



December 3, 2019

The Honourable Adriana LaGrange

Minister of Education
Office of the Minister
228 Legislature Building
10800 - 97 Avenue
Edmonton AB T5K 2B6

Re: Support for a fully funded and supported public education system

Delivered by e-mail

Dear Minister LaGrange:

ARTA (Alberta Retired Teachers' Association) is an organization of over 13,500 retired teachers whose lifetime careers were dedicated to the best possible education for Alberta students. That dedication, passion and concern continues in our retirement years. In the light of all the current government proposed changes, we are especially concerned for the education of our grandchildren, our great grandchildren, and the children of all Alberta families. Thus, at the recent ARTA Board of Directors meeting, it was unanimously agreed that our concern regarding the proposed new legislative policy called the "Choice in Education Act" needs to be shared with you and your department.

Our concerns surround the Alberta Governments proposed new legislation called the "Choice in Education Act". This policy includes instituting an American-style voucher system that would reduce the amount of funding available for public, separate and Francophone schools. Such policy would unfairly impact students, particularly those most vulnerable.

Our members endorse a fully funded and supported public education system and do not see the value in an American-style voucher system. In the recent weeks, public education has taken a hard hit financially; students and teachers alike are paying the price for decisions made.

While we appreciate the Alberta Government's desire to restore fiscal responsibility, we do not support any proposed change that has the potential of impacting a fully funded and supported public education system.

The voucher system that is being considered shifts the focus from a collaborative view of education to a more elitist view and has potential of impacting those who cannot buy into a tiered approach to education. The voucher system has the potential of impacting the mix of students, and in changing the mix, you devalue social interactions that help improve communication, understanding and collaboration that an inclusive public education systems develops.

In these changing times, tolerance and understanding thrive in a healthy mixed environment; elitist tiered education blurs the lines of social and interracial tolerance.

The members of the Alberta Retired Teachers Association appreciate that you are seeking public opinion on this proposed legislation and we have encouraged our members to complete the survey you have developed. However, we would be remiss if we did not contact you directly to assist you in understanding our views on instituting an American-style voucher system.

We are available if you would like a sounding board for any proposed changes you are contemplating that affect public education; our years of experience and dedication to education could serve you well.

May we all work together to ensure that the best possible education for Alberta students is at the forefront of every decision made.

Sincerely yours,



Lorna McIlroy, President
Alberta Retired Teachers Association

CC. The Honourable Jason Kenney, Premier
Jason Schilling, President, ATA
Dennis Theobald, Executive Secretary, ATA
Daniel Mulloy, CEO, ARTA
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