

EDMONTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

February 9, 2010

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: Trustee G. Rice, Conference Committee Chair

SUBJECT: Report #7 of the Conference Committee (From the Meeting Held February 2, 2010)

RECOMMENDATION

1. That Report #7 of the Conference Committee from the meeting held February 2, 2010 be received and considered.
2. That the Board support in principle the PSBC Work Plan; the Foundation Program Statement; and the proposed School Act whereas statements, given the understanding that the PSBC will be doing further work and refinement of the same, be confirmed.
3. That the Board's designate to the PSBC, Trustee Catherine Ripley, be authorized to convey to the PSBC the Board's questions, suggestions and amendments as identified by the Board in the discussion of this report, be confirmed.
4. That Board support for the PSBC authorizing the transfer of \$15,000 from the accumulated surplus of the Association to the 2010 budget to pay the anticipated costs of intervener status in the ongoing case between Aspen View School District and the Government of Alberta be denied.

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The attached report *Board Position on Public School Boards' Association of Alberta Work Plan and Initiatives* was deferred from the January 26, 2010 board meeting to the February 2, 2010 Conference Committee meeting due to the time-sensitive nature of material.

The Conference Committee supported Recommendations 2 and 3 above; but did not support Recommendation 4.

AS:mmf

Attachment - January 26, 2010 Board Report – Board Position on Public School Boards' Association of Alberta Work Plan and Initiatives

EDMONTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

January 26, 2010

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: Trustee C. Ripley, Public School Board Council (PSBC) Representative

SUBJECT: Board Position on Public School Boards' Association of Alberta Work Plan and Initiatives

RECOMMENDATION

1. That the Board support in principle the PSBC Work Plan; the Foundation Program Statement; and the proposed *School Act* whereas statements, given the understanding that the PSBC will be doing further work and refinement of the same, be approved.
2. That the Board's designate to the PSBC, Trustee Catherine Ripley, be authorized to convey to the PSBC the Board's questions, suggestions and amendments as identified by the Board in the discussion of this report.
3. That the Board support for the PSBC authorizing the transfer of \$15,000 from the accumulated surplus of the Association to the 2010 budget to pay the anticipated costs of intervener status in the ongoing case between Aspen View School District and the Government of Alberta be approved.

\* \* \* \* \*

At the February 4 to 6, 2010 Public School Board Council meeting, , the PSBC will be considering and approving a number of recommendations that will be that will guide the work of the PSBC over the next year. As the PSBC representative for the Board, Trustee Ripley brings this report to Board for discussion and input to guide her in representing the Board.

**PSBC Work Plan**

The proposed PSBC Work Plan (Attachment #1) is derived from the Work Plan that the PSBC adopted in February, 2008. The Executive Committee reviewed the Work Plan at its December planning session. Some completed items have been removed from the plan, and some new items have been added (in italics). The Board is asked to consider if the priorities correspond to what it believes the Association should concentrate on in the next year as a complement to and a support for our work in Edmonton. Is there anything missing?

Trustee Ripley suggests the following:

- a) the addition of a communication plan for the Foundation Program (Priority 1, Goal 1)
- b) clarification on Priority 1, Goal 2 with respect to offering other solutions,
- c) clarification on Goal 3 as to whether it is local CONTROL that is needed or easy ACCESS to wraparound services, and
- d) addition of strategy to Priority Three, Goal 1 that the PSBC will examine the obstacles to membership identified by non-member boards as way of stepping forward to achieving this goal
- e) any other additions or deletions recommended by individual trustees and accepted by the full Board.

### **The Proposed Whereas Clauses**

The Whereas clauses at the beginning of the *School Act* provide an important framework for understanding the Act as a whole. The reason PSBAA is recommending a debate among members of the PSBAA about potential clauses at this time (ahead of any recommendations or revised legislation from the Government) is that the debate and any agreement the Council can reach about proposed Whereas clauses will assist representatives of the Association when they are discussing draft legislation with MLAs and others as well as assist trustees in their own local advocacy on this topic.

