



Empowering all our people to excel

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HORIZON SCHOOL DIVISION NO. 67

Our Learning Community

BARNWELL

Barnwell School
Phone: 403-223-2902

COUTTS

Coutts Community School
Phone: 403-344-3804

ENCHANT

Enchant School
Phone: 403-739-3770

GRASSY LAKE

Arden T. Litt Centre for Learning
(Outreach School)
Phone: 403-655-2372

Chamberlain School
Phone: 403-655-2211

HAYS

Hays School
Phone: 403-725-3755

HUTTERIAN BRETHREN SCHOOLS

Phone: 403-223-3547

LOMOND

Lomond Community School
Phone: 403-792-3620

MILK RIVER

Erle Rivers High School
Phone: 403-647-3665

Milk River Elementary School
Phone: 403-647-3747

TABER

ACE Place Learning Centre
(Outreach School)
Phone: 403-223-4761

Central Elementary School
Phone: 403-223-2170

D. A. Ferguson Middle School
Phone: 403-223-8971

Dr. Hamman Elementary School
Phone: 403-223-2988

L.T. Westlake Elementary School
Phone: 403-223-2487

Taber Christian Alternative School
Phone: 403-223-4550

W. R. Myers High School
Phone: 403-223-2292

VAUXHALL

Horizon MAP
(Outreach School)
Phone: 403-654-4654

Vauxhall Elementary School
Phone: 403-654-2422

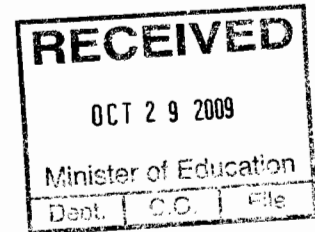
Vauxhall High School
Phone: 403-654-2145

WARNER

Warner School
Phone: 403-642-3931

October 26, 2009

Office of the Minister
Alberta Education
224 Legislature Building
10800 – 97th Ave.
Edmonton, AB T5K 2B6



Dear Honourable David Hancock:

Horizon School Division Board of Trustees would like to thank you for the opportunity to provide input into the review of the *School Act*. Like you, we believe that our 21st Century learners will have different challenges and we have a responsibility to ensure that we are providing the highest quality education that will move them into the future as successful individuals able to compete globally and contribute as global citizens.

We have participated in opportunities for discussion regarding the School Act through ASBA round table discussion as well as big picture visioning through participation in Inspiring Education. As such, we have not outlined everything that we support or would propose otherwise. For example, it is clear that all stakeholders are calling for a strong and clear delineation of principles. Other areas pertaining to the role and responsibility of students and teachers are inherent in the review roundtable process, so we do not focus on those here. Instead, we have delineated what we believe are critical areas of consideration regarding our role as a public education board:

1. Cooperation and Coordination

It has been recognized for some time that seamless delivery of services to children and coordination among the service providers is more efficient and effective. Unfortunately, there has not been a consistent framework or delineation of responsibilities that align with funding support to assume those responsibilities. Education is in the best position to coordinate services with children having a consistent pattern of contact through the school. The *School Act* should speak to the coordination of services with attention to roles, responsibilities and alignment of funding for jurisdictions within the "wrap around" delivery model.

2. Value of Local Autonomy

The *School Act* should speak to the value of local autonomy in meeting the needs of students. This aligns with the belief that those closest to the students are in the best position to determine and meet the student's unique needs. This could take the form of a principle. This would need to align with a clear and unambiguous mandate regarding the work and responsibilities of school boards.

back towards local governance, making trustees accountable to the local electorate and allowing local governance the opportunity to seek innovative solutions. There needs to be a strengthening of the role and flexibility of school boards. Currently the relationship that School Boards have with Alberta Education leans toward central control and there needs to be a rebalancing.

In addition, if school boards were designated as “natural persons” they would have more flexibility to provide services, to innovate and to generate revenue. Under current legislation, school boards can only take action on issues that are implicitly or expressly sanctioned by the *School Act*. This limits the powers of school boards and inhibits their ability to respond to local needs and priorities. Natural persons power would give boards the authority to undertake any initiative unless it was expressly prohibited by the *School Act*. It would provide school boards with the autonomy to act and would give them the same decision-making authority as municipalities. Providing school boards with natural person powers may help change the *School Act* from a prescriptive, literal statute to one that is more flexible and enabling.

3. Early Learning

There is a growing realization that early childhood learning has a significant impact on a child’s success in school. Districts have been providing services to pre-kindergarten children with developmental delays for a considerable amount of time, and the responsibility should be reflected in the *School Act*. In addition, school jurisdictions have evolved to assume responsibility for pre-kindergarten programming for all children. If early learning is increasingly becoming a role within the education system, it needs to be recognized in the *School Act* and subsequently funded.

4. Accountability in all education delivery models

The Act should continue to make provisions for various forms of delivery models of education. It is critical, however, that all models that receive education funding have the same level of accountability. Whether the model is an outreach or alternative program, funded private school or home education, all models should have basic requirements for accountability including delivery of provincial curriculum and achievement of outcomes. This should include participation in achievement examinations. At a minimum, participation should include measures of literacy and numeracy reflected in the mathematics and English Language Arts achievement tests.

Respectfully,

Marie Logan, Board Chair