

ALBERTA SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOCIATION

STRATEGIC PLAN

September 2006 - August 2009

April 2006

**INTRODUCTION:
ALBERTA SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOCIATION**

The Board of Directors of the Alberta School Boards Association prepared a three-year strategic plan and adopted it in March 1999. This plan would take the ASBA forward, beginning in September 1999, to September 2002. Execution of the plan began in September 1999.

Each January since that time the Board of Directors has reviewed and renewed the ASBA Strategic Plan. The Board has been very pleased with the progress made and is particularly pleased with the positive and supportive attitudes and enthusiasm of trustees and school boards across Alberta in part as a result of the efforts made in meeting the requirements of this plan.

In January 2006, the ASBA Board conducted its seventh annual review. The Strategic Plan following represents the conclusions of the Board of Directors from its session of January 12th to 14th, 2006. It was approved in April 2006 and will be refined, detailed and executed beginning September 2006.

THE VISION OF ALBERTA SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOCIATION

- ASBA is a respected and influential provincial association of locally elected school boards.
- ASBA supports publicly elected school boards in their efforts to ensure that students in Alberta have the opportunity to reach their highest potential.
- ASBA is the leading voice advocating for public education in Alberta.
- ASBA is energized by the enthusiastic participation of its members.

THE MISSION OF ALBERTA SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOCIATION

PROMOTING EXCELLENCE IN PUBLIC EDUCATION

THE MANDATE OF ALBERTA SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOCIATION

The Alberta School Boards Association is a province-wide organization of locally elected school boards. Providing leadership focusing on continuous improvement of the public education system, the Alberta School Boards Association:

- Advocates provincially and nationally on public education issues, with a strong voice, on behalf of locally elected school boards.
- Provides timely, well-researched information on public education issues to school boards.
- Encourages networking and interaction among school boards and stakeholders on education issues.
- Works with other provincial organizations, national education organizations and governments to improve public education.
- Provides services to school boards.

THE GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF ALBERTA SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOCIATION

(Guiding principles are high-level directional statements that define the Alberta School Boards Association's values and parameters).

1. Public Education – public, separate and francophone jurisdictions – must be governed by locally elected school boards.
2. School boards must have the autonomy to make decisions in the best interests of the students and communities they serve.
3. School boards must have access to long-term, stable funding to fulfill the mandate of educating their students.
4. Direct access to the local property tax base and the ability to tax are fundamental to school board autonomy, accountability and responsiveness to their communities.
5. The Alberta School Boards Association will sponsor or provide input to any amendments to the *School Act* and regulations.
6. School boards are responsible for communicating with their communities about the local public education system.
7. School boards are responsible for providing quality public education to their students.

THE CORE BUSINESS ACTIVITIES OF THE ASBA

The core business activities of the ASBA can be categorized under four major headings (four pillars). These are as follows:

- Services to All Boards;
- Services to Individual Boards;
- Advocacy; and
- Board/Trustee Development.

The services to all Boards include:

- Leadership in the development and promotion of strategic initiatives;
- Provision of access to cooperative insurance/pension/purchasing programs;
- Communications function;
- Research on and analysis of specific educational issues and challenges; and
- Policy advisory services.

The services to individual Boards include:

- Legal services;
- Labour relations services;
- Policy review services;
- Recruitment services; and
- Evaluation services.

The advocacy function comprises:

- Issue monitoring and action;
- Key message development;
- Networking and partnering of public education interests;
- Direct lobbying of government ministers and departments, and MLAs; and
- Editorial board visits and other media engagements.

The development of Boards and trustees is accomplished through:

- General Meetings (SGM and FGM);
- Workshops;
- Seminars;
- Zone meetings; and
- Board Learning Centre.

These core business activities reflect the preferred contributions of ASBA as determined by Board and member strategies, policies and actions. The Alberta School Boards Association conducts these activities with a focus on action through proper process.

