

**Alberta Mackenzie Provincial Council
The Catholic Women's League of Canada**

Education and Health Communiqué #8

Mary H., Chairperson
December, 2018



“Inspired by the Spirit; Women Respond to God’s Call”

This letter comes to you with Christmas around the corner. I feel it is important that we are prepared early in the New Year to declare our support of our publicly funded Catholic School System and “fight” for its future. June Fuller, Cheryl Boom & I have been in meetings with Edmonton School Board Trustees Carla Smiley and Lisa Turchansky to determine how members of the CWL can become involved. On January 16th we will meet with all of the stakeholders in the Edmonton area to lay out a concrete plan as to how we will move forward. We understand that all Catholic Districts in the province will all be on side and follow a similar course of action.

Protecting our publicly funded Catholic Schools

Catholic schools support the mission of the Church, by offering formation of the “whole person” which includes academically, physically, socially and spiritually.

Property Taxes Declaration

Catholic education is funded through education property taxes, grants and general provincial revenue. As a Catholic elector, you need to be aware of your right to support your Catholic schools through your property taxes.

Be sure to declare your support of the Catholic separate school district in your municipality. To ensure your property taxes are supporting your Catholic separate school, you must declare your school support as “separate” on your annual property assessment notice and tax bill.

In recent years, there are increasing numbers of Catholic supporters who have not felt the need to make the tax declaration as school funding is now determined on a per student enrollment basis and not based on direct taxes paid to the school district. It is important that government knows how many Albertans there really are who support publicly funded Catholic education and that enrollment numbers provide only a portion of those numbers with extended family, businesses and other interested individuals representing the balance.

If your support designation is incorrect, it should be corrected by completing and submitting a School Support Declaration form, obtained online or from your local city, town or municipal office. A change in school Support does not take effect until the following calendar year. The Alberta Catholic School Board

Trustees Association (ACSTA) are willing to assist anyone in contacting your local Catholic school district and can be reached at 780-484-6209.

Letter Writing Campaign

Now is the time to write your MLA, Education Minister David Eggen and Premier Rachel Notley. For your convenience, I am including the address of the Legislature Building where your letters should be sent. Please find following some points for Catholic Education Advocacy that may be of assistance when drafting your letters:

- There are Constitutional guarantees to Catholic education in Alberta. Although Catholics are a large minority in the province, their voice still counts. Would it be acceptable for the general public to make decisions on the Constitutional rights of any minority? The implications for marginalization are staggering.
- There is an obvious demand for Catholic education in Alberta.
 - There are 17 Catholic School Districts in Alberta with a total of 418 schools.
 - In 2017-18, there were 168,629 students enrolled in Catholic schools in Alberta. That is 24% of the of the student population enrolled in provincial ECS-grade 12 schools.
- Under the School Act, parents have the right and responsibility to make decisions respecting the education of their children. Removing choices, such as faith based education, diminishes those parental rights.
- Catholic education is distinctive. It is more than gaining knowledge of faith. It is extending that knowledge to application of the faith across the curriculum and into real life situations. It is thus a framework for living that engages mind, body, and spirit.
- In the same fashion that Alberta Education has developed a vision of the competencies that Alberta’s students build through education, the goal of Catholic education is to also build competencies in students that are deeply rooted in Catholic Social Teaching. This equips them to navigate the real world within a strong faith framework, always oriented to discerning situations by looking at the impact of action on others.
- Catholic education is oriented to community and communion. Students are nurtured from the beginning of their education to seek to build up the community to which they belong. In fact, they know that this is what they are called to do. They are further empowered to know that they do make a difference. We graduate global citizens!
- Catholic education honors diversity and is welcoming; it is grounded in the principles of hospitality, justice, and the dignity of each person as a child of God.

The address of the Legislature Building is 10800 – 97th Avenue N.W. Edmonton T5K 2B6

The Honourable Rachel Notley
Premier of Alberta
10800 – 97 Avenue N.W.
Edmonton, Alberta
T5K 2B6

The Honourable David Eggen
Alberta Minister of Education
10800 – 97 Avenue N.W.
Edmonton, Alberta
T5K 2B6

Name of Your MLA
Constituency Name
10800 – 97 Avenue N.W.
Edmonton, Alberta
T5K 2B6

Please note that postage is required. Only letters to federal representatives require no postage.

