

**DATE:** May 22, 2018

**TO:** Board of Trustees

**FROM:** Alberta Schools Boards Association (ASBA) Issues and Resolutions Committee:  
Trustees Adams, Janz and Draper

**SUBJECT:** Recommendations on voting in advance of the ASBA Spring General Meeting (SGM)

**ORIGINATOR:** Karen Mills, Director Board and Superintendent Relations

**REFERENCE:** [Trustees' Handbook](#), Section 6.2 ASBA Issues and Resolutions Committee

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## ISSUE

Annually prior to the ASBA Spring General Meeting SGM, the ASBA Issues and Resolution Committee brings forward a recommendation with regard to disposition of motions and the vote on the proposed budget.

## BACKGROUND

The ASBA Issues and Resolutions Committee is a committee of the Edmonton Public School Board. The purpose of the Committee is to advise and assist the Board in presenting issues and resolutions to the Alberta School Boards Association Zone and General Meetings. The Committee met on Thursday, May 3, 2018, to discuss the motions and budget proposed for the 2018 SGM. The following points summarize their discussion and observations:

- Despite the board package every year being shared with member boards and freely discussed at public board meetings, this year it is stamped “FOR ASBA MEMBER USE ONLY. NOT FOR PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION” even though the package did not contain confidential information. A lack of transparency further fuels concerns about the appropriateness of ASBA expenditures, rather than building a culture of trust and confidence.
- The Committee expressed a general concern about the ASBA executive’s self-imposed “culture of secrecy” separating them from the ASBA Board and staff and from the member school boards and Albertans. While the ASBA is not a school board and not required to adhere to the same legislative disclosure and reporting as a school board, voluntary compliance and support for best practices would go a long way to rebuilding trust with their membership. The executive’s secretive conduct is incongruent with the ASBA vision: *Excellence in education through exceptional school board governance* or the Strategic Goal: *Bolster the viability, credibility and sustainability of the Association and School Boards*.
- The ASBA Issues and Resolutions Committee members recalled letters received this year from other school boards expressing concerns over the difficulty for member school boards to drive the association. The current strategic plan was not ratified by the member school boards at a general meeting and lacks buy-in.
- The Committee expressed concern about the lack of critical dialogue within the ASBA. Narrowly interpreted governance policies emphasize that a director is an advocate for the ASBA Board/executive rather than their own school board or zone. These self-imposed ASBA policies result in an environment where ASBA directors cannot share (even in-camera) with their own zone or board. This dynamic of emphasis of ASBA executive/staff interest, rather than the interest of member school boards, contributed to the failure to pass a budget last year, disengagement of

Trustees from the association and the current proposed budget felt to serve the ASBA executive and not the member school boards

- Concern was noted that to attend the one day business meeting in Red Deer, Trustees were charged \$400 per person just for registration, which seemed to be a high cost for a few hours of a minimalist business meeting (room rental, breakfast, lunch, no keynote speakers and no dinner). This does not include hotel or mileage.
- With regard to the proposed seven per cent fee increase in the proposed ASBA budget, the Minister of Education emailed boards in December 2017 to instruct that education organizations should scrutinize travel, conference, and membership fee expenses to cut costs.

## RELATED FACTS

Three motions are currently proposed on the SGM agenda:

### **Motion 1: 2018-2019 Budget**

Concerns were raised by the Committee around:

- The Committee felt that if Edmonton Public Schools was not forced to be ASBA members, the Association could pass whatever budget they pleased and that the boards that see value in membership would be free to remain members.
- Lack of inclusion of the Executive Director's salary in the budget, despite the salary being disclosed for at least the last two executive directors over the last decade.
- Staffing. \$3.2 Million for 19 FTE (an average cost of \$168,000 per individual). Concerns regarding the excess of staff in the ASBA office, in particular the six-eight administrative positions were highlighted.
- Reserves of almost \$4,000,000, including \$500,000 for capital asset replacement for a small office, and \$2,000,000 for a "Wind Down" reserve. We find the reserves redundant, and if the auditor recommendation was three months operating, the association would only need \$1.2 Million, and this could be further reduced by right-sizing the staff complement. The rest of the reserves could be transferred to the membership and provide the ability to provide a 90% fee reduction membership fees this year, and still leave three months operating in reserve.
- While members were pleased to see that the ASBA was not looking at purchasing a building and was instead looking for more affordable lease options, it was reiterated that the ASBA (as well as the other three publicly funded education organizations subleasing space from the ASBA: College of Alberta School Superintendents (CASS), Association of School Business Officials of Alberta (ASBOA) and Alberta School Councils' Association (ASCA) should explore the possibility of renting space from Edmonton Public Schools, which could offer a competitive rate.
- The proposed budget was not passed unanimously by the ASBA Board of Directors. While the Committee considered responses from the ASBA executive, they were found to be unsatisfying. There was perceived to be an overall lack of clarity around what the \$3 Million in membership fees pay for as the events and functions are very expensive and costs of those are covered by the fees paid from attendees. Zone meetings are also paid for with separate zone fees.

### **Motion 2: Zones of the Association**

This motion from Saint Thomas Aquinas Roman (STAR) Catholic contemplates additional language requiring an annual meeting between Zone Chairs and the ASBA Board, which already happen anyway (usually at the ASBA board meeting prior to the SGM). The Committee noted the issue with the ASBA was more of a disconnect between the member school boards and the leadership of the organization rather than an absence of mandated meetings. The Issues and Resolutions Committee members

expressed frustration that this motion did not change the issues with the ASBA or offer a remedy to the real problems facing the ASBA.

### **Motion 3: Policy Proposals Process**

This motion from STAR Catholic requests insertion of language suggesting that the Board of Directors collaborate with Zone chairs annually to support the policy process. Again, we felt that this was already happening and the problem was a fairness issue, not a language issue. The Issues and Resolutions Committee members expressed frustration that this motion didn't change the issues with the ASBA or offer a remedy to the real problems facing the ASBA.

**The ASBA Issues and Resolution Committee is also proposing the addition of two emergent motions to the agenda:**

### **Motion 4: Creation of an Executive Director Salary Disclosure Bylaw**

MOTION: In alignment with past practice, that disclosure of the Executive Director's salary be added to the ASBA bylaws.

- While it is true that ASBA is not required to disclose the Executive Director's salary, there is nothing *prohibiting* the disclosure. This is not singling out or "bullying" one particular Executive Director, but rather attempting to strengthen good process and uphold our fiduciary duty to transparency and good governance.
- This formalizes past practice and best practice. Given the extensive focus the ASBA placed on school board superintendent compensation through the creation and public dissemination of Superintendent Salary Compensation Survey, reporting the Executive Director's salary could help protect the ASBA from allegations of hypocrisy or unfairly singling out and comparing superintendents while not making public their own leader's salary.
- The salary figure was the provided since at least 2010 annually in the SGM budget package.
- While we know that the ASBA is not a school board and disclosure isn't required by law, that doesn't mean we still can't set our own rules as an organization. As school board leaders, ASBA should model practices expected of boards.
- For many years, the salary was provided in writing. The Executive Director's salary for 2013-2014, 2014-2015, and 2015-2016 are attached. The Executive Director's salary was not included in the agenda package for the first time in 2016-2017 and again in 2017-2018. It is unclear why past precedent was abandoned and why the Board of Directors violated past practice.
- The decision to not report the salary is part of a disturbing trend around selective application of governance. For instance, it is unclear who at the Board of Directors requested the creation of the Superintendent Salary Survey with the particular slant and comparisons.
- This motion is emergent because we were not aware that the ASBA proposed budget would fail to include this information.

### **Motion 5: Create a bylaw to require the ASBA to stop appointing non-trustees to ASBA, Alberta Education, or other external committees**

While the exact wording needs to be further developed, there are a series of positions detailed in Governance Policy 9 that the ASBA Board of Directors appoints. Currently, there are some who are appointed that were not re-elected as trustees or are staff or consultants of the ASBA. This practice erodes the role and opportunity of trustees.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

**That the following recommendations be approved as the voting direction for the Edmonton Public School Board at the ASBA 2018 SGM:**