INTERNAL SCAN: STRENGTHS OF ASBA

The internal strengths of the Alberta School Boards Association include three areas of focus:

Governance: The Alberta School Boards Association strives to be a model of good governance and process, led by a dedicated, skilled, and experienced Board of Directors, and is recognized as:

- The legislated, recognized voice of public education in Alberta, in which all school boards are members;
- A leader, provincially and externally, on educational issues, and increasingly sought out to collaborate in positive solutions to educational issues;
- A leader in encouraging involvement of trustees, to better use their wide range of skills and experience on internal and external Committees;
- An organization with strong relationships with educational partners in all areas of Alberta and beyond; and
- An organization focused on its core business (its four pillars) and guided by a strong and evolving strategic plan.

The Premier's Award annually provides an opportunity for sharing exemplary practices amongst boards.

Management and Staff: A highly skilled, professional, creative, innovative, and dedicated team, management and staff are committed to continuous learning and improvement, and they rigorously evaluate past actions in order to improve.

Programs and Activities: The programs and activities of ASBA provide quality, professional skill development for trustees, improve advocacy skills, respond to changing needs, and use a participatory process to resolve issues.

INTERNAL SCAN: CHALLENGES FOR THE ASBA

There are four major internal challenges for the Alberta School Boards Association:

Working With All School Boards in Alberta: ASBA faces the challenge of balancing the needs of individual boards with those of all Boards, some aspects of which include:

- Seeking consensus and managing the tensions created by different views;
- Fostering ownership, engagement and participation of Boards;
- Linking the ASBA Board with Zones; and
- Fostering a collective focus on provincial priorities.

ASBA's governance approach, organization structures, and culture must continually evolve to engage these challenges.

Dealing with Limited Resources: ASBA is continuously challenged with balancing the demand for services with limited resources and capacities of the organization.

Working Effectively with Government and Other Organizations: ASBA is challenged by its need to maintain independence and separation from Government while cooperating, partnering and collaborating with Government and others to address the key issues facing students and the education system in Alberta today. ASBA strives to engage in a positive working relationship with the Alberta Teachers' Association as a key partner in education.

Communicating Effectively: Audiences for ASBA communications include school boards, trustees, the Provincial Government, other Associations, the Alberta public and myriad other Alberta and non-Alberta organizations. Maintaining continuous and effective communication with Boards and trustees about the overall vision for and leadership of public education by the ASBA is critical. Accessible information, alignment of the Strategic Plan with policy and directives, and the value of public education are also important communication priorities of ASBA.

EXTERNAL SCAN: OPPORTUNITIES FOR ASBA

Significant areas of opportunity for Alberta School Boards Association can be grouped in three categories:

Opportunities for Successful Advocacy in Support of Public Education: Strong relationships with key public leaders, the healthy financial position of government, and ASBA's advocacy positions are opportunities to influence the direction of public education in Alberta.

Opportunities to Influence Future Program Directions for the Alberta Educational System: Long term funding for specific programs, policies for children and students at risk in aboriginal education, modified K-12 programs, response to labour shortages, arts and language program initiatives, and influencing the remaining ACOL recommendations are all opportunities for ASBA influence in support of public education.

Opportunities to Help Create a Diversified Education Delivery System: Rapidly changing technology, and in particular the SuperNet initiative, influences education and represents an opportunity for the ASBA to take a leadership role in advocating for a diversified educational delivery system.

EXTERNAL SCAN: EXTERNAL CHALLENGES FOR ASBA

Three external challenges to the business of ASBA require focus:

Maintaining Strong, Positive Relationships: ASBA strives to maintain strong, positive working relationships with Government and provincial education associations.

Engaging the Public: Engaging the public in active support of public education and its funding is a continuous challenge, especially where changing demographics and declining enrollments in some areas reduce the focus of citizens.

Maintaining Service Levels and Funding: ASBA is challenged to maintain its service levels in the face of increasing external pressures, including increasing demand for legal services, rising technology cost for school boards, increasing focus on Public-Private Partnerships, and the growth of charter schools, private schools and tutoring.

KEY ISSUES FOR THE STRATEGIC PLAN, 2006-2009

The Board addressed and prioritized the key issues for ASBA in the coming three years. From an initial list of 39 issues, the following key issue areas were considered most critical:

Increasing Capacity of Boards to Govern: Providing school boards the tools for Governance, developing and teaching quality processes for Boards. Areas of focus include:

- Communications, accountability, and dealing with increasing public expectations;
- Focusing boards on data-driven decision-making;
- Maintaining focus on the most important things in an environment of many challenges.

