



Public school education is not just a cornerstone of Alberta’s social fabric but also a critical driver of its economic prosperity. As debates around education funding continue, it’s important to understand that public schools play a unique and essential role in preparing Alberta’s citizens and future workforce—across all sectors, from non-specialized workers to skilled trades and advanced professionals.

The Public School Boards' Association of Alberta (PSBAA) firmly believes that Public School education is the foundation of a strong and prosperous Alberta. While public schools offer globally recognized academic excellence, they also provide vital cultural, wellness, skill-based, and alternative programming that prepares students to achieve their best, no matter what path they choose.

In Alberta, The Education Act governs the operation and administration of the province’s K-12 education system. It outlines the rights and responsibilities of students, parents, teachers, and school boards. Reinforcing the importance of safe, inclusive, and respectful learning environments, setting guidelines for student behavior, school governance, and accountability, The Act is designed to promote educational excellence and equity while maintaining flexibility within the system to meet diverse student needs across Alberta.

The Education Act in Alberta positions public schools as a fundamental component of the province’s education system, providing equitable access to education for all students. Public schools are seen as inclusive institutions that serve diverse student populations, regardless of socio-economic status, background, or ability. The Act emphasizes the role of public schools in offering a broad-based curriculum that adheres to provincial standards and promotes student achievement. While it supports parental choice in education, public schools remain central to ensuring that all Alberta students have access to quality, taxpayer-funded education. The Act also underscores the importance of public school boards in governance, accountability, and decision-making within their local communities.

It is important to note that while all Alberta schools receive public funding, only public schools are required to accept and accommodate the diverse needs of every student. This open-door mandate creates complexities and challenges other systems—such as charter and private schools—do not face

With a funding model that prioritizes equity and transparency, public schools can continue to support students, families, and communities across the province. The current funding model does not take into account the additional burdens placed on public schools, nor does it consider key societal factors such as immigration, inflation, and increasing student enrollment.

Public schools are not only dedicated to educating students but also to helping to solve broader societal challenges. By working closely with government and industry, public schools are actively developing solutions to issues such as mental health support and family affordability. Their unique, community-centered perspective allows public schools to serve as effective partners in addressing these multi-faceted problems.

The Provincial Government provides the overarching framework, including workforce development, recruitment and retention, curriculum, policies, and funding that support the public school system, ensuring consistency and quality across Alberta. School boards, on the other hand, manage the local implementation of these policies, overseeing day-to-day school operations, staff management, and community engagement. Both entities play essential roles in ensuring that Alberta’s public school system meets the diverse needs of students and provides a high-quality education for all.

Key Differences Between the Provincial Government and School Boards:

Provincial Government

School Boards

Creates and enforces provincial education policies and legislation	Implements policies at the local level
Develops and mandates the curriculum for all public schools	Oversees curriculum implementation and adaptation
Provides the overall funding for public education	Allocates funding locally, managing school budgets
Sets province-wide teacher certification and labour standards	Hires and manages teachers and staff locally
Monitors and ensures accountability for school system performance	Manages day-to-day school operations and community relations

The provincial government, in partnership with local school boards, holds the responsibility to ensure Alberta’s public school system is fully supported, accountable, and equipped to serve every student. With adequate funding and resources, public schools can fulfill their mandate, building a resilient, educated workforce that strengthens Alberta's future. Working together, we can ensure that public schools remain a pillar of community strength and a catalyst for economic diversification and growth.

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