



# Education Policy Brief



**The Alberta Party** believes strengthening our education system is the key to a healthy & prosperous future.

Already considered a world leader in learning, Alberta's education system must maximize our potential for success in an increasingly knowledge based economy. Our education system must be resilient, proactive and adaptive, and produce citizens with those skills. Critical thinking— *and a commitment to life-long learning* — are necessities as technology, knowledge and industry evolve at an ever more rapid pace.

**The Alberta Party** supports a publicly funded education system that utilizes bold and innovative methods to facilitate learning. We recognise every student's potential is increased by personalized/ individualized learning with the necessary supports and resources. Recognizing that strong, healthy relationships are critical to the development of vibrant, thriving individuals, the Alberta Party aspires to

establish a people-centered education system, and to create school-community linkages that support optimized learning.

In 2010 the Alberta government engaged Albertans in a visioning process called Inspiring Education. The resulting report (Inspiring Action) contains directions that would improve our current model of public education.

**The Alberta Party** would provide the necessary resources to implement the best aspects of Inspiring Action. Our education system must be inclusive, ensuring that all students have access to high quality education regardless of ability, language, cultural background, place of residence, gender or age.

**The Alberta Party** envisions an education system where local school jurisdictions receive stable, adequate funding and a policy framework that optimizes their ability to make responsible decisions.

## THE ALBERTA PARTY WILL STRIVE TO:

- *Make funding for education stable and consistent.*
- *Ensure necessary resources to match students' potential.*
- *Ensure the effectiveness of educational spending .*
- *Give all Albertans a voice in educational decisions.*
- *Minimize the number of students being left behind by the system.*
- *Counter high drop-out rates and low transfer rate to post-secondary education.*
- *End the over reliance on standardized testing*

### FOUR PRIORITIES

The Alberta Party believes that an inclusive public education system, supported by sustainable and predictable funding, with strong systems in place to address the areas of concern, is the right of every Albertan. In order to achieve this vision we will prioritize four different areas for action:

#### 1 Building Community-Centered Schools

The Alberta Party will revamp current education structures to better utilize funds and support local decision-making by:

- Facilitating the development of community-school initiatives and processes that maximize wraparound services, delivered through schools as community hubs.
- Decentralizing decision-making with regard to the construction, operation and disposition of school facilities.

- Encouraging and supporting local stakeholders to collaboratively make decisions and share resources (municipalities, school jurisdictions, community groups, health and human services, private sector etc.).
- Utilizing open data and open government principles to ensure accountability and transparency with regard to spending.
- Establishing mechanisms that facilitate public inclusion in local school decisions and offer opportunity for recourse to manage conflict and address issues of concern.

#### 2 Inclusivity and Support for All Learners

The Alberta Party will invest in—and explore—initiatives that support all learners within an inclusive system by:

- Creating a coordinated approach to facilitate information sharing between school jurisdictions regarding successful practices including human resources, spending, safe schools, programming etc.
- Working with post-secondary institutions, the Alberta Teachers Association (ATA) and local school boards to develop a coordinated approach to teacher professional learning.
- Maintaining commitment to Alberta School Initiative for School Improvement (AISI) funding while ensuring transparency and accountability through open data structures.
- Increasing adult learning opportunities and removing the age limit for funding high school completion
- Ensuring that publicly funded learning centres meet standards of inclusivity and support all learners regardless of ability, language, cultural background, religion, place of residence, gender and gender identification

- Reducing public funding to private schools that limit student access.
- Optimising conditions for early success by supporting and ensuring seamless transition from early childhood learning streams into the public system.
- Repealing the sections of Bill 44 related to classroom instruction.
- Working with the federal government, First Nation and Métis leaders and communities to develop strategies for providing and maintaining healthy schools, including adequate facilities and programs, recruitment and retention of, qualified teachers and parental participation.
- Ensuring that adequate funding for specialized supports is maintained as a priority in all school jurisdictions and that parents and specialists have a voice in placement and programming.

### 3 Assessment and Accountability

The Alberta Party will create a strategy for assessing students, encouraging success in all learning activities by:

- Using a wide variety of assessment measures that help stakeholders and identify and support intervention efforts and optimize learning conditions
- Developing research-based assessment tools for literacy and numeracy in grades one to nine that will assist in programming for all stakeholders across the province.
- Replacing Provincial Achievement Testing with sample testing methods to ensure efficiency of programming and high standards across the system
- Employing open data principles to ensure accountability and transparency in teaching and learning.

- Decreasing the weighting of diploma exams to 30% of the student's final mark to ensure a common standard for all Alberta students but be more in line with standards in other provinces across Canada.
- Maintaining recognition programs for outstanding performance while providing access to programs for those who do not meet satisfactory standards of performance

### 4 Meaningful and Relevant Learning Programs

An Alberta Party government will support an optimal learning environment, by:

- Re-examining programs of study to maximize opportunities to explore concepts in depth, ensuring that the focus of instruction is more personalized and relevant to students' lives.
- Establishing strong programming opportunities at all grade levels for second language learning, arts and culture and entrepreneurship;
- Expanding the use of online program delivery and other technologies to make learning more accessible, flexible and to support a diversity of learning styles and readiness



## **CONCLUSION**

Alberta has the resources to meet the needs of all Albertans. The Alberta Party invites all Albertans to share in the creation of new solutions that will enable us to improve our education system as we build our future. We believe that an innovative, student-centered, creative and responsive education system will produce innovative and creative citizens for the province... and the world.

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