through hearing processes. Unlike the Ontario College of Teachers, the ATA does not publish the names of those found guilty of unprofessional conduct. The ATA provides only very general information about offending teachers' conduct in the *ATA News*: sometimes in the form of an article, though more often in the *ATA News*' "PEC (Provincial Executive Council) Points."

The limited public availability of information about individual teacher conduct cases and penalties imposed by the Saskatchewan Teachers Federation (STF) led to the publication of Dr. Dennis Kendel's Report, *For the Sake of Students* (2013). The Report determined that the STF, Saskatchewan's provincial teacher organization with powers similar to those of the ATA, focused too much on its teacher-members' interests and insufficiently on the public interest. Dr. Kendel recommended specific actions to address this and other shortcomings. Similar recommendations may be appropriate in respect to the ATA's focus here in Alberta.

When it comes to concerns about penalties for unprofessional conduct, it appears that even the ATA's own Provincial Executive Council (PEC) has some concerns about the hearing process that the ATA administers, especially when it comes to the lenient penalties imposed for unprofessional conduct by teacher-dominated hearing committees.

To illustrate, the October 8, 2013 edition of the *ATA News* reported that PEC had appealed to "the Professional Conduct Appeal Committee the order of a hearing committee on the grounds of inadequate penalty." In one instance, the hearing committee had found the teacher guilty of five charges of unprofessional conduct, among them: inviting students to the teacher's apartment for purposes of consuming alcohol, engaging in sexual intercourse with a student, and telling untruths about a previous sexual encounter. PEC launched the appeal because the hearing committee only penalized the teacher with a fine, a severe letter of reprimand and a recommendation for a mere three-year suspension of his certificate after which the teacher would be free to teach again. In the same edition of the *ATA News*, PEC also appealed another order of a hearing committee on the grounds of inadequate penalty. In this case, the teacher had been convicted of three indictable offenses, namely defrauding the Government of Canada by deceit, falsehood or other means of more than \$ 5000. In this case, the hearing committee only issued a severe letter of reprimand and a recommendation that the teacher's certification be suspended for eighteen months.

The other power normally associated with a self-governing profession, which the ATA has enjoyed since 2009, is the administration of practice review in respect to its teacher-members. The ATA is the only North American teacher organization with the authority

to do so. Though hearing committees must have at least one public member, the public has little access to information about the process. Although the ATA's bylaws provide for public attendance at the hearings, they do not include any provisions concerning making information about hearings and decisions of hearing bodies available to the public (ATA, *Practice Review Bylaws*, 2008). As in the case of teacher conduct, transparency in respect to practice review processes does not appear to be a high priority for the ATA.

The 2009 *Dispute Resolution Process Bylaws* display a similar lack of transparency. These bylaws, which have the force of a Regulation (168/97), provide the Executive Secretary of the ATA the authority to address "a matter that does not necessarily warrant a hearing." Through a process termed "invitation," conducted informally and in private, a member of the ATA is appointed to identify the "fact situation, identify concerns of the profession and of the public and provide appropriate advice to the member under investigation" (Section 1(1)(b)). Interestingly, there is no mention of the interests of students. Furthermore, once completed, the report of the findings of an invitation is provided to the executive secretary who may decide whether a hearing should or should not be held on the matter. Most important is the provision whereby the invitation process is confidential and may not be made public or used in any other process. Public transparency is not served by this process.

The ATA does not appear to be overly interested in being open to the public or its scrutiny, as evidenced by the composition of its Provincial Council. Under Alberta's Health Profession Act, Section 12, twenty-five percent of the voting members of executive councils of Alberta health professions must be public members. However, the ATA's Provincial Executive Council consists of twenty (20) members, all of whom are teachers; there are no public members on the Council.

More broadly, given the key role of teachers, AISCA believes that the Minister of Education should continue to regulate and govern the teaching profession, and perhaps bring back under his control both teacher conduct and practice review processes, either directly or through a Professional Council appointed directly by the Minister himself. The Minister, either directly or through an appointed Council should determine teacher regulatory and governance matters such as: teacher certification requirements including acceptable teacher preparation, the standard of practice expected of teachers, and the establishment and maintenance of the teacher registry system.

Any further extending professional self-governance powers to the ATA will only further reduce the Minister's ability to deliberate about, and make decisions in view of the public interest of Albertans with respect to teacher regulation and governance.

It is through engagement with the public including public debate and information gathering that the Minister is constantly engaged in the process of ascertaining the public interest, which itself, which itself is constantly defined and re-defined as Alberta's socio-economic and cultural life changes. Were Alberta teachers through the ATA to further accumulate self-governing powers or become an entirely self-governing profession,

discussion and debate about teacher certification, teacher preparation, induction and professional growth, practice review, excellence in teaching and other matters would be largely confined to members of the teaching profession itself with little ongoing input from the public. Debates about teaching issues would become internal to the profession, instead of engaging all Albertans and providing the broad spectrum of inputs needed to define the public interest. The emergence of enhanced teaching professional self-governance would not enhance the innovation and flexible education system that *Inspiring Education* envisions.

