

# Strategic Plan



THE ALBERTA TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION



The Alberta  
Teachers' Association



[www.teachers.ab.ca](http://www.teachers.ab.ca)

*There is no power for change greater than a  
community discovering what it cares about.*

*–Margaret Wheatley*

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# Public education

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## THE MISSION OF PUBLIC EDUCATION

Public education is the cornerstone of democracy. It must be founded on a commitment to educate all children well. Public education must foster and support the intellectual, social, physical, emotional and spiritual development of each child.

The mission of public education is to develop

- a foundation of learning that enables students to function effectively in work, further learning and life;
- the potential and gifts of each child; and
- citizens of a democratic society.

Public education must be

- free and accessible to every child;
- delivered by certificated, highly skilled and knowledgeable teaching professionals;
- appropriately funded to ensure that every child learns, every child succeeds; and
- a responsibility shared by all Albertans.

## A VISION FOR PUBLIC EDUCATION

Alberta's teachers believe all students can succeed. Public education provides students from all backgrounds with learning experiences to discover and develop their potential, their passions and their gifts, allowing them to make significant contributions to their communities.

Public education allows professional, highly educated teachers to provide students with a broad range of learning experiences in addition to the basic subjects of language arts, science, math and social studies. Public education presents students with opportunities to develop ingenuity, creativity, critical-thinking skills and a strong sense of citizenship.

Public education prepares learners for life.

Alberta's teachers  
believe **all** students  
can succeed.

The following four Strategic Directions and the Preferred Futures express the commitment of Alberta's teaching profession to public education and the central role that it will play in assuring a vibrant future for the province.

## STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

### *Understanding the nature of learning*

Ensure that teaching and public policy reflect the fact that learning is a highly relational endeavour.

#### BACKGROUND

The Association strives to ensure that relational learning comes first in Alberta classrooms. The Association is a leader in researching new ways that children can learn in publicly funded institutions. In a climate of growing inequity and standardization, the Association seeks to protect and nurture innovation and effective practice.

Education is ultimately a relational endeavour. It follows that anything that diminishes the relationships between teachers, students and parents diminishes the quality of learning.

#### POTENTIAL STRATEGIES

- Research promising practices and current developments with respect to the relational nature of learning. **(NEW)**
- Cosponsor public events based on the theme of relationships and the future of learning.
- In the context of the growing diversity and complexity of school–communities, provide teachers with knowledge and skills that focus on inclusion and equity.
- Give students agency in helping to determine their own conditions of learning.



In a climate of growing inequity and standardization, the Association seeks to protect and nurture innovation and effective practice.

## STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

# *Improving the working lives of teachers*

Ensure that teachers, individually and collectively, are supported in improving their conditions of practice.

## BACKGROUND

Teachers establish effective relationships with their students, their families and Alberta communities by being the best that they can be. Teachers are at their best when they

- (1) practise collaborative professional autonomy,
- (2) feel that they can speak out without fear on matters related to teaching and learning and
- (3) are able to integrate the competing responsibilities of their personal and professional lives.

The conditions of practice that teachers encounter have a direct impact on their effectiveness as teachers. The strategies associated with this direction focus on ways in which teachers can enhance their professional efficacy by achieving optimal conditions of practice that support real learning.

## POTENTIAL STRATEGIES

- Seek teachers' input on what an enhanced sense of sustained work–life integration means. **(NEW)**
- Undertake research on, and develop a model for, achieving work–life integration. **(NEW)**
- Address with the government the kind of investment and support that is required to enable teachers to demonstrate the highest standard of practice. **(NEW)**
- Support teachers' efforts to develop communities of practice that support collaborative professional autonomy.
- Assess and publicize how policy and organizational decisions affect teachers' worklife.
- Ensure that collective bargaining addresses the increasingly complex and competing demands that teachers are facing.
- Affirm the profession's view of what constitutes teachers' work. **(NEW)**



Teachers establish effective relationships with their students, their families and Alberta communities by being the best they can be.



## STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

# Building member commitment and public engagement

Create a common front of member commitment and public engagement that focuses on the critical issues affecting children and learning.

## BACKGROUND

The Association shares with the public the goal of wanting to understand the fundamental nature of learning and the important role that learning plays in creating Alberta's future. However, for this kind of discussion to take place, members must be committed and the public must be engaged.

