

**University of Alberta**

Re-valuing Teachers

by

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## Abstract

This study explored an apparent re-valuing of public education as a social good by the Alberta government with the concomitant re-valuing of teachers, who were obliged to make shifts in who or what is given priority. These shifts have created emerging or exacerbated tensions in their workplace. The study has expanded knowledge of the work values of experienced teachers in Alberta, including how those values were formed and of the impact of forced change on experienced teachers in the Alberta setting.

Three stages of the study provided discrete sources of data, which were subjected to inductive analysis to identify the underlying values and the tensions among values. Teacher comments from the 1996 ATA *Report Card on Education* survey provided impetus for the study and an indication of teacher values. A review of selected government-initiated reports and formal ATA input or response provided historical information regarding educational decision-making from 1935 through 1978. Interviews with eighteen experienced, older teachers provided support for and clarification of the values identified earlier and their impact on teacher actions.

Inductive analysis in stage one identified seven themes and ten key values for teaches. It showed incongruence between what the teachers saw themselves trying to achieve and the pressures on them. Document review in stage two revealed forty years of progressive development of humanistic goals and values for and by teachers accompanied consistently by strong conservative social values whose influence in society has waxed and waned. Stage three findings supported the soundness of

earlier findings and identified effects arising from the incongruence between the personally held values of teachers and the values implicit in imposed activities.

The study identified the strong influence of older teachers on the values formation of younger teachers and the breakdown of synergy between many active teachers and higher-level decision-makers in education in Alberta to two ideologically opposed groups. Implications of the findings were suggested through the application of two models of change to reveal not only who will be served by the changes but also how the dynamics could be influenced.

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## Chapter One

### *Orientation to the Study*

In 1996, Alberta Premier Ralph Klein characterized his government's reforms in education as a "good news story" (PC Talk, January 1996). In response, the Alberta Teachers' Association distributed a short survey to all of its 32,000 teacher members asking them to rate several aspects of education. More than 10,000 teachers responded. The responses formed the basis for a published *Report Card on Education* (ATA, 1996). A final question on the survey asked for comments. Those comments were never published but were provided to this researcher. They show an apparent divergence between the norms being established by the government as what ought to be done in the schools of Alberta, and the values of the teachers who are expected to implement them. The comments included thousands similar in sentiment to the following:

*Education may be classified as a good news story since the cutbacks have had very little obvious setbacks in the classroom. Since teachers have continued to put in all of the extra work to implement exceptional programs without support, cutbacks appear great. Once you look under the surface, however, the teachers who are making it the "good news story," are the ones who are destroying themselves in the process. (Unpublished teacher comment, 1996)*

*I have grave concerns with cutbacks to other sectors, particularly social services/medical services; and how this directly impacts on the well-being of the students coming to us. Children today are much "needier" than five*

*years ago and the social/emotional demands on families and teachers today are much more significant. Reduction in salary pay, increase in class size, less money available for high needs, ESL and other special needs has resulted in very high stress levels, thereby decreasing the quality of the learning environment. (Unpublished teacher comment, 1996)*

*We cannot close beds and have waiting lists. We meet the needs of students who come to our door and we continue to do the best we possibly can. There was room for improved efficiencies, yet more important is improved effectiveness. While teachers have accommodated changes, the load is getting to be too much in the classroom. I supported some changes, but I do feel we must ensure an outstanding education system as a real part of The Alberta Advantage. (Unpublished comment, 1996)*

Premier Klein's comments followed amendments to legislation such as the *School Act Amendment Act, 1994* and regulatory guidelines including the *Education Business Plan*, in which the provincial government shifted the patterns of decision-making and accountability in education and the way they involve students, parents, school district officials and teachers. The changes, accompanied by reduced funding, required that tough decisions needed to be made in schools, not always for the comfort or satisfaction of all those affected. This study focuses on the influence of the government-driven changes on some of the work values of teachers, with attention to what is important to participants in education. What is important? To whom?

Chapter Two of this study is a literature review that examines three

dimensions of the study topic: (i) values and valuing; (ii) values in education as work; and (iii) possible value changes in education in Alberta. The first dimension discusses the importance of values as personal motivators to action, the relevant nature of values, re-valuing that occurs as a result of internal and external pressures, and how priorities shift or are shifted. The second dimension explores the special nature of values in education, their reciprocal link to society as a whole, and the struggle for influence or control over those values. The third dimension explores how the government of Alberta has engaged in a deliberate reform of education that is influenced locally, nationally and globally by a shift in values as public interest is de-emphasized in favour of self-interest. Throughout all three dimensions, the existence of tension and conflict between values of teachers and others is a common thread.

Chapter Three of this study is an outline of the change movement in education in Alberta that was underway when the above survey of teachers was conducted. It provides context for the comments which reflected the feelings of teachers who, since that time, have conducted work-to-rule campaigns, both threatened and actually gone on strike, experienced massive cutbacks and major layoffs of personnel, appreciated support at parent rallies, and seen unprecedented coverage of education issues by local and national media in response to the degree of concern and confusion that was generated. Throughout it all, teachers raised concerns about how reform has been reflected within schools. The following are brief accounts of some examples that were brought by teachers to the Member Services Area of the ATA for consultation and advice on how to respond

effectively.<sup>1</sup>

In one instance, to protect staffing for other school-based programs, an elementary school principal rearranged classes so that compulsory core French as a Second Language classes would be taught in double classes. This meant daily groups of approximately 50 students, but no consistent groupings. The combinations included Day One: classes 5A and 5B together; Day Two: classes 5A and 5C together; and Day Three, classes 5B and 5C together.

In another example, to protect reduced government grant funding now tied to credit completion by high school students (instead of to the number of students served in the school), every student in a large high school was automatically enrolled in a 1 credit Career and Technology Studies (CTS) module taken concurrently with core subjects. Although no extra instructional time was allotted and no additional work was assigned, separate marks were awarded for the core course and for the CTS module; thus funding was claimed for providing two courses, the CTS module and the core subject.

Teacher roles also underwent an apparent shift. Table 1 shows how reforms affected the number of teachers in the province. Teacher numbers declined after 1992 at the same time as many teacher-librarians, resource room teachers and guidance counsellors throughout the province sought ATA assistance as either their positions were eliminated or they were replaced by untrained or narrowly trained (i.e. library technicians, teacher assistants) personnel. At the same time, student populations and students with family problems grew in a climate that Denis (1995)

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<sup>1</sup> Permission was given by Dr. Charles Hyman, Executive Secretary of the Alberta Teachers' Association to make reference in this study to the actual work situations noted.



described as one in which, “the *individual* is called upon to be responsible when he or she is to take a pay cut; when he or she faces either higher user fees or lower quality government service” (p. 94, emphasis in the original).

**Table 1: Number of teachers and students in Alberta**

Year	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
<b>Teachers</b>										
Full-time	27,380	26,569	25,628	25,357	25,595	25,469	26,557	26,220	27,236	27,596
Part-time	3,379	3,560	3,875	4,116	3,896	4,142	4,346	4,669	4,932	4,872
<b>Students</b>	477,302	483,594	481,304	487,837	527,552	534,868	545,992	549,064	552,461	551,156

Source: 1. ARA Handbooks, 1993-2002, The Alberta Teachers' Association  
2. Student count as reported by Alberta Learning

Since 1994, ministries within the Alberta government have been required to issue three-year business plans, updated annually. The updated draft of the *Alberta Learning 2000-2005 Business Plan (2002)* spoke to the core goals of the province, the strategic drivers and the “Goals, Outcomes and Performance Measures” of the Ministry. The plan showed a clear emphasis on technology, on accountability and measurement of learning outcomes, on apprenticeship and adult learning, on budgeting and on communication. Teachers were acknowledged only on page 7 in a statement declaring that the licensing of teachers is a core business of the Ministry. Mention of teaching or any support for the activities of teaching was otherwise absent from the business plan. It would seem that teachers were not central to the delivery of education in Alberta.

The research reported in this thesis is about Alberta teachers in public education. The provincial government directs many of the norms of school operation. When there is a separation between the values underlying the norms set for school operation and the values of the professionals operating the schools, that separation could be the cause of considerable tension as norms are generally derived only after

values have been considered (Baier & Rescher, 1969, p. 52). An understanding of the tension created when widely held teacher values are incompatible with new directives could help teachers get a better perspective of what is valued by whom and inform them about the implications of required changes in their work.

Teachers work in a formally defined role within a formally defined institution. Teachers are employed on individual contracts as authorized by the *School Act* and they usually work in isolation in a classroom where they exercise personal influence on management and instruction within that classroom. Their collective voice is the Alberta Teachers' Association (the ATA) to which all teachers in public education are required to belong by the *Teaching Profession Act*, as a condition of employment. Through that voice, they exercise influence on education at both the school district and provincial levels. This research draws heavily from that collective voice, but its conclusions are grounded in the individual voices of teachers.

#### *Statement of Purpose*

The primary purpose of this study was to explore the apparent re-valuing of teachers in a way that could provide insights into emerging or exacerbated tensions in their workplace. This research objective is appropriate at a time when the apparent professional values of teachers may be at odds with values that were being imposed on them by government. The context of the study was an apparent re-valuing of public education as a social good by the Alberta government through the deliberate involvement of the business community in setting education policy. One important result was the concurrent re-valuing of teachers obliged to make shifts in whom or

what is given priority. Conducted within that context, the study focuses on an examination of the work values of teachers and particularly on the re-valuing of teachers in Alberta by the government. Although teachers work alone, they also work as employees and are therefore impacted by any application of a business model on the system. As Navran (1992) has observed,

Employees are in an interesting position. They have to balance multiple sets of values. They bring their *personal* values to the job. They are subjected to their *supervisor's* values. They are taught the *company's* values and they have to consider their (internal and external) *customer's* values (italics in the original). (p.9)

This study considers how actions of teachers or others in education have been affected at the point of implementation of new priorities. That shift in priorities forces a process of re-valuing: reconsideration of worth in terms of relevance to other values and priorities. When that reconsideration results in opposing or incongruent values, a values conflict exists thus creating tensions in the way teachers do their work.

In Stage One of this research, I used a sample of the unpublished responses to the Report Card survey as a base from which to identify what the responding teachers expressed as work-related values. In Stage Two, I conducted a records review to identify the historical and political policy context of those values. The findings of stages one and two are reported in Chapter Four. In Stage Three, I interviewed a sample of teachers to determine whether their expressed values (based on experiences in their professional lives) are congruent with the values identified

earlier from the teacher responses to the Report Card survey. The findings of the interviews are reported in Chapter Five.

I hypothesize that the re-valuing of education as a public service in Alberta has created a values conflict between the expectations of government and the expectations of experienced teachers that creates tensions in the way they do their work.

### *Research Questions*

This study seeks to answer the following four major and four sub-questions:

1. How can an apparent re-valuing of education in Alberta be demonstrated?
  - a. What key values affecting teachers' work did the provincial government mandate in education, prior to the reform changes?
  - b. What key values affecting teachers' work were mandated by the government as part of system reform?
2. Is there an apparent re-valuing of Alberta teachers and their work by teachers themselves?
  - a. What values affecting teachers' work have teachers in Alberta historically supported?
  - b. What values affecting teachers' work did teachers see as challenged by the reforms initiated by the provincial government?
3. What tensions have arisen from any perceived re-valuing by the provincial government? What implications for practice are evident in these tensions?
4. What implications for students result from the re-valuing of teachers by government?

### *Justification of the Research Topic*

This study seeks to contribute to scholarly research on teachers' values.

Although Clemmer (1995) emphasized the need for understanding one's own values in order to take and retain a leadership role within an organization, my review of the literature revealed a striking shortage of studies that identified the values of teachers. In order to reach its goal of identifying and describing any values conflict that may exist between teachers and government, this study seeks to expand our knowledge of (i) the work values held by teachers with several years of experience in Alberta; and (ii) how those values were formed. The study seeks to reveal the inherent teachings of the past, the context in which they originated and the tensions they feed.

Barely a decade ago, Greenfield and Ribbins (1993) criticized much research in educational administration as conforming "almost perfectly to the view that administrators seem to want to have of themselves: that they are instruments of an objective, selfless, rationality" (p. 141). They rejected the belief that values could be ignored in educational decision-making. So, too, did Codd (1989) who stated of administrators that "whether they are determining ends or means, they cannot escape the commitment to values; neither can they ignore the careful appraisal of the facts pertinent to each decision" (p. 160). Taft (1997) seemed to suggest that current Alberta government policy-making excludes moral consideration from value consideration. It would follow that both administrators and teachers who implement the policies must also either disregard the moral aspect of their personally held values or modify how they implement these policy changes. To suggest otherwise is to suggest a wilful disregard for their commitment. Yet to suggest they disregard

their personally held values is to suggest the acceptance of areas of tension. This study seeks to contribute to understanding the effects of the tensions arising from value conflicts for Alberta teachers.

A second objective of the study is to contribute to the knowledge base of researchers and educational leaders regarding the dynamics of ongoing controversy over unresolved basic questions in education. Stout, Tallerico and Scribner (1994) indicated that this controversy includes the following five questions because each one rests upon tensions between competing values:

Who should go to school?

What should be the purposes of schooling?

What should children be taught?

Who should decide issues of school direction and policy?

Who should pay for schools? (p. 5)

They suggest that the way a problem is defined is apt to determine how it is addressed. This study will contribute to our understanding of the interaction between values and expand our ability to re-think the dynamics of major educational reform and thereby to re-define problems in terms of the interests of all parties.

A third significant reason for doing this study is to contribute to an area of identified need. Kasten and Ashbaugh (1991) referred to the study of the implementation of values as the study of “values in action” (p. 64), and contended that there is a need for such research. This is not a well-developed area of research. Much of the existing literature is based on research involving small groups such as a

single school community. For example, Acker (1999) concluded that there is a need to “understand that teachers in a given school form a community who develop a particular set of shared understandings that give their work meaning” (p. 191). This study is based on province-wide samplings in which shared understanding reflects broadly based influences.

The purposeful shifting of values in education represents a significant dimension of educational leadership. Studies that explore and analyze the tensions between and among values in a time of change can reveal a great deal about leadership. Begley (1999) pointed out, “While values and leadership might still seem inseparably intertwined, the linkage itself says nothing about what values and what leadership” (p. xi). This study seeks to identify specific values associated with specific leadership at the classroom level and the overall system level during a period of forced reform. On the basis of a study that covered many years of forced change in a school in Britain, Acker (1999) concluded that “there is no doubt that forced reform works” because the teachers were “committed enough to teaching and to their school to do whatever is necessary to sustain their vocation” (p. 191). A fourth purpose of this study is to expand our knowledge of the impact of forced change on teachers, both individually and collectively, in the Alberta setting.

#### *Researcher and Research*

As an Alberta Teachers’ Association staff officer responsible for programs “to assist, advise, protect and discipline teachers in the discharge of their professional duties and relationships (*Teaching Profession Act*, Section 4, Objects of the Association), I have seen a huge increase in the number of individual

employment concerns brought to the ATA by members. That increase is reflected in the number of individual consultations logged by the ATA Member Services Program Area where I work. Table 2 shows the increase as it was reported to the ATA Annual Representative Assemblies.

**Table 2: Number of Teachers Seeking Assistance or Advice from the ATA**

Year	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
Open Files	776	1,063	903	851	946	1,733	2,211	1,838	1,707	1,953
Telephone Consultations	7,139	8,740	10,328	11,174	11,331	15,260	14,915	21,035	22,295	22,134

Source: ARA Handbooks, 1993-2002, the Alberta Teachers' Association

This study was motivated by my own knowledge and experience of the increase reflected in these numbers. I make no pretence of being neutral. Baier and Rescher, (1969) pointed out the inability of a researcher to be separated from personal values. Similarly, Greenfield and Ribbins (1993) said, "We want to know what is in the world, but we cannot discover it without acting and bringing to bear upon the inquiry our own interests, attitudes, and values" (p. 97) and commented further that "One cannot study the social order, therefore, without studying also the self" (p. 98). Ryan and Bohlin (1999) also demonstrated the fallacy of pretending to be neutral, given the strong link between the value perspectives of a researcher and his/her research. They saw objectivity as having an awareness of personal values, not the presumed absence of values. The challenge for me in doing this study was the need to set aside my value judgements that arise from my regular work with teachers and to recognize my personal and professional perspectives while remaining open to the views of others and ensuring those views are included within the range expressed in the study. I have attempted to approach the data with an awareness of my own biases and to use a research design that minimizes the infiltration of those biases. I



recognize that my personal perspective is both idealistic and humanistic, and that I place great importance on respecting individual human interests and dignity.

Personally and professionally, I see education as a public interest, a service that maximizes individual growth and development to build a society that fosters success for every member without excluding or favouring any group. I know, too, that I have an ability to see and understand other views which has contributed to my professional success. In doing this study I tried to achieve objectivity by considering both positions and interests as a step in determining underlying values. I believe my ability to make objective determinations improved as the study progressed and the delay between stages one and three was beneficial.

