



How to improve Alberta's high school completion rates

Insights from Alberta's school trustees

Published February 2006

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Introduction	1
Top eight factors identified by ASBA workshop participants	2
What workshop participants said about the top eight factors	3
How this report will be used	5
Appendix A: list of 15 possible factors used as discussion starters	6
Appendix B: Record of workshop input	8

Report written by Suzanne Lundrigan, ASBA Communications
For more information contact 1.780.482.7311.

Introduction

Appalled that about 25 per cent of Alberta students do not complete high school within five years of entering Grade 10, Alberta School Boards Association President Maureen Kubinec, in November 2005, called on school boards to lead the charge to address what she termed an unacceptable blemish on Alberta's record of otherwise stellar service to the province's students.

In Alberta, statistics for high school completion rates track first time Grade 10 students for three, four and five years. Students are deemed to have completed high school if they have:

- ❑ obtained an Alberta High School Diploma, a high school equivalency diploma (GED) or Integrated Occupational Program (IOP) certificate (credentialed completion) or;
- ❑ enrolled in a credit program at an Alberta post-secondary institution or registered in an apprenticeship program or;
- ❑ earned credit in five Grade 12 courses, including one language arts diploma exam course and three other diploma exam courses.

Alberta high school completion rates

Year	97/98	98/99	99/2000	2000/01	01/02	02/03	03/ 04
3 Yr	61.7	62.8	65	65	65.5	67.3.	68.9
4 Yr		69.2	70.2	71.8	71.9	72.1	71.6
5 Yr				72.8	73.8	75.1	75.4

Source: Richardson, K., & Solez, E. "Indicator of Success." *CASS Connection*, Fall 2005, p.26.

While the ASBA participated fully in an Alberta Education task force, which operated February 28, 2005 to October 6, 2005, to address this issue, the ASBA launched a separate process aimed at involving school boards directly in identifying possible solutions to the high school drop out problem. The ASBA scheduled two workshops at the ASBA's 2005 Fall General Meeting. Some 110 trustees and senior administrators participated in these workshops. This report outlines the outcomes of those discussions.

About the workshop process

Edmonton Catholic Schools trustee Debbie Cavaliere, who represented the ASBA on Alberta Education's provincial high school completion rate task force, opened the workshop by presenting 15 possible factors that could contribute to improving high school completion rates.

The 15 factors are listed in Appendix A on page 6 of this report. These 15 factors, presented as "story starters" for the table discussions, were drawn from the 2001 *Removing Barriers to High School Completion* report; the 2004 *Literature Review For The High School Completion Rate Project* and the 2005 *Without a Paddle: What to do About Canada's Young Drop-outs* report.

Workshop participants, working in groups of eight to 10, were asked to review the 15 possible factors; to suggest different factors; and to choose the eight most important factors – and to provide a rationale for their selections. After this small group work, participants reviewed all the ideas that emerged and each participant individually selected the four factors that resonated most strongly with them. The table discussions at both the morning and afternoon workshops were lively and intense. This report summarizes those discussions and, where possible, the discussions are reported using the participants' own words.

Top eight factors identified by ASBA workshop participants

This report summarizes the eight factors identified most frequently by workshop participants in descending order. It is interesting that many of these factors are currently reflected in ASBA policy as initiatives that would generally improve education for students. Other factors, like early intervention, emerged as recommendations in the 2004 Alberta Commission on Learning report.

The top eight factors

Alberta Education provide additional funding to enable jurisdictions to offer early intervention programs.

- ❑ Alberta Education ensure there is additional funding to support guidance counselling services and to coordinate the delivery of multi-agency and school-based services including exit interviews of students leaving school.
- ❑ Societal pressure to reinforce the importance of education generally and specifically vs outside jobs or leaving school early to work.
- ❑ Alberta Education improve relevancy of provincial curricula and sequencing of high school core courses to ensure that the learning needs, aspirations and interest on non-university bound students can be addressed effectively in school programs, and advocate that post-secondary institutions review and modify if necessary their entry requirements [especially in Mathematics] to fit the level actually needed for success in the area of further study.
- ❑ Financial incentives/disincentives to keep kids in school.
- ❑ Ensuring each at-risk student has at least one adult in the school who knows them well and will support them in their learning.
- ❑ Cross ministry cooperation – aimed at increasing high school completion.
- ❑ Alberta Education ensure that curriculum and funding are available for schools to work with students to assist them in knowing their interests and abilities and engage in meaningful and timely career development planning with trained career counsellors [not necessarily certificated teachers].

