



# COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS SUPERINTENDENT SALARIES

PREPARED FOR THE ALBERTA SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOCIATION  
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## Executive Summary

The objective of this analysis was to examine the base salary of school board superintendents across a number of comparators to determine if the salaries are aligned province wide, by type of board (public, separate, francophone), and metro, urban, and rural segments. Similar information was also gathered from Ontario, Saskatchewan, and British Columbia as a means to compare salary rates. When discussing salaries in this report, it is meant to represent only the base salary information for those positions. Additional elements of total compensation are widely diverse and would make comparison inaccurate as documented in the ASBA Management Compensation Report <sup>1</sup>. Provinces were selected based on the availability of reliable data. Information was also analyzed against trends in unemployment, average earnings, and cost of living increases across the 4 provinces as well as teacher salaries and comparable government employees.

The information contained within this report is largely based on audited financial statements for each of the Public, Separate and Francophone School Boards as posted on the Alberta Education website as well as information contained within the 2017 ASBA Management Compensation Report. The information has been analyzed and is presented for information and discussion purposes. Information related to salaries in Ontario, Saskatchewan and British Columbia was gathered through publicly available websites. Provincial based statistics such as unemployment rates, average wages, and cost of living increases was gathered from Statistics Canada.

Overall, the analysis revealed the following points for discussion:

1. There is a great deal of variation in salaries for School Board Superintendents provincially. Size of budget or number of students in the district are not reliable indicators for salary levels.
2. Alberta School Board Superintendents experienced significantly higher increases in base salary between 2011 and 2016 than those of teachers, non-certificated administrative staff within school boards.
3. The average salary in the province of Alberta has experienced a decline in the past 5 years. School Board Superintendents continue to experience growth in the base salary. Salaries for Alberta School Board Superintendents increased by over 10% during that period. In the last 3 years the increase was over 7%, with the top 10 highest paid Superintendents experiencing an increase over 10%.
4. The average base salary for CEO's of Agencies Boards and Commissions contracted by nearly 14% between 2015 and 2016. Salaries for Alberta School Board Superintendents has increased by over 10% during 2011-2016.
5. Maximum salaries for Superintendents in the Province of Alberta are significantly higher than those of Ontario, Saskatchewan and British Columbia.

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<sup>1</sup> ASBA Management Compensation Report (2017)– Analysis Superintendent of Schools

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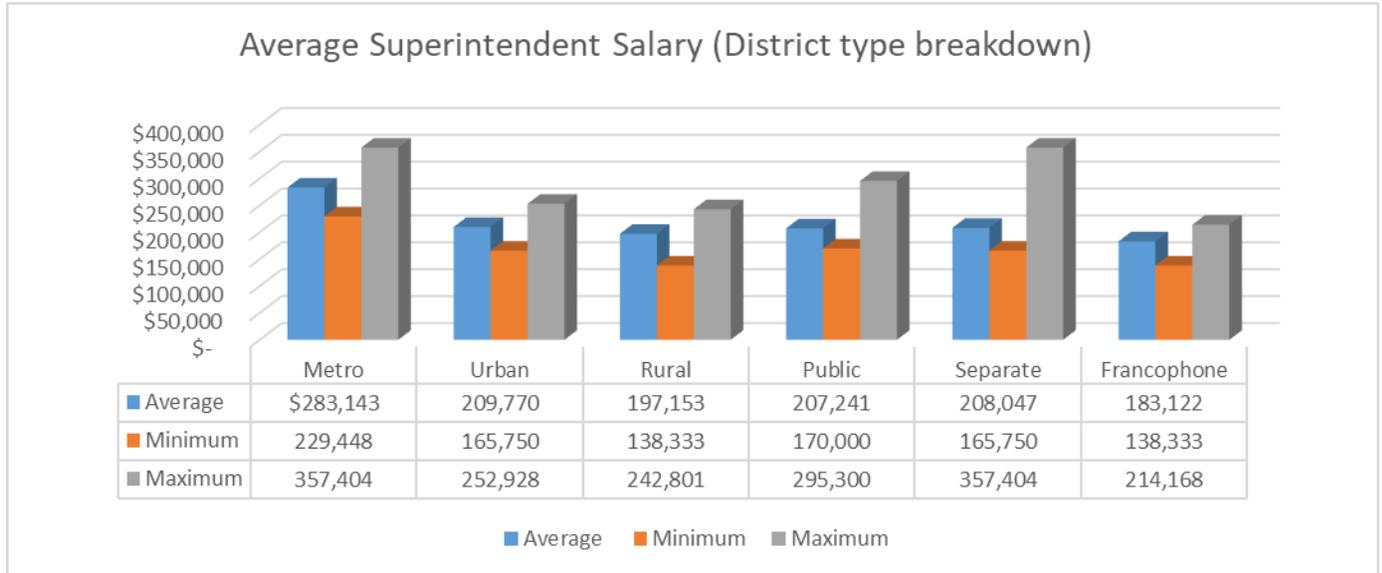
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## 1. Superintendent Base Salary (FY 2015-16)