Sustainable Funding, especially in the face of increasing labour and other cost impacts, is a perennial challenge for ASBA and its members.

Improving High School Completion Rates were viewed as a key issue for Alberta going forward.

Maintaining Positive Working Relationships with outside organizations, whether ATA, Government or other jurisdictions, is a key area of focus.

Responding to Future Challenges with a United Voice remains a key challenge and focus.

Communication: Continuous, effective communications represents an area of continuous effort for ASBA, and is always a key area for focus.

Specific Priorities: At a meeting of the Board of Directors in January 2006, and as a response to these key issues, two specific priorities of the 2006-2009 Strategic Plan were identified by the Board:

- Creating organizational structures that result in all school boards participating fully in the ASBA.
- Launching initiatives to support and enhance local school boards' leadership capacity.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES OF ASBA

Strategic priorities describe the most important priorities that ASBA must accomplish in order to succeed at a point in time. Strategic priorities focus the resources of ASBA on ***Doing the Right Things, Well, at the Right Time.***

STRATEGIC PRIORITY: SERVICES TO ALL SCHOOL BOARDS: The ASBA proactively makes available advice, information, programs and strategies to support school boards.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY: SERVICES TO INDIVIDUAL SCHOOL BOARDS: The ASBA provides high quality, cost-effective services to school boards.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY: ADVOCACY: The ASBA advocates effectively for excellence in public education.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY: SCHOOL BOARD / TRUSTEE DEVELOPMENT: The ASBA builds the leadership and governance capacity of individual school boards and trustees, and encourages trustee candidacy.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY: ASBA STRUCTURE AND ORGANIZATIONAL ENVIRONMENT: The ASBA structure and organizational environment facilitates the achievement of its mandate and ensures that all Boards participate in setting the direction of the Association and in implementing the Association's policies and priorities.

KEY RESULTS AND STRATEGIES FOR ASBA

The **Key Results** are the specific outcomes that ASBA will achieve in each of the strategic priority areas. The Board of Directors, Executive Director and Management Team will be measured against these key results on a regular basis.

In sections following strategic priorities, key results and strategies are not numbered in order of importance, but rather only to provide a reference. Strategies are reported only for those Key Results that are strategic in nature.

Strategies of the ASBA direct the organization as to how Key Results will be accomplished during the time period of the Strategy. The Board has incorporated the advice and input of members across the province, of staff through their experience with member issues and needs, and the formal input of members through the SGM/FGM in preparing these strategies.

Key Results that are **Strategic in nature**, requiring a specific and significant effort from the organization in the coming three years, are identified under the first heading below. In the sections following, strategies of ASBA in relation to those key results are presented.

Key Results that are **Operational in nature** and require ongoing effort from ASBA are identified under the second heading following. These key results were at one time strategic and have now become part of our way of doing business, of ongoing operations. Ongoing efforts are therefore required to maintain these key results over time.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY: SERVICES TO ALL SCHOOL BOARDS: The ASBA proactively makes available advice, information, programs and strategies to support school boards.

KEY RESULTS

Strategic

- *There were no strategic key results for this priority.*

Operational

A-1: *Advice and information to school boards is timely and valued.*

A-2: *ASBA provides school boards with access to services (insurance, pension, etc.) that are cost effective, responsive, accountable, and fiscally transparent.*

STRATEGIC PRIORITY: SERVICES TO INDIVIDUAL SCHOOL BOARDS: The ASBA provides high quality, cost-effective services to school boards.

KEY RESULTS

Strategic

B-1: *School boards are prepared to pay for their requests for existing and new services.*

Operational

B-2: *School boards are highly satisfied with the quality and range of services provided by ASBA.*

B-3: *School boards are aware of all services available through ASBA, use the services, and promote the advantages of ASBA.*

STRATEGIC PRIORITY: SERVICES TO INDIVIDUAL SCHOOL BOARDS		
The ASBA provides high quality, cost-effective services to school boards.		
<i>Key Results</i>	<i>Strategies</i>	<i>Responsibility</i>
STRATEGIC KEY RESULTS		
B-1: <i>School boards are prepared to pay for their requests for existing and new services.</i>	B-1.1 Determine resource requirements necessary to maintain existing services, and for new services.	Dir. Mem. Serv.
	B-1.2 Investigate/explore options for revenue generation, including recommendations from the Financial Options Task Force.	Mgr. Fin. & Admin.
	B-1.3 Prepare budget proposals for consideration by the membership.	Mgr. Fin, & Admin.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY: ADVOCACY: The ASBA advocates effectively for excellence in public education.

