



# AGENDA

## BOARD OF TRUSTEES

**Sarah Hoffman**  
Board Chair


**Michael Janz**  
Board Vice-Chair

**Sherry Adams**  
**Orville Chubb**  
**Michelle Draper**  
**Ken Gibson**  
**Nathan Ip**  
**Cheryl Johnner**  
**Ray Martin**

**Edmonton School District No. 7**  
**One Kingsway**  
**Edmonton, Alberta**

**McCauley Chambers**  
**Tuesday, January 21, 2014**  
**3:00 p.m.**

### **Board Meeting #5**

- A. O Canada **
- B. Roll Call**
- C. Approval of the Agenda**
- D. Communications from the Board Chair**
- E. Communications from the Superintendent of Schools**
- F. Approval of the Minutes**
  - 1. DRAFT – Board Meeting #4 – December 17, 2013
- G. Comments from the Public and Staff Group Representatives**  
*(NOTE: Pre-registration with the Board Office [780-429-8021] is required by 4:30 p.m. Monday, January 20, 2014 to speak under this item.)*
- H. Reports:**
  - 2. Motion re Child Care Poverty Reduction  
(Recommendation)
  - 3. Locally Developed Courses for Semester Two  
(Recommendation)
  - 4. Lost Prizes Program  
Response to Request for Information #002  
(Information with 5 to 8 minute presentation)
  - 5. Student Population Growth and Proposed New Schools  
Response to Request for Information #007  
(Information)
  - 6. Bereavements  
(Information with introduction)

- I. Other Committee, Board Representative and Trustee Reports**
- J. Comments from the Public and Staff Group Representatives - 5:00 p.m.**  
*(NOTE: Pre-registration with the Board Office [780-429-8021] is required by 4:30 p.m. Monday, January 20, 2014 to speak under this item.)*
- K. Trustee and Board Requests for Information**
- L. Notices of Motion**
- M. Meeting Dates**
- N. Adjournment**

## **MINUTE BOOK**

### **Board Meeting #4**

Minutes of the Board Meeting of the Trustees of the Edmonton School District No. 7 of the Province of Alberta held in McCauley Chambers in the Centre for Education on Tuesday, December 17, 2013 at 2:00 p.m.

#### **Present:**

##### **Trustees**

Sherry Adams  
Orville Chubb  
Michelle Draper

Ken Gibson  
Sarah Hoffman  
Nathan Ip

Michael Janz  
Cheryl Johner

##### **Officials**

Diana Bolan  
Jim Davies  
David Fraser

Ron MacNeil  
Kathy Muhlethaler

Darrel Robertson  
Sandra Stoddard

**Board Chair:** Sarah Hoffman

**Recording Secretary:** Manon Fraser

A. O Canada 

Hannah Meyers, Angelina Berlinic and Julia Don Edwards, Grade 10 students from Victoria School, sang O Canada.

B. **Roll Call:** (2:00 p.m.)

The Superintendent advised that Trustee Martin was absent. All other Trustees were present.

C. **Approval of the Agenda**

The Board Chair advised that a report from the Caucus Committee would be added to the agenda following report three.

**MOVED BY Trustee Janz:**

**“That the agenda for the December 17, 2013 board meeting be approved as amended.” (UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED)**

## **MINUTE BOOK**

### **D. Communications from the Board Chair**

The Board Chair noted everyone was saddened by the death on December 5, 2013 of one of the world's most influential people in history – the former President of South Africa Nelson Mandela. Schools lowered their flags to half-mast to honour his passing.

A moment of silence was observed.

The Board Chair advised that the District Recognition for Service, Team and Merit awards event to recognize the outstanding accomplishments, contributions, and achievements of parent/community members, staff members and students was held December 3, 2013. She commended the event organizers and those who put forward nominations.

The Board Chair advised that, on December 4, 2013, she attended the signing of the reaffirmation of an Education Memo of Understanding between the Province of Alberta and Spain to offer Spanish accreditation through school programming.

The Board Chair noted a Metro Board Chairs' meeting was held December 11, 2013, at which, it was determined the common areas of advocacy would be the budget challenges from last year and what boards would like to see in the upcoming budget as well as the common metro area infrastructure needs.

The Board Chair advised there was Board representation at the recent Public Schools Administrators Association event.

The Board Chair advised she attended the Violence Threat and Risk Assessment training session offer by Edmonton Catholic Schools on December 12, 2013.

The Board Chair advised she attended the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Gala of the Al Rashid Mosque on December 14, 2013. The Al Rashid Mosque was the first mosque in Canada.

The Board Chair advised that the Tuesday, January 7, 2014 board meeting has been cancelled. The next board meeting will be held on Tuesday, January 21, 2014 at 2:00 p.m.

## MINUTE BOOK

### **E. Communications from the Superintendent of Schools**

The Superintendent advised that Principals Greg Kushnir and Karen Linden have been nominated to be two of Canada's Outstanding Principals, a prestigious award from The Learning Partnership. The final forty award winners will be determined, and announced in February. He offered his congratulations.

The Superintendent advised that Edmonton Public Schools was invited to appear before the House of Commons Standing Committee on Official Languages to provide testimony and recommendations on how the Federal Government can enhance its contribution to supporting French immersion programming. Ms Valerie Leclair, Program Coordinator for French Language Programs with the Institute for Innovation in Second Language Education at Edmonton Public Schools, provided a ten-minute testimony via video-conference on December 2, 2013 which included information regarding French Immersion programming in the district as well as the District's successes and challenges. He is proud of the fact that Edmonton Public Schools is widely seen as a national leader in second language education, and the District has been identified by the Commissioner of Official Languages as having the best French immersion programs in Canada.

The Superintendent advised that, earlier this month, the Confucius Institute in Edmonton (CIE) was recognized by the Chinese government as the Confucius Institute of the Year. CIE Director Dr. Wei Li and Assistant Superintendent Diana Bolan travelled to Beijing to receive the award from the Vice Premier of China, Madame Liu Yandong. This is the second time in three years the CIE has received this distinction.

### **F. Minutes**

1. Board Meeting #2 – November 26, 2013

**MOVED BY Trustee Draper:**

**“That the minutes of Board Meeting #2 held November 26, 2013 be approved as printed.” (UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED)**

2. Board Meeting #3 – December 3, 2013

**MOVED BY Trustee Ip:**

**“That the minutes of Board Meeting #3 held December 3, 2013 be approved as printed.” (UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED)**

## **MINUTE BOOK**

### **H. Reports**

3. Report #2 of the Caucus Committee (From the Meeting Held December 3, 2013)

**MOVED BY Trustee Janz:**

- “1. That Report #2 of the Caucus Committee from the meeting held December 3, 2013 be received and considered.” (UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED)

**MOVED BY Trustee Janz:**

- “2. That the appointment of Trustee Cheryl Johner to serve as the Board’s alternate representative on the Alberta School Boards Board of Directors for 2013-2014 be confirmed.” (UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED)

**MOVED BY Trustee Janz:**

- “3. That the allocation of \$495 from the Board Initiative Fund to cover the cost of the Metro Boards Meeting held November 17, 2013 be approved.” (UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED)

Report #3 of the Caucus Committee (From the Meeting Held December 17, 2013)

**MOVED BY Trustee Janz:**

- “1. That Report #3 of the Caucus Committee from the meeting held December 17, 2013 be received and considered.” (UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED)

**MOVED BY Trustee Janz:**

- “2. That the following designation for the period August 12, 2013 to August 31, 2014 be approved: Sandra Stoddard – Executive Director” (UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED)

## MINUTE BOOK

**MOVED BY Trustee Janz:**

- “3. That considerations to the Amiskwaciy lease be deferred pending administrative recommendations developed as a result of the growth accommodation strategy as well as the passing of the Planning Principles in September 2013. As a result, the motion approved at the June 18, 2013 board meeting with respect to the Amiskwaciy base rent (*That Recommendation #2 of the Amiskwaciy Base Rent report (That, in future years, the Amiskwaciy base rent be paid with funds other than those received from the province specifically for First Nations, Métis and Inuit Education.) be referred to the Community Relations Committee to consult with the FNMI communities and bring a report to public board by January 31, 2014.*) is rescinded.” (UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED)**

### **G. Comments from the Public and Staff Group Representatives**

The Board heard from Ms Blanca Sanchez regarding the District’s space issues.

- 4. Motion re Resources to Strengthen Liaison Between First Nations Schools and Edmonton Public Schools**

**MOVED BY Trustee Gibson:**

**“Given**

- the degree and timing of student mobility between First Nations schools and Edmonton public schools,**
- limitations in student records following the student,**
- this Board's commitment to building social capital through partnerships as a means to strengthen student success,**
- the Provincial Government's commitment to result-based budgets rather than funding in separate silos, and**
- the Federal Government's desire to strengthen First Nations education,**

**that the Advocacy and District Priorities and Governance Committees consider the merits of developing a plan to engage the provincial and federal governments to provide the District additional resources to strengthen liaison between First Nations schools and Edmonton Public schools.”**

**The Board Chair called the question.**

**The Motion was UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED.**

## MINUTE BOOK

### 5. 2012-2013 Financial Statements and Auditors Report

**MOVED BY Trustee Gibson:**

- “1. That for the 2012-2013 year, the transfer of \$17.4 million from the Unrestricted Surplus to Operating Reserves be confirmed.**
- 2. That the audited financial statements for the year ending August 31, 2013 be approved.” (UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED)**

There was a short break at this point.

### 6. Fall 2013 Update to the 2013-2014 Budget

**MOVED BY Trustee Johner:**

**“That the Board formally adopt the Fall 2013 Update as the 2013-2014 annual District Budget.” (UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED)**

### 7. Development of the District Priorities

**MOVED BY Trustee Gibson:**

- “1. That the recommended process for seeking staff, student, parent, and community stakeholder input into the development of the District Priorities as outlined in Phase 1 of the Project Charter titled *Development of the District’s Strategic Plan 2014 – 2018* be approved.**
- 2. That the Agenda Outcomes for the January 26– 29, 2014 Board Retreat be approved.**
- 3. That the allocation of up to \$20,000 from the Board Initiative Fund to assist with the costs associated with the use of an external Program Evaluator to:**
  - support the development of goals, strategies, outcomes, and performance measures based on the District Priorities; and**
  - facilitate the creation of an online dashboard to measure progress on the priorities over the next four years be approved.”**

**The Board Chair called the question.**

**The Motion was UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED.**



## **MINUTE BOOK**

8. Annual Policy Development and Review Plan 2013-2014

**MOVED BY Trustee Draper:**

**“That the Annual Policy Development and Review Plan 2013-2014 be approved.” (UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED)**

9. Alberta School Boards Association (ASBA) Call For Input into the ASBA Strategic Plan 2014-2017

**MOVED BY Trustee Hoffman:**

**“That the Board approve the questionnaire responses as proposed by the ASBA Issues and Resolutions Committee.”**

**MOVED BY Trustee Gibson:**

**“That the questionnaire responses be amended so that the rankings for questions 9, 10 and 12 of the questionnaire remain as high priority and the rankings of all other items be lowered by one priority level.”**

**The Board Chair called the question on the Amendment.**

**The Motion was UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED.**

**The Board Chair called the question on the Motion as Amended.**

**The Motion was UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED.**

- I. Comments from the Public and Staff Group Representatives – 5:00 p.m.**

There were no registered speakers.