Table 1.



Based on the information in Table 1, not unexpectedly, the Edmonton and Calgary Metro regions have the highest base salary for their superintendents. There is a nearly \$160,000 gap between the highest and lowest salaries between the Metro Boards with Edmonton Catholic being highest and Northwest Francophone being lowest. (Max: \$357,404; Min: \$229,448).

Table 2 and Table 3 illustrate the top 10 salaries for Board Superintendent's in FY 2015-16, and the top 10 student population across all School Board Districts. Although Edmonton Catholic has the highest salary for their Superintendent, they have the 4<sup>th</sup> highest student population across all districts. Similarly, Parkland School District has the 3<sup>rd</sup> highest salary for the reporting period with the 9<sup>th</sup> highest student population. This would indicate that size of student population is not a good predictor of base salary for School Board Superintendents.

Table 2.

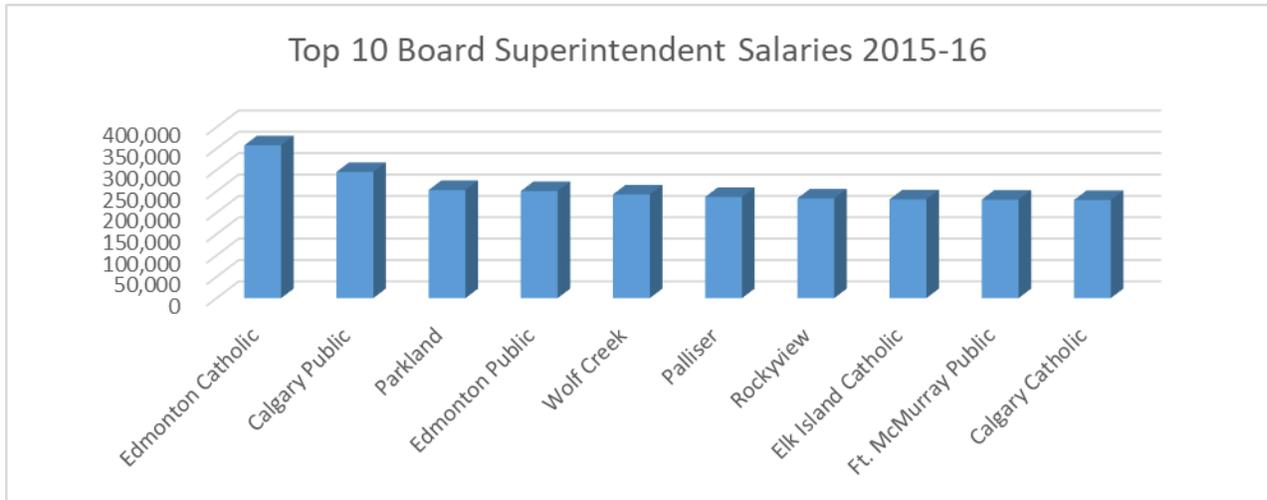
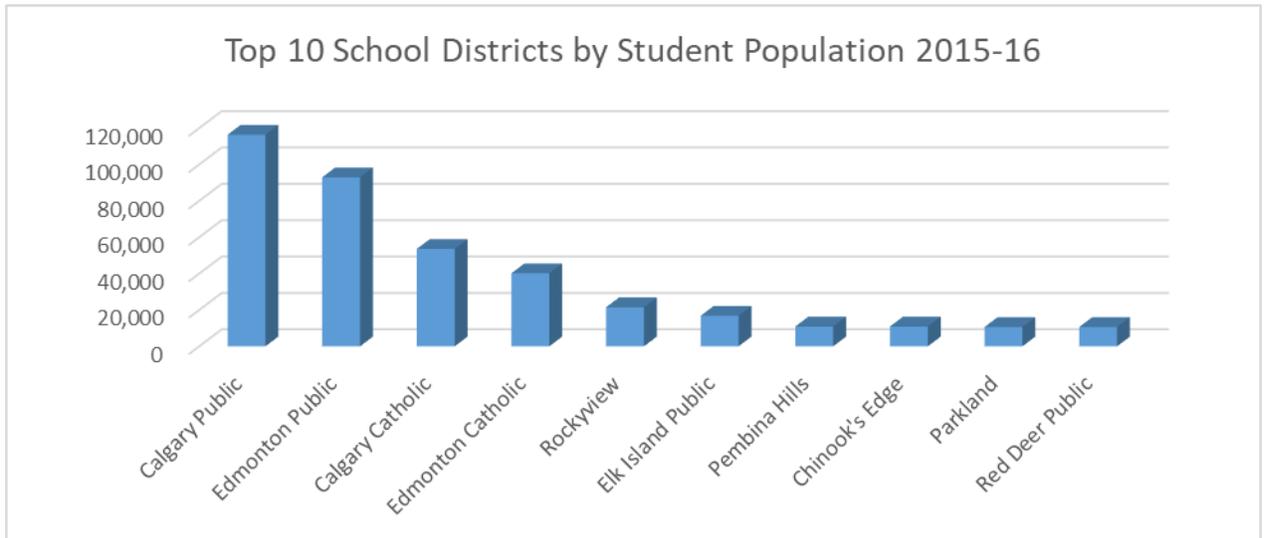


