

MAKING LIFE BETTER FOR STUDENTS, PARENTS AND TEACHERS:

RENEWING EDUCATION

Under the NDP, class sizes in Alberta have continued to increase, math and reading scores have declined, Alberta's successful tradition of school choice has been under attack, the carbon tax has taken valuable resources away from classrooms, and curriculum changes have been taking place largely in secret. Alberta's children deserve an excellent, world-class education that will equip them intellectually, socially, and with jobs-ready skills for life.

To ensure that education is a key advantage for Alberta, a United Conservative government would work with parents, teachers, principals, and trustees to once again make Alberta's schools the diverse, excellent classrooms that all Albertans desire and deserve.

The United Conservatives recognize that every child is unique and that parents, not politicians, know what is best for their children.

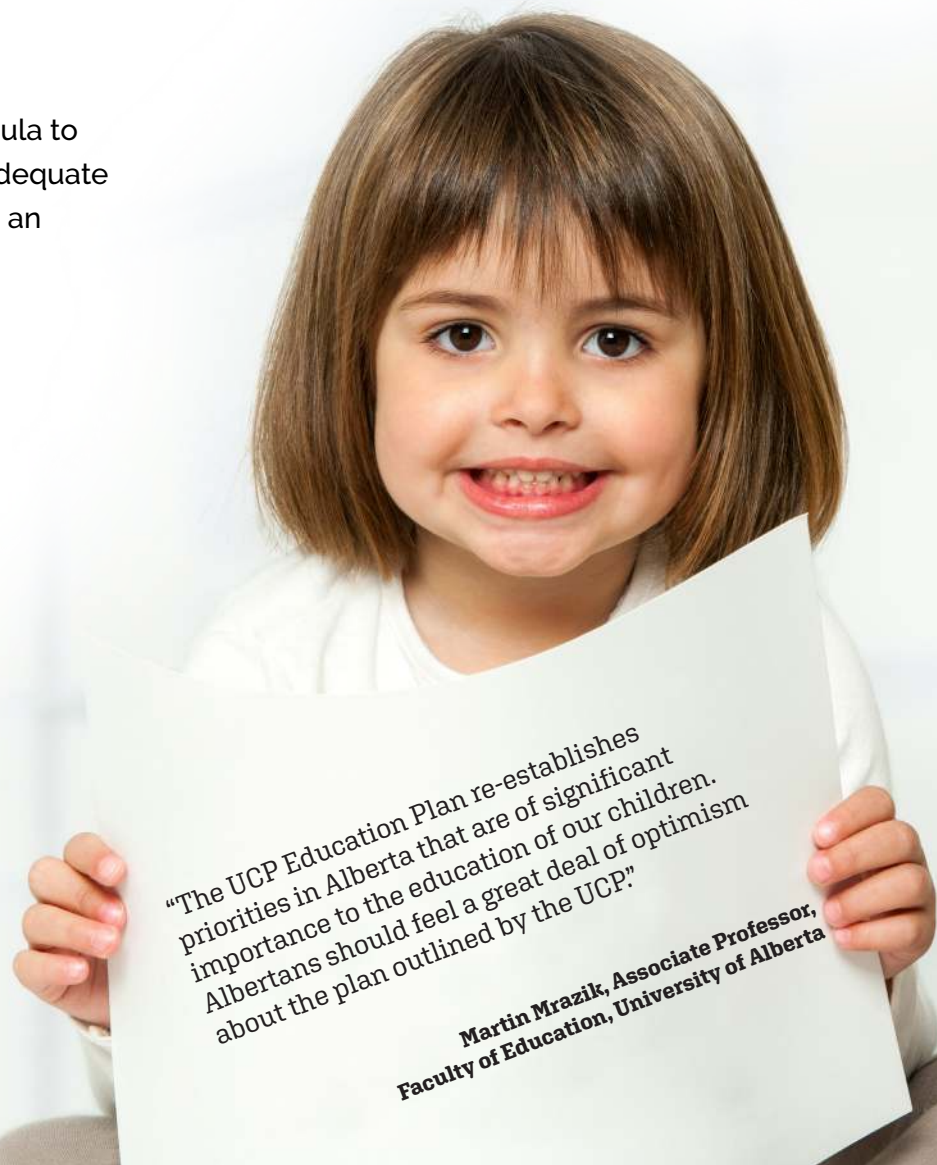
A United Conservative government will:

- Maintain or increase education funding while seeking greater efficiency by reducing administrative overhead and pushing resources to front line teachers
- Continue to build new schools, while ordering an immediate audit of class sizes to determine what happened to previous funding dedicated to class size reduction, and prioritize public infrastructure funds for schools and health care infrastructure
- End the focus on so-called "discovery" or "inquiry" learning, also known as constructivism, by repealing Ministerial Order #001/2013 and replacing it with a new Ministerial Order which focusses on teaching essential knowledge to help students develop foundational competencies
- Pause the NDP's curriculum review, and broaden consultations to be open and transparent, including a wider range of perspectives from parents, teachers, and subject matter experts

- Curriculum reform should begin by determining the key knowledge and skills that Alberta students should possess by the time of their high school matriculation, written in plain language that students, parents, and teachers can understand
- The curriculum should focus on developing foundational competencies
- Teaching methods should focus on those that produce the best outcomes, such as phonics and proven math instruction methods
- The social studies curriculum should be taught without political bias, offering an objective understanding of Albertan, Canadian, and world history, geography, and civic literacy
- Financial literacy should be a mandatory element woven throughout the curriculum
- Consent must be taught as an essential part of the sexual education curriculum
- Reform student assessment so that students, parents, and teachers can clearly identify areas of strength and weakness. This will include:
 - Bringing back the Grade 3 Provincial Achievement Test
 - Returning to a 50/50 split between Diploma and school grades for Grade 12
 - Implementing language and math assessments for students in grades 1, 2, and 3 to help both parents and teachers understand and assess progress in the critical early years, and remedy where necessary
- Require clear, understandable report cards
- Focus on excellence in outcomes, with measures that include:
 - benchmarking the Alberta education system against leading global jurisdictions
 - ensuring teachers have expertise in subject areas by introducing teacher testing
 - expanding options for schools to facilitate expertise

- requiring that the education faculties in Alberta's universities themselves require that teachers take courses in the subjects they will one day teach in schools.
- Support safe schools that protect students against discrimination and bullying
- Reinforce the need for open, critical debate and thinking as key to lifelong learning
- Proclaim the *Education Act* (2012), taking effect on September 1, 2019
 - A UCP government will trust the hard work done by those who created the 2012 *Education Act*, and proclaim that legislation, already passed by the Legislature
 - Unlike the NDP's curriculum review, conducted largely in secret, the *Education Act* resulted from years of widespread public consultation
- Introduce a *Choice in Education Act* which will:
 - Affirm parents have primary responsibility for the education of their children
 - Add to the preamble of the *Education Act* recognition of Section 26.3 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which states that "parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children"
 - Protect the status and funding of independent schools in legislation given that they save the public education system \$168 million annually
- Facilitate the creation and operation of new charter schools by:
 - Lifting the cap on the number of charter schools
 - Lifting charter school enrolment caps
 - Allowing charter schools to own property
 - Treating charter schools as priorities above other possible uses for surplus public-school infrastructure
- Support and encourage an expansion of alternative programs in the public system
- Respect the constitutional right to separate schools

- Maintain funding for independent schools and home schoolers at current levels
- Encourage the sharing of busing and infrastructure where appropriate, while respecting the distinctive nature of both systems
- Ensure that requests from parents for blended homeschool programs are facilitated
- Amend the *Education Act* to implement the Leadership Quality Standards
- Reduce paperwork burdens on teachers, principals, and other school staff, and reduce unnecessary regulatory burdens throughout the system
- Review and implement selected recommendations from the Task Force for Teaching Excellence including:
 - Establishing alternative pathways to teaching certification for those in specialized areas of knowledge
 - Introducing more regular assessment of teacher performance
 - Ensuring subject matter competence
- Review the current funding formula to ensure that rural schools have adequate resources to deliver programs in an equitable way



"The UCP Education Plan re-establishes priorities in Alberta that are of significant importance to the education of our children. Albertans should feel a great deal of optimism about the plan outlined by the UCP."

**Martin Mrazik, Associate Professor,
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