

ALBERTA TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION POLICY RESOLUTIONS MAY 2007

1.A.60 Alternative schools and alternative programs within the public education system must meet the following criteria:

1. They are designed to meet learning needs and address learning differences, rather than religious, ethnic or socio-economic differences and do not result in excessive fragmentation.
2. On balance, they demonstrate a net educational benefit, are financially and administratively feasible, and do not assess non-instructional or program fees.
3. They do not extend privileges or benefits to one segment of society that could not feasibly be extended to all similar segments of society.
4. They do not violate the following basic principles:
 - a) Public education is publicly funded and universally accessible by all students.
 - b) Public education is directed toward developing the potential of every student.
 - c) Public education is accountable, through government, including publicly elected school boards, to society.
 - d) Public education fosters the development of a democratic citizenry and society.

[1985/88/96/98/2007]

Government Response:

Alberta's education system respects the right and responsibility of parents to make decisions that best suit the needs of their children. By supporting programs of choice, the province strengthens the public school system and promotes availability of diverse educational experiences for Alberta students.

Provincial legislation governs the criteria for establishment and operation of alternative programs and alternative schools. Section 21 of the *School Act* provides the authority for school boards to offer alternative programs that emphasize a particular language, culture, religion or subject matter or use a particular teaching philosophy.

By strongly supporting regular education programs, as well as promoting alternative programs when demand and resources are present, Alberta's diverse education system prepares students for the changing nature of the world in which we live.

The government does not require public schools, including charter schools, offering alternative programs to serve all applicants. Not all alternative programs are suitable for all students; parents need to work with school boards or charter schools to determine the appropriateness of the program for their child.

Alternative programs within public school jurisdictions and charter schools are required to follow the Alberta Programs of Study and are held accountable for student achievement. In the case of charter schools, additional accountability is placed on them to demonstrate that

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implementation of the charter goals has resulted in improved student learning outcomes and growth. Former private schools that become alternative programs are accountable to public boards and are held to a higher standard in the areas of special education and reporting on all accountability pillar measures.

Alberta Education does not provide targeted funding for starting alternative programs or charter schools. Alberta Education allows school boards and charter schools to charge parents fees to defray all of or a portion of any non-instructional costs, such as transportation and resources or materials that may be incurred by a board in offering the alternative program. Alternative programs may not charge a tuition. As with any school board, charter schools are held accountable for financial operations within a balanced annual budget.

1.B.2 BE IT RESOLVED, that the Alberta Teachers' Association urge the Department of Education to maintain a course in career, personal and life management studies as a high school graduation requirement.

[1998/2001/04/07]

Government Response:

The Career and Life Management (CALM) program is a core course at the senior high school level and successful completion of this course is a requirement for an Alberta High School Diploma. CALM provides opportunities for students to consider information and acquire, practice and demonstrate strategies for dealing with the challenges of life and living such as preparing and using a personal budget, developing banking skills and assessing strategies for finding a place to live. The CALM program is designed to support and build on healthy decision-making and lifestyle choices including analyzing nutritional choices, building awareness of fitness and exercise as contributors to physical well-being and establishing meaningful interpersonal relationships.

1.B.8 BE IT RESOLVED, that the Alberta Teachers' Association urge the Department of Education to review and update the Program of Studies for the fine arts program, including the components of music, art, drama and dance.

[1998/2001/04/07]

Government Response:

Alberta Education has developed a project plan for the review and revision of the Fine Arts Program of Studies. Initial focus group meetings were held in January 2008 with stakeholders from the fine arts and education communities as part of the curriculum review process. Representatives from the Alberta Teachers' Association's Fine Arts Council participated in the K-12 Arts Education Focus Group meetings.

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1.B.11 BE IT RESOLVED, that the Alberta Teachers' Association urge the Government of Alberta to take immediate action to address the incorporation of private schools within the public school system by enforcing the requirements identified under the *School Act* relative to:

1. right of access to education,
2. prohibition against tuition fees,
3. right to access alternative programs, and
4. limits on parent fees for non-instructional costs of an alternative program; and by ensuring that there is public consultation and full disclosure when a private school incorporates into a public school jurisdiction. [2007]

Government Response:

Section 21 of the *School Act* provides the authority for school boards to offer alternative programs. Since 1999, 19 former private schools have become alternative programs with school boards. Alternative programs have the same accountabilities and requirements as other public schools.

Former private schools are not able to charge tuition fees as an alternative program in a public jurisdiction. If there are non-instructional costs associated with the operation of the alternative program such as transportation, activity or course fees, the board may charge parents fees for the purpose of defraying all or a portion of these non-instructional costs that are incurred by the board in offering the alternative program and are in addition to the costs incurred by the board in providing its regular education program.

The government does not require public schools offering alternative programs to serve all applicants. Not all alternative programs are suitable for all students; parents need to work with school boards to determine the appropriateness of the program for their child.

When a former private school is contemplating becoming an alternative program within a jurisdiction, the school board and the former private school hold numerous public meetings with stakeholders.

1.B.14 BE IT RESOLVED, that the Alberta Teachers' Association urge the Government of Alberta to work with the profession to bring about the following changes to the diploma examinations program to

1. allow teachers to make more effective use of the examinations in the instruction, assessment and evaluation of students;
2. reduce the inordinate amount of time lost to classroom instruction to accommodate the examinations schedule;
3. reduce the negative impact on students with special needs;
4. schedule the marking of examinations to minimize the time teachers are away from the school;
5. minimize the negative impacts on all students and school programs; and
6. recognize the voluntary nature of the marking of and the developing of diploma examinations by professional teachers.

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[2004/07]

Government Response:

Alberta Education provides numerous materials to assist teachers when instructing classes. Currently the diploma examination subjects are supported with *Information Bulletins* (current and archived), released items (annually), exemplar documents, and detailed examination reports. Examinations are not released for classroom use because they are secured. Security is necessary in order to support the equating process.

The examination schedule is fair to all students in that it provides for the best use of time to test students. Alberta Education continually reviews the diploma examination schedule and all efforts are made to minimize the schedule's impact on schools. Schools and teachers know the examination schedule more than a year ahead of time so it is possible to effectively plan instruction. Because the diploma examinations have been expanded to provide a Part A and a Part B to further enhance the examinations, the time required is fair and reasonable. It is also important to note that the examinations are considered part of instructional time.

Alberta Education is committed to accommodating the needs of all Alberta students for them to have fair and equitable access to educational opportunities, including writing diploma examinations and achievement tests. The goal of accommodation is not to optimize performance, but to level the playing field by removing equitable obstacles to performance. Each case is individual and unique, and will be handled as such through schools applications for accommodations on the students' behalf.

The diploma examination marking schedule is based on completing marking by the end of each semester. Teachers will spend some time away from their schools, and this varies by subject from as little as one day in a math or science subject to as much as five days for English Language Arts for regular markers. Teachers with senior roles in marking will be away for slightly longer periods of time.

The purpose of Grade 12 diploma examinations is to: certify the level of individual student achievement in selected Grade 12 courses; ensure that province-wide standards of achievement are maintained; and report individual and group results. The purposes do not negatively impact students and school programs. They provide a vehicle whereby improvement can take place by providing information to inform instruction. Schools are responsible for the organization of day-to-day school operations and plan for examination administration. The quality of this planning will determine the impacts that occur.

Marking diploma examinations is a teaching responsibility as defined in the *School Act*. Alberta Education practices require superintendents to approve the nomination of teachers for marking. Teacher participation on development committees is recognized, rewarded and supported by Alberta Education in written recognition when the opportunity presents itself, and through financial support.

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1.B.22 BE IT RESOLVED, that the Alberta Teachers' Association urge the Department of Education and school jurisdictions to provide for in-service education for all teachers on the teaching of English as a second language students.

[1991/94/97/2000/03/06/07]

Government Response:

Alberta Education has developed and is implementing a four-year comprehensive strategy to address the needs of English as a Second Language (ESL) students and teachers in a coordinated manner. The need for a common assessment tool has been expressed by stakeholders and experts during the review of K-12 ESL education in Alberta.

The key elements of the K-12 ESL comprehensive strategies are:

- Developing ESL proficiency standards for K-12. The proficiency standards will provide a provincial frame of reference for ESL programming, instruction, assessment and reporting.
- Review and/or development of assessment tools suitable for ESL students that align with the proficiency standards.
- Revision of the Senior High ESL Program of Studies to align with the proficiency standards, and the possible development of a K-9 ESL Program of Studies.
- Review and/or development of resources to support implementation of the proficiency standards and program of studies.
- Review of coding and funding issues to reinforce program delivery support.

To support the implementation of these key elements, the Alberta Regional Consortia will receive funding to assist teachers and administrators to work with and have a better understanding of ESL issues and practices.