Attachment #2 contains the suggested Whereas Clauses proposed by PSBAA. At the February meeting (or possibly, the April meeting, depending on where the discussion leads in February), the Council will vote to endorse these clause by clause.

The Board of Trustees submission to the Minister of Education on the School Act on October 27, 2009 centred around three main areas the Board believed needed to be included in any new provincial education legislation: 1) Defining Public Education, 2) A Focus on Success for All Students, 3) Establishing an Enabling Framework. (reference [http://www.epsb.ca/board/oct27\\_09/item03.pdf](http://www.epsb.ca/board/oct27_09/item03.pdf)). It is recommended that these should be used as a guide to evaluate the Whereas Clauses.

Trustee Ripley suggests the following:

- a) endorse Whereas Statements #1, #2, #7 and #8;
- b) that #3 and #6 be combined;
- c) that # 4 be streamlined to read “Whereas it is in the public interest to provide public education that is inclusive, democratic, and governed by locally elected school boards,”
- d) that # 5 be deleted.

## **The Foundation Program**

Attachment #3 contains the core description of the proposed Foundation Program. The full report can be accessed online at: [http://www.public-schools.ab.ca/Public/association/PSBC\\_FoundationProgramInterimReportDraft2010Jan.pdf](http://www.public-schools.ab.ca/Public/association/PSBC_FoundationProgramInterimReportDraft2010Jan.pdf).

The PSBAA Standing Committee on the Foundation Program was established in April 2008; Trustee George Rice serves on this committee. In a nutshell, the mandate of the Committee is to “recommend to the members of the Association a description of the program(s), which every student in Alberta should be able to access, no matter where the student lives in the province.”

On February 6, 2010 the Interim Report of the Committee and the Draft Description of a Foundation Program for Public Education in Alberta will be brought to the PSBC and the Board’s PSBC representative will be asked to vote on adopting the draft Foundation Program Statement in principle, subject to such revisions as the Standing Committee makes following this debate and subject to final approval by the membership at the April 10, 2010 meeting of the PSBC.

## **Intervenor Status in the Aspen View vs. the Government of Alberta Case**

See Attachment #4 for details.

CR:as

- Attachment #1 - PSBC Work Plan
- Attachment #2 - PSBAA Proposed *School Act* Whereas Clauses
- Attachment #3 - The Foundation Program
- Attachment #4 - Intervener Status in Aspen View vs. the Government of Alberta



PUBLIC SCHOOL BOARDS  

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COUNCIL  

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OF ALBERTA

# DRAFT WORKPLAN 2010-2012

# PSBC WORKPLAN 2010 - 2012

## ***Introduction***

The Public School Boards' Association is the servant of 32 school boards in Alberta. The members elect officers - the President, First Vice-President, Second Vice-President, and two Directors - to form a leadership team. This leadership team is also the Executive Committee.

This mandate of the Executive Committee is to:

- (a) conduct the affairs of the Association, including, but not limited to, the responsibility to hire, remunerate, direct, evaluate the performance of, and discharge the Executive Director; and
- (b) represent the Association and delegate individuals to represent the Association.

Following the election of the Committee at the AGM, November 18<sup>th</sup>, 2007, the Committee undertook a two-day planning session to develop a leadership plan that could be recommended to the Public School Boards Council as a guide for governance throughout 2008 – 10. *This workplan revision represents an extension of the 2008 - 2010 Plan, and is presented to the PSBC for consideration in February of 2010.*

The Public School Boards' Association of Alberta is the one organization which represents the unique interests of public school jurisdictions in the province. "We champion public school education."

### ***Our Mission is:***

To ensure the continuation and constant improvement of a universally accessible system of public education, which is locally governed, student centered, and challenging.

### ***Our Goal is:***

To provide constructive leadership – represented by effective strategies, advocacy, and communication - and to work with others, wherever possible, for the good of public education.

### ***We believe:***

Public schools are the first choice of our communities, where all our children learn and live the values of democracy together, reflecting our hope and shaping the future of our communities.