As an officer of the ATA, it is important for me to understand the professional values held by teachers in order to be able to assist them through difficulties that may arise. The ATA must reflect the collective values of teachers in its policies and actions while generally avoiding value clashes with individual members, no matter what professional values they hold, as all members must be able to rightfully look on the ATA as “their” association.

Thompson (1990) stated that people rely on the past for understanding in a manner that causes them to see “spirits of the past” (p. 277), views that are distorted by the desire for continuity and may therefore “conceal, obscure or disguise the present” (p. 277). It is important for me to be able to help teachers understand the value-engendered source of the tensions they are experiencing as a basis for addressing the important questions facing them; I must therefore be able to identify and understand the values in conflict as a result of government-mandated educational

reform. This study will help increase that understanding.

### *Key Assumptions*

This study rests on certain assumptions. As noted above, a researcher brings to the work a personally held set of beliefs about the reality being studied and about what constitutes knowledge of the phenomena in question. In this study, school systems are conceptualized as socially constructed realities in which teachers, both individually and collectively, shape their environment in accord with a normative rationality based on their own education and experience, but also influenced by their collective education and experience as well as by external pressures. My assumption is that their values are a part of how they see themselves personally and professionally; that teachers create their own set of professional, work-related values based on what they individually believe to be right, good and fair. They then operate within this value system, which gives personal meaning and a sense of purpose to their professional functions.

I believe that teachers are educational leaders able to influence their colleagues and their students. Whether in the classroom or in designated leadership positions, teachers make a continuous stream of decisions or judgements about what must be done throughout each day and each term. The French term for those who lead others is "*le responsable*" a term that embodies the responsible deliberation teachers exercise daily.

I assume that the values held by teachers determine their comfort level with their actions, whether those actions are deliberately chosen by them or carried out under directive from a superior. Codd (1989) explained the link between rational

action and values; he saw, arising from values, a “disposition towards rational reflection and deliberative action which is fundamentally philosophical in nature” (p. 161).

I assume, too, the existence of links between schools and power. Torres (1995) argued that schools are part of the dynamism of power relations in society. They also have their own governance structure. Since politics are inherent in every educational system, conflicting values will cause tensions to develop within the dynamism.

I assume that this study will provide further understanding of the conditions facing teachers in an education system undergoing forced change. I further assume that the study will provide an opportunity for reflection and insight into how values under pressure may be bolstered, defended or changed through greater understanding.

#### *Summary and Overview*

The purpose of the study is to explore the apparent re-valuing of teachers in a workplace where their professional values may be at odds with values imposed on them by government. Four research questions and three sub-questions were formulated having to do with (i) demonstrating the apparent re-valuing in both a historical and recent context; (ii) the response to re-valuing by teachers; and (iii) the implications for practice arising from re-valuing. The study is justified on the basis of its potential contributions to scholarship and professional practice.

Chapter Two presents the conceptual framework and the review of the literature for the study. The framework briefly outlines the stages of the study. The

review of the literature is presented in two parts. The first part covers a general overview of values theory and then looks briefly at literature on teachers' work. The dearth of studies that identified the values of teachers made it necessary to rely on much non-educational literature. The second part presents the historical value framework underpinning education in Alberta and the context of educational reform in the 1990s of which educational reform in Alberta was a part.

Chapter Three describes the design for the study. Chapter Four is the first of two chapters that report the findings. It contains the findings derived from records including various government-initiated reports and teacher input or response to them and a review of teacher comments initiated as a response to a comment made in 1996 by the Premier to the effect that change in education in Alberta was successful. Chapter Five presents the second set of findings. It contains the findings derived from interviews with a sample of experienced teachers who taught in Alberta both before and during the change process.

The last two chapters unify the study. Chapter Six provides an interpretation of the findings and relates the literature to the research findings. Chapter Seven concludes with a summary of the study, my personal reflections and recommendations for further research.

## Chapter Two

### *A Review of the Literature*

#### *Three Dimensions*

The review of the literature relevant to this study of the effect of educational reform on teachers' values required the examination of three basic but discrete dimensions of the values of teachers in Alberta. First is an understanding of what is significant in the existing values and how re-valuing is accomplished. Second is an exploration of the special nature of values in education, and of the struggle for influence or control over educational values from within society as a whole. Third is an exploration of the deliberate reform of public education by the Government of Alberta as it is influenced locally, nationally and globally by a shift in values as public interest is de-emphasized in favour of self-interest.

The first dimension concerns the identification of values and the process of valuing. Scholars have grappled with this task sufficiently to identify aspects of values that permit understanding of their existence, their uses and their scope. Baier and Rescher (1969) wrote on the varied meanings of the term "value." Writings by Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck (1961), Frankl (1970), Rokeach (1973), Hodgkinson (1991), Campbell-Evans (1991) and Navran (1992) have shown the scope and nature of values and their relationship to life and to teachers' work. Discussion on the act of "valuing" was drawn from the writing of Ryan and Bohlin (1999) who linked valuing and the researcher, and Hodgkinson (1991) who demonstrated the separation of motives and values.

A second dimension has to do with values in education as work. Hodgkinson

(1991) outlined the special value-laden nature of education. In a full chapter devoted to defining education, he noted early on that “everyone would agree that our acquisition of values, however it occurs, is an integral part of our education” (p. 16) and then that

It is the art of helping people to know themselves, to develop the resources of judgement and skills of learning and the sense of values needed on facing a future of unpredictable change, to understand the right and responsibilities of adults in a democratic society and to exercise the greatest possible degree of control over their own fate. (p. 16)

In subsequent pages he defined education as “liberating” (p. 17), utilitarian (p. 18), having “political moral imperatives” (p. 21), and needing “sociological sorting” (p. 21). He concluded “that the perpetuation of the human species is nothing less than a direct function of education” (p. 23). Begley (1999) pointed out that the choices to be made and the breadth of values encountered in education meant that schools “increasingly encounter situations where consensus cannot be achieved” (p. 239). After providing a brief overview of the presentations at a conference made by values researchers in educational administration, Begley also concluded that “there is still no strong consensus on the nature and function of values as influences on administration” (p. 316). Discussion on the special nature of values in education as teacher-work was drawn from Hodgkinson (1991), Stout et al. (1994), and others.

A third dimension has to do with the exploration of possible value changes in education in Alberta forced on teachers by Alberta Learning in response to pressures from the government caucus and public and private sector interest groups. In this

section of the literature review I draw primarily on the writings of Acker (1999), Hayek (1994), Harrison and Laxer (1995), and Saul (1996) to develop an international perspective through which the changes being implemented in Alberta can be interpreted or explained. Documents from Alberta Education outline the mandate for change in the operation of schools in Alberta.

*The First Dimension: Understanding Values and Valuing*

It is difficult to determine accurately the values or changes in values. Baier and Rescher (1969) pointed out the lack of any agreed upon or even promising method that social scientists can employ to determine values or values changes, the confusion between normative and value judgements, and the inability to separate a researcher from his/her personal values. He reasoned that people are able to see that there are clear causal links in nature and therefore can agree on ways to identify them, but are unable to see similar clear causal links in how to determine obligation or value. Therefore, he concluded, social scientists are willing to accept that it may not be possible to identify value judgements as fact or to separate them from the normative values of the researcher. Hodgkinson (1983) made the point that “values do not exist *in the world*” and continued by saying that values are “subjective, facts of inner and personal experience, ultimately only susceptible of location within an individual cranium” (p. 31, emphasis in the original). These theorists assert the highly subjective nature of values and values identification.

Values may have different meanings to different people. Hodgkinson explained that values are “relative and not absolute” and that concepts carry “different value connotations from culture to culture and from time to time” (1991, p.

91). A conundrum of varied meanings is apparent in Navran's (1992) suggestion that "*Values* refers to a person's or organization's system of beliefs. That is how the individual or organization defines what is *right, good* and *fair*. *Ethics* refers to how those values are acted out" (p. 1, emphasis as in the original). He noted that the word "ethics" is derived from the Greek word "*ethos*" which refers to character. Many researchers use the term "moral" or "morality" interchangeably with "ethics" or "ethical." Navran defined ethical behaviour as that which is consistent with both one's personal values and the commonly held values of the systems in which one functions (organizational, political, societal, religious, etc.). Navran's simple definition reflects a complex dualism involving both interaction between and juxtaposition of personal and organizational values, and the inter-relationship of values and moral choice.

Rokeach (1973) defined a value as:

an enduring belief that a specific mode of conduct or end-state of existence is personally or socially preferable to an opposite or converse mode of conduct or end-state of existence. A *value system* is an enduring organization of beliefs concerning preferable modes of conduct or end-states of existence along a continuum of relative importance. (p. 5)

Also, according to Rokeach:

If values were completely stable, individual and social change would be impossible. If values were completely unstable, continuity of human personality and society would be impossible. (p. 5)

Rokeach's definition permits us to understand that different people can have



varying understanding of the same value. It also permits comprehension of value-ranking and the limited openness to change. By defining values as single beliefs that are “standards that guide ongoing activities” or that may be organized into value systems as “general plans employed to resolve conflicts and to make decisions,” (1973, p. 12), he makes provision for situational influences and changeability that affect or determine ranking. Social implications, including political implications, are also apparent in the use of terms such as “right, good, fair, ethical” and “moral” as implicit in understanding values. The definition of value provided by Rokeach was chosen for this study because it incorporates the complexity referred to by Baier and Rescher (1969), with the subjectivity referred to by Hodgkinson (1991) and Navran (1992). The definition helps us comprehend the conflict between different meanings and rankings that mark the values underlying social and political decisions.

Rokeach (1973) noted that the relationship of values with an individual’s value system might result in differing actions, even if two people define one value similarly. For example, two people who express similar views on the desirability of educational opportunity may take different action. One may see opportunity as an educational choice but not necessarily an equality of choice and therefore may limit access to some educational opportunities to those able to afford them. The other person may see both choice and equality as necessary components within opportunity and therefore seek ways to overcome financial barriers to access. Clearly, a set of values can affect the choice of action more than an individual value.

Various researchers have tried to determine a set of universal, defined values. Hall (1995) described how he and Benjamin Tonna developed a values inventory for

use “to differentiate and measure different values in various populations” (p. 241). Hall created the Hall-Tonna Values Map that identifies a total of 125 Goals and Means values within phases and stages of life. Hall stated that any person is able to actualize any of the 125 values but “we only have room in our lives for about ten priorities” (p. 85). Hall reported working with organizations including schools and businesses to effect deliberate cultural change by shifting values in the organization by the application of direct pressure on the phases and stages of the lives of those within the organization in a manner that forced change in their priorities. One example is creating increased security or insecurity for an individual and thereby changing that person’s willingness to act independently.

Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck (1961) came to the conclusion that there are a limited number of value orientations across all cultures because all cultures share the same limited number of common human problems. Solutions, however, are ranked within a range of possibilities. All choices are present in all societies but are differentially preferred, with dominant and alternative preferences ordered by rank within societies. Value preference can endure as long as the society endures or until a persuasive change occurs within the society. Rokeach (1973, p. 11), Hodgkinson (1991, p. 94), and Campbell-Evans (1991, p. 175) have linked the number of values to human needs. Together, these writings show that people hold only a small number of values at any time and that values change in terms of their relative importance, as needs change. The process of the changing importance of values is part of valuing.

Like Hall (1995), other researchers have suggested valuation frameworks to explain relationships among values, the relationship between values and norms, and

to explain the existence of values held by individuals that are inconsistent with norms. Baier and Rescher (1969) discussed the evaluative, dispositional and soundness properties of value decisions that affect lives. In considering how effects on evaluation change in life, they considered *worthwhileness* – satisfaction of personal expectations; *worthiness* – satisfaction of expectations of others; and *worth* – contribution to the lives of others.

Baier and Rescher (1969) discussed the causal relationship between values and actions and the way knowledge of the causal role could be consciously used to create change that is actually or potentially favourable. Within this context they distinguished between values and norms. Norms, they said, “provide guidance for those who are trying to solve practical problems...about what someone ought to do” (1969, p. 52). That “ought to do” requires value-laden information about benefit, the ability to avoid and the limitations on free choice. A change in the priority of values may create the need to change a norm. They saw values as “appraisal-dependent” (1969, p. 54). By this they meant that action results from the degree to which one accepts what is proffered. An otherwise acceptable belief may be irrational in view of other beliefs. Appraisal-dependence provides one method by which values can be identified as end-states or goals; the achievement of which a person believes will make a favourable change in life for someone.

Hodgkinson (1991) showed a similar causal relationship when values have collective purposes as “systems of law, codes of ethics, systematized philosophies and ideologies” (1991, p. 96). Gronn (1999) showed a more broadly applied relationship between values and norms when he tied the establishment of norms to

democracy saying, “Democracy is supposed to be an effective system for determining outcomes of this kind, because it is, after all, a system for aggregating preferences” (1999, p. 88). Thus democracy provides a framework for societal valuing based on the will of the majority.

Baier and Rescher (1969) referred to both the rational fear of having sound values replaced by less sound ones and the fear of having one’s personally held values found to be unsound. They explained the ability of an individual or a group to maintain detachment between norms and values only so long as the resulting belief identification is not absurd in the views of the individual or group implementing the norms. In this blend of rational fear, detachment and belief outcomes, we see both subjectivism and relativism in the way individual values are related to norms within a value system.

Frankl (1970), like Baier and Rescher (1969), used three classifications in valuing: (i) creative, determined by what is given to the world; (ii) experiential, determined by what is taken from the world through experience; and (iii) attitudinal, the stand taken when faced with unchangeable fate. “Creative” is similar to Baier and Rescher’s concept of worth (contribution to others), “experiential” to Baier and Rescher’s concept of worthwhileness (benefit from experience) and “attitudinal” to Baier and Rescher’s concept of worthiness (matching the demands of others). Frankl said, “Even a person who is deprived of both creative and experiential values is still challenged by an opportunity for fulfilment, that is, by the meaning inherent in an upright way of suffering” (1970, p. 101).

Frankl (1970) differed from Baier and Rescher (1969) in that he rejected

relativism in favour of self-determinism by individual conscience in valuing. He rejected absolutism as well, suggesting that there is subjectivity in the “perspective through which we approach the world. But, this subjectivity of perspective does not in the least detract from the objectivity of the world itself” (p. 101). He suggested that people require courage to search for true meanings of situations in a search “led and guided by conscience” (p. 103). He saw a responsibility to allow people to refer to their own conscience, as he believed that it is in conscience that people can assess the validity of externally imposed norms or even continue to have a meaningful life in an age without universal values. In its recognition of subjective choice in valuing, Frankl’s use of “conscience” parallels Navran’s “ethical” considerations and Rokeach’s “preferable” outcomes.

Ryan and Bohlin (1999) saw conflict between relativity and self-determinism in his discussion of societal conflict over acceptable values or conflicts between individual value systems and the way those conflicts complicate choosing an action. Valuing comes from a direct relationship both to norms within a social system, and to the willingness of individuals to comply with or challenge those norms. Individual values determine the motivation to act.

In the above-noted works, various scholars showed “valuing” to be an act of assigning worth or purpose to an object, person or role; an act that is influenced by a truth continuum, a conception of aesthetics, and/or morality. Each of the scholarly interpretations reviewed contributes to understanding the valuing process in a complex association of existing individual and collective values with subjective and external pressure for change. Navran showed that pressures on values arise from

being an employee. The frameworks provided by Baier and Rescher (1969) and Frankl (1970) provide a way to visualize the pressures experienced by employees. The point of nexus between individual valuing and organizational valuing is in the need for the individual to act, at which time value considerations and value rankings can be exposed, even if the valuing process was intuitive.

Hodgkinson (1991) separated the notion of values from motives. He suggested that “the fact that I myself or other observers can pass value judgements upon... motives is sufficient to show that value is something other than motives, desires, wants or needs” (p. 94). This separation, when viewed in light of the earlier recognition that there are priorities among values, does not preclude maintaining an operational definition of “values” as motivating beliefs that initiate or reinforce action. It provides a way to determine the values that are of the highest priority for an individual, those that also act as motivators. Hodgkinson visualized values in a hierarchy of four classifications based on the ways individuals choose what is “good” and “right.” His first category is values selected through “preference,” a human selection process that is natural and less than rational. Next he identifies values selected through two rational processes: consensus, (going along with others) and consequences (acting because one has to). Finally, he identifies a category for values selected on the basis of principle, metaphysical in nature, possibly religious or ideological but for that individual beyond a need for rational explanation.

The real-life examples provided in Chapter One may relate to the worth of courses, individuals and teaching roles. Teachers in these situations were influenced by their perception of truth and honesty, the benefit they received from spending

time with students, and their moral obligations to students as individuals. These were typical of educational concerns and pressures that affect the work-lives of teachers. In each situation, a new norm was introduced and the individual values held by teachers were therefore challenged. "Re-valuing" changed the work-life of teachers in each situation. They asked themselves, "Is this right? Is this the best way to offer a course? Is this good for students?" Of course, external pressures or motivations might have affected the actions ultimately taken by the individuals concerned.