1.B.24 BE IT RESOLVED, that the Alberta Teachers' Association work with the Department of Education to ensure that all curriculum committees have appropriate Association representation. [2007]

Government Response:

The Alberta Teachers' Association (ATA) is one of Alberta Education's key stakeholders and as such is a valued member on the Program and Accountability Advisory Committee (PAAC) and external subject area advisory committees. Alberta Education also sends representatives to the ATA Curriculum Committee and many of the Specialist Councils to share directions and listen to advice regarding the development, implementation and maintenance of Alberta's curriculum. ATA members contribute significantly to many other ad hoc working groups as well. Input from all stakeholders is essential to developing an excellent curriculum and the department is always willing to discuss ways to improve dialogue.

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1.B.28 BE IT RESOLVED, that the Alberta Teachers' Association urge the Government of Alberta to reform the process for policy development and decision making related to student assessment, evaluation and accountability to include

1. systematic consultation with representatives selected by the Association on design, technical and administrative issues;
2. ongoing consultation, communication and decision making with the Association and other education partners on policy matters;
3. ongoing research focused on guiding and improving policy decisions; and
4. assurances that all exams are developed in Alberta by active members of the Alberta Teachers' Association reflecting the Alberta Program of Studies.

[2004/07]

Government Response:

Alberta Education policy development requires public consultation on new policies or policies that have undergone substantive change. Alberta Education decision making may involve a process of consultation and collaboration depending on the nature of the decision to be made. When public consultations are needed or when stakeholder advisory committees are held, the ATA is invited to attend. Stakeholder organizations are not represented on operational tasks such as test design, technical review of exams or administrative issues as stakeholder organizations do not have a responsibility for government operations.

Consultation with educational stakeholders is ongoing. As a stakeholder, the ATA is involved in forums and on committees where policies are discussed. Three major committees are in place to deal with issues and policy matters: the Building Classroom Assessment Capacity to Enhance Student Success Project; the Online Assessment Advisory Committee; and the Program and Assessment Advisory Committee.

Alberta Education's Accountability Pillar model was designed and implemented with direct involvement of many stakeholders, specifically the ATA. The Review Committee on Outcomes (RCO) was a three-year project involving many stakeholders, where a large set of outcome measures critical to the education system was developed. It is from this list that the set of 16 measures used in the Accountability Pillar model for jurisdiction accountability was derived. The Accountability Pillar Design and Implementation Advisory Sub-Committee was formed to engineer the specific implementation of the Accountability Pillar for the education system. The ATA had membership on this committee.

As part of the RCO process, teachers were identified as a targeted group for collection of information, along with students, parents and school board members. The Accountability Pillar survey process was designed to collect information, equally weighted, for each of these four groups. Boards were dropped from subsequent administrations due to their small sizes and difficulty getting enough data to publish under privacy rules. As such, teacher responses are responsible for fully one-third of the overall measure evaluation for each survey question.

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Alberta Education conducts and uses high-quality qualitative and quantitative research to inform decision making processes. All Alberta Education examinations are required to be based on the Alberta Programs of Study. Alberta teachers are actively involved throughout Alberta Education's assessment activities.

1.B.35 BE IT RESOLVED, that the Alberta Teachers' Association urge the Department of Education to ensure that all students enrolled in high school Career and Technology Studies modules have access to 25 discrete hours of instruction from a certificated teacher for each credit unit offered.

[1998/2001/04/07]

Government Response:

The *Funding Manual for School Authorities* states instructional services must be timetabled for both students and teachers and must ensure students have access to at least 25 hours of instruction per high school credit. An exception to this requirement is that schools can deliver a block of three, 1-credit CTS courses for 62.5 hours; however, schools must ensure students meet all of the outcomes of each 1-credit course. CTS courses are funded at 1 credit enrolment unit for each 1-credit course.

1.B.36 BE IT RESOLVED, that the Alberta Teachers' Association urge the Government of Alberta to report annually on Outreach Programs, with respect to

1. courses in which credits are offered,
2. credits generated by each course per year,
3. average number of credits earned by each student per year,
4. the number of credits generated by each full-time-equivalent teacher per Outreach School per year, and
5. the revenue generated by each Outreach Program per school jurisdiction.
6. number of coded students relative to the total school population, and
7. data related to high school completion rate.

[1998/2001/04/07]

Government Response:

Alberta Education monitors a sample of 10 to 15 Outreach programs each school year. Programs are monitored to ensure compliance with provincial policy and to identify effective practices. Outreach programs operate under existing school codes or as a school with a unique school code. Currently, these separate and distinct conditions under which Outreach programs operate prevent collecting accurate data on the parameters specified in this resolution. However, this issue is currently under review by the department.

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1.B.38 BE IT RESOLVED, that the Alberta Teachers' Association urge the Department of Education to recognize the right of a teacher to exempt a student from a provincial achievement test when the teacher deems it inappropriate to the needs of the student.
[1992/2001/04/07]

Government Response:

The authority to excuse a student from writing a provincial achievement test rests with the local superintendent of schools. A student may be excused for one of the following two reasons: the student is not capable of responding to the assessment in its original or approved accommodated form, or that participation would be harmful to the student. Teachers, as well as principals and parents/guardians, play an active and important role in providing the information required by the superintendent to make this important decision.

1.B.40 BE IT RESOLVED, that the Alberta Teachers' Association urge the Government of Alberta to include student-parent-teacher interview time as part of the current instructional time (950 hours annually for elementary and junior high programs and 1,000 hours for high school programs) for scheduling purposes under their regulations.
[1998/2001/04/07]

Government Response:

Instructional time includes time scheduled for purposes of instruction, examination/testing and other student activities where direct student-teacher interaction and supervision are maintained. This definition accommodates a variety of activities in addition to the traditional teaching-learning scenario. There are no current plans to revise the definition of instruction.

1.B.49 BE IT RESOLVED, that the Alberta Teachers' Association urge the Department of Education to adhere to the dates outlined in the Implementation Schedule for Programs of Studies (2005) and to provide funding for necessary resources, including capital equipment. [2007]

Government Response:

The *Implementation Schedule for Programs of Study and Related Activities* is prepared collaboratively among the Alberta Education divisions and other education stakeholders to provide opportunities for planning and effective implementation. The schedule is posted well in advance of the program dates to allow for this planning.

Implementation occurs when all the components are in place: the new or revised program of studies, basic and support resource, assessment tools (if required), and a strategic plan for professional development. Any revisions to the schedule are made following consultation with our education stakeholders with the primary focus being the best interests of the students impacted by the changes.

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Alberta Education is developing a document entitled, "*A Strategic Framework for Implementation Support*" to be released following consultations with stakeholders. This document clarifies Alberta Education's position on implementation support for its strategic educational policies, priorities, mandates, programs and initiatives.

2.A.1 The professional organization must be a partner in making decisions affecting the preparation of teachers: recruitment, selection, admission, institutional preparation, internship, placement and programs of support in the early years of practice.

[1967/87/97/2007]

Government Response:

Through various forums such as bi-annual meetings, the Deputy Minister of Education collaborates with stakeholders to ensure Alberta's teachers are well prepared as teachers and able to make the transition from pre-service to in-service. The ATA, along with other education system stakeholders, participate in the work of the External Advisory Committee for the Workforce Planning Initiative. This committee has as its focus the development of a draft Education Workforce Action Plan, with an attendant set of strategic policy recommendations for "attracting, preparing, developing, engaging and retaining" the highest-quality teachers for Alberta students.

2.A.23 The preparation of a teacher for initial certification requires

1. general education, subject preparation, study of pedagogical strategies and field experiences;
2. a teacher education program based on a professional practice standard determined by the profession;
3. instruction in the legal, ethical and professional nature of teaching, with an emphasis on the services, structure and function of the ATA;
4. university entrance standards equivalent to those of other faculties;
5. a minimum of four years of university-level study beyond recognized university entrance, provided that a degree has been earned;
6. at least two of the university years, which include all of the pedagogical strategies and the field experience prerequisite, to be taken in a university faculty of education program where the university faculty of education assumes total authority and direct responsibility for the teacher education program including admission of students, program requirements, program review and approval, course content and evaluation, course delivery, placement and supervision of students in the field experience, and conferral of the degree; and
7. At least half of the minimum four years of university preparation to be common for all teachers regardless of specialization.

[1967/70/78/87/97/04/07]

Government Response:

All applicants for teacher certification must meet the same standard expected of a graduate of an Alberta teacher preparation program. Individuals who have not completed an Alberta Bachelor of Education degree must present a degree from an approved post-secondary

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institution that includes, or is supplemented with, an acceptable basic professional teacher preparation program.

In Alberta, the issuance of a teaching certificate is based upon the *Certification of Teachers Regulation*, which requires that applicants have completed a Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) degree or equivalent.

An acceptable basic teacher preparation program is a structured, pre-service program from an approved institution consisting of, at minimum, 48 semester credit hours of pedagogical study that includes at least 12 weeks of supervised student teaching experience; and meets the criteria for teacher certification in the jurisdiction where the teacher preparation program was completed.

An approved teacher preparation institution in Alberta is a public post-secondary institution or private college approved under provisions of the *Post-Secondary Learning Act* to grant a Bachelor of Education degree, and one that has entered into a Memorandum of Agreement with the Minister for purposes of teacher certification in Alberta.