- J. Other Committee, Board Representative and Trustee Reports**

Trustee Janz reported that he represented the Board at the Minister of Health’s Human Papillomavirus (HPV) vaccination announcement on December 5, 2013. The vaccine will be available for all district students next fall.

Trustee Janz advised that the John Humphrey Centre for Peace and Human Rights asked him to be the chair of their 2013 Human Rights awards ceremony held on December 10, 2013. It was noted at the ceremony that Evansdale School was Alberta’s first school to be a part of UNICEF Canada’s Rights Respecting Schools (RRS) initiative.

## MINUTE BOOK

Trustee Janz advised that, last night, he attended the Brander Gardens public meeting and engagement forum regarding space issues in that area. He commended all of the staff who participated in helping parents work through some of the tough issues the District is facing.

Trustee Johner, the Board's representative on ASBA Zone 2/3, reported that Zone 2/3 met on November 29, 2013. Trustee Adams was also in attendance. This was the first meeting of the Zones with the new Trustee representatives. The Labour Relations Representative and Alternate were elected at the meeting as well as the third member of the Advocacy Committee. She noted the Honourable Donald Scott, Associate Minister of Accountability, Transparency and Transformation provided a professional development presentation on the ongoing review of *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy* legislation. In addition, David Anderson, ASBA Executive Director, provided an overview of ASBA history. She noted the next ASBA Zone 2/3 meeting will take place Friday, January 24, 2014. Professional development at the meeting will be with respect to the Funding Framework, Tweeting for Trustees and Superintendent Compensation. She also noted the following upcoming events:

- January 19-21, 2014 – New Trustees Board Chair's Conference (open to all Trustees)
- January 21-22, 2014 – Community Engagement Conference

Trustee Gibson advised he had attended the Bessie Nichols special school council meeting on December 9, 2013 regarding the District's growth and accommodation issues. There were approximately 125 parents in attendance. He commended Principal Martyn, the school staff and staff from the Planning Department. He commended Superintendent Robertson, in particular, who attended the entire event and stayed 45 minutes after the official close of the meeting. He acquitted himself remarkably well and the community was extremely impressed. He felt this was an excellent demonstration of leadership.

Trustee Hoffman, the Board's representative on the Alberta School Boards Association (ASBA) Board of Directors, reported on the following from the December 12-13, 2013 Board of Directors meeting:

- Discussion took place regarding Alberta's ranking on the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) tests dropping in reading, science and math. The Board of Directors approved a motion to request that ASBA administration enter into discussions with Alberta Education and other partners including the Alberta Teachers' Association to determine the cause of the decline and recommend actions to reverse the trend.
- The establishment of a task force to review alternate fee structures for the ASBA was approved.
- The audited financial statements were approved.

## **MINUTE BOOK**

- Members were approved for the Insurance Bureau as well as the Insurance Board.
- 2 members were appointed to the Alberta School Employees Benefit Plan (ASEBP) Committee
- 1 member was appointed to the Alberta School Boards Insurance Exchange

The Board Chair advised that a copy of her full, written report will be posted on the Board Intranet Site (BIS) for Trustee information.

Trustee Hoffman advised that, on December 5, 2013, she and several other Trustees attended the launch of the full-day kindergarten program at Princeton School. She commended the event organizers.

**K. Trustee and Board Requests for Information** – None.

**L. Notices of Motion**

Trustee Janz served notice of the following motion:

*That the Board seek support from Edmonton Catholic School District and Edmonton City Council to write a joint letter to the Minister of Education requesting a clear, transparent, and equitable process for the awarding of new schools.*

Trustee Janz served notice of the following motion:

*That, in alignment with the Premier's 2012 goal to end child poverty and District Priority #1 (provide supports and programs that will enable all students to complete high school), the Board write a letter to the Premier in support of the Child Care Poverty Reduction Report authored by the Alberta College of Social Workers, Public Interest Alberta, and the Edmonton Social Planning Council.*

**M. Next Board Meeting Date: Tuesday, January 21, 2014 at 2:00 p.m.**

**MINUTE BOOK**

N.     **Adjournment** (4:35 p.m.)

**The Board Chair** adjourned the meeting.

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Sarah Hoffman, Board Chair

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Dr. Sandra Stoddard, Executive Director  
Governance and Strategic Support Services

**DATE:** January 21, 2014

**TO:** Board of Trustees

**FROM:** Trustee Michael Janz

**SUBJECT:** Motion re Child Care Poverty Reduction

**REFERENCE:** [Trustees' Handbook](#) – Notices of Motion (Section 5.2.2)  
[December 17, 2013 – Edmonton Catholic School Board Meeting Report - Motion re Elimination of Childhood Poverty – Statement of Support From Words to Action – Alberta Can Afford a Real Poverty Reduction Strategy](#)  
[Government of Alberta's Early Childhood Mapping Initiative](#)

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#### ISSUE

Notice of motion was served at the December 17, 2013 board meeting.

#### RECOMMENDATION

**That, in alignment with the Premier's 2012 goal to end child poverty and District Priority #1 (provide supports and programs that will enable all students to complete high school), the Board write a letter to the Premier in support of the Child Care Poverty Reduction Report authored by the Alberta College of Social Workers, Public Interest Alberta, and the Edmonton Social Planning Council.**

#### BACKGROUND

Socioeconomic challenges play a major role in inhibiting the success of many of our learners. Increasing research, including that of the Government of Alberta's Early Childhood Mapping ([www.ecmap.ca](http://www.ecmap.ca)) initiative highlight the significant role that the early years places on educational success for students. Wrap-around supports and partnerships with other ministries and organizations can play a role in supporting success for all students and ensuring that all students are able to complete high school.

The Edmonton Catholic School Board unanimously passed the following statement of support at their December 17, 2013 board meeting (Attachment I): *That the Board of Trustees of Edmonton Catholic Schools endorses the call in the report, [From Words To Action](#), jointly issued by Public Interest Alberta and the Edmonton Social Planning Council that calls for a modification to Alberta's Provincial tax structure in order to help to end child poverty by 2017 and as an expression of that endorsement the Board Chair writes to Premier Redford stating the Board's support for the recommendations included in the report.*

#### OPTIONS CONSIDERED

The following options have been considered as they are deemed the most admissible:

1. The Board Chair could support the request and write a letter in support of the report.
2. The Board could receive the report for information at this time.

**ATTACHMENTS & APPENDICES**

ATTACHMENT I     December 17, 2013 – Edmonton Catholic School Board Meeting Report -  
Motion re Elimination of Childhood Poverty – Statement of Support

MJ:mmf

*December 17, 2013 Public Board Meeting 3.3(B)*

December 2, 2013

To: Board of Trustees

From: John Acheson  
Trustee

**Re: Elimination of Childhood Poverty: Statement of Support**

**Motion:**

That the Board of Trustees of Edmonton Catholic Schools endorses the call in the report, From Words To Action, jointly issued by Public Interest Alberta and the Edmonton Social Planning Council that calls for a modification to Alberta's Provincial tax structure in order to help to end child poverty by 2017 and as an expression of that endorsement the Board Chair writes to Premier Redford stating the Board's support for the recommendations included in the report.

**Background**

The Province has stated its desire to eliminate child poverty by 2017. In order to achieve this goal the report, From Words To Action, calls for changes to Alberta's tax regime. Such changes could bring in an additional \$1.2 billion to \$3.0 billion, which could be used to address specific social aspects relating to child poverty. These could include but would not be limited to the following:

- a) Enhanced Alberta child benefits;
- b) Funding for additional affordable housing;
- c) Funding to support full day kindergarten for vulnerable children;
- d) Funding to improve early childhood development and child protection;
- e) Funding to reduce class size [and reduce class composition complexities];
- f) Funding to increase support for Family and Community Support Services.

The report, From Words To Action,

<http://www.actiontoendpovertyinalberta.org/images/stories/documents/from%20words%20to%20actions%20report%202013%20final.pdf>

tax rate adjustments promoted therein would still leave Alberta as the Province with the overall lowest tax regime in Canada.

The report further notes that one in every 10 children in Alberta - or about 84,000 - lived below the low-income measure poverty line in 2011. Many of these children would be students in our schools. It is axiomatic that in many cases their socio-economic situation would add unique challenges to their schooling and learning. It is because of this that the Catholic Board should add its voice to the call for action by the Province - the situation as it exists has a definite impact on the children and schools of the District. Further, the Board's endorsement of the report might increase the possibility of it to have a positive impact on the Province's poverty-reduction strategy that is due to be released in the spring of 2014.





# From Words to Action

Alberta Can Afford a Real Poverty Reduction Strategy

November 2013



### Acknowledgements

**John Kolkman** of the Edmonton Social Planning Council (ESPC), and **Bill Moore-Kilgannon** of Public Interest Alberta (PIA) jointly authored this report. **Lori Sigurdson** of the Alberta College of Social Workers (ACSW) and **Leah Kelley** of the Women's Centre of Calgary provided input on content. ACSW also covered print costs. Layout, design and proof-reading by **Virginia Dowdell** (ESPC) and **Sheryle Carlson** (PIA). We wish to thank the members of the Public Interest Alberta Human Services and Poverty Reduction Task Force for their input and support.

