



ALBERTA 2017

POLITICS AND POLICY DIRECTIONS

IMPACT

AGENDA

1. Politics & Polling
2. Policy
3. ASBA Strengths & Opportunities
4. Communications
5. Questions

POLITICS

POLITICS

NDP

- Recently passed the halfway mark of the Notley administration
- First two years: Change, understanding how government really works, lots of bumps along the way; Aggressive pursuit of key election promises
- Digging its heels in on important policy items despite considerable resistance from some stakeholders – speaks to core beliefs around social justice
 - Examples: Farm & Ranch legislation, minimum wage, carbon ley, protecting Vulnerable Albertans
 - “It’s a sign to our side and our opponents that we are not going to back down...we have a clear program for this province and we’re going to carry it out.” – Brian Mason, post NDP convention in June
- Still tight control from the centre, but MLAs are more comfortable in roles and reaching out to create new relationships

POLITICS

NDP

Key Issues:

- Jobs
- Families and Workers
- Diversifying the Economy
- Environmental Stewardship

Key Values:

- Removal of Social Inequalities
- Gender Equality
- Worker's Rights

POLITICS

NDP

- Recognize the need to present itself as reasonable, practical and pragmatic
 - Gets reflected in approach to policy items, not complete abandonment: how quickly to move, how to balance ideology vs. evidence and the will of the people
- Want to show a different way of governing than what Albertans have been used to for decades
 - Prescriptive versus goal-setting
 - Don't like references to the previous government
 - Eager for new policy ideas not necessarily considered by the previous government; and if considered, anxious for it to be amended so they can own it.

POLITICS

Opposition

- Opposition is reformatting itself to respond – not clear yet what that looks like, but current deep divisions help the government at the moment
- Jason Kenney, Brian Jean and Doug Schweitzer are all vying for the leadership of the newly formed United Conservative Party
- Real challenge of building a conservative coalition begins after unification
 - Won't be easy: 75% Wildrose ratification
 - Expand the tent or move the tent?
- The response of disgruntled progressive, non-NDP voters
- NDP will respond by trying to once again highlight the reasonableness of its positions and drive the opposition to the fringes

POLITICS

What's on the horizon?

- Increasingly turning attention to setting the stage for re-election in 2019
 - Beginning of the end period where government cements tough decisions ahead of next election
- Looking to reinforce its base and build a coalition for 2019
 - 2015 Votes: NDP – 604,000; WR – 360,000; PC – 413,000; Libs – 62,000; ABP – 33,000
 - NDP base = Social Justice groups, Labour, Environmentalists, Young, Urban, Modern, Working Class
- Coalition-building will be reflected legislatively in 2017
 - School Fees, Utility rate caps, Provincial Housing Strategy; Labour Legislation/WCB; City Charters (October 2017 Municipal Elections); Democratic Reform/Constituency boundary review; Daylight Savings Time
 - Will look to highlight difference between budget cuts and deficit financing
 - E.g.: Education investments vs. projected cuts under Prentice budget

POLITICS

Challenges: General

- BC minority government & federal NDP = all are anti-pipeline
- Government facing increasing pressure to show results of climate change and jobs plans
- Recall that there was a 80% turnover rate in MLAs at the last election – those members will face re-election for the first time.
- Very different sort of election when you must defend your record vs. running against the other team.
- Perception that NDP government is tipping the scales in favour of unions
- Perception among unions that large associations hoard cash for central functions

