

THE CHANGING ROLE OF SCHOOL BOARDS

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Publicly elected school boards are creatures of the legislature and can only perform those tasks that are permitted to it under provincial statute. In Alberta, school boards have been created by the province to provide educational programs and services to its resident students and to other students that might attend its schools. However, the province retains the ultimate authority over public education and the manner in which it shall be provided to Alberta's children. It is the province that decides what school boards can, or may, do.

There is no requirement, or opportunity, in law that gives the public the right to have a school board. School boards exist, and will continue to exist, only for as long as the provincial legislature believes that they play a useful and significant role in the delivery of education and have sufficient community support to generate the necessary political capital to retain survival.

The brief review of the historical record provided in this document illustrates that publically elected school boards have been an important component of the educational system in Alberta since their establishment in 1884 with the passage of the first *School Ordinance* of the Northwest Territories to the present date. Although many changes in the structure, responsibility, accountability, and funding of local school boards has occurred over this period, the fundamental role has been retained. Publically elected school boards exist for the following reasons:

1. To ensure every resident student has access to an educational program that is consistent with provincial requirements and standards and the needs of the student.
2. To apply and implement provincial policy and direction within its jurisdiction in the manner that is consistent with, and supportive of, community wishes and norms.
3. To advocate on behalf of its community, parents, students and staff. School boards are aware of what is needed within their jurisdiction and must be prepared and courageous in their efforts to secure the necessary supports and continue to lobby on behalf of public education.

As conditions have changed over time, school boards have been forced to adapt their priorities, policies and procedures in order to accommodate new demands and circumstances. For example, the removal of board's ability to tax real property to fund the education of its students has changed the relationship between the board and its supporters. Taxes have a way of generating both interest and discussion. Now for the large number of Albertans that do not have children in school, a significant motivator for interest in the activities of the local school board has been removed. This now means that boards have to find new ways to engage the members of the public in a meaningful and constructive manner. The recent Alberta School Board Association initiative, *Putting the Public Back in Public Education*, is an effort to identify and implement new strategies to accomplish this.

The institutionalization of choice within the Alberta system has also changed the relationship between parents, schools and the board. If a parent is unhappy with the opportunities provided at the local school, or by the local board, there are alternatives. There is no real need for a parent to lobby for change in the local system if there are other opportunities that can be accessed. If the parent accesses educational services from an agent other than the local board, there is really no incentive to be actively engaged in the activities of the local board.

School boards have to devote their attention to ensuring that every student that is enrolled in a school under its jurisdiction has access to a high quality education that is provided in an environment that is positive, safe and caring. School board policies and actions must hold the schools within its control accountable for the results achieved. Jurisdiction resources must be devoted and directed to the achievement of identified goals and priorities. There must be alignment between provincial goals and priorities and those of the board that reflect community values and expectations.

This document has noted what might appear to be a lack of interest on the part of the citizens in the activities of the local publically elected school board. The absence of hotly contested elections for the position of trustee and participants at board meetings are often provided as evidence of a decline in support. However, parents are more involved in, and identify with, the school their children attend. As school jurisdictions have increased in size, the board is somewhat more distant and its role and responsibilities are not always clearly understood. The board's role is to ensure that that school plays a vital role in the lives of parents, students and the community in those matters that are of local responsibility.

The publically elected school board has a responsibility to develop a positive culture throughout the jurisdiction. It must welcome input into the formulation of its policies, plans and procedures. Public input must be sought in those areas that are of jurisdictional interest. Items of local interest are best left at the local level. The school board must also highlight the achievements and successes of the educational system. There is no news like "good news".

THE CHANGING ROLE OF SCHOOL BOARDS

I. INTRODUCTION

As we approach the end of the decade, it is indeed imperative to consider the role played in the delivery of educational services to Alberta's children by publically elected school boards. This consideration is indeed even more critical as there appears to be a shift in the political approach to the delivery of public services by the provincial government. The need to address reducing revenues and increasing demands for improved services has forced the provincial government to seek out more efficient, effective and publically acceptable alternatives to the current systems. The restructuring of the governance of the health services system has raised some concerns among school trustees and others involved in the delivery of education as to the sustained viability, and even longevity, of the present educational governance arrangements. In the Honourable David Hancock's remarks to the Alberta School Boards Association (ASBA) recent initiative this spring, *Putting the Public Back in Public Education*, the following statements appear:

We have to ask ourselves if the way we govern our school system needs to change with the times.

I know that invigorating school boards will be a big part of the conversation you'll be having here this weekend.

The Minister of Education, the Honourable D. Hancock, has recently initiated a number of major public consultations that have the potential, as well as the promise, to restructure the manner in which educational services are to be delivered within the province. Three of the major consultations that are occurring at this time are:

1. *Setting the Direction for Special Education in Alberta,*
2. *Inspiring Education: A Dialogue with Albertans, and*
3. *Speak Out – Alberta Students Engagement Initiative*

The brief description and mandate of each of the consultations are provided on the Alberta Education Website and are noted below. They point to the desire of the Minister to obtain the views of Albertans in an effort to determine where changes could and should be made and to ascertain where public support for those changes may lie.

Setting the Direction for Special Education in Alberta
Setting the Direction for Special Education in Alberta will create a new special education framework that includes vision, principles, policy, accountability and funding

Inspiring Education: A Dialogue with Albertans
Albertans are invited to take part in a series of conversations about the future of education in Alberta. We want to hear from a variety of interests and voices to help develop public understanding and expectations across multiple perspectives

Speak Out – Alberta Students Engagement Initiative

Alberta Student Engagement Initiative encourages Alberta high school students to speak out about their education to help government to strengthen our education system - moderated discussion boards and a wealth of information for students

Without doubt, the impact of these consultations will generate new expectations, new pressures and demands on school boards. As noted in the *Setting the Direction for Special Education in Alberta* initiative, a promise has been made to change not only the manner in which services will be provided to students but also in the way in which funding and accountability will be determined. It is indeed appropriate at this time to examine not only the role of school boards but what their structure and accountability will, and should, be. It may also be opportune to ascertain and identify the roles that ought to be played by both the province and school boards in the delivery of educational services to the children and students of the province.

It should be noted that the provincial government, under the direction of the Honourable Dr. Lyle Oberg, structured a task force to review the educational system in Alberta and report back to the provincial government and members of the public on measures to improve the educational opportunities available to Alberta's children. *Alberta's Commission on Learning*, as the task force was known, delivered its report to the Minister in October 2003, just over five years ago. The Commission travelled the province, listened to the views of hundreds of Albertans, reviewed research and current trends in education, sought advice from a wide range of experts, explored options and made a series of recommendations, some 95 in total. One might well ask why the need today to revisit the same concerns, to obtain again the input of Albertans, on issues which had already been apparently researched and reviewed and recommendations generated for remediation and improvement of the system.

