

## ATA/ASBA sign civility agreement

The presidents of the Alberta Teachers' Association and the Alberta School Boards Association have signed the following civility agreement: "This will confirm our mutual undertaking that in the best interests of relations between the ATA and the ASBA, we both undertake to refrain from making any negative comments of a personal nature in any public circumstances and further that we will each recommend that this respectful approach be adopted by elected representatives of our provincial associations."

## ASBA seeks govt. funding to develop accountability tool

The ASBA has asked Alberta Learning for \$125,000 to support the development of a tool which will expand the scope of board reporting to their communities regarding student outcomes. The aim is to give school boards a tool to enable them to provide their constituents with a simple yet complete picture of how their students are doing.

The next phase would see the use of this same material to build a robust tool and practical applications including, but not limited to, strategic planning at both the district and school levels.

This project builds on the ASBA's commitment to board accountability and student learning.

## City of Edmonton explores bully bylaw

The City of Edmonton is exploring the possibility of establishing a bylaw that would result in fines for bullies.

The city's Community Services Committee adopted an Edmonton Police Services' proposal that will see city administration, in consultation with Edmonton Police Services, prepare a report suggesting how Edmonton's Public Places Bylaw might be amended to create an offence of bullying.

The Edmonton Police Services brief says, "as bullying often takes a form that cannot be addressed through the criminal process, there is a need to introduce legislation that addresses this serious issue. There would then exist financial sanctions and deterrence for such activity. To this extent, a new offence of bullying with an associated fine is proposed."

The proposal goes on to say, "As bullying takes place both on and off school property, it would be necessary to prohibit bullying behavior in any public place or any place to which the public reasonably has access. Without limitation this should include school buildings and school property."

## Congratulations Shaun Muldoon

Congratulations to **Shaun Muldoon**, trustee with Grande Prairie Catholic. His name was picked from among those who submitted an ASBA annual report evaluation form. Thanks to all who completed evaluation forms.

## "Spanking law" being challenged in court

The Supreme Court of Canada has agreed to hear a case arguing that Section 43 of the Criminal Code be declared unconstitutional on the basis it violates the Charter of Rights and Freedoms by discriminating against children.

Section 43 states: Every schoolteacher, parent or person standing in the place of a parent is justified in using force by way of correction toward a pupil or a child, as the case may be, who is under his care, if the force does not exceed what is reasonable under the circumstances.

The Canadian Foundation for Children, Youth and Law, supported by the Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies, launched the Charter Challenge. The Supreme Court has not yet set a date for the hearing.

The Canadian School Boards Association position on this matter is:

The CSBA does not support the use of corporal punishment by school personnel. Rather, it recognizes the importance of protection for minors against harsh unwarranted forms of discipline. The CSBA supports efforts to end physical punishment for children as part of a broader strategy to reduce violent behavior and threats of violence by adults in society. At the same time, the CSBA recognizes provisions must be made to provide for necessary procedures to ensure a safe school environment and to protect school personnel and students. As a result the CSBA does not support the application to have Section 43 removed from the Criminal Code.