This report is published by the Alberta College of Social Workers, Public Interest Alberta, and the Edmonton Social Planning Council. Any errors, omissions, and opinions are strictly those of the authors. Online (pdf) versions of this report are available at [www.pialberta.org](http://www.pialberta.org), [www.acsw.ab.ca](http://www.acsw.ab.ca), and [www.edmontonsocialplanning.ca](http://www.edmontonsocialplanning.ca). To request a bound copy of the report please contact::

#### Alberta College of Social Workers

550-10707 100 Avenue NW  
Edmonton, Alberta T5J 3M1  
Phone: 780.421.1167  
[www.acsw.ab.ca](http://www.acsw.ab.ca)

#### Public Interest Alberta

305-10512 122 Street NW  
Edmonton, Alberta T5N 1M6  
Phone: 780.420.0471  
[www.pialberta.org](http://www.pialberta.org)  
Twitter: @PIAlberta  
[www.facebook.com/PIAlberta](http://www.facebook.com/PIAlberta)

#### Edmonton Social Planning Council

37-9912 106 Street NW  
Edmonton, Alberta T5K 1C5  
Phone: 780.423.2031  
[www.edmontonsocialplanning.ca](http://www.edmontonsocialplanning.ca)  
Twitter: @edmontonspc  
[www.facebook.com/edmontonspc](http://www.facebook.com/edmontonspc)

At the national level we also work closely with and support the work of:

#### Campaign 2000

[www.campaign2000.ca](http://www.campaign2000.ca)

#### Which measure of poverty to use?

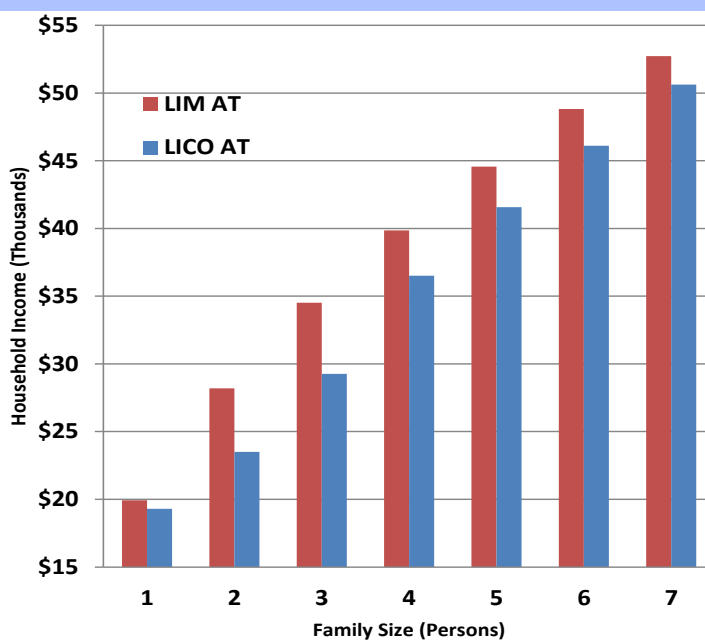
Canada does not have an official poverty line. In this report most of the data is presented using the Low Income Measure After-Tax (LIM AT). Several of our Campaign 2000 national and provincial partners are also using the LIM AT in their reports.

The decision to discontinue use of the Low Income Cut-off is in part because, since 1992, LICO has only been updated for inflation and not other changes in the expenditures of Canadian families. Statistics Canada has no plans to update LICO, whereas LIM is updated every year.

LIM has other advantages over LICO. It is a more easily understood measure. LIM is based on 50% of median family income. LICO is a much more complex calculation. LIM is also an international measure used to compare poverty rates in different countries around the world. LICO is a measure only used in Canada.

Chart 1 shows the low income (poverty) lines for different household sizes for both LIM and LICO.

Chart 1: Low Income Lines by Family Size



Source: Statistics Canada, 2013e; Statistics Canada 2013h

Cover Photo Credit: farmer64

## From Words to Action

In April 2012, Premier Alison Redford promised Albertans that if her government was re-elected, they would commit to a 5-year plan to end child poverty and a 10-year plan to reduce poverty overall (Progressive Conservative Association of Alberta, 2012).

This breakthrough occurred due to the hard work of many concerned organizations and individuals advocating for a provincial strategy.

The Edmonton Social Planning Council and Public Interest Alberta previously co-published three reports, *We Can Do Better* (2008), *We Must Do Better* (2009), and *Time for Action* (2010). The Alberta College of Social Workers joined ESPC and PIA to co-publish two poverty reduction reports, *In This Together* (2011), and *Achieving the Promise* (2012).

Action to End Poverty in Alberta, a steering committee representing municipalities, social policy organizations, and the social service sector was formed three years ago to champion and lead the development of a comprehensive strategy.

*"We are proud of our accomplishments with the 10-year Plan to End Homelessness, and Alberta is now recognized as a leader in Canada in its approach to addressing this issue. We plan on building on this success with our Plan for Poverty Reduction."*

- Premier Alison Redford, April 11, 2012  
(Progressive Conservative Association of Alberta, 2012)

In February 2012, Vibrant Communities Calgary and Action to End Poverty in Alberta released a report titled *Poverty Costs: An Economic Case for a Preventative Poverty Reduction Strategy in Alberta* (Briggs & Lee, 2012). This report quantified the cost of poverty in terms of health care, crime, and lost economic opportunity for the first time in Alberta. *Poverty Costs 2.0* followed in June 2013 with a comprehensive blueprint for reducing poverty in Alberta (Hudson C.A., 2013).

The *From Words to Actions* report contains updated information on the extent of child and family poverty in Alberta. Also highlighted are the many worthwhile programs, services and initiatives already underway that contribute to reducing poverty.

This report makes the case that Alberta can readily afford a poverty reduction strategy. According to the

government's own numbers, were Albertans to be taxed at the same level as the second lowest taxed province, \$10.7 billion in additional revenue would be generated (Government of Alberta, 2013a). This report outlines modest changes to the personal and corporate tax systems that would generate the revenues required to properly fund key poverty solutions. These solutions are also costed.

The Alberta government continues to consult on a Social Policy Framework in which a children's charter and poverty reduction plan is included. An interactive website was launched and hundreds of community conversations held to gather public input during the summers of 2012 and 2013 (Government of Alberta, February 2013).

Earlier this year, an overarching Social Policy Framework focused on values, vision, and broad goals was finalized by the Ministry of Human Services. Enabling legislation called the Children's First Act was passed by the Alberta Legislature. While the goals of the Act are laudable, some of the provisions raise concerns about downloading of responsibilities onto the voluntary sector.

When the 2013 provincial budget was tabled in March, cuts were made to many programs that support low income families. It will take more than money to eliminate the scourge of child poverty in this province. Yet, without additional investment in key solutions, the goal of ending child poverty by 2017, and reducing overall poverty by 2022 will not be achieved.

Consultations and policy framework documents are no substitute for meaningful action. The next year will be critical in determining whether the Social Policy Framework and Children First Act end up being simply statement of good intentions, or include specific policy changes to make Alberta a leader in eliminating child and family poverty.

The time has come for Alberta to move from words to action. Outlined in this report are recommended solutions and where the needed resources would come from.

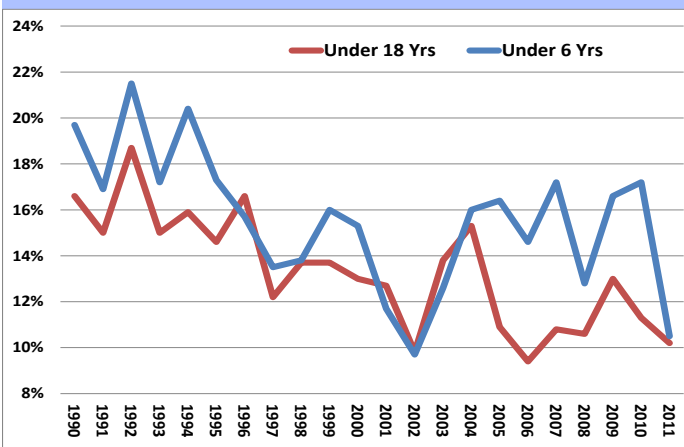
## Alberta Child Poverty Facts

Over one out of ten Alberta children lives in poverty. 84,000 children under the age of 18 (10.2 per cent) lived below the low income measure poverty line in 2011 (Chart 2). 2011 is the last year for which poverty data is available. Despite a return to strong economic and employment growth, only 8 per cent fewer children lived in poverty compared to the previous year (Statistics Canada, 2013f).

The percentage of younger children living in poverty is slightly higher than the overall child poverty rate in Alberta. Over one in ten (10.5 per cent) children under the age of 6 years are living in low income families. In Alberta, there are 29,800 children under 6 living in poverty.

A stronger economy alone will not eliminate child poverty. Additional social investments such as enhanced child tax benefits and making work pay are also required.

**Chart 2: Alberta Low Income Rate, (LIM AT), Children Under 18 Years and Children Under 6 Years**



Source: Statistics Canada 2013c; Statistics Canada 2013f

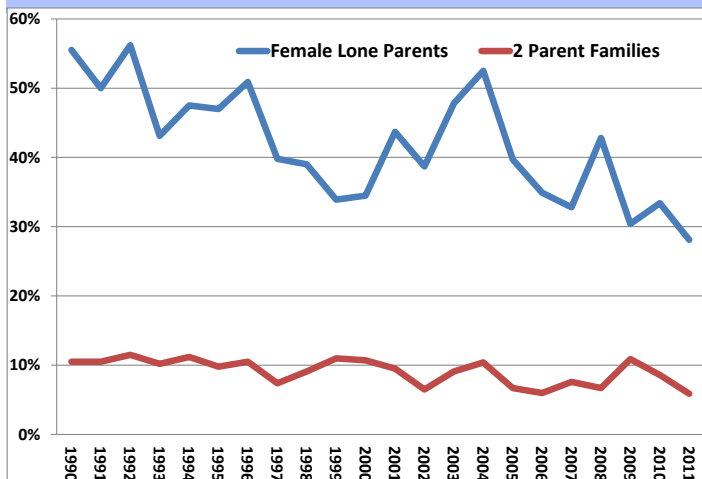
### Child poverty higher in lone-parent families

In Alberta, some sub-populations are more likely to be poor than others. One group that is particularly vulnerable is single parent mothers, who tend to have weak links to the labour market and/or are precariously employed (Canadian Women's Foundation, 2010, p. 38). When facing these circumstances, it is difficult to find continuous work and adequate child care, while juggling their domestic responsibilities as caregivers.

Poverty rates for children under the age of 18 who live with a female lone parent are markedly higher compared to two-parent families. In the years leading up to the recent recession, the poverty rates for these children were declining, but spiked at 42.8 per cent at the onset of

the recession in 2008. Child poverty rates for female lone parent household started to fall in 2009, settling at 28.1 per cent in 2011.

**Chart 3: Poverty Rate by Family Type, Alberta, (LIM AT) (Persons Under 18 Years)**

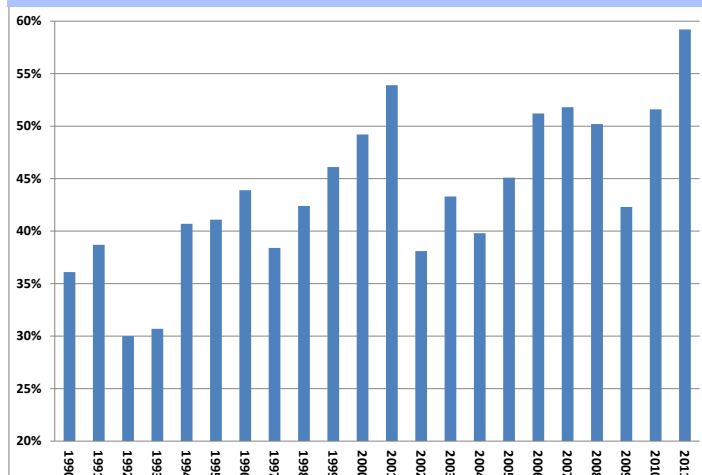


Source: Statistics Canada 2013g

Between 2009 and 2011, the poverty rates for children (under the age of 18) living in two-parent households fell from 10.9 per cent to 5.9 per cent (Chart 3). Poverty in families with two-parents tends to follow broader economic trends, going up during recessions and down during periods of strong economic growth. The recent improving trend reflects improving employment conditions and hours of work in 2011.