In any case, professional self-governance is a trend that is largely on the wane. The public and even some members of the traditional professions are increasingly skeptical about professional self-governance. As James Casey, perhaps Canada's leading expert on professional self-governance, recently noted: "skepticism about the societal value of self-regulation is very strong" (2008, p. 1). Even the self-governance of traditional professions is no longer taken for granted. As Janice Mucalov (2004) writes, "Governments everywhere – under pressure from citizens about access to justice and the accountability of the legal profession – are becoming less inclined to bow to lawyers' traditional role as governors of their own profession" (p. 1). In their 2007 paper titled "The End(s) of Self-Regulation," Richard Devlin and Porter Heffernan of Dalhousie Law School argue that legal profession self-governance "might not be working as well as one would want in a liberal democratic society" (p. 5). Professional self-governance is not necessarily the best alternative even for so-called traditional professions and is viewed more and more with public skepticism.

Recent developments in Canada call into question the advisability of further full self-regulation and governance to the teaching profession. In British Columbia, government recently resumed the role of regulating and governing the teaching profession. It did so based on the recommendation of the findings of Donald J. Avison's Report, *A College Divided: Report of the Fact Finder on the BC College of Teachers* (2010). The report suggested that the BC College of Teachers was "dysfunctional," insufficiently focused on the public interest, and unable to exercise its regulatory and governing functions in a manner independent of the interference of the British Columbia Teachers' Federation (p. 32).

In neighboring Saskatchewan, the Kendel Report (2013) explicitly rejects the "unitary model" of teacher regulation and governance favoured by the Saskatchewan Teachers Federation and advocated by the ATA here in Alberta. As Dr. Kendel states very strongly:

I cannot endorse any model [of teacher regulation and governance] that leaves the public protection roles and teacher advocacy [including collective bargaining] in a single organization, even if more effective "fire walls" could be established between these two roles at the STF [Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation] level (p.83).

AISCA agrees with Dr. Kendel's position as well as his view that unitary models of teacher governance is not in the public interest or viable. As Kendel points out, it is not credible to believe that the governing Board and CEO of a "unitary" organization can consistently

manage competing interests within an organization by having segregated Board agendas or suggesting that the CEO (or Executive Secretary) serves one group in the mornings and the other in the afternoons (p. 83).

Despite this reality, the ATA's *Long-Range Policy* (2013) 10.A.21 continues to assert that the Association will "oppose strongly" any attempt on the part of government to separate into dual organizations teacher professional regulation such as control of teacher conduct matters and teacher advocacy, such as collective bargaining.

Given the failure of the British Columbia College of Teachers, AISCA shares with Dr. Kendel the view that "there are most certainly grave risks inherent in considering a College of Teachers as the best model for future regulation of all teachers" (Kendel 2013, p. 83). However, he goes on to suggest, that if Ontario teachers have made the College model work, then surely Saskatchewan, and by extension, presumably Alberta could also do so. However, in the AISCA's view, this assumption is overly optimistic. While there is a single Ontario Teachers' Federation, it includes four sub-groups: the Association des Enseignantes et des Enseignants Franco-Ontariens, the Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario, the Ontario English Catholic Teacher's Association, and the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation. The existence of these sub-groups likely serves to limit the influence of any one group on the Ontario College of Teachers.

Then of course, there is the very matter of whether or not Ontario teachers have in fact "made the Ontario College work." In 2003, only 4 % of Ontario teachers actually bothered to vote in the Ontario College's governing Council elections (ASICA 2010, p.11). This hardly suggests a strong motivation on the part of active, classroom teachers to govern themselves; instead, it suggests that a small, ideologically motivated clique of teachers maintains control over the Ontario College.

In AISCA's view, if teachers were to be granted professional self-governance, then the ability of government and the Minister of Education would be diminished. The Minister would find himself in a less powerful position to take the lead, when it comes to consultation with education stakeholders, and in innovating and introducing change to the education system and teaching practice. Essentially, enhanced teacher professional self-governance would create a new institution, "dominated by members of the profession, which would exercise powers previously exercised by the legislature" (Strike 1993, p. 258).

As in many jurisdictions and currently in Alberta, the Minister of Education limits by statute, regulation, and policy the autonomy of teachers (Anderson, 2010, p. 9). On behalf of society as a whole, government restricts the autonomy of teachers given the intimate connection between what constitutes good teaching and what constitutes necessary and desirable learning outcomes. As Kenneth Strike (1993) pointed out, "when teachers seek to control their own work, they especially seek control over teaching and over curriculum" (p. 259).

To concede self-governance to teachers, beyond what has already taken place, would in essence defer to teachers the purpose, or ends for which society deems education to be pursued. For a democratic society, this is a questionable path to pursue. The only

institution in a democracy that has the right to speak on behalf of society as a whole, including for minorities, is a democratically elected government. In this specific instance it is the Government of Alberta, that has democratically conferred the authority to articulate the purposes and ends of education through the Minister of Education.

