

(Check against delivery)

Good morning colleagues

I can't believe that close to 7 months have passed since we last met.
7 months since Michael and I were elected.
It is fair to say that these months have been a whirlwind.

You have asked.....

Have the last few months been hard? Yes.

Challenging? Yes

Stressful? Yes

Have they been exciting? Yes

Rewarding? Yes

Productive? Yes

It has been an amazing journey and it's only just begun.

I now have a new found understanding of the contributions of presidents who have gone before.
I must say it is still an incredible honour to serve this association and all of you.

As I have traveled the province, I have seen firsthand the value of the work you are doing. Every trustee in this room contributes daily to the success of our students.

Alberta is fortunate to have each and every one of you, who are so passionate, dedicated and committed to working with our schools, and our communities.

We don't do it for the money or the recognition. We do it because we care.

Being a trustee is not an easy job, we have many responsibilities and great expectations are put on us, but people underestimate our influence. As we move into times of political uncertainty it is now time for us to exercise that influence.

We are connected to our communities and are advocates for education at our schools, community events, and in our local grocery stores.

We live in the communities we serve and are local leaders because we have earned their trust.

Our communities understand the importance of having a local voice, and if you look at what that voice costs, it is the best deal around.

Many of you already understand how important it is that we put our energy into this - our association to make our voice even stronger.

Every trustee in this room and every school board is a member.

This is where we can make the biggest difference. Working together we can have a strong powerful voice.

It is with one voice and common goals we can make even a bigger difference to Alberta students.

Don't let anyone tell you that what you do is not important. Nothing could be farther from the truth.

We are the communicators, planners, policy makers, advocates, educators, adjudicators, lobbyists, legislators and politicians. No wonder we are so busy.

When I look at what we have accomplished in just the last 7 months it is pretty amazing.

We started with our submission to the Excellence in Teaching Task Force and are now in the process of reviewing the Task force recommendations.

At this time they are just recommendations but they could have impact on teachers, schools, school administrators, system administrators, governance and government. It is important that we discuss these recommendations in a respectful and thoughtful way determining what will improve student learning.

Thank you to the Bargaining Task Force committee and to all the boards and trustees who contributed to the report.

We have offered opportunities for all boards and trustees to provide input, every board that chose to provide input was heard.

We have been working on how to enhance the provincial voice, how to enhance the role of zones. Zones are becoming an integral part of how we do our business, how we support each other and how we communicate. I am so impressed with the energy at zones and find the enthusiasm very contagious.

We have started work on the Task Force on Governance recommendation by initiating conversations at the Zone level.

We have focused on the health and well-being of students.

We have provided legal professional development. We have provided supports for new trustees and have focused on relationship building. This is ongoing work but we are making progress.

The last few months have been challenging on a provincial level and we have tried hard to keep focused on the regular work that we must continue to do.

We have had to respond to criticism on many aspects of inspiring education, and we have shown our support by sharing success stories at the community level. To that end we have posted on our website local stories showing how boards have followed the Inspiring Education vision to make a difference in their communities. We know that the best decisions are made closest to the students.

We have to constantly defend the need for reserves. These reserves have been battered around like a political football. They are constantly under attack and given as the reason that education cannot

get more funding. We know reserves are ways for boards to be fiscally responsible, that makes sense with solid business practices.

Without stable, predictable, sustainable funding reserves are necessary. And to develop any long term planning boards need reserves to support local programs and initiatives.

Most of the reserves reported already have been dedicated to local projects. We surveyed boards on reserve funding as of Aug. 31, 2013 and at that time we had less than 10 days operating across the province and that included moneys already allocated to projects. Since our March budget we have heard about many boards using up reserves, just to keep their systems operating in the black.

We will definitely be asking again to compare Aug 13 to Aug 14. We know how important these reserves are to a healthy system. When we asked for information, all of the school boards responded. That is incredible. Thank you.

We are working on and looking at better ways to communicate with all of you. You all play an important role in this communication by doing simple things like sharing all board chairs emails with your fellow trustees.

Speaking of communication and support I thank all trustees and boards who take the time to respond to association requests. That is how we speak with a stronger voice. We are member driven, and we want to hear from you.