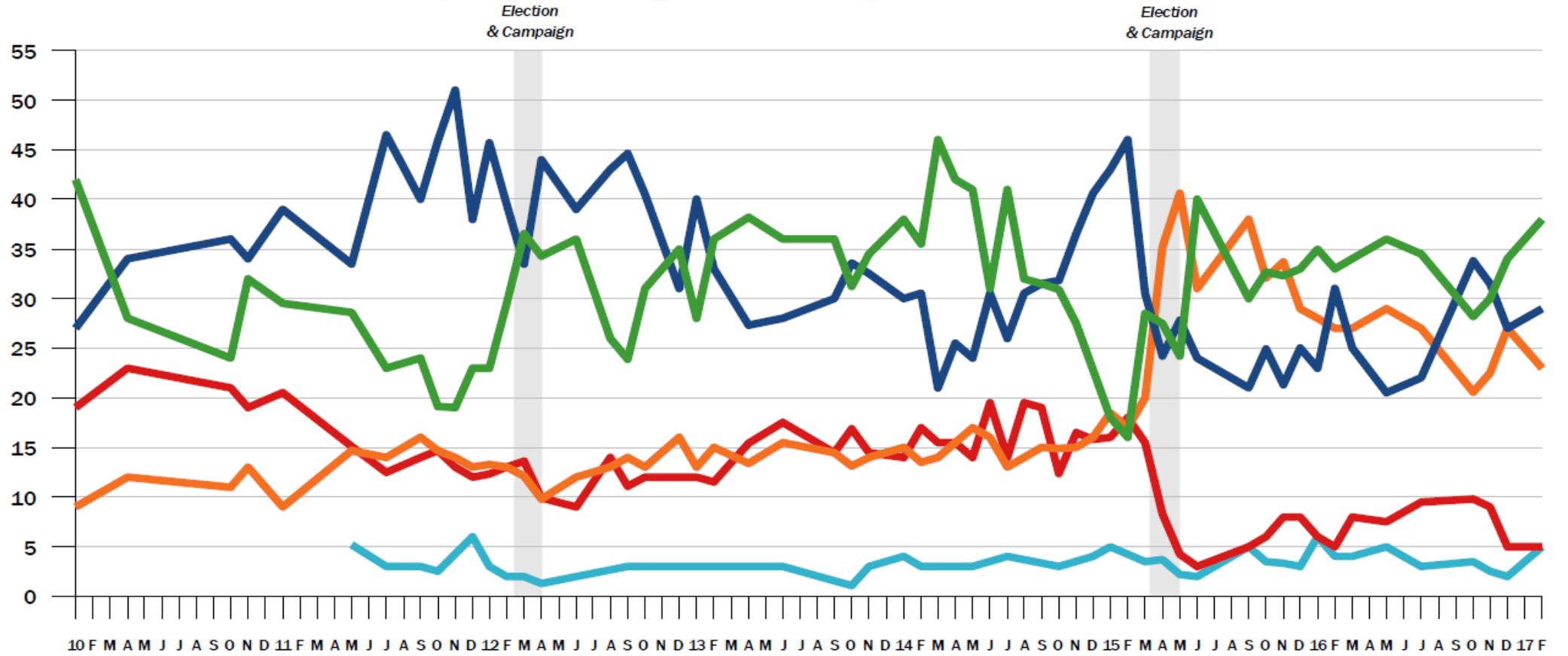
POLITICS

Challenges: Education

- Access to education / availability of infrastructure
- Funding models for public / private / charter schools
 - Progress Alberta campaign
- Faith-based provision of education
- Financial constraints on boards
- Perceptions

RECENT POLLING (308.COM)

Alberta monthly polling averages



POLICY

POLICY: GENERAL

- Protecting public services
- Economic growth & diversification
- Rebalancing laws that have disenfranchised ordinary Albertans
- Making life more affordable for families
- Present the NDP as a centrist choice for 2019

POLICY: EDUCATION

- Government is fundamentally restructuring education
- More centralized decision making (e.g. Bill 8, 2015)
- Directing more funding toward specific initiatives (e.g. Bill 1, 2017)
- Re-building government relationships with political friends
- Limiting autonomy of school boards
- Building infrastructure
 - Previously promised schools
 - Playgrounds

POLICY: EDUCATION

- Bill 8: Restructuring bargaining
- Bill 6: Reinstating Northland
- Bill 1: Reducing school fees
 - Recently announced regulations

POLICY TAKEAWAYS

- Students and families first
- Populist changes
- Governance is shifting

ASBA STRENGTHS

- ASBA plays a critical role to government, representing >60 school boards
- Powerful stakeholder advocating for the interests of students
- Best equipped to build capacity of boards, deliver governance changes that are in the best interests of students
- Best equipped to deal with the diversity of boards: assisting with governance and training by zones, or individually
- Best equipped to help the broadest base of boards understand shifts in government policy
- Play to your strengths

ASBA OPPORTUNITIES

- What central functions does ASBA serve that helps create economies of scale ,to increase efficiencies of the board and funder?
- How can the organization distinguish itself from PSBAA, ACTSA and others, to serve the mutual interests of all?
 - In a positive fashion? Consider #SGM2017
- Is ASBA doing all it can to support trustees, so they can develop the support of parents, students and government?
- How can ASBA show value?
- How do advocacy needs and efforts shift under other budget scenarios?

COMMUNICATING WITH GOVERNMENT

- All communications should be run through the student lens
- Don't air dirty laundry
- Be positive in public, be critical in camera.
 - E.g. #SGM2017, "disaster" language in Bill 1
- Identify and publicly support policy alignment
 - E.g. School lunch programs, pink shirt day, playground funding, public vs. private school funding

QUESTIONS?

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THANK YOU

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