A. AUTHORITY OF SCHOOL BOARDS

The decisions of the provincial government impact directly upon the manner in which educational services are to be delivered to students and the role and authority of school boards in providing those. School boards are creatures of the legislature and can do only what the province permits, or requires, them to do.

The following statements taken from the *MEMORANDUM OF DECISION OF THE HONOURABLE MR. JUSTICE V.W.M. SMITH of the COURT OF QUEEN'S BENCH OF ALBERTA* in regard to the legal action undertaken by the school boards in the matter of the *School Amendment Act, 1994* and the *School Act, 1988* clearly define the judicial interpretations of the limits of the authority of school boards.

"Municipalities are entirely the creatures of provincial statutes. Accordingly, they can exercise only those powers which are explicitly conferred upon them by a provincial statute."

"The School Act does not create an autonomous entity, rather many of the functions which the Board is empowered to do are reviewable and its actions are in

the main controlled by government. This is illustrated in many parts of the School Act. The Minister of Education must approve the person who is to be the Boards' Superintendent of Schools. One can hardly say that the Board is master in its own house when dealing with its teaching and supervisory and administrative staff."

A review of the roles and responsibilities of school boards over the past 120 years illustrates significant shifts in responsibilities and authority. From a time when the bulk of school board revenues were generated from local taxes levied by school boards on the real property of their supporters to complete dependence on provincial funding in 1994. School boards have been required to respond to a wide range of new trends that have swept across the province from: "classrooms without walls" to "site-based management" to "parental choice" to "accountability" to "charter schools" and the "merits of competition". School boards have been forced to translate provincial policy into local policy and to be held accountable for the results. From bargaining directly with members of its teaching staff to what might be viewed as essentially provincial bargaining with the reaching of a *Memorandum of Agreement* between the government of Alberta and the Alberta Teacher's Association.

There are many of those involved in education today that believe the powers and responsibilities of school boards have been so badly eroded as a result of the initiatives undertaken by the provincial government and that to question their continued usefulness is appropriate. Most commonly, the examples referred to are: the loss of access to the local tax base, inability to select the superintendent of schools and to determine the salary and length of contract of employment, school-based budgeting, to what many view as provincial collective bargaining with members of teaching staff. As noted on the ATA website dealing with issues in Collective Bargaining:

"Albertans would be left to wonder why school boards- which cannot collect revenue, cannot set curriculum and are increasingly controlled by the provincial government – should continue to exist at all."

Recognizing that the source of the above-noted quote is from an ATA position on Collective Bargaining, the issue it raises is one that is more general in nature and worthy of discussion and examination. Do school boards continue to play a useful role in the delivery of educational services to children and students in Alberta? Or as the Minister of Education has asked, "if the way we govern our school system needs to change with the times?"

B. PROVINCIAL POWERS OVER SCHOOL BOARDS

The responsibility for education has been delegated to each of the provinces through the provisions of the *British North America Act*. In Alberta, school boards have been created by the province to provide educational services to its resident students. However, the province retains legal control over public education and has the ultimate authority over the structure of school jurisdictions and the assignment of responsibilities. The province

can either expand or reduce the powers and responsibilities of school boards as it sees fit.

It must be remembered that a school board is an agent of the province and exercises its powers on behalf of the province. A school board only has those powers assigned to it by the province. The legislation and regulations identify those actions or activities that a school board must do and those which a school board may do if it so chooses. Attached as an Appendix, is a listing of the powers and responsibilities of school boards that was compiled in 2003 on behalf of the ASBA. Although the document is now somewhat dated it does provide a useful instrument for assessing the scope of the responsibilities and powers assigned to school boards under the legislation of that day.

There is no requirement, or opportunity, in law that gives the public the right to have a school board. As noted earlier in this document, school boards are created by the legislatures of each province and are given powers and responsibilities through provincial statute. Some provinces have eliminated locally elected school boards and replaced them with a variety of other agents.

School boards in Alberta are locally elected from a geographically identified area that is assigned a designation based upon the nature of its formation and the characteristics of its electors. In Alberta we have school districts, school divisions, regional divisions, Francophone education regions, Roman Catholic separate school districts, Protestant separate school districts and Roman Catholic Regional Divisions. Although school boards are geographically described for the purpose of the election of trustees and identifying those students for which it has educational responsibility, school boards are not restricted to providing educational services exclusively within that area. School boards can, and do, serve the educational needs of students anywhere they might reside.

While beyond the mandate and scope of this document, it is appropriate to note that the province has designated and empowered other agents to provide educational services to students resident within the geographical boundaries of publically elected school boards and have provided those agents with access to public funding in order to do so. Parental choice in the selection of educational programs and services for their children is provided for in existing provincial legislation and appears to be supported by a large number of Albertans. The introduction and extension of educational choice has placed a significant burden upon school boards not only in the use of scarce financial and human resources but in matters of governance, the establishment of priorities and the relationships between educational authorities. It has also injected a different level of accountability to the residents within the boundaries of the jurisdiction.

II. HISTORICAL REVIEW

In order to ascertain whether in fact there is a useful role to be played by Alberta school boards in the provision of educational services to Alberta's children as we move into the second decade of the 21st century and to speculate what that might be, it is important to briefly review the changes that have taken place over the past number of years.

A. ORIGINS OF THE PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM

The public school system that exists today throughout a large part of Canada had its roots in the United States and was transported into Canada by the United Empire Loyalists following the American Revolutionary War of Independence in 1776. Education was deemed significant enough to these individuals to require a high level of local control through the establishment of a local school board as was the case in many of the American states.

By the beginning of the 19th century, Upper Canada had been divided into eight school districts each governed by a school board. It is reported that these school boards were given almost exclusive powers over the operation and administration of the schools within their district. This power even extended to the development and selection of curriculum and the assessment of student achievement. Such a circumstance was certainly not in the best interests of the students as educational standards and requirements varied significantly from district to district. Student attendance was reported to be sporadic with little opportunity provided to complete a specific academic level of achievement.

In 1846, Egerton Ryerson became the Chief Superintendent of Schools for Upper Canada and is credited with the drafting of the first *Common School Act*. It was through this legislation and his determination that the powers of the central authority and the local school boards were defined and legislated. The division of responsibility can be generally described as follows:

The central authority:

- i. prepared curricula;
- ii. authorized text books;
- iii. certified teachers;
- iv. identified requirements for teacher education;
- v. assessed student progress and achievement;
- vi. established requirements for the election of trustees; and
- vii. appointed the superintendents of schools.

The local school board:

- i. provision and maintenance of school facilities;
- ii. hiring and termination of teachers and other staff;
- iii. transportation of students;
- iv. enforcing student attendance requirements;
- v. could levy local taxes on real property;
- vi. required to adhere to central legislation and regulation; and
- vii. attend to other operational and routine matters.

