

# Task Force for Teaching Excellence

## TERMS OF REFERENCE

*Other than parents and families, Albertans see the teacher as the single most important contributor to learner success. They were clear that teachers must achieve excellence if they are to inspire the same level of achievement in learners. How we prepare teachers and how we assure teaching excellence would need to change to align with shifts in policy.*

### ***Inspiring Education: A Dialogue with Albertans***

*Excellence in teaching and equitable access to opportunities are the two most fundamental elements for student success that we can influence.*

### **Honourable Jeff Johnson, Minister of Education**

Albertans see the role of the teacher changing from that of a knowledge authority to an architect of learning—one who plans designs and oversees learning activities. The teacher would consider the interests, passions, talents and natural curiosities of the learner. He or she would inspire, motivate and plant the seeds for life-long learning.

### ***Inspiring Education: A Dialogue with Albertans***

## **A. Context**

Establishment of a Task Force for Teaching Excellence to recommend directions for the development of new legislation that will support the achievement of excellence in teaching by professional and occupational groups that provide services to students in accordance with the vision, values and guiding principles of *Inspiring Education*.

Several major ministry initiatives, including but not limited to *Inspiring Education: A Dialogue with Albertans*, *Setting the Direction for Special Education in Alberta*, *Speak Out: The Alberta Student Engagement Initiative* and *Literacy First: A Plan for Action*, have provided Albertans with an opportunity to participate in dialogues about the kind of education that students need now and in the future. Alberta's new Education Act is a significant first step toward bringing to life a vision for education set out in *Inspiring Education*, where all Alberta children become engaged

thinkers and ethical citizens with an entrepreneurial spirit and thereby contribute to healthy, inclusive communities and a thriving Alberta economy.

Education in Alberta needs to be delivered differently if Alberta's education system is to become truly collaborative and inclusive. The system must encourage and support creativity, innovation and entrepreneurialism to attain the highest possible standards and to ensure every student's success—academically and developmentally.

In this context, the public discussion will shift from a focus on a new vision for education to a focus on the ways we will achieve the policy shifts identified in *Inspiring Education*:

- More focus on education rather than school,
- the learner rather than the system,
- building competencies rather than delivering content, and
- technology to support the creation and sharing of knowledge rather than to support teaching.

Student learning is at the center of this profession. Educators should recognize and consider the complexities of the 21st century student. Educators remain the primary variable to student learning and success in the 21st century. Educators should continue to be learners themselves and remain current in sound, research-based practice.

The successful transformation of Alberta's education system, as envisioned by *Inspiring Education*, to arm students with new competencies, to create an inclusive education system and to promote innovation and creativity will not happen with new policies and directives. The transformation as envisioned under *Inspiring Education* requires the commitment, expertise and dedicated service of all members of Alberta's education system; it will also require some realignment and co-ordination of their respective roles and responsibilities and will require an education system that empowers people to be innovative risk-takers and that acknowledges their expertise. Whereas all those involved in the education enterprise are important, it will be critical to have teachers who are inspired, resourced, supported and accountable in making the required, on-going shifts in their mind-sets and practices. The new legislation, which will complement the Education Act, is intended to achieve this.

## B. Purpose

The Task Force will make recommendations emanating from its examination of relevant, current research, consultation with Albertans and a review of current provincial legislation, regulations and policy framework. Recommendations will align with the vision, values, guiding principles and policy shifts of *Inspiring Education* to provide for legislation and practice that will enable and assure teacher excellence and that educators will be innovative and current in their practice. All educators will be empowered to inspire and build strong relationships that fully engage students to aspire to and fulfill an entrepreneurial spirit. The new legislation will assure Albertans that all Alberta teachers and other educators are accountable for putting students first and providing high-quality educational experiences to children, youth and their families.

