

EDMONTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

April 25, 2000

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: Trustee C. Dean, ASBA Issues Ad Hoc Committee
Trustee J. Melnychuk, ASBA Issues Ad Hoc Subcommittee
Trustee G. Nicholson, ASBA Issues Ad Hoc Subcommittee

SUBJECT: Issues for the 2000 ASBA Fall General Meeting

RESOURCE STAFF: Irene Billey, Anne-Louise Charette, Beatrice Denboer, Ken Dropko, Brian Fedor, Dennis Huculak, Angus McBeath, Anne Mulgrew, Faye Parker, Dean Power, Gary Reynolds, Anne Sherwood, Shirley Stiles, Stuart Wacowich

RECOMMENDATION

1. That the submission of the following issue, as outlined in Appendix I, to the Alberta School Boards Association for consideration at the 2000 Fall General Meeting, be approved:

Funding for the Student Health Initiative should be increased to the level that will enable all students with special needs to have access to the health and related support services that they require.

2. That the following recommendations for amendments to ASBA policies, as detailed in Appendix II, be approved:

- 3.L.01 Delete “*their Regional Children and Family Service Authorities*” and insert “*local boards, agencies and other providers of health and related services*” in paragraph 2 so that 3.L.01 reads:

The Alberta School Boards Association believes that school boards should collaborate with *local boards, agencies and other providers of health and related services* in the implementation of the coordination of services to children at the school level.

- 4.D.01 Add an additional sentence: *And, advocate that such services be provided in a manner that is*

supportive of educational services. So that 4.D.01 reads:

“Advocate that all medical and social services required to support children in school settings be funded by government agencies other than the school systems. *And, advocate that such services be provided in a manner that is supportive of educational services.*”

- 8.L.04 Add an additional statement to the second paragraph by placing a colon and sub-section (a) after “should”, add a semi-colon ; *and* after “ensure continuous scope and sequence of the courses” statement, and add statement “(b) *reflect an academic and a mid-stream set of courses.*” so that the second paragraph of 8.L.04 reads:

The Alberta School Boards Association believes that high school programs of studies should:

- (a) ensure continuous scope and sequence of courses; *and*
- (b) *reflect an academic and mid-stream set of courses.*

3. That a recommendation to the ASBA that the following ASBA policy be deleted, as outlined in Appendix III, be approved.

- 4.D.03: The Association shall advocate that if government passes Year 2000 immunity legislation, the description of “government bodies” be broad enough to include school boards or, alternatively, to specify school boards as a body covered by the proposed immunity legislation.

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In response to the ASBA’s call for the identification of policy issues as well as proposed amendments or deletions of existing policies, the administration reviewed the existing ASBA policy statements and developed recommendations for policy issues, amendments to and deletions of existing policies. In addition, the administration did provide recommendations for policy affirmations, however if the policy is not time specific, it is not necessary to affirm. The administration’s comments with respect to the remaining policies is attached as Appendix IV and will be forwarded to the Alberta School Boards Association for information.

Issues identified by member boards will be debated at the Zone level and worked into policy statements for approval at the ASBA Fall General Meeting.

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- APPENDIX I - Proposed Alberta School Boards Association Issues
- APPENDIX II - Proposed Alberta School Boards Association Policy Amendments
- APPENDIX III - Proposed Alberta School Boards Association Policy Deletion
- APPENDIX IV - Review of Alberta School Boards Association Policy

Student Health

ISSUE: Funding for the Student Health Initiative should be increased to the level that will enable all students with special needs to have access to the health and related support services that they require

Background

The Student Health Initiative distributes \$26 million annually to enhance health and related support services for students with special health needs. This initiative has resulted in demand and expectation for a full range of services for students with diverse health needs. The allocated resources fall far short of identified resource needs. Even in the areas of priority for the partnerships, universal access to needed services is not possible.

Policy 3.L.01 School Board Operations – Long Range Policy Statement

Recommendation: Delete “their Regional Children and Family Service Authorities” and insert “*local boards, agencies and other providers of health and related services*” in paragraph 2 so that 3.L.01 reads:

The Alberta School Boards Association believes that school boards should collaborate with local boards, agencies and other providers of health and related services in the implementation of the coordination of services to children at the school level.

