

## GET THE FACTS ON CHARTER AND PRIVATE SCHOOL FUNDING –

An Opinion Piece

from the Board of Trustees for Grande Yellowhead Public School Division

### **Ensuring a strong public school system should unite Albertans, not divide us.**

Current conversations around ‘choice’ often lead to Charter Schools being identified as the answer. *But why?*

### **Alberta’s public education system has been internationally ranked as a leader in curriculum, inclusion, instruction, and system leadership.**

Alberta is the only province in Canada that has Charter Schools. One must wonder why. When Canada ranks highly in the *Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA)* performance results, *why would we want to emulate the US approach, where they track to the much lower PISA ranking and where the public education system is broken?*

Consider this, in Alberta, Charter Schools receive 100% of the per student funding split and Private schools receive 70% in the same way as Public, Separate and Francophone schools do. Yet they only account for 1.4% and 5.11% of Alberta students respectively. Neither are freely equitable, nor do they accept or accommodate the needs of all students seeking access – that falls only to the public school system.

### **Diverting funds from the public system to support ‘choice’ weakens the public system.**

*At a time when Alberta public schools are losing EAs, teachers, librarians, and school counselors, is it fiscally responsible to funnel more provincial dollars into exclusive options outside of the public system?*

As leaders in Public School Education and stakeholders in Alberta’s K-12 education ecosystem, we believe that a strong public school system is fundamental to creating a strong society and a strong economy. Our students should not be sacrificed or disadvantaged for the benefit of a select few.

### **All Alberta students deserve the benefits derived from key learnings of Charter Schools.**

Most people don’t know that Alberta Charter Schools were initially established as a short term (five year) program to gather information on learning styles and teaching methodology. The information gathered at Alberta Charter Schools was supposed to be consolidated and flow back into Public Education. *Where is the value for Albertans?*

Public School Boards are ultimately accountable to the citizens of Alberta as Trustees are publicly elected. The same cannot be said for Charter and Private Schools. While they receive public funds for every student, they are not accountable to those providing the funds – the taxpayer. In fact, Charter and Private Schools are not required to have a democratically elected board.

Ask your 2023 provincial election candidate:

***Should your party form government, will you limit the public funds that are diverted to support private and charter schools, and turn your focus back to funding a strong, inclusive, and world-renowned public education system in Alberta?***

This opinion piece is part of the Board’s advocacy for public education plan and illustrates their commitment to community engagement. The Board thanks the **Public School Boards’ Association of Alberta** for resources to communicate the need for increased awareness of public education issues.