



# Alberta's Education Act

## A 21<sup>st</sup> Century Transformation

Education is the key to Alberta's future and is central to individual and societal well-being. Future generations of students will face an increasingly complex world and we must set a path for their success. Our education system must embrace change, respond to the diverse needs of our students and provide high quality, personalized and socially engaging learning opportunities.

> We must continue to be innovative and responsive to furnish our students with every chance to succeed in a rapidly changing future.

Alberta's future will be built on a foundation of ethical citizenship, engaged thinking and entrepreneurial spirit. Our education system must instill these qualities in our children as they grow into young adults, enabling them to reach their full potential.

The proposed Education Act will enable the transformation of our education system by providing a foundation and expectations for educational excellence in Alberta.



**we educate**

## How did we get here?

Alberta is a world leader in education. With great teachers, great curriculum and strong public support, we are in the forefront of transforming the traditional education model into one that is ready and able to meet the challenges of the 21st century.

Over the past three years, Alberta Education has undertaken several province-wide engagement initiatives – Inspiring Education, Inspiring Action, Speak Out and Setting the Direction, which have helped envision the best ways to support students striving to succeed in an increasingly complex world. Each of these initiatives has contributed to the ongoing renewal of Alberta's education system and influenced the proposed Education Act. For more information on these initiatives, please visit [www.education.alberta.ca](http://www.education.alberta.ca).

> The proposed Education Act will emphasize the responsibilities of students, parents and school boards.

## What does it mean?

The proposed Education Act signals the ongoing process of transformation in Alberta's education system. We must continue to be innovative and responsive to furnish our students with every chance to succeed in a rapidly changing future.

### Education Act Highlights

The proposed Education Act will emphasize the responsibilities of students, parents and school boards.

#### STUDENTS

The proposed Education Act outlines the expectation that students will understand they are active participants in their learning and in the education of those around them. Student responsibilities extend beyond simple attendance – they must actively pursue their own educational success. The new responsibilities also emphasize that students are expected to contribute to a caring, respectful and safe school environment.

#### PARENTS

Parents play a crucial role in their children's education. Defining parental responsibilities recognizes and supports greater co-operation and communication between parents and school personnel. Parents have the right to make decisions respecting the education of their children and a responsibility to take an active role in their children's educational success.

#### SCHOOL BOARDS AND TRUSTEES

The responsibilities of boards reflect a student-centered focus and the principles of inclusiveness, fairness, diversity, and excellence. School boards' primary responsibilities relate to student achievement and governance. The new responsibilities also emphasize the engagement of parents, students, staff and community on board matters.

The responsibilities of school trustees are to fulfil the responsibilities of the board, to participate in meetings of the board, to comply with the board's code of conduct, and to engage parents, students and the community on matters related to education.





> The Education Act places greater emphasis on caring, respectful and safe schools.

## Focus on Student Success

The proposed Education Act recognizes the importance of completing high school in the life of a student and the future of the province. Raising the minimum age students may leave school and giving students more time to return and complete high school provide more educational opportunities to more students, resulting in a better educated population and a better educated workforce.

The proposed Education Act places greater emphasis on caring, respectful and safe schools. As a result, Alberta's school boards, principals and teachers will be better able to respond to incidents and promote the best possible environment for students.

## Focus on Community Engagement and Local Decision-Making

The new legislation will broaden the powers of school boards, allowing them to be more responsive to local needs. For instance, granting school boards natural person powers – that is, giving them legal authority to do anything a natural person may do – is an example of how boards will be better able to respond to the unique needs of their communities.

The new Education Act will support school boards in their efforts to engage their communities when creating policies on student transportation, school closures, fees, infrastructure and other factors impacting the delivery of education.

The proposed Education Act will also ensure that education service agreements between school boards and First Nations and/or the federal government will include accountability for educational outcomes, recognition of the unique needs of these students, and a commitment to engage all parties to the agreement.



# What's New?

## What's changing

The age limit for access to education has been increased to include individuals who are younger than 21 years of age as of September 1.

Every person who is six years of age or older as of September 1 in a year and is younger than 17 years of age must attend school.

Defines new responsibilities of students, parents, school boards and trustees

It is the responsibility of schools and school boards to provide all students and staff with a caring, respectful and safe environment.

References to the provision of specialized supports and services rather than using the term "special education."

School boards will have natural person powers

Boards will have greater flexibility in determining the transportation needs of students and the services they provide.

## What it means

Students will have until age 21 to complete high school within the publicly funded education system. This increase will also give students needing specialized supports and services more time to be successful in their education programs.

The compulsory attendance age rises from 16 to 17 years to encourage more Alberta students to complete high school.

The Education Act sets out responsibilities for students, parents, school boards and trustees.

Boards will be required to develop policies obliging them to provide a caring, respectful and safe environment – one that addresses all forms of bullying, including cyberbullying, and discrimination, both in and out of school. Boards will be expected to share these policies and the consequences of unacceptable behaviour with students, teachers and parents.

The new Act will enable boards and schools to be flexible in the delivery of specialized supports and services to students with identified needs within a collaborative and inclusive education system.

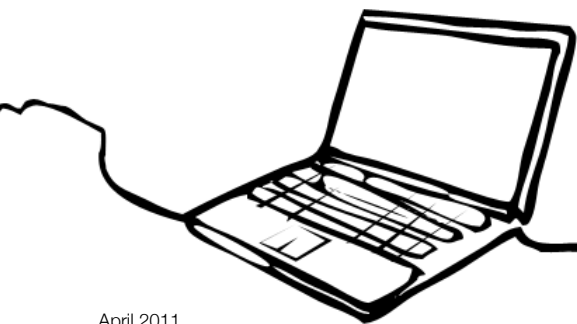
Natural person powers provide school boards with the authority to do any legal thing a natural person may do except when prohibited by the Act or by regulation. Granting boards natural person powers gives them more administrative flexibility to deliver educational programming.

The 2.4-kilometre walk limit will be removed from legislation allowing boards to be more responsive to the needs of their community when determining how to provide safe and appropriate transportation for their students.



## Other Changes

The proposed Education Act includes several other provisions touching on many of the diverse facets of Alberta's education system, including separate school district establishment, definitions of independent and resident students, the Minister's powers to appoint trustees and the ability of school boards to acquire property. The Act also provides criteria around the establishment of charter schools, expands who may establish them and provides, through regulation, the ability for charter schools to become permanent programs.



> For more information on the proposed Education Act, please visit:  
[www.education.alberta.ca/educationact](http://www.education.alberta.ca/educationact)

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