Rationale: In addition to the Regional Children and Family Service Authorities, we now have health authorities and mental health boards. An all encompassing statement that addresses current partners and future partners is preferable.

Policy 4.D.01 Educational Finance – Declaration

Recommendation: Amend policy 4.D.01 by adding an additional sentence: *And, advocate that such services be provided in a manner that is supportive of educational services.* So that 4.D.01 reads:

Advocate that all medical and social services required to support children in school settings be funded by government agencies other than the school systems. *And, advocate that such services be provided in a manner that is supportive of educational services.*

Rationale: Consistent with the intent of 3.L.01, it should be made clear that medical and social services should be provided by those with the expertise and the mandate. However, it should also be clear, that the provision of such services in school settings, should involve school jurisdictions to ensure that they are provided in a manner that is supportive of educational services.

Policy 8.L.04 Curriculum and Instruction – Long Range Policy Statement

Recommendation: Amend policy 8.L.04 by adding an additional statement to the second paragraph: place a colon and sub-section (a) after “should”; add a semi-colon ; *and* after “ensure continuous scope and sequence of the courses”; and add “(b) *reflect an academic and a mid-stream set of courses.*” So that 8.L.04 reads:

The Alberta School Boards Association believes in the equality of access to educational opportunities for all students.

The Alberta School Boards Association believes that high school programs of studies should:

- (a) ensure continuous scope and sequence of courses; and
- (b) reflect an academic and mid-stream set of courses.

Rationale: A practical interpretation of the policy statement would be that the scope of the high school courses reflect an academic and a midstream set of courses, better enabling students to access courses that meet their needs. The inclusion of midstream courses within the definition of scope of courses would reinforce the position that midstream courses in the areas of mathematics, science, social studies and English are vital in meeting the needs of the range of students to whom schools have a responsibility.

Other Comments on the Policy: The first statement is an agreeable one to all, but requires definition and a statement of implications. What does “access” mean in this statement? Does it apply to all courses or just to core courses? Does the statement imply that there should be an equality of access to complementary courses and educational opportunities across the province?

It is important to education in Alberta that the quality of access be an issue. This would include the concept that the role of the teacher in the classroom serves to improve the quality of instruction, as compared to situations where the instruction is delivered by some remote means through technology or mail.

Re: “The ASBA believes that high school programs of study should ensure continuous scope and sequence of the courses”.

Presently the high school courses in English, Mathematics and the Sciences generally do have a rational sequence and very well defined scope to the respective programs. Social Studies, because of the nature of the course design, does not have a well defined sequence, as it deals with specific topics, which in some cases are related. Since Social Studies is not structured in a way that follows an historical continuum, it is difficult to sequence in terms of knowledge building up the same way it does in mathematics for instance. Thus the statement may imply a need to alter the structure of Social Studies into being more reflective of a sequential look at the historical and social development of mankind.

Some high school curriculum consists of stand alone courses such as Geography 20, which would fall outside the intent of the statement, given that there is not a course before or after with which to sequence.

Policy 4.D.03 Educational Finance – Declaration

Recommendation: That Policy 4.D.03 be deleted:

The Association shall advocate that if government passes Year 2000 immunity legislation, the description of “government bodies” be broad enough to include school boards or, alternatively, to specify school boards as a body covered by the proposed immunity legislation.

Rationale: This policy is not a significant issue, since the critical period for Y2K has now passed.

Policy 4.L.01

The Alberta School Boards Association believes that the current level for funding of education does not meet the needs of students in Early Childhood Services to grade 12.

Recommendation: SUPPORT

During the period since the April 1, 1994 rollback in funding, school jurisdictions have had to continue to fund inflationary increases and salary settlements with less than adequate increases in the overall funding per student. This has the effect of forcing further cutbacks to programs since these increases have to be funded from within the existing resources.