The structure of education as provided for by Ryerson in what was then known as Upper Canada, became the template for what was to occur in that portion of the territory that was to become the province of Alberta in 1905. The central authority retained responsibility for standardization of what could be regarded as the high level

expectations for education and required the local authority to assume responsibility for implementation of these central directions within the local context.

B. THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES PRIOR TO 1905

All of the schools there were originally established in that portion of the Northwest Territories that was to become the province of Alberta were private schools operated by a variety of religious groups. The first missionaries to establish church missions or private religious schools were the Catholics and the Methodists. The major purposes of these schools were the teaching of religion and the promotion of fluency in English to the aboriginal inhabitants of the area. The funding and control of these schools was totally in the hands of those that founded them.

In 1884, the responsibility for education became a government responsibility and a public school system was established. Edmonton became the first public school district to be established under the provisions of the first "*School Ordinance*". Schools formed under the provisions of the Ordinance were financed by the dominion and territorial governments as well as by taxes levied on real property. As T. C. Weidenhamer notes in his history of The Alberta School Trustees Association, school districts were often the only form of local government in many rural areas. They were also the first form of local government to have the power to levy taxes on the real property of their supporters in order to maintain the provision of educational services. It was reported that at the time Alberta became a province in 1905 there were 476 operating school districts.

C. FROM 1905 TO 1940

This was a significant period in the development of the education system in Alberta. During this time period the Alberta School Trustees Association was formed; the *Teaching Profession Act* ensured that all teachers were required to be members of the Alberta Teachers Association; and attention was given to rural education which led to the establishment of school divisions and larger units of administration. The early years of the *Great Depression* placed a major strain on the funding available not only for education but on the delivery of every public service.

The original school districts were approximately 16 square miles being some four miles by four miles in size. The boundaries were not legally required to be rectangular but were generally established to conform to the pattern of settlement. It was intended that students would have reasonable access to the school house located within the district. Each of these school districts operated with a local school board and governance was indeed close to the people. In order to provide assistance to the local school board members, the Alberta School Trustees Association (ASTA) was formed in 1907.

By the late 1920's and early 1930's, larger units of administration were being proposed by the provincial government in an effort to improve the educational opportunities available to students in the rural areas. There was significant opposition to the establishment of the larger units by local trustees. The arguments used to oppose any change to the system that was in place were:

1. Loss of local autonomy and decision-making over educational matters in the districts; and
2. The costs of providing education would increase significantly.

By 1936, the legislation providing for the establishment of larger units of administration (school divisions) was enacted and the future direction of education in rural Alberta was set.

The *Teaching Profession Act* introduced compulsory membership for teachers employed by school boards. This legislation changed significantly the interactions that existed between school boards and their teachers and ushered in a new era of labour and professional relationships.

D. FROM 1941 TO 1988

The 1941 to 1988 period was a time of significant change and excitement throughout the province. Some of the major impacts upon the educational landscape were:

1. The Alberta Teachers Association (ATA) became the bargaining agent for teachers throughout the province and has bargained collectively with school boards since 1942. Collective agreements became more standardized and issues in addition to salary, such as conditions of work, found their way into employment considerations.
2. Provincial funding was first provided to operators of private schools in 1968 with the passage of Bill 29. Public funding for private schools served to reinforce the legitimacy of private schools as an option for those that wished to have their children educated outside of schools operated by the local school board. It also made the choice of a private school placement somewhat more affordable. Choice was injected into the provincial educational environment.
3. Home education had long been an option for parents who for one reason or another could not have their children attend a public school. However these were due largely to the absence of opportunities in the local community. In the early 1980's, there were a number of parents who wished to educate their children at home due to what they viewed as unacceptable practices in the public schools. Changes in legislation and provincial funding allowed parents to obtain support from any school board in the province through which they could engage in home schooling.
4. Introduction of alternative schools into Alberta occurred in 1976 in Calgary with the introduction and establishment of the following schools:
 - a.) Calgary Hebrew School,
 - b.) I. L. Peretz School, and
 - c.) Logos Christian School.

Although these schools were not supported by the Calgary Public School Board after 1983, the concept of alternative schools remained and continues to operate in various school jurisdictions throughout the province under a variety of different arrangements.

5. Francophone schools had their origins in Section 23 of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* that was adopted in 1982. The concept of Francophone schools in the province was not readily accepted and the matter found its way to the Supreme Court of Canada. The *Mahe Judgment* set the stage for the provision of French language schools in the province governed by those individuals that qualified under the provisions of Section 23.
6. The *1988 School Act* was necessitated as a result of the major changes that occurred within the province during the previous decades. The legislation provided significant choice to Alberta parents and students as to how they would access those educational programs and services they wished.

E. FROM 1989 TO THE PRESENT

In 1994, the provincial government took over the full responsibility for the funding of education. School boards were no longer able to access the local tax base in order to raise revenue to support the provision of educational programs and services and were totally dependent upon the province. This action by provincial government fundamentally changed the relationship between school boards and their electors. It also changed the relationship between the board and its parents as school choice became much more of a reality. Except for those very high cost special needs students that other school authorities were not quick to accept without additional funds, parents were able to send their children to any school in the province. In reality a “voucher system” was established in the province.

In addition to the provincial decision to fund the educational system directly, there was a drive toward greater financial restraint, accountability and school-based decision-making. The number of school jurisdictions was reduced significantly from in the neighborhood of 150 to a target number of 60. The reduction in the number of operating school jurisdictions was brought about primarily by the amalgamation of existing boards.

The new level of accountability focused upon jurisdictions completing and submitting Three-Year Plans and Educational Results Reports. It was felt that these formed a vital link to ensure that school jurisdictions were in line with provincial priorities and directions. In addition, it was felt that such public reporting would be useful in assuring the public that educational standards were not compromised by the changes that had taken place.

Bill 19, the *School Amendment Act*, passed in 1994 provided for the establishment of charter schools in the province. Alberta became, and still is, the only province in Canada that supports charter schools. Charter schools are in fact public schools and receive the same levels of funding as school boards. While there has not been a large number of

charter school formed in the province, those that exist are primarily in the urban areas and have provided an additional choice for parents.

III. THE ROLE OF SCHOOL BOARDS

As we look to the future, it is essential that school boards take the time to identify what they can and should do in the delivery of educational services. As Lewis Carol in *Alice in Wonderland* noted:

“If you don’t know where you are going, any road will get you there.”

Or as Robert G. Allen noted, *“the future you see is the future you get”*.