# PSBC WORKPLAN 2010 - 2012

## **Values - As a council we:**

- strive to achieve the highest level of member service;
- provide opportunities for learning, innovation and continuous improvement;
- believe all people should be valued as individuals and respected as important members of our community;
- achieve success through involvement, teamwork, and recognition;
- communicate in an open, respectful, and timely matter;
- conduct ourselves with integrity, and in a responsible manner, so as to build trust and confidence; and
- will be accountable.

## **Association Profile**

The Public School Boards' Association of Alberta is entering its 21<sup>st</sup> year of operations.

The PSBAA operates on the basis of "one member, one vote". The PSBAA is dedicated to improving the condition of public school education everywhere, so that our youth have comparable opportunities and all communities have excellent public school education.

The PSBAA serves everyone involved with the jurisdiction – trustees, senior executive staff, school-based leaders, and everyone in the community concerned about public school education.

The PSBAA believes that the community must be extensively involved in the day-to-day decisions about public school education. The Association believes that locally elected trustees should be accountable to the community. The PSBAA believes in reasonable local autonomy and a respectful partnership between the provincial government and the local community (represented by local government in the form of the public school board). *The public school board is the means by which the local community practices self-determination and self-government.*

The Association's success and growth has been accomplished through:

- a clear and hopeful vision;
- a forward-looking and pro-active outlook;
- member driven and shared decision-making;
- determined advocacy;
- excellent leadership development; and
- effective support for members.

## PSBC WORKPLAN 2010 - 2012

### ***Current Issues and Strategies:***

The Association has developed a reputation for providing positive learning experiences for its members, and it intends to develop as a continuously learning organization. The PSBAA provides timely, in-depth analysis of current issues and events as they relate to public education, self-government in strong local communities, and local jurisdictions. The Association is a model of democracy in action and the members feel a strong connection to initiatives and positions taken by the Association.

There is a strong bond between member boards because of their shared commitment to the foundation statement ("We believe public schools are the first choice of our communities, where all our children learn and live the values of democracy together, reflecting our hope and shaping the future of our communities") and their shared values and beliefs about public school education.

At the same time, there is an awareness among members that public school education and the future of local communities and trusteeship is at a pivotal point. It is imperative that supporters of public school education and strong local communities expand our reach and strengthen our position within the provincial community. To increase our credibility, school boards need to speak more often and more effectively. Both school boards and the Association need to be more active in the political arena.

Some of our trustees express an uneasiness about the future of locally elected boards, and about their ability to offer the level of service necessary to ensure our young people are well educated and prepared to make a contribution to society. The Association should provide the impetus for public school boards to respond and develop public school systems that meet communities' needs, hopes, and dreams. As an Association, we want to ensure that our members can make a positive difference to our youth, in the classroom and beyond.

The Executive Committee has identified three priorities that represent the Mission, the Goal, and the Beliefs of the Association. The Committee recommends these priorities to the PSBC.

***Priority One: Support and Improve Public School Education***

***Priority Two: Support and Improve Local Governance***

***Priority Three: Support and Improve the Association's Health and Well-Being***



## PSBC WORKPLAN 2010 - 2012

### Strategies:

- 1) **Developing and telling the story of public school education.**  
We will continue to elaborate and tell the story of public school education - including its connection to community, local democracy, and citizenship.
- 2) **Relationship building.**  
We will work together with all members and at all levels of the community - school boards and the Association will be acknowledged as vital and effective contributors to the success of local communities, the provincial government, and others.
- 3) **Building trust and confidence.**  
We work collaboratively, gathering relevant data, sharing good information and resources to build trust and confidence.
- 4) **Organizational excellence.**  
We will be consistently responsive to our members' needs and requests, and be accountable for our actions.
- 5) **Leadership.**  
We will maximize our members' potential through the training and development of trustees and others. We will draw upon the strengths of the members to maintain the organization's well-being, and create a stronger and more responsive educational support team.
- 6) **Communications.**  
*We will enhance and integrate effective communication strategies and techniques, and use any media, including new media, to convey our messages, to ensure that our story can be improved, enriched and understood by all internal and external stakeholders and the public at large.*

# PSBC WORKPLAN 2010 - 2012

**Priority One:** *Support and Improve Public School Education*

**Goal # 1**

The PSBAA will describe the appropriate school foundation program \* for students across the province (\* what every student has a right to be exposed to in the course of public school education in Alberta).

