



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



June 13, 2017

The Honourable David Eggen,  
Minister of Education,  
307 Legislature Building  
10800 97 Avenue  
Edmonton, AB T5K 2B6

Dear Minister Eggen,

On behalf of the over 9,700 members of the Catholic Women's League of the Alberta Mackenzie Provincial Council, I wish to voice member's concern about the threats to Catholic education. We are guided by the objects of our organization; to unite Catholic women of Canada particularly, to promote the teachings of the Catholic Church and to uphold and defend Christian education and values in the modern world. I have been directed by members attending our 2017 Annual Provincial Convention to write to you.

Members of the Catholic Women's League believe that Catholic education is a gift. Catholic education has served nations for centuries through teaching students in their faith throughout Canada, provinces, territories and dioceses.

Our members are concerned that Catholic education is safeguarded and preserved so that our children can be nurtured and grow in an environment that is rooted in Christ. We want to be sure that generations in the future will live out our vocations in a way that honors our faith and draws us ever more deeply into relationship with the Trinity.

There are Constitutional guarantees to Catholic education in Alberta. Although Catholics are a large minority in the province, our 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 a strong need for our government to support publicly funded Catholic education and it's ability to provide a fully permeated faith curriculum. Further, it is critical that the curriculum redesign outcomes allow Catholic Schools the flexibility to be able to infuse/permeate faith throughout the whole course of study

There is an obvious demand for Catholic education in Alberta.

- There are 17 Catholic School Districts in Alberta with a total of 410 schools.
- There are 166,209 students enrolled in Catholic schools in Alberta. That is 24% of the of the student population enrolled in provincial ECS-grade 12 schools.

<https://education.alberta.ca/alberta-education/school-authority-index/everyone/alberta-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!

Our members, constituents across Alberta, are following this closely. We are asking for your commitment, in word, to Catholic education in our province.

For God and Canada,

Cathy Bouchard,  
President,  
Alberta Mackenzie Provincial Council,  
The Catholic Women's League of Canada