

ASBA submission to commission looking at govt. fiscal policy

The provincial government has set up a commission to review Alberta's fiscal situation and make recommendations for future policy. The ASBA made a submission to this commission which will report back by the end of June.

ASBA executive summary

- ◆ We cannot run a \$3.6 billion sector on year-to-year funding. We believe creating a stabilization fund would assist our sector by providing enhanced security and certainty of financial resources.
- ◆ We believe more money needs to be spent on research-based innovation – and we propose the establishment of an Alberta Education Innovation Trust to accomplish this objective.
- ◆ We believe that we need a return to some measure of local taxation to support education, but we believe that this needs to occur without overturning the gains that have been made in equity throughout the province.

The ASBA submission will be posted on the ASBA web page under Position papers at <http://www.asba.ab.ca>. Contact Executive Director **David Anderson** danderson@asba.ab.ca.

ASBA prepares for Education Commission

The ASBA has started work on its response to the Education Commission by naming Board of Directors' members to lead teams who will develop ASBA positions about the key issues identified by school boards. Topics include:

Expectations of the system:

Maureen Kubinec/Jerry Muelaner

Funding the system:

Michele Mulder/Lori Benner

Employment contracts with teachers /Role of teachers:

Lynn Nishimura/Gerald Kujala

Taxation:

Don Fleming/Maureen Kubinec

Societal issues:

Marjorie Moncrieff/Debbie Engel

Governance:

Maureen Emond/Alice Brick

ASBA advice re

Education Commission

Based on input gathered at the April 22 labor meeting, input from school boards and the advice of senior ASBA staff, the ASBA Board of Directors made these suggestions to the minister of learning about the commission:

Membership of the commission

Commission members should be non-partisan people of integrity, held in high esteem and trusted by Albertans, credible, objective and forward thinkers. Commission members should be independent individuals who are advised by a group with educational expertise, so that input from those with an educational background will form the framework for commission members on complex issues.

Topics to consider

Beyond the matters already assigned to the commission, issues identified by school boards include-- but are not limited to – funding public education (equity, flexibility, sufficiency, and taxation); the role of government and school boards, parents and teachers; how employment contracts are established, how teachers are compensated and trained; and Albertans expectations of public education including our responsibilities to special needs and other students.

Timelines

Most school boards said the commission should take the time it needs to do its work in a credible manner. As there may be a desire for

action and response on some matters, perhaps the commission could issue an interim report in response to these.

Funding framework review underway

The review of Alberta's funding framework is underway. Four ASBA representatives will serve on the 11-person committee: President **Michele Mulder**, Zone 4 Director **Gerald Kujala**, Edmonton Catholic representative **Debbie Engel** and ASBA Executive Director **David Anderson**. The committee will develop a "straw" report within the mandate set out by the minister of learning:

- ◆ focus on distribution of funds; not adequacy
- ◆ equity issues will be looked at from a province-wide perspective
- ◆ ensure specific provincial initiatives and priorities are not compromised while at the same time providing school boards with maximum flexibility.
- ◆ develop an allocation system that ensures maximum flexibility to school boards
- ◆ strive to minimize administrative procedures
- ◆ Operations and Maintenance will be excluded from the review because this area has been transferred to Alberta Infrastructure.

The committee includes four ASBA reps, two CASS reps, two ASBOA reps, a post-secondary rep, an AHSCA rep and a representative of the Francophone school jurisdictions.

SGM to consider student testing policies

Boards will consider policies dealing with student assessment at the SGM. Recently adopted by the ASBA Board of Directors, the policy positions have been e-mailed to jurisdiction offices.