Host a Catholic Education Event

Please find following a copy of the e-flyer that was sent out leading to a Catholic Education Forum at Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church in Sherwood Park which was by all accounts a wonderful success. There is another event planned in January at St. Thomas More Parish. Consider doing something similar in your community...



TIMELY TOPICS

Catholic Education: Why Should I Care?

- Why do we have two school systems in Alberta?
- Why does the Catholic Church seem to have "pride of place" among other Christian and non-Christian faith groups?
- How is Catholic education different from that in the public school system?
- Why should I care?

Join our panel of experts to learn more about Catholic education in Alberta and what you can do to help preserve it for future generations.

For information, contact:
Pat at 780-467-5470
or pat@olph.ca

**Monday,
November 5
7:00-9:00 p.m.**
**Our Lady of Perpetual
Help Parish, 13 Brower
Drive, Sherwood Park**

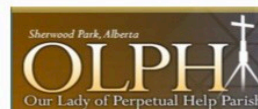
Panelists:

Archbishop Richard Smith, Catholic Archdiocese of Edmonton

Dean Sarnecki, Executive Director, Alberta Catholic Schools Trustees Association (ACSTA)

Anna Loparco, Partner, Dentons Canada LLP, ACSTA legal counsel

Paul Corrigan, Assistant Superintendent, Elk Island Catholic Schools, Division Principal of Faith & Wellness Formation



GrACE (Grateful Advocates for Catholic Education)

Catholic school boards and dioceses have created a new organization to counter the push for a unified public education system in Alberta. Leading this effort is Bonnie Annicchiarico who was assistant superintendent with Christ the Redeemer Catholic school district and resides in Brooks.

GrACE is a way for us to advocate for Catholic education in a coordinated way and discuss the successes of the system.

A 2017 Saskatchewan court decision ---one that found Catholic schools have no constitutional right to funding for non-Catholic students---could also substantially affect Catholic schools in Alberta and Ontario if the case makes its way to the Supreme Court of Canada.

We will hear more from GrACE after the January 16th planning meeting which I will attend and share with you. If you have any information, suggestions or have questions, I would be pleased to hear from you.

Please find attached below, a copy of the GrACE handout that came out in October of this year

Wishing you and your families abundant blessings at Christmas and throughout the New Year...

For God and Canada,

Mary Hunt, Standing Committee Chair
Education & Health
Alberta Mackenzie Provincial Council
The Catholic Women's League of Canada
Phone: 780-487-3165
Email: abmkprovedhealth@gmail.com

Introducing...



WHY?

The gift of publicly funded Catholic education in Alberta is a true blessing. As a community we are called in gratitude, faith and action to ensure that our children and future generations continue to learn and grow in our Catholic schools.

WHAT?

The mission of **GrACE** is to inspire, invigorate and embolden the spirit of Catholic education in order to unite, engage, educate and communicate with one voice on its behalf. **GrACE** is a partnership of stakeholders resolutely committed to Catholic education within the province of Alberta.

WHO? YOU!

GrACE invites all those committed to Catholic education, through the unity of the Holy Spirit, to be advocates and witnesses for our schools' successes and their future.

WHERE?

In your homes, your neighborhoods, your schools and your parishes. Watch for and get involved with your local **GrACE** team. Tell your stories of Catholic education. Let your voice be heard.

WHEN? NOW!

Every day is a celebration of Catholic education. Let us be grateful for our blessings and commit our support.

Catholic education affirms parents as their children's primary educators and respects the rights of parents to choose the school that meets their needs

In Catholic schools, it is our deepest desire to ensure that every child knows and experiences the love of God through the witness of their community

Principles of diversity and inclusion are central in the teachings of the Catholic Church and permeate all aspects and curriculum in a Catholic school

180,000 students currently attend Catholic schools in Alberta

Alberta is one of three provinces in Canada with publicly funded Catholic education. Ontario and Saskatchewan are the other two.

Catholic education in Alberta is 158 years old

An organized effort of public school lobbyists are attempting to disrupt Catholic education in our province. Your engagement; your advocacy; your voice is vital.

"The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen"

Romans 16:24