Policy 4.L.02

The Alberta School Boards Association believes the funding provided for special education programs does not currently meet the needs of students. A review should be undertaken by the provincial government to determine the actual incidence rates of students with special needs and the actual costs of providing programs and services for these students to ensure adequate funding is provided for all students to achieve the standards set by the provincial government.

Recommendation: SUPPORT

Funding equity should consider school jurisdictions that have a disproportionate number of students with special needs; students who are economically disadvantaged; and students of aboriginal heritage. The province needs to adequately fund these students so that funding does not need to be taken from other programs.

Policy 4.L.03 & 4.L.04

The Alberta School Boards Association believes that the educational component of the property tax should remain intact.

The Alberta School Boards Association believes that the funding generated by the educational component of the property tax should be at an appropriate level to reflect the community's fiscal responsibility for providing education at the local level.

Policy 4.L.04

The Alberta School Boards Association believes that the removal of the machinery and equipment tax for school purposes has had a detrimental effect on the appropriate funding of education at the local level.

Recommendation: SUPPORT

School jurisdictions must have direct access to the property tax base through their local requisition in order to provide the diversity of programs and services that are required in their local communities.

Policy 4.L.05

The Alberta School Boards Association believes that provincial standards for the use of technology within the classroom and for administrative purposes should be established.

The Alberta School Boards Association believes that the resources necessary to meet and to maintain those standards should be provided and that the allocation of funding should ensure equity of access to technical equipment, program software, in-service, evergreening bandwidth, and connectivity throughout all school jurisdictions.

Recommendation: SUPPORT WITH RESERVATIONS

We agree with the intent of the policy statement, that technology must be funded fully and appropriately. However, we have several concerns about the wording and intent of 4.L.05.

A definition of “provincial standards” in this context is required. We would not be in support of “standards for the use of technology within the classroom and for administrative purposes” that diminished the choices that should be made by teachers and by jurisdictions to meet local needs.

We do not agree that the “resources necessary to meet and to maintain those standards should be provided” if that means that all decisions about resources are made at the provincial level. Nor do we agree that targeted, block funding be provided for technology, if that is the intent of the phrase “the allocation of funding should ensure equity of access throughout all school jurisdictions.” If this phrase suggests that funding should be different between urban and rural schools, we have strong concerns about how this assumption can be proven.

Policy 4.L.06

The Alberta School Boards Association believes that the principles underlying the funding framework require review.

The Alberta School Boards Association believes that the manner of the distribution of funds within the funding framework should allow school jurisdictions to address the needs of their students.

Recommendation: SUPPORT

More flexibility must be provided in the funding framework to school jurisdictions to make decisions about how to provide effective and efficient educational programs in response to community needs.

Policy 4.L.07

The Alberta School Boards Association believes targeted funding should be minimized and additional funding for school boards should acknowledge initiatives that boards already have in place.

Recommendation: SUPPORT

The flexibility intended with the basic instruction grant is being continually eroded with additional conditional funding. There should be a move toward unconditional funds recognising pertinent equity factors. A three-year sunset clause would be sufficient to bring many conditional grants under the basic instruction grant.

When the province initiates new conditional funding such as early literacy, school jurisdictions should be given the flexibility to reallocate their existing funds for that program to other important programs. School jurisdictions should not be required to use the provincial conditional funding to “top up” the school jurisdiction’s existing funding.

Policy 4.L.08

The Alberta School Boards Association endorses the actions taken by the Board of Directors with respect to the Alberta School Improvement Program (ASIP) and supports continued discussions with school boards, education stakeholders and the Government of Alberta to develop a program which serves the interests and needs of our students and our communities.

Recommendation: SUPPORT

The funding for the ASIP should be rolled into the basic instruction grant when the program is completed.

Policy 4.D.01

The Association shall advocate that all medical and social services required to support children in school settings be funded by government agencies other than the school system of this province.

Recommendation: SUPPORT

When medical and social services are required by our students, appropriate funding should be transferred to school jurisdictions to compensate districts for these costs.

Policy 4.D.02

The Association shall advocate that the Government of Alberta direct monies derived from the provincial supplementary requisition to school jurisdictions in twelve equal instalments on the fifteenth of each month.