## Strategies

- Association develops implementation process
- Standing Committee formed
- Local leaders training program implemented
- A draft description of a Foundation Program is prepared by the Standing Committee, for consideration by members

## Key Leaders

Standing Committee, PSBC Representatives, Director of Learning

## Timelines

- April 2008 – Standing Committee formed
- May – Oct. 2008- Committee training & orientation
- Feb. 2009 - Standing Committee presents action plan and handbook to PSBC
- April – June 2009 -Local Board Progress Reports
- Oct. 2009 - Final input from local Boards
- Feb. 2010- Draft foundation statement presented to PSBC
- June 2010 – Foundation statement completed

## Measures of Success

Foundation statement acknowledged and accepted provincially.

# PSBC WORKPLAN 2010 - 2012

## Goal # 2

We will address the funding issue by determining the needs that are not being met and we will be able to offer solutions

## Strategies

- Association develops resource materials and contacts
- Engaging communities workshop
- Local boards consult with their publics
- Incorporate improved feedback strategies so that members are actively involved in the development and creation of resources that are useful in making arguments in favour of additional investments in education.*

## Key Leaders

PSBC Representatives, Local Boards, Community Influentials

## Timelines

- February 2010 – Explore options with PSBC Representatives
- April 2010 – PSBC Representatives consider initiatives
- June 2009 – PSBC Representatives present needs assessments

## Measures of Success

Needs assessments produced as support for Foundation Program and funding alignments.

# PSBC WORKPLAN 2010 - 2012

## Goal #3

*Public School Boards will expand their circles of influence to increase the local control of educational resources. Increased flexibility is needed at the local level, so that extended services from other ministries are readily accessible by children (they must be ready and able to benefit from the educational programs offered within their local jurisdictions). The term "wrap around services" is used to describe cross-ministry services that would be directly accessible by school boards.*

## Strategies

- Boards will increase the development of local capacity
- Boards will explore new means to meet local needs
- Boards (trustees) become active participants in the corporate (business), social, and service communities

## Key Leaders

PSBC Representatives, Boards of Trustees

## Timelines

- April 2008 and thereafter – PSBC Representatives join local organizations (i.e. Chamber of Commerce)
- Oct./Nov. 2008 – Local organizational meetings include community service appointments

## Measures of Success

Cooperative initiatives will be undertaken locally. Inter-departmental and inter-organizational problem solving and joint ventures at the local level will be actively solving local problems without provincial government intervention or interference.

# PSBC WORKPLAN 2010 - 2012

**Priority Two: Support and Improve Local Governance**

**Goal # 1**

We will provide information to assist trustees in promoting local government and reasonable local autonomy.

**Strategies**

- Expand Trustees expertise and confidence
- Expand the storytelling network to increase public awareness

**Key Leaders**

Association Executive Staff, PSBC Representatives

**Timelines**

- April 2008 - PSBC Representatives receive briefing packages
- May 2008 - Boards will approve final briefing packages

**Measures of Success**

The community will have the ability and authority to make the important decisions closer to where the need is. There will be increased community autonomy.

# PSBC WORKPLAN 2010 - 2012

## Goal #2

*We will build political contacts provincially and assist in building relationships at the local level. The Association has committed to strengthen the relationships amongst local and provincial politicians and administrations. Strategic initiatives should focus on the development of a strong enduring relationship that encourages two-way communications, sharing good information, and pro-active dialogue and deliberation among local and provincial politicians.*

## Strategies

- Association will develop a strategic communication plan
- An Intra-governmental Political Relations Standing Committee will be struck to provide leadership through the development of a program to facilitate strong local and provincial intra-governmental political relations.
- Incorporate political events (business and social) into PSBC and general meeting agendas

## Key Leaders

Association executive staff, PSBC Representatives

## Timelines

- April 2008 – draft plan to PSBC
- May 2008 – Spring Assembly hosts first political leaders event
- October, 2009 – Standing Committee on Intra-Governmental Political Relations established
- April, 2010 – Initial proposal from the Standing Committee for consideration by the PSBC.