### Most low income parents work full-time

**Chart 4: Percentage of Alberta children in poor families where one or more parents has a FT,FY job**

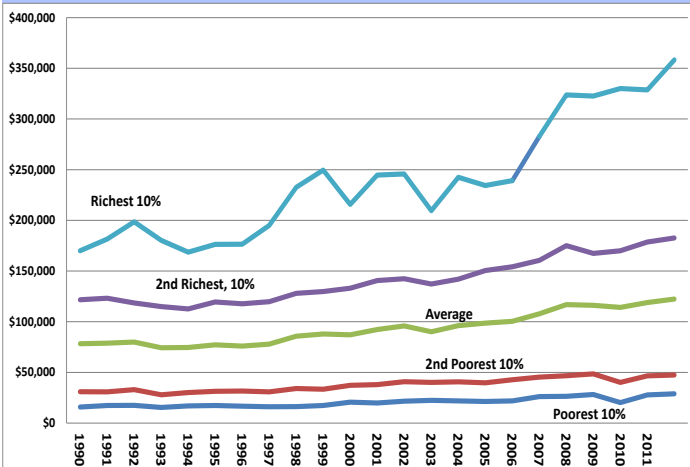


Source: Statistics Canada 2013c

For many low-income families, employment is not a guaranteed ticket out of poverty. Full-time work, even when combined with income transfers from governments, is still inadequate to lift children out of dire circumstances. In 2011, an all-time record 59.2 per cent of children in poverty lived in a household where one or more persons were working full-time for the entire year (Chart 4).

## Greater disparity in income

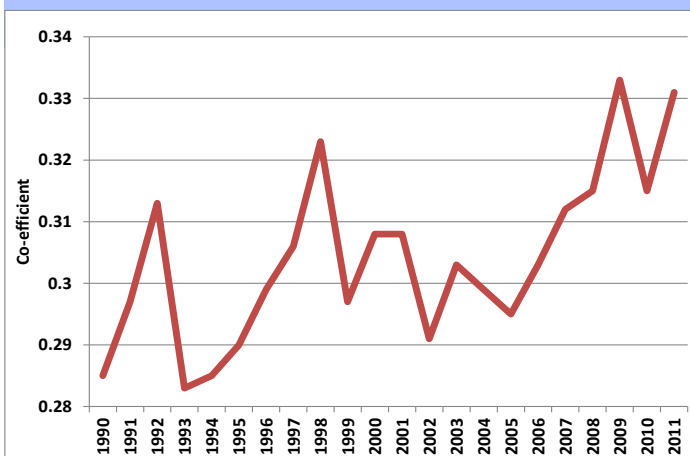
**Chart 5: Annual Total Average Income of Families with Children, by Income Group, Alberta (Constant 2011\$)**



Source: Statistics Canada 2013b

Income inequality between the richest and poorest Alberta families has widened greatly since 1990. Between 1990 and 2011, the yearly income of the poorest 10 per cent of Alberta families with children increased only marginally (Chart 5). Over the same period of time, the yearly income of the richest 10 per cent of families with children more than doubled.

**Chart 6: Income Inequality, Alberta, Non-Elderly Families (After Tax)**



Source: Statistics Canada 2013d

## The Gini co-efficient explained

A Gini index of 0 represents absolute equality - every family in Alberta has the exact same income. A Gini index of 1 represents absolute inequality - one family has all the income in Alberta and all of the other families have none.

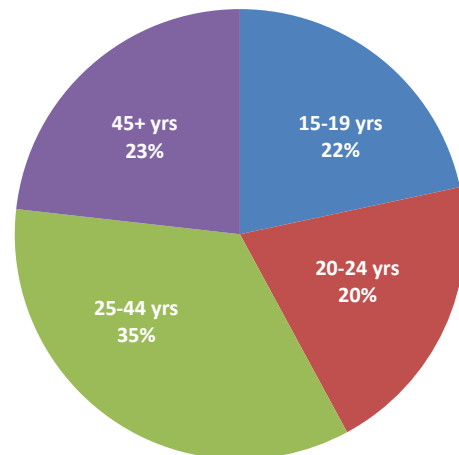
Globally, countries with a Gini below 0.300 has low inequality and those from 0.300 to 0.399 medium inequality.

In 2011, Alberta saw an increase in income inequality (Chart 6). Despite yearly fluctuations, Alberta has continued along an upward trajectory from low to medium income inequality. Growing inequality threatens Alberta's social cohesion by increasing polarization between income groups, impeding upward mobility, and undermining support for strong public services.

## Most low wage earners older adults, women

Over one in five employed Albertans, and over one in four employed women, work for low wages (\$15 per hour or less) (Chart 7). Between April 2012 and March 2013, 58 per cent of low-wage working Albertans were 25 years of age or older. This is the same per cent as the year before (Canada, 2013a).

**Chart 7: Albertans Earning \$15 per hour or less, by Age Group (April 2012 to March 2013)**



Source: Statistics Canada 2013a

There is also a gender disparity when it comes to low wage work. Almost two-thirds of low wage workers 25 years and older (65%) are women (Statistics Canada, 2013a). Many more women than men work in low wage occupations in sectors such as retail trade, health care and social assistance, and accommodations and food services (Government of Alberta 2013, p. 12). Moreover, the Government of Alberta's decision to implement a lower two-tiered minimum wage negatively impacts women who

disproportionally are employed as servers (Government of Alberta, September 2012, p. 4).

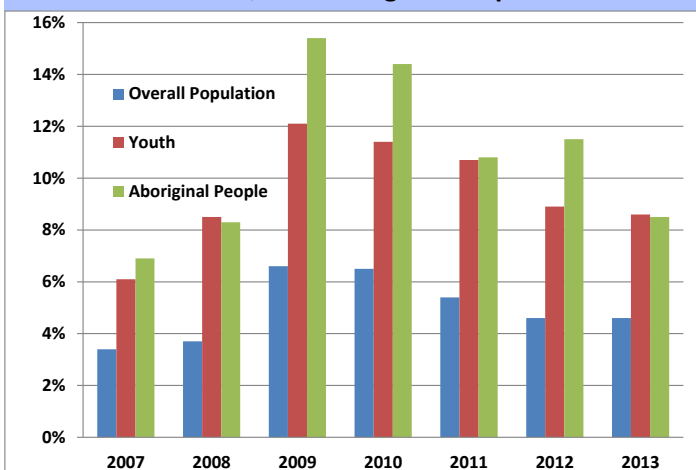
### Strong employment growth since recession

From an employment perspective, the recession bottomed out in March 2010, when 91,000 fewer Albertans had jobs compared to October 2008. During the same timeframe, the unemployment rate more than doubled from 3.5 to 7.4 per cent. Unemployment rates have been steadily decreasing since the height of the recession to 4.6 per cent in 2013 (January to September).

Job growth in Alberta has improved over the past three years. Since September 2010, the province has added 222,000 jobs.

Unemployment rates for Aboriginal people living off-reserve fell from 15.4 per cent at the height of the recession in 2009 to 8.5 per cent in 2013 (January to September). However, it was still almost double the overall unemployment rate in Alberta (Chart 8).

**Chart 8: Unemployment Rates of Alberta Population, Youth, and Aboriginal People**



First 9 months of 2013

Source: Statistics Canada 2013b ; Government of Alberta, November 2013

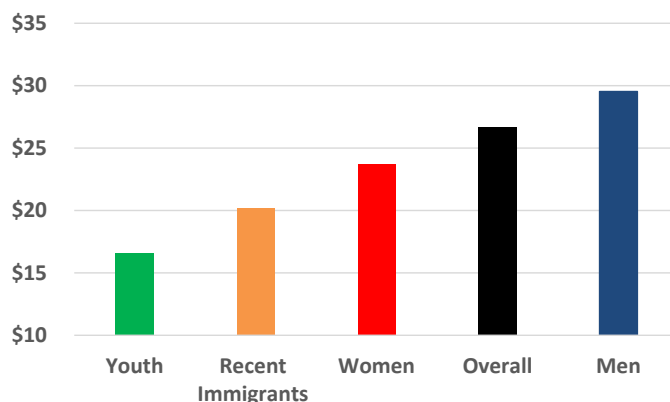
Similarly, youth unemployment rates fell modestly between 2009 (12.1 per cent) and 2013 (8.6 per cent). These percentages are still much higher than overall unemployment, and are still above pre-recession levels.

### Wages lower for youth, immigrants, women

Certain groups in Alberta are disadvantaged in the labour market and earn substantially lower wages. As shown on Chart 9, average hourly wages of women are 23 per cent lower than those of men. Recent immigrants who have been in Canada for less than five years earn only 75% of

the average hourly wage. Youth under the age of 25 earn only 62% of the average hourly wage.

**Chart 9: Average Hourly Wage by Group**

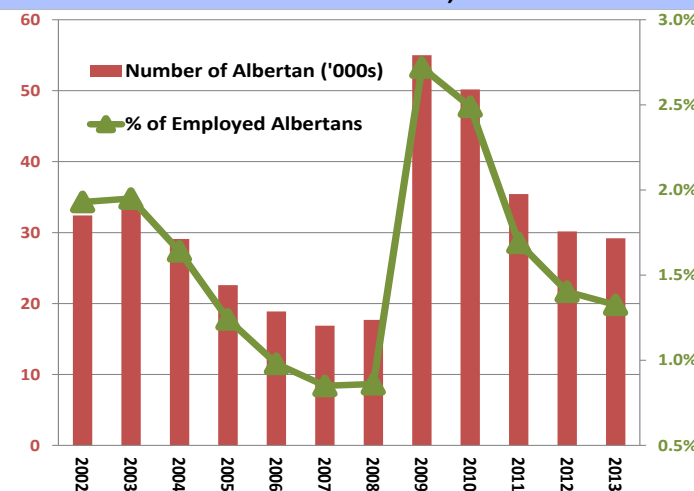


Source: Government of Alberta, Labour Force Profiles

### Fewer Albertans receiving EI benefits

Employment Insurance was accessed by most low income Albertans who experienced sudden job loss at the start of the recession (Chart 10). Between 2008 and 2009, the number of Albertans receiving regular benefits tripled. Men were disproportionately affected by job loss. In 2010, the number of beneficiaries started to decline as eligibility expired and employment prospects improved. This trend of fewer beneficiaries continues into 2013. The ratio of EI beneficiaries compared to the number of employed Albertans is very low. Almost 99 Albertans are working for every Albertan drawing regular EI benefits.