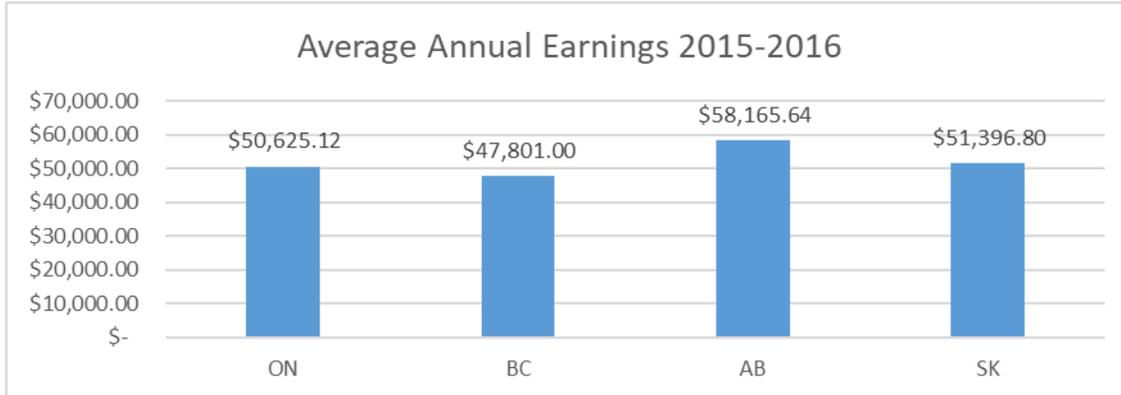
Table 3.