## Measures of Success

Member boards will be achieving new results and will have expanded their circles of influence.

# PSBC WORKPLAN 2010 - 2012

## Goal #3

We will work to influence legislative changes that will strengthen local government and the role of trustees.

## Strategies

- Engage influentials to advocate for more local autonomy
- Revise and update the Local Government Charter for reaffirmation*
- Build political alliances to advance legislative changes

## Key Leaders

PSBC Representative, Executive Committee, Association Executive Staff

## Measures of Success

Legislative changes will be less prescriptive. The *School Act* will reduce the Minister's day-to-day authority, and the ALBERTA ACT will be amended to ensure a meaningful, long lasting role for local governments (school boards and municipal councils).



# PSBC WORKPLAN 2010 - 2012

## **Priority Three: Support and Improve the Association's Health and Well Being**

### **Goal # 1**

*We will work to have every public school board as a member of PSBAA.*

#### **Strategies**

- First Choice campaign
- Personal contact with non-members
- Associate membership considered
- Personal contact with members in their local jurisdictions
- Fee free trials sent to non-member boards

#### **Key Leaders**

Executive Committee, PSBC Representatives, Local Trustees

#### **Timelines**

- Dec. 2007 - Fee free trial offered
- April 2008 - All non-member boards will have been contacted personally
- June 2008 - PSBC Representatives will make follow - up contacts

#### **Measures of Success**

The Association will represent all public school boards in the province.



# PSBC WORKPLAN 2010 - 2012

## Goal # 2

We will become more active so as to raise the profile of the PSBC and the Association.

### Strategies

- Provincial branding of FirstChoice
- Executive Committee members expand their network
- Improve fraternal organizational interaction
- Value statements will be collected and incorporated into our story

### Key Leaders

PSBC Representatives, Executive Committee, Local Trustees & Sr. Admin., Executive Staff Members

### Timelines

- April 2008 – Fraternal invited to PSBC Meeting
- June 2008 – FirstChoice marketing launch
- Oct. 2008 – Fraternal delegates attend AGM.
- 2009 – Association is called upon to speak for Public Education

### Measures of Success

The Association will be called upon as the first choice to speak on behalf of public school boards and about educational issues. Public Schools offering public education will become universally recognized as Alberta's First Choice, distinguishing themselves from those offering separate, charter, or private education.

# PSBC WORKPLAN 2010 - 2012

## Goal # 3

We will increase the decision-making role of the PSBC

### Strategies

- Provide informational resources to assist PSBC Representatives with the practical work in their local jurisdictions
- Provide training and development for PSBC members to enhance their skills
- Executive Committee will solicit agenda items from Council
- Ad Hoc and Standing Committees will be created to call upon the expertise of the PSBC Representatives*

### Key Leaders

PSBAA executive staff, Executive Committee, PSBC Representatives

### Timelines

- April 2008 -Communication packages distributed
- Spring / Fall 2008 – Professional development sessions
- April 2008 – PSBC Representatives consulted for agendas

### Measures of Success

The business of the Association will be more membership driven. A broadly based network will undertake the work of the PSBAA. There will be many voices and many hands doing the work and the Association's voice will be heard throughout the province.

# PSBC WORKPLAN 2010 - 2012

## Goal # 4

We will create an archival system to record the history of the organization.

