

Draft: Dated March 13, 2013

We are pleased that we have been able to agree in principle on a memorandum of agreement. Considerable effort has been expended exploring solutions and fostering understanding, which has now enabled us to find a lasting solution that balances the interests of teachers, students, parents, school boards and the taxpayer. It will provide a stable environment that will lead to the best possible learning experience for our children as we move the Inspiring Education transformation agenda forward.

It has been a difficult task to find a the proper balance between the security teachers need to accept a four year collective agreement and the ongoing exploration of new ideas that will enhance the education we offer. Now that we have reached this agreement in principle, it is important to facilitate its successful implementation.

We wish to offer assurances as to what may change during this four-year period and what will not. As a Government and a Ministry we have an ongoing obligation to exercise regulatory powers assigned to us and to continue to develop and enforce policies that foster and enhance Alberta's educational system. We cannot abandon our responsibilities in this area. This includes responsibility for teacher certification and for professional competencies and standards.

We understand that, by agreeing to this extended period of labour stability, teachers will be concerned that the legislative provisions that go hand in hand with their collective agreement rights be maintained. In the spirit of this agreement our government will commit not to proclaim any legislative changes that affect the core statutory protections afforded to teachers. Currently, these provisions are contained in various sections of the School Act. Once proclaimed, those provisions will be contained in Part 7 of the Education Act, along with section 245.

The proclamation of the Education Act, provided it includes those same protections, will not be a violation of this commitment. Changes to section 227 (2) and 227(3) of the Education Act will not be a violation of this commitment. Notwithstanding the above, the commitment

will not be considered to be violated by changes to the Education Act or to other legislation to implement a different bargaining model provided (1) the Association's role of bargaining agent is recognized; and (2) the Association is fully consulted and has an opportunity for input and (3) any changes do not become effective until the next round of Association collective bargaining. Similarly, the Government will commit not to proclaim any legislative changes to those aspects of the Teaching Profession Act that address membership in the Association and the structure and objects of the Alberta Teachers' Association.

This agreement in principle will result in collective agreements under the provisions of the Labour Relations Code. The Association's current rights as bargaining agent will continue during the term of the agreement, including the right to enforce that agreement by grievance and arbitration, subject to the existing provisions of the Labour Relations Code.

We pledge to seek the Legislative Assembly's support for the necessary funding to enable the Memorandum of Agreement's full execution and implementation.

This agreement will provide stability for four years. During that period the Government will consult over effective processes for achieving agreements into the future. This will include consultation with the Association as bargaining agent as well as other educational stakeholders.

The Government is, and will continue to explore ways of improving education in Alberta. We know this a shared goal with the Association. We will undertake to use our best efforts to consult with Alberta's teachers through their Association on issues that will improve the learning environment for Alberta's students. We look forward to our continued collaboration. We may not always agree, but the views of the Association and the members it represents will be heard.

The Inspiring Education agenda will continue to be our focus. Through that initiative we will continue to consult with all Albertans and stakeholders like yourselves on ways to improve the system. In addition to the more specific commitments given above, we commit that before accepting any recommendations affecting the role of teachers, we will consult

with the Association. This allows us to consult over the future, to provide teachers and the Province with four years of stability in the terms and conditions of employment (statutory and contractual) that apply to teachers, while still fulfilling our legal responsibilities for regulating the profession and the setting and upholding of quality standards and competency within the profession.

The Government of Alberta and the Alberta Teachers' Association recognize that the role of teachers is changing. We commit to establish a Teacher Development and Practice Advisory Committee that will advise the Minister on the many matters with respect to the 21st century teacher and how Alberta can continue to have the world's best in front of our students. The ATA will have strong representation on the Teacher Development and Practice Advisory Committee and any major legislative, regulatory or policy shifts regarding the profession and teaching will be vetted at that committee prior to Government consideration.

The government believes that this agreement will balance the needs of teachers for stability and security during the four years of this agreement with the ongoing need to collaboratively improve education in ways supported by the people of Alberta.

Sincerely,

Honourable Alison M. Redford, QC
Premier

Honourable Jeff Johnson
Minister of Education