Note: The appendix on page 6 of this report lists all the items discussed during the two workshops and the level of support indicated by participants.

What workshop participants said about the top eight factors

In each of the following paragraphs, the top eight factors and the rationale the participants provided for choosing these factors, are described, using as often as possible, the participants' words.

Alberta Education provide additional funding to enable jurisdictions to offer early intervention programs (43)

Flagged as a life or death issue, early intervention emerged, by far, as the most important factor for participants. The sooner we reach children and students – the better they do. Early intervention programs give students the academic foundation they need to build their school careers. And beyond giving students fundamental academic skills, participants looked to early intervention programs as a key opportunity to reach youngsters early to instil in them, the importance of completing high school. Participants warned that on both fronts – building an academic foundation and fostering a positive attitude to school – waiting until students are in high school is too late – by then they are too discouraged. With more and more students coming to school unprepared, participants stressed the benefit of investing early in students rather than incurring the massive social costs of students falling through the cracks later on. They also flagged the reality that focusing on early intervention means teachers will need to have special skills to meet the needs of these children and students.

Many participants were uncomfortable with limiting access to early intervention to a specific demographic or age group and several groups suggested broadening the definition to give children and students access to the supports they need when they need them to achieve the ultimate goal: every Alberta student completes high school.

Alberta Education ensure there is additional funding to support guidance counselling services and to coordinate the delivery of multi-agency and school-based services including exit interviews of students leaving school (28)

Participants emphasized the need to have trained professionals available to help students deal with the family/behavioural/cultural issues they are facing. They looked to these counsellors to truly connect with students and to take a holistic approach. Programs must be based on information gathered directly from early school leavers: “We need to understand why they are leaving to develop strategies for keeping them in school”. Participants see guidance counsellors playing a role in linking students in need with the resources and supports available in the community. Discussion about guidance counselling often turned to specialized career counselling. Again the theme of early intervention emerged with participants calling for professionals to begin work as early as Grade 7 to help students identify their interests and their individual profiles with a view to charting a future course. We cannot wait until high school.

Societal pressure to reinforce the importance of education generally and especially when compared against outside jobs or leaving school early to work (22)

This theme emerged at many tables. Schools and school boards need support and engagement from and by business, government, employers, families and the community, to improve high school completion rates. These parties must reinforce the merit and importance of completing a high school diploma and help shift public attitudes about the perceived value of completing high school and education in general. Alberta invests a great deal in public education – every taxpayer should take an interest in ensuring that we maximize the benefit of that public investment. Everybody has a role to playing in communicating to children and students the benefits of staying in school. Remember school is the work of children.

Alberta Education improve relevancy of provincial curricula and sequencing of high school core courses to ensure that the learning needs, aspirations and interest on non-university bound students can be addressed effectively in school programs, and advocate that post-secondary institutions review and modify if necessary their entry requirements [especially in Mathematics] to fit the level actually needed for success in the area of further study (16)

Participants called for the development of curriculum that recognizes Grade 11 and 12 academics are not for everyone. Hand-in-hand with this, is the need to overcome external biases – including parental bias – against the so-called non-university route. The theme of designing schools and education with the student as the starting point – of making school fit students rather than students fit school – emerged again. Offering students a variety of choices honours their uniqueness and recognizes their diversity. Participants envision a comprehensive curriculum that provides opportunities for all students – a curriculum that offers students a variety of options and lets students explore. As a specific recommendation, participants want to see Career and Technology Studies programs that are more exploratory and relevant – especially the hands-on components. Support from post-secondary stakeholders will be essential to the success of this particular initiative.

Financial incentive/disincentive to keep kids in school (15)

Participants suggested touching people's pocketbooks in an effort to turn high school completion rate trends around. On the incentive side, they offered this option: give families with students attending high school a tax credit. On the disincentive side, an idea that captured participants' imagination was the following: if an employee hasn't completed high school, pay them a reduced salary and bank the "savings" in an account which employees, who don't have a high school diploma, could use to go back to school get a high school diploma. Participants viewed this option as a way to engage parental support for high school completion. Another idea proposed was to reduce the family allowance for families who have high school aged students who are not attending high school.