Recommendation: SUPPORT

This is presently being done for school jurisdictions that have not opted out of the ASFF.

Policy 5.L.01

The Alberta School Boards Association believes that a review of urban transportation funding should occur through the establishment of a task force involving representation from all levels of government.

Recommendation: SUPPORT

We believe that the urban transportation block grant should be amended to:

- provide increased sensitivity and financial recognition in support of programs required to meet the demand, cultural diversity and needs of students,
- recognize that the pattern of growth can result in a long term commitment for yellow bus service,
- recognize districts that have disproportionate number of students with special needs, students who are economically disadvantaged, students of aboriginal heritage and students requiring access to a variety of alternative and bilingual programs that the community needs and requires,
- exclude from the transportation block grant calculation all school sites that have no neighbourhood component, but rather, draw students from throughout the City,

- provide funding for technological resources required for managing the diverse routing and reporting of transportation in a large urban setting (rural jurisdictions received a special grant for technology a few years ago),
- reflect the cost benefit and trade-offs of busing versus building. The cost of transporting students for an extended period of time equates to the cost of building a facility.

Policy 6.L.01

The Alberta School Boards Association endorses the recommendations identified in the Government of Alberta's "Report on a New School Facilities Capital Plan" and believes that the government should implement the remaining recommendations of the Report immediately, namely to provide funding for:

- (1) the elimination of the current backlog of school maintenance and modernization projects by 2002/2003; and
- (2) a separate pool of funds for maintaining and modernizing existing facilities. This fund would be equal to the private sector rate of 2 percent of facility replacement value as a baseline annual budget.

Recommendation: SUPPORT

- (1) Before the government can address the backlog of school maintenance and modernization needs, it needs to determine the extent of capital required to address the needs by completing its assessment of condition of all school facilities. The backlog of school maintenance and modernization needs is increasing. Over the next 8 years, the number of district school facilities over 50 years of age will increase to represent over 50 per cent (+100 school buildings). This is due to the fact that the majority of district schools were built in the late 1950's and early 1960's. Funding to address school facility conditions is required as soon as possible. Attached is a summary chart of some key issues in this regard.
- (2) Provincial funds to address the backlog of existing school facility needs should not be generated by reallocating current capital support levels. Current support levels do not account for the extensive upgrading needs of districts. Sufficient additive funds need to be set aside to address these needs.

Research indicates that private sector investment in facilities is equal to about 2 per cent of the capital replacement value. However, it should be noted that private sector investment in facilities is usually targeted to yield short-term results, whereas investment in school facilities is long term, often for a 30 to 50 year span. As such, a 2 per cent replacement value is conservative for school buildings.

Policy 6.L.02

The Alberta School Boards Association believes that the formulae used to determine capacity and space utilization of schools and educational facilities must be adaptable to take into consideration changing conditions and variable local needs.

Recommendation: SUPPORT

The province's utilization rate calculations are not reflective of the district's real use of space. In Edmonton Public Schools there are many special needs students that require more space. Many of the special needs categories receive no exemption under the current formula i.e. learning disabilities, multiple-handicapped, and opportunity. Spaces to accommodate aides, specialized equipment, community living skills spaces, that are required are not accounted for. In addition, community use of space and partnerships the school board has with health providers i.e. ESHIP need to be considered in the mix as legitimate uses of space. Daycares that exist in a number of our schools using 1 or 2 rated classroom spaces should not be considered as spaces that are surplus to the district's needs and should therefore not count against the district when requesting support for new school construction. The nature of schools providing community services in public buildings is currently not acknowledged nor accounted for in the current calculations that are used when the province determines school capital funding issues. The following chart elaborates on a number of examples where the current formula does not take into consideration varied local circumstances.

Deficiencies with Provincial Utilization Rate Calculations

Current Capital Process Deficiencies	Capital Process Improvements Required
Areas within large districts that have either high or low utilization rates are not distinguished.	The difference between suburban and urban-core utilization rates of schools in large districts needs to be recognized and distinguished in the capital planning process so that a school jurisdiction can address localized growth and/or under-utilization concerns within its boundaries.