## 2. Trends in Average Base Salary

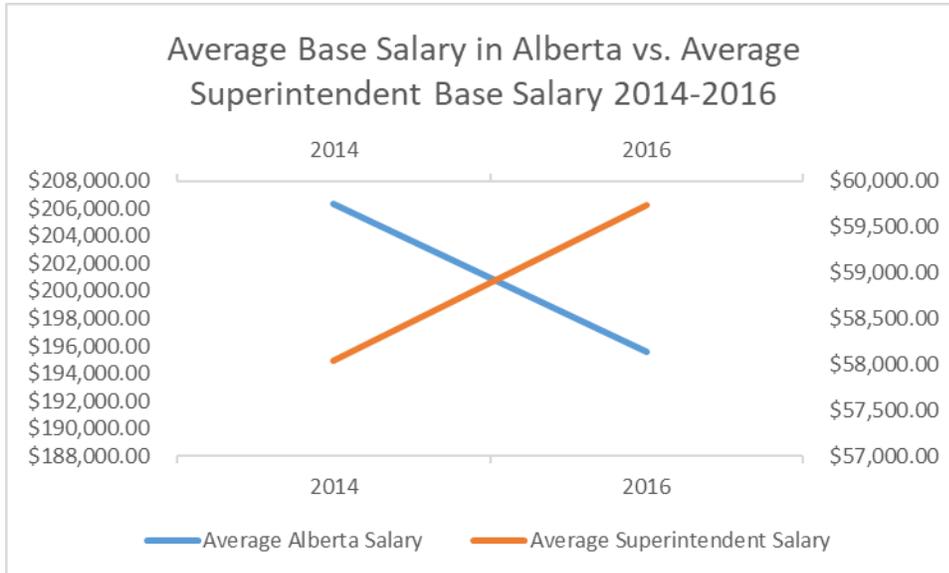
Looking at the average earnings as reported by Statistics Canada, it is not unexpected to find that Albertans enjoy the highest base salaries. The average weekly earnings in Alberta have historically been, and remain, the highest of the 4 provinces examined in this report.

Table 4.



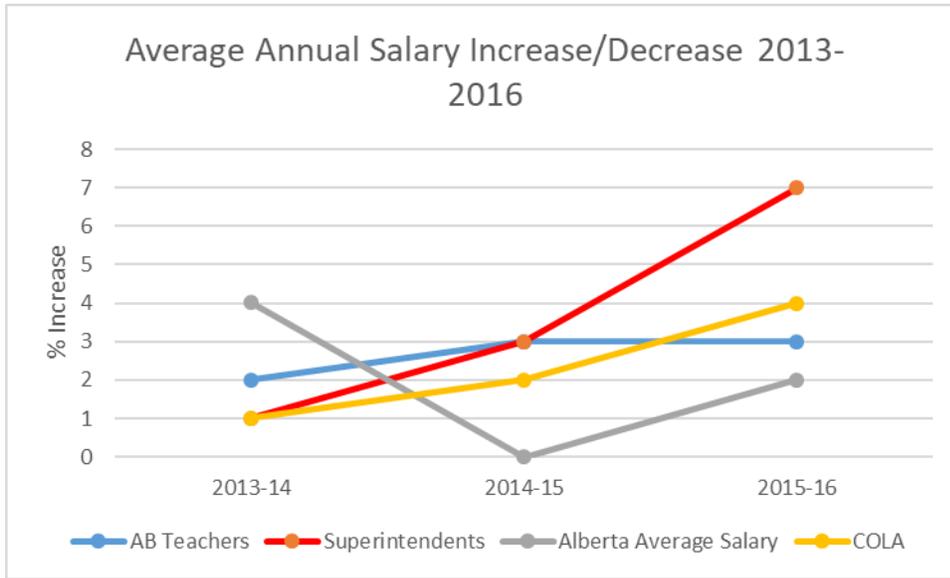
Despite maintaining the highest average base salary among the provinces, average Alberta wages have been declining since 2014. Alberta School Board Superintendents salaries have continued to rise during that same period.

Table 5.



