

# Final Report

Mission to Japan  
June 25-27, 2014

## Overview:

As a former teacher and member of the Task Force for Teaching Excellence, Associate Minister Naresh Bhardwaj attended the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)/Japan Seminar “How to Best Shape Teacher Policies? Policy Lessons from International Comparisons,” on behalf of Honourable Jeff Johnson, Minister of Alberta Education. The seminar provided an opportunity to exchange views with ministers of education from around the world on how best to shape teacher policy for optimal impact on the quality of the learning environment. It also featured the release of an international report summarizing the results of the Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) 2013, in which Alberta was the only participating Canadian jurisdiction.

The mission was successful in meeting its objectives as outlined below.

## Mission Objectives:

1. Gain an understanding of the teaching and school leadership environment in Alberta schools as compared to other countries, and the implications of developing teaching and school leadership policies and legislation.
2. Exchange views with ministers of education from around the world on how best to shape teacher policy for optimal impact on the quality of the learning environment.
3. Represent Alberta Education at the Japan Seminar, which followed on the heels of Minister Johnson’s March 2014 attendance at the International Summit of the Teaching Profession (ISTP) in New Zealand, where he represented the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC) as Chair. Also, represent Alberta Education at bilateral meetings with Canadian embassy staff.
4. Build Alberta’s reputation and relationships with international policy and opinion-makers through meetings with 32 other countries involved in TALIS.
5. Support preparations for the next ISTP, which will be held in Banff, Alberta in March 2015.

**Results:**

Associate Minister Bhardwaj participated in the OECD/Japan Seminar and informal meeting of ministers of education on June 25 and 26, 2014. The following topics were discussed in the three plenary sessions:

- How do we develop teachers to better prepare 21<sup>st</sup> century learners?
- What do we know about policies and practices that foster more effective teaching and learning?
- What do we expect from education and schools in the future, and how does teaching and the role of teachers need to change as a result?

The meeting also saw the launch of TALIS 2013. Overall, TALIS results have shown that teachers feel well prepared for their profession, but that they frequently work in isolation. The data has also shown that feedback and appraisal teachers receive in schools does not always lead to desired changes, and that in countries in which teachers feel valued, students perform better.

The meeting also provided an opportunity to discuss Alberta's innovative approaches to education as outlined in *Inspiring Education* as well as in the report of the Task Force for Teaching Excellence. Ensuing discussions provided an opportunity for Associate Minister Bhardwaj to learn about innovative approaches implemented in different countries to address issues related to quality teaching.

On June 26, Associate Minister Bhardwaj participated in a planning meeting to discuss potential themes for ISTP 2015. Meeting attendees were: Andreas Schleicher, Director, Directorate for Education and Skills at the OECD; John Bangs, Senior Consultant to the General Secretary of Education International; Shinichi Yamanaka, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Education for Japan; Sander Dekker, State Secretary of Education, Culture and Science for the Netherlands; Honourable Jevgeni Ossinovski, Minister of Education and Research for Estonia; Janusz Zieminski, Senior Manager, Policy Research for Alberta Education; and Antonella Manca-Mangoff, Coordinator, International for the Secretariat of the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada. The OECD agreed to compile the discussed themes in preparation for future planning meetings.

Associate Minister Bhardwaj had a bilateral meeting with Dr. Montserrat Gomendio Kindelan, Vice Minister of Education for Spain. Alberta Education's relationship with Spain began in 1998 through the signing of a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the Spanish Ministry of Education. The MOU was renewed in December 2013, as this relationship has supported the growth and enhancement of Spanish language programs in Alberta schools. This program has also provided Alberta students and teachers with access to scholarships, learning and teaching resources and professional growth opportunities. Alberta and Spain's shared commitment to continuing this relationship was discussed and reaffirmed.

A bilateral meeting was also held with the Honourable Elisabeth Truss, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Education and Childcare for the United Kingdom which was an opportunity to exchange recent experiences that Alberta and the United Kingdom had with redesigning curricula, teacher certification and approaches to early childhood education.

On June 27, Associate Minister Bhardwaj visited the Yamate Middle School to further relations, as Alberta has traditionally been one of the key destinations for the school's students to learn more about Canada and its culture. For over 30 years, high school students from across Alberta have participated in this exchange, which sees approximately 100 Yamate students visit Alberta for up to three weeks in the spring, and Alberta students travelling to Japan in the summer and staying with Japanese families. Associate Minister Bhardwaj confirmed Alberta's interest in continuing student exchange programs with the school, and agreed to discuss with Alberta Culture how this exchange program could be supported by engaging with smaller communities in Alberta, outside of Edmonton, Calgary, Medicine Hat and Red Deer.

Associate Minister Bhardwaj also met with the officials from the Canadian Embassy to discuss effective ways of promoting Alberta as a key destination for Japanese students, which enables students from Japan and students in Alberta to gain intercultural skills and grow as global citizens.

**Delegation:**

Associate Minister Naresh Bhardwaj

## International Travel Final Expenses

Expenditures by Participants	Amount
<b>Travel</b> (includes airfare, airport service fees, ground transportation costs, including taxis, car rentals, parking, trains, buses as well as mileage to/from airport or taxis to/from airport in Alberta, including any cancellation fees)	\$ 1,856.09
<b>Accommodation</b> (room charges and related taxes, including any cancellation fees)	\$ 1,309.83
<b>Meals</b> (includes restaurant bills and tips, meals on hotel bills, per diem meal claims, share of group meals or working sessions)	\$ 348.80
<b>Incidental and Miscellaneous</b> (includes cell phone rental charges, incremental costs for all electronic devices such as roaming charges for cell phones, iPads and costs associated with communications such as the costs incurred for media call-backs, conference/registration fees, including cancellation fees, fax and internet charges, passport and visa fees, medical and inoculation fees, laundry and dry cleaning, baggage handling, out-of-country per diems, and other sundry expenditures)	\$ 0.00
<b>Sub-Total</b>	\$ 3,514.72
General Mission Expenditures	Amount
<b>Receptions and Hosting</b> (receptions, luncheons, dinners, and events that are hosted by the GoA that are specific to the mission and include meeting related costs for room rental, room rental for hosted events, food, beverages, catering staff, service charges, entertainment, flowers)	\$ 0.00
<b>Incidental and Miscellaneous</b> (includes translation of documents fees, publications, shipping charges, gifts purchased specifically for mission, Canadian Embassy/High Commission/Consulate charges for services provided to the GoA)	\$ 0.00
<b>Sub-Total</b>	\$ 0.00
<b>Total Costs</b>	<b>\$ 3,514.72</b>