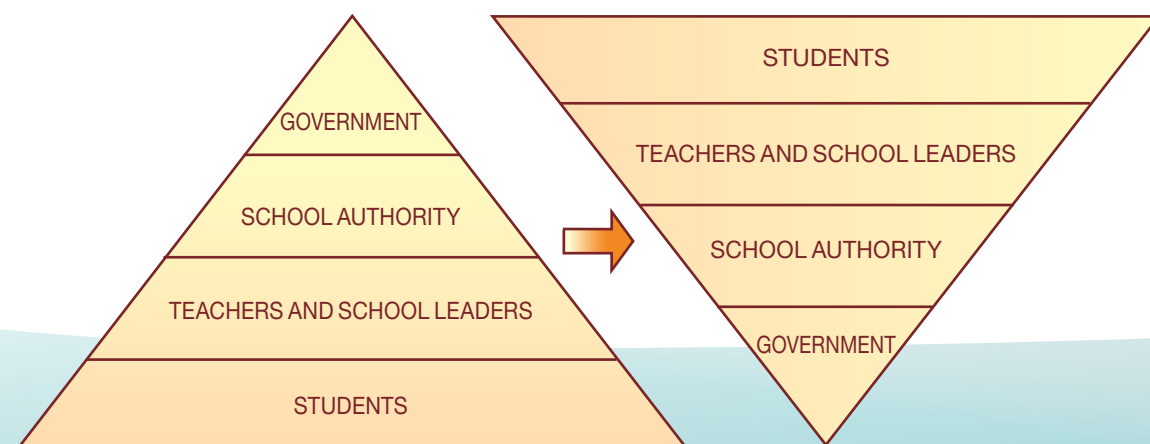


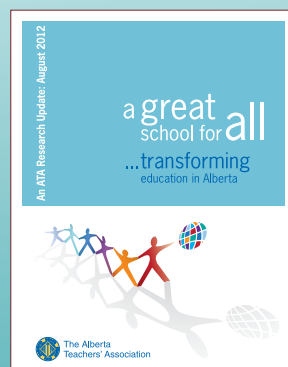
A Time for Change: Evolving from an (Ego)system to an (Eco)system

The global education reform movement (GERM) continues to drive misguided government policies both here in Alberta and across Canada. Ignoring the research and often driven by the growing influence of corporate interests, these policies place an excessive focus on standardization and control that includes the growth in testing and student reporting technologies. In this context it is little wonder that the most significant contributors to teachers' workload in Alberta schools is the growth of the 'datafication' of school life alongside ill-conceived technology acquisitions accompanied by declining support for inclusion and the growing number of students with special needs. These GERM policies are not unique to Canada. Consider that since 2000, only 1 in 10 educational reforms implemented by OECD jurisdictions such as Canada have produced in any gains in student learning.

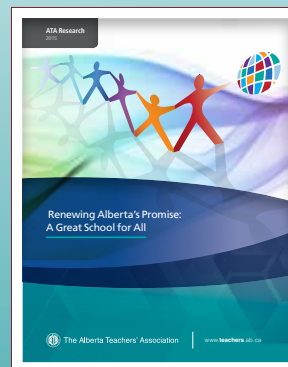
It is time to "flip the system" and the current assumptions that feed the GERM. Rather than governance structures that represent an "ego-system" where individuals are held accountable within a hierarchy, we need to move to an "eco-system" that recognizes that the role of all of those involved in the education sector is to support the work of schools as parts of a complex living system. Central to this work is the role of teachers and school leaders as architects of change.



From the "ego-system" we have to the "eco-system" we need.



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To obtain copies of the reports cited in this publication go to www.teachers.ab.ca or contact jordan.kardosh@ata.ab.ca.

A Great School for All: Moving Forward Together

We must start to think of education as a life-system of the entire community. As such, it cannot be examined or reformed in isolation from public sentiment, values and aspirations. —David King, 2015

For far too long, Alberta's K–12 education sector has been overmanaged and underimagined. With a new government now settling into their role as our provincial stewards, it is time that we consider how the Alberta Teachers' Association and this new government can work together to bring meaningful and sustainable change to our public education system and indeed our professional work as teachers.

What follows are excerpts from *A Great School for All—Transforming Education in Alberta* (2012), which provides a blueprint for educational development in the province based on a focus on excellence through equity.

The first statements in each of the dimensions provide the aspiration for the change necessary to transform education and are followed by a question for the government to consider. These dimensions of change are interconnected and recognize that schools are complex living communities that exist within an ecology bounded by culture, community, socio-economic realities, political environments and global trends and pressures. Each of the 12 dimensions considers a vital component of a vibrant future and when taken together as a learning project will ensure that Alberta continues to have one of the best education systems in the world.

This blueprint for change was developed by the Association in collaboration with a team of international experts in order to provide a research informed, systematic approach to enhancing educational opportunities for Alberta's increasingly diverse student population. This blueprint was further updated (summer 2015) to reflect current realities with the publication of *Renewing Alberta's Promise: A Great School for All* (2015).