Current Capital Process Deficiencies	Capital Process Improvements Required
<p>Community service uses of district space during off-school hours, including use of district furniture and equipment, is not accounted for.</p>	<p>District space used for such things as adult education classes, hosting of community league functions and neighbourhood meetings and events needs to be validated as legitimate uses when determining use of school space.</p> <p>The Joint Use Agreement between Edmonton Public Schools, Edmonton Catholic Schools and the City, which has been in existence for years, clearly shows the district's commitment to sharing facilities with others, an aspect the province is encouraging through capital planning. The trade-off of this cooperation and sharing is real wear and tear on buildings.</p>
<p>Although exemptions to rated space are made for non-profit daycares in our schools, rated school space used by all other daycare operators are not. Currently, this results in lower utilization rates for those facilities.</p>	<p>School space used for daycares and after-school-cares is viewed by this district and its local communities as a key aspect of the social infrastructure, and as such should be reflected in how space use is calculated.</p> <p>This district has shared its space with these kinds of agencies and groups for years, once again showing that the district is already implementing what the province is now encouraging.</p>
<p>In cases where districts educate students in buildings that are not rated by the province, neither the space nor the number of students are included in the province's "Building Assessment and Utilization" report for those districts. This report is used as a basis for determining capacities, utilization rates, and surplus space by the province.</p>	<p>Innovative uses of non-traditional spaces for schools, like Centre High, which is accommodated in renovated office space without provincial capital, are indicators of districts' efforts to maximize use of facilities. This is particularly relevant since the province is encouraging districts to consider such innovations. These kinds of arrangements are reflective of the real use of space by districts and need to be accounted for. A long term benefit to the province is reduced reliance on future additional capital.</p>

Current Capital Process Deficiencies	Capital Process Improvements Required
The “25 student spaces” per classroom rating used by the province does not take into account space in typical classrooms used for computer equipment and furniture which reduces the number of students that can reasonably be accommodated to less than 25.	Limitations on classroom size in response to up-to-date program delivery methods need to be considered. There must be allowances made for the use of technology in the classroom and the space required for equipment used to deliver the CTS mandated curriculum.
District initiatives that use less classroom space and have less reliance on capital investment in school buildings, like LearnNet, Blended and Home Schooling programs at EPS are overshadowed by emphasis on utilization in provincial rated buildings.	The weight assigned to current “space utilization rates” as real indicators of how districts use space needs to be re-evaluated and shifted more toward a recognition and reward system based on districts opting to provide and enhance programs that are not space intensive.

Policy 6.L.03:

The Alberta School Boards Association believes that the province should establish, without delay, standards for the assessment of indoor air quality (IAQ) in the province’s school buildings.

Recommendation: SUPPORT

The provision of a safe and comfortable learning environment is of paramount importance to school jurisdictions and is a requirement under section 28.(7) of the School Act. Indoor air quality is a key component of a safe and comfortable learning environment. Currently, indoor air quality tends to be a subjective area which is influenced by building conditions and individual circumstances such as respiratory sensitivity.

Alberta is viewed as demonstrating a high incidence of asthma and related respiratory ailments and this is resulting in concerned interest from community stakeholders. The interest translates into demands for action being placed directly on school jurisdictions or alternatively through regulatory bodies.

School jurisdictions are then subject to local interpretation by regulatory bodies without reference to a recognized standard. In some cases, judgments as to relative air quality are made based on occupational exposure limits (O.E.L.’s) which are based on industrial settings and adult physiology. This raises the question of the effects on children.

The establishment of a standard by the government will enable school jurisdictions to address this important area in a consistent and practical manner and will instill confidence in our community stakeholders.

Policy 7.L.02

The Alberta School Boards Association believes that collective bargaining is the most practical means of determining the remuneration of employees, but that collective agreements should be restricted to matters of salaries, special allowances, sick leave, and other benefits specifically required by law.

Administrative procedures pertaining to role specifications of supervisory personnel, provision of stenographic and clerical services, classroom load, the provision of classroom facilities, etc., should be divorced from collective agreements and established through board policies arrived at through the cooperation of board, administration and teaching staff.