Consider the elementary principal who arranged compulsory core French to be taught to inconsistently combined classes. To make the arrangement work, the teacher was forced, among other considerations, to adjust the quality of instruction although it had to be measured in terms of achievement outcomes. The teacher may have experienced difficulty matching her concept of truth to what constituted the best possible education, or her concept of morality in unequal educational opportunities, and she may have imputed to the principal a low priority for the teaching of second languages. Hence, the teacher's values may have come into conflict with the system's values, thereby creating difficulty in the fulfilment of her duties. She had to modify her values of acceptable achievement, or experience difficulties. Similarly, the replacement of teacher-librarians and resource teacher specialists posed challenges for teachers working with the replacement technicians and assistants. The teachers' concept of worthiness may have been counter to the replacement of more highly trained personnel with less well-trained personnel, and their concept of morality may have been offended by the inability to meet many student needs. The potential existed for teachers to adjust their actions with students

to compensate for the reduced service level, or to modify their values to accept the personnel changes. Teachers in these situations had to assess their personal values in light of changed system values. In such instances a re-valuing process occurred.

The writings of the social philosophers, Baier and Rescher (1969), the psychologist, Frankl (1970), and the educational sociologist, Hodgkinson (1991), converge on their proposals for similar value classification schemes based on the way values bring meaning to life. The link between values and norms was shown to be one bridge upon which people may be forced to test their beliefs, to assess truth, aesthetics, and morality. As a point at which individual values may be accepted, that link may be a point of fear. It may, too, be a point of rebirth. Thus, forced re-valuing for teachers created challenges based on: perceptions of truth, aesthetics or morality, individuals experiencing fear and opportunity for new norms to develop or be expressed when underlying beliefs were previously suppressed. By extension, “re-valuing” can occur when existing valuing is changed consciously or unconsciously by action or policy. Because (i) values are ranked along a continuum; (ii) they are appraisal-dependent; and (iii) the relationship of values-to-norms gives individuals concern about the soundness of personally held values, a re-valuing process may have occurred without individuals realizing it.

#### *The Second Dimension: Values in Education as Work*

Smyth (2001) noted that “teachers’ work has never been an apolitical activity” (p. 6). He referred to teachers’ decisions on what to include or exclude, connections between content and student lives, and teachers’ responses to increasing external control as examples to prove that “we must, therefore, treat teachers as



educational workers and political actors” (p. 6). He is showing that teachers’ values influence society.

The importance of teachers’ work values has been widely recognized. Robert Young (1997) described the influence of the values of upper academic institutions on the behaviours and beliefs of society. He noted that although some values are implicit in educational institutions, they are visible in actions or performance. He emphasized the need for the values of truth, freedom, equality, justice, individuation and community to serve as the underpinnings of scholarship and democracy. Similarly, he warned against values of materialism, narcissism, competitiveness, vocationalism, conformity, and consumerism. In like manner, Greenfield and Ribbins (1993) warned against accepting the moral order of an institution without recognizing the responsibility of the individual for decisions taken within that organization.

Kohlberg (1984) examined the opportunities for moral or empathetic role-taking in professions and identified the need for a system to be able to resolve conflict fairly when “the rules of a system or an institution conflict with the welfare or rights of an individual within that system” (p. 475). Within education, as in other fields, one finds scholastic, economic and political “haves” and “have-nots.” Kohlberg showed graphically how the inequalities in one’s ability to marshal the resources of the system affect the outcome. His example is drawn from the legal system where he noted that an imbalance can work either way. A penniless drifter could be overwhelmed by the force of law (police, prosecutor) or the resources of an O. J. Simpson could overwhelm the force of law. The values of fairness and justice

are swept aside in favour of procedures, leaving all parties working in the system unclear about the values of the system. In education a comparable imbalance can also occur. For example, in meeting the needs of special education students, teachers must balance the rules of the system, for example, the constraints of staying within budget may not permit what they see as the rights of the individuals in the system. While the system may state its values in terms of meeting students' needs, other values control the actions taken.

The self-determinism raised by Frankl (1970) is visible in the writings of others who refer to the values of individuals and how they relate to system values. Sergiovanni (1996) wrote that:

By definition, people are frail at best – prone to shortcuts, concerned about their own egos, and motivated by self-interest. But they also have the capacity to sacrifice their own self-interests for causes they believe in. And they also have the capacity to dream, to idealize, to pray, to wish for the best, to care for others, and to go beyond giving a fair day's work for a fair day's pay. (p. 179)

Havel wrote,

It is largely up to the politicians which social forces they choose to liberate, and which they choose to suppress, whether they rely on the good in each citizen or on the bad." (1992, p. 4)

He added that:

Work is always personal, and one does it well when one knows what it is for and what it will become – when one can take pride in it or know it will

receive recognition. (p. 108)

Havel, the poet/politician, Frankl and Kohlberg, psychologists, and Sergiovanni, the educator, all recognized the internal conflict experienced by a professional whose values form a large part of the work ethic within parameters defined by the profession or the organization. Hodgkinson (1983, p. 78) believed that underlying values provide meaning for actions within a paradigm that he believed could influence but not determine practice. Miller (1984, p. xiii) and Hall (1995, p. 187) went further to suggest that once values were identified they could be used to shape or even create organizational culture. All were aware of the potential for tension between personally held values and institutional or societal values.

Lortie (1975) posited that teachers' commitment to the job rises when their normative value orientation is consistent with that of the organization. Campbell (1989) found that when a value conflict arose between organizational values and teachers' personal values, teachers' actions conformed to their own values at the expense of the organization's values. Navran (1992) said, "It is always reasonable to expect that the employee's greatest allegiance will be to his/her personal values" (p. 3). It is thus apparent that individual values can affect the way employees do their job, and those values will not always be consistent with the values of the organization.

*The Special Nature of Education as Teachers' Work.*

There is a body of literature that addresses the special nature of teachers' work. Smyth (2001), for example, described teachers' work as intangible, broad in scope, varied, complex, shaped by immediate and long-term forces, individualistic,

emotionally personal and invisible. He deplored the many educational reforms that try to impose conformity on teaching. Connell (1993) noted that teachers' work "is unusual, however, in having an 'object' that is very difficult to specify" and a task that "can expand and contract in alarming ways" (p. 58). Drawing on data from interviews, he identified as many tasks done by teachers as he could find in the data. He was able to identify 80 tasks. It is little wonder that one of the recent reforms in education has been an emphasis on accountability and conformity by de-emphasizing teaching in favour of learning outcomes, effectively "de-skilling" teachers through a strong emphasis on preparing students for standardized tests.

Teaching defies definition. Connell (1993) said that "Learning is a full-blooded human social process, and so is teaching. Teaching involves emotions as much as it involves pure reasoning" (p. 63). Goble (1990) described the ambiguous and intangible nature of teachers' work. In his words, "involvement is the essence of teaching: the job is to lead, stimulate, advise, care" (p. 10) and that:

Teaching is the extension of upbringing, the fostering of development. There is no moment when it is done, no terminal point – except as may be arbitrarily set by the educational authority: and teachers must then be concerned about whether that artificial goal is defensible, or irrelevant and unjust. (p. 10)

The boundaries of professional responsibility for teachers (as for other professionals) are the subject of legislation, regulation and litigation. Alberta has the *Teaching Profession Act*, the *School Act* and accompanying regulations, and a host of school board policies. Ingersoll (2003) pointed out the difference between

professionals who are separated from the failure of their clients to follow directions, and teachers who are often held accountable for the failure of their students to follow their instructions. He wrote that “Teachers have wide responsibility for the behaviour, motivation, attitudes, and performance of their students” (p. 184) and continued, “The authority granted teachers in their relationships with students is not the time-honoured autonomy of traditional professionals” (p. 184).

Ingersoll saw the teacher’s role as a nexus rather than a leadership role. He compared it to being a foreman in an industrial plant – responsible to those above them and to their students below them. Even in this analogy, he noted that teachers are denied the necessary resources to do the job. The foreman has the ability to remove a worker who does not work or cooperate. The teacher has no comparable right with students. While his analogy is overly simple it does illustrate a basic problem with the education reform emphasis on accountability – responsibility for achievement is shared among teachers, others in the system, students, parents and others. Accountability is vested in the teacher.

Freire (1998) saw teaching as work with a special nature. He noted:

The teaching task is above all a professional task that requires constant intellectual rigor and the stimulation of epistemological curiosity, of the capacity to love, of creativity, of scientific competence, and the rejection of scientific reductionism. The teaching task also requires the capacity to fight for freedom, without which the teaching task becomes meaningless. (p. 4)

Teaching is a complex task that includes some or all of the work of many other occupations. Gallen, Karlenzig and Tamney (1995) wrote of the many

important teacher roles that cause stress: “Counsellor, social worker, nurse, chauffeur, fundraiser, mediator, public relations officer, entertainer....” (p. 29).

Hodgkinson (1991) concluded that “Education has been shown to be a general set of human behaviours and experiences organized in about three categories of purpose: aesthetic, economic and ideological” (p. 26). For him, the three strands of purpose, aesthetic, “primarily associated with self-fulfillment and the enjoyment of life” (p. 23); economic, “vocational education or training...with the manifest end of making money” (p. 24); and ideological, concerned with transmission of “the culture of the society in which it occurs” (p. 25), are rarely separable. Thus, the multiple purposes result in multidimensional values in teachers’ work.

The culture of work in public education in Alberta is changing. Young and Grieve (1996) noted an increase the number of teachers on part-time employment contracts and work arrangements being “negotiated on a case-by case basis in the spring for the subsequent school year” (p. 7). They noted, as well, that given the contractual conditions of these teachers there was an inordinate level of pressure on them to do more for less in order “to distinguish themselves as desirable employees” (p. 9). Young et al. (1998) reported that, in some cases, more than 25% of the teachers in Alberta school jurisdictions are on part-time contracts. In examining the working conditions of teachers on part-time employment contracts, Young (1999) noted that increased numbers of teachers are choosing to work part-time for either personal or professional reasons. She found inconsistencies in the expectations placed on different individuals within a system and in the concessions they are expected to make. What is valued in one situation is not valued in another. The

pressures on one teacher employee differ from those on another. Re-valuing is clear in her comment:

According to the new “90s” viewpoint expressed by some principals, the truly “professional” teachers are the ones who demonstrate “flexibility” and resilience by compromising as a means of coping with today’s changing demands. (p. 145)

In her concerns, raised as a question:

Is it just a matter of time before those who respond by working harder leave teaching and we are left with public schools staffed with “flexible” teachers with equally “flexible” standards of professionalism? (p. 145)

An equally salient aspect of the culture of teachers’ work is the degree of control teachers have in important areas of their work lives. Manzer (1994, p. 28) noted the ability of government to allow organized interests such as the teachers’ association to “be accepted as legitimate participants in the design of public policies and even designated as agents of policy implementation.” Alberta teachers, through the ATA, have responsibility under the *Teaching Profession Act* for discipline of conduct of their colleagues. Section 97 (1) (d) of the *School Act* gives the ATA responsibility for two operational school days for teachers’ professional development. That authority is strong enough that teachers who wish to attend an alternative activity to their convention must seek permission to do so from the ATA, not their employer. Alberta teachers participated for many years as contributing members of virtually every committee organized by the education ministry to deal with the organization of education, curriculum, achievement outcomes, etc. Teachers

in Alberta have historically had a powerful voice in shaping the nature of their work, although not necessarily their direct assignment.

A review of The Alberta *School Act*, school board policies and the Alberta *Learning Guide to Education: ECS to Grade 12, 2003* shows comparable conditions to those in the United States where, according to Ingersoll (2003), teachers exercise a high degree of control over decisions in the area of academic instruction, and moderate control over the determination of course objectives, evaluation standards and assigning work. At the same time, they have relatively little control in areas such as class scheduling, size, hiring, firing and budgeting, and “admission, placement, assignment, and expulsion of students” (p. 77).

*The Third Dimension: Forced Change of Values in Education in Alberta*

At various times in their histories, jurisdictions have identified a need to change the focus of their educational systems as part of greater change in society. For example, with the demise of the Soviet Union, former Soviet bloc countries underwent tremendous social upheaval that forced them to define and rebuild their social systems. Havel (1992), the intellectual dissident who became president of the Czech and Slovak Federal Republic, wrote:

The most important thing is a new concept of education. At all levels, schools must cultivate a spirit of free and independent thinking in the students.

Schools will have to be humanized, both in the sense that their basic component must be the human personalities of the teachers, creating around themselves a “force field” of inspiration and example, and in the sense that



technical and other specialized education will be balanced by a general education in the humanities.

The role of the schools is not to create “idiot-specialists” to fill the special needs of different sectors of the national economy, but to develop the individual capabilities of the students in a purposeful way, and to send out into life thoughtful people capable of thinking about the wider social, historical, and philosophical implications of their specialities. (p. 117)

While the economic forces driving change in the Czech and Slovak Republic may be highly visible, global economic forces are driving change in education on a worldwide basis. Smyth (2001) described the changes as part of capitalism responding to economic imperatives of favourable conditions for industry, opportunities for 24-hour investment, and balancing markets. Education, he argued, is under pressure to be “the means to economic salvation – if only a narrow, mechanistic view of education is embraced” (p. 37). Similarly, Manzer (1994) situated education reform within what he sees to be a continuum of “successive liberal education projects – political, economic, ethical and technological” ideological paradigms that have underlain public philosophies of education. He defined the current ideological shift as “economic transformation” away from an ethical paradigm characterized by a strong belief in meeting individual needs, cultural multiplicities and educational pluralisms and toward a technological paradigm focused on basic skills, results and a common curriculum that puts “limits on accommodation of individual differences” (pp. 212-213).

Fowler (1996) described the formation of a new constitution for the

*Fédération de l'Éducation Nationale*, an amalgamation of education labour unions in France, for the purpose of combating the effects of economic globalisation on education. Smyth (2001), in Australia, writes of de-skilling teachers, increased surveillance disguised as accountability, removal of teacher voice, schooling as vocational skill formation and abandonment of those who are already disadvantaged. Apple, in the forward to *Teachers' Work in a Globalizing Economy* by Smyth, Dow, Hattam, Reid and Shacklock (2000), described the publication of that book "in Japan, Argentina, Brazil, Spain, Portugal and elsewhere" (p. xv). It was first published in England, then the United States and Canada. Apple notes that its widespread publication "demonstrates the truly global nature of the processes and dangers they critically discuss" (p. xv). Clearly the recent reforms in education in Alberta must be seen as part of a provincial, national and international trend.

From a national perspective, Saul (1996) wrote of a weakened commitment to the public good on all fronts. He noted a lack of consciousness of the larger struggle, the lack of awareness of the shift in societal leadership to a culture of corporatism and market-driven education. Saul claimed that political leadership has moved from a citizen-based society, dependent on participation and disinterest, to one in which "Everything, from school education to public services, is being restructured on the self-destructive basis of self-interest" (p. 33).

Manzer (1994) was even more direct when he wrote:

Schools in Canada are still "the principal stake" in power struggles among religious, racial, ethnic, and linguistic cultural groups that seek to organize public education to embody their visions of individual and collective good.

Schools have also become the principal stake in power struggles among political and economic elites who seek to organize public education to achieve economic wealth and political power. (p. 272)

Thus, belief in the paramountcy of the collective good appears to have weakened internationally, nationally and provincially.

The review of historical educational records in Chapter Four of this study will show that the concept of education as a means of developing individual strength for the collective good has long been highly valued in Alberta. The nature of government in Alberta may make the province particularly vulnerable to imposed changes. A voting pattern of support for the governing party shows that citizen participation in democracy in Canada has been limited; especially so in Alberta where only four political parties have governed Alberta since its creation. Table 3 shows that Albertans have left the job of governing to one strong party for long periods of time.

**Table 3: Ruling Political Parties in Alberta**

1905 - 1921	Liberal
1921 - 1935	United Farmers of Alberta
1935 - 1971	Social Credit
1971 - present	Conservative

Barber (1984) suggested that this pattern relegates citizenship to definition within roles such as taxpayer, welfare recipient, special-interest advocate, or constituent. Saul (1996) described society as “unconscious,” and Barber called our democracy “thin.” For both, the risk of low public involvement is a population open to the control of power groups. McLaren (1989) asserted that “liberty and democracy are in retreat” and the “existing criticisms of schooling and the agenda for education

reform themselves constitute part of this retreat” (p. 5). Harrison and Laxer (1995) suggested that the effect of the small number of ruling parties “has been to prevent the development of a sufficient number of strong, independent political sites within which a pluralist system of democracy can thrive” (1995, p. 119).

