



# Media Release

## ***PSBAA releases research paper on Choice in Alberta Education: Challenges and Opportunities for Public Schools***

March 4, 2024 (Edmonton, AB) – The Public School Boards' Association of Alberta (PSBAA) has released a research paper by Curtis Riep, PhD, called *Choice in Education: Challenges and Opportunities for Public Education*.

This paper reveals that public schools – constituting more than 66% of the total student enrolments in Alberta – continue to work towards increased programmatic choice, which may be a more effective approach to expand educational choices to both parents and students. This report demonstrates that 'choice in education' should be recognized and implemented more systematically as a matter of programmatic choice within public schools because it aligns with the principles of efficiency, equity, accountability, and inclusivity, while preserving the strength and integrity of the public school system.

A note of importance is that the paper highlights examples of the challenges to choice in public schools. Research shows that provincial funding is tied to enrolment. This leads to many smaller rural schools not receiving the same programs as more populated schools across the province. Through interviews and research with Superintendents from public school divisions, this research determines that public schools in Alberta are realizing choice through a variety of mechanisms and strategies.

"Research papers like this one are imperative to our work as a membership driven organization. Being able to bring this information to our trustees and our member school divisions allow us to have more meaningful discussions and also gives us a clear direction forward." Says PSBAA President Dennis MacNeil.

Dr. Curtis Riep expressed his satisfaction with the findings and working with PSBAA as a whole. "This is the fifth research paper I have done for PSBAA and I

truly enjoy the discussions with the members. During the webinar sessions where the paper is presented, is when I find the organization and I can really dive into the work that's been done."

Dr. Riep's report and presentation which was released on Friday March 1<sup>st</sup> 2024, is posted on the PSBAA website at <http://public-schools.ab.ca/research>

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