



Public Schools, Putting Students First

As time races towards Election Day our province is facing new and significant challenges. Wildfires are wreaking havoc across Alberta with implications to all aspects of daily life – including the education and well-being of our children.

The disruption, another natural disaster our children are facing, brings to light the importance of our education system and the support public schools across the province offer students and their families throughout the year. It also leads one to reflect on the continued need for a strong foundation from which to deliver an excellent education to students across our province.

During elections, every problem seems to turn into a political issue and any possible solution into a political campaign promise. Post-election, political ideology drives both government decisions and the oppositional narrative. One has to wonder, what does this truly solve and who does this really benefit?

As a political candidate, it may seem odd to be asked to put politics aside, but with something as important as the future of our society at stake, it is an important consideration.

Public schools seek to de-politicize education, focussing on what is right for students and what is right for Alberta's future.

It all starts with a vision – a vision of what public school education can and should look like. Rather than holding the party line or clinging to party ideology, we suggest you as a candidate and the government take a step “out of the box.” Envision a public school system where all Alberta students have the opportunity to achieve their full potential, where all Alberta students are lifted up and where all Alberta



students are recognized as the citizens they will become - helping to shape society and drive the economy.

This is a public school system that would put students first.

Envision a public school ecosystem where the collaborative efforts of experts in learning methodology and science alongside stakeholders is encouraged, where an educative environment is supported by engaged cross ministry networks, where decisions are based on facts and research, not opinion or anecdotal information, where solutions are developed to address root causes, not merely to treat the symptoms.

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Public schools are pillars in every community across Alberta.

Public schools are often the first schools established within a community and in many cases, the only schools supporting Alberta communities. They welcome the world – and welcome every student.

From supporting students dealing with mental health issues and families facing increasing affordability pressures, to simply getting students to school every day – public schools are well positioned to collaborate and contribute to the creation and delivery of much needed solutions. Due to their community presence across the province and their insights gained directly from classrooms, they have a unique and important point of view to consider. We look forward to continuing our work in partnership with parents and across government ministries to ensure Alberta students achieve their best in an effective and efficient public school system.

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The desire to ensure a strong public school system should unite Albertans not divide us.

We have heard that a need for choice takes people away from the public school system. One might suggest that anyone placing value on the education of all Alberta students and the opportunity to strengthen the foundation of a thriving society and burgeoning economy would work to fortify the public school system in offering choice – not tear it down.

Alberta's public school education system is recognized around the world for excellent outcomes. In order to maintain that standing in light of a continued robust increase in population, appropriate policies and funding for infrastructure, staffing, supports, transportation and programming is required. We recommend the government conduct a thorough evaluation of Alberta's K-12 education ecosystem, analysing the impacts and implications of:

1. All legislation and regulation impacting the public school system and the larger K-12 education ecosystem – seeking transparency, equity and improved efficiencies.
2. Spending on K-12 education across the ecosystem, understanding where and why the system experiences a continual shortfall.
3. Public school education funding in light of key economic and societal impacts including but not limited to: immigration, inflation, learning loss and mental health.

This work is foundational to Alberta and a public school system that puts students before politics.

Who would not agree that a strong public school system is fundamental to creating a strong society and a strong economy?

To this point, it is important to recognize that Alberta public schools provide a foundation for exceptional learning, providing access to all Alberta students. They deliver top ranking educational outcomes such that graduates are well-prepared to enter a post secondary institution or directly join the



workforce. Through the public school system, all Alberta students have the opportunity to achieve their very best and it is inherent upon us to ensure this continues to be the case for years to come.

As partners in Alberta's learning ecosystem, we look forward to working with the government to establish an effective and transparent model for public school education that puts student success first.