Teachers are more likely to engage with the public when they are committed to and feel proud of their profession and have a compelling reason for belonging. Linking members' commitment to the Association and the public's willingness to engage in discussions about educational matters will create opportunities for

- (1) talking about the future of Alberta's children,
- (2) discussing the future of the province,
- (3) communicating the real purposes of learning and
- (4) exposing discredited ideas about schools and learning.

By focusing on the critical issues that affect children, the Association influences the wider cultural milieu.

## POTENTIAL STRATEGIES

- Design innovative ways of building on the public's and the Association's converging interest in co-creating a vibrant, democratic, learning-driven society. **(NEW)**
- Launch a project to examine the kinds of hearts and minds that Albertans will need to possess to enable the province to thrive on global opportunities in the future. **(NEW)**
- Develop communication strategies to help the Association listen to and be listened to by Albertans.
- Ensure that school leaders and teachers support each other in creating democratic workplaces.
- Help teachers to be effective front-line advocates for public education through their individual and collective authoritative voices.
- Use social media to promote social justice and cohesion.
- Help teachers to show how inequity and standardization diminish learning. **(NEW)**
- Build enduring alliances with a variety of organizations based on common goals. **(NEW)**



Linking members' commitment to the Association and the public's willingness to engage in discussions about educational matters will create opportunities.

## STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

# *Becoming an agile and resilient learning organization*

Be an agile and resilient organization that is continuously learning through research and strategic thinking about the future.

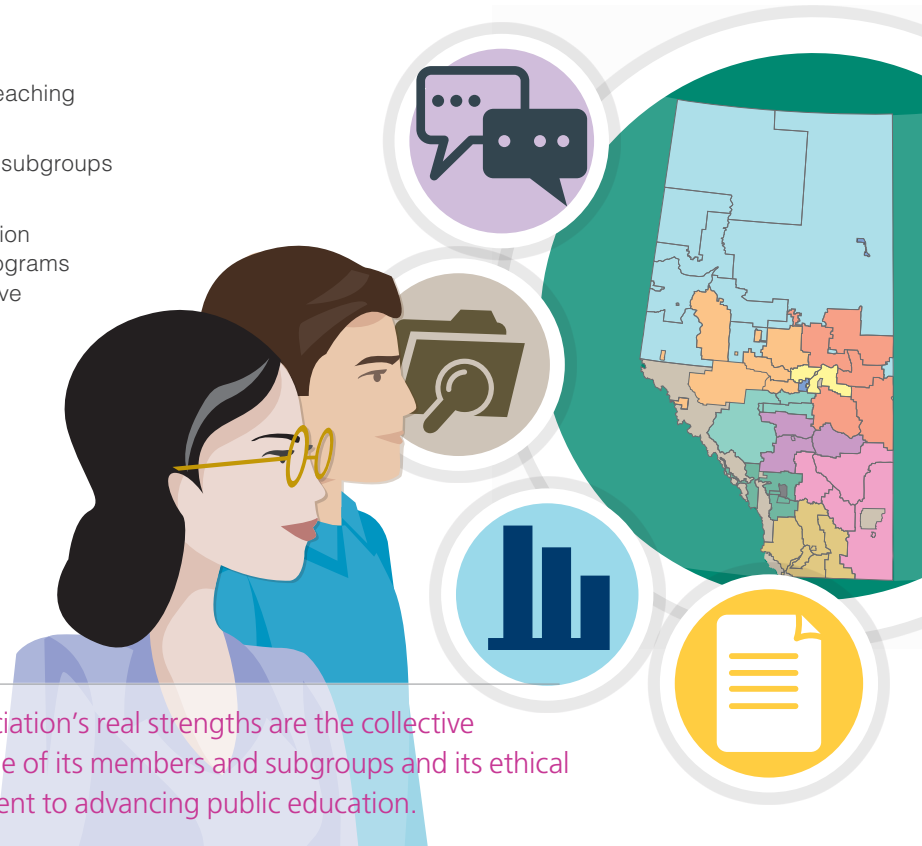
## BACKGROUND

Agility and resilience are cornerstones of the Association's commitment to learn from and then shape its environment. To become agile and resilient, the Association must create a culture that encourages members to be innovative and take risks.