Apathy and abrogation of democratic responsibility by the population leave people in the control of leaders who can choose when and how to heed the wants or wishes of the citizenry. As early as 1513, Machiavelli (1952) gave state leaders the following advice:

The Prince ought always to take counsel, but only when he wishes, not when others wish; on the contrary, he ought to discourage absolutely attempts to advise him unless he asks it, for it is an infallible rule that a Prince who is not wise himself cannot be well advised. (Codevilla, p. 88 )

In shaping its educational reform during the 1990s, the Alberta government sought its own advisors. Sir Roger Douglas, former finance minister in New Zealand and a large contributor to the reform upheaval in that country advised the Alberta cabinet on ways to neutralize unsolicited advice. Mackay and Flower (1999) reported that the government followed the advice of Douglas to make simultaneous and rapid changes in many areas: to make quantum leaps instead of small increments of change, to allow individual choice of school, deregulation and a marketplace model of education. Douglas saw government services and regulations as the administration of privileges. One precept of Douglas’ teaching was the need to make changes on many fronts at once. As Dobbin (1995) has explained it, the government attacking everything at once demoralizes those who would criticize, and democratic opposition

becomes difficult. Another strategy is labelling naysayer groups as “special interest groups” which could be ignored. According to Dobbin, as a consequence of following Douglas’ advice, the speed and the scope of change undertaken by the Alberta government was highly effective.

The Alberta government also followed advice from political strategists such as Osborne and Gaebler (1993). Under the guise of “open government” they shifted the responsibility for public policy matters, but not the power to implement them, into the hands of mostly unelected people. The shift left real power in the hands of political ministers, but responsibility for making the day-to-day, difficult, hands-on and sometimes “dirty” decisions at a lower level, for example, was left in the hands of Regional Health Authorities and amalgamated School Boards. Lisac (1995) pointed out that this shift “tends to devalue debate. It separates political decisions from elections” making “it easier for one part of society to impose its will on another part.” As he saw it, the democratic value of widespread, public involvement in decision-making ends at perception.

The shift in values that occurred in Alberta as self-interest replaced societal interest was evident in the wide use of the value-laden language of market-driven corporatist education, in terms such as “choice, freedom, progress and improvement.” Saul (1996) criticized the much respected management expert Peter Drucker who claimed that “the nanny state is a total failure” (p. 85). Saul saw Drucker’s conclusion as a misplaced criticism of the societal goals and as an exaggerated reality in a system that does many things well but has failed through poor management. Ball (1996) addressed the need to confront the demand for

“individual choice” by parents who are only seeking to do the best for their children. At some point, he explained, it may be necessary to limit choices when what is good for one child is bad for other children. He noted that it is possible to be a good parent and a bad citizen. The clash between democratic values and self-interest is especially evident in the educational dilemma of choice.

Halvar Jonson, then Minister of Education, stated in a “Press Release” on January 18, 1994 that “Our kids come first.” One of the earliest deficit reduction budget cuts of 1994 was a 50% reduction of funds for kindergarten. At the same time, daycare subsidies were cut by 20%. In a similar vein, then Minister of Social Services, Mike Cardinal, introduced a new Child Welfare plan that, among other policy changes, shifted responsibility for children back to their parents who had abused them. Cardinal, quoted in Harrison and Laxer (1995), commented that “government can never be a good parent...only parents of those children can be good parents” (p. 95). While not coming directly from an education minister, the comment coming from a Minister was indicative of the value government placed on the state role in assistance to children. Changes in education legislation, regulations, and department encouragement increased the direct, participative role of parents in education. The actions of the two ministries show the existence of sharp contrasts in the valuing of children, the valuing of people who work with children and the willingness to provide the support necessary to make the system work so that marginalized children become successful in society.

Teacher effort and opinion was criticized as not being valued. Peters (1996) publicly challenged then Minister of Education Jonson for the lack of praise given to

teachers for the work they do. In response, the Minister's Director of Communications identified press releases praising the achievement test results which lauded the tests but did not mention teachers, the changes to legislation that provide expeditious handling of unprofessional conduct charges, and positive comments about student diploma exam results, which included a comment noting teacher praise for student responses. Not one positive comment was directed toward teachers and their work. Peters responded by pleading that the Minister and his department "become the most prominent cheerleaders for this province's educational system and its teachers."

The *Mandate and Missions* statement of Alberta Education (1994) was also neutral or noncommittal with respect to the value of teachers. In fact, it mentioned teachers only once: by encouraging "schools and teachers" to take advantage "of different delivery options, such as distance education and workplace learning." It is notable that these two options provide minimal opportunity for teacher-pupil relationships. All other responsibilities were directed to the lifeless, organizational body, the school, without specific direction as to who should pursue them. This document, which replaced the *Goals of Education, Goals of Schooling and Desirable Personal Characteristics* in the Elementary, Junior High and Senior High School Handbook, was extracted from the government-produced *Meeting the Challenge II: Three-Year Business Plan for Education, 1995/96 - 1997/98*. In a statement silent on participant values, the document suggested that "Schools will have authority to deploy resources and *may use any instructional technique acceptable to the community as long as the results are achieved*. Schools and teachers are encouraged

to take advantage of different delivery options, such as distance education and workplace learning [emphasis added].” Schools were separated from teachers, and delivery of education was separated from daily contact with teachers. Taft’s (1997) assessment that moral considerations were eliminated from value considerations seems apt. The end justified the means. No instrumental values were considered as important as end values.

The erosion of long-standing educational values has been an international, national, provincial and deliberate process. Ball (1996) drew comparisons between actions in Britain, New Zealand and Canada. Barlow and Robertson (1994) made the point that despite an exceptionally strong national and international reputation for excellence in education, forces wanting change skilfully neutralized professional knowledge and experience by repeating myths that favoured their own agenda. Sometimes the reformers have been blatantly open about the process. John Snobelen, Minister of Education in Ontario, reported in the *Globe and Mail*, July 7, 1995 when he said, “If we really want to fundamentally change...education we’ll have to first make sure we’ve communicated brilliantly the breakdown in the process we currently experience. That’s not easy. We need to invent a crisis.” Neither was there evidence of a crisis in education in Alberta.

Researchers have identified a tendency toward slanted, distorted and inaccurate reports of poor student results that destroy confidence in the public education system and contribute to increased external control. Pinet and Sands (1993) found that in the *Globe and Mail* teachers were the least likely to be quoted about education and that union perspectives on issues were excluded. They reported



the finding of *Halifax Daily News* columnist Parker Barss-Donham that the right-wing think tanks were greatly over-represented in coverage by Canadian Press.

When the facts are reported fully and accurately, Canada's education system is patently successful by many measures. Lapointe, Askew and Mead (1992) noted that the OECD had reported that Canada had one of the highest levels of post-secondary participation of all OECD countries and the highest per capita number of post-secondary degrees in the world. In addition, Canada scored in the middle for science and mathematics despite having much higher enrolment rates, reflecting the broader ability level of students writing the tests. Good news in education is ignored elsewhere as well. A 1991 Sandia Laboratories report in the United States reported positive aspects of American schooling and identified public misconceptions. The *Utne Reader* (1994) called the report one of the "Top Censored Stories of 1993" because it received little press and was suppressed by the Bush administration, which had commissioned it.

In Alberta and internationally, there has been a shift of decision-making power away from those directly involved in education to those at arm's length from it, politicians, party members and those individuals and organizations able to influence government decisions such as the fifty businesspeople who sit on the Alberta Economic Development Authority as reported in *The Edmonton Journal*, February 1, 1995 (A7). The impetus for change was both interest-based and global. Lawton (1995) lauded the shift in decision-making and noted "revolutionary" experiments in education occurring in six countries (p. 14). Acker (1999) noted that the changes in education in Britain were made without respect for the opinions of

teachers and concluded that consultation and involvement could have both improved and speeded up the process.

Those in the know in Alberta were directly prevented from speaking out. Harrison, in Harrison and Laxer (1995), spoke of the prevalence of fear against speaking out being felt by groups, including teachers, under pressure from the government. He noted that a direct threat had been issued by only one minister in the Alberta government, Mike Cardinal, who specifically and publicly stated that social workers who spoke against changes would be fired. But there was a veiled “threat” in the policies of other departments and ministers and in the failure of the Premier and other members of the government to distance themselves from Cardinal’s direct threat. Alberta Education proposed a shift in policy away from continuing teaching certificates to five-year renewable certificates. The government proposed to determine the eligibility for the right to continue to practice on the basis of “knowledge, skills and attitudes.” The ATA organized a vigorous protest that included a province-wide campaign and a special edition of the *ATA News* (January 1, 1995) entitled “Teacher Certificates Threatened.” The government took no action on the proposal.

Helmer, in Harrison and Laxer (1995), noted that University of Lethbridge president, John Woods, political scientists David Taras and Alan Tupper of the University of Alberta, and Shirley McInnes of the Common Front, all accused the government of “settling scores,” including some against the education profession. Marchak (1988, 1991) explained that many groups see a common enemy in the public education system because it created a class that demands social privileges that

exceed what would be provided by private interests.

Harrison and Laxer (1995) alleged that one aim of Alberta government policies was to move toward a two-tier system of education similar to that found in the United States. Part of the plan, as they saw it, was to create an impoverished, inferior public system. Direct moves included budget cuts, as noted in Table 4, the creation in the *School Act Amendment Act* (1994) of charter schools exempt from many of the regulations governing other publicly funded schools, and increased funding to private schools, as shown in Table 5. Between 1997 and 2001, funding for private schools was projected to rise 30.8% whereas funding for public schools was to rise 6.8% (Kachur, 1999). The modest rise in funding for public education was put into context by Neu (1999), who reported that between 1985 and 1992, while Don Getty was Premier, per pupil spending decreased 6.3%. In the first term of Premier Klein, it decreased a further 14.6% (p. 79).

**Table 4: Budget cuts in Alberta 1988-1995**

Fiscal Year	Per-pupil spending
1988-89	\$4,998
1991-92	\$5,695
1994-95	\$5,490

Source: Alberta Education, *Annual Report 1994/95*.

**Table 5: Funding for private schools 1988-1995**

Fiscal year	Private School Funding	Enrolment	Per pupil (Funding+ enrolment)
1988-89	\$14,138,057	14,464	\$ 977.47
1991-92	\$21,902,566	15,142	\$1,446.48
1994-95	\$31,700,000	19,719	\$1,607.59

Compiled from figures provided with the Alberta Education information package on private school funding, 1998

Harrison and Laxer (1995) reasoned that if private schools and charter

schools proliferated in ways that permit elitism, the public schools would have only the children of the disadvantaged and lower middle class. The privileged and upper-middle-class would go elsewhere. This was part of their contention that a great deal of the reform in Alberta is not as “much about reducing government as abrogating democracy” (p. 13). Of course others, whose special interests were met, saw things differently. Lawton (1995), for one, advocated Charter schools as essential to break the hold of the bureaucracy on education and restore control to parents.

Both the speed and the reasons for educational change may have been part of new forced change methods. Writing about the evolution of teaching into a profession earlier in the century, Bacharach (1990) said that:

Teachers were the first to notice the decline in the quality of education produced by regulation. Teachers realized that, because they were not trusted, conditions were being forced upon them that caused them to treat students poorly. Standardized teaching meant ignoring the needs and interests of students. The solution they seized upon was to assume responsibility for the quality of the teaching force. (p. 405)

Bacharach (1990) noted that teachers found solutions through involvement in policy-making. The same option of becoming involved in policy-making has not been available to teachers in the late 1990s. When, early in the reform process in Alberta, teachers were asked to take a 5% cut in salary, Bauni Mackay, ATA President, offered to encourage such a cut in return for participation in the reform decision-making process. As noted in the press release of February 17, 1994, she was soundly rebuffed by the Premier. Teacher input through the ATA was not wanted or

permitted. Yet, at a Progressive Conservative Party Workshop held on April 3, 1993 called “Reinventing Education,” party members had discussed such topics as membership in the ATA, elimination of the ATA; separating principals as “management” from teachers as “labour” by dividing the ATA; introduction of provincial bargaining; changing teacher certification requirements; in-service opportunities, requirements of teacher evaluation; rejecting the need for public schools to integrate special needs students; increasing the number of teacher assistants; voucher systems; parent involvement in school decision-making; amalgamation of school jurisdictions; religious minority education rights; merit pay; fiscal equity problems; school discipline; coordination among education, social services and health departments and year-round schooling. The government did not implement all the ideas, opinions and suggestions provided by those attending the workshop. But party members did participate in a discussion with government leaders on many topics of vital concern to teachers – and no formal voice for teachers was invited or permitted to participate in these same or similar discussions.

Other forums were “tightly controlled with guests, presenters, and team leaders carefully selected” (Harrison & Laxer, 1995). The perception of input was carefully managed without any real opportunity for comment from anyone whose views were not already consistent with government ideology. The exclusion of organized, representative teacher input continued to be evident. Government appointments to advisory councils and committees were frequently individual teachers who self-nominated rather than teachers whose names were put forward by the professional association as had been done in the past. Appointments of individual

teacher-citizens were safe for the government because they represented no one except themselves; when they were not in agreement with government plans, they could rally no organized or official opposition. At the same time they provided the veneer of consultation. Honneth (1995) suggested that this type of exclusion from decision-making contributes to a breakdown within a professional group of their sense of professionalism and of values relating to a commitment to society.

The highly structured opportunities for public input noted above make it appear that in Alberta the directives for educational change came without regard for the aims, beliefs, or values of teachers in public education. Indeed, this strategy may have been a quiet method of commencing re-valuing of aims, beliefs and values without specifically identifying replacements. Rather than inviting debate on specific goals, the government offered broad statements. Saul (1996) explained this deliberate vagueness as “no ideologue would be caught dead admitting to a utopian ideal. That would imply hope when what he is delivering is truth. He doesn’t even see himself as an ideologue.” He wrote that ideologues “have the truth. The aim of the ideologue is to manipulate, trick or force the majority into acceptance. People whom you intend to manipulate, trick or force are people for whom you have contempt” (pp. 21-22). The lack of professional involvement in the change process showed such contempt.

Using Saul’s statement to assess the method of implementation of educational reform adds meaning to the comments of Jim Dinning, Alberta Provincial Treasurer at the time, and a former Education Minister, who supported a free-enterprise school system based on competition (CHAT-TV, 1994 01 27).

McKay and Flower (1996) reported that Dinning, a strong leader of government reform in Alberta, first discussed reform possibilities openly after attending an international conference in Britain in 1988. In Britain he was exposed to the Thatcher government's policies and philosophy based on the work of Friedrich Hayek, who had strongly influenced the Chicago School of Economists? Indeed, the Thatcher reforms were modelled on Hayek's principles of choice, diversity, competition and autonomy. These four market principles are linked with efficient, effective, accountable management and control of information. McKay and Flower (1996) and Marchak (1988) both asserted that Hayek was anti-democratic in his belief that government officials are inefficient and self-serving, and that trade unions distort the marketplace. Thus, neither group is worthy of consultation. Nowhere in the Hayekian principles does one find respect for human rights or equality. Indeed, they contended that construction of a society based on Hayekian values as shown in Table 6 will inevitably lead to deliberate destruction of targeted segments of the population. Ball (1996) reported the Hayekian values at the annual Professional Development Symposium for education leaders:

**Table 6: Hayekian Principles as reported by Ball**

1	Government or bureaucratic planning is less likely to work than the trial and error of the market.
2	Politics based on public spending solutions encourages "promissory democracy."
3	Social justice and redistribution are politically biased and rest on partisan notions of needs and worth.
4	Coerced transfer of income (taxation) is unfair.
5	High taxes reduce initiative, incentive, creativity, and responsibility.
6	State provision of services removes personal liberty.
7	State professionals are inefficient and self-serving, engaged in restrictive practices and resistant to innovations.

8	Trade unions distort the market and competition by artificially raising wages above the "real" market level.
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The reform process in Alberta was vaguely defined even in documents that purported to clarify goals. Depending on one's perspective, changes in education may have appeared to be inconsistent with the document *Program Foundations: Mission and Mandate* (Alberta Education, 1995). The mission was stated as "The best possible education for all Alberta students." As a mission statement, this offers no focus for education; it is so vague as to be meaningless for education professionals and parents. "Best" has meaning only if the reader knows what is being compared; "possible" excuses anyone from being the "best" at anything. The accompanying mandate statement said that "Education is responsible for ensuring that students have the opportunity to acquire the knowledge, skills and attitudes needed to be self-reliant, responsible, caring and contributing members of society." Close examination of the entire document reveals that "knowledge, skills and attitudes" were defined through phrases such as "prepared for the world of work...entrepreneurial and technical skills and work habits...high-tech global economy." One also finds that those who spend the money were to be accountable if the goals set by the external decision-makers were not accomplished "with the existing resources." Meanwhile, Alberta, a wealthy province, was funding education on a per pupil basis at a rate lower than all states in the United States except Utah, Saskatchewan and the Maritime Provinces (see Appendix 2). Soucek and Pannu (1996) described the Alberta government as "unusually stingy when it comes to spending on education" (p. 38).

The *Mission and Mandate* document also made it clear that teacher



satisfaction with the education system is not a consideration. Rather, “The satisfaction of students, parents and the public is critical to the success of the education system.” Teachers were conspicuously absent from the list.

