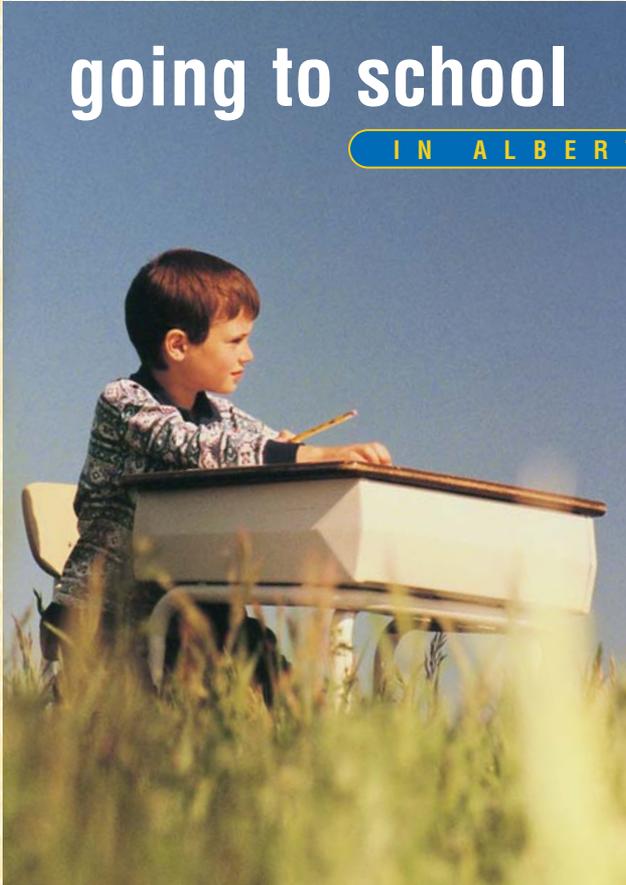


going to school

IN ALBERTA



THE ALBERTA TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION

PUBLIC, SEPARATE & FRANCOPHONE SCHOOLS

More than 92 per cent of Alberta's students are educated in the province's public education system, which includes public, separate and francophone schools—69 per cent in the public system, 22 per cent in the separate system and 1 per cent in the francophone system.

Public, separate and francophone schools

- are governed by publicly elected school boards;
- are fully funded by Alberta taxpayers;
- must accept all students;
- must abide by all the regulations approved by Alberta Education;
- must employ certificated teachers who, upon employment, become active members of the Alberta Teachers' Association (ATA) and are subject to the teaching profession's Code of Professional Conduct; and
- may offer and charge fees for alternative programs that emphasize a particular language, culture, religion or subject matter, or use a particular teaching philosophy.*

* Current examples include Christian programs, an all-girls school, various academic schools and arts schools, and alternative high schools tailored to students returning to school after dropping out.

CHARTER SCHOOLS

Charter schools are established by agreement between a school board or the Minister of Education and an individual or group. The government states that the intention of charter schools in Alberta is to provide innovative and enhanced means of delivering education. As of January 2008, there were 12 charter schools in Alberta. Charter schools

- are governed by a board of directors or governors;
- receive full government funding except for capital grants;
- cannot charge tuition fees or operate for a profit;
- must structure their curriculum around Alberta Education's basic education program, but are autonomous in daily operations;
- can develop policies different from those established by local school boards;
- cannot be affiliated with a religious faith; and
- must employ certificated teachers; however, teachers in charter schools are not eligible for active membership in the ATA and are not subject to the teaching profession's Code of Professional Conduct.**

** The Code of Professional Conduct applies to teachers employed by public, separate or francophone boards.

PRIVATE SCHOOLS

There are two main categories of private schools in Alberta: registered and accredited. As of January 2008, there were 10 registered and 149 accredited private schools. There are also a number of Early Childhood Services (ECS) eligible for funding as private schools. Currently, accredited private schools and ECS operators receive 60 per cent of the funding given to schools in Alberta's public education system.

REGISTERED PRIVATE SCHOOLS

Registered private schools in Alberta

- do not receive funding from Alberta taxpayers,
- do not have to employ certificated teachers,
- do not have to teach the Alberta program of studies, and
- cannot grant high school credits.

ACCREDITED PRIVATE SCHOOLS

Accredited private schools in Alberta

- must be run by a non-profit agency;
- receive 60 per cent of the per-student instructional grant given to public and separate schools;
- may charge tuition fees and operate for a profit;
- must offer programs approved by the Minister of Education;
- must ensure that their students write provincial achievement and diploma examinations; and
- must employ certificated teachers; however, teachers in accredited private schools are not eligible for active membership in the ATA, and are not subject to the teaching profession's Code of Professional Conduct.**

H O M E S C H O O L I N G

In Alberta, parents can opt to keep their children at home and provide home-based instruction; however, parents who choose this option must inform their resident board.

Home education programs must be supervised by a regular school board or by an accredited private school. Home-schooled students must receive at least two assessments per school year by the supervisory body.

Supervising school boards or private schools receive funding for each student schooled at home.



ATA POLICY ON

PUBLIC, SEPARATE AND FRANCOPHONE SCHOOLS

The ATA supports public, separate and francophone schools because public education provides opportunities for ALL children.

ALTERNATIVE PROGRAMS

The ATA supports alternative schools and programs when they address learning needs and differences rather than religious, ethnic or socioeconomic differences.

PRIVATE SCHOOLS

The ATA opposes all public funding of private schools.

CHARTER SCHOOLS

The ATA opposes publicly funded charter schools that exclude certain types of students, operate under less restrictive legislation than public, separate and francophone schools, or are dominated by special interest groups.

HOME SCHOOLING

The ATA urges the government to ensure that student evaluation regulations are applied to and enforced for home-schooled students.



The Alberta Teachers' Association