Individuals are issued an interim professional certificate, valid for three years, and are authorized to teach in K-12 based upon attestation by a Dean of Education from an approved Alberta teacher preparation program that an individual has completed a program allowing a student to demonstrate the professional competencies established in the Teaching Quality Standard.

2.A.40 It is a joint responsibility of the governments of Canada and Alberta to ensure that funding is available for the development and implementation of teacher education programs that meet the special needs of First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples.
[1989/92/95/98/2006/07]

Government Response:

Alberta Education is committed to enhancing educational opportunities for all Aboriginal students and continues to implement the *First Nations, Métis and Inuit (FNMI) Education Policy Framework* (2002). Alberta Education continues to support the enhancement of educational opportunities of FNMI student learners in the province as outlined in the 2007-2010 Alberta Education Business Plan, Goal 2, Strategy 2.2.

Through the *Renewed Funding Framework* Alberta Education provides additional funding to school authorities in support of initiatives in FNMI education. For the 2007/2008 school year an amount of \$1,093 per eligible full time equivalent FNMI student was provided. School authorities are provided with flexibility as to how they utilize this funding in support of FNMI student outcomes including jurisdiction-based teacher education programs in FNMI education.

Alberta Education's FNMI Services works collaboratively with the Alberta Regional Professional Development Consortia to provide regional

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workshops in FNMI Education open to all educators. Alberta Education's FNMI Services sponsors the annual Learning Together for Success Conference in FNMI Education designed to assist all educators.

The 2004 Memoranda of Agreement between the Minister and the Boards of Governors of Alberta's teacher preparation program institutions include four areas for growth on which Deans are to report annually. One of those areas, "teacher education about Aboriginal culture and appreciation of First Nations, Métis and Inuit learner issues," requires teacher preparation programs to ensure that graduates are provided with a program that enables them to address the special needs of FNMI students.

5.B.11 BE IT RESOLVED, that the Alberta Teachers' Association urge the Government of Alberta to compel employing school boards to cover all medical, vision care, dental and legal costs and loss of income incurred by teachers as a result of dealing with students under their care.
[2004/07]

Government Response:

The Alberta School Employee Benefit Plan, which is governed by five directors appointed from each of the ATA and the Alberta School Boards Association, is the major provider of health care benefit plans for teachers. For each plan the scope of coverage and the terms and conditions for coverage is determined by the plan boards and the other providers. Workers' Compensation Board also provides a range of coverage (for health care and loss of income) for teachers who are not exempt from Workers' Compensation Board coverage.

Traditionally, health care coverage and provisions for loss of income have been included with the terms and conditions of employment and thus have been negotiable between the teachers and their employers. Alternatively, school boards may have policy to address any medical expenses and loss of income that are not covered by the current benefit providers. Alberta Education continues to believe this coverage requested by the ATA is a matter to be resolved by the boards and their teachers.

5.B.15 BE IT RESOLVED, that the Alberta Teachers' Association urge the Government of Alberta to fund the implementation of a five-step annual increment teacher salary grid.
[2001/04/07]

Government Response:

Government's commitment to funding school authorities is significant. Teachers in Alberta are the highest paid on average in Canada, thereby providing school boards the ability to attract and retain the teachers they need. This is achieved through the collective bargaining process between the ATA and local school boards, including the establishment of appropriate pay grids, which recognizes both teaching experience and education levels. Government will continue to work with school boards to ensure appropriate levels of funding are aligned with the costs

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associated with providing education to students. Any change in teacher grids, however, is a local issue.

5.B.25 BE IT RESOLVED, that the Alberta Teachers' Association urge the Department of Education to ensure that distributed learning be supported and delivered by certificated teachers.

[1989/92/95/98/2001/04/07]

Government Response:

Teaching in a distributed learning environment is no different than teaching in any environment. Alberta Education remains committed to the regulations in the *School Act*. Regulation 92(1) of the *School Act* states "Unless otherwise authorized under this Act, a board shall employ as a teacher only an individual who holds a certificate of qualification as a teacher issued under this Act." Further, Regulation 93 of the *School Act* states that "Unless a person holds a certificate of qualification as a teacher issued under this Act, that person is not eligible to hold a supervisory position that directly relates to the teaching functions of a teacher."

5.B.31 BE IT RESOLVED, that the Alberta Teachers' Association urge all levels of government to encourage appropriate conduct of parents toward teachers in an effort to ensure the overall well-being of teachers and students. [2007]

Government Response:

Alberta Education encourages the development of positive relationships between parents and teachers. Several measures in the *School Act* support this – principals are required to promote cooperation between the school and the community it serves (s.20), schools are required to have school councils and parents must make up the majority of the members of the school council (s.22), and boards may provide for parental and community involvement in schools (s.60(2)(c)). Furthermore, school boards may make rules respecting any matter under their jurisdiction (s.60(3)(d)). Alberta Education believes that local school jurisdictions are in the best position to determine what rules are required to encourage the appropriate conduct of parents towards teachers and ensure the well-being of teachers and students.

6.B.5 BE IT RESOLVED, that the Alberta Teachers' Association urge the Government of Alberta to allocate funds to eliminate the entire unfunded liability of the Alberta Teachers' Retirement Fund.

[1997/2000/01/04/07]

Government Response:

The Memorandum of Agreement struck between government and the ATA in November 2007 and which is now in effect, addresses the issue of the teacher payment toward the pre-1992 unfunded pension liability, and eliminates the burden for current and future teachers in the Teachers'

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Pension Plan.

6.B.7 BE IT RESOLVED, that the Alberta Teachers' Association urge the Government of Alberta to recognize that growth of the teachers' pension plan contribution rate since 1992 is substantially attributable to the effects of government cuts and underfunding of public education from 1994 onwards and, therefore, that the Government of Alberta is responsible for the increased costs visited upon teachers as a result. [2007]

Government Response:

The Memorandum of Agreement struck between government and the ATA in November 2007, and which is now in effect, addresses the issue of the teacher payment toward the pre-1992 Unfunded Pension Liability and eliminates the burden for current and future teachers in the Teachers' Pension Plan.

6.B.9 BE IT RESOLVED, that the Alberta Teachers' Association urge the Government of Alberta to amend the *Teachers' Pension Plan Act* to remove the reduction factor, thereby enabling teachers to receive a full two per cent pension upon achieving the 85 index, with related costs to this amendment to be funded by the Alberta government. [2007]

Government Response:

Section 1.4 of the Memorandum of Agreement struck between government and the ATA in November 2007, and which is now in effect indicates the ATA will not request any pension benefit improvements that would increase pension benefit costs attributable to the government's assumption of the pre-1992 unfunded pension liability. The government position with respect to matters of pension improvement for members in the post-1992 period remains that government and the ATA must, as co-sponsors, agree on any such pension improvement and share the cost of any such agreement.

7.B.13 BE IT RESOLVED, that the Alberta Teachers' Association urge the Government of Alberta to allocate substantial additional increases in funding to school boards to enable them to

1. establish classroom conditions that allow teachers to meet the learning needs of all children,
2. negotiate teacher salary increases that reflect the value of the contribution made by the profession and
3. attract and retain qualified members of the teaching profession.

[2001/04/07]

Government Response:

Education remains a priority for this government. The investment in the K-12 system has increased significantly over the last 10 years—at a

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pace that far exceeds enrolment and inflation increases combined. As well, the achievement results of our students, along with Alberta students' scores on international test results, indicate the learning needs of students are indeed being met. As well, funding support for students with special needs has also increased by over 48 per cent over the last 10 years.

Locally elected school boards have the responsibility to negotiate fair salary increases for teachers that reflect the financial capacity and local needs of their jurisdiction. Teachers in Alberta continue to have, on average, the highest salaries of any province in Canada and also enjoy the benefits of living in a sales tax and debt free province. The recent five-year agreement related to the unfunded pension liability will also ensure teachers receive fair salary increases for the next five years, and benefit teachers from the permanent elimination of approximately 3 per cent in pension deductions from their paycheques.

7.B.14 BE IT RESOLVED, that the Alberta Teachers' Association urge the Department of Education to require school boards to make available to the public financial statements detailing the revenue and expenditures of funds collected through fees, fund-raising, gifts and donations for each school operated or supervised by the board, including charter schools.

[1995/98/2001/04/07]

Government Response:

Alberta Education's prescribed formats for school jurisdiction financial statements are in accordance with Canadian generally accepted accounting principles and are subject to audit and filing with Alberta Education. The financial statements include aggregate school jurisdiction reporting on gifts and donations, instruction resource fees, transportation fees, revenue from other sales and services, and school-generated funds revenues and expenses. Schedules to the statements present sources and uses of school-generated funds in categories common to school boards. These categories are fundraising, non-instructional student fees, donations and grants to schools, and other sources. Alberta Education believes that the potential cost of requiring this information separately for each school would exceed the benefits.

7.B.19 BE IT RESOLVED, that the Alberta Teachers' Association urge the Government of Alberta to provide sufficient funding to school boards to allow for major reductions in class size.