The *Mission and Mandate* document, with its radical departure from the existing objectives of *The Goals of Basic Education for Alberta* (1978), offers only one way of imputing that government decision-makers were bringing about a change in values. In the February 1995 throne speech, the government referred to its citizens as “customers.” As Harrison, in Harrison and Laxer, pointed out (1995), while citizens have universal rights, customers have only the rights they can buy as individuals. From a business orientation, education can be seen as an expense, not a right. In response to this business ethos, a major curriculum area that received attention from Alberta Learning and from school boards was Career and Technology Studies, which was intended to prepare students directly for the job market. One emphasis was for students to “job shadow.” Within this program, if a student visited a hospital under the auspices of a school project, the purpose was probably not to visit the shut-ins for humanistic reasons but to experience the commodity value of being a nurse or other worker.

Quality education, as it was seen by the Alberta Government, continued to feed on a number of myths that had been deliberately and/or naively propagated to promote the need for changes (Meaghan & Casas, 1995). Evans (1995), writing from Ontario, pointed out that teachers may be no different from other groups in society who failed to see that education was becoming increasingly elitist. The general public had limited access to broad-based information sources and had to rely on the

inaccurate perceptions presented by the media. Denis (1995) did a content analysis of two major Alberta media outlets, the *Edmonton Journal* and *Alberta Report* magazine. He concluded that the media outlets “supply their readers with vast amounts of information originating from governments” and “government messages *will be* transmitted” (p. 93, emphasis in the original).

Democracy itself was under attack. Marchak (1991) examined the ideology and the uniformity of thought underpinning pressure on politicians around the world and concluded that, for proponents of change, “Democracy’s great flaw is that it reverses the ‘appropriate direction of influence,’” and “Equality as an idea is nothing more than a product successfully sold at a particular point in history” (p. 97).

Marchak continued by pointing out that people with little belief in and no understanding of democracy and equality have the desire to reduce spending on education because they do not see that a liberal education offers value to their society and can easily be led to the belief that it should be available only to those who want and can pay for it. Thus, they would reduce access to schooling, including university education, and target teaching to subjects that are applicable to the job market. For those who do not understand democracy, there are “no social goods beyond individual preferences” (p. 102) and those must be limited by ability to pay. In sharp contrast, the *Member’s Handbook* (2003) of the Alberta Teachers’ Association includes extensive policy set by teachers that places a high priority on social good well beyond individual preferences and self-interest.

### *Summary*

In this chapter I reviewed the literature on the concept of value, with a focus on what constitutes a value and the importance of values as motivators to action. I have shown that the literature contributed to an operational definition of “values” as motivating beliefs that initiate or reinforce action. Values were shown to be a small number of ends or means tightly connected to individual considerations that are reflective of the culture under consideration. A value system was defined as a set of beliefs that an individual thinks to be right, good and fair.

The literature also clarified the relationship between values, norms and value systems, for individuals and groups. It showed that values can be inferred in what a person believes to be giving to the world, or taking from the world, or from an attitude when a person is faced with an unchangeable situation. The individual’s value system need not always be consistent with the values of the organization but can affect the way employees do their job. “Valuing,” a conscious or unconscious change of an existing value system by action or policy, was shown to be tightly linked to (i) the beliefs of individuals; (ii) the ability of the individual to act on a value by virtue of its soundness and compatibility with the individual’s personally held beliefs; and (iii) its priority level as a motivator for the individual.

Alberta was shown to have undergone an ideologically driven reform process under the leadership of a government that attempted to eliminate teachers from the decision-making process and discounted their opinions and values. This process was shown to be part of a larger global process.

The next chapter will explain the design of the study.

## Chapter Three

### *Research Methodology*

“Social justice” in education; that is, with the potential that education offers both as a vehicle for improving life chances and opportunities, and as a means of enriching and enhancing the business of living....such a position does not mean that all educational activities, organizations and workers in education are benign in their intentions and effects; the fact that I defend these as possibilities does not mean that I am uncritical of present or past provision; nor does it mean that I am blind to the unfair and damaging aspects of that provision. (Ozga, 1999, p. 8)

With these words Ozga neatly defines the limitation of research created by the study of one aspect at a time. She also neatly identifies the one-sided nature of research which always leaves room for other sides to be explored elsewhere. That, of course, is true of this research as well. I sought to investigate the nature and implications of a values conflict, if one exists, between values underpinning the new norms imposed by the reform movement and the existing values of experienced teachers. In Chapter One, I outlined what was to be studied and my orientation to what was to be studied. In Chapter Two I reviewed pertinent literature that provided structure for my own research. In Chapter Three, I outlined the design of the study and reported on the process of doing the research. I wrote about the values inferred from teachers’ comments about their work and ATA policy statements about teachers’ work, but like Acker (1999) “without claiming there is a universal form of teachers’ work” (p. 198). Still, this study offers a glimpse of the espoused values that

have shaped teachers' work over the last seventy years.

My review of the literature reveals a striking shortage of studies that identify the values of teachers. I sought to identify the values influenced by continual reforms by looking at "multiple layers of construction (i.e. interpretation)" (Gall, Borg & Gall, 1996, p. 20). *The Report Card on Education* (1996) provided a large enough number of teacher-generated statements about their work to reveal common teacher values with some certainty of widespread applicability. This study extracts values, places them in a historical and situational context, and checks to see if teachers say that they have acted either to support and elevate the identified values, or abandoned them deliberately in order to reduce the tensions of value-conflict in their workplace to a bearable level. The study has three distinct layers of data collection: the first from the large pool of comments, the second from written records; and the final one revealing the meanings selected teachers ascribed to their actions.

Thompson (1990) suggested a need for "meaningful constructs which are structured in definite ways and which are embedded in specific social and historical conditions" (p. 280). I tried to provide the social-historic context before proceeding to formal analysis to be sure the task was not "an abstract exercise, disconnected from the conditions of production" (p. 285). Thompson stressed the fallacy of accepting either the message or the recipient without consideration. He asserted that the meaning of the message could not be inferred from the content alone; it required examination of the social-historical context, formal analysis and further interpretation through creative synthesis. Similarly, the recipient could not be viewed as a passive but an active participant "in an ongoing process of understanding and re-

understanding themselves through the messages they receive” (p. 319). This view allows for the possibility of a modified understanding over the long course of the study.

This study began with my own subjective interpretation of the values inherent in teachers’ responses to the *Report Card on Education* (1996). I then determined the historical underpinnings of those values from major historical records in education in Alberta in the past fifty years and finally determined through interviews whether selected teachers identified or verified these as their motivating values. The subjective selection of values by the researcher was checked for errors through review by other researchers familiar with education in Alberta but not at this time actively teaching or involved in public education. In this way I hoped to control for and minimize researcher bias.

### *Design of the Study*

#### *Stages of the Study*

As noted above, the study is designed as a multi-layered project in which each stage of the research grows logically from the last and expands the findings of the previous stage. The study has three identifiable stages, as follows:

Stage One: I identified possible teacher-work values from a province-wide source.

To draw such inferences required a large sampling of teachers’ comments about their work. Just such a sampling was provided to me in late 1996 when Dr. David Flower, then Coordinator of Communications at the Alberta Teachers’ Association informed me that the ATA had decided not to do anything with the written responses from teachers gathered when the Alberta Teachers’ Association surveyed its members for

the *Report Card on Education, 1996*. A copy of the survey is attached as Appendix 3. The survey is a two-part instrument with two questions to which teachers responded on a three-point agree-disagree scale. It was followed by a single question inviting a written response. That was, "Please comment on the premier's observation that education is 'a good news story.'" The written responses from teachers were solicited in a way that allowed them to add any information or opinion they wished. Although a small number of sample comments were reported in news releases from the ATA, no other analysis or use was made of the data. Copies of all responses organized by the provincial legislature riding were offered to me for use in a research project and this study is designed to take advantage of that data source. The original survey was designed jointly by the ATA and the Population Research Laboratory at the University of Alberta and administered in June, 1996. At that time, the ATA made a single request for school representatives in each school to arrange an opportunity for teachers in their school to respond to the survey, then gather the responses and forward them to ATA headquarters in Edmonton. Some made use of time at staff meetings, some arranged informal meetings and many simply put the request in each teacher's mailbox at school with a request to respond by a specified date. No record was kept of how responses were gathered in individual schools. School representatives from more than 71% of Alberta's public schools (including separate schools) returned responses from 36% of the teachers, or 10,554 teachers out of 29,473 on the membership lists. Most included comments, but no use was planned for the comments. For this study I grouped the teachers' written responses into common themes from which I identified underlying values consistent with the

operational definitions of the study. Schools were not identified in the compilation of responses provided to me and are not identified in the study. Survey results provided to me were tallied and reported on the basis of provincial government ridings and the comments which were collected remained essentially unreported prior to this study.

I acknowledge some concerns with the methodology of the ATA survey. First, the sample was voluntary and not necessarily representative. Second, the response rate was relatively low. Third, the three-point scale which elicited overwhelmingly negative responses for specified school conditions may have unduly focused teacher responses on narrow perspectives. Fourth, the timing of a survey in June when teachers are exceptionally busy may have influenced their willingness to respond or the extensiveness of their answers. Still, in a statement on the issue of reliability with a response from 36.5% of the teachers in the province, Donna Fong (1996) of the Population Research Laboratory at the University of Alberta called the return "very good" for a survey without follow-up and suggested, "it is very unlikely that the teachers who did not complete the survey would have answered in the opposite direction, in sufficient numbers, to change the overall picture." It was therefore possible to use the data collected with some confidence that the values of many Alberta teachers are reasonably represented in the responses to the second part of the survey.

Stage Two: I selected and reviewed formal records that described the historical and developmental context of the values expressed by teachers in 1996. This included government reports and studies and formal teacher input to, or comment on, those



studies. These documents included the report of the Deputy Minister of Education, G.W. Gorman, in the *Twenty-ninth Annual Report of the Department of Education*, 1934 (Gorman, 1935), (hereinafter referred to as the Gorman Report); the *Report of the Royal Commission on Education, 1959* (Royal Commission on Education & Cameron, D., 1959) chaired by Senator Donald Cameron (hereinafter called the Cameron Commission and the Cameron Report); *A choice of futures, a future of choices: report of the Commission on Educational Planning* (Commission on Educational Planning & Worth, W., 1972) chaired by Dr. Walter Worth (hereinafter called the Worth Commission and the Worth Report); the *Goals of Basic Education* (Alberta Education, 1978) approved by the legislature in 1978, and lastly, a report by J.D. Harder of the (then) Alberta Department of Education in 1977 called *Alberta education and diploma requirements: a discussion paper prepared for the Curriculum Policies Board* (Harder, 1977) hereinafter called the Harder Report. As I was looking at long-serving teachers in Alberta, these records provided a broad base of information on the education system of Alberta at the time they completed their teacher education and entered practice.

Stage Three: I interviewed a sample of 18 teachers selected according to pre-set criteria with the intention of either validating the values identified earlier or of revealing alternate possibilities. The study design was for 20 participating career teachers with 15 or more years of experience, having experienced the changes in education resulting from the reforms made by the Klein government. The interview criteria called for a convenience sample with a cross-section of views and values by selecting five practising teachers, five practising administrators, five teachers who

had returned to the classroom from administration and five teachers who had left teaching prematurely (before they were eligible to receive a pension). Limitations of this methodology include the small sample size for interviews, the artificial split into four groupings, the narrowness of the sample in terms of age and the possibility that the participants knew the interviewer prior to the study. The sample, while small, included participants from 12 different communities and 12 different school jurisdictions throughout the province of similar age and experience as many of the teachers in Alberta. Since I was interviewing and I was known by name to many teachers in Alberta, care was taken to ensure that the study participants were not ATA members with whom I have worked directly. To identify participants, I went to a meeting of teacher-leaders from across the province, announced the criteria and asked them to provide me with names to contact. The interviews provided a rich source of data on the values of at least some Alberta teachers.

### *Doing the Research*

Research is necessarily interpretive. The literature made clear that values are related to the individual and the situation of the individual. In Chapter One of this study I put forward the premise that the way people interpret their social environment affects their subsequent actions. I suggested the further belief that one of the influences motivating those actions is the value system of the individual; another is the value system of the organization. This perspective is relevant to each stage of the study.

#### *Stage One: Report Card Comment Analysis*

After receiving the teachers' comments, I selected a geographic sample to

include responses from teachers throughout the province and from all sizes and types of community in the province. Without looking at the responses, I chose one large urban riding with responses from 159 teachers; one suburban riding with responses from 139 teachers; one small urban riding with responses from 156 teachers; one southern rural riding with responses from 126 teachers; and one northern rural riding with responses from 140 teachers. A second criterion was then considered: did all of the ridings contain teachers in separate and public schools, the two major teacher groups within public education in Alberta? All did, so no changes were made.

In total I had a sample of comments from 561 of the 10,554 teachers responding to the survey selected to provide geographic, rural/urban and public/separate representation from five ridings throughout the province. In analyzing the report card responses I used a “holistic” method (Van Manen, 1990, pp. 92-93) in which I captured meaning by identifying phrases that expressed the meaning of the whole. All of the comments provided by teachers in those ridings were separated, reviewed and sorted into similar or related comments. Themes were identified from the collated comments based on the message within each grouping. I read the selections carefully for phrases or words that provided clear meanings, read them carefully again for words that inferred a value, and then again for selective meanings.

I chose an inductive approach to determining the underlying values in each theme. Sayer (1992) identified areas for concern with induction in research and areas where it is appropriate. First, there must be reason to believe the framework provides a structure of knowledge that is enduring. Changes in the education system come

reasonably slowly and are highly visible when they occur. This study focuses on the points of change within a system. The events identified by participants and by the researcher are necessarily related to the system, which thereby provides a base for inductive reasoning. Second, all knowledge is fallible. But, as Sayer noted, this concern relates to all knowledge and cannot preclude basing new observations on what we already know.

Sayer went on to suggest that induction is appropriate in the explanation of what has occurred when it helps us determine what to accept through practical judgements that arise from weighing the possible consequences of choices. Induction was effective in this study because the desired consequences of teachers' actions were visible.

As the literature had suggested, the comments yielded a fairly small set of values. The selected values were reviewed by other graduate students familiar with the requirements of research; all were teachers who were not at that time engaged in the practice of teaching. Once acknowledged as acceptable choices, the values identified from the report cards were then used in the preparation of the interview guide questions for the third stage of the study.

#### *Stage Two: The Records Review*

Stage Two of this study is a records-review carried out to provide the essential context. Sayer stressed that knowledge “never develops in a vacuum but is always embedded in social practices and we can more fully understand the former if we know the latter” (p. 43). Thus, the social practice of public reporting is likely not only a source of substantive data on the values of the time, but was also a contributor

to the development of those values. Although the documents selected were originally published for varied purposes and with specific mandates, I selected each because it provided insight into the values of the day.

The Gorman Report of 1935 was a small part of the *Twenty-ninth Annual Report of the Department of Education of the Province of Alberta*. It was a report on demographics, activities and plans as submitted on a regular basis by a government ministry. From it I was able to identify a straightforward statement of purpose for education and a plan to fulfill it. I summarized Gorman's stated intentions for change within the system and the underlying beliefs of his position. I then identified the apparent values supported by positions taken in his plan for education.

The *Report of the Royal Commission on Education in Alberta* (the Cameron Report) was a major review of education in Alberta from a Commission with a mandate to make a "comprehensive survey of the various phases of the elementary and secondary school system of the province with particular attention to programs of study and student achievement" (1959, p. 4). From the Cameron Report I summarized the positions taken and the recommendations of the Royal Commission as well as those found in a minority report. I also summarized the brief submitted by the teachers of Alberta through the Alberta Teachers' Association. For both the Commission and the teachers I identified the apparent values of the education partners setting the course of education in Alberta in a manner supported by direct value statements. The concerns addressed to the Commission by Albertans expressing opposing values were reflected in the minority report, which was not influential at the time.

*A Choice of Futures: Report of the Commission on Educational Planning* (the Worth Report) marked the conclusion and recommendations of the Worth

Commission after a major review of education in Alberta. Its mandate was to:

examine the needs of all individuals in our society; to analyse our total educational requirements; to recommend the future changes, structures, and priorities necessary for a comprehensive educational system. (1972, p. 2)

The Commission asked, “What is to be our vision for education in Alberta? How is it to be achieved? By and for whom?” (p. 36) and stated, “The function of the Commission on Educational Planning is to help Albertans answer these imperative questions” (p. 36). From the report, I summarized the position put forward by the report and the recommendations of the Commission. I also summarized the official input of the teachers, provided by the ATA. From these I again identified the guiding values of both government and teachers as supported by their stated beliefs and actions. A study done by Fennell (1985), who was an “insider” at the time, revealed some concerns that lingered in the government and led to the development of the Goals of Basic Education that were formulated during the 1970s. Fennell reported that the Department of Education struck a committee in 1972 with the objective: “to integrate the elementary and secondary statements into a single document on the aims and objectives of education” (p. 76). The Goals statement was eventually approved by the legislature in 1978. I reviewed it and considered the new political circumstances in which it was created to once again identify the underlying values and then to contrast them to the values in the Worth Report from which it had grown.