The Alberta Teachers' Association

Dimension 1

Assessing and reporting student learning

Teachers' professional judgment is considered primary in developing the individual gifts and talents of all students.

School performance reporting reflects both the breadth and depth of Alberta Education's Goals of Education, which represent the aspirations of Albertans for a vibrant public school education for all students.

How will the government and the profession work together to develop alternatives to the current provincial testing programs and provide job-embedded professional learning for teachers?



Dimension 2

Curriculum development and implementation

Curriculum is developed through networks that enable teachers to share innovative practices, and the high school curriculum provides multiple pathways for student success.

How do we ensure that ongoing curriculum development incorporates a significantly reduced number of learning outcomes and provides the teaching profession with the responsibility for developing curriculum that's appropriate for each community?



Dimension 3

Digital technologies and learning

Teachers have primary responsibility for determining the appropriate role of technology in shaping students' learning environments.

Alberta schools recognize that teaching and learning are highly relational activities and technology use must be developmentally appropriate.

Will the government encourage the education partners to collaborate on research that explores the kinds of technologies that optimize student learning and enhance teachers' conditions of practice?



Dimension 4

Inclusive education

Schools have the funding they need to honour the right of all students to learn.

Wraparound supports and services are available to help schools meet the unique needs of students.

School administrators and classroom teachers have the time and resources necessary to maximize student learning and create a great school for all students.

How will the government ensure that the funding framework for inclusion reflects the true costs of providing supports and services to diverse learners and that the government funds all aspects of inclusion while monitoring how these funds are being used to support students?

Dimension 12

Governance and vibrant communities

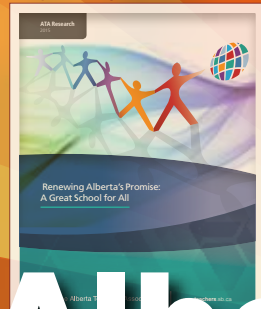
Schools are the hubs of vibrant communities that engage citizens to become their best possible selves.

Given that school communities are complex ecosystems, Albertans recognize that visionary leadership, engaged citizenship and a commitment to equity are key to effective community development.

How can the government support the school as the focal point for communities to better co-ordinate the delivery of education, health and other public services that enhance the well-being of students?



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Renewing Alberta's Promise for A Great School for All

Dimension 5

Optimal conditions of practice

Alberta schools are vibrant, creative working environments that enable teachers to grow professionally and personally.

Alberta teachers—whose combined workload and classroom complexity exceeds that of all other OECD jurisdictions—see immediate reductions in unsupported initiatives often driven by marketing of technology vendors.

How will the government work with the profession to address the growing complexity of teachers' work?



Dimension 11

Early learning

Alberta is recognized as a world leader in early childhood development research and programming that is committed to equity.

How might the education partners support the government in expanding early-learning initiatives, especially with respect to full-time kindergarten?

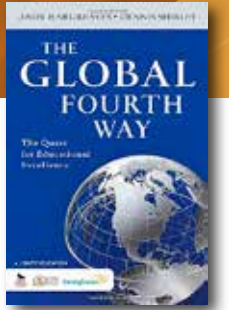


Dimension 10

Teacher leadership

Teachers are at the centre of educational reform, not on the sidelines.

Will the government implement an education research framework to facilitate the development of evidence-informed initiatives that foster local innovation and strengthen teacher leadership?



Dimension 9

School leadership

School leaders across the province have the resources they need to support student learning.

How do we support the government with an immediate policy that will achieve greater equity through investments in early learning?



Dimension 8

Public assurance

Alberta schools have implemented a locally focused public assurance model that is based on sampling and other more effective research-informed processes related to school and system performance.

How can the government support Alberta schools in moving from a bureaucratic accountability model to a locally-focused, student-driven assurance model of public assurance?



Dimension 6

Differentiation for learning

Alberta schools offer creative learning environments in which all students feel connected to their teachers and are fully engaged in their learning experiences.

In what ways can education partners collaborate to embark upon model projects to explore how innovative learning environments can support teachers as they differentiate learning?

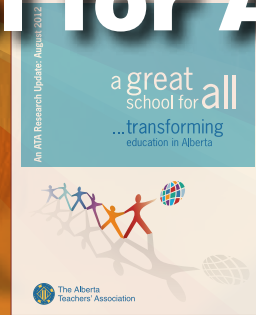
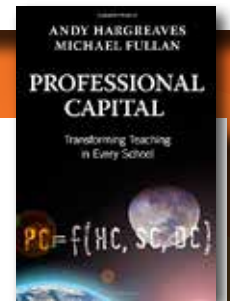


Dimension 7

Professional development and autonomy

Through self-governance that includes teacher certification, Alberta's teaching profession is committed to exemplary teaching practice, sustained by ongoing professional learning determined by teachers.

In a self-governance framework, how will professional learning opportunities, appropriately funded by government, be sustained in ways that put teachers at the centre rather than at the edges of school improvement efforts?



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