[1998/2001/04/07]

Government Response:

Since its implementation in 2004/2005, government has invested more than one half billion dollars in the Small Class Size Initiative, which has provided the support for more than 2,700 new teachers to be hired across the province to reduce class sizes. For the 2007/2008 fiscal year, ongoing government support for this initiative reached \$194.5 million and boards have made significant progress in lowering class size averages.

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Provincially, class size averages are below those recommended by Alberta's Commission on Learning in all grade groupings with the exception of K-3. Class size averages in K-3 continue to decrease annually despite challenges such as teacher availability, unexpected enrolment growth and shortage of classroom space.

7.B.20 BE IT RESOLVED, that the Alberta Teachers' Association urge the Department of Education to amend the funding framework for high schools by eliminating credit enrolment unit funding and reinstating funding based on student enrolment.

[1998/2001/04/07]

Government Response:

The Minister's Advisory Committee on the Renewed Funding Framework recently reviewed the funding model for high school students and recommended that Alberta Education retain the current method of funding based on Credit Enrollment Units (CEUs). The Committee agreed that the current CEU funding model provides the most flexibility for boards to offer choice in education programs and diversity in high school courses for students.

7.B.21 BE IT RESOLVED, that the Alberta Teachers' Association urge the Department of Education to expand the provincial funding formula for school boards to reflect the experience and educational level of certificated staff of specific school boards.

[1998/2001/04/07]

Government Response:

Teachers' salaries and benefit plans in Alberta are set through negotiations between local school boards and the ATA. Given these local negotiations, salary grids and benefit plans vary from school board to school board. Expanding the parameters of teacher compensation to reflect the experience and educational level of certificated staff continues to be a locally negotiated decision.

Budget 2007 provides \$4.6 billion in operating support to school boards, including \$178 million in property tax support for opted-out school boards. The existing funding framework is simply a funding allocation model that distributes funds equitably to jurisdictions across the province; however, boards have the flexibility to re-direct these funds to areas of need within their jurisdiction, including salary and remuneration for appropriate staffing levels.

7.B.22 BE IT RESOLVED, that the Alberta Teachers' Association urge the Department of Education to amend the current funding formula to fund three credit enrolment units for three credit courses.

[1998/2001/04/07]

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Government Response:

Funding at the rate of 2.5 per CEU more accurately reflects the service provided and costs incurred by schools relative to five-credit courses. By aligning the funding with the service provided, there is no financial advantage to timetabling students for two three-credit courses.

Three-credit courses require a minimum of 62.5 hours of instruction, which is half the time of five-credit courses.

7.B.30 BE IT RESOLVED, that the Alberta Teachers' Association urge the Department of Education to increase funding in the supplementary grant for English as a second language students receiving instruction in Grades K-12.

[2004/07]

Government Response:

Alberta Education is committed to supporting English as a Second Language (ESL) instruction for K-12 students. Alberta Education provides jurisdictions with per student ESL funding in addition to the basic instruction funding. Jurisdictions have the flexibility to determine student needs and allocate the funding to meet local priorities. In addition, Alberta Education has extended the five-year funding limitation for students of ESL programs to seven years, allowing school boards to design ESL programs to extend beyond five years if necessary. As well, in 2007/2008, Alberta Education introduced new funding for ESL programs for children as young as three-and-a-half years of age.

7.B.31 BE IT RESOLVED, that the Alberta Teachers' Association urge the Department of Education to create a funding code to address the needs of refugee students with limited formal schooling.

[2004/07]

Government Response:

Alberta Education does use a code (#640) to identify high school refugee students. This allows their base instruction funding to be block funded at 35 CEUs per year and jurisdictions have the option of removing this code if the student can earn more than 35 CEUs in a given year.

A refugee code is not used in Grades 1-9; however, jurisdictions can likely identify the majority of refugee students in these grades as foreign-born ESL students (code 301), thereby providing additional funding support for associated programs implemented by the jurisdiction.

8.A.30 Decision makers and professionals who deliver services to children should be guided by the following principles in effective integration at the school site:

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1. Accessibility
 - a) Integrated education, health, justice and social services are accessible and readily available to all children and families based on the teacher's determination of needs.
2. Nature of Services
 - a) Integrated services for the healthy development of all children and families have a strong focus on prevention and early intervention, starting with prenatal stages.
 - b) Integrated services are developmentally appropriate based on the needs and age of children and the needs of families.
 - c) Integrated services for children and families are responsive to cultural diversity.
3. Role of Community
 - a) Integrated services are community based and reflect the community's needs and priorities for its children and families.
 - b) Integrated services help the community be responsible for its children and families.
 - c) Integrated services recognize the family as key and welcome families as partners with the providers of services to their children.
 - d) Integrated services for children and families include schools within the community/regional interagency system
4. Human Resources
 - a) Integrated services for children and families require the coordination of human resources.
 - b) Integrated services are based on a team approach in which all partners understand and respect one another's mandates to work collaboratively on behalf of children and families.
 - c) Integrated services for children and families respect regulations governing confidentiality.
5. Financial Resources
 - a) Integrated services for children and families require adequate and long-term funding.
 - b) Integrated services for children and families require shared responsibility for funding among the departments of Education, Children's Services, Health and Wellness and Justice.
6. Impact on Teaching and Learning
 - a) Integrated services in schools for children and families meet the noneducational needs of children in order to allow teachers to teach students more effectively.
 - b) Integrated services in schools for children and families are viewed by teachers as accessible and beneficial.
 - c) Integrated services in schools for children and families allow teachers and other partners to provide input into the development of community-based programs.

[1999/2004/07]

Government Response:

Alberta Education, through providing supports and services to children and youth in ECS-12, recognizes that decision makers and professionals

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should be guided by the principles as outlined above. Integrated services such as those offered by Student Health are accessible and available for identified children with special health needs registered in school programs in their communities. These developmentally appropriate services focus on prevention and early intervention and involve families when appropriate. Currently there are 17 local Student Health Partnerships (SHPs), consisting of school authorities, the regional health, and the child and family services authority, who work together to develop a joint service plan that identifies how they will respond to the special health needs of students within their regions. These partnerships support collaboration and coordination through a team approach.

In 2007/2008, Alberta Education provided \$40,150,000 to SHPs on behalf of the partnering ministries of Education, Children's and Youth Services, and Health and Wellness.

SHPs are expected to report on performance measures related to the goals of Student Health. The summary of Student Health annual reports for 2005/2006 reflect that 72.4 per cent of teachers report that they agree or strongly agree that student health services that their students need are available, and 74.6 per cent report that those services improved their students' abilities to be successful at learning.

Alberta Education also recognizes the importance of respecting issues of confidentiality. The Alberta Children and Youth Initiative participated in the development of the Information Sharing Guideline (2003) which helps address issues of confidentiality while supporting the need for appropriate cross-sector information sharing.

8.B.1 BE IT RESOLVED, that the Alberta Teachers' Association urge the Government of Alberta to amend the *School Act* so that all those employed in administrative, supervisory and consultative positions related to the teaching function require an Alberta teaching certificate.
[1989/92/95/98/2001/04/07]

Government Response:

Section 93 of the *School Act* states that "Unless a person holds a certificate of qualification as a teacher issued under this Act, that person is not eligible to hold a supervisory position that directly relates to the teaching functions of a teacher". Government believes that this section of the *School Act* ensures that those who directly supervise teachers, or consultants where roles may include some supervision, have the required expertise and experience.

8.B.7 BE IT RESOLVED, that the Alberta Teachers' Association urge the Government of Alberta to standardize the normal Grade 1 entrance age throughout Alberta so that the minimum Grade 1 entrance age is six years of age as of December 31 in a year or at a younger age if a professional assessment demonstrates that a student is ready for Grade 1.
[1998/2001/04/07]

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Government Response:

Alberta Education provides jurisdictions with the flexibility to enrol students, supported by public funding, who are six years of age by February 28 of the school year. This flexibility enables jurisdictions to set their enrolment age to accommodate students and provides parents with the choice to either enrol their children at 5 years and 6 months of age by September 1, or wait until the child is 6 years of age. Alberta Education encourages school jurisdictions, private schools and private ECS operators adjacent to each other to use a common entrance age policy.

8.B.8 BE IT RESOLVED, that the Alberta Teachers' Association urge the Government of Alberta to ensure that all private schools meet the requirements for accreditation, including the requirement that these schools

1. implement the Alberta Programs of Study,
2. employ certificated teachers,
3. ensure student eligibility to earn credits toward an Alberta graduation diploma and
4. meet public accountability and reporting standards.

[1989/92/95/98/2001/04/07]

Government Response:

The Government of Alberta acknowledges its compelling interest in the education of all students in Alberta, but also recognizes its responsibility to provide reasonable accommodation for parents who choose to educate their children outside of the public education system. The categorization of private schools into two major categories—registered and accredited—establishes an equitable balance between these positions.

When compared with schools in the public education system, accredited private schools meet similar requirements regarding the delivery of the Alberta Programs of Study, employment of certificated teachers and public accountability and reporting requirements. In return for reduced funding support, accredited private schools retain control over their governance.