The remaining document that I reviewed has been called the Harder Report

of 1977. *Alberta education and diploma requirements* was an internal Alberta Education discussion paper prepared for the Curriculum Policies Board in which Harder wrote of his purpose as:

1. Give a definition of schooling and suggest objectives that schools can meet in achieving survival competencies;
2. Identify core levels of learning along with a selective approach to electives;
3. Suggest ways of maintaining standards for quality education and organizational structures that validate a high school graduation diploma. (p. 1)

The report was done on a small scale without external input. Although it was largely ignored at the time, it has since been seen as a harbinger of what was to come. I summarized it and drew out the underlying values from its statements of belief and recommendations for action.

#### *Data Analysis from the Records*

For the records review, I focus on excerpting key ideas from archival records to build a chronological understanding of the forces that shaped values in education in Alberta during the past 70 years. I rely on induction to draw out the underlying values from positions and recommendations. The records themselves provide a stable foundation for study that includes statements of desired consequences and recommended actions to achieve those consequences.

### *Stage Three: The Interviews*

#### *Pilot Interviews.*

A pilot study using the interview schedule was conducted with one classroom teacher and one former school administrator who had taken early retirement. These interviews provided insight into (i) the length of time the interviews would take; (ii) the appropriateness of the questions; (iii) the need for further probing questions; and (iv) the identification of themes arising from the interviews. A critique of the pilot interviews was shared with my dissertation supervisor and changes were made to reflect the response I had received.

#### *Participants in the Interviews.*

In total, I interviewed 18 individuals for the study. Appendix 4 provides a complete list of interviewees. Each interviewee completed a short questionnaire before the interview to focus their thinking on the topics I wanted them to discuss. These focus questions were not discussed during the interview and did not form part of the interview guide, data, or findings. A copy is attached in Appendix 5. Two of the original 20 sample members scheduled for interviews were unable to attend at the scheduled time. Distances and timing precluded expanding the interview process.

Four of the individuals interviewed were continuing their career as classroom teachers. At the time of the interview, they had teaching experience of 17.5, 19, 30 and 34 years; two were male, two female; all currently taught at the secondary level, three at junior high and one at senior high. One of the teachers had extensive experience in elementary schools. Three were teaching in urban settings, one in a rural school.



Another five respondents had left teaching in the previous two years before they were eligible for a pension. At the time of the interview, they had experience of 23, 27, 28, 28 and 30 years as teachers; all were female; three were classroom teachers on exit, two were principals. Three taught in a semi-urban school (small town), one in an urban school (small city) and one in a major urban school (large city).

A third group of five interviewees were practising school principals with a minimum of five years' administrative experience. At the time of the interview, they had experience of 28, 28, 28, 33, and 34 years. Four were currently assigned to a school, the fifth was a district principal functioning as a consultant to other principals working from an office at the central office building, one was female, and four were male. One taught in a major urban setting, three in urban schools and one at a rural school.

The final group of respondents were four former school administrators who chose to return to classroom teaching. At the time of the interview, they had experience of 14 (in year 15), 20, 24 and 27 years. The fifth scheduled interview was cancelled because the sample member had extended his summer vacation and was unavailable. At the time of interviewing, two were teaching in urban schools, one in a semi-urban school, and the last in a rural school. All had experience in a variety of settings in more than one size of community. Three were male, one female.

#### *Data Collection in the Interviews.*

As noted above, data were collected from the individuals interviewed according to a set interview guide. Questions were designed to determine the

existence of support for specific values identified earlier and to determine if the tensions between values previously hypothesized did, in fact, exist and were motivators. A complete copy of the interview guide is included in Appendix 6. The interview allowed participants to provide anecdotal references to support observations and conclusions. Only two interviews took less than one hour; most took between 75 and 90 minutes. The interview schedule was sectioned to solicit responses on seven topics: qualities of good teachers, purpose of education, acceptable achievement, democratic equality, the teacher-student relationship, sacrifice by self and others, and system performance. Taped interviews were held in seven different communities throughout the province at the convenience and choice of the individual interviewed. Locations included private homes, schools, offices and restaurants. All were conducted in the summer of 2002.

*Data Analysis from the Interviews.*

For analysis of the interview data I returned to the “holistic” method (Van Manen, 1990, pp. 92-93) followed by a review of the transcripts, highlighting, circling and otherwise marking key phrases. I then reread each transcript using “selective reading” (Van Manen, 1990, p. 93) to determine the underlying meanings. My personal experience helped me understand the participant experiences and recognize themes. In this way I was able to determine the underlying themes and the values represented in those themes. Once the themes were developed I used a process of induction to determine specific values supported by interview participants. This again was a concept-dependent process made possible by matching the outcomes or consequences desired by the interviewees with their expressed actions

and beliefs.

*Timelines.*

The study took longer than expected to complete. Stage One and part of Stage Two and Three of this study were completed in 1997-1998. Illness and work commitments delayed me from completion and less progress was made in 1999-2001 than was planned. The data collection and analysis for Stage Three was completed in 2001-2002. Writing continued through 2003. The delay between the first data collection for the Report Card and the later data collection through interviews was over five years. During this time the reform process in education in Alberta continued. One unanticipated benefit of the delay was that all of the teachers interviewed had experienced the reforms. By using this multi-stage process I was able to understand identified teacher values in the context of their development and to examine them in light of changed norms.

*Paradigmatic Orientation of the Study*

This study focuses on teachers working in public education. Sayer (1992) said that:

Any conception of society – whether lay or scientific – which treats people as passive objects of history and mere carriers of knowledge, rather than agents or producers, is doomed to misrepresent both its object and itself. (p. 19)

Gall et al. (1996) commented on the importance of studying the beliefs of individuals within an organization when they indicated that:

Post-positivist research is grounded in the assumption that features of the social environment are constructed as interpretations by individuals and that

these interpretations tend to be transitory and situational. (p. 28)

They further indicated that a scientific realism orientation to research, which is one form of post-positivism, looks for layers of causal structures that interact to produce the observed effect. Research seeks to “discover how these causal structures work” (p. 27). Central to that research are the people being studied.

Underlying this study is the belief that teachers individually give attention to the education environment and choose how to act within that environment. Their individual values may or may not coincide with the values of the educational organization within which they work and may play a causal role in shaping that organization. As a combination of post-positive and critical realism, this study uses a multi-layered approach that reveals at least some of the forming influences of the work values of a selected group of Alberta teachers and the strength of those values in the face of newly imposed values. From that understanding, trends and probabilities for future action may be discernable.

### *Rigour*

Validity, reliability and “generalizability” are touchstones of research that together create rigour. Research is affirmed when the findings can be used to confirm, expand or influence other research. Rudestam and Newton (1992) indicated that internal validity exists when “a measure in fact measures what it purports to measure” and reliability is “the ability of a measure to produce consistent results” (p. 67). The credibility and dependability of this research is in those touchstones as they are found in the design of this study.

### *Validity*

As a three-stage study, validity arises from corroborative data. Gall et al. (1996) suggest that the “use of multiple data-collection methods, data sources” (p. 773) is “one way to eliminate biases that might result from relying exclusively on any one data-collection method” (p. 574). The findings in Stage One come from sample responses to a survey of a large population, in Stage Two from historical records and in Stage Three from interviews. The impressive consistency of findings supports claims of validity.

The audit trail enhanced validity. For each stage of the study there are distinct bodies of raw data. The teacher comments of Stage One are appended to this research. The records used in Stage Two are publicly available. The interviews from Stage Three were taped and transcribed.

The survey instrument used in Stage One was developed by an external organization with expertise in the field, the University of Alberta Population Research Laboratory. The dependability of the original information for this study was assured by the grouping and quantitative analysis being done by the University of Alberta Population Research Laboratory before it was provided to me. The records used in Stage Two are public records including government reports and formally authorized responses from the Alberta Teachers’ Association. In each case the documents were produced for the purpose of expressing the value-laden beliefs of the authors. The validating information I sought in Stage Three through interviews was assured through the use of written and electronic recording, transcriptions by an external transcriber from a completely neutral perspective, reflection and review of

the transcripts with a mind to punctuation and the meanings affected by punctuation. I checked backup notes taken during interviews on several occasions to ensure that my interpretation was accurate. One interview did not tape fully and I relied on my backup notes to determine responses. The data are confirmable. The process of narrowing down the data through steps of analysis, described elsewhere in this chapter, created a series of analysis products. The reconstruction or synthesis of those products is visible throughout the study in the tables that build sequentially through the addition of data, as it became part of the study.

### *Reliability*

Several steps in the design and implementation of the study foster reliability so that another researcher who analyzes the raw data of this study may replicate the findings. The multi-vocality of the data was intended to ensure that the target stratum within the teaching population was represented by teachers with many roles in education. Earlier in this chapter it was noted that the survey responses in Stage One were viewed by the Population Control Laboratory at the University of Alberta as representative of the teacher population of the day. The records used in Stage Two were created with widespread input and all approved by representative bodies before publication. The teachers interviewed in Stage Three represent several types of responsibility in teaching.

Subjective factors that may affect reliability include my being known to most of the interview participants in Stage Three. This may have helped to put them at ease, however, and may have contributed to the richness of the data in that the interviews were longer than projected. None of the participants was in any way

directly linked to me through my work responsibilities.

The need for clarity and logical progression in analysis was addressed by having a retired colleague from the Alberta Teachers' Association read my analysis of the transcripts. Her 31 years of classroom experience and her own experience in doctoral and other research enabled her to question and flag for my further attention any interpretations that seemed unclear. Discrepancies that appeared between findings, and between my expected findings and the actual findings, reinforce the credibility and reliability of the overall study.

Time is a relevant factor in establishing reliability. In this study, the comparison of results between two different groups six years apart (the Report Card responses and the interview responses), provide a sense of the enduring nature of the values noted. The historical records span almost 70 years. This time span provides a redundancy that supports accuracy.

#### *Generalizability*

The generalizability of the study is limited because the study is specific to teachers from a certain period, and who have been subjected to a specific reform procedure. At other times, the paramountcy of values may differ. Both the acknowledged existence of individual value systems and the transitory and situational nature of the process of values-ranking suggest that even for the same group of people, other values may take precedence in other situations. Gall et al. (1996) refer to the need for readers to test generalizability "against the specific conditions operating in each locale or situation" (p. 579).

Definitions of values vary in ways that affect the ability to generalize the

study findings to other groups. For example, accountability is identified as a value in each portion of this study. Its meaning varies from “value for money” to “maximized potential.” Even within those definitions it could be related to a demonstration of results to society in general, to a specific group in society or to the individual. Replication of this study in other jurisdictions or with younger groups of teachers or those with differing backgrounds could therefore result in different findings.

#### *Limitations and Delimitations*

In Stage Three I imposed delimitations on the sample respondents whose responses provided the validation for the analysis done earlier. I used control through selection criteria to help ensure that the situations and phenomena being discussed were the same. The group of teachers interviewed had comparable educational backgrounds and experiences and had lived through the same period of change in education. Teachers who have not experienced the pre-change conditions in education may not have a comparable referent and may see the situation in different ways. In defining the group I provided sufficient delimitation to help others determine to what extent, if any, the analysis is transferable to other contexts.

Delimitation of the analysis to values precluded a consideration of specific events or personal reflections in a way that may have provided insights into the development of individuals as teachers or even into change in education generally.

#### *Summary*

“Motherhood and apple pie” values are identifiable even in a shallow look at a situation and context. It is possible to see the surface values from the Report Card as “motherhood and apple pie” responses from teachers. I wanted to determine the



depth of those values and the willingness to live by them in the face of opposition. In the interviews I sought teacher comments about their experiences in a form that could allow me to identify teacher values, seat them in a formative context and determine the effects of pressures on those values in a changing education system.

My primary data collection methods included the analysis of survey results from the Report Card on Education to reveal values; a review of records to establish the history and context; and the use of interviews to provide validation, expansion and evidence of action arising from the values. Participants in the study often knew me by name or reputation. Although some had met me previously, none was more than a professional acquaintance. Most were strangers to me. All responded openly and frankly to questions that probed into their personal backgrounds and experiences, including their successes and failures, their work habits, their opinions of self and others, and many other aspects of their personal and professional personæ.

Data analysis was done in three separate stages over a period of six years. When the findings from the third stage were derived, a final comparison of findings from all of the data collection was made. The eight value indicators that appeared consistently throughout the study and therefore proved a reliable basis for comparison, include: trust in self and others, equality, student-centered education, purpose of schooling, accountability, foresight, synergy, and underlying ideology.

In this chapter I have explained the study design and clarified how values were identified and imputed. Chapter Four will provide a more detailed presentation of the findings from the Report Card comments of 1996 and from the records review

that provided the historical setting for identified values. Chapter Five will present the findings from the interviews.

## Chapter Four

### *Findings: Stages One and Two*

#### *Key Education Values in Alberta*

I undertook this research to determine what I could learn about the impact of the governmental pressures for change in public education upon the values of teachers in Alberta in the 1990s. To identify those values I examined perspectives from the past. By looking at government-initiated reports and briefs on education and parallel briefs, reports and records from the Alberta Teachers' Association, I identified some of the prevailing values in education at the time each record was produced and the historical context of some current values. I looked for the values in the objectives set or recommended in government-initiated reports. I also looked for values accepted, opposed, proposed or defended by teachers. Then I examined teacher statements from the early stages in the government-initiated change process. My analysis revealed a conflict in values and some areas of probable tension. The findings are presented in this chapter in two parts. Part I outlines the values found in the government-initiated reports and records. Part II outlines the teachers' values deduced from the input, responses or comments aligned with the reports from Part I. Part III is an identification of the values expressed by teachers early in the change movement initiated by the Conservative government of Premier Ralph Klein. It is based on teachers' responses to a comment about education made by the Premier.

*Part I: Value Expectations as Seen in a Series of Government-initiated Reports*

Education in Canada is a provincial responsibility (Constitution Act, 1867, Section 93). Upon the creation of the province in 1905, the Government of the Province of Alberta established a coordinated education system sharing common goals across the province. Varying levels of centralized control and coordination of Alberta's unique education system can be detected in a series of government-initiated reports that express provincial goals and underlying principles and values. I examined four major reports and a philosophical statement of goals. These documents were the report of Deputy Minister of Education G.W. Gorman in the *Twenty-ninth Annual Report of the Department of Education, 1934*, (Gorman, 1935); the *Report of the Royal Commission on Education, 1959* (Royal Commission on Education & Cameron, 1959), chaired by Senator Donald Cameron (the Cameron Commission and the Cameron Report); *A Choice of Futures, a Future of Choices: Report of the Commission on Educational Planning* (Commission on Educational Planning & Worth, 1972) chaired by Dr. Walter Worth (the Worth Commission and the Worth Report); the *Goals of Basic Education* (Alberta Education, 1978) approved by the legislature in 1978, and lastly, a report by Dr. J.D. Harder of the (then) Alberta Department of Education in 1977 called *Alberta Education and Diploma Requirements* (Harder, 1977) known as the Harder Report).

*The Gorman Report (Annual Report of the Department of Education, 1935)*

When Alberta became a province in 1905, the first premier, the Hon. A.C. Rutherford, also served as Minister of Education and the Provincial Department of Education had eight employees. At the time, although there were 602 organized

school districts, many operated only one-room schools. Most teachers were poorly educated; many had not even completed high school. Although Alberta was in a period of rapid growth, the state of education was visible in the report of G.W. Gorman, Deputy Minister for Education in Alberta. In the report of the Department to the legislature, he provided a demographic update for 1934 showing an increase of thirty-three new school districts in that one year, outlining other events in education and expressing direct concern for the necessary improvement of rural schools, the high costs, student attendance rates and teacher qualifications.

The Gorman Report was a uniquely clear statement of government intent to change the education system. No other government reports on education that I have seen have given as straightforward a statement of purpose for education and a plan to fulfill it. Gorman's report revealed both the level of his influence on the education system of the day and a government ministry that was making a conscious shift in educational philosophy under the direction of (or at least in full knowledge of) the government of the day.

Gorman set out to create change despite the economic depression of the day and the decline in resources available for schools. He reported a reduction in overall school expenditures of \$1,575,969 or 12% of the total expenditures on education of the previous year. A focus on raising average attendance had achieved a "gratifying figure of 90.18%" (Gorman, 1935, p. 12) average monthly attendance, teacher salaries accounted for one half the total expenditures, and Gorman reported that the average teaching salary in Alberta, although declining, was high compared to other provinces. In 1934, 3,766 schools were operating and in 1932-33, the year for which

statistics were available, they averaged 192.7 operating days. High school enrolments were climbing and because the “cost per pupil in the high schools is at least twice as high as for the elementary school” he saw a need for “a much larger budget per pupil” (Gorman, 1935, p. 12). He concluded that he saw the need to provide “equal opportunity to all and distributing the burden of school costs in an equitable manner” (Gorman, p. 14).