KEY RESULTS

Strategic

- C-1: The ASBA succeeds in achieving advocacy positions and will identify two priorities for advocacy in the first year of the three year strategic plan.***
- C-2: The ASBA advocates for a decision on the outstanding recommendations from the Learning Commission report and influences the outcomes and implementation of approved recommendations.***

Operational

- C-3: The ASBA identifies emergent issues for Directives for Action which drive advocacy.***
- C-4: The ASBA advocates for positions identified in Policies and Directives for Action.***

STRATEGIC PRIORITY: ADVOCACY		
The ASBA advocates effectively for excellence in public education.		
Key Results	Strategies	Responsibility
STRATEGIC KEY RESULTS		
C-1: <i>The ASBA succeeds in achieving advocacy positions and will identify two priorities for advocacy in the first year of the three-year strategic plan.</i>	C-1.1 Establish priority issues each year that should be the primary focus of ASBA advocacy/lobbying activities and develop specific lobbying, marketing and communication plans to support those priorities identified.	Ex. Dir./Board
C-2: <i>The ASBA advocates for a decision on the outstanding recommendations from the Learning Commission report and influences the outcomes and implementation of approved recommendations.</i>	C-2.1 The ASBA will advocate in support of the legislated centralized school board controlled teacher bargaining model as presented by ASBA to government.	Board
	C-2.2 Create opportunities to influence the other outstanding recommendations of the Learning Commission.	Board/Ex.Dir.
	C-2.3 Create opportunities to influence the outcomes and implementation of approved Learning Commission recommendations.	Board/Ex.Dir.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY: SCHOOL BOARD / TRUSTEE DEVELOPMENT: The ASBA builds the leadership and governance capacity of individual school boards and trustees, and encourages trustee candidacy.

KEY RESULTS

Strategic

D-1: School Boards have the necessary tools to govern effectively.

D-2: School boards access ASBA resources to raise public awareness of and support for the role of the trustee and school boards in public education.

Operational

D-3: ASBA responds positively to requests for customized school board development services.

D-4: Trustees access school board/trustee development opportunities and are highly satisfied with the quality of those services.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY: SCHOOL BOARD / TRUSTEE DEVELOPMENT		
<i>The ASBA builds the leadership and governance capacity of individual school boards and trustees, and encourages trustee candidacy.</i>		
Key Results	Strategies	Responsibility
STRATEGIC KEY RESULTS		
D-1: School Boards have the necessary tools to govern effectively.	D-1.1 Governance tools are developed and delivered for use by school boards.	Mgr. Corp. Services
	D-1.2 Boards are made aware of the governance tools available.	Mgr. Corp. Services
D-2: School boards access ASBA resources to raise public awareness of and support for the role of the trustee and school boards in public education.	D-2.1 ASBA Board establishes lead role in creating public awareness.	Board
	D-2.2 ASBA resources (materials) are promoted to school boards in support of public awareness initiatives.	Mgr. Comm.
	D-2.3 ASBA weaves in messages about the role of the trustee into its efforts to raise the profile of school board elections.	Mgr. Comm.
	D-2.4 ASBA measures school board use of ASBA materials in support of public awareness.	Mgr. Comm.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY: ASBA Structure and Organizational Environment: The ASBA structure and organizational environment facilitates the achievement of its mandate and ensures that all Boards participate in setting the direction of the Association and in implementing the Association's policies and priorities.