Since 1988 when Alberta's *School Act* was rewritten, there has been considerable debate about the rights of parents to educate their children. Some have argued and continue to say that the right to educate belongs exclusively to parents. Others felt that all children should attend schools which taught the provincial curriculum, had only certificated teachers and were managed by school boards.

To arrive at a balance between these points of view, Alberta has followed the 1986 Supreme Court decision in the *Jones Case*. That decision was that parents have the right to choose the education of their children based on their religious and conscientiously held beliefs. However, the province has a "compelling interest" in the education of all children and must ensure that the education they are receiving meets acceptable

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standards and prepares them for a successful future. Registered private schools satisfy the requirements to be licensed while providing for the right of parents to choose a private school for their children.

8.B.11 BE IT RESOLVED, that the Alberta Teachers' Association urge the Government of Alberta to increase funding to a level sufficient to sustain the coordination of services to students through the departments of Children's Services; Health and Wellness; Employment and Immigration; Justice and Attorney General; and Education, so that no students suffer inadequate support.

[1998/2001/04/07]

Government Response:

Government does facilitate and fund coordinated services through Children and Youth Services, Health and Wellness, Justice and Attorney General, and Employment and Immigration. In many instances, Health and Wellness, Children and Youth Services and Education are primarily involved. Introduced in 1998, the Alberta Children and Youth Initiative (ACYI) is a collaborative partnership of nine government ministries working together on issues affecting children and youth. Its vision ensures that Alberta's children and youth are well cared for, safe, successful at learning, and healthy. The ACYI provides a forum for dealing with children and youth issues from a broad-based perspective by using the expertise of the partnering ministries, communities, and Aboriginal people in developing strategies and initiatives. The ACYI arose from recognition that a coordinated government-wide effort is critical for the effective and efficient support of children, youth and their families. Working together, government ministries and communities can more effectively address these issues.

8.B.14 BE IT RESOLVED, that the Alberta Teachers' Association urge the Government of Alberta to ensure that education, health and other social portfolios are funded at levels that guarantee high quality of service without the need for revenue from gambling.

[1998/2001/04/07]

Government Response:

Government has historically addressed the funding for all essential, core programs through the General Revenue Fund (GRF). As indicated in the business plans for the various ministries, their priority programs are fully funded through the GRF budget, including any direct revenue sources (e.g., education property taxes, health care premiums).

Gaming revenues earned by the government are deposited in the Alberta Lottery Fund only. The purpose of the Lottery Fund is to provide benefits for charitable, not-for-profit community and public initiatives.

To address concerns about fundraising done at the local school level, the Alberta School Boards Association developed guidelines to assist school boards in establishing appropriate local policies. These guidelines support fundraising activities that enhance education programs for students

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and ensure dollars raised do not replace core education funding.

8.B.16 BE IT RESOLVED, that the Alberta Teachers' Association urge the Government of Alberta to immediately apply all accountability measures required of public schools to private schools that receive public funds.

[1998/2001/04/07]

Government Response:

Private schools, like the public system, are subject to the *School Authority Accountability Policy 2.2.2*. Private Schools develop three-year education plans consistent with provincial requirements; develop an annual education results report, and undergo regular on-site reviews in relationship to accountability. Further, private schools complete Annual Operational Plans by May 31 of each school year to continue their accreditation, complete Budget Reports and Audited Financial Statements, and must provide an educational program for the remainder of the school year for students expelled.

Students write Provincial Achievement Tests and Diploma Examinations.

Private schools are responsible for implementing the *Personal Information and Protection of Privacy Act* which governs the collection, use and disclosure of personal information by organizations in a manner that recognizes and balances the right of an individual to have his or her personal information protected, and the need of the organization to collect, use or disclose personal information for purposes that are reasonable. Parents have access to records that the school has on their children through the *Private Schools Regulation*. Any information submitted to government from a private school authority is subject to access through FOIP.

Parents in private schools have the right to appeal decisions affecting the placement of their children to the Board of Directors of the private school authority. The Board of Directors' decision however is not subject to a Review by the Minister. Department staff have developed a new resource entitled *Guidelines for Special Education in Accredited-Funded Private Schools*, that deals specifically with expectations for appeals.

Superintendents, principals and teachers employed by private schools are answerable to the Minister of Education for their decisions and conduct through the *Teacher Growth, Supervision and Evaluation Policy*, section 109 of the *School Act*, and the *Teaching Quality Standard Applicable to the Provision of Basic Education in Alberta*. The *Practice Review of Teachers Regulation* is applicable to private schools' teaching personnel. Teacher certification requirements for accredited private schools are the same as that for teachers within the public system.

8.B.17 BE IT RESOLVED, that the Alberta Teachers' Association urge the Department of Education, in promoting its international education agenda, to

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1. act to advance the best interests of Alberta's public education system,
 2. recognize that education is not a commodity for sale and that the goal of international cooperation in education should be to assist developing nations to develop their own public education systems, and
 3. ensure that public education in Alberta does not become subject to international agreements relating to trade in goods and services.
- [2001/04/07]

Government Response:

The purpose of the Alberta International Education Strategy is to advance the best interests of Alberta's public education system. The aim of the Strategy is to ensure that Albertans are well-prepared as world citizens and able to enjoy fully the benefits and opportunities of their global community, can participate fully in the economic growth associated with international education, can contribute to international humanities projects, and can compete successfully in the global economy.

Development aid is primarily a function of the federal government. However, Sections 46 and 49 of the *School Act* give school boards the capacity to enrol foreign students and to charge tuition fees. Both provisions are, however, at the discretion of the board. Any board wishing to assist developing nations may also offer cost-recovery continuing education, such as professional development programs for foreign teachers or others under Section 55 of the *School Act*. Alberta Education has participated in development projects funded by the Canadian International Development Agency.

Negotiation of international trade agreements, such as General Agreement on Trade Services and World Trade Organization, is the responsibility of the federal government. The position of the federal government on this issue is that public education will be protected.

8.B.18 BE IT RESOLVED, that the Alberta Teachers' Association urge the Government of Alberta to develop a comprehensive Provincial Children's Agenda that would

1. reduce child poverty substantially and
2. establish adequate levels of services and benefits for families with children in order to
 - (a) provide universally accessible and affordable prenatal support programs, child care and early childhood education;
 - (b) provide tax recognition to all families with children; and
 - (c) provide incentives to encourage employers to implement family-friendly policies such as on-site child care, family leave and flexible work arrangements without penalty.

[1998/2001/04/07]

Government Response:

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The role of the Alberta Children and Youth Initiative is to promote the needs of children and youth, and their families in a holistic manner. Alberta Education continues to have a representative on the ATA's Joint Stakeholder Committee on Children in Poverty. This committee tends to play the role of sharing information. The committee's terms of reference could be reviewed to reflect a more proactive role as the committee membership involves vital stakeholders that support families that are vulnerable. The Ministries of Health and Wellness, Children and Youth Services and Education all contribute to services and benefits for families with children.

8.B.19 BE IT RESOLVED, that the Alberta Teachers' Association urge the Government of Alberta to increase the allocation of funds for the development and implementation of early intervention programs through integrated services.

[1998/2001/04/07]

Government Response:

The Government of Alberta has responded to Early Intervention in several ways, but has not implemented Junior Kindergarten nor Full-day Kindergarten as was recommended in Alberta's Commission on Learning report. Several school authorities have used available funds for students identified as having mild/moderate special needs, or Program Unit Funding for children with severe disabilities, while also including some community children into their programs to provide a program they may call Junior Kindergarten. Some communities have supplemented these programs from within their existing resources or have accessed funds from other sources. The government will continue to increase awareness of supports available for early intervention, specifically for mild/moderate disabilities or delays for three-and-a-half year old children. There is a need for better understanding of this source of funding and the value of early programming support and intervention to benefit these vulnerable children.

The ATA, as well as government, has a role to play in educating Albertans regarding the importance of early intervention in supporting school and life long success of young children. In September 2007, newly established ESL program funds became available for children as young as three-and-a-half years old, which was designed for early learning programs to enhance the oral English language skills of foreign- and -Canadian born children, while recognizing the value of a strong first language and encouraging family engagement in the program.

The Parent Link Centres, Home Visitation programs, Preschool Developmental Screening Project, pre-and-post natal care continue as supports to families, in addition to the educational supports.

Current research on the critical period of age 0-3 and the impact of early development on future success will influence practice. The Government of Alberta continues to examine ongoing national and international research regarding the value of quality early learning and care for children 0-6 in order to address and design supports unique to the needs of Alberta's young children and families.

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8.B.26 BE IT RESOLVED, that the Alberta Teachers' Association urge the Government of Alberta to establish air-quality standards for schools and to provide funding to enable schools to meet those standards.

[1992/95/98/2001/04/07]

Government Response:

The Government of Alberta has established air quality standards for schools. These standards are included in the August 2007 document *Design Guidelines: Standards and Guidelines for School Facilities*.

Alberta Education provides school boards with Infrastructure Maintenance and Renewal funding to replace building components, which have failed or pose health and safety problems for students and staff, extend the useful life of school facilities and sites and maintain the quality of the school environment. This source of funding is used to replace mechanical systems and improve air quality. It includes exhaust systems, heating, forced air systems, steam and hot water distribution.