**Chart 10: EI Beneficiaries, Alberta**



Source: Statistics Canada 2013i, 2013 data is first 8 months

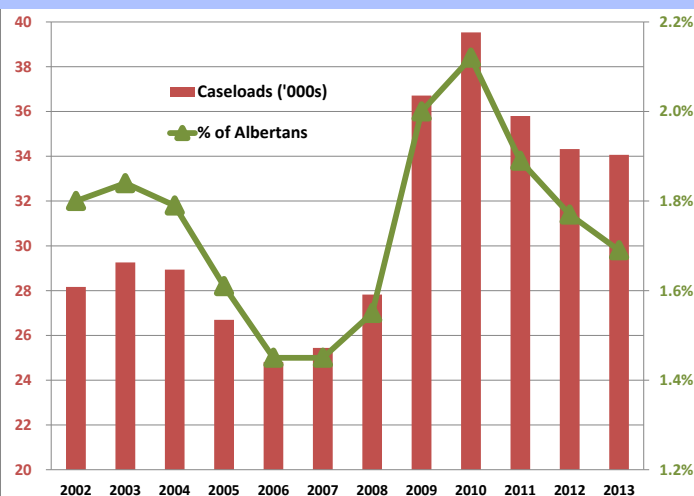


## Social assistance caseloads slowly decline

The Alberta Works caseloads are averaging 34,000 so far in 2013 (Chart 11). Since each case represents an average of two people, only about 1.9 per cent of Albertans receive social assistance.

One in three income support recipients are single parents with children. The government has been able to reduce the social assistance budget by over \$50 million in the past two years due to the reduction in caseloads. Yet, the amount of support provided to single parents is not sufficient to even cover market rents let alone other essentials. Moreover, 75 per cent of any amounts earned above \$230 per month are clawed back (Government of Alberta, November 2013).

**Chart 11: Alberta Works Caseloads, Alberta**



\*2013 data is for first 8 months

Source: Government of Alberta, August 2013

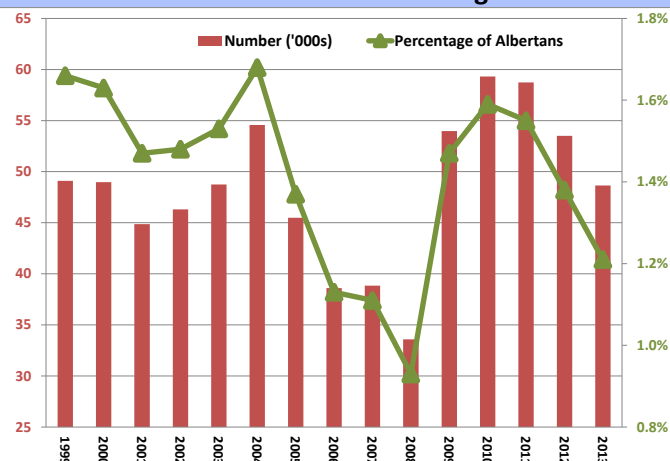
## Food bank use follows economic trends

There was a dramatic increase in food bank usage between 2009 and 2011 (Chart 12). As Alberta's economy recovers, the number of individuals and families using a food bank is slowly declining. In March 2013, 48,653 Albertans used a food bank, still 44.9 per cent higher than five years earlier.

In March 2013, children and youth made up 44.1 per cent of those turning to food banks for help (Food Banks Canada, 2013, p. 25). 32.2 per cent of those helped by a food bank reported being on some form of social assistance, while 21.9 per cent reported having employment income (Food Banks Canada, 2013, p. 25). Alberta has the highest rate of food bank use by those working full-time, full-year in Canada (Alberta College of

Social Workers and the Parkland Institute, 2012, p. 26).

**Chart 12: Number of Albertans Using a Food Bank**

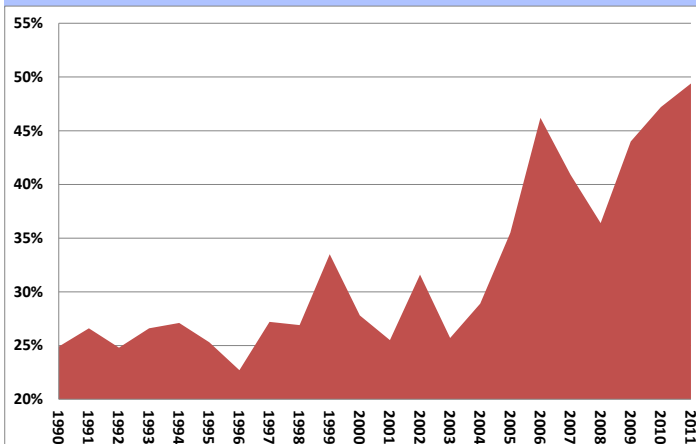


Source: Food Banks Canada, 2013

## Government transfers: Positive effects

Government income transfers - such as child tax benefits, social assistance, and employment insurance - play a significant role in lifting low income families above the poverty line (Chart 13). In Alberta, the effectiveness of government income transfers in lifting children above the poverty line has increased over the years. In 1990, only about 25.0 per cent of children were lifted above the poverty line. Twenty one years later in 2011, this had increased to 49.4 per cent.

**Chart 13: Percentage of Children Lifted out of Poverty by Government Transfers, Alberta**



Source: Statistics Canada 2013c

### We Can End Poverty

The *Poverty Costs* report makes the case for why failing to act to end poverty has serious consequences and costs not only for those directly affected, but for all Albertans. The report, authored by Vibrant Communities Calgary and Action to End Poverty in Alberta, estimates that poverty costs Albertans \$7.1 billion to \$9.5 billion per year (Briggs & Lee, 2012, p. 1).

In her April 2012 election promise, Premier Redford made the same point:

*“There are significant economic benefits to reducing poverty beyond the positive social impact for those immediately affected. Children raised in poverty are far more likely to have long term health implications and a difficult time learning in school, which is why early intervention is vital,”* (Progressive Conservative Association of Alberta, 2012).

#### Build on what’s already working

A diverse range of services and supports benefiting people affected by poverty are already in place. Personal and corporate acts of charity, excellent programs delivered by human services organizations and educational institutions, and investments by all orders of government are making valuable contributions.

In her election promise, Premier Redford affirmed this work as follows:

*“We recognize that there is already a great deal of valuable and relevant work going on in communities throughout the province, and we want to build on those successes,”* (Progressive Conservative Association of Alberta, 2012).

Governments already contribute to reducing poverty through income support programs, tax credits and public services like child care, child protection, affordable housing, education, and health care. In the absence of government supports, many more people would be living in poverty, including 50 per cent more children (Chart 13). For the most part, finding poverty solutions involves building upon what’s already working well.

#### Government leadership is essential

Alberta has many individuals and organizations with an extensive understanding of poverty. Determination to end poverty is strong. But the magnitude and complexity of the problem requires leadership from all orders of

#### A Snapshot of Current Activity: A Social Policy Framework for Alberta - Fairness and Justice for All

On November 2, 2012, the Alberta College of Social Workers and the Parkland Institute (2012) found that - despite Alberta’s wealth - inequality and disparity are growing faster than anywhere else in the country. Report highlights include:

- The top 1 per cent of Albertans earned 14.4 per cent of all pre-tax income;
- The top 50 per cent of Alberta households received 87 per cent of the share of earnings;
- The bottom 50 per cent of Albertans received only 13 per cent of the share of earnings;
- Albertans work the longest hours, with the least time-off, of almost anyone in the developed world; and
- Revenue reform including oil and gas royalty changes and a return to progressive income taxes will provide the needed financial resources to address high levels of poverty and inequality.

The report’s recommendations for policy and other changes were submitted to the Government of Alberta’s Social Policy Framework consultations.

government. Stable adequate public funding and sound public policy are essential aspects of achieving a poverty-free future.

The economy has since bounced back strongly from the 2009-10 recession. Yet, the provincial government actually cut many important programs in this year’s budget. Further public investment is needed in proven approaches to reducing and preventing poverty.

#### Child benefits effective in reducing poverty

Child tax benefits are the most effective way to reduce child and family poverty. They do not discriminate based on source of income and are easy to administer. The only eligibility requirement is filing an income tax return. At no extra administrative cost, the provincial government could introduce an Alberta Child Benefit for low and modest income families to parallel federal child tax benefits.

In July 2013, the Ontario government increased the Ontario Child Benefit to \$1,200 per child per year, with a scheduled increase to \$1,310 per year on July 2014 (Government of Ontario, November 2013). The introduction of an Alberta Child Benefit at an initial level of \$1,200 per year for every child living in poverty and then phased out gradually thereafter would be a strategic investment in poverty reduction.

As federal government revenues recover, real increases to federal child tax benefits should be made as well. Campaign 2000 recommends that the maximum federal

child tax benefit (including the supplement for low income families) should eventually increase to \$5400 per child for the lowest-income families, about 50 per cent higher than current levels.

### Ensure income support tied to living costs

Less than two per cent of Albertans receive social assistance (Alberta Works) benefits, with most recipients unable to work due to illness and other factors. After peaking in 2010 due to the recession, caseloads are slowly declining in line with an improving economy. Some of the savings from caseload reductions should be reinvested in indexing benefits, increasing assets limits, and rewarding work by allowing recipients to earn \$500 per month before clawbacks.

Within the past five years, there has been only a 5 per cent increase in Alberta Works monthly benefit levels in April 2012. (Government of Alberta, March 2012, p. 24). Due to this minimal increase, Alberta Works monthly benefit levels remain among the lowest of any Canadian province (National Council on Welfare, April 2011, p. 2). There also remains no mechanism for Alberta Works benefits to increase in line with living costs.

Assured Income for the Severely Handicapped (AISH) benefits for disabled Albertans increased by \$400 per month on April 1, 2012. The earnings exemptions before clawbacks was also doubled to \$800 per month (Government of Alberta, February 2012). As a result of these changes, the gap between benefits received from social assistance and AISH has widened.

Both Alberta Works and AISH benefits should be indexed to changes in living costs.

### Place-based initiatives

Place-based initiatives are developed in a particular geographic location or context. They are better able to address circumstances specific to a particular locale. Street newspapers, community festivals, safe communities activities, and peer-support programs for people with mental illnesses are examples of this. People living in economic poverty must be significantly involved in providing perspectives and having meaningful roles in the development and delivery of programs and services.

Experiences and challenges of poverty differ depending on location. For example, low income families living in rural or small town Alberta do not have access to public transit. Costs for transportation are therefore higher because of the need to have a vehicle.

While 80% funded by the province, Family and

Community Support Services (FCSS) is an initiative that is directed by local communities, preventative in approach, and addresses local low income challenges. FCSS funding has been frozen at the same level for many years. Adding \$25 million in FCSS funding and then indexing for changes in population and living costs would strengthen the capacity of this local-based program.

### Accessing benefits

Incomes can also be improved by ensuring low income Albertans receive tax and health benefits for which they qualify. Better financial literacy enables people to use income more effectively.

Many community agencies invest significant volunteer resources helping people get benefits to which they are legally entitled. Since many benefits are tied to the filing of an income tax return, community initiatives like Edmonton E4C's Make Tax Time Program use volunteers to assist low income households in filing their annual tax returns (E4C Alberta, 2012).