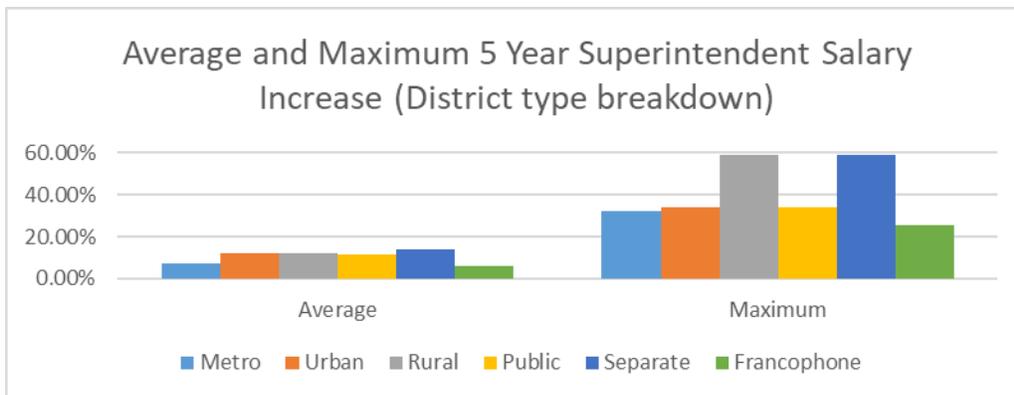
The table below illustrates the minimal increases to salaries in the past 3 years for Alberta teachers. Traditionally these increases have been aligned with annual Cost of Living Adjustments (COLA). Exceptions to that include an overall decrease in the average salary for Albertans, as well as an overall increase for School Board Superintendents over the same period. As a point of interest, Alberta Teachers agreed to a freeze on increments to their salary grids as part of their most recent collective agreement which expires in 2018.

Table 6.



Contrary to the decreased average weekly salary experienced by many Albertan's, the average base salary for all School Board Superintendents in Alberta increased by 7% and the top 10 School Board Superintendent salaries increased by over 10% in three years (2013-2016). The annual cost of living adjustment during that same period was between 1 and 2%. Based on the information available, it would appear that increases to the base salary of School Board Superintendents in the province of Alberta is inconsistent with other positions in the province. The table below provides some additional information regarding the 5-year average base salary increase for School Board Superintendents which resulted in an overall increase of 10%.

Table 7.