Ensuring each at-risk student has at least one adult in the school who knows them well and will support them in their learning (15)

It's about relationships, said participants, citing research demonstrates that if one person supports a student, they are more successful in school. Give students encouragement and motivation and they will blossom. Participants called for a formalized system that would link each at-risk student with at least one adult, who is there to serve as a mentor, coach and advocate. With these support systems in place, more students will succeed.

Cross ministry cooperation – aimed at increasing high school completion (14)

At many junctures and in discussions about different topics, the conversation frequently turned to the theme that there are many different players who must come to the table with schools and school boards to address this issue. School boards look to key ministries to join them in this effort. Let's not put barriers between ourselves

Alberta Education ensure that curriculum and funding are available for schools to work with students to assist them in knowing their interests and abilities and engage in meaningful and timely career development planning with trained career counselors [not necessarily certificated teachers] (12)

Make specialist career counsellors available to students to help students paint a picture of their desired futures. Give students a clear picture of what they want to achieve and they will see the relevance of today's math or English class. Participants want specialized career counsellors available to students to help them understand themselves – their interests and their abilities – so they can

begin mapping out the path to where they want to be in life. Kids need to know how to reach their goals at an early age. If kids know their path, they can stick to it. Give them a sense of 'there's where I want to be and this is how to get there.' Give kids focus.

How this report will be used

This report will be forwarded to the minister of education. In keeping with the ASBA's wish to broaden the participation of school boards in the conversation about improving Alberta's high school completion rates, the report will also be forwarded to school boards as a potential launching point for local discussions about this issue. The report will also be presented to the ASBA Board of Directors as it considers further initiatives to address this issue.

Appendix A: List of 15 possible factors used as discussion starters

1. Alberta Education support school authorities in ensuring that each at-risk student has at least one adult in the school who knows them well and will support them in their learning.
2. Alberta Education ensure that there is additional funding to support guidance counseling services and to coordinate the delivery of multi-agency and school-based services including exit interviews of students leaving school.
3. Alberta Education ensure that curriculum and funding are available for schools to work with students to assist them in knowing their interests and abilities and engage in meaningful and timely career development planning with trained career counselors [not necessarily certificated teachers].
4. Alberta Education work with other government departments and industry to expand the range of credentialed occupations and to develop transition programs like Registered Apprenticeship Program that lead into other occupations.
5. Alberta Education provide jurisdictions with non-enveloped up front financial support in addition to Credit Enrolment Unit funding to assist in addressing the needs of at-risk secondary students beginning in the 2006 –2007 school year.
6. The Government of Alberta investigate the potential impacts of increasing high school completion through amending the School Act such that students are required to attend school until they complete high school or reach the age of 18 years.
7. Alberta Education provide on-going funding for Alberta Initiative for School Improvement projects and for those specific to high school completion: [1] extend the project timeframe to 5 years, [2] provide school authorities with data specific to the context of the research, and [3] determine those that have the greatest potential to increase completion and provide financial support for the ongoing implementation of those strategies
8. Alberta Education, the Alberta Teachers Association and school jurisdictions and community organizations work together to provide professional development opportunities for teachers and support staff to enable them to respond effectively to student diversity and the particular learning needs of First Nations Metis Inuit students.
9. Alberta Education improve relevancy of provincial curricula and sequencing of high school core courses to ensure that the learning needs, aspirations and interest on non-university bound students can be addressed effectively in school programs, and advocate that post-secondary institutions review and modify if necessary their entry requirements [especially in Mathematics] to fit the level actually needed for success in the area of further study.
10. Alberta Education working with school jurisdictions review Outreach Schools policy and the effectiveness of Outreach Programs in improving high school completion rates, the identification of any barriers in program funding and delivery, and the identification of opportunities for sharing promising practices.

11. Alberta Education work with stakeholders to identify and address all the constraints that restrict program offering and flexibility, including but not limited to elements of the Credit Enrolment Unit funding model.
12. Alberta Education provide additional funding to enable jurisdictions to offer early intervention programs for at-risk pre-school children as appropriate to their needs.
13. Schools and school councils work together to assess, monitor and share effective practices for engaging the First Nations Metis Inuit community, increasing First Nations Metis Inuit parental and community involvement, and ensuring that First Nations Metis Inuit parents and community members feel welcome in schools.
14. Schools and school councils work together to assess and monitor the extent to which school cultures are inclusive, celebrate diversity, equity and human rights, and demonstrate respect for differences in physical characteristics, mental ability, ethnicity, sexual orientation and gender identity.
15. The Minister of Education work with the Minister of Advanced Education to ensure entry requirements for apprenticeship programs are clearly articulated with high school programs, especially programs such as those comprised primarily of Integrated Occupational courses [now Knowledge and Employability courses].