### Asset building

Hopeful initiatives are making it possible for people to start building assets. These initiatives include social enterprise and micro-enterprise loan funds, and avenues for people to become homeowners through land trusts, sweat equity and cooperative housing. In Alberta, innovative programs are being implemented to encourage low income people to feel more financially capable, save money for the future and build assets.

Programs through Financial Futures Collaborative in Calgary and the Alberta Asset Building Collaborative in Edmonton are teaching financial literacy while providing matched savings. For instance, Edmonton has a program called Empower U – Building Confident Futures in which low income participants can have their savings matched 2:1. Participants saving \$50 per month can receive matching savings of \$100, allowing them to purchase an asset that will help with their quality of life, their education or employability.

### Support to service providers

When service providers do not have adequate and stable long-term funding, it is difficult to develop and sustain programs. Skilled staff are lost when programs come and go. New staff have to learn skills and valuable time is lost as they become competent. The current funding processes require organizations to spend a great deal of time and expertise developing proposals, rather than putting resources into actual service delivery. Excessive



reporting requirements on small details not related to the purpose of the work also wastes valuable resources.

Funding should be based on achieving a real, long-term, positive impact and equipping people to meet their own needs. There is both tangible and intangible value in services that are client-directed and close to the people being served.

Inadequate funding often means non-profit sector staff are paid poorly. This makes it hard to recruit and retain qualified staff.

### Feminization of Poverty

Women in Alberta have many more barriers to their financial well being than men. These include the obvious fact that overall women earn lower wages than men. Less obvious facts such as women's unpaid work, violence against women and low political representation also create barriers to women's financial earning power.

In Alberta, women on average make 68 cents for every dollar men earn. This rate is tied with Newfoundland and Labrador for the Canadian low. Worse still, women with post-secondary education make 63 cents for their male peer's dollar (Parkland, 2012). Amazingly, a commitment to developing themselves through advanced education, disadvantages women, putting them even further behind.

The less obvious reason for women's lower earning power, is that they take on double the amount of unpaid work of men (Sandberg, 2013). Women do the lion's share of house keeping, cooking and caring for children. Women are more often responsible for the care of elderly and sick family members, than their male counterparts.

Another less obvious barrier to women's financial earning power, is the high rate of family violence in Alberta. Last year 5,642 women and 5,480 children were served through the emergency shelter system. In addition 14,000 women and 12,000 children were turned away from these same shelters due to space restrictions. The upheaval caused by these traumatic situations often makes it impossible for them to keep employment (Alberta Council of Women's Shelters, 2013).

Low representation of women legislators means that policies adopted by government are less family friendly. Research finds that a minimum of 30% of legislators must be women for implementation of progressive policies (Trimble & Arscott, 2008). In the 2012 provincial election, 23 out of 87 MLAs were women; 26.4%. Reaching the necessary threshold by electing more women, will go a

long way to advancing policies that lift women out of poverty.

The solution to ending child poverty lies in ending women's poverty. Increasing income, increasing access to child care, and strengthening supports to address domestic violence will vastly improve the situation of women experiencing poverty in Alberta.

### Deliver on plan to end homelessness

Ending most federal and provincial investment in affordable housing 20 years ago led to dramatic increases in the numbers of homeless individuals and families throughout Alberta. Combined with rapidly rising rents, this meant that by 2008 the number of homeless Calgarians increased to over 4,000 and the number of homeless Edmontonians to over 3,000.

In 2009, following the lead of Red Deer, Calgary and Edmonton, the Alberta government adopted a 10 year plan to end chronic homelessness in the province's seven largest urban centres. Four years into the 10 year plan, progress is stalled. Both Calgary and Edmonton reduced the number of homeless persons by about 20 per cent during the first two years. Progress slowed in Year 3 and reversed in Year 4. Record low vacancy rates in Edmonton and Calgary is causing increased numbers of homeless to access emergency shelters (CMHC 2013).

The Alberta Homeless Plan estimated an investment of \$3.3 billion (\$330 million/year) is needed to end homelessness in the next decade. The last several provincial budgets delivered approximately \$500 million less than the required investment. There have been reductions in funding for new capital construction and for homelessness prevention programs such as rent supplements. The commitment to end homelessness must be backed up with sufficient provincial and federal investment.

More effective municipal leadership is needed to ensure new affordable housing units get built. Several funded projects in Edmonton have been cancelled or delayed because of neighbourhood opposition. All neighbourhoods—not only those in the inner city—need to step up to the plate and welcome affordable housing units to their communities. Innovative solutions such as using surplus school sites in newer neighbourhoods would ensure a better distribution of non-market housing.

## Affordable rents and homeownership

Affordable shelter is by far the biggest cost for low and modest income Albertans. Keeping people housed through affordable rents or homeownership is an important homelessness prevention strategy.

To address this funding shortfall, non-profit housing management agencies have implemented systems to determine which types of households have the greatest need for housing. Families with children receive priority, though there continues to be a shortage of units for larger families. For everyone else, the wait for rental assistance can take two years or more.

## Employed Albertans deserve a fair income for work

Stable secure jobs with decent pay and benefits are a key poverty elimination tool. As well, government policies need to be developed that improve employment conditions for low income workers without extended health and dental benefits, employment pensions, and job security.

59% of children living in poverty have at least one parent working full-time for the full year (Chart 4). This shows a clear need for strategies to make sure these hardworking Albertans do not have to live in poverty.

### *Raise and Index Minimum Wage*

In June 2007, a new minimum wage policy indexed the province's minimum wage to the average earnings of all Alberta employees. This led to transparent and manageable annual increases in the minimum wage.

In April 2009, the province announced a minimum wage freeze at \$8.80/hour. The freeze continued until September 2011 when the minimum wage increased to \$9.40/hour with a lower \$9.05/hour wage for workers serving liquor (Government of Alberta, May 2012, p. 10). From then on, the minimum wage will be adjusted annually using a formula that includes inflation and average earnings. This resulted in a minimum wage increase to \$9.95/hour in September 2013 though the lower wage for liquor servers remains at \$9.05/hour (Government of Alberta, September 2013a).

Because of the prolonged freeze in our minimum wage, and because other provinces have aggressively increased theirs, Alberta now has the lowest minimum wage of any Canadian province or territory.

### *Living Wage for Contracted Services*

Vibrant Communities Calgary determined that in 2012, a

## A Snapshot of Current Activity: Major Cities

**Edmonton's Poverty Elimination Steering Committee** brought diverse stakeholders together to develop a Preliminary Poverty Elimination Strategic Framework to initiate active engagement on poverty solutions. Close to 200 Edmontonians struggling with low income and limited resources participated in focus group discussions held from September to November 2013.

**Calgary's Poverty Reduction Initiative** was launched in January 2012 and led by the City and the local United Way to develop a long-term community-based strategy to significantly reduce poverty. This strategy was adopted unanimously by Calgary City Council on May 27, 2013. With the strategy in place, and strong political support, work on implementation is underway. Over the past six months, partner teams have developed detailed implementation plans with timelines and budget for 2014 and beyond. Work also continues on establishing a long term and sustainable governance structure to guide the initiative into the future.

living wage of \$14.50 per hour without benefits and \$13.00 per hour with benefits would be required to ensure that a single person working full-time for the full year could live above the poverty line (Vibrant Communities Calgary 2013). Living wage policies - especially for services contracted by all three orders of government - would ensure a stronger human service sector.

### *Make Work Pay through Tax Credits*

Earned income tax credits reward the work effort of those employed in low-paid jobs. The federal government first introduced a refundable working income tax benefit (WITB) in 2007, and enhanced the benefit in 2009.

The WITB is available on earnings above \$3,000 per year. For single individuals, the maximum benefit is \$925 and benefits are phased out at a net income of \$16,667. For single parents and couples, the maximum benefit is \$1,680, and benefits are phased out at a net income of \$25,700. Unfortunately, the WITB has remained frozen for the past four years (Department of Finance Canada, 2013).

Alberta has a separate earned income tax credit called the Alberta Family Employment Tax Credit. Currently, the Alberta credit is only available to working families with children. The Alberta Family Employment Tax Credit should be expanded to include single adults and child-less couples, paralleling the federal working income tax benefit.

As revenues recover, both federal and provincial governments should reward work by investing more in refundable employment income tax credits.

### Early learning and child care

Early childhood development programs are an effective investment that makes a positive difference for decades to come.

Early childhood development services such as Head Start are especially important to equip all children for school success. Full day kindergarten is especially beneficial for children from low income families. Last year, the province announced plans to establish full-day kindergarten. However this has not been followed by a firm commitment to do so, even in schools that have the space and a demonstrated need.

Alberta lacks a comprehensive, non-profit childcare system that provides sufficient access to quality, affordable day care and after-school care.

The market-based child care system in Alberta is very expensive. Many low and middle income families either have to pay very large amounts for child care or make unregulated arrangements. The child care subsidy certainly helps, but many families still struggle to pay the uncovered costs. Unfortunately, rather than providing more supports for low income families to access child care, the Alberta government cut the \$7.1 million quality

enhancement grant this year. This has resulted in most child care centres having to increase their monthly fees.

There are many areas of need for early childhood development. It is difficult for immigrant families with preschool children to be involved in official language learning programs when they have no connections to the community. Without language proficiency, their chances of getting a good paying job are low. As a result, they can get trapped in poverty. Those who need occasional child care and do not have safe places to leave children run into trouble due to the lack of drop-in spaces. Additionally, there are insufficient spaces and training to serve children with special needs.

### Recreation, arts and culture

Access to recreation, arts, and cultural opportunities is important for all ages and incomes. There are some excellent programs to cover costs of equipment, registration fees, and access to facilities like Edmonton's Leisure Access Program. Yet, transportation costs remain a major barrier for many low income families.

The Alberta government cut the \$7.1 million Summer Temporary Employment Program in this year's budget. STEP provided not only relevant work experience for students, but was also an important funding source for summer recreation programs that low income children participate in.

## A Snapshot of Current Activity: Poverty Reduction in Alberta's Regional Centres

Action to End Poverty in Alberta has garnered support from 101 municipalities and organizations who support a strategic approach to addressing the root causes of poverty. Highlights include:

- The Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo is developing a Social Sustainability Framework to be completed in 2014. The framework will identify social priorities, encourage collective responsibility and promote collaborative decision making. Community consultations are currently underway. Once the framework is complete, further consultation is planned and a committee will be formed to develop a local poverty reduction strategy.
- The Vibrant Lethbridge Committee, a working committee of the Community and Social Development Committee of Council, has started work on poverty reduction. 8 focus groups with those with lived experience have been held. The findings have been analyzed, comprised into a report and submitted to the Alberta government and the Vibrant Lethbridge Committee.
- In March 2013, Central Alberta Poverty Reduction Alliance hosted a large community consultation in Red Deer. 150 community leaders identified key priorities including: creatively showing the face of poverty in Red Deer, addressing affordable transportation, exploring existing employment programs, addressing social isolation, and enhancing and sustaining existing literacy programs. A Living Wage for Red Deer is set to be published in February 2014.
- In May 2013, the City of Grande Prairie's Community Social Development Department released a Living Wage report. The City supports Community Action to End Poverty in GP (CAEP). In June 2013 CAEP developed a 2013/14 strategic plan. In September 2013 CAEP and the City hosted a collaboration to provide input on the provincial Social Policy Framework.
- The Medicine Hat Roundtable commissioned a research project to establish baseline data on living wage, accessible transportation and recreation, affordable housing, food security and education. Next steps include development of a governance model and developing activities to inform, support, and energize the community to reduce poverty.