Alberta Education provides funding for new schools and when a school is being modernized a portion of the funding may be used to address any necessary air quality issues.

9.B.1 BE IT RESOLVED, that the Alberta Teachers' Association vigorously publicize the position that managerial models of school administration that interfere with collegial relationships are harmful to the interests of students and teachers.

[1992/95/98/2001/04/07]

Government Response:

The draft *Principal Quality Practice* document, collaboratively created by a Stakeholder Advisory Committee, outlines seven leadership dimensions and related descriptors of effective practice. One of the dimensions relates to the management of school operations and resources while other dimensions relate to fostering effective relationships and the development and fostering of leadership in others, which focus on the promotion of collegial relationships with staff, students, parents and the larger community.

9.B.2 BE IT RESOLVED, that the Alberta Teachers' Association opposes the use of classroom walk-throughs as part of the teacher evaluation process. [2007]

Government Response:

Alberta Education does not mandate the processes used by jurisdictions to carry out teacher evaluations other than those found in the *Teacher Growth, Supervision and Evaluation Policy*.

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10.B.2 BE IT RESOLVED, that the Alberta Teachers' Association request that the Government of Alberta require all teachers employed in schools receiving public funds to be members of the Association and subject to the *Code of Professional Conduct*.

[1995/98/2001/04/07]

Government Response:

The government is committed to ensuring high quality teaching across the province. The *Teaching Profession Act* assigns responsibility for governance of complaints about conduct and competency of teachers employed by school boards to the ATA.

The current *Practice Review of Teachers Regulation (04/99)* provides a due process for addressing complaints about alleged unprofessional conduct on the part of certificated teachers who are not members of the ATA. Given the amended Regulation, government is of the opinion that it has addressed the issue. The Regulation, like provisions of the *Teaching Profession Act* that apply to ATA members, defines as unprofessional any conduct that, in the opinion of a panel of peers and a member of the public, is detrimental to the best interests of students, the public or teachers generally.

10.B.3 BE IT RESOLVED, that the Alberta Teachers' Association urge the Government of Alberta to require that all counselling positions in schools be filled with certificated teachers.

[2004/07]

Government Response:

Policy 1.6.3 Guidance and Counselling states that school boards should employ professionally trained counsellors who have had successful teaching experience. For schools that do not have a counsellor, the school board should ensure that guidance and counselling services are available to the students. This policy is currently under review.

13.B.1 BE IT RESOLVED, that the Alberta Teachers' Association urge the Government of Alberta to fully fund and mandate school boards to provide Full-day Kindergarten programs of 950 hours that are available to all children who are five years of age by December 31.

[1995/98/2001/04/07]

Government Response:

The Alberta public has not been receptive to mandatory Kindergarten. Currently, 96 per cent of age-eligible children attend. The consequence of mandatory attendance could create issues such as Attendance Board involvement, which is not appropriate at this age, as parents do provide

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a vital role as their child's first teacher and families value their autonomy. School authorities must provide provisions for Early Childhood Services/Kindergarten.

Research indicates that quality language-rich, play-based, developmentally appropriate practices that extend a child's learning and provide additional time may benefit some children, especially those that are at a disadvantage or vulnerable. The research indicates quality pre-school experiences may have more impact than Full-day Kindergarten. There is caution provided that indicates introducing structure and content too early can contribute to behaviour concerns and can, in the long-term, limit the desire and sense of competence to learn. Research does indicate that extended time is beneficial for some children who require more time to assimilate their learning and experiences, but universal Full-day Kindergarten is not well supported by research in terms of having the most impact.

Government does provide additional funding for extended hours (up to 880) for children with special needs if it is reflected as appropriate in the child's Individualized Program Plan.

13.B.3 BE IT RESOLVED, that Junior and Full-day Kindergarten programs be implemented and funded in accordance with the recommendations of Alberta's Commission on Learning.
[2005/07]

Government Response:

The research indicates that quality programming prior to Kindergarten that is language-rich, play-based, and developmentally appropriate can extend a child's learning and may be particularly beneficial for children, who are at a disadvantage or vulnerable. There are supports available for young children (age three-and-a-half) identified as having mild/moderate and severe needs as well as English as a Second Language supports.

Government feels there is not sufficient public support to implement Junior Kindergarten or Full-day Kindergarten at this time. Government has addressed the needs of children who are vulnerable and the issue for Full-day Kindergarten has been addressed in resolution 13.B.1.

16.A.2 The Alberta Teachers' Association should be represented at all decision-making levels regarding the application of educational technology.
[1982/94/2004/07]

Government Response:

Alberta Education provides a range of opportunities for the ATA to influence educational technology decision making, including membership on the School Technology Advisory Committee. The ATA is also represented on the Provincial Approach to Student Information Advisory

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Committee and the Emerge One-to-One Laptop Learning initiative research advisory committee.

16.A.5 The Department of Education should provide sustainable funding to school jurisdictions for educational technology in the following areas:

1. Acquisition, maintenance, upgrading and replacement of technology for schools
2. Licensing, acquisitions and instructional development
3. Teacher professional development
4. Research
5. Technical support, including technical personnel

[1987/90/94/2000/04/07]

Government Response:

The *Renewed Funding Framework* gives locally elected school jurisdictions the authority and flexibility to allocate funding in a way that best meets the needs of their students and communities. This includes the acquisition of technology for the jurisdictions and the professional development costs needed to help teachers better integrate technology into the classroom.

Alberta Education also has undertaken several additional initiatives to reduce various aspects of the total cost of ownership for technology. These include covering monthly SuperNet service charges, providing Microsoft Office licenses to all publicly funded school jurisdictions through the Provincial Microsoft License agreement, and the establishment of Education Standing Offers that enable school jurisdictions to acquire selected technology products at educational pricing levels that would not be typically available using independent purchasing arrangements.

To take full advantage of www.learnalberta.ca multi-media resources available over SuperNet, Alberta Education provided free content delivery devices to all jurisdictions.

Alberta Education encourages ongoing innovation and research to explore how new technologies and related practices can help improve teaching and learning. One strategy for supporting this innovation is through competitive Calls for Proposals. Calls for Proposals are innovative, research-based initiatives that let jurisdictions pilot new technologies and practices. School jurisdictions participating in these projects become Alberta Education's research partners in examining new ways of using technology in teaching and learning.

16.A.14 Elementary and secondary curricula must include the development of critical literacy related to the role of technology in a democratic society.

[199/2004/07]

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Government Response:

A primary goal of all K-12 Programs of Study is to provide students opportunities to develop the skills that will enable them to become active, informed and responsible citizens. Fostering skills such as critical thinking, communication and decision making enables students to explore perspectives, seek clarity of information and communicate viewpoints effectively. Information communication technology outcomes, identified at every grade level, provide students an opportunity to sharpen these key skills, in particular, the ethical use of technology in a democratic society.

Information communication technology outcomes indicate that by the end of Grade 12, students will be able to identify and use current, reliable information sources, identify complexities and discrepancies in the information, generate new understanding of issues by using technology, apply information technologies to communicate understanding of complex issues and analyze the impact of various forms of media. Additionally, students will demonstrate a respect for ownership and integrity of information and discriminatory selection of electronically accessed information. The inclusion of information communication technology outcomes, such as these, provides students with the opportunity to cultivate skills that are essential to citizenship in a democratic society.

One of the goals of the K-12 Science Program is to develop in students an understanding of the relationship between science and technology – the related issues and problems in addressing the needs for a sustainable environment, economy and society.

16.A.17 Teachers must have primary involvement in the design, development and selection of instructional materials used in distributed learning and must receive adequate time and compensation for the work involved.
[2001/04/07]

Government Response:

The selection and development of distributed learning instructional materials by Alberta Education currently includes teachers in the design and development stages. Alberta Education does not mandate local processes for selecting learning and teaching resources and, therefore, school jurisdictions can choose to use Alberta Education developed resources or choose to develop their own. School jurisdictions have the authority to determine a teacher's assignment and Alberta Education will continue to leave decisions regarding choice of learning and teaching resources and staff assignments to the local authority.

16.B.2 BE IT RESOLVED, that the Department of Education provide sustainable funding for an independent longitudinal research study of distributed learning effectiveness. [2007]

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Government Response:

The Distributed Learning Strategy is committed to continuous improvement. As part of the early phases of the strategy, Alberta Education will, in partnership with stakeholders, assess the effectiveness of current initiatives and projects underway in the province that support teaching and learning independent of time and place. School authorities, through the Alberta Initiative for School Improvement (AIS), could choose to do independent longitudinal research to assess the effectiveness of distributed learning. AIS is uniquely positioned to conduct this type of assessment as the implementation of distributed learning will reflect local needs and circumstances.

16.B.4 BE IT RESOLVED, that the Alberta Teachers' Association, in conjunction with the Department of Education and school boards, develop policies and strategies to address issues of student and teacher safety, cyberbullying and the appropriate uses of the Internet.