It is your choice how much involvement you or your board has. It is your choice whether or not your voice is heard.

As we look to the future there is much work to be done. This is only the beginning.

As we look at the our 2014/15 strategic plan we will be among other things developing an advocacy plan.

In the short term we will be looking key messages that we can share as we look forward to leadership races in two of our political parties.

We will be reviewing our membership fee structures, reviewing policy, reviewing ways to communicate work being done, continue to build relationships, and look for efficiencies in our system. We need to also need to tell our story so that the public understands our role and recognizes the value we bring to the system.

Every trustee is elected, connected and is an influential member of their community.

There are many distractions to the work we are doing, but we need to hear your voice at the provincial level. We ask for your involvement, your support, and your input.

We need to hear from you as every one of you have been elected and are the ones trusted to lead.

Now, trust comes in many forms. Trust can be built and trust can be broken. It is one of the strongest things that keeps us together, and is yet one of the most fragile when you abuse it.

Trust is about being genuine with no ulterior motives.
Trust is about allowing yourself to be somewhat vulnerable.
Trust is about strength and beliefs.

You trust intentions, if they are noble.
You trust people when they are honest,
And you trust situations if they are fair.

I am honoured with the trust you put in Michael, me and this association. We will continue to work hard to deserve that trust and not take it for granted.

Trust is part of team building.

We need to have strong teams. I would like to say thank you to all the members of our team at ASBA who have worked hard to make this SGM happen.

Thank you to:

Suzanne Lundrigan	Noreen Pownall
Teresa Ergezinger	Marian Johnson
Donna Engel	Bobbie Garner
Elaine Palliser	Heather Rogers
Nieta World	Heather Tkachuk
Jennifer Elsinga	Val Dale
Kit Anderson	

They are truly amazing and we appreciate what they do.

Also I would like to thank David Anderson, Executive Director and Scott McCormack, Associate Executive Director.

I mentioned the important work being done at Zones so would like to introduce and say thank you to our Zone Chairs.

Zone 1	Diane Lavoie
Zone 2/3	Cheryl Dumont
Zone 4	Diane McKay
Zone 5	Sylvia Eggerer
Zone 6	Martha Ratcliffe

I would also like to thank my board (Rocky View Schools) and my community for their complete support. There is no way I could do this job without their understanding and support

As I said to trust we need to allow ourselves to be strong and yet vulnerable.
We need to take our workbut not ourselves too seriously.

Throughout all the work we do we must remember to get to know each other and even have a few laughs.

I am honoured to work with a Board of Directors that gets that.

They have allowed themselves to be vulnerable and have allowed us to see their inner child.

Let me introduce to you your board of directors.

Zone 1	Nan Bartlett
Zone 2/3	Kim Webster
	Jean Boisvert
Zone 4	Diane McCauley
Zone 5	Kim Bater
Zone 6	Peter Grad
Calgary Public	Pamela King
Calgary Catholic	Cathie Williams
Edmonton Catholic	Marilyn Bergstra
Edmonton Public	Sarah Hoffman
Vice President	Michael Janz
President	Helen Clease

Thank you to the Board of Directors for their hard work, dedication, passion and trust.

These board members represent you, they make sure that all 61 boards are heard and every trustee is represented. They attend your zone meetings and are the link between you and the association.

Take the time to get to talk to them and get to know them. They are your voice.

Your Board of Directors.

In closing be proud of the work you are doing as trustees.

Every day you make an important contribution to education of Alberta students

Together we can face any challenges from funding to infrastructure. We may not always see things the same way, but we are all there for the same reasons.

We all care about the education system not just for our local students but for all students in this province.

We are committed to build and support a healthy education system.

We will be there for education in Alberta, supporting change not for the sake of change but change for the benefit of our students.

We are in this together to make sure every student gets the best education possible.

They need leaders with passionate, dedicated voices. They need us, their trustees to be their voices.

It is up to each and every one of us how strong that provincial voice is. It's been said before, and needs to be said again, we are in this together and there is no doubt that we are stronger together.

Thank you.