## Seniors

The rapidly growing population of seniors is a significant future challenge. Because of continued lower lifetime earnings compared to men, a disproportionate percentage of those experiencing poverty are women.

Significantly reducing seniors poverty is the greatest Canadian social policy achievement of the past 40 years. The slow erosion of this achievement is threatening the retirement security of today's families. The federal government's move to increase the eligibility age of Old Age Security and the Guaranteed Income Supplement to age 67 threatens the future well-being of seniors with low and modest savings as they enter their retirement years. The most effective way to improve the retirement security of middle income earners is to enhance the Canada Pension Plan to cover a higher percentage of pre-retirement earnings.

Being able to live independently for as long as possible is both socially healthy and fiscally sensible. The current government policy of privatizing and shifting costs for essentials like prescription drugs and long-term care will further increase problems for seniors on fixed incomes.

## Literacy

Literacy (including numeracy and computer literacy) needs more attention at all age levels. Too many adults do not have strong enough literacy skills to secure and hold meaningful employment in a high-tech world. Post-secondary institutions and community organizations offer options to improve literacy. Some are designed to meet the needs of those with work or family commitments and unable to study full time or during normal business hours. Some employers also provide support as well. Public libraries are actively developing creative programs and welcoming facilities for all ages and income groups.

## Education

The number of children in Alberta's Kindergarten to Grade 12 school system increased by 22,000 students this year. Yet, the province cut \$14.5 million from school operating budgets. Much larger class sizes and cuts to many programs are the result. This will prevent many children from reaching their full potential.

Youth who do not complete high school or post-secondary education and training are at increased risk of experiencing poverty. While high school and post-secondary completion are steadily improving, Alberta still lags behind most other provinces when it comes to students dropping out.

The Alberta government cut funding for our post-secondary education sector by over 7 per cent (\$147 million instead of providing the 2 per cent increase promised during the election. While the province recently announced they will put \$50 million back, most institutions have already reduced access, cut programs, and laid off staff and faculty. Alberta has one of the lowest post-secondary education participation rates, so these latest cuts are only going to make matters worse. Among Canadian provinces, we also have above average tuition costs. Relying on loans makes it difficult to access and complete post-secondary education. Alberta needs to expand bursaries and grants to improve accessibility to post-secondary for those with low or modest incomes. Doing so represents a wise investment in the province's future since post-secondary graduates earn higher incomes and experience significantly lower unemployment.

## Supporting Vulnerable Workers

Greater emphasis needs to be placed on skills training and securing jobs for groups under-represented in Alberta's labour force especially Aboriginal people, recently arrived immigrants, and disabled Albertans. The continued high unemployment and underemployment of these groups represents a tremendous waste of human capital. In its recent budget, the government took a backward step by cutting skills training and academic upgrading programs by about 15 per cent. The number of immigrants and refugees settling in Alberta went up 20% in the past year. Yet funding for immigrant settlement and employment programs has remained frozen.

Instead of hiring these underrepresented groups, some Alberta employers have been bringing in tens of thousands of temporary foreign workers mostly to fill low skill and semi-skilled positions. Reliance on temporary workers to fill low wage jobs serving fast food and cleaning motels should be reduced. Temporary foreign workers with a good employment history who wish to settle here need to be provided with a pathway to permanent residency.

A better balance between the rights of employers and employees is also needed in this province. Many labour disputes are caused by anti-union employers refusing to bargain a first collective agreement in good faith. First Contract Arbitration (FCA) is a fair way of ensuring that employees who have democratically decided to form a union are able to achieve a first collective agreement.



# Alberta Can Afford a Real Poverty Reduction Strategy

## Revenue Reform

Alberta is the richest province in Canada. Yet when it comes to investing in quality public services and fulfilling Premier Redford's promise to eliminate child poverty, the Alberta government pleads that it does not have revenue. In fact, rather than investing in many important public services that help low income families prevent and reduce poverty, the Alberta government's recent budget cuts have hurt many.

There are many solutions to Alberta's revenue problems that will allow us to fulfil the commitment to prevent, reduce and eliminate child poverty by 2017.

The first simple step is to move Alberta back to a progressive tax system used by every other province and the federal government. Alberta's flat tax system means that people with average amounts of taxable income are paying more in taxes than people in BC and Ontario, the two closest tax jurisdictions.

For example, an Albertan earning \$70,000 pays \$1362 more in taxes than if they lived in BC and \$947 than if they lived in Ontario. However, someone from Alberta earning \$1 million would pay \$41,000 less in provincial income tax than in BC and \$82,500 less than if they lived in Ontario.

If individual income over \$150,000 was taxed at 14%, Alberta would bring in an additional \$700 million per year. This would affect just over 6% of Albertans who make over \$150,000/per year. If we had the same top income tax bracket as Saskatchewan, which taxes all income over \$122,589 at 15%, we would bring in over \$1 billion. We could bring in even more if we had the same top income tax bracket as BC, where high income earners pay 14.7% on everything they earn over \$104,754.

Secondly, Alberta also has the lowest corporate income tax rate in Canada at only 10%. Many provinces, including Alberta, have been cutting corporate income taxes while cutting vital public programs. For example, Alberta's corporate tax rate in the 1990s was 15.5% , in 2001 it was cut to 13.5% and then was slowly cut to 10% in 2006. If Alberta was to increase its corporate tax rate to that used in Saskatchewan at 12%, we could bring in close to an additional \$1 billion based on the \$5 billion being generated by the existing 10% rate.

Alberta also needs to examine how we can receive fair royalties for our energy and other natural resources. However, additional funds from a revised royalty

framework could go towards investing in the infrastructure needed by our growing population and to save for future generations.

By making the above changes to Alberta's personal and corporate income taxes, **the provincial government could bring in an additional \$1.2 billion – \$2.0 billion per year and still be the lowest tax jurisdiction in the country.** This would allow the Alberta government to invest in all the policy solutions for a real poverty reduction strategy presented in this report, with additional funds to invest in other important public services.

## Additional Provincial Investment for Poverty Solutions

- Alberta Child Benefit of \$1,200 per child —\$200 million
- Index Alberta Works and AISH, change asset policy, and allow people to earn \$500 before clawbacks —\$50 million
- Implement living wage for contracted services —\$150 million
- Enhance working income tax benefits —\$75 million
- Additional affordable housing investment —\$100 million
- Fully fund rent supplements —\$50 million
- Full-day kindergarten for vulnerable children —\$100 million
- Additional investment in child care, early childhood development, child protection —\$100 million
- Re-invest in programs to reduce class sizes and provide more access to post-secondary education —\$100 million
- Improve bursaries for low income post-secondary students —\$50 million
- Increase support for Family and Community Support Services —\$25 million

**Additional Investment Per Year—\$1 billion**

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## Note

Data on facing page based on authors' calculations. Source documents include Canadian Revenue Agency taxation statistics, provincial budget documents, and publicly available financial information on the referenced programs.

## From Words to Action: Eliminating Poverty in Alberta

Premier Redford's promise that was made on April 11, 2012 to eliminate child poverty in five years and reduce poverty for everyone in ten years, is a bold commitment. Achieving this goal is not going to be easy, but if there is any place that can actually make this goal a reality, it is Alberta. We have caring spirit, incredible wealth, and amazing people who dedicate their lives to support all Albertans.

All Albertans will benefit if we implement a real comprehensive plan that will prevent, reduce and ultimately eliminate poverty. We will all enjoy living in stronger, healthier communities where children have the support and opportunities to reach their full potential. By implementing a real comprehensive plan we will also strengthen our overall economy and see reductions in expenditures that come from failing to address the root causes of poverty.

However, it remains to be seen what will come from the Government of Alberta's Poverty Reduction Strategy that is set to be released in Spring 2014. Many organizations and individuals have been very involved in the consultations and significant effort has been made by community groups to make sure that the voices of people who are or have lived in poverty are heard. We look forward to seeing if the input into the Children's Charter and Poverty Reduction Strategy will reflect the many excellent recommendations provided to the government by this consultation process. We hope the government moves quickly from talking about poverty to taking real action that will achieve the important promise to eliminate child poverty and reduce poverty for all Albertans.

## A Call to Action: Next Steps

In the lead up to the Alberta government's unveiling of a poverty reduction strategy next Spring, we need to communicate to all MLAs about the importance of adopting a real poverty reduction strategy. We call on Albertans to:

- Contact MLAs and challenge them to take action that will result in reducing the growing disparity in our province.
- Get involved and support the many organizations in your community who are working to address the root causes of poverty.
- Help promote this campaign to others in your networks, use social media, and/or host an event.

**DATE:** January 21, 2014

**TO:** Board of Trustees

**FROM:** Darrel Robertson, Superintendent of Schools

**SUBJECT:** Locally Developed Courses for Semester Two

**ORIGINATOR:** Mark Liguori, Assistant Superintendent

**RESOURCE STAFF:** Diane Brunton, Tami Dowler-Coltman, Sandra Erickson, Sandy Forster, Stacy Fysh, Rick Paulitsch, Natalie Witte

**REFERENCE:** [Alberta Education - Guide to Education](#)  
[Alberta Education Policy 1.2.1 - Locally Developed/Acquired and Authorized Junior and Senior High School Complementary Courses](#)

## ISSUE

District schools have requested additional acquired locally developed courses be approved to meet the needs of students at their schools.