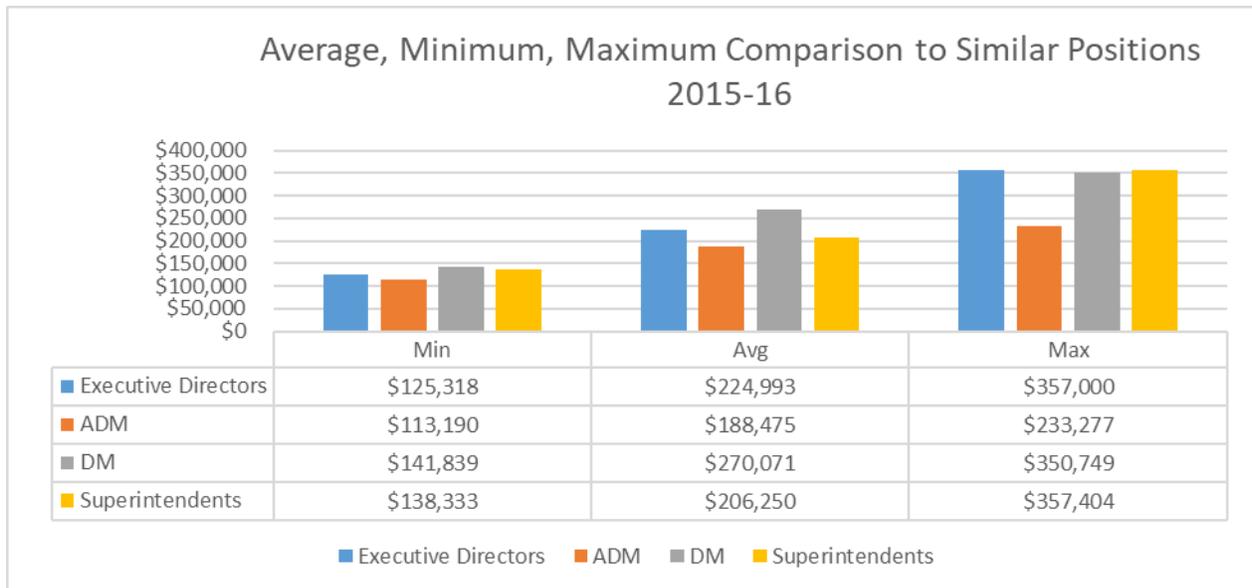


### 3. Comparison to Similar Positions

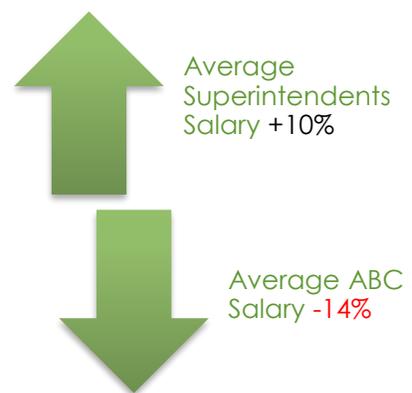
In 2016 a survey of salaries for Executive Directors or equivalent level positions in the Province of Alberta was conducted.<sup>2</sup> Details for the salaries of Assistant Deputy Ministers, and Deputy Ministers has been pulled from the Salary and Severance disclosure information under the Public Sector Compensation Transparency Act<sup>3</sup>.

In 2014-16, the average salary for an Assistant Deputy Minister (ADM) was \$188,475; School Board Superintendent average base salary exceeds that of an ADM by over \$15,000, however appears to be within the range of similar executive director type roles in the province. The maximum salary for a School Board Superintendent in Alberta was listed at \$357,000. This exceeded the maximum salary for all other like positions, including the Deputy Minister. The table below illustrates the average, minimum and maximum salaries for similar level positions in 2015-2016.

Table 8.



Recently there has been a heightened awareness for executive level salaries in the Province. In 2017, the Alberta Government passed a new compensation regulation framework for all Agencies, Boards, and Commissions in the Province of Alberta<sup>4</sup>. This framework has resulted in significant changes to base salaries for CEO's charged with running these entities. The average CEO salary prior to the changes was \$326,839. Based on the changes made, the new average salary will be \$282,715. This represents a 14% decrease.



<sup>2</sup> Western Management Consultants engagement for private organization 2016.

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.alberta.ca/salary-disclosure.aspx>

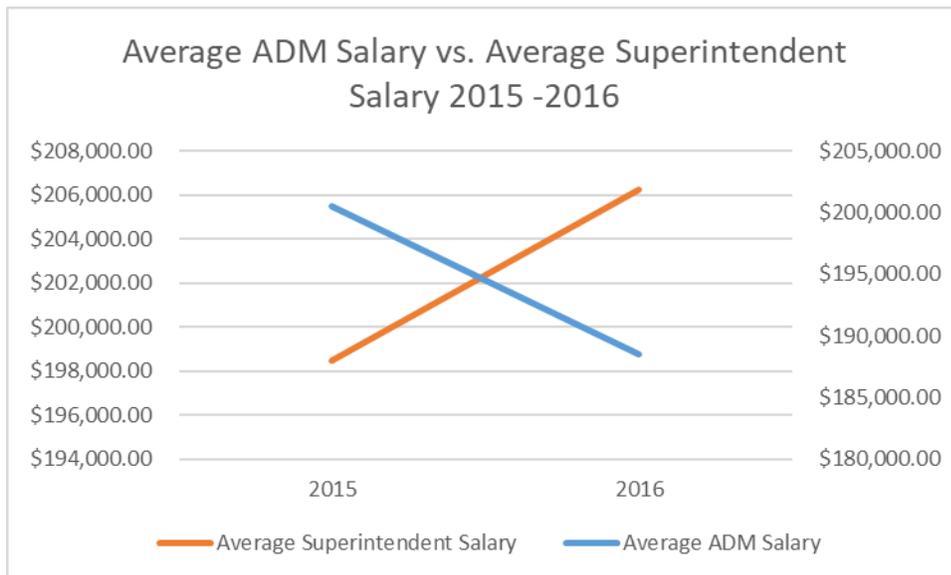
<sup>4</sup> <https://www.alberta.ca/abc-compensation.aspx#toc-3>

Although the average salary for CEO's of the ABC's is slightly higher than the School Board Superintendent, there is a trend towards reductions from the ABC's, however the same cannot be said for School Board Superintendents.