### Strategies

- Document the history of Public Education through resource packages that all Members will be able to tell our story throughout the province
- Create templates to record our membership's history. (Board profiles)
- Spread the work of the Association throughout the membership to broaden the network of historians
- Incorporate the use of social media as tools to develop the archives and history. Wikis and blogs will provide opportunities for members and alumni to help record the history.*

### Key Leaders

Association staff, Executive Committee, PSBC Representatives, Jurisdiction Trustees and senior executives

### Timelines

- Jan. 2008 – basic jurisdiction profiles created
- April 2008 – template developed for board profiles
- June 2008 – Boards submit profiles
- Jan. 2008 – Executive Committee expanding role
- Feb. 2008 – PSBC Representatives more actively engaged

### Measures of Success

There will be formal records (archives) within the Association office and our story will be familiar to the majority of our members. Historical information as well as current events and initiatives will be well documented and well known throughout all levels of the organization.

To: PSBC Representatives  
From: Executive Committee  
Date: January 12, 2010  
Re: *School Act* Review- Potential Whereas Clauses

Dear Members of Council:

At the upcoming meeting of the Council, which will be held on February 6<sup>th</sup>, 2010, you will be asked to provide preliminary input and have an initial debate about the attached clauses for a new *School Act* (see below).

We (your Executive Committee) encourage you and your trustee colleagues to discuss these prior to the Council meeting.

Unless there is widespread support for voting on the draft Whereas clauses on February 6<sup>th</sup>, the debate will be tabled until the April meeting of the PSBC and voted on then.

In putting the draft Whereas clauses forward for debate the Executive Committee is trying to strengthen and make more clear our members' perspective on new legislation.

Whereas clauses are not an enforceable part of an *Act*, therefore most legislation doesn't have Whereas clauses.

The Legislative Assembly includes Whereas clauses in legislation when the public policy is very important.

Whereas clauses are meant to state the few very important ideas that judges and others should bear in mind when interpreting the act. The current *School Act* has Whereas clauses.

With the tight timelines proposed for new *School Act* legislation, we need to be able to move forward as quickly as possible, however we must ensure that we are thorough and diligent in our democratic decision-making practices and processes.

If you require any additional information to help you prepare for a discussion with your Board, please do not hesitate to contact myself, a member of the Executive Committee or the Association staff.

Thank you for your attention to this very important matter. We look forward to a healthy and informative dialogue regarding these draft Whereas clauses.

Yours truly,



Patty Dittrick  
President, Public School Boards' Association of Alberta

## Possible "Whereas clauses" for the School Act (or new school legislation)

(The purpose of the first whereas clause is to make it clear that education is an essential public good, for citizens and for the community. This is why legislation is vital.)

**# 1 Whereas excellent education for each and every person is the primary basis for free and effective citizens and for a strong and enduring democratic community, and**

(The purpose of the second clause is to make it clear that parents have a fundamental right to be involved in the education of their children. At the same time, children are not chattels of their parents: the right of parents has to be exercised with the best interests of the child in mind.)

**#2 Whereas parents have a right and responsibility to make informed decisions respecting the education of each of their children, bearing in mind the best interests of each child, and**

(The purpose of the third clause is to reassure the provincial government, and others, that the exclusive constitutional authority of the provincial government is acknowledged: at the same time, the statement is made that the provincial government "chooses" to regard the government of community as being in two parts, provincial and local")

**#3 Whereas in Alberta the Legislature of Alberta has exclusive constitutional jurisdiction to make laws respecting education and chooses to regard the government of community as being in two parts, provincial and local; and,**

(The purpose of the fourth clause is to make clear that, in providing for education in the province, public school education is first and foremost, and public school education has three vital characteristics: it is inclusive, it is a deliberate model of a civil democratic community, and it is substantially governed locally in every community by people who are locally elected.)

**#4 Whereas it is in the public interest and a matter of important public policy to provide public school education that is inclusive, a deliberate model of a civil democratic community and substantially governed locally in every community throughout Alberta by people who are locally elected, and**

(The purpose of the fifth clause is to make it clear that public school education exists to serve, equally, the student and the community.)

**#5 Whereas public school education focuses on the student in the context of the community, and public school education exists to serve, equally, the potential of the student and the community, and**

(The purpose of the sixth clause is to acknowledge the constitutional provisions for separate and francophone education.)

