

Setting the Direction for Special Education: Phase Two

What are your thoughts about special education in Alberta? Do you have insights into what works and what doesn't?

Alberta Education invites public input in the consultation process of a new initiative that aims to create "a new special education framework that includes vision, principles, policy, accountability, and funding." ACCD's Executive Director, Bev Matthiessen, attended the public consultation in Red Deer and was excited about the dialogue that is being created between parents, educators, and government.



ACCD attended the Phase One consultation process in Red Deer last November, and we look forward to attending a Phase Two meeting in Edmonton on March 20 and 21. Bev Matthiessen, executive director with ACCD, comments, "At the phase one meetings I was impressed by the number of people who attended the sessions to voice their concerns and suggestions. I hope that ACCD members, their families, and their friends will participate in the Phase Two consultations. Your commitment to this initiative is critical."

Approximately 3,500 Albertans contributed to Phase One. Dave Hancock, Minister of Alberta Education, notes, "Contributions were clear, consistent, and direct, and a common passion for every student's success was clear in the input of students, parents, teachers, and school board trustees."

The purpose of the Phase Two sessions is to

- affirm what was heard during Phase One Consultations (vision, mission, and principles),
- share the proposed system redesign to support achieving the vision,

views online or by filling out and mailing in a discussion guide / questionnaire.

Phase 2 consultations will take place in February and March 2009. Alberta Education will seek public input on options for special education policy, accountability, and funding. Dates and locations will be published on the Alberta Education web site.

Phase 3 will take place at a Minister's Forum scheduled for June 8-9, 2009 in Edmonton. A draft special education framework will be presented for discussion. The framework will include vision, principles, policy, accountability measures, and funding mechanism details.

After the Minister's Forum, the project Steering Committee will make final recommendations to the Minister of Education. If adopted, the framework is scheduled for implementation in September 2010.

Nominations Open for ACCD Award

Question: What do Larry Pempeit, Robin Slater, and Travis McNally have in common?



Answer: They are all recent recipients of the Council of Canadians Disability Award!

Each year, ACCD presents the CCD award to an individual who is dedicated to the "pursuit of full participation in society by people with disabilities."

If you know an Albertan whose commitment to the disability community deserves recognition, we want to hear from you.

The deadline for nominations is December 31, 2008. Nomination forms are available by calling the office at 780-488-9088 or toll free at 1-800-387-2514. Nomination forms are available on the ACCD website at www.accd.net. Choose "What We Do" from the web site menu and then click on "CCD Award".

Registered Disabilities Savings Plan

In 2007, Canada became the first country in the world to create a national Registered Disability Savings Plan (RDSP). As of December, 2008, Canadians have the opportunity to participate in the RDSP which presents families with a way to provide for the future financial security of their loved ones with disabilities. An estimated three quarters of a million people across Canada will benefit from this initiative.

Like Registered Education Savings Plans, the plan allows funds to be invested tax free until withdrawal. Any individual who is eligible for the Disability Tax Credit may establish an RDSP. In the case of a minor child, a parent or guardian can establish and direct the RDSP.

The lifetime contribution limit is \$200,000. Contributions can be made by the individual, a family member, or a friend. There are no annual limits on contributions. There are no restrictions on when the funds can be used or for what purpose.

Planned Lifetime Advocacy Network (PLAN) has developed a brochure, fact sheet, and online blog that will answer some of your most pressing questions. You can learn more by visiting the PLAN web site at www.plan.ca or by calling the PLAN office at (604) 439-9566.



Warm Wishes for
a Wonderful
Holiday and
a Happy New Year
from all of us at
ACCD.



Together, We Hold The Power!

Full Participation - Accessibility - Equity

All Star Hockey Fun-Raiser Coming Soon!

Come cheer on the Eskimos Alumni and the Edmonton Police Service Faded Blues, with help from their friends on the U of A Pandas and Golden Bears, as they take to the ice at the All Star Hockey Fun-Raiser! This year's event promises to be better than ever with prizes, raffles, auction items - and, of course, some terrific hockey! All proceeds support ACCD's programs and research.



Attendance at this year's event is absolutely free - all you have to do is register online to let us know that you'll be in attendance.

Family Day

Monday, February 16, 2009

Doors open at 12:30 pm

Game starts at 1:30 pm

Clare Drake Arena,

U of A Campus - Edmonton

Door Prizes * Silent Auction

* Shoot on Goalie

Register Online to Qualify at

www.hockeyfun.dojiggy.com for the

FREE GRAND PRIZE

(must be present at the game to win)

Volunteers and Sponsors Needed

If you would like to learn more about sponsorship and volunteer opportunities for the All-Star

Hockey Fun-Raiser, contact ACCD at

780-488-9088 in Edmonton or

1-800-387-2514 (toll free)

outside of Edmonton.