[1997/2000/03/06/07]

Government Response:

The Internet is a valuable tool for children. As with any tool, it is important to learn how to use it properly and safely. Parents and schools need to work together to ensure our children are using the Internet in a safe manner. The Information and Communication Technology outcomes in the programs of study include the expectation that students will demonstrate a moral and ethical approach to the use of technology and all school jurisdictions are required to have responsible or acceptable use policies in place for electronic communications.

In 2007, Alberta Education licensed Media Awareness Network's Web Awareness Workshop Series teacher training resources, including resources addressing cyberbullying, for all publicly funded school jurisdictions. The Workshop Series will give teachers the information they need to help students make ethical choices while using the Internet and contribute to a safe and caring school environment. Under this agreement, Alberta Education is funding the licensing cost of this resource until May 31, 2009 for all K-12 schools in the province, with unlimited access for all teachers.

Alberta Education facilitates information sharing with jurisdiction technology leaders and Information and Communications Technology professional development providers on technology implementation topics, including safe and appropriate use of the Internet.

Alberta Education's LearnAlberta.ca website provides access to online learning resources, including a child-safe destination for Internet-based research. Other online resources include the "2Learn.ca Education Society's Safety'Net @2learn.ca" section on its website. This section provides examples of acceptable use policies and guidelines, Internet filtering software information, tips for the safe use of the Internet in the classroom, and resources for teachers, students, and parents. Alberta Education works with the 2Learn.ca Education Society on projects that promote the effective use of technology in the classroom.

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Alberta Education is also a co-lead of Alberta's Cross-Ministry Strategy for the Prevention of Bullying. The initiative's website has a two-page information sheet on cyberbullying for parents. The strategy also has an informative cyberbullying website for youth.

Parents and schools need to work together to ensure our children use the Internet in a safe manner. This collaborative work also needs to be supported at home. Parents have a responsibility to make sure they have open and honest discussions with their children about Internet use.

16.B.7 BE IT RESOLVED, that the Alberta Teachers' Association urge the Department of Education to develop procedures for the ongoing review and approval of distributed learning educational material.

[1998/2001/04/07]

Government Response:

Alberta Education currently has ongoing review and approval procedures for learning and teaching resources including distributed learning resources. All distributed learning resources developed by Alberta Education are authorized resources. Alberta Education, through the Distributed Learning Strategy, will be developing standards for distributed learning courses.

16.B.11 BE IT RESOLVED, that the Alberta Teachers' Association urge the Department of Education to mandate that school boards establish policy to govern the acquisition and application of technology in schools so that decision making is in the hands of the teaching staff in each school.

[1999/2002/05/07]

Government Response:

Policies and practices related to equipment and learning resources also apply to technology. Alberta Education does not mandate local processes for selecting equipment and learning resources and, therefore, will continue to leave decisions regarding involvement of teaching staff in making decisions about the acquisition and application of technology at the local authority.

16.B.13 BE IT RESOLVED, that the Alberta Teachers' Association urge the Government of Alberta to provide, at no cost to schools, including monthly operating costs, SuperNet and Internet access for every Alberta classroom.

[1999/2001/04/07]

Government Response:

When SuperNet was announced in November 2000, the Government of Alberta committed to providing \$503.50 in high-speed network funding

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per month to each site connected to SuperNet. High-speed network funding was the first ongoing, operational funding provided to schools to maintain their wide area network connections. The department currently spends more than \$10 million annually to provide SuperNet connectivity to Alberta schools. This funding enables jurisdictions to reallocate wide area network dollars to other areas, such as upgrading network equipment, or toward enhancing the basic level of broadband network access over SuperNet.

School jurisdictions are responsible for paying for their own Internet access and network services through local telecommunications providers. Internet service costs have significantly decreased since January 2005 when provided over SuperNet. As such, jurisdictions are paying as little as one-tenth the cost of their previous Internet bandwidth charges and can increase existing bandwidth without increasing their networking budgets.

Basic SuperNet access for learning institutions is defined as a 10-megabit per second (Mbps) connection with 5 Mbps guaranteed throughput (10/5 connection). The 5-Mbps SuperNet service provides sufficient bandwidth to support broadband applications such as videoconferencing. Some school jurisdictions that have already implemented videoconferencing technology over SuperNet are not planning to increase bandwidth beyond 5 Mbps.

16.B.14 BE IT RESOLVED, that the Alberta Teachers' Association urge the Department of Education to involve teachers in a timely review and evaluation of the educational suitability of distributed learning resources and digital content.
[1999/2002/05/07]

Government Response:

Alberta Education involves teachers in the timely review and evaluation of distributed learning resources to ensure that teaching and learning needs are being met in a variety of learning environments. In addition, Alberta Education is working in partnership with a number of school jurisdictions in the development and field testing of online and print distributed learning resources.

Alberta Education encourages and endorses consultation with teachers on the development of digital content. These consultations ordinarily take two forms, focus groups and field validation. Focus group consultations are held with teachers at project initiation where input is sought in the identification of appropriate outcomes requiring multimedia support, areas where students commonly experience difficulty and innovative ideas for development. Teacher validation is sought during the initial development stages to respond to prototypes and/or storyboards of the resource. This validation may continue with review and evaluation of the resource as it approaches completion. In addition, for selected projects, Alberta Education contracts teachers for the development of storyboards, the writing of teacher support material, and for content validation and accuracy.

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16.B.16 BE IT RESOLVED, that the Alberta Teachers' Association urge the Department of Education to establish a clearing house staffed by teachers that will evaluate the education suitability of distributed learning resources.

[2001/04/07]

Government Response:

Alberta Education works with online educators, the publishing and new media industries to ensure that the highest quality of online resources are available to students and teachers. There are no plans to establish a provincial clearinghouse for evaluating online resources.

16.B.17 BE IT RESOLVED, that the Alberta Teachers' Association urge the Department of Education to include the following criteria when authorizing distributed learning or other technology-based educational programs and resources

1. the pedagogical soundness of the teaching and learning strategies;
2. the educational value and demand;
3. financial cost-effectiveness, including ongoing costs;
4. the breadth, depth and consistency of the resource with provincial curriculum;
5. the inclusion of Canadian content and freedom from bias; and
6. the recognition of diversity and the promotion of inclusive school communities.

[2001/04/07]

Government Response:

Alberta Education agrees that the criteria outlined in this resolution are important considerations when reviewing resources for possible authorization. Section 39 (1)(b) of the *School Act* provides the Minister the power to authorize instructional resources. In keeping with this statutory requirement, Alberta Education authorizes instructional materials (print and digital) through the consistent application of guidelines for authorization. These guidelines and procedures are outlined in the policy 3.2.2 Learning and Teaching Resources.

In-depth reviews of resources are conducted by teachers using criteria that include the evaluation of pedagogical soundness, curricular alignment to the programs of study, and the inclusion of Canadian and Alberta content and infusion of FNMI perspectives. In addition, Alberta Education always considers educational value and demand and financial cost effectiveness. All resources must undergo an analysis to ensure that they meet Recognizing Diversity and Promoting Respect standards and the Aboriginal Content Validation guidelines. Both the Recognizing Diversity and Promoting Respect analysis and Aboriginal Content Validation guidelines consider how the content and activities embedded in resources promote inclusion of all students, including students with disabilities. Pedagogical reviews of individual resources also consider design features that enhance learning opportunities (e.g., scaffolding, student choice, use of varied learning preferences) and ensure that all students in the learning community can participate and be successful learners.

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16.B.19 BE IT RESOLVED, that the Alberta Teachers' Association urge the Department of Education to review the efficacy of distributed learning delivery related to the Career and Life Management courses. [2007]

Government Response:

Alberta Education supports distributed learning delivery of all courses. The Career and Life Management course is no different in this regard. Distributed learning includes all forms of learning where, by design, students and their teachers may be separated in time and/or space for some or all of their interactions. Therefore, distributed learning includes online learning, videoconferencing, distance education and other models which can improve the quality of teaching and learning through increased social interaction within the context of learning. Alberta Education has no plans to review the efficacy of any specific distributed learning courses. However, as part of the early phases of the Distributed Learning Strategy, we will be examining a variety of distributed learning resources and their effectiveness in distributed learning environments.

17.B.5 BE IT RESOLVED, that the Alberta Teachers' Association urge the Government of Alberta to amend its policy on funding for special education private schools to ensure that there is no automatic right for parents to choose a private school education, paid for with public funds, for students with special needs where a program appropriate to that child's needs is available in the public system. [1998/2001/04/07]

Government Response:

The *School Act* provides parents with the right and responsibility to make decisions about the education of their children. Parents of students with a mild, moderate or severe disability may choose to enrol their child in a designated special education private school. Alberta Education requires that consultation occur between the parent(s) and resident board to discuss the student's special education needs, including a description of the services and programming that would be provided by the resident board. The resident board official must retain a record of the discussion with the parent(s) to document the parent consultation. Although Alberta Education has very clear expectations of both resident boards and designated special education private schools, it cannot usurp the right and responsibility of parents to make educational decisions on behalf of their child.