**#6 Whereas, notwithstanding its primary commitment to public school education, Alberta acknowledges and upholds the provisions of the Constitution that allow and enable separate and francophone education, and**

(The purpose of the seventh clause is to remind all readers that separate school education is a civil authority, not a parochial institution. Such a clause would reassure separate and francophone supporters that the PSBAA is not using the review of the *School Act* to advance a confrontational agenda.)

**#7 Whereas public school education , separate school education, and francophone school education are all provided under the auspices of a civil education authority, and**

(The purpose of the eighth clause is to reassure the provincial government that the Association acknowledges their public policy position and their constitutional authority to allow private, charter and home schooling.)

**#8 Whereas Alberta also allows and enables private education, including, but not limited to, charter schools, private schools, and home schooling**

Therefore...

## VIII. A Foundation Program for Public School Education in Alberta

For the purposes of developing a Foundation Program, the Standing Committee has set out a desirable and defensible operational framework for such a program. This is the first iteration of a Foundation Program.

1. The primary preferred place of providing public education is in a school, for three reasons. First, there are important socializing opportunities that are familiar to us and easily taken advantage of in a school setting. Second, the organization of schools favours the efficient and economic use of resources, notably: the development of a learning community and the use of the school for other community purposes. Third, a school setting makes it easier to model a civil democratic community.

Notwithstanding our commitment to the school as the primary preferred place of providing public education, we value learning in other places and we value individualized learning, under appropriate conditions. A Foundation Program should be flexible enough to accommodate and encourage this, as long as the needs of the child are foremost in planning. (First of all, do no harm to the child.)

Every place of learning, which a child comes to in the course of public school education, must be safe, healthy and secure, attractive and welcoming, and appropriate to the need (school, home, library or museum, work place, etc.).

2. The safety and health and well-being of a child are paramount. The local public school jurisdiction will provide transportation to and from the local public school in the absence of public transportation or when the walking distance may be injurious to a child's safety, health and well-being, or readiness to learn.

Public or school transportation must be safe, secure, healthy, and welcoming.

3. No child should spend so much time travelling to and from school each day that it is likely to interfere with learning well and relating well to others in school.

4. Fees should not be a deterrent to school attendance, including participation in school life, for any child.

5. The pupil-teacher ratio -- The numbers of children in a classroom setting should never exceed the number, which causes the quality of the relationship between teacher and children, or the quality of instruction, to be diminished. The pupil teacher ratio is important for its effect on relationships and social development even more than for its effect on instruction. Particular priority should be given to minimizing the class sizes for primary and middle years grades and whenever there is a significant special needs population within a classroom.

6. A certificated teacher who is a member of a professional organization is the designated educational leader of the team in place for each child and has the responsibility, time, skills, and disposition to know the child as a person and help the child form and manage relationships. (Other members of the team might include other teachers, mentors, coaches, counselors, librarians, psychologists, medical practitioners and health care professionals, vocational counselors, journeymen, etc.)

7. Every child has the right to a public education that provides a reliable framework for the development of character, opportunity and means to develop knowledge, skills and attitudes, opportunity and means to develop attentiveness, and opportunity and means to understand what it means to relate well. There is a Program of Studies, and a curriculum for each course in the Program, bearing in mind that this Foundation Program considers public school education to be much more than the Program of Studies and courses or modules.

The public school education available to each student must expose the student to a well-grounded:

- knowledge and skill in the use of at least one of the English or French language;
- knowledge and skill in the use of both math and science;
- general knowledge of the social studies (such as history, geography, cultural studies, etc.);
- general knowledge of the fine and performing arts, and an experience (familiarity) with at least one musical instrument, visual art medium, and form of physical expression (such as dancing or singing) ;
- general knowledge and skill in the use of inductive and deductive reasoning, problem identification risk assessment, critical thinking and appreciative inquiry;
- general knowledge of personal health and well-being (including nutrition and exercise) and personal and social development;
- general knowledge of the use and maintenance of personal infrastructure (household maintenance, personal finances, service providers, personal assistants, etc.)
- well-grounded general knowledge about the local, provincial and national community, and positive citizenship experiences.