Appendix B: Record of workshop input

FACTOR	VOTE	RATIONALE
<p>Alberta Education provide additional funding to enable jurisdictions to offer early intervention programs for at-risk pre-school children as appropriate to their needs</p>	<p>Received 43 votes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - early intervention provides long-term positive effects. - more and more kids re coming to schools unprepared - obvious benefit - need - identify issue - work with/influence children from an early age - instil the importance of a high school diploma - remove “pre-school” - change “children” to “students” - “at risk” students need support which may continue through schooling - reinforce and <u>constant reaffirmation</u> of goal – to finish Grade 12 at early stage for young kids - setting up skills at early age. - losing students in Grades 1 – 2 - by high school they are too discouraged - identify them early - find differences/needs early - this is a life and death issue! - addresses social costs - teachers skills also need attention. - mitigate disadvantage - early intervention - research based – shows success in later years - views child as a whole person – a citizen - address literacy
<p><i>Adaptation of above</i> Alberta Education provide additional funding to enable jurisdictions to offer early intervention programs for at-risk children as appropriate to the needs as early as pre-school</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - at risk occurs at <u>any</u> age through pre-K to 12 - risk factors including FMNI, ESL, attendance.
<p><i>Adaptation of above</i> Remove “at risk” For all children</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the earlier we get them the better they do.

FACTOR	VOTE	RATIONALE
Alberta Education ensure that there is additional funding to support guidance counseling services and to coordinate the delivery of multi-agency and school-based services including exit interviews of students leaving school	Received 28 votes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - we have large number of students who have family/behavioral/cultural issues which need to be dealt with. - (as stated in original document) - high interest courses – vocational - timely career development planning for all students - need to understand why they are leaving to develop strategies for keeping them in school - increasing need - rationale as provided - early counseling at least Grade 7 (before high school)
<i>Merge the following with above</i> Alberta Education ensure that curriculum and funding are available for schools to work with students to assist them in knowing their interests and abilities and engage in meaningful and timely career development planning with trained career counselors [not necessarily certificated teachers]		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - counselors to be up-to-date with current issues to <u>connect</u> with students - student profiles and engagement of interests - using a holistic approach - student realistic goal-setting - early career/skill planning (Grade 7,8, and9) <u>awareness</u> - add career counselors - cannot wait until high school and must start early and involve parents - training guidance counselors as more than educators to guide other interests
Societal pressure	Received 22 votes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - need support of other government departments and employers to further our efforts (world of work) - need parental and community support (involvement of parents; educational expectations) - shift in perceived value in completion
<i>Related to above</i> Reinforce importance of education vs. outside jobs or leaving school early to work. School is the “work” of children		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - importance of education - huge public investment in education - need to maximize benefit of public investment - prevention – pro-active vs remediation/reactive approach later on - reinforce to students benefits of staying in school.
<i>Related to above</i> Family and community values		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - parent support and engagement - stakeholder involvement - conflicting values and interests

FACTOR	VOTE	RATIONALE
<p>Alberta Education improve relevancy of provincial curricula and sequencing of high school core courses to ensure that the learning needs, aspirations and interest on non-university bound students can be addressed effectively in school programs, and advocate that post-secondary institutions review and modify if necessary their entry requirements [especially in Mathematics] to fit the level actually needed for success in the area of further study</p>	<p>Received 16 votes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - students need to know the <u>relevance</u> of their education - need to overcome traditional notions of what is relevant ie Shakespeare – make it relevant to students - need options and why there are different options - need acceptance by the stakeholders (U of A and NAIT) - don't use subjects to “screen” - we need to have more career counseling for kids to decide what they are interested in pursuing - make CTS program more exploratory and relevant – especially hands-on components - commence earlier; junior high - improve parental perception; an acceptable alternative - a comprehensive curriculum will provide opportunities for <u>all</u> students - they need a variety of options - Grade 11 and 12 academics are not for everyone - bringing back general math - paths other than post-secondary.. but bear in mind... clearly define what we mean by post-secondary. - choice, flexibility and relevancy - honors student diversity by recognizing choice - learning is a lifelong process - different measurements of success - not serving students if communications is not open between Alberta education and post secondary institutions - success includes the availability of spaces - maintain course standards
<p>Financial incentives to families: tax credit for families with students in high school. Reduction (per cent of salary) to employees who drop out of high school (You pay an employee penalty in salary reduction) which would be paid into a fund for those employees without a high school diploma. Employees could access this fund to go back to school to get their high school diploma. Reduce family allowance for families who children are not in school</p>	<p>Received 15 votes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - financial incentive/disincentive to keep kids in school. Attempt to gain support at home from parents provide a way for kids who left school to go back and complete high school

