

**ALBERTA'S NEW EDUCATION ACT****Overview**

Alberta's new Education Act brings to life the vision for a 21st century education thousands of Albertans shared with us through the Inspiring Education dialogue and subsequent consultations. We listened to what Albertans told us and their input is reflected in this legislation.

The new Education Act is based on values we believe are fundamental to educating students in the 21st century, including focusing education on the student; supporting educational choice for Albertans; and enabling boards to be more collaborative and responsive to local needs.

**Shared responsibilities**

Education requires collaboration among all partners in the system to ensure all students achieve their potential.

Students must attend school regularly and punctually and must actively engage in their education. They must also be accountable for their conduct, respecting the rights of others.

Parental responsibilities include making informed decisions respecting the education of their children and playing an active role in their child's educational success, including assisting their child in fulfilling his or her responsibilities as a student.

A clear statement of responsibilities will help Albertans understand the obligations of school boards related to governance, community engagement and student achievement.

**A sense of belonging**

We all benefit from a sense of belonging. It is essential to developing a healthy sense of self – physically, mentally and emotionally. The Education Act provides a framework for an inclusive education system, where all students are supported in finding success through a quality educational experience. It focuses on ensuring access to educational programs, including specialized supports and services regardless of disability, economic circumstances, location or cultural background.

**Welcoming, caring, respectful and safe schools**

The new Education Act addresses bullying and the consequences of inappropriate behaviour – no matter where or when it occurs or who is at fault. Creating caring, respectful and safe environments that respect diversity and foster a sense of belonging is a responsibility shared by all partners in education. Boards must create a student code of conduct that addresses bullying. It must also ensure support not only for students impacted by bullying, but also for students who engage in such behaviour.

**High school completion**

Improving high school completion rates is important as we plan the economic future of Alberta. In addition to raising the compulsory age of attendance for Alberta students to 17 from 16, the Education Act allows Alberta students to access a provincially funded high school education until they turn 21. Boards will decide how to best meet the needs of older students.

**ALBERTA'S NEW EDUCATION ACT****Home education**

The provisions in the Education Act related to home education programs have not changed. Alberta recognizes the essential role of parents as a child's first and most important teacher – that they are the primary guides and decision-makers with respect to their child's education. In that regard, all children in Alberta begin their education at home.

**Charter and private schools**

Charter and private schools continue to be part of a broad range of educational choices for parents and students in Alberta. The Act provides criteria for establishing charter schools and clarifies who may establish them. The Minister may now cancel or suspend a private school's accreditation if its financial administration places the education of students at risk.

**Fees**

No student should ever be denied a basic educational opportunity because they or their parents can't afford school fees. The Education Act continues to prohibit boards from charging tuition fees to resident students or the resident students of any other board. The Act also provides, however, that a board may charge the parent of a student fees in accordance with the regulations. These regulations will be developed in consultation with Albertans once the Act has passed.

**Transportation**

School boards will have greater flexibility in determining the transportation needs of students. Under the Education Act, boards will be required to establish, maintain and implement a policy respecting the safe and appropriate transportation of their students. Specific requirements, including the 2.4 km funding threshold, will no longer be legislated. This will allow boards to be more responsive to the needs of their community when determining how best to provide transportation.

**Natural person powers**

With natural person powers, a board may do anything that a natural person may do – unless the legislation expressly says that it cannot. Without natural person powers, a board can only do those things permitted by legislation. Granting boards natural person powers provides them with more flexibility and opportunity to respond creatively to local issues. Other locally elected bodies, such as municipalities and Métis settlements, already have natural person powers.

**For more information**

To learn more about the new Education Act, visit [www.education.alberta.ca](http://www.education.alberta.ca) or contact Alberta Education at 780-427-7219.

To call toll-free within Alberta, dial 310-0000 then the number

