



SURVEY: AUPE Committee on Political Action
Submitted September 28, 2021

Curriculum:

Curriculum experts, educators, parents, and many of the current school boards have pointed out the flaws in the draft k-6 curriculum.

1. Do you agree with calls to scrap the draft curriculum and start over to develop a curriculum that is accurate in capturing Alberta's colonial history, diverse present, and modernized to reflect the world we live in?

I agree with calls to scrap the draft curriculum - and absolutely agree that we must expediently develop a curriculum that meets all the criteria above as well as being developmentally appropriate and truly represent the students by whom it's being studied.

The curriculum (current & draft) in almost every content area and grade is out-dated, and there were years of work happening by parents, teachers and respected experts to update the curriculum ready to upgrade our classrooms. Because of the hard work of these committees, working groups, and workshop participants - we don't need to start over, we need to return to their work, and bring these important folks back to the table.

We need to commit to facilitating a development process that allows us to move to a finalized curriculum as quickly as is reasonable with public feedback, and commit the required resources that allow teachers & schools to transition to the new content effectively and without undue pressure on already overworked school staff.

Funding:

Alberta continues to be a growing province, with more students entering the system. While we're told funding is tight for public education, Alberta continues to subsidize private education with millions in public dollars.

2. Do you believe the current education funding formula is sufficient for your district? If not, how will you work to convince the province to provide sustainable and adequate funding?

The current education funding formula, specifically the Weighted Rolling Average (WRA), Program Unit Funding (PUF), and Regional Collaborative Service Delivery (RCSD) program funding cuts cost Lethbridge students almost \$3M in education investment . This is not sufficient for the enrollment growth our district regularly sees - almost 20% projected between seven short years - 2016 and 2023.

Collective advocacy, such as the Alberta School Board Association's efforts to reinstate PUF funding to 2018 levels, is critical for long term sustainable funding for public education as a whole. Also crucial: listening to experts - like education researchers, teachers, and parents about what students and schools need to be successful.

Privatization including P3s:

AUPE members know very well that privatization regularly fails to find “efficiencies” and any cost savings are often off the backs of workers who become de- unionized, with lower pay and benefits.

They also work on the front lines of service delivery and see the problems caused by high-turnover low wage private providers, and the bureaucratic burden caused by having to deal with a third party instead of an in-house Provider.

3. Will you oppose privatization of school services and infrastructure, including Public-Private- Partnerships aka P3s? Will you support bringing previously privatized services in-house?

Public education should be just that: Public, in as many ways as possible.

Alberta has used and examined using P3s to build schools on many occasions and governments including PC and NDP leaders have found P3s to be less cost effective than traditionally funded infrastructure. While Alberta currently has 5 high schools slated to be built through P3s, we know from the evidence presented by numerous real world case studies in Alberta and almost every Canadian province that P3 built schools often have hidden costs and higher price tags, have maintenance and operational challenges, and less opportunity for community accountability than traditionally built schools.

In Lethbridge, the previously public transportation service (offered through City of Lethbridge transit, with drivers from ATU 987) was privatized with significant and continuing struggles.

As a member of the board I would continue to advocate for the reinstatement of public transportation services for schools, and support traditionally funded school construction for our city's upcoming schools.

Schools as Employers:

As our economies recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, good jobs are an important factor. Public sector workers spend in their communities, and many households

impacted by private sector recessions have been able to keep the bills paid thanks to a stable public sector job.

4. Will you support your employees and your community by ensuring the school board employs staff with living wages, full-time hours where desired, job security, and collective bargaining rights?

It is critical and privileged work to take excellent care of our employees - from teachers, admin, educational assistants, community support workers, librarians, caretaking staff, and all the people who keep our buildings open, our students cared for and educated, and our community thriving. My partner was a teacher for ten years, and as a trained teacher myself, I understand the critical work that school staff invest into the wellbeing of our students and families - the staff that do this work deserve excellent advocates in return.

I am a vocal supporter of worker's rights including collective bargaining rights, along with meaningful, just, and fair work, compensation, and security. I am particularly interested in examining the employment conditions for substitute teachers, who are often left out of the traditional protections that teachers have fought hard for. Additionally I am focused on ensuring that Educational Assistants are supported in their critical work in supporting our most vulnerable students, while facing some of the lowest pay, least security, and most precarity in schools.

Living Wage Alberta is set to release new data about a living wage this fall, and it is my commitment to advocate for a living wage for all workers for whom I am responsible, whether it be at my job in community development leadership at a local nonprofit, or as a member of the Lethbridge School Division Board of Trustees.

I was honoured to receive an endorsement from Alberta Federation of Labour during my school board campaign in 2017, and as of September 27, 2021 have been honoured with an endorsement from the Lethbridge & District Labour Council - I will continue to earn that support by standing up for workers.

5. Will you oppose attempts from the provincial government to legislate against school staff including cuts to the Local Authorities Pension Plan, or restrictions on their right to strike?

School staff's financial wellbeing is a priority for my community leadership - because as we know from all work places; when compensation packages are commensurate and respectful of the work required, we are better able to attract and retain the staff who make the day to day impact of public education.

With school staff burnout rates skyrocketing, and teacher attrition shown to be at more than 40% in Alberta even before the pandemic, we must ensure that we advocate for appropriate

compensation and worker rights like right to strike or we risk facing a severe school staff shortage across Canada, which could have drastic consequences on student learning.

LAAP's cuts and ties to underperformed AIMCO is an insult to lifelong educators, and restrictions on right to strike would be a huge step backward for not just education workers but all workers. I would fight to protect both.

COVID Safety:

With the negligent provincial response to now three preventable waves of COVID-19, school boards have been put in an awkward position of needing to take measure to protect their students and staff throughout the pandemic. Many are introducing measures of their own, but not all have.

6. Do you support measures such as mask mandates, and vaccine mandates for staff to limit and reduce the spread of COVID-19 in your schools?

Public health and public education go hand in hand. While it is deeply harmful that the provincial government has left each school district to make their own decisions with limited medical knowledge or expertise, rather than offer expert guidance, districts must act to protect their staff and students. I support mask mandates and vaccine mandates for staff to limit and reduce the spread of COVID-19 in Lethbridge schools. There are reasonable accommodations that can be made available for staff who for various reasons are unable to access this proven, safe, and effective vaccine.

But these are not the only measures that keep schools safe. I also support and advocate for the return of contact tracing, as well as testing and identification of close contacts. Additionally, I would advocate for the resourcing of schools to ensure that these measures are able to be implemented: provision of masks, sanitizer, cleaning supplies, enough teachers & spaces to offer smaller class sizes, and staffing supports to ensure that learners who must isolate have meaningful education while at home and so staff who must isolate have adequate coverage.