FACTOR	VOTE	RATIONALE
Alberta Education support school authorities in ensuring that each at-risk student has at least one adult in the school who knows them well and will support them in their learning	Received 15 votes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - it's about <u>relationships</u> - connect to school - support system - connected to someone who cares - mentor/coach advocate - accountability - encouragement and motivation - in-school mentoring (big brother/sister) - research shows that if one person supports, they are more successful
<i>Adaptation of above</i> School authorities would ensure that each at-risk student has at least one adult in the school who knows them well and will support them in their learning		
Cross ministry cooperation – the goal is to increase high school completion	Received 14 votes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - enhance cooperation across government ministries - working <u>together</u> - let's not put barriers between ourselves
Alberta Education ensure that curriculum and funding are available for schools to work with students to assist them in knowing their interests and abilities and engage in meaningful and timely career development planning with trained career counselors [not necessarily certificated teachers]	Received 12 votes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - expert career advice - kids need to know how to reach their goals at an early age. - if kids know their path, they can stick to it - provide focus for students - more information – they can set goals - there's where I want to be and this is how to get there - could easily add a position ie career techs - gives kids <u>focus</u>
<i>Merge the following with above</i> Alberta Education ensure that there is additional funding to support guidance counseling services and to coordinate the delivery of multi-agency and school-based services including exit interviews of students leaving school		

FACTOR	VOTE	RATIONALE
<p>Alberta Education, the Alberta Teachers Association and school jurisdictions and community organizations work together to provide professional development opportunities for teachers and support staff to enable them to respond effectively to student diversity and the particular learning needs of First Nations Metis Inuit students</p>	<p>Received 11 votes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - training to meet the needs of students - research supports <u>ongoing</u> staff development - leads to improved instruction/student achievement and improved understanding of diversity - differentiation of instruction - expand beyond FNMI - need to address how to work with a growing part of our population (<u>fastest</u> growing part needs to be emphasized) - better understanding - better communication - enhanced skills - specific skills - better advice given to students - change teacher practices to engage students more effectively - relevancy for teachers - every teacher is an advocate for those at-risk students.
<p>Alberta Education provide jurisdictions with non-enveloped up front financial support in addition to Credit Enrolment Unit funding to assist in addressing the needs of at-risk secondary students beginning in the 2006 –2007 school year</p>	<p>Received 10 votes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - provide non-time based approach to funding - not tied to success or failure - need funding to support the at-risk student in high school - currently early leavers earn no CEUs but require considerable investment of staff and dollars - funding for students not just credits - greater flexibility to address student needs - more applicable programming - creates equity across the province
<p><i>Merge the following with above</i> Upfront dollars addressing needs of at risk students and address constraints that restrict early intervention</p> <p>Alberta Education work with stakeholders to identify and address all the constraints that restrict program offering and flexibility, including but not limited to elements of the Credit Enrolment Unit funding model</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - CEU doesn't balance up needs of low - demographic areas with those of middle-upper socio economic areas - expand choice - make overall high school operation more flexible - current model doesn't address needs of small rural high schools
<p><i>Related to above</i> Redevelop CEU Funding to fund counseling and administration</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - needs to be funding for courses that are failed and dropped - provide flexible timetabling