## C. Mandate

The Task Force will:

1. Be guided by the vision, values, principles and policy shifts identified in *Inspiring Education*.
2. Provide input into a Consultation Plan and the Strategic Communications Plan.
3. Consult with Albertans and education stakeholders to review the existing environment and recommend revisions or make new suggestions to transform Alberta's education system, as envisioned by *Inspiring Education*. The strategic questions below could be used as a guideline for the discussions.
  - a. What are the main contributing factors of EIT that Alberta should focus its priorities on?
  - b. What is the definition of 'educator?' What does a 'world-class' educator look like in the 21<sup>st</sup> century?
  - c. What are the characteristics that highly skilled educators demonstrate in providing a 'quality education' for students?
  - d. Who should be authorized to educate students in Alberta? What should be their qualifications?
  - e. What is the role of the 21<sup>st</sup> century teacher? How is that different from the current role? What is their role in relation to others who educate in Alberta?
  - f. Are there currently any barriers to excellence in teaching?
  - g. What should a code of conduct for Alberta educators include?
  - h. What mechanisms should be in effect to assure Albertans that all educators, system leaders and administrators demonstrate career-long:
    - competencies
    - quality practice
    - proper conduct?
  - i. How can we ensure entrepreneurialism is a trait in teachers?
  - j. What is the role of the community in the assurance of excellence?
4. The Task Force will consider:
  - what educators will need to work in a more flexible, innovative system that sees students reaching their full potential, not only within secondary education, but as lifelong learners; and
  - what processes and mechanisms are in place to ensure there is consistent excellence in teaching and that there will be assurances in place to maintain that excellence.
5. Review the adequacy and appropriateness of current provincial requirements for Alberta educators.
6. Identify strategies, processes and parameters used by other educational jurisdictions, including the mechanisms in place that assure their publics of the career-long competence, quality practice and proper conduct of all educators, that are worthy of consideration for the Alberta context. Consider strategies and processes used by other professions.

7. Identify how its proposed recommendations on policy and practices that lead to transformation of Alberta's education system might challenge the current assumptions and expectations of Albertans.

## D. Deliverables

By January 31, 2014 the Task Force will prepare a Report to the Minister with recommendations on:

1. Provincial requirements for those who are authorized to educate in Alberta's K-12 Education system;
2. The mechanisms for assuring Albertans that all educators demonstrate career-long competency, quality practice and proper conduct throughout their careers;
3. The establishment of provincial requirements for the following educators:
  - professionals:
    - teachers,
    - school superintendents,
    - school leaders;
  - occupational groups:
    - educational and therapeutic assistants,
    - non-certificated instructors,
    - school business managers;
4. The mechanisms to effectively co-ordinate and align the respective roles of those educators;
5. The establishment of provincial requirements in legislation, regulation and policy for educators, related to their:
  - roles,
  - responsibilities/duties,
  - qualifications,
  - competencies,
  - certification/credentialing,
  - standards of practice,
  - codes of conduct,
  - preparation and ongoing professional learning,
  - currency of practice,
  - practice supervision and performance evaluation,
  - employment contracts;
6. The role of all stakeholders, but specifically the Ministry of Education, in enabling and assuring excellence in education;
7. The role of the Ministry of Education in directing post-secondary training in the field of education;

8. Any other actions or policy shifts required to attain excellence in the rapidly evolving field of education.

## E. Membership

Task Force members will bring the perspectives of students, teachers, parents, entrepreneurs, post-secondary institutions, technology experts, education human resources personnel, the business community and government. A number of the members of the Task Force will be former members of the *Inspiring Education* and *Setting the Direction* steering committees to ensure the vision, values and policy shifts of *Inspiring Education* are in the forefront.

The Task Force may also engage with external experts who will be contracted by the ministry to provide advice and information.

The Minister will appoint members by Ministerial Order.

## F. Remuneration

Task Force members will be compensated as outlined in Appendix 3, Schedule 1, Part A of the Committee Remuneration Order (O.C. 466/2007). Task Force members will be reimbursed for expenses as outlined in the Subsistence and Travel Allowance Regulation Travel Meal and hospitality Expense Policy TB directive 04/2012.

## G. Meetings

The frequency and dates for meetings of the Task Force will be determined by the Task Force Chair to ensure achievement of the Task Force's mandate within the timeline requirements.

## H. Support

Ministry staff will provide support to the Task Force for Teaching Excellence throughout the full process as required.