

speaking notes

Council of School Councils – Update Annual Reports and ATA Agreement

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Vice-Chair

Council of School Councils
Meeting
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**Calgary Board
of Education**

Hello. My name is Lynn Ferguson and I am the trustee who represents Wards 3 & 4 in the City of Calgary and the Vice-chair of the Board of Trustees. My role here this evening is to share two pieces of information with you. The first is to remind you about the Annual Report to Trustees and the second is to update you on the framework agreement.

Annual Report to Trustees

If you reference the 2012-13 School Council Handbook you will remember that on page four under “role”, there is a statement regarding reporting to the Board of Trustees. It reads:

“Under the *School Act*, school councils are responsible to submit an annual report to the Board of Trustees. This report helps the Board of Trustees measure and be accountable for parent and community involvement. The school council chair is responsible for submitting the report to the Board of Trustees by June 15 of that year.”

Don't panic! This report is not meant as an exercise to challenge your creative writing skills. What we are looking for is very simple and very basic information.

If you have reviewed the 2012-13 comprehensive school council handbook (which is located under the School Council Resources Section of the CBE website), you will have discovered that there is a template to help you with this report.

Use the template!

Trustees are interested in learning things such as who was on your committee, how many times you met, what were the activities you were involved with and what finances you handled during the year.

The reports should be sent directly to the Office of the Trustees. We will compile all of the information and share it accordingly.

The deadline for these reports is June 15, 2013. Your school will be able to assist you in getting these to us by using the interschool mail system.

Proposed Framework Agreement

If you have been following stories in the media, you will already know that the Board of Trustees has stated that it cannot support the four-year agreement proposed by the Alberta government and the Alberta Teachers' Association.

The media would tell you that the proposed agreement would hold the line on costs for three years and that it contained benefits for teachers.

When the Board of Trustees carefully examined the proposed agreement line by line we did not see the same information.

We were deeply concerned that benefits for students were conspicuously absent from the agreement.

We are concerned that the proposed agreement concentrates much of the decision-making for student learning in the teachers' union.

We are concerned that the proposed agreement gives individual teachers exclusive control over their professional learning.

We are concerned that the proposed agreement creates excessive and expensive bureaucracy.

We are concerned that the proposed agreement includes significant hidden costs.

As a board we value and respect the contribution of our teachers. We want a collective agreement that reflects the value of our teachers, an agreement that we can afford in tough financial times, and an agreement that enables us to remain a world-leader in public education.

What happens next? This agreement offers “labor peace” but we do not think there is labor conflict. Our students are learning while local bargaining has continued throughout the province. The Calgary Board of Education has an effective working relationship with the local union that represents our teachers. We are confident that we can reach an agreement that works for students, teachers and our system.

What happens if the proposed agreement is legislated by the government? We know this is a possibility. What we also know is that we were elected by you to do what is right for students. We believe it would be wrong to support this agreement. There are too many concerns and too many questions.

After meeting with Alberta Education, we are even more concerned that there are no answers to our questions. This leads us to ask, “How could any school district support an agreement with so many unresolved issues?”

In the final determination, perhaps the single most important question we asked ourselves was: “Are we willing to sacrifice our students’ learning for a collective agreement?” With students first in our thoughts, your Board of Trustees agreed the answer is “no.”

The provincial government has set May 13 as their ratification deadline. We will continue to update you as more information becomes available. You can look to the CBE website for these updates.