17.B.8 BE IT RESOLVED, that the Alberta Teachers' Association urge the Department of Education to develop a funding accountability measure by which school jurisdictions must demonstrate the allocation and expenditure of funds received for each student identified as having special needs. [1995/98/2001/04/07]

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Government Response:

In January 2008, Alberta Education announced it was implementing a project plan to examine special education policy, accountability, and funding mechanisms. The project is coordinated through Special Programs Branch. The project will engage a wide range of stakeholders to identify issues and generate solutions that clarify Alberta Education expectations for the administration and funding of special education throughout the province. The ATA will be invited to participate in this project.

17.B.12 BE IT RESOLVED, that the Alberta Teachers' Association urge the Department of Education to review the current Special Education monitoring process and appropriately fund and support special education programs in order to comply with the Standards for Special Education (2004). [2007]

Government Response:

As stated for 17.B.8: In January 2008, Alberta Education announced it was implementing a project plan to examine special education policy, accountability, and funding mechanisms. The project coordinated through Special Programs Branch. The project will engage a wide range of stakeholders to identify issues and generate solutions that clarify Alberta Education expectations for the administration and funding of special education throughout the province. The ATA will be invited to participate in this project.

18.B.7 BE IT RESOLVED, that the Alberta Teachers' Association urge the Department of Education to require school boards to develop policy and procedures for dealing with discrimination on the basis of race, religious beliefs, colour, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, physical characteristics, disability, marital status, family status, age, ancestry, place of origin, place of residence, socioeconomic background or linguistic background.

[1998/2001/04/07]

Government Response:

Alberta Education believes that all students are entitled to learn in an environment in which they feel safe and accepted:

- All Albertans are responsible for upholding the provisions of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* and the *Alberta Human Rights, Citizenship and Multiculturalism Act*.
- Section 45(8) of the *School Act* states that "a board shall ensure that each student enrolled in a school operated by the board is provided with a safe and caring environment that fosters and maintains respectful and responsible behaviours."
- Sections 3(1) and (2) of the *School Act* state that "all education programs offered and instructional materials used in schools must reflect the diverse nature and heritage of society in Alberta, promote understanding and respect for others and honour and respect the common values and beliefs of Albertans." Further, "...education programs and materials referred to in subsection (1) must not promote or foster doctrines

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of racial or ethnic superiority or persecution, religious intolerance or persecution, social change through violent action or disobedience of laws.”

- The *Guidelines for Recognizing Diversity and Promoting Respect* ensure that all Programs of Study and learning and teaching resources accurately portray people of diversity and their positive contributions to society.
- The *Ministerial Order 004/98 on Student Learning Outcomes*, section (h) states that the knowledge, skills and attitudes to be acquired by Alberta students include “respect [for] the cultural diversity and common values of Canada”.
- The Ministry provides the resource, *The Heart of the Matter: Character and Citizenship in Alberta Schools*, to assist schools in integrating character and citizenship core values into the existing curriculum and into daily experiences and interactions.
- ‘Success for all Students’ is the #1 strategic priority in the Ministry’s 2007-2010 Business Plan, which emphasizes that the learning environment must acknowledge students’ varied backgrounds and needs.
- Alberta Education and Alberta Children and Youth Services have launched *Alberta’s Bullying Prevention Strategy*, which provides information and supports to children, youth, parents and other members of the community to help them to prevent or stop bullying.
- A number of Alberta Initiative on School Improvement projects focus on establishing positive school climates and providing differentiated instruction that recognizes and accommodates diversity in student learning needs.
- Through implementation of the *First Nations, Métis and Inuit Education Policy Framework*, the contributions and needs of Aboriginal students, families and communities continue to be recognized and addressed.

18.B.10 BE IT RESOLVED, that the Alberta Teachers’ Association urge the Government of Alberta, the Alberta School Boards Association and individual school boards to implement the recommendations of the Task Force on Children at Risk.
[2001/04/07]

Government Response:

Government has undertaken a number of initiatives, through Alberta Children and Youth Initiative, in terms of prevention, early identification, crisis intervention and treatment , and collaborative community supports as a direct response to *The Task Force on Children at Risk* recommendations. Activities include expanding parent education (Parent Link Centres), expanding mental health services, (Mental Health First Aid initiative, Positive Futures), expanding and co-ordinating services for children prior to entering school, Bullying Prevention Strategy, and addressing the needs of FNMI families. Although progress has been made in these areas, government continues to be diligent in addressing the needs and concerns of children and families who are vulnerable and considered to be “at risk”. There is continued work on high school completion, early learning opportunities and support for disengaged youth.

18.B.16 BE IT RESOLVED, that the Alberta Teachers’ Association urge the Department of Education to fund professional development that

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addresses cultural competence, diversity and antidiscrimination education.
[1992/95/98/2001/04/07]

Government Response:

Alberta Education support currently exists through conditional grants relating to Character Education and Supporting Positive Behaviour resources. Also implementation supports are in place for Social Studies, English as a Second Language, International Languages, and Aboriginal Languages that relate to culture, tolerance, diversity and understanding. \$5.25 million has been allocated over the three-year period 2007/2008 to 2009/2010 to addresses cultural competence, diversity and antidiscrimination education.

18.B.17 BE IT RESOLVED, that the Alberta Teachers' Association urge the Department of Education to develop and implement a policy for diversity and multicultural education consistent with the objectives of the *Human Rights, Citizenship and Multiculturalism Act*.
[1992/95/98/2001/04/07]

Government Response:

The Department's commitment to multiculturalism is evidenced by section 3(1) of the *School Act* that requires all educational programs and materials reflect our diversity, promote understanding and respect for others, and honour and respect our common values and beliefs. Further, section 3(2) states that educational programs and materials "must not promote or foster doctrines of racial or ethnic superiority or persecution, religious intolerance or persecution, social change through violent action or disobedience of laws".

Please also see the information in the response to Resolution 18.B. 7.

18.B.18 BE IT RESOLVED, that the Alberta Teachers' Association urge the Department of Education to ensure that provincial curriculum includes diverse cultural perspectives.
[1992/95/98/2001/04/07]

Government Response:

A primary goal of the K-12 Social Studies Programs of Study is to foster understanding of the roles and contributions of linguistic, cultural and ethnic groups in Canada. The programs of study recognize and reflect multiple perspectives and the important contributions of all Canadians, including the importance of Francophone and Aboriginal culture and history in Canadian history. With this consideration, the K-12 Social Studies Programs of Study consultation process involved a wide variety of stakeholder groups. First Nations, Métis and Inuit and Francophone perspectives are infused throughout the curricula and are a key part of the review process for resources. Authorized resources undergo intensive review with consideration of recognizing diversity and promoting respect. Programs of study for International Languages include

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outcomes for Global Citizenship, which enable students to learn about the culture of the target language as well as other cultures.

18.B.19 BE IT RESOLVED, that the Alberta Teachers' Association urge the Department of Education to ensure that the curricula of Career and Life Management, Health, and personal living skills do not impose a monocultural perspective.

[1992/95/98/2001/04/07]

Government Response:

The Career and Life Management (CALM) curriculum development and implementation process involved a wide variety of stakeholder groups to ensure that it recognizes diversity and promotes respect. The support resources for the CALM Programs of Study are reviewed with consideration for respecting diversity and promoting respect prior to being authorized.

APII 2 The Association, in conjunction with the Department of Education and school boards, will develop policies addressing the issues of intellectual property rights and performance rights for Alberta teachers. (178/07)

Government Response:

While acknowledging the need for advocacy to ensure the appropriate balance between the use of intellectual property for educational purposes versus the protection of rights-holders, particularly in the area of copyright, Alberta Education supports awareness of and compliance with existing intellectual property laws. Alberta Education has recently worked on the drafting of a Ministry-wide intellectual property policy.

APII 15 The 2007 Annual Representative Assembly

1. reaffirms the unity of teachers in Alberta and rejects any attempts by the government to create division among teachers on any basis, including years of service,
2. celebrates the Association and reaffirms its commitments to serve the public interest as the professional organization representing all teachers and to function as a union protecting the rights and interests of all its members,
3. calls upon the Minister of Education to respect and acknowledge the contribution of those people who have made teaching their life work and whose expertise and experience continue to benefit students, the profession and public education in Alberta,
4. calls upon the Minister of Education to honour the mandate given to him by the Premier, to engage in negotiations that will lead to a fair, reasonable and lasting solution to the unfunded liability of the teachers' pension plan and to do so immediately. (214A/07)

Government Response:

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Government and the ATA negotiations on the issue of the pre-1992 unfunded liability of the teachers' pension plan occurred in good faith, with respect for teachers espoused and supported by both parties as one of the underlying values associated with the negotiation. The solution achieved on January 31, 2008 is indicative of the Minister of Education's commitment to finding a fair, reasonable and lasting solution to this long-standing issue.

APII 17 The Association declines participation in the proposed Government of Alberta task force on the unfunded liability of the teachers' pension plan. (217A/07)

Government Response:

With the January 31, 2008 resolution of the unfunded liability issue and the government position that the resolution serves the interests of students, teachers, school boards and taxpayers alike, the Association position on the Task Force is moot.