

**Teleconference Meeting between Parent Councils and  
Minister of Education, Jeff Johnson**

Regarding Task Force on Teaching Excellence

October 22, 2013

- Albertaschoolcouncils.ca – survey especially for parents regarding teaching excellence
- Education Act enshrines the rights of parents
- Conduit to parents is parent council
- Investing heavily in infrastructure: 50 new schools and 70 modernizations, increased modular classrooms from 40-100 not including the 54 added in response to floods
- Grateful for the response to floods that often involved schools and school bus drivers who helped evacuate
- New rollouts: New Education Act, regulatory review ongoing right now to discern what should be in the corresponding regulations where the legislation is operationalized
- Diploma exams throughout the year and more digital exams to accommodate any time, any pace, anywhere
- Modernizing PATs – eliminate in current form; still important to have standardized benchmarks and not wait until grade 12 to ensure the system is working but modernized PATs – phasing in grade 3 this year followed by grade 6 and grade 9
- High School Flexibility Project: delinks time from credit so students can work through content faster or more slowly, also dual credit blurs the lines between high school and post secondary and also industry
- Alberta has taken on the chair of CMEC – Chair of Councils of Ministers of Education of Canada – represents Canada at global meetings so incredible potential to develop internalization opportunities
- International test on adult competency: Literacy, Numeracy and Problem-solving in a digital context – 27000 in Canada, oversampled Aboriginal and immigrant population, test done every 10 years
  - Our results were just below OECD average in numeracy, average for literacy, above average on Problem-solving; if you strip out those who are taking the test in a second language, we then had very strong results
  - Also had smallest gap between immigrant and non-immigrant population
  - Alberta was top jurisdiction in Canada
- Thanked trustees who have served and ran in elections last night.
- Initiatives are all coming out of an effort to comply with Inspiring Education document
- Next step is to be sure teachers have the supports they need to get the best teachers possible to celebrate great teachers and weed out the weak ones

- Glenn Feltham (NAIT president) - President on Task force for teaching excellence; consultation process invites all to participate, sign up for a session or complete survey
- Excellent teacher for every child in every class – how do we empower teachers? How do we enable them to achieve what we have set out? How do we remove roadblocks to excellence? Need to look at the learner of the future
- Task force looking broadly at TE, does system/leadership support teaching excellence? Certification? how it is we ensure teachers remain current,? what it means to hold all in the system accountable?
- Question: At one point will PSE start looking at the whole portfolio of the applicant and not just the academics?
  - Hope Albertans are given priority
  - Recruit and allow access to PSE for Alberta kids that are less represented such as rural kids going into medicine and aboriginal students
  - K-12 parallels in PSE – seamless pathways and evaluating the whole person, emphasis on lifelong education, not closing opportunities for the future
  - Dual credit will help open up that partnership and open up access to education in their communities
  - Certified journey person can go straight into degree program
- Question: Flex schools and self-directed schools – not restricted to 25 hour unit for funding but 60 credit cap in one year has limited funding
  - Commends St. Joe's for what they are doing
  - Challenges to deliver those opportunities to rural kids
  - Are we delivering education just for funds or for credentials and learning?
  - Limits on funds we can provide – don't want to limit kids' experience but focus on learning, not on the funds
- Question: Lord Beaverbrook, School Council funding, ordinary upgrade to sounds system supplied by parent council, what sort of long term supports is the gov't putting in place to accommodate technology needs?
  - Biggest challenges are teacher quality and equity
  - Don't fund equally because smaller schools are more expensive to run and need those resources
  - Some communities would be wealthy if taxes were attached to the school in the area – divvied up across the province, Alberta has some of the highest funding in the developed world
- Question: High River – teachers are suffering with the lack of school in HR and why weren't modular redirected to HR?
  - Working on this as quickly as they can
  - Will get support to deal with apparent delays and issues
- Question: FFCA – when will we get the respect and funding that other schools get? Getting second hand schools, would love to expand but don't have the building

- Getting the same funding as other schools, especially now with new announcement
  - Premier is committed to infrastructure funding
- Question, James Moet Elementary – how are parents contributing to curriculum redesign?
  - Tenders out for curriculum redesign
  - Asking school boards to help us develop prototypes, ask for more opportunities for school councils to weigh in
- Question: Will there be more supports for special needs students (e.g., autism) in smaller communities like Grande Prairie?
  - Will help plug into all the supports that exist in GP
- Question: Evidence based outcomes for Education Act – Alberta report identified class sizes of under 20 for K-3 have important long term positive outcomes
  - Task force: Examine issue of class size – different impacts at different grade levels, will be looking at the impact of this on teaching excellence and achieve the vision of Inspiring Education
  - Budget cuts impacted administration not classrooms
  - Rather have a strong teacher with a large class than a weak teacher with a small class – where to allocate resources
  - Results on class size are mixed
- Question: How to increase numeracy in K-3/K-6?
  - Developing in new curriculum
  - More and more engagement from employer for older grades so they have relevant experiences
  - High expectations for teachers in those areas
- Question: Funding for dual credit – when will this be allocated?
- Question: No percentages in junior high, will this creep into high schools and will it impact their ability to access post-secondary?
  - School boards will still be required to report high school grades in percentage
  - Trying to communicate the competencies that they have regardless of percentages