Conclusion & Recommendations

In AISCA's view, the desire to enhance the excellence of Alberta's teaching force is admirable and appropriate given the key role teachers play in enhancing student learning outcomes.

Further enhancing the quality of Alberta's teachers is not just a matter of changing one or two policies or directions. As with all impactful educational change, systemic interventions (Mourshed et al., 2010) need to take place in a number of directions, but once in place promise to change the culture and the operation of the education system.

In this context, AISCA believes Alberta's thinking about teachers and teaching must be updated and strengthened on a number of fronts:

1. **Teacher and School Leader Competencies and Standards of Practice:**

The province has a role to ensure that certificated teachers and school leaders (school principals and assistant principals) have the knowledge, skills and attributes needed to facilitate and support student learning in the 21st century.

The competencies expected of practicing certificated teachers should be updated. An excellent starting point for this process is the Alberta Association of Deans of Education's 2012 paper, *Framework of Effective Teaching for Learning*.

AISCA supports the *Alberta Professional Practice Competencies for School Leaders* developed by Alberta Education in consultation with education partners. School principals and assistant principals should be certificated teachers who are knowledgeable about competent teaching, and should be able to practice and coach their colleagues – certificated teachers – about ways and means to further enhance the quality of student learning opportunities.

Definitive standards of competent practice need to be explicitly articulated in a legally enforceable manner similar to those found in many contracts for professional services. Any new Ministerial Order concerning competent teaching and school leadership practices should include a standard requirement that ensures the teacher's teaching or the school leader's leadership practices meet a standard of practice generally expected of teachers or school leaders performing at similar levels and in comparable circumstances.

2. Employment of non-certificated specialists, assistants and instructors:

Under the *Education Act* (2013), school authorities are responsible for providing education programs appropriate to students. To do this in an innovative and flexible manner and in order to better engage community resources, school authorities should be free to establish policies and procedures to enable them to employ non-certificated instructors, specialists and both the personal and teaching assistants necessary to provide appropriate programming. At most, provincial legislation may require local authorities to take reasonable measures to ensure the safety of students, for example, through policy measures requiring criminal record checks of all individuals entrusted with close student contact. Also, the province may also wish to identify which reasonable supervision measures authorities need to have in place to ensure the quality of instruction delivered by non-certificated personnel or instructors. In addition, authorities should have in place policies and processes concerning the assessment of learning outcomes.

3. Employment and Evaluation of Certificated Teachers:

School authorities are responsible for providing quality learning opportunities to students. To fulfil their responsibilities, independent schools and school boards must have sufficient authority to ensure that teachers they employ practice competently, improve their professional competency in keeping with school authority improvement plans, and generally support the goals and objectives of the employing authority. Therefore, consideration should be given to amending the *Education Act* as applicable to certificated staff in keeping with the 2003 Commission on Learning recommendations concerning the elimination of the Board of Reference. Also, high stakes teacher evaluation processes should be enhanced to include information from multiple sources as recommended by the latest research on teacher effectiveness.

4. Teaching Profession Governance:

Given the key role of teaching to the achievement of students and to Alberta's future as whole, ideally the Minister of Education should regulate and govern the teaching profession.

In reference to the matters of teacher conduct and teaching practice complaint processes currently administered by the ATA, the Minister should revisit these procedures and, at minimum, insist that if the ATA wishes to continue overseeing these processes, then their openness to the public must be considerably improved. For example, at minimum the deliberations of hearing committees and hearing decisions should be made public on the ATA's website and include the name of the teacher in question.

In respect to any recommendations emanating from the TDPAC, the Minister should reject any recommendations that would increase the ATA's hold on professional development, especially as they may apply to independent school teachers and superintendents of schools. In addition, the Minister may wish to consider appointing

a Professional Council. This would provide him with indispensable advice pertaining to teachers and teaching from the perspective of the public interest, as opposed to the teaching profession alone.

The Minister should also consider eliminating current Regulation that legitimates the ATA's Dispute Resolution Bylaws. In its place, he may wish to consider the appointment of an education ombudsman to address complaints about teaching practice or teacher conduct, which is currently addressed through an "invitation" process. Failing that, the Minister may wish to insist that reports about the resolution of disputes under the ATA's current processes be made public.

The regulation of the teaching profession should be carried out in the best interest of students and in the public interest. In summation, AISCA believes that the competencies expected of teachers and school leaders should be established by the Minister of Education. Local authorities should have the right to employ non-teacher specialists, non-certificated instructors, as well as personal and teaching assistants necessary to the delivery of an appropriate education to students. Furthermore, the conditions under which teachers are employed and the regulation and governance of the teaching profession should fall to the Minister of Education and the elected government which speaks on behalf of the citizens of Alberta. Teacher governance and regulation should definitely not be under the control of the same organization, the ATA, which also collectively bargains and advocates on behalf of teachers.

If Alberta wishes to enrich student learning, it must aspire to maximize excellence in teaching by modifying the policies, regulations and legislation currently in force pertaining to teachers and teaching.

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