As noted earlier, Mazurek (1999) described Gorman’s report as signalling the birth of a new era in Alberta related to thinking about education. Gorman noted that education had “been based too much upon the need for obtaining a living” (1935, p. 13) and recognized the need to develop the potential of children at each stage as part of a life process of learning. As he put it:

Mental attainments, subjects taught, and methods employed are means rather than ends. Greater stress must be laid on the cultivation of personal and social character. The supreme motives in any system of education are character building and the enjoyment of a full life. (1935, p. 13)

To this end, he encouraged the teaching of the habit of study by capturing the interest of the child in learning. He noted that committees were in progress revamping the course of study for both elementary and secondary schools. He also noted the increasing qualifications required for teachers. In his words there was “little doubt that eventually all candidates for a teaching certificate will have a minimum academic standing of graduation from Grade XII” (1935, p. 14).

Gorman’s short description of what education should be doing reveals several personally or socially preferable beliefs in an end-state of existence for both teachers

and students or modes of conduct for teaching. Values, for the purpose of this study, were defined in Chapter Three “as motivating beliefs that initiate or reinforce action.” Table 7 identifies the values underlying the recommendations of the Gorman Report, the values that, at least in part, drove teachers’ actions in the following years.

**Table 7: Values in the Gorman Report**

<b>Values and indicators</b>
Belief in teachers - confidence in ability to improve themselves - support for increased qualifications
Belief in educating the whole student - need to maximize potential at each stage - broad-based learning over career preparation - responsibility for cultivation of personal and social character of students
Belief in education as a desire to learn - importance of motivating and capturing interest
Belief in equal opportunity - need to provide equal access for rural and urban students
Fair return for the dollar

Many of the changes in education, initiated by Gorman, occurred. The Gorman Report marked the beginning of a provincial government-driven move toward “equal opportunity” and a broadly based education that appeared evident in later reports. For instance, teacher qualifications increased rapidly. King and Peart (1992) reported that, by 1940, Alberta required all secondary teachers to have a Bachelor of Arts degree plus one year of post-secondary training. Ell (2002) reported that in 1945 Alberta was the first province to close the teacher education programs offered at “Normal Schools” (2002, p. 36) in favour of Bachelor of Education degrees at universities. Gorman’s main recommendations called for a significant role

for the state in public education, a move away from employment-oriented education and the provision of opportunities for students beyond what parents would provide. It saw education as a way to level many socio-economic and socio-cultural differences. Mazurek (1999) identified the Gorman- initiated changes as part of the progressive education movement. In his words, “The years 1935-40 witnessed the creation of a school system that, on the surface, was unrecognizable from the perspective of what existed before” (Mazurek, p. 8). In his opinion, though, progressive education was not fully implemented in Alberta because “a great number of teachers did not buy in” (Mazurek, p. 8). Gorman instituted a shift from the control of education by parents to a bureaucracy. The minority report of the Cameron Commission of 1959 that is to be discussed later in this chapter sought to reverse this trend. Contemporary critics such as Lawton (1995) also called for changes in the structure of education that weaken the control of the bureaucracy.

*The Cameron Report (Report of the Royal Commission on Education, 1959)*

The first full Royal Commission on Education in Alberta reported in 1959. Its report, which became known as the Cameron Report after Commission chair Senator Donald Cameron, was the first serious, comprehensive review of the education system in Alberta by a commission. The Cameron Commission was determined to receive comprehensive input from interested citizens and groups throughout the province. It received 189 briefs and 85 other submissions, heard 600 citizens propose 5,000 recommendations, assembled a research library, solicited information on all aspects of the purposes and activities in education, conducted interviews with both individuals and organized groups, contracted research to fill gaps in relevant



information, and met with similar commission teams working in Manitoba and British Columbia. After nearly two years of study, in November 1959 the Cameron Commission presented a report that included 280 recommendations to the government. The Commission argued that the primary objective of schools is larger than its component parts; schools “must produce students who are capable of courageous individual conviction” (1959, p. 44). The Commission concluded “no one set of ends can be presented as the will of a majority of the public” (1959, p. 44). Thus, it recommended a continued but altered mix of increased local and decreased central control of education including elementary, secondary, and community college programs, under one government education department. Accredited schools would have the power to exempt students from departmental exams; however, these exams would remain in place for grades 9 and 12. The goals of education would be set by society. The report, moreover, expressed a statement of belief in the ability of teachers to meet educational goals and recommended that curriculum guides be confined to matters of objectives and content; the choice of methodology was to be left to the expertise of the teacher.

The report further stated that the solution to teacher shortages lay in the “fundamental problem of upgrading the profession” (1959, p. 184). It recommended, as well, numerous changes in working conditions for teachers, including holding down class sizes, increasing instructional time, employing teachers’ assistants, providing more pre-service and in-service training, job security and tenure, and salary and benefits improvements. Recognition was given to the need to assist teachers with meeting individual student differences. Special education needs were

acknowledged to be a provincial responsibility. Other needs of children were recognized in the recommendations to upgrade libraries, to include three years of vocational courses encompassing up to 50% of a high school program, to develop two high school streams, matriculation and non-matriculation, to increase guidance and counselling services, and to create programs for children leaving school at 16 years of age or after grade 10. A general recommendation was to increase tolerance of differences, especially in the matter of "Indian" education.

The Commission showed much respect for teachers by virtue of recommendations 155 and 156 (1959, p. 192, 306) that called for the ATA to be given a stronger voice for the professional association in matters related to measures of teacher competence and as an advisor to the government on educational matters.

The Cameron Report was endorsed by five of the six Commissioners who rejected the opinions of the dissenting member's report and distanced themselves from that member's minority report by including it within the final document as a separate report. They disagreed with its attributions to them and believed it was influenced by an overly simplified philosophical perspective. The author of the majority report acknowledged that many ideologies have influenced education in Alberta and believed that the education system gained strength by drawing from differing ideological perspectives. Still, the recommendations of the majority reflect a rather traditional approach to education. The minority member, however, viewed education as a contest for control between "traditionalist or essentialist on the one hand and the progressivist or modern on the other" (1959, p. 361). The minority Commissioner charged that progressivism has "run rampant in Alberta," that the

rights of parents have been forgotten; that progressivism is responsible for many changes from traditional education. That Commission member recommended the return of education in Alberta to the 4 X 4 system in which local school boards and the Home and School Association in each 16-square-mile district have “authority over matters such as courses of study, curriculum, texts, and teaching methods” (Report of the Royal Commission on Education, p. 289). The Commission rejected the minority report as being a distortion full of misunderstandings and misinterpretations that would create chaos in education if accepted.

The rejection of the minority position by the majority of the Commissioners reflects a clear choice of values for education in the face of opposition to those values. While the Cameron Report continues to reflect many traditional, conservative values it also shows continued support for many of the values Gorman espoused in his 1935 report. Table 8 shows the overlap of values between the two reports.

**Table 8: A comparison of values between the Gorman Report and the Cameron Report**

<b>Values in the Gorman Report</b>	<b>Values in the Cameron Report</b>
Belief in teachers - confidence in ability to improve themselves - support for increased qualifications	Trust in teachers individually and collectively
Belief in educating the whole student - need to maximize potential at each stage - broad based learning over career preparation - responsibility for cultivation of personal and social character of students	Belief in maximizing individual potential - meet varied needs in society - independent thinking skills
Belief in education as a desire to learn - need to motivate and capture interest	
Belief in equal opportunity - need to provide equal access for rural and urban students	Belief in equal opportunity for students - tolerance - respect for various philosophies
Fair return for the dollar	Belief in accountability - accreditation and exams

Mazurek noted that the Cameron report described “a school system that was ‘traditional’ in its conservative ‘underpinning, content and pedagogy’” (1999, p. 10).

Ell (2002) also noted that:

It is not easy to trace Alberta's subsequent educational reforms directly to the *Cameron Report*. However, there is little doubt that the report served as a vast reservoir of proposed educational improvements and allowed the government to bring in selected reforms according to its own timing over the next decade. Among other things, the commission likely encouraged the development of the province's college system. (2002, p. 43)

Although not all of the Commission’s recommendations were adopted by the government of the day, its influence on policy development during the ensuing years is evident in matters such as the split between matriculation and vocational schools, the continued reliance on examinations and the increased standards for certification of teachers. The report, however, placed a great deal of emphasis on individual needs and showed the rift between liberal and conservative values with respect to education in Alberta.

*The Worth Report (A Choice of Futures, a Future of Choices: the Report of the Commission on Educational Planning, 1972)*

The report of the Worth Commission was presented to a Conservative provincial government on June 16, 1972. It became known almost instantly and universally as “The Worth Report.” The philosophical conflict between politically liberal and conservative views over values in education in Alberta continued to be

visible in the Worth Report. The Worth Commission was appointed by a Social Credit Government in 1969 as the Cabinet Commission on Education Planning directed to review the entire educational system in Alberta. In its report, the Commission tried to answer the questions, "What is to be our vision for education in Alberta? How is it to be achieved? By and for whom?" (1972, p. 36).

In his introduction and the frontispiece to the report, Worth acknowledged the valuable contributions of each Commission member and the fact that "each may take exception to certain aspects of it." The report acknowledged both the strong link between teachers and schooling and the links between education and society. We can learn about the education values of the day from both the recommendations of the report that were accepted and those that were rejected.

The Worth Report observed that schooling had been influenced by a residual theory, that is, school did whatever was left to it by church, family and other agencies. The Worth Commission saw the primary goal of education as one of developing "socially responsible individualization" (1972, p. 45) instead of transmitting traditional aspects of culture. The report proposed a shift from basic education as 12 years of schooling for behavioural change through abstract learning, to four planned major functions: "individualization, preservation, anticipation and motivation" (1972, p. 52). The Commission stressed a particular requirement to address the needs of the poor and to target resources to meet those needs. It recognized that the education system is a social institution within which "Inevitably, it [education] seems to involve making more judgements on the basis of value than fact" (1972, p. 65). The Worth Commission attempted to project the society of the

future and predicated the report on a projected change in societal values toward the “worth and well-being of each person; and toward an emphasis on values referring to the social good or the welfare of mankind” (1972, p. 6). The report also advocated widespread public involvement in setting goals and objectives to guide implementation by education professionals, thereby limiting goal-setting as a responsibility of provincial authorities to what others at lower levels (the school or the local authority) could not do effectively. The Worth Report reflected both a high level of trust in the education professional and a need for broad involvement in educational decision-making from the community.

The Commission recommended immediate attention to “the need for equity and the need for momentum” (1972, p. 299) because the Commissioners saw rapid change coming in society and argued that the need for equity would be heightened by a need to increase the learning content in order to keep up with progress and pressure as the combined wisdom of the generation in power became outdated. The report noted that:

Institutions for schooling have acted as selective agencies that tend to pass on the advantages enjoyed by the affluent to their children alone. For this reason, the pursuit of equity will be strongly resisted by those who have the edge and want to keep it, and by those who haven't got it but want it. (1972, p. 299)

Despite noting the difficulty of bringing about educational change as “we are intervening in a complex social system” (1972, p. 300), the Commission encouraged quick action since educational growth is not linear but rather is carried along as “a sort of synergy takes over” (1972, p. 300). It proposed ten recommendations for

immediate attention:

- Provision of universal opportunity and selective experience in early education;
- Abolition of Grade XII departmental exams;
- Inauguration of the Alberta Academy, Early Ed [sic] and the supporting ACCESS Network;
- Extension of opportunities in further education;
- Modification in certification requirements for teachers in early and basic education;
- Reorganization of the Department of Education and Department of Advanced Education;
- Revision of funding arrangements for all levels of recurrent education, including provision for life experience and student assistance;
- Modification of the school year and of procedures for the transfer of credits;
- Reduction in the length of all general and most professional first - degree programs in universities;
- Preparation of an integrated Provincial Development Plan. (1972, p. 300)

In effect, the Worth Commission recommended no less than a complete redefinition of education as an individualized right of citizenship that would help “each person to find greater self-fulfilment through the layering of formal studies, gainful employment and leisure activities” (1972, p. 300) so that individuals could

respond better to shifting labour trends and be given greater freedom of choice between work and further education. The Worth Commission stated its preference for “humanist values” in a “person-centred society” (1972, p. 301) over what they saw and rejected as the alternative, “a second-phase industrial society” (1972, pp. 31-32).

It was the view of the Commission that “To change schooling is to change teachers” (1972, p. 237). It proposed a complex structure that would create differentiated staffing while giving professional teachers, both individually and collectively, greater voice in the management of education. The authors did not believe that differentiated staffing would be a cost-cutting measure, but they did foresee achieving considerable savings through the “extensive utilization of volunteer aides [who] could relieve professional teachers of non-instructional duties...supplement the work of teachers, and thereby make possible the personalized learning” (1972, p. 241) also recommended in the report. It was further argued that this system would result in greater accountability as role expectations were made clear; in happier, self-fulfilled teachers because they would no longer be expected to be everything to everybody; and in increased autonomy for the learner because all education would be based on learner needs.

In the Worth Report there is a “deliberate selection of a set of dominant values and beliefs that direct the activities of society and the lives of its members” (1972, p. 30). Specifically, Worth and his co-writers advocated that the “person-centered society’s humanist values support a more flexible structure, which better enables the organization to recognize, adjust and adapt to changing conditions”



(1972, p. 30). Table 9 summarizes the values and indicators of those values as found in the report.

**Table 9: Values in Worth Commission Report Recommendations**

Value	Indicators
Individualization	- self-actualization/ autonomous individuals/ personal autonomy - individualized instruction/ personalization
Democratic rights	- claim to an education arises from citizenship/ equity - widespread involvement in goal setting/participatory planning/ participation - redistribution of educational opportunities/ quality - selective education/ early education/ diversity
Synergy	- attempt to create momentum from early action/ efficiency - education as part of a complex system
Trust	- belief in abilities of teachers - belief in local autonomy - ethical discretion
Openness to change	- redefinition of education/ lifelong learning/ adaptability/ context
Foresight	- planning/ futures perspective/ coordination
Humanism	- belief in person-centred society/ diversity - social competence - creative capacity - concern for welfare of mankind

As Dr. Worth predicted, the report and its recommendations did not meet with universal approval. One area of controversy was the shift in the goals of education (1972, pp. 45-49) that the report advocated. Fennel (1985) reported that although the Legislative Assembly adopted in principle the goals of education (Alberta Legislature, 1973, p.1536) advanced by Dr. Worth, the government caucus rejected the goals of the Worth report as too generalized, too liberal, disparaging of the work ethic, lacking an ethical base, and inconsistent with a Conservative Party educational philosophy heavily influenced by the business community. (1985, p. 78)

In addition to rejecting the report's goals, and therefore much of the report, government legislators chose to be directly involved in setting goals for education.

Nevertheless, Mazurek contended that the report documented the “full extent to which the new educational ethos and practices had permeated public schooling” (1972, p. 12). He saw too the concurrent beginning of a decline in the share of the provincial budget allocated to education and the emergence of dissatisfaction with public education among government members based on unfulfilled expectations held by the public and especially the business community.

*The Goals of Basic Education for Alberta*

Publication of the Worth Report focused discussion in the education community on the goals of education and initiated the creation of a formal goal statement by the government. Fennel (1985, p. 124) reported that the formal process began internally in the Department of Education in 1973. A proposed set of goals was developed and presented to Minister of Education Hyndman a year later. The Minister arranged to have the goal statement reviewed by the Cabinet and the Progressive Conservative Caucus. The 1975 election brought a change in Minister and renewed attention to the control of education. Fennel reported that the government’s conclusion was that:

The educational community was too influential in the direction in which education was moving. Educators were perceived to lack understanding of what the needs of society were generally, and what the public demanded of education specifically. (1985, p. 82)

Accordingly, direct legislator involvement in educational policy making increased.

A 1976 motion in the legislature called for “establishing the basic goals of education in this province and also...setting up educational priorities” (Alberta

Legislature, 1976, p. 955). Debate in the legislature advocated “a return to an emphasis on basics in education” (Fennell, 1985, p. 84). He reported that in the February 24, 1977 Speech From the Throne, the establishment of the goals was announced as a priority and in 1978 the legislative assembly approved *The Goals of Basic Education for Alberta*. Fennell identified the following five themes in media reports about the goals:

The action by the Legislature to approve the goal statement – a responsibility previously left to the Department of Education; the separation of the goals of schooling from the goals of education; an increased emphasis on the redefinition of basics; emphasis on the shared role for the education of children between schools and the community; and the implications of the goals for curriculum. (1985, pp. 95-96)

The approved version read, “This statement of goals is to direct education for grades 1 through 12 in Alberta schools. *It is the basis from which specific objectives for various subjects and grades shall be developed*” [emphasis added]. The goals were printed at the front of elementary, junior high and senior high school handbooks and actively used to direct educational decision-making for many years. When the *School Act (1988)* was revised it gave power to the Minister to adopt goals for education.