Based on the expectation that the child will be in the public school system for a total of 13 years, the educational experience must include a comprehensive diagnostic assessment of each child the first year they are in the public school system and periodically thereafter.

On the same expectation, the program available to each child each year need not include all of the elements listed above, as long as the child could realistically expect to have the benefit of all elements, all other things being equal, during 13 years of education in any one community.

The Foundation Program is significantly experiential and involves creating learning.



The Foundation Program has no decision points that foreclose future choices. A graduate of the Foundation Program will have had access, through any succession of public schools in the province to a program commensurate with post-secondary expectations.

The Foundation Program includes a deliberate "acculturation" component for immigrants, refugees, children who are illiterate in their first language, and children whose first language is not English or French. For all such children, notably First Nations Children, an acculturation component will emphasize pride of first culture as well as understanding of the common culture of Alberta.

8. Every child has the right to appropriate space, furniture, and learning aids (books, laboratory equipment and supplies, sports and recreation equipment, computers, internet access, etc.), and teachers have the right to appropriate space, furniture, and teaching aids.

9. In general, children, teachers and others have the right to conditions that make access to public education a reality for all children, no matter where they live in the province, and no matter what their circumstances are. Where there are insufficient numbers for school based education, children will be provided with a residential learning experience – either home schooling under supervision or boarding away from home to enable a school experience.

10. The locally elected public school board is solely accountable to the local electorate, for all the facilities and local organization that make public school education a reality, and for all locally initiated mandates and for the attainment of all outcomes.

Locally initiated mandates may relate to education broadly described and/or to local community development and well-being, and/or lifelong learning and continuing education.

**The Public School Boards' Association of Alberta**  
**Intervener Status: Aspen View vs. the Government of Alberta**  
**(PSBC Meeting of February 6<sup>th</sup>, 2010: Agenda Item #8.iv)**

**Background**

The Public School Boards' Association of Alberta is an intervener in the legal action that a member, Aspen View School Division, has initiated against the Government of Alberta. The subject is the Government's use of the so-called "alternate method" for the expansion of separate school education. In Aspen View, this method was used to expand the boundaries of Lakeland Separate School Division.

The PSBAA is an intervener in the case. What this means is that we claim to have an interest in the case, and the courts agree that we have an interest, because the decision will have an impact on other public school jurisdictions that could experience separate school expansion based on the alternate method. In other words, the decision in this case could have an impact on any or all of our members.

Our members enjoy a temporary benefit, while this case is in process, because the alternate method has not been used by the provincial Government since Aspen View launched its action.

In addition, the evidence brought out so far has undermined the arguments for the alternate method.

The PSBAA made a contribution of \$10,000.00 to Aspen View's legal cost (the PSBC, August 25<sup>th</sup>, 2007).

In addition, the Association has paid all the costs associated with having intervener status. As of December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2009, these costs total \$49,839.66 (since May, 2005).

The cost of continuing as an intervener has never been included in our annual budgets, on the basis that the project is extraordinary, the cost could not be accurately projected from year to year, members should consider, from time to time, continuing as interveners, and it is appropriate to draw on the accumulated surplus for this purpose.

At the end of 2008 the accumulated surplus of the Association was \$440,000.00. It is expected that the Association will record a small surplus in 2009.

(over)

### **The Issue**

The Association has reached the limit of what is currently authorized for payments related to this intervener position. The pace of activity is generally slower than it has been, but some Examinations for Discovery have recently been held or are scheduled.

If the Association does not continue as an intervener, there will be consequences, including, but not limited to, the following:

- our investment so far will be of minimal value;
- we will lose our influence over the progress of the action and the arguments being made (We have no authority in this regard, but we do have influence.);
- others may read into our decision the suggestion that we have lost interest in opposing the alternate method;
- we will be compromising the position of a member.

### **Recommendation**

It is recommended that the Public School Boards Council authorize the transfer of \$15,000.00 from the accumulated surplus of the Association to the 2010 budget (Vote #3) to pay the anticipated costs of intervener status and a resolution to this effect will be presented at the upcoming meeting of the PSBC.