Recommendation: SUPPORT

It is always to a school board's advantage to retain maximum flexibility in organizing and managing the system. Collective agreement clauses which circumscribe the ability to organize by specifying class sizes or pupil-teacher ratios have major cost and organizational implications. The same applies to working conditions clauses that specify levels of resources for a classroom or a teacher. These kinds of provisions are contrary to the spirit and practice of site-based decision making, as they allow no flexibility to organize in a way that makes sense for the individual school. Boards should strive to have as little as possible prescribed in collective agreements.

Policy 7.L.03

The Alberta School Boards Association believes in the principle of regional bargaining with the Alberta Teachers' Association where groups of individual boards determine it is in the public interest to do so.

Recommendation: SUPPORT WITH RESERVATIONS

We are only supportive of this position as long as it remains voluntary on the part of boards. Boards should not be prevented from bargaining regionally, but we would oppose a move to impose regional or province-wide bargaining, as this removes the ability of individual boards to bargain in the best way possible relative to their individual context.

Policy 7.L.04

The Alberta School Boards Association:

Adopts the position that local collective bargaining or the formation of voluntary associations are the most desirable and beneficial forms of negotiating collective agreements;

Provides and encourages local and voluntary association collective bargaining; and

Adopts the position that the right to strike or lock out are essential parts of a balanced negotiation process and should continue to be available for negotiating any school board collective agreements.

Recommendation: SUPPORT

It is important that the right to bargain collectively at the local level be maintained. With respect to the services related to bargaining that are provided to boards by ASBA, they are valued by districts and should also be maintained.

It is unclear why the statement about strike-lockout is in the policy, unless there is a move to declare teachers an essential service or remove their right to strike. At present, teacher bargaining is governed by the Labour Act, and these rights are integral to the framework for the process.

Policy 8.L.01

The Alberta School Boards Association believes:

- that the government should establish a clearing house to collect and disseminate information and criticism on programs and approaches being used across North America to improve education for culturally and economically deprived children; and
- that such a clearing house be under government contract with a university or college in the Province of Alberta.

Recommendation: SUPPORT

This would be a practical and useful idea as long as there was a very stringent mechanism to carefully screen information and research being placed in the database to ensure it is objective and reliable in nature. Such a reservoir of information may prove useful in designing, planning or customizing local initiatives to assist the district in addressing the educational needs of a significant number of students whom we serve.

Policy 8.L.05

The Alberta School Boards Association believes that courses should be implemented at the school level once Alberta Learning has met the following criteria:

- (1) Collaboration and consultation with educational partners.
- (2) A pilot has been conducted to identify needed resource materials, staff in-service requirements, new course impact on existing program offerings, impact on existing courses (e.g. math impacting chemistry and physics), new course impact on prior grade levels, impact for high school diploma requirements, and implications to prerequisite standings for post secondary entrance.
- (3) Teachers have been inserviced to ensure high levels of student performance and quality teaching.
- (4) Textbooks and resource materials are available at least one semester prior to mandated course implementation dates.

Recommendation: SUPPORT

- (1) There is a real and pressing need for Alberta Learning to ensure there is broad input to curriculum development in the early stages of design, from a large and representative sample of stakeholders. These consultations need to involve not only a large representative sample of teachers, and principals, but parents groups, and post-secondary institutions. The latter can help ensure there is a seamless transition between secondary and post-secondary education, and needs to involve, at the university level, representatives from Arts and Science as well as the Faculty of Education.
- (2) The importance of a meaningful pilot of new courses is the major question here. Pilots conducted in the case of a number of new curricula, the new math program in particular, have been woefully inadequate. Initially, in the case of high school math, implementation of Pure Math is being done without significant piloting. Course and text are mandated without pilots. Applied Math curriculum was only given a pilot year after considerable public outcry, and the pilot was only marginally effective in bringing about alterations in the course resources, many of which were not ready, when the pilot began.

