

DATE: May 9, 2017

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: Trustee Michael Janz

SUBJECT: Motion re: Repealing the Alberta School Boards Association Act

REFERENCE: [Trustees' Handbook – Section 5.2.2 – Notices of Motion](#)

ISSUE

Notice of motion was served at the April 25, 2017, Board meeting.

BACKGROUND

That the Edmonton Public School Board advocate to the government to repeal the *Alberta School Boards Association Act*.

- The *Alberta School Boards Association Act* (ASBA Act) is a purely symbolic piece of legislation that does not create or sustain the ASBA or school boards. School boards get their authority through the *School Act* and repealing the *Alberta School Boards Association Act* would have no effect on the operations of school boards or the continuance of the ASBA as a non-profit organization.
- The ASBA Act does outline a process for boards to leave the ASBA and does suggest that it should be a voluntary organization; however the ASBA leadership has been unwilling to assist boards in navigating their own voluntary exit from the ASBA. The Edmonton Public School Board has refrained from engaging in the ASBA at either Zone meetings or at the ASBA Board of Directors.
- While it could be argued that this motion is of purely symbolic value, it is timely given the fact that it is at the end of our term and would help make clear to new trustees across Alberta that they are elected by their local communities, accountable to their local communities, and are supervised by their own voters— not any other school board association.
- The *ASBA Act* furthers a false sense of entitlement from the ASBA in the education community and may mislead future trustee candidates or parents into believing that the ASBA is an oversight body or a higher authority, rather than a voluntary service organization.
- No other trustee association or conglomeration has their own Act. There is no Public School Boards Association Act, Rural Education Caucus Act, Metro School Boards Group Act, Alberta Catholic School Trustees Association Act, College of Alberta School Superintendents Act, Alberta School Councils Act. It is not useful when only one group is singled out to have their own Act; it has contributed to a false sense of superiority over school boards and locally-elected school trustees.
- Repealing the Act would be a way of helping restore collaboration and equal partnerships between school boards and stakeholders. Concern is regularly raised by school trustees that the government may eliminate locally elected school boards and replace them with a “super board” like was done in the consolidation of health boards and that the ASBA may attempt to position themselves as that entity, using their artificial profile as the “only legislated association” as justification.

- The ASBA has no role in bargaining with teachers. This work is being done through the newly created Teacher Employer Bargaining Association (TEBA).
- The Minister of Education has indicated that he will be reviewing education legislation this fall, so it is a perfect time for a repeal of the *ASBA Act* and a renewed emphasis on the local autonomy of school boards. Given the endless negative coverage the ASBA has provided this Minister, it would be a timely reminder to the ASBA Board of Directors that they must be transparent, accountable, and voluntary as the *ASBA Act* had intended.

RECOMMENDATION

"Be it resolved that the Edmonton Public School Board advocate to the Provincial government to repeal the *Alberta School Boards Association Act*."

NEXT STEPS

Upon the passing of the motion, a letter will be sent to the Minister of Education requesting that he repeal the *Alberta School Boards Association Act*.

MJ:km