In addition to the implementation of the compensation framework, on February 1, 2018, the Alberta Government also announced a Salary Restraint Regulation for all ABCs. The restraint states that no 'designated executive' shall receive an increase to their base salary for the period of April 1, 2018 to September 30, 2019<sup>5</sup>. This regulation supports the 2-year salary freeze for all managers and non-union employee in public service positions<sup>6</sup> that was put in place in January 2016 by the Provincial Government.

Comparing data from 2015 and 2016, there was a decrease in average salary for Assistant Deputy Ministers(ADM) and Deputy Ministers. The chart below depicts the decline in average salary for ADM's, and the increase in average salary for Superintendents between 2015 and 2016.

Table 9.



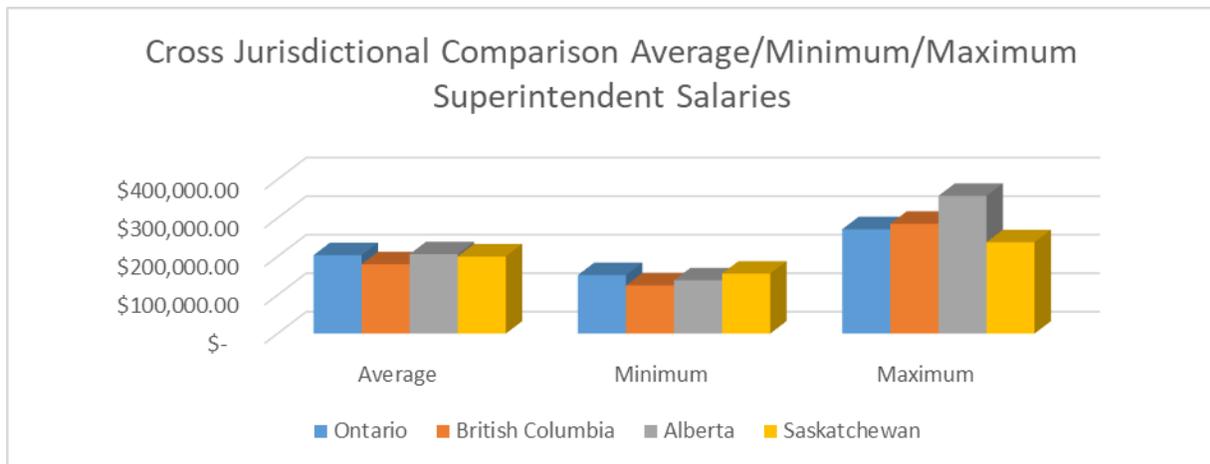
<sup>5</sup> [http://www.qp.alberta.ca/documents/orders/Orders\\_in\\_Council/2018/118/2018\\_015.pdf](http://www.qp.alberta.ca/documents/orders/Orders_in_Council/2018/118/2018_015.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> <http://calgaryherald.com/news/politics/alberta-government-announces-two-year-salary-freeze>

## 4. Cross Jurisdictional Comparison (FY 2015-16)

Information was gathered about School Board Superintendent (or equivalent - ON and SK title the lead role as “Directors of Education”) salaries in Ontario, Saskatchewan and British Columbia. Based on the information above, Alberta has the highest average salary for School Board Superintendents (or equivalent). The maximum salary for Alberta Superintendents is nearly \$90,000 more that of Ontario, more than \$100,000 higher than Saskatchewan, and \$70,000 more than that of British Columbia.

Table 10.



When considering unemployment rates across the 4 provinces, it is evident that Alberta has been experiencing some difficulties with job retention and growth. In the past 4 years, Alberta's unemployment rate has increased by 76%, whereas Ontario and British Columbia have seen a decrease in rate of unemployment by 18% and 12% respectively. Saskatchewan's unemployment rate increased by 34% during the same reporting period. Likely as a result of the same downturn in oil revenue that heavily impacted Alberta's economy.<sup>1</sup> Generally speaking, increases to unemployment rates has a negative correlation to average base salaries. This is a result of excess supply of labor in the market and reduced bargaining power for potential employees. Most indicators in this analysis support that correlation with the exception of School Board Superintendents, who continue to see a rise in their average base salary despite drastic increases to the rate of unemployment in this province.

Table 11.