1. Propose an amendment to the budget for a one-time fee reduction of 80 per cent with the transfer coming from reserves.
2. Propose an amendment to the budget to reduce the staff complement by at least one quarter.
3. If the proposed amendments do not pass, oppose Motion 1: 2018-2019 Budget
4. Oppose Motion 2: Zones of the Association
5. Oppose Motion 3: Policy Proposals Process

That the Edmonton Public School Board put forward two emergent motions for inclusion at the ASBA 2018 SGM:

1. In alignment with past practice, that the requirement for the disclosure of the Executive Director's salary be added to the ASBA bylaws
2. Create a bylaw to require the ASBA to stop appointing non-trustees to ASBA Alberta Education, or other external committees

### OPTIONS

Based on the information provided in this report, the following options are considered most appropriate:

1. Approve the recommendations as presented
2. Request changes to the recommendations and provide feedback

### CONSIDERATION and ANALYSIS

- ASBA has expressed concern that other groups (ASCA, CASS, and ASBOA) have passed membership fee increases, but the Committee did not support these justifications for an ASBA membership fee increase, and noted that those groups have voluntary membership.
- Committee members expressed a desire to see the ASBA actively work to create voluntary membership and have the right to leave the ASBA. The ASEBP Deed of Trust was amended by the ASBA and ATA to require school boards to be members of the ASBA in order to participate in the ASEBP benefits program. As Alberta School Employee Benefit Plan (ASEBP) benefits are a contract item, leaving the ASBA would in effect jeopardize access to the health and benefits plan for our staff. Fourteen school boards representing over 45 per cent of students voted for a bylaw amendment at SGM 2016 for the right to leave the ASBA.
- Edmonton Public School Board Trustees still find the value proposition on the part of the ASBA lacking.

### NEXT STEPS

- The Board will send a letter to the ASBA member boards informing them of our proposed emergent motions.
- Delegates to the ASBA SGM will vote according to the direction set forth through these motions.

### ATTACHMENTS and APPENDICES

- ATTACHMENT I ASBA Budget & Bylaws Bulletin 2018 Cover Page  
ATTACHMENT II ASBA Executive Director Salary Statistics 2013-2016

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## **Budget & Bylaws Bulletin 2018**

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Please bring this bulletin with you to the business session of the ASBA Spring General Meeting on June 4, 2018 at the Sheraton Hotel, Red Deer. Please review the Rules of Procedure in advance of the meeting.

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NOT FOR PUBLIC  
DISTRIBUTION.**

## Alberta School Boards Association Budget 2013-2014

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### Notes for Executive, Corporate and Communication Services continued:

- ◆ All other costs have been reviewed and increased or decreased to a cumulative total of \$1065. Association staff continue to look for efficiencies to reduce office costs.

Positions included in the 2013-2014 budget (~8.5 FTE):

### Executive Director

- ◆ Executive Director – 2013-2014 Salary = \$230,761.

## Alberta School Boards Association Budget 2014-2015

Line #	Information - Executive, Corporate and Communication Services
	<p>Positions included in the 2014-2015 budget (~8.5 FTE):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➢ 2.5 Directors (Corporate Services (.50FTE), Finance and Administrative Services, Communications)</li> <li>➢ 1 Receptionist and Administrative Assistant</li> <li>➢ 1 Executive Administrative Assistant</li> <li>➢ 1.9285FTE Administrative Assistants</li> <li>➢ 1 Policy Coordinator/Administrative</li> <li>➢ 1 Executive Director</li> </ul> <p><u>Executive Director</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➢ Executive Director – 2014-2015 Salary = \$230,761.</li> </ul> <p><u>ASBA Compensation Policy – Executive Director</u></p> <p>“The ASBA Board believes the ASBA should have the ability to attract and retain an Executive Director with the background and relevant experience necessary to perform the duties associated with the expectations of the membership.</p>

# Alberta School Boards Association Proposed Budget 2015-2016

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Line #	Information - Executive, Corporate and Communication Services
	Positions included in the 2015-2016 budget (8 FTE):
	> Executive Director
	> 2 Directors (Finance and Administrative Services, Communications)
	> 1 Receptionist and Administrative Assistant
	> 1 Executive Administrative Assistant
	> 3 Administrative Assistants
	<b><u>Executive Director</u></b>
	> Executive Director – 2015-2016 Salary = \$169,000