Pursuing this direction will require efforts on the part of both the provincial organization and its locals and other subgroups. The structures and traditions that serve the members well must not inhibit the Association from thinking and acting creatively in the future. The Association's real strengths are the collective knowledge of its members and subgroups and its ethical commitment to advancing public education.

## POTENTIAL STRATEGIES

- Research alternatives to hierarchic organizational structures. **(NEW)**
- Build robust national and international partnerships focused on enhancing teaching practice and school leadership. **(NEW)**
- Build the capacity of committees and subgroups to commission and conduct research.
- In partnership with faculties of education and international experts, develop programs that help teachers become authoritative voices on educational matters.
- Research the future of learning and professional practice.
- Examine how emerging educational issues are connected to social and economic issues.
- Build the capacity of subgroups and members to engage in strategic thinking.



The Association's real strengths are the collective knowledge of its members and subgroups and its ethical commitment to advancing public education.



# Preferred Futures for the Alberta Teachers' Association

## THE ALBERTA TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION OF 2030

The Alberta Teachers' Association of 2030 is an authoritative voice shaping the educational landscape of Alberta. It has combined the best features of a unitary organization by achieving optimal conditions of practice for the profession. A motivated and engaged membership demonstrates its leadership in learning by participating actively in all levels of its professional organization. The ongoing evolution of learning is led and inspired by Alberta's teachers working with parents, government and local communities. The commitment of teachers expresses itself collectively through the Association's public leadership and individually through principled authoritative action. Global professional leadership occurs through national and international engagement with education partners and policy makers. The Association has responded and adapted to some profound developments in Alberta.

## THE ALBERTA OF 2030

The Alberta of 2030 finds itself in a new story. It is a narrative being written by Albertans, not by the forces acting on them. Alberta has moved beyond the scarred prosperity of its boom-and-bust economy and its politics of division. The volatile decades of the initial shale and oil sands development have given way to steady progress in greening the province's energy-driven economy. Although economic cycles have shortened and sharpened and climate change has affected key sectors such as agriculture and tourism, Albertans have adapted and innovated to ensure that their province is still an attractive place to live, work and raise a family. Most important, recognizing what the world needs from them, Albertans have turned to their new passion in meeting their fundamental design challenge for the future: sustained prosperity in a culture of learning and innovation. In this renewed Alberta, characterized by its vibrant civil society and strong democracy, the Alberta Teachers' Association has seen the following commitments come alive. The result is an enduring role for learning, supported by the cornerstone of Alberta's public education system.



Alberta has moved beyond the scarred prosperity of its boom-and-bust economy and its politics of division.

## THE ASSOCIATION'S STRATEGIC PLAN

The Association's Strategic Plan conveys the Association's clarity of commitment and unites its preferred future with meaningful action.

## LEARNING ALBERTA

In a learning Alberta, innovation and creativity are seen as central to the quality of living and economic prosperity. No longer driven by testing and ranking, schools are now seen as places where creative and inquiring minds capable of meeting the complex challenges and opportunities of 21st-century Alberta are nurtured and developed. Students have access to lifelong and postsecondary learning.



## CENTRALITY OF RELATIONSHIPS

The centrality of relationships energizes teachers, parents and communities to work together to ensure that community-based public schools are the centres of lifelong learning. Success means that learners of all ages, backgrounds and abilities have equitable access to high-quality teachers, programs and resources through learning communities. They enhance learning opportunities for children, adults and families as partners in lifelong learning.



## LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

Learning environments are characterized by teachers and learners co-constructing skills and ideas and using them in real-world situations. Early learning and ongoing developmental support are seen as a key investment in the future. Young learners feel purposeful and engaged in their schools and communities. Schools nurture socially conscious global citizens engaged in the challenges and opportunities afforded by Alberta's responsibilities to the world. Alberta's teachers are widely respected and valued for their commitment, expertise and professionalism. They spend meaningful time with students, colleagues and parents.



No longer driven by testing and ranking, schools are now seen as places where creative and inquiring minds capable of meeting the complex challenges and opportunities of 21st-century Alberta are nurtured and developed.



For more information about the Association's Strategic Plan and Preferred Futures, scan the QR code or search **Strategic Plan** on [www.teachers.ab.ca](http://www.teachers.ab.ca).



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