We might be reassured by the words written by group, *Fire and Rain*:

*“Is there a place for us?
There’s a place for us
Somewhere a place for us,”*

Although it is evident that school board elections, whether in Canada or in the *United States*, are not generally characterized by high voter turnout and public enthusiasm; there is significant public support for locally elected school boards. The *39th Annual Phi Delta Kappa/Gallup Poll of the Public’s Attitudes Toward Public Schools* found that:

“The majority of the public rate their public schools with an A or B. They also prefer that local school boards have the greatest influence in deciding what is taught in public schools.”

The *Ipsos News Centre, Ipsos Reid Survey, February 12, 2006* conducted on behalf of the Canadian Union of Public Employees reported that:

“Eighty-five percent of British Columbians say they trust locally-elected school boards more than the provincial government, with 63% saying they trust the local school boards a lot more. Only 12% of people say they trust the provincial government more than local school boards, with just 7% saying they trust the provincial government a lot more.”

It is sometimes difficult to understand, or explain, why the local residents do not turn out at election time to vote for the individuals wishing to become elected to the school board serving their area. As well why there is apparent disinterest in the activities of the school board as communicated by the low attendance at public meetings of the board. Everyone appears to acknowledge the importance of education and the need for parental and community support, yet participation by the public remains low. In examining participation rates in local municipal and school elections and comparing those at the provincial and federal levels, it may be that as Albertans and Canadians we are not actively involved in the political process. There are some that refer to this lack of participation as the “democratic deficit”.

In reviewing the results of the Alberta school board elections in 2007, the Alberta School Boards Association reported that:

- eight school boards out of a total of 62 did not receive sufficient nominations in order to field full slates of candidates in every ward or subdivision; and
- out of the 58 boards that reported their election results on October 22, 2007, some 261 trustees were acclaimed to their position with 165 being elected.

It may be that Albertans are not prepared to make the effort to vote, or run for office, if things appear to be going well and they are satisfied with the educational experiences being provided to their children and those in the community. *Alberta's Commission on Learning*, reported in October of 2003:

“At the local level, school boards have responded to the needs and expectations of their communities, maintained excellent schools, hired capable and caring teachers, and ensured good results for their students.”

The lack of involvement in the selection of trustees and what might be viewed as disinterest in the operation of local school boards may be a reflection of what has been occurring throughout the school jurisdiction and at the school level. With such initiative as school councils, school-based budgeting, increase in the size of school jurisdictions, ability of parents to choose educational programs from any school board or other educational agent in the area, the identification of the public with the local school board may not be very robust. The recent ASBA initiative, *Putting the Public into Public Education*, a statement from the focus groups that provided input supports this view to a considerable degree.

“For parents, the major “connection” to the school system is through their children and the school they attend. School newsletters, parent/teacher meetings, school events and other contacts provide them with information on education or school related issues.”

It should also be noted that the public school system in Alberta has significant positive support among Albertans and is viewed as doing a good job. One of the key findings from the annual provincial surveys noted in the Alberta Education Annual Report 2007/2008 was:

“All (100%) superintendents were satisfied with the quality of education, followed by students (99%), principals (98%), teachers (95%), board members (94%), parents (K-12: 88%, severe special needs: 79%) and the public (70%).”

While the province makes provision for parents to choose to send their children to a private school, student enrolment data provided by Alberta Education illustrates that the overwhelming choice for Albertans is the public school system. In the 2007 – 2008 school year, in excess of 95% of students were enrolled in the public school system. However, the opportunity is there for parents to make a choice to secure educational services from another provider, should they be unhappy with what is being offered by the local board.

Based upon the evidence, it is apparent that publicly elected school boards play an important role in the provision of educational services to Alberta students. Although the role of school board has changed over time in response to changing times, priorities and circumstances, it remains a vital cog in the machinery of education. It is incumbent to consider what that role can, and should, be as the province moves forward with new approaches to the delivery of educational services to new generations of Albertans.

A. WHAT IS THE ROLE OF THE SCHOOL BOARD?

As noted in the previous sections of this document, the responsibilities, expectations and roles of local school boards have changed dramatically over the years. It has moved from the administration of small rural school districts often with a single classroom teacher to large metro districts educating thousands of students and employing thousands of staff. It has moved from being primarily dependent upon revenues from the real property of supporters to being dependent almost exclusively upon provincial grants.

Many of the examples used in this paper to illustrate the changes that have occurred in the duties and responsibilities assigned to publicly elected school boards may be viewed as simply tasks or strategies through which the role might have been fulfilled. For example, much has been made of the removal of the local property tax from the authority of the board to access and how this decision has diminished the power of the board. Possibly one could safely assume that the role of the board is not to collect taxes. It was available, and necessary, for the board to raise revenue to be able to fulfill its role and responsibilities at a specific point in time. This was particularly the case when provincial grants were not adequate, or intended, to fund the educational programs being provided to students. When circumstances changed and other provincial considerations were dealt with, the board's access to the local tax base disappeared. However, this did not detract from the value and responsibilities of the local school board or lead to its demise.

The board's role is two-fold:

1. ensuring that students that are attending schools that are under the authority of the board learn and achieve at the highest possible level. Every student must not only have the opportunity to reach his or her full potential, but should do so; and
2. translating provincial goals and policies into community goals and priorities.

As long as school boards fulfill these responsibilities they will have a role in the educational governance of the province.

B. PROVINCIAL IDENTIFICATION OF THE ROLES

Alberta Education has identified the roles and responsibilities of both the province and the school boards on its website. As the province has complete authority and responsibility over the delivery of education, its assessment of the responsibilities of each is paramount.

Alberta Education

Alberta Education supports the needs of students, parents, teachers and administrators from Early Childhood Services (ECS) through Grade 12.

The Ministry has the following responsibilities:

- *Develops curriculum and sets standards.*
- *Evaluates curriculum and assesses outcomes.*
- *Teacher development and certification.*
- *Supports special needs students.*
- *Funds and supports school boards.*
- *Aboriginal and francophone education.*
- *Management of the Alberta Initiative for School Improvement (AISI).*
- *Oversees basic education policy and regulations.*

School Boards

School boards play an important role. Through the School Act, the Government of Alberta delegates much of its authority for the governance of education to locally elected boards.

Some of the decisions made by school boards include:

- *Planning for the jurisdiction, setting priorities for the system in light of community wishes, available resources and sound educational practice*
- *Setting goals for the jurisdiction, ensuring education stays in step with today's world*
- *Evaluating the School Board Superintendent*
- *Adopting an annual budget for the school system*
- *Making policy to guide the administration and employees toward district goals*
- *Communicating with the community and staff on behalf of the jurisdiction*
- *Educating others, with a goal of ensuring education is given a high priority by the public and to make the community aware of the jurisdiction's achievements*
- *Gathering information in order to make sound decisions*
- *Adjudicating in policy disputes*

A quick review of the decision-making areas identified by Alberta Education as being the responsibility of local school boards illustrates the importance of translating provincial goals and directions into a local framework.