KEY RESULTS

Strategic

- E-1: The ASBA structure supports a sustainable, successful organization; school boards value their membership in the organization.**
- E-2: School boards are satisfied with the level and process of consultation provided by ASBA before decisions are made.**
- E-3: ASBA acknowledges and respects the unique needs and differences of school boards.**
- E-4: School boards show respect for the ASBA democratic processes and subsequent advocacy efforts.**

Operational

- There are no operational key results under this priority.**

STRATEGIC PRIORITY: ORGANIZATION ENVIRONMENT		
ASBA processes encourage active, respectful school board participation in defining and implementing membership direction.		
<i>Key Results</i>	<i>Strategies</i>	<i>Responsibility</i>
STRATEGIC KEY RESULTS		
E-1: <i>The ASBA structure supports a sustainable, successful organization; school boards value their membership in the organization.</i>	E-1.1 The membership will undertake a review of the “key” elements of the ASBA structure: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Membership – Voting procedures (including how the weight of votes are allocated) – How fees are assigned – Roles and responsibilities for decision making – If there is a representative governing body – how are its members selected, and what are its powers – How the association’s policy is set. 	Board/Ex. Dir
	E-1.2 That the Executive Director use his best judgement to recover, wherever possible, the costs of providing information or responding to requests for services beyond what could normally be expected, from external organizations.	Ex. Dir
E-2: <i>School boards are satisfied with the level and process of consultation provided by ASBA before decisions are made.</i>	E-2.1 Develop an approach for involving metro and zone directors in consulting with school boards before decisions are made.	Ex. Dir./Board
	E-2.2 Develop an effective input system so that metro and zone directors and school boards can provide their views as input to decision processes.	Ex. Dir./Board
	E-2.3 Provide feedback to school boards on the input received and decisions made.	Ex. Dir./Board
	E-2.4 Strengthen communication and representation role of individual members of the Board of Directors of ASBA by continuing “key messages” from Board meetings and bringing their key issues to the Board table.	Ex. Dir./Board

<p>E-3: ASBA acknowledges and respects the unique needs and differences of school boards.</p>	E-3.1	Review the findings and recommendations of the metro boards report in relation to unique needs and differences.	Mgr. Corp. Services
	E-3.2	Complete the urban school boards study, and assess the urban issues in relation to unique needs and differences. Compare these needs with the metro and rural issues, and assess common issues as well as unique needs.	Mgr.Corp. Services
	E-3.3	Identify opportunities to promote and support the diversity within the public education system and the unique needs of metro, urban, and rural school boards.	Mgr.Corp. Services
	E-3.4	Research, assess and summarize areas of similarity amongst urban and rural school boards.	Mgr.Corp. Services
	E-3.5	Develop policy positions to support unique board issues for presentation to FGM 2005.	Mgr.Corp. Services
<p>E-4: School boards show respect for the ASBA democratic processes and subsequent advocacy efforts.</p>	E-4.1	Identify mechanisms that are now in place to provide opportunities for school boards to be heard.	Mgr.Corp. Services
	E-4.2	Prepare and promote the new governance manual, and provide clear direction to ASBA Board members on their roles and responsibilities with respect to ASBA matters.	Mgr.Corp. Services
	E-4.3	Continue to provide speaking notes for Board members on key positions of ASBA.	Mgr. Comm.
	E-4.4	Monitor, evaluate and adjust this approach to ensure Directors are both comfortable with their roles and are supporting ASBA efforts.	Ex. Dir.

EXECUTING THE STRATEGY

Effective September 2006, the ASBA management team and staff will begin executing this Strategy, and will invest maximum effort in its strategies and action plans. Management will:

- Prepare action plans to accomplish each strategy.
- Prepare budget and resource estimates relative to each strategy.
- Identify operational issues relative to each strategy.
- Assign resources to each strategy.
- Identify implementation timing and evaluation methods for each strategy.

For some Key Results and Strategies, particularly those under the Advocacy Strategic Priority, members of the ASBA Board of Directors will be partners and significant players in the implementation of these strategies. In these cases the key positions of ASBA, the history of how ASBA came to these positions and the role of local trustees and school boards in the ASBA consultative process will be included in the material supporting the ASBA Board members as they talk directly with their political colleagues on school boards across Alberta about their work on the Alberta School Boards Association.

The Board will be presented with quarterly reviews of the progress of the Strategy and will be provided with a year-end report.