## RECOMMENDATION

**That the following locally developed courses and resources be approved for use in Edmonton Public Schools:**

### New courses acquired by Edmonton Public Schools

Course Name	Level - Credit	Approval Period
Abnormal Psychology (Pembina Hills Regional Division #7)	35 (5 credit)	February 2014 – August 2014
Advanced Dance (from Lethbridge School District #51)	15 (3 or 5 credit) 25 (3 or 5 credit) 35 (3 or 5 credit)	February 2014 – August 2014
Band (Calgary School District #19)	25 (5 credit) 35 (5 credit)	February 2014 – August 2016
Forensic Science Studies (Pembina Hills Regional Division #7)	35 (5 credit)	February 2014 – August 2016
Leadership, Character & Social Responsibility (Golden Hills School Division #75)	15 (3 or 5 credit) 25 (3 or 5 credit) 35 (3 or 5 credit)	February 2014 – August 2016
Musical Theatre in Performance (Fort McMurray Public School District #2833)	25 (5 credit) 35 (5 credit)	February 2014 – August 2014
Performing Arts (Grande Yellowhead Public School Division #77)	15 (3 or 5 credit) 25 (3 or 5 credit) 35 (3 or 5 credit)	February 2014 – August 2015
Popular Culture (Parkland School Division #70)	25 (3 or 5 credit) 35 (3 or 5 credit)	February 2014 – August 2016
Professional Development in the Arts (from Calgary School District #19)	35 (3 or 5 credit)	February 2014 – August 2014



Course Name	Level - Credit	Approval Period
Rock and Pop (St. Albert Public School District #5565)	15 (5 credit) 25 (5 credit) 35 (5 credit)	February 2014 – August 2015
Triathlon (Red Deer Public District #104)	25 (5 credit) 35 (5 credit)	February 2014 – August 2015
Vocal Jazz (Calgary School District #19)	15 (3 or 5 credit) 25 (3 or 5 credit) 35 (3 or 5 credit)	February 2014 – August 2016

## BACKGROUND

Locally developed courses (LDCs) are developed or acquired and authorized by school authorities to provide students with learning opportunities that complement provincial programs of study. LDCs provide unique opportunities to explore a range of interests in subject areas or extend the learning outcomes in provincial programs. These courses accommodate special interests and abilities of students and address local, community or parental interests. Districts may develop their own courses, or they may seek permission to acquire courses developed by other districts.

Alberta Education supports the local development and authorization of junior high and senior high school complementary courses which do not duplicate provincially authorized courses, to further develop and cultivate the unique interests and abilities of students; and to foster educational improvement and excellence through innovation at the local level to meet the unique needs of a local community.

Locally developed courses and resources are approved and renewed on a three year cycle by the developing board. In the case of high school courses, the courses also must be approved and renewed by Alberta Education. The process is governed by Alberta Education policies. All courses developed align to policy guidelines such as:

- courses are completed within the year they are started;
- a certificated teacher is required for instruction;
- unique hours of instruction are required for each course; and
- waiver of prerequisites provision cannot apply to locally developed courses.

Locally developed courses are created to meet specific identified schools' needs. The costs of developing a course varies greatly with differing topics, external requirements, number of courses in sequence, established frameworks, and complexity of stakeholders.

## RELATED FACTS

Advance Dance and Professional Development in the Arts have been requested by Victoria School of the Arts.

Abnormal Psychology has been requested by Braemar School.

Band; Forensic Science Studies; Leadership, Character & Social Responsibility; Musical Theater in Performance; Performing Arts; Popular Culture; Rock and Pop; Triathlon and Vocal Jazz have been requested by Ross Sheppard School.

**CONSIDERATIONS & ANALYSIS**

Locally developed courses are submitted for approval for a maximum of three years. Courses acquired from other jurisdictions are subject to an approval period based on the original three year cycle for the authoring jurisdiction.

**NEXT STEPS**

Upon approval of this recommendation, the Administration will complete the process to validate these courses and have them available to students in Semester Two (2013-2014).

**ATTACHMENTS & APPENDICES**

N/A

SF:db

**DATE:** January 21, 2014  
**TO:** Board of Trustees  
**FROM:** Darrel Robertson, Superintendent of Schools  
**SUBJECT:** Lost Prizes Program (Response to Request for Information #002)  
**ORIGINATOR:** Mark Liguori, Assistant Superintendent of Schools  
**RESOURCE STAFF:** Fred Hines  
**REFERENCE:** November 26, 2013, Board Meeting (Trustee Martin)

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**ISSUE**

Provide information regarding the Lost Prizes program for at risk students; including the purpose of the program, outcomes achieved and any potential for implementation in the District.

**BACKGROUND**

In the early 1990's, three Manitoba school districts established Lost Prizes, an initiative to reclaim at risk, talented high school drop outs who had been lost to the system. The three school districts involved were Lord Selkirk School Division, (city 10 minutes north east of Winnipeg), Sunrise School Division (rural district 30 minutes east of Winnipeg), and Interlake School Division (rural district 30 minutes north of Winnipeg). The majority of the students targeted had withdrawn from school, were unproductive and were involved with the Justice system. Lost Prizes was an initiative to reconnect these at risk individuals, tap into their creative potential and motivate them by building their self-esteem and self-worth so they could become productive citizens.

In the initial stages of the Lost Prizes program, a facilitator worked directly with the participants in an off-site classroom setting. The classes focused on career awareness and creative problem solving training. By incorporating creative problem solving tools, the re-engaged students learned to make meaningful choices in the areas of careers, life decisions and they considered how to move from their current reality to a desired future state. Students designed individual growth plans to help identify and work towards goals. The second phase of the program focused on students gaining skills through on- the-job placements with an opportunity to have authentic hands on learning experiences with trained mentors in the business community. Lost Prizes proved to be a success with 57 of the 88 participants (65 per cent) returning to high school, entering the post-secondary programs at university or community college, or obtaining employment.

**CURRENT SITUATION**

Lost Prizes program connects theory and practice from both the enrichment and at risk domains. Currently, with support from the University of Winnipeg faculty and staff, a vision is emerging that features three levels of Lost Prizes intervention:

- Lost Prizes training centres that provide the facilities, materials and human resources necessary to train new practitioners.

- Programs that involve trained practitioners using the Lost Prizes philosophy and approach directly in their work with young people.
- Schools that embody and practice Lost Prizes principles at all levels throughout the school environment.

The results of these efforts are evident in a number of interesting new ventures. In Thailand, a new Lost Prizes free school called Por Peang (self-sufficiency) will soon be built for village children Buriram and a prototype demonstration centre is also being planned for Bangkok. Kenya will be soon opening a Lost Prizes school and program in Nairobi and a training centre in Kisumu. Planning sessions were held in July 2013 to follow-up on earlier discussions and interest in Jordan, India, Turkey, Israel, Cuba, Mexico and Peru.

The goal of Lost Prizes program has always been to improve the talent identification and development process. Once educators are equipped with appropriate training, skills commitment and experience (in both the enrichment and at risk areas), they strive to identify and nurture the talents of these highly capable but disconnected children and youth. As new challenges arise, they approach them with hope, flexibility, and perseverance. As a result, many young people who have been otherwise marginalized now have the potential to make healthy contributions to societies around the world.

#### **KEY POINTS**

Potential implications for Edmonton Public Schools:

- Increased high school graduation rates.
- Increased student enrollment.
- Increased student engagement.
- Improving literacy, numeracy and citizenship.
- Foster positive relationships with students, educational staff and community partners.
- Strengthen urban community building, leadership and skill development.
- Mentoring opportunities
- Staff professional development opportunities

#### **ATTACHMENTS & APPENDICES**

N/A

FH:ja

**DATE:** January 21, 2014

**TO:** Board of Trustees

**FROM:** Darrel Robertson, Superintendent of Schools

**SUBJECT:** Student Population Growth and Proposed New Schools (Response to Request for Information #007)

**ORIGINATOR:** David Fraser, Executive Director, Corporate Services

**RESOURCE STAFF:** Roland Labbe, Marco Melfi, Lorne Parker

**REFERENCE:** December 3, 2013 Board Meeting (Trustee Gibson)

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**ISSUE**

Provide information regarding what percentage of the expected student population growth will be met by adding the proposed new schools in the growth regions, e.g. does one new school in Lewis Farms address the need in the west end or does it address 10% of the need?

**BACKGROUND**

Edmonton Public Schools plans future school needs in newly developing areas using plan areas established by City Council. It is more accurate to look at plan areas individually - such as the Lewis Farms plan area - as demographics are different throughout the City within the different plan areas.

**CURRENT SITUATION**

The new junior high school proposed for Lewis Farms would not address all of the capacity that will be needed to provide local accommodation to the Lewis Farms plan area. With regard to the Lewis Farms plan area, there are four possible sites where EPSB schools could be constructed: Potter Greens, Rosenthal, Secord and Webber Greens. Sites in Potter Greens and Webber Greens are assembled and ready to accommodate a future school. In conjunction with the City of Edmonton, Planning is in the process of assembling the sites required for future schools in both the Rosenthal and Secord neighbourhoods. Winterburn School is an existing K-9 school located on the edge of the Lewis Farms plan area. This school has reached capacity and has limited junior high facilities.

**KEY POINTS**

- The proposed school for the Lewis Farms plan area is competing with the 13 other new school construction priorities in the *Three-Year Capital Plan 2014-2017*.
- Edmonton Public Schools has 44 other possible school sites (at various stages of assembly) in developing neighbourhoods across the City that could serve increasing student residency numbers.
- Residential growth and student demographics will continue to be monitored annually after official enrolment numbers are finalized in October of each year.
- New school priorities are adjusted annually within the Three-Year Capital Plan, approved by the Board and submitted each spring to the Government of Alberta.

**ATTACHMENTS & APPENDICES**

N/A

MM:gm

**DATE:** January 21, 2014  
**TO:** Board of Trustees  
**FROM:** Darrel Robertson, Superintendent of Schools  
**SUBJECT:** Bereavements  
**ORIGINATOR:** David Fraser, Executive Director, Corporate Services  
**RESOURCE STAFF:** Sandy Boyce  
**REFERENCE:** [GM.BP – Acknowledgement of Deaths and Bereavements](#)  
[GM.AR – Deaths and Bereavements](#)

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**ISSUE**

To acknowledge the death of three current staff members.

**BACKGROUND**

Mr. Barry Kokotailo passed away on December 9, 2013, at the age of 57 years. Mr. Kokotailo began his career with Edmonton Public Schools in 2001 as a member of the exempt staff group and held the position of an analyst with District Information Security. He is survived by his son, Christopher.

Ms. Joyce Sydora passed away December 17, 2013, at the age of 64 years. Ms. Sydora began her career with Edmonton Public Schools in 2010 as a member of the support staff group and held the position of payroll clerk with Human Resources. At the time of her passing she was on sick leave. Ms. Sydora is survived by her daughters, Shelley and Christa.

Mrs. Lora Berry passed away December 30, 2013, at the age of 41 years. Mrs. Berry began her teaching career with Edmonton Public Schools in 1998 and taught at Scott Robertson, Fraser, Abbott and Crawford Plains schools. She was on sick leave at the time of her death. Mrs. Berry is survived by her husband, Craig and five year old daughter, Erika.

**CURRENT SITUATION**

A memorial donation in honour of Mr. Kokotailo has been made on behalf of the Administration and Board of Trustees to the Heart and Stroke Foundation.

A donation has been made to the Grey Nuns Community Hospital, Palliative Care, Unit 43, in memory of Ms. Sydora on behalf of the Administration and Board of Trustees.

A donation in memory of Mrs. Berry has been made to the Alberta Cancer Foundation on behalf of the Administration and Board of Trustees.

**KEY POINTS**

N/A

**ATTACHMENTS & APPENDICES**

N/A

DF:sb