FACTORS	VOTE	RATIONALE
<p><i>Related to above</i> Alberta Education work with stakeholders to identify and address all the constraints that restrict program offering and flexibility, including but not limited to elements of the Credit Enrolment Unit funding model</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - consistent standards amongst stakeholders - needs of students should drive programs not CEU funding
<p>Change the school not the student</p>	<p>Received 8 votes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - flexibility in changing the 'school model' to meet the students' needs – not at the expense of other students or programs.
<p>Alberta Education work with other government departments and industry to expand the range of credentialed occupations and to develop transition programs like Registered Apprenticeship Program that lead into other occupations</p>	<p>Received 8 votes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - more choices meet more needs - bring career people in to create an awareness and develop an interest in trade, etc. - cooperative type programs at the high school level - opportunity to succeed in some area - create programs that are meaningful to them (Links to No. 9) - because not all students are university bound. Need to provide choices. Change attitudes/culture. Increase value of trades etc. - small communities don't have RAPs - provides hands on experience/basis for choice - addresses diversity of skills/interests - addresses shortage of skilled labour ie) practical approach - CEU credits must address instructor needs, not only in high school also in colleges. - link to chosen trade – reward - not all students are academic. - industry-related - community and parent buy-in - relevancy to students - contributions to society - to represent current and expanding occupations - provide greater choices to students
<p>The Government of Alberta investigate the potential impacts of increasing high school completion through amending the School Act such that students are required to attend school until they complete high school or reach the age of 18 years</p>	<p>Received 5 votes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - establishes a social expectation - also needs enforcement though - employment standards code should NOT undermine School Act (Work with industry to encourage completion for their employees - we need legislation to support all the other initiatives

FACTOR	VOTE	RATIONALE
Alberta Education working with school jurisdictions review Outreach Schools policy and the effectiveness of Outreach Programs in improving high school completion rates, the identification of any barriers in program funding and delivery, and the identification of opportunities for sharing promising practices	Received 4 votes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - recognizes that not all students work well in traditional school environments - need flexibility for students - students still valued in these settings - support (e.g. child care) enables education - alternative program for kids who fall through the cracks - ability to identify and meet the needs of kids who fall through the cracks - more flexibility - continue to explore alternative outreach programs
Make it easier and cheaper for adults to come back and complete high school	Received 4 votes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - not every student is ready to make career choices.
Alberta Education provide ongoing funding for Alberta Initiative for School Improvement projects and for those specific to high school completion: [1] extend the project timeframe to 5 years, [2] provide school authorities with data specific to the context of the research, and [3] determine those that have the greatest potential to increase completion and provide financial support for the ongoing implementation of those strategies Recommended change: remove “for those specific to high school” Consider a project timeframe of six years allows for two years of statistical trending	Received 3 votes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - provides a targeted group for leadership and necessary resources e.g. literacy programs - good data for good decisions - need high school completion and non-high school completion data for special populations – e.g FNMI, ESL, special education - better results with long-term sustainable funding - proven success of AISI - tailored to student needs - anything which improves success at an early age will improve completion rates.
More effective drug and alcohol counseling in schools	Received 2 votes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - deal with the problem
Schools and school councils work together to assess, monitor and share effective practices for engaging the First Nations Metis Inuit community, increasing First Nations Metis Inuit parental and community involvement, and ensuring that First Nations Metis Inuit parents and community members feel welcome in schools	Received 2 votes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - largest growing population attending schools - focus on this factor increases attendance, participation - encourages their culture in school environment - provides a sense of community - honors their culture - find out how to involve parents/community members - largest growing population - societal issue

FACTOR	VOTE	RATIONALE
Schools and school councils work together to assess and monitor the extent to which school cultures are inclusive, celebrate diversity, equity and human rights, and demonstrate respect for differences in physical characteristics, mental ability, ethnicity, sexual orientation and gender identity	Received 1 vote	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - students need to accept and respect differences - aspire to an inclusive society - necessary – changing demographics - also take into account religious affiliation - social cohesion - safe and caring schools - the foundation for all other factors - addresses bullying
The Minister of Education work with the Minister of Advanced Education to ensure entry requirements for apprenticeship programs are clearly articulated with high school programs, especially programs such as those comprised primarily of Integrated Occupational courses [now Knowledge and Employability courses]	Received 1 vote	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - meet diverse needs of students - make sure students understand what they need for various career/trade choices - need time for career counseling - self-explanatory - caution regarding availability of qualified teaching resources - students will stay in school because their courses are heading them somewhere and are relevant and interesting - stronger focus on career preparation-this will help us get there - accessibility to post-secondary for students who are low achievers
University training programs for <u>related</u> early learning skills	Received 1 vote	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - for all of the previous needs “factor”
Early literacy and numeracy	Received 1 vote	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - foundation for success - ties into early intervention
Identify different (more effective) teaching techniques for boys	Received 0 votes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - boys learn differently and need different teaching techniques to be engaged