C. BOARD'S ROLE IN ENSURING STUDENT SUCCESS

While the province has identified a number of significant activities that a school board must undertake and is empowered to do so under existing legislation, all of these must lead to improved student learning. School boards must devote their attention on activities that bear directly on students and the classrooms over which they have jurisdiction. As noted by the *National School Boards' Association (NSBA)*:

“Board members’ primary agenda is raising student achievement and involving the community in the attainment of the goal.”

The school board must make the following activities its primary focus:

1. Setting of Standards

The *School Act* 60(1)(a) requires that a board “establish policies respecting the provision of educational services and programs”. It is the responsibility of the school board to set high standards and expectations for student success through policies that reflect provincial and local goals, priorities and expectations. High standards must be expressed in such a way as to be measurable in order to determine success. Standards must also reflect the expectations of the community that is served by the board and the school.

The NSBA states:

The board is responsible to create the conditions under which excellent teaching and student performance will take place.

Recognizing that the province has the ultimate authority for determining the student outcomes, school boards must have the authority to select those materials and educational practices that best meet the individual needs of students in the local community. School boards must insist that the provincial curriculum be implemented and that students achieve a high level of success.

School boards must insist that all schools and staff members have improvement plans that reflect the desire to improve student performance. Improvement plans must also have standards that are measureable and can be used to ensure accountability.

2. Ensuring Accountability

School boards must ensure that administrators and teachers are held accountable for the results at the school level and jurisdiction level. The Alberta Auditor General has defined accountability as, “an obligation to answer for the execution of one’s assigned responsibilities”. Board policies and provincial legislation set out the roles and responsibilities of all staff members. Staff must be held accountable for what occurs in the system.

School-based budgeting and decision-making was a key feature of the reforms that were mandated by the provincial government at the end of the century identified the following prerequisites as being necessary for success:

- a.) *the district’s ability to plan, to set policy, and to monitor compliance, and*
- b.) *the school’s ability to make decisions that affect school operation.*

School plans must reflect school jurisdiction and provincial educational goals and directions.

Systematic review and evaluation which leads to continuous improvement must be implemented if the goal of improving educational opportunities for students is to become a reality. There is reluctance among some sectors of the educational enterprise to engage extensively in the evaluation of student achievement. However, it is sometimes noted that:

“What gets measured gets done.”

Student results must be communicated to the public and the province. It is imperative that everyone be made aware of the degree to which student achievement is progressing toward local and provincial standards.

The Alberta Auditor General in 1994 identified the following as the basic components of an accountability plan:

- a.) *set measurable goals, and responsibilities,*
 - b.) *plan what needs to be done to achieve goals,*
 - c.) *do the work and monitor progress,*
 - d.) *report on results,*
 - e.) *evaluate results and provide feedback.*
3. School boards must ensure that there is alignment among all three components of the educational system: the province, the school jurisdiction and the school. It is essential that board and school policies reflect the wishes of their communities and are consistent with provincial guidelines. Alignment is also critical in order to focus the resources available within the system to the achievement of provincial and jurisdiction goals.

The school board is responsible to determine the distribution of resources through its budget. It must direct resources those areas necessary to achieve its goals and priorities.

4. Developing a Positive Culture

School boards have the ultimate responsibility in establishing and maintaining a healthy and positive culture throughout the entire jurisdiction. A great deal of the literature on high performing organizations identifies a positive organizational culture as a key factor in determining behaviour of staff. The effect of a positive culture is infectious in that staff behaviour will influence the perceptions of the school by members of the community.

5. Collaborative Relationships

Education of the young is not simply the responsibility of a single agent. Everyone has a role to play and everyone must play their part if the youth of the province are to receive the kind of education that will meet their needs and that of the society in which we live. School boards are in the best position to develop and foster the kinds of relationships necessary to make this happen.

D. BOARD'S ROLE IN ENSURING COMMUNITY VALUES AND SUPPORT

1. Advocating on behalf of students, schools and community is fundamental to the role of the locally elected school board. Trustees have a responsibility to not only speak to their communities but also to speak for them.
2. Establish educational policies that reflect the values and aspirations of the communities served by the board. The board must translate provincial goals and priorities into local policies and directions.

IV. CONCLUSION

As one reviews the past 125 years of public education in the province of Alberta, from the passage of the first *School Ordinance* in 1884 to the present day, the role of the publically elected school board has not been fundamentally changed. It is clear that the powers and responsibilities assigned to school boards by the province have been altered over time in response to changing circumstances and provincial priorities, the basic role has not. School boards are, and always have been, responsible to:

1. ensure that every resident student has access to an educational program that is in accordance with provincial and local requirements and standards; and
2. deliver the provincially mandated educational programs and services within the parameters of local community values needs.

The ASBA identified the responsibility of school boards in its submission to *Alberta's Commission on Learning* in 2002 as being:

As elected representatives of our communities, Alberta's school boards are entrusted with the responsibility to foster excellence in public education. It's a job we take very seriously.

While the role of the publically elected school board has not changed since the establishment of the first public schools in the province, the political environment in which it operates certainly has. These changes have placed great pressures on boards to continue to fulfill their responsibilities and remain relevant in dealing with the issues and concerns of members of the community. However, school boards have proven to be resilient and continue to have shown themselves to be essential in the delivery of educational services to Alberta's children. There needs to be an accountability mechanism between the province and the community and that is the role to be played by publically elected school boards.

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APPENDIX

LEGAL REQUIREMENTS FOR SCHOOL BOARDS

DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES AS OF 2003

The duties and responsibilities for school boards are found in the:

- School Act
- Alberta Learning Funding Manual
- Alberta Learning Regulations
- Alberta Learning Policy Manual
- Other Provincial Legislation:
 - ◆ Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act
 - ◆ Local Authorities Election Act
 - ◆ Trustee Act
 - ◆ Oaths of Office Act
- Alberta Infrastructure
- Roles and Responsibilities in Education - Report From a Task Force - not a legal document in itself - but was used to develop policies and regulations

A school board is not required to directly fulfill the responsibilities assigned to it but may delegate.

Section 61(1), School Act, Statutes of Alberta 2000, Chapter S-3 with amendments in force as of April 1, 2002, defines the delegation of power.