Pilots to be meaningful need to be given sufficient time to inservice pilot teachers in resources and in the changes from the existing curriculum. The pilot needs to run a full year,

following which input from pilot participants can be used to alter both curriculum and resources. This revision should require a year, ensuring that a review process is conducted at various stages. The revised resources and curriculum can then be produced in quantity and be available for inservicing in the spring prior to September implementation.

In the course of initial design and during the pilot, participating staff and Alberta Learning staff need to take a look at how the program articulates with other subject areas. Does the math program match the needs and the applications of math required in the parallel science course for instance. Are there math expectations in the science for which students are not prepared by the math course at that grade level? What is the impact of the courses on the curriculum a grade below and a grade above the implemented program? These questions are very much needed to prevent the kind of gaps that teachers are reporting in math skills between grade nine and ten. Should a student who passes a grade nine course need a pre grade ten course to prepare for the course in grade ten. Such is the case with the new Math 10 Prep.

In the process of curriculum planning and during the pilot year, input needs to be obtained from the post secondaries, as to the way in which the new program, especially at the grade 12 level, prepares students for a seamless transition. Why are SAIT and NAIT now saying the student graduating with Applied Math 30 will likely need a math preparation course to enable them to prepare for math needed by the trades? Such a course was not needed by the old Math 33 course, and now because of improper design, consultation and piloting, students and tax payers will have to pay for an additional course.

The information given by well done pilots, which honestly look for ways in which the course can be improved, in the best interest of the student, is not a luxury and is something which should not be rushed by some other agenda. Pilots are the key quality control phase of curriculum design and must be done with the greatest of diligence.

- (3) The inservicing of teachers in a new curriculum is essential to enable the teacher to teach effectively in the early years of implementation. The keys to successful inservicing are ensuring the teachers are aware of: how the curriculum is different; what changes have been made; what are the outcomes or objectives of the course; and what are the resources that are available. Inservicing must be careful not to give any impression that there is a particular way or method that must be followed to teach the new curriculum, but rather identify to the teacher the “whats”. Some “hows” may be suggested, but must not be mandated. Teachers must be free to choose the best method which meets the needs of their particular class and their particular educational community.
- (4) In addition to the comment made in section (2) (above) it is most important that implementation of courses are done in such a manner that the acquisition of texts is affordable. This requires a new program to be phased in one or two grade levels a year. The recent grade 1 through 6 implementation of the new math curriculum in a single year, placed unreasonable strains on school budgets, often resulting in situations where two or three students were sharing a text. Not only then must piloted texts be available well ahead of implementation, but implementation must permit school budgets to absorb the costs over a

period of time, or Alberta Learning needs to increase general allocations to reflect the increased costs forced upon school districts due to curriculum implementation.

Policy 9.L.04 - Home Education Student Achievement Tests

The Alberta School Boards Association believes that the rules and standards for writing provincial achievement examinations should be applied consistently to all students in Alberta including home education students.

Recommendation: SUPPORT

Rationale: Over the years, the majority of home education students registered with the district have not participated in the administration of the Alberta Education Achievement Tests. Due to the small number of students writing, one is not able to determine the effectiveness of the home education program.

In May 1999, Alberta Learning released a revised Home Education Regulation. Within that regulation in the section titled Student progress evaluation, it states the following:

- (2) A parent and the supervising board or supervising private school must:
 - (a) ensure that a student at a level equivalent to grades 3, 6 and 9
 - (i) write the grades 3, 6 and 9 provincial achievement tests and at the time designated by the Minister, or
 - (ii) undergoes an alternative evaluation that reflects standards similar to the standards in the provincial achievement tests and that meets the student learning outcomes prescribed in the Schedule at a time and place mutually agreed to by the parent and the supervising board or the supervising private school

The General Information Bulletin for grades 3, 6, and 9 Achievement Tests states that “Students enrolled in home education programs shall write the achievement tests or an alternative form of evaluation approved by the Superintendent, under conditions similar to those of all other students.” Students enrolled in schools are expected to write the achievement tests and the vast majority do so. Students receiving home education are also expected to write, however the majority of these students do not participate in the achievement testing program.