The values underlying the Goals of Basic Education for Alberta, as approved by the legislature, bore only a slight resemblance to the values espoused by the Worth Report. Indeed, the perspective is different on all the major values. Although individual development was prized in both, in the Worth Report it was self-directed

individual development, whereas in the goals statement, individuals were to be assisted in the development of specified targets. In the Worth Report, democratic rights were emphasized, whereas in the goals statement the emphasis was on democratic responsibilities. For the Worth Report, education was part of the synergy within a complex system. In contrast, the goals statement portrayed education as a subordinate part of the system and complementary to the home and family. In the Worth Report trust was centered on the individual's ethics, on teachers and on an ability to make situational decisions. In the goals statement, trust was centered in the guidance of the family. The Worth Report valued openness to change; the goals statement valued tradition. The Worth Report valued planning and foresight, the goals statement was focused on basic knowledge and skills. The Worth Report valued humanistic development of human abilities; the goals statement focused on knowing one's limitations. Table 10 provides a comparison of the two sets of values embedded in the two documents.

**Table 10: Comparison of values in recommendations of the Worth Commission Report, 1972 and the Goals of Basic Education for Alberta, 1978**

<b>Values and Indicators: Worth Report</b>	<b>Value and Indicators: Goals of Basic Education</b>
Individualization - self-actualization/ autonomous individuals/ personal autonomy - individualized instruction/ personalization	Individual development - desire for life-long learning - basic knowledge and competencies - objective acquisition and application of information - knowledge, skills, attitudes, and habits for physical, mental and social well-being - knowledge, skills, attitudes, and habits to respond to opportunities and expectations of work
Democratic rights - claim to an education arises from citizenship/ equity - widespread involvement in goal setting/participatory planning/ participation - redistribution of educational opportunities/ quality - selective education/ early education/ diversity	Manage democratic responsibilities - effective finance utilization - constructive involvement in community - interest in culture and recreation

Synergy of education within a complex system - attempt to create momentum from early action/ efficiency - education as part of a complex system	Education as a subordinate influence - complementary to the home
Trust - belief in abilities of teachers - belief in local autonomy - ethical discretion	Trust - belief in paramount role of the home and family
Openness to change - redefinition of education/ lifelong learning/ adaptability/ context	Appreciate tradition - understand and respond to change
Foresight - planning/ futures perspective/ coordination	Focus on basic knowledge and skills
Humanism - belief in person-centred society/ diversity - social competence - creative capacity - concern for welfare of mankind	Conservatism - responsibility to community - realistic appraisal of capabilities and limitations - ability to get along with others - respect for authority, property, rights of others - active citizenship locally and beyond

The goals statement was prominent in government publications through to 1993 when a new Conservative government was elected. Although the approval of the goals statement has never been rescinded by the legislature, in 1994 it simply disappeared from all handbooks without comment by the government.

During the development of the goals statement, the government formulated a list of issues that it felt would be addressed in a statement of goals. One of those issues was “Reduced public confidence in the results achieved by teachers and the educational system” (Fennell, 1985, p. 117). No rationale for this issue was ever developed and when Fennell researched the topic of the creation of the goals statement he learned that the key participants in the development of the goals had not seen reduced public confidence as an issue (p. 120).

*The Harder Report (Alberta Education and Diploma Requirements, 1977)*

A Department of Education official identified as a key participant in the development of the Goals of Basic Education was Dr. D.J. Harder, Associate

Director of Curriculum (Fennell, 1985, p.103). In 1977, again allegedly because of the “general dissatisfaction of the public” with the education system (Mazurek, 1999, p. 14), Harder produced a report internal to Alberta Education but containing recommendations for change, *Alberta Education and Diploma Requirements*.

Mazurek noted that the allegations were not justified in the report or in the attention given to it. In fact, he said it attracted the attention only of “the academic community and activists within the Alberta Teachers’ Association” (Mazurek, p. 14). Still, he described it as the beginning of orderly, planned change (that began with the attention to curriculum change) over the next two decades; change that accelerated in the 1990s. The report was primarily a curriculum document but the recommendations included delimiting the role of the school, systematic monitoring, checkpoints, competency levels, an increased number of specified compulsory courses, and limited inclusion of locally designed and approved courses (Mazurek, p. 14).

Harder proposed delimitation of the role of the school to shift greater responsibility into the hands of parents for social development of the child, the use of curricula based on cumulative competencies and knowledge skills, and mandatory competency in personal development targeted at preparing the student for the world of work. He recommended systematic monitoring in all school systems, evaluation checkpoints at grades 2, 5, 8, and 11, grade retention of students until competency standards were met, compulsory elective courses, limited ability for local school boards or schools to design and approve courses, and increased accountability for teacher education faculties because, in his view, the current programs do not produce

teachers able to meet the new demands. In addition, Harder saw a need to separate the “Goals of Basic Education” into “Goals of Education” and “Goals of Schooling” to make a more accountable system, to ensure courses conform to the objectives of education, and to include compulsory courses in second languages, religion and the importance of the family. He emphasized the inclusion of social responsibility and practical arts courses.

The underlying values in the Harder Report extol the supremacy of the parent, the family and society over the needs of the individual; accountability; education as preparation for work; centralized control; limited respect for the needs of the individual; and limited respect for the abilities of teachers. The report not only recommended extensive testing for students but extensive monitoring of both teacher training and practice. It also recommended that “Teacher education faculties be challenged to meet the same criteria for accountability at their level as the schools are” (p. 35). The stated implication was that education faculties would have to “revamp their programs to meet the requirements” (p. 42). Table 11 provides an overview of values and value indicators found in the recommendations of the Harder Report.

**Table 11**

<b>Value and Indicators: Harder Report 1977</b>
Parent supremacy - responsibility for social development of the child
Importance of family over individual - compulsory courses in religion and importance of the family
Importance of business in society - education as preparation for the world of work - inclusion of courses in social responsibility and practical arts
Accountability - outcomes achievement - cumulative competencies and knowledge skills - retardation of students until competent
Distrust of teachers - delimited role for schooling - systematic monitoring and accountability
Distrust of teacher education programs - accountability comparable to schools - need to revamp programs to meet requirements
Centralized control - limited influence school boards in courses - defined educational program

The Harder Report called for a limited role for schooling in the development of people. It envisioned an education system for which the goals, objectives, priorities and values are set outside the school. The values represented in the Harder Report are even more conservative than those in the Goals of Basic Education, which made it a marked departure from the Gorman Report, the Cameron Report and the Worth Report.



*Part II: The ATA Articulation of Teacher Values in Alberta*

The Alberta Teachers' Association (ATA) operates with a democratic approach to determining the view of the majority to set policy and govern actions of the ATA. Teachers have created an organizational structure that divides the province for representation at an annual assembly that acts as the parliament of the ATA at annual and emergent special assemblies. Throughout the year the ATA is governed by a Provincial Executive Council that includes district representatives elected regionally, a President and two Vice-presidents elected provincially. Administrative work and day-to-day operations of the ATA are carried out by the Executive Secretary and Executive Assistants. This has been the structure of the ATA since its inception in 1918 as the Alberta Teachers' Alliance. This structure allows a high level of member input to policy decisions and a system of input for member concerns and questions throughout the year, either directly or through district representatives or locals. Like any other group that is thousands strong, teachers in Alberta hold views that include the whole spectrum. Besides the Annual Assemblies, the ATA also seeks input through four meetings of Local Presidents each year, a summer leadership conference and special meetings each spring and fall for both professional development and bargaining. The ATA website includes a brief history of the ATA in which it notes the establishment of a legal foundation for the ATA in 1935 and work done thereafter to improve the working conditions of teachers and the development of education as a profession ([www.teachers.ab.ca/about/history](http://www.teachers.ab.ca/about/history), retrieved July 27, 2003). By the 1950s, the ATA was ready to provide information as an organized profession.

*Teacher Input to the Cameron Commission*

Teacher input to the Royal Commission on Education, known as the Cameron Commission, was extensive. At the 1957 ATA Annual General Meeting, in response to learning that a commission on education might be appointed, delegates had endorsed full cooperation and assistance for the proposed Royal Commission, including making available to it all policies, reports, and records of the ATA, and preparation of a major submission as well as requesting all Locals of the ATA to cooperate. ATA records and documents were made available and the ATA encouraged members to cooperate fully with the Royal Commission. The Commission reported that, for one research report it prepared, 99.2 % of the teaching population completed and returned a questionnaire, thus providing an almost total picture of the characteristics of the teaching force in 1958 (p. 338). The ATA brief to the Royal Commission was presented as a 198-page volume. It reflected total support by the ATA for a complete review of the education system. The seven-part brief, prepared by a committee appointed by the Provincial Executive Council, made numerous recommendations in a far-reaching, comprehensive review that revealed much about Alberta schools of the time and about the aspirations of teachers who taught in them.

ATA recommendations included the establishment of a government advisory committee to determine the will of society regarding the objectives of education. The ATA proposed that, once the goals were agreed on, professional educators should be responsible for their implementation and achievement.

The Brief presented six principles advanced by teachers as objectives of public education. They were:

1. That, as far as possible, every child, no matter what his (*sic*) geographic location, should have the right to educational opportunities consistent with his ability, needs and interests.
2. That it is the democratic right of every child to have educational opportunities sufficiently differentiated to achieve results consistent with Principle 1 above.
3. That the basic educational program of every child should provide for the development of skills (reading, language, mathematical); attitudes (respect for the worth of the individual, loyalty to such institutions as the family and the nation, honesty, truthfulness); appreciations (in such cultural fields as music, drama, art and literature).
4. That every child should have his curiosity aroused by a stimulating school environment and that he should be taught to think clearly within the limits imposed by ability.
5. That the development of character and citizenship is implicit in the educational aims of elementary and secondary schools.
6. That, while they cannot be expected to train directly for trades and professions, elementary and secondary schools should provide opportunities for exploratory vocational experiences and guidance. (p. 10)

The ATA made 164 recommendations related to various aspects of education that represented concerns related to the good of the public, students, and teachers.

Nine recommendations related to openness to change in the structure of the system, including review of subject-matter placement, meeting individual differences, organization of junior high schools, capacity of junior high schools to meet student needs, optimum and maximum size of high schools, function of high schools, matching instruction to pupil readiness, use of the semester system, and review of various teaching techniques (including the enterprise system).

The ATA expressed confidence in having centralized authority over education. It also supported local involvement in decision-making through strong, elected school boards and openness to consideration of the merits of administration by locally employed superintendents, a goal of trustees at the time.

The ATA called for establishing higher standards for teachers and for instruction; strengthening the usefulness of external exams by making improvements in validity, reliability, objectivity and comparability; making concentrated efforts to hold all students in school as long as they are benefiting, determining why students drop out, eliminating economic and cultural barriers to education; and increasing public participation in decision-making.

The ATA brief showed strong belief in the value of an education that meets individual needs. Its recommendations encompassed the diversification of programs, meeting cultural differences, lowering class sizes, paying increased attention to school readiness and primary years, mid-year promotion, enrichment, providing both opportunity rooms and integration for special needs students, devoting attention to the gifted, and attending to the physical, mental, emotional and social development of children. In support of providing equal opportunity for rural and urban students,

the ATA recommended increased opportunities for students to attend summer school or for rural students to access necessary subjects in urban schools. Six recommendations reflected concern about the need to alleviate hidden financial constraints that confront students by paying them or providing financial support for students to pay them.

Few ATA recommendations addressed the personal benefit of teachers. Rather, priority was given to the improvement of education overall. Attention was placed on the need to deal with the teacher shortage, on high certification standards, on high entrance qualification levels for teacher education programs, and on attention to the recruitment and retention of teachers. Some recommendations, had they been implemented, would have provided direct benefits to teachers. These included:

37. Salaries of teachers should be made comparable to those of other professions with similar training; especially with respect to maximum salaries. (p. 146)

134. Make living and working conditions attractive for their teachers in order to attract and hold teachers. (p. 155)

141. Additional curricular and extra-curricular supervisory positions should be established. (p. 156)

Chapter 3 of the ATA brief opened with the words, "No aspect of education can be properly considered apart from the society it serves" (p. 13). It thereafter addressed major issues of the day including labour supply and demand, demographic and geographic labour trends, changes in the economy of Canada and Alberta, and

concluded with an assessment of general roles of Alberta schools in meeting changes in Canadian manpower needs. The brief emphasized that schools could not replace the need for industry and post-secondary commitment to vocational training or to meet the out-of-school need for community guidance services. They could only cooperate with such services. One important role of the schools, it was suggested, was participation in the “professionalizing” of technical occupations to make them more attractive for Alberta youth by increasing the value attributed to them by society. Released at a time of rapid economic growth, when the political and scientific race between the superpowers was heightening, the brief called for a broad perspective when considering the demands of industry by stating that:

The ultimate source of the moral authority of the profession of education resides more in the commonly shared democratic values of Canadian culture than in the shifting and sometimes conflicting demands of the economic world, important as these are. (p. 13)

The brief noted a conflict between the traditional, meritocratic, middle-class values, incentives and motivations underlying educational policy-making of the day, and the post-war ability of individuals to attain symbols of success without superior talent or extended education.

The ATA continued to work closely with government after the Cameron Report was released. In a condensation of the report for members, the ATA position was clear:

If we accept that the Cameron Report is the most significant contribution to the cause of education in this province, we must not leave to chance or to

posterity the implementation of many of the recommendations found in the report. (Clarke, 1960, p. 8)

Table 12 shows the values running through the brief presented to the Cameron Commission by the Alberta Teachers' Association. Priority was on the value of education to society and to students as individuals.

**Table 12: Values of teachers drawn from the ATA Submission to the Cameron Commission**

<b>Value</b>	<b>Indicator as drawn from recommendations in the ATA brief</b>
Education	Exercise perspective in meeting the demands of industry given the availability of high wages without higher learning or high skills High certification standards High entrance qualification levels for teacher education Attention to recruitment and retention of teachers
Worth of the individual	Meeting individual differences Development of skills including academic skills and artistic appreciation Development of character including honesty, truthfulness Provision of exploratory vocational experiences "Professionalizing" of technician occupations
Democracy	Recognition of democratic values of Canadian culture underpinning of education
Equal opportunity	Elimination of differences in urban and rural educational opportunities Elimination of barriers to education Diversify programs to meet cultural differences and to meet physical, mental, emotional and social development needs Elimination of hidden financial constraints for students
Trust	Faith in the ability of teachers to meet the demands of individuals and of society Confidence in the centralized authority Local involvement in decision-making
Accountability	External exams Higher standards for instruction Higher standards for teachers
Loyalty	Loyalty to nation Development of loyalty to family
Teaching	Lowering class sizes Salaries comparable to those of other professions Attractive living and working conditions Additional curricular and extra-curricular supervisory positions
Openness to change	Recommendations for change in the structure of the system including review of subject placement, organization of junior high schools, capacity and size of schools, matching instruction to student readiness, function of high schools, use of semester system, use of various teaching techniques
Synergy/cooperation	Recognition of the link between education and society Recognition of the need for cooperation with, but not replacement of, vocational training and community guidance services

The ATA input showed a mix of values reflective of a developing organization concerned not only with betterment of the standards of its members and their working conditions but also with the needs of students.

*Teacher Response to the Worth Commission Recommendations*

The ATA responded to the Worth Report in two stages. The first stage, in October, 1972, was a response to the “Top Ten” recommendations of the report (Worth, p. 300) and then in a second stage, in February, 1973, the ATA responded to the report as a whole. At that time, both response submissions were published in a special publication distributed to the general membership of the ATA. In its initial response, the ATA acknowledged support for much of what was in the report. The ATA appreciated the report’s application of foresight and planning proposals for the future. The ATA noted too that Worth was calling for a massive shift in values to create a person-centered society. The assumptions and values of the ATA at the time are apparent in the following general comment:

Since, in general it is not the job of the school to impose values, however determined, but to encourage the process of valuing, the job of education seems to be what it has always been, namely to produce a person who can think critically and be open-minded and humane. (ATA. 1973, First Submission, p. 1)

The ATA response appeared to suggest that teachers at one and the same time accepted the values of openness, critical thinking and humanism as central to education and thereby imposed those values on themselves while they accepted the right of others to subscribe to their own set of values and perhaps reach different



value decisions.

The initial response also advanced the value of “universal opportunity” and expressed faith in the abilities of teachers to provide better educational service than the public (p. 2). The ATA also opened the door to increased accountability, going so far as to declare “that the solution to unprofessional or incompetent practice lies in delegating the responsibility for certification to The Alberta Teachers’ Association” (p. 5).

The second submission expanded ATA support for equal opportunity for all students, regardless of their physical or mental condition, to the point of supporting the stance of inclusive education by moving handicapped children out of schooling at home into classes in schools and, moreover, “that most such classes be located in regular schools where handicapped children might be integrated into regular classes as much as possible” (p. 3). This was consistent with the general ATA support of the Commission’s recommendation that education “enhance creative capacity and personal autonomy” (p. 4) in all students and its support for “equality of educational opportunities between city and non-city areas and free choice of schools under the dual educational system” (p. 3).

The ATA believed it was essential to use foresight in determining the purposes