61(1) The board may authorize by resolution

- (a) any of its employees,
- (b) a committee of the board or that is established by the board,
- (c) a school council, or
- (d) a joint committee established under section 47,

to do any act or exercise any power that the board may or is required to do or exercise subject to the directions and limitations set out in the resolution, except

- (e) the power to make a by-law under this Act,
- (f) the power to close a school or school building under section 58,
- (g) the power to requisition from a municipality that the board may have from time to time,
- (h) subject to section 105, the power to suspend the services of a teacher,
- (i) the power to terminate the services of a teacher, and
- (j) the power to hold a hearing under section 104. (*if a teacher has been given a notice of transfer, the teacher may request a hearing*)

Note, that while the board is given the power to engage in a wide range of activities and is mandated to perform certain functions, many of these can be delegated to a wide range of agents. Although the board has delegated, it is still responsible to see that the actions are completed in a satisfactory manner. Of the six items that the board must deal with directly:

- three deal with teachers - really labor relations items
- one deals with school closure
- one deals with the power to requisition
- one deals with the power to pass a by-law.

It is therefore critical that the board enacts the appropriate policies and procedures to ensure the appropriate conduct of the school system and the limitations of delegated responsibilities or powers. The board is ultimately accountable.

SCHOOL ACT

Specific responsibilities in the School Act: **SHALL**

- make a reasonable effort to ensure student attends school [13(4)]
- designate principals and assign to school or schools (19)
- establish regulations for the establishment of a school council for each school [22(1)]
- establish an appeal or conflict resolution process under which a principal or school council may use for disputes on policies proposed or adopted for a school [22(8)]
- establish and maintain a student record for each student [23(1)]
- provide a copy of the student record to persons able to obtain [22(3)]
- provide a competent person to review the student record should a request be made from a person entitled to review [22(6)]
- reinstate a student who has been suspended, or expel the student, within 10 days of the suspension [24(8)]
- offer a student who has been expelled another educational program [25(1)]
- ensure that each resident student is provided with an educational program consistent with the Act [45(1)]
- provide each student enrolled in a school an educational program consistent with the requirements of the Act and the regulations that will give the student an opportunity to meet the standards set by the Minister [45(7)]
- enroll a student in a school that is requested by the parent of a resident or non resident student if there are sufficient resources and space [45(3)]
- enroll a resident student of the government if so requested [45(5)]
- ensure that each student is provided with a safe and caring environment that fosters and maintains respectful and responsible behavior [45(8)]
- enroll students who have a right to access an educational program under section 8 prior to enroll those that do not (46) - *really deals with the right to access a program between the ages of 6 and 18*
- prior to placing a student in a special education program consult with the parents and if appropriate the student [47(3)]
- not charge tuition fees except it may to foreign students (49)

- permit students whose parent request - to leave the classroom during period of religious instruction or exercises [50(2)]
- provide transportation to and from school in accordance with legislation and regulations [51(1)(2)]
- pay maintenance allowance to students directed to a school and cannot stay at home (53)
- specify the school operational year - opening date, vacation periods, etc. and to notify the Minister (56)
- fix conditions which led to a temporary closure of a school building [57(2)]
- must: [60(1)]
 - ♦ establish policies respecting the provision of educational services and programs
 - ♦ in respect to its operations
 - keep insurance
 - damages for death or personal injury
 - damages to property
 - or for property in which the board has an insurable interest
 - ♦ maintain, repair, furnish and keep in good order all its real and personal property
 - ♦ make copies of the rules made by it available to those employees who are affected
- enter into an agreement with an institution - teacher education - to attend classrooms for the purpose of observing or student teaching [62(4)]
- hold an organizational meeting of the board annually [64(1)]
- elect one of its members as chairman and another as vice-chairman [65(1)]
- hold as many regular meetings as necessary to deal adequately with the business of the board [66(1)]
- resolution of board shall state the date, time and place of regular meetings [66(2)]
- meetings are public (70)
- maintain a record of all proceedings of the board and committees (74)
- make certain records available to any elector (75)
- provide any information the Minister requests in writing [77(1)]
- develop a reporting and accountability system on any matter the Minister prescribes [78(1)]
- disseminate and information the Minister prescribes [78(2)]
- employ as a teacher only an individual who holds a certificate of qualification as a teacher [92(1)]
- deal with any acting principal within one year after designation [95(2)]
- every contract of employment with a teacher shall be in writing [97(5)]
- hold a hearing if teacher wishes on a transfer (104)
- pay teachers in a manner prescribed by the Act (111)
- appoint an individual superintendent of schools for a period of not more than 5 years in accordance with the Act (113)
- appoint a secretary and a treasurer or 1 person to be secretary-treasurer (116)
- establish an appeal procedure - student appeals - by resolution (103)

- ensure that a student has been informed of the responsibility to attend school prior to the matter being referred to the Attendance Board [126(2)]
- appoint an auditor (146)
- on or before Nov. 15 prepare financial statements for the previous year and on or before May 31 prepare and submit a budget [146(2)]
- receive, and permit discussion on, the auditor's report at a regular meeting (150)
- provide and maintain adequate real and personal property for its administrative and educational purposes (195)
- notify the Minister within 30 days from which the board purchases any land or any interest in land [196(2)]
- give public notice if it wishes to construct, purchase or lease a building - other than a school building - exceeding \$500,000 [198(1)]
- call a public meeting if presented with a petition with sufficient signatures (269)
- give proper notice of a public meeting (270)

NOTE: The listing is too long to be useful – it may be useful to select those items that a board must do and group them under headings and eliminate those that state how things are to be done.

STUDENTS

- make reasonable effort to ensure student attends school [13(4)]
- establish and maintain a student record for each student [23(1)]
- reinstate a student who has been suspended or expel the student within 10 days from the date of suspension [24(8)]
- ensure that each resident student is provided with an educational program consistent with the Act [45(1)]
- provide each student enrolled in a school an educational program consistent with the requirements of the Act and the regulations that will give the student an opportunity to meet the standards set by the Minister [45(7)]
- enroll a student in a school that is requested by the parent of a resident or non resident student if there are sufficient resources and space [45(3)]
- enroll a resident student of the government if so requested [45(5)]
- ensure that each student is provided with a safe and caring environment that fosters and maintains respectful and responsible behavior [45(8)]
- prior to placing a student in a special education program consult with the parents and if appropriate the student [47(3)]
- provide transportation to and from school in accordance with legislation and regulations [51(1)(2)]
- pay maintenance allowance to students directed to a school and cannot stay at home as a result (53)
- establish an appeal procedure - student appeals - by resolution (123)

TEACHERS

- employ as a teacher only an individual who holds a certificate of qualification as a teacher [92(1)]
- deal with any acting principal within one year after designation [95(2)]
- hold a hearing if teacher wishes on a notice of transfer [104(3)]
- pay teachers in a manner prescribed by the Act (111)

NON TEACHING PERSONNEL

- appoint an individual superintendent of schools for a period of not more than 5 years in accordance with the Act (113)
- appoint a secretary and a treasurer or 1 person to be secretary-treasurer and advise the Minister(116)
- appoint an auditor (146)
- may designate an attendance officer other than the superintendent [14(1)(a)]

OPERATIONS

- establish a school council for each school [22(1)]
- establish an appeal or conflict resolution process under which a principal or school council may use for disputes on policies proposed or adopted for a school [22(8)]
- specify the school operational year - opening date, vacation periods, etc. and to notify the Minister (56)
- fix conditions which led to a temporary closure of a school building [57(2)]
- must: [60(1)]
 - ♦ establish policies respecting the provision of educational services and programs
 - ♦ in respect to its operations
 - keep insurance
 - damages for death or personal injury
 - damages to property
 - or for property in which the board has an insurable interest
 - ♦ maintain, repair, furnish and keep in good order all its real and personal property
 - ♦ make copies of the rules made by it available to those employees who are affected
- enter into an agreement with an institution - teacher education - to attend classrooms for the purpose of observing or student teaching [62(4)]
- hold an organizational meeting of the board annually [64(1)]
- elect one of its members as chairman and another as vice-chairman [65(1)]
- resolution of board shall state the date, time and place of regular meetings [66(2)]
- maintain a record of all proceedings of the board and committees (74)
- make certain records available to any elector upon request (75)
- provide any information the Minister requests in writing [77(1)]
- develop a reporting and accountability system on any matter the Minister prescribes [78(1)]
- disseminate and information the Minister prescribes [78(1)]

- on or before Nov. 15 prepare financial statements for the previous year and on or before may 31 prepare and submit a budget [146(2)]
- receive, and permit discussion on, the auditor's report at a regular meeting (150)
- provide and maintain adequate real and personal property for its administrative and educational purposes (195)
- give public notice if it wishes to construct, purchase or lease a building - other than a school building - exceeding \$500,000 [198(1)]
- call a public meeting if presented with a petition with sufficient signatures (269)
- give proper notice of a public meeting (270)

Powers - discretionary: **MAY**

- establish attendance area for a school [13(2)]
- refer attendance problems to the Attendance Board [15(1)]
- offer alternative programs [21(2)]
- charge fees for the purpose of defraying all or a portion of non-instructional costs of an alternative program [21(4)]
- re-enrol a student who has been expelled [25(4)]
- provide an early childhood services program [30(1)]
- charge fees in respect of an early childhood services [30(2)]
- require the choice made by a parent as to which system a child attends to remain in effect for a school year [44(8)(d)]
- direct a student who has already accessed 3 years of high school to a designated school [45(4)]
- determine that a student is in need of a special education program [47(1)]
- determine that it cannot meet the needs of a student that has special needs and refer to a Special Needs Tribunal (48)
- prescribe religious instruction, religious exercises, patriotic instruction, patriotic exercises for its students [50(1)]
- permit persons other than teachers to provide religious instruction [50(1)(e)]
- charge parents for transportation services [51(3)]
- enter into agreement with the parent to provide transportation services [52(1)]
- provide off-campus education programs subject to regulations [54(1)]
- develop and provide courses to any person on any subject [55(1)]
- declare 2nd Friday in June as Farmer's Day holiday [56(6)]
- may temporarily close a school building if the health or safety of students is endangered [57(1)]
- develop, acquire or offer courses or program - subject to the regulations [60(2)(a)]
- acquire, develop instructional material subject to the regulations [60(2)(b)]
- provide for parental and community involvement in schools [60(2)(c)]
- invest only in investments authorized [60(2)(d)]
- provide for payment of travelling expenses and honoraria to trustees and persons appointed to committees [60(2)(e)]
- make payments, other than loans or grants to another board [60(2)(f)]

- make grants or payments, other than loans, to an association of school trustees or a person or organization engaged in educational activities [60(2)(g)]
- arrange and sponsor educational, cultural, or recreational trips for its students [60(2)(h)]
- establish committees and define powers and duties [60(2)(i)]
- charge parents fees with respect to instructional supplies [60(2)(j)]
- make any banking arrangements [60(2)(k)]
- make rules regarding attendance of students, the operation, management and operation of schools and school busses, or any other matter [60(3)]
- enter into an agreement respecting the provision of educational, managerial or other services with respect to the operation of its schools [62(1)(a)]
- enter into an agreement with another board to provide services to its resident students [62(1)(b)]
- enter into agreements to promote and develop recreation and community services [62(1)(c)]
- with approval of the Minister enter into agreements with agencies of government or Indian Bands to provide services [60(2)]
- deal with unorganized territory [62(2)(d)]
- call special meetings of the board under specific circumstances and under certain conditions(67)
- make rules governing its internal procedure and meetings (68)
- pass a by-law requiring each trustee to file a statement showing items such as names and employment of spouse and children, holding in companies, etc [81(1)]
- declare a person to be disqualified from remaining as a trustee - in accordance with the Act [86(a)]
- employ a competent individual to teach language or culture under the supervision of a teacher [92(2)]
- designate a teacher to an acting principal for a period of not more than one year [95(1)]
- appoint any person or designate a teacher to an administrative, supervisory or consultative position [96(1)]
- employ a teacher under a probationary contract of employment for a complete school year [98(1)]
- suspend a teacher [105(1)]
- employ other non-teaching employees that the board considers necessary (117)
- borrow to meet current expenditures and capital expenditures - certain conditions apply (183)
- authorize the holding of a plebiscite to request approval for a special school tax levy (190)
- acquire property either by gift, lease or purchase (196)
- enter into agreements with other boards for acquisition of real property (197)
- sell, lease, rent or otherwise dispose of any of its personal property [200(1)]
- change its corporate name (248)

ALBERTA EDUCATION FUNDING MANUAL

- funding is provided on the condition that government legislation, policy and regulations are followed, and program goals and objectives specified by Alberta Education are met.
 - ♦ courses of study
 - ♦ educational programs
 - ♦ goals and standards prescribed, authorized, and approved by the Minister
- must provide students with access of up to:
 - ♦ up to 950 hours of instruction for grade 1
 - ♦ 950 hours of instruction for grades 2 to 9
 - ♦ 1000 hours of instruction for grades 10 to 12
- three-year plan will contain strategies to achieve local goals - how funds will be distributed to educational programs and services, and provide the measures that will be used to evaluate and report on the success of education programs and efficiency of administration
- shall keep on file, documents and invoices required to support their claim for each type of program funding:
 - ♦ eligible enrolment count
 - ♦ copies of current education or transportation agreements
 - ♦ record of the daily attendance of each enrolled student
 - ♦ if attendance on computer - a hard copy of the daily attendance records of each enrolled student as of September 30, signed and dated by the principal
 - ♦ a paper copy of the timetable for each high school student as of September 30
 - ♦ a list of schools, teachers and administrators involved in each program
- must develop, keep current, and implement written policies and procedures which are consistent with Alberta Education policies, regulations and procedures
- all borrowings for operational expenditures if they exceed the account receivable balance require the prior approval of the Minister
- a jurisdiction incurring an accumulated operating deficit is expected to submit an accumulated operating deficit elimination plan. Failure to eliminate the accumulated deficit over a period of three years may be subject to an inquiry
- must develop and implement an Individualized Program Plan supported by documentation and a variety of supports and services to receive severe disabilities funding
- to receive ESL funding will submit annually the management Information Reporting Schedule 8 - regarding the implementation of their ESL program to Alberta Learning

- school facilities are the responsibility of Alberta Infrastructure
- to receive transportation funding - rural - must submit Form 95ED1.B.4, "Rural Transportation", in disk format to School Finance by December 15, and the funding rates for rural transportation
- required to keep on file the following for a minimum of 3 years (rural transportation):
 - ♦ maps of overall attendance areas and the transportation service areas
 - ♦ location of each student's residence
 - ♦ maps of individual bus routes
 - ♦ records of route distance verified by an official of the jurisdiction
 - ♦ list of names of eligible transported ECS children
 - ♦ copies of all overload permits
 - ♦ copies of education service agreements
 - ♦ copies of transportation agreements with boards, private schools, charter schools and private ECS operators
 - ♦ inspection certificates
 - ♦ copies of all contracts
- urban transportation - Form 99eD1.B.6, "Urban Transportation" must be submitted in disk format
- urban transportation- required to keep documentation on file to verify the number of eligible passengers and eligible transported ECS children
- must develop a three-year technology plan
 - ♦ include policy to address equity of access by students to classroom computers
 - ♦ must be available to staff and the public
 - ♦ must be consistent with the Three Year-Education Plan
 - ♦ must address equity between schools
 - ♦ maintain records to verify purchases

POLICY, REGULATIONS AND FORMS MANUAL

- develop, keep current and implement an education plan consistent with provincial requirements and local needs. Must include:
 - ♦ mission
 - ♦ mandate
 - ♦ vision
 - ♦ beliefs
 - ♦ goals provincial priority improvement areas
 - ♦ results desired
 - ♦ performance measures
 - ♦ strategies
 - ♦ expenditure plan

- ♦ list of capital priorities and projects
 - ♦ be signed by the chair of the board and the superintendent
 - ♦ be made available to the Minister and to the public
 - ♦ must specify targets for improvement to be met by 2001/01 for provincial achievement tests and diploma examination results in consultation with their schools, parents and communities
(Policy 2.1.1 - School Authority Accountability)
- Integrated Occupational Program (IOP)
 - ♦ develop, keep current, and implement written policy and procedures consistent with provincial policy and procedures (there are quite a number of requirements in provincial procedures dealing with assessment, parental permission, etc.)
 - ♦ identify, assess and place IOP students in accordance with the policy
 - ♦ evaluate IOP students
 - ♦ establish transfer routes of IOP students to higher level courses and programs
 - ♦ ensure students are 12 1/2 or older on September 1
(Policy 1.4.2 - Integrated Occupational Programs)
 - develop, keep current and implement policies and procedures with respect to closure of schools that are consistent with this regulation (there are a number of items here - motion, giving notice, etc.)
(Alberta Regulation 238/97)
 - student learning in education programs shall be assessed to assist in improving programs, establishing and maintaining standards, and improving student achievement
(Policy 2.1.2 - Student Evaluation)
 - report provincial grade 3, 6 and 9 achievement tests and grade 12 diploma examination results, and shall use these assessments to complement locally designed and administered student evaluation procedures to assess the quality and effectiveness of education provided to students
(Policy 2.1.2 - Student Evaluation)
 - develop, keep current and implement written student evaluation policy and procedures consistent with provincial policy, regulations, and procedures
 - ♦ accurate and fair
 - ♦ right of appeal and procedures for
 - ♦ timely communication of evaluation information
(Policy 2.1.2 - Student Evaluation)
 - report annually to school councils and to the public the results on provincial assessments consistent with provincial reporting requirements, including information on the local context and the limitations of the assessments
(Policy 2.1.3 - Use and Reporting of Results on Provincial Assessments)

- implement a policy that
 - ♦ applies to all teachers unless otherwise stipulated in this Policy
 - ♦ provides a review mechanism
 - ♦ is consistent with the teaching quality standard
 - ♦ is readily available to the public,
 - ♦ details when and how often information summarizing implementation of the policy will be reported to the public
(Policy 2.1.5 - Teacher Growth, Supervision and Evaluation)

- submit a Budget Report Form to School Finance and facilities Branch, by April 30 of the current year for the following fiscal and school year
(Policy 2.1.6 - School Authority Financial Accountability and Audits)

- human sexuality
 - ♦ provide human sexuality education to students in Grades 4 through 9, and in at least one senior high course required of all students
 - ♦ be taught within the normal school day
 - ♦ be offered through different instructional structures
 - ♦ parents be advised of their right to exempt their child
 - ♦ provide alternative learning experiences for students exempted
(Policy 4.1.2 - Human Sexuality Education)

- designate one of its employees to be responsible for ensuring that the policies and procedures established by the board relating to
 - ♦ student records
 - ♦ information referred to in section 2(4)
comply with this Regulation and the *Freedom of Information and Privacy Act*
(Alberta Regulation 71/99 - Student Record Regulation)

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES IN EDUCATION

Definitions which appeared in the document may be of interest:

- responsibility - an assigned and accepted duty or function
- accountability - the obligation to answer for the results of assigned and accepted duties and functions

Note: I don't believe that this document has a legal status but it does present some accepted notions

School boards have the authority (delegated from the Minister of education) to deliver education programs that respond to the learning needs of local students, their parents and the community. School boards are responsible for ensuring that all children in their jurisdiction receive a high quality of education.

School boards are ultimately responsible for results, both in terms of student achievement and meeting the expectations of parents and community members.

School boards will:

- establish local policies and procedures as needed for all aspects of operations - school closures, appeal mechanisms, student conduct, etc.
- develop an education business plan for the jurisdiction
- implement systems for evaluating students, teachers, schools and programs
- engage in joint planning with community service providers to meet the learning needs of all children
- ensure that schools provide an education program for each student that is consistent with the requirements of the School Act
- ensure that schools adhere to the provincial Program of Studies
- ensure that schools implement a school-based management approach
- hear appeals from parents regarding student placement issues and from parents and school councils when they have concerns
- establish clear measures of student achievement that are linked to provincial standards
- approve locally developed courses
- budget and account for all funds received
- allocate funds to schools
- enter into agreements with other parties about the provision of education services
- recruit, select, employ, assign, contract and dismiss staff
- provide students with transportation to school
- construct, renovate and maintain school buildings
- set fees
- report to government, parents and taxpayers on the achievements of students and performance of the school jurisdiction
- ensure that parents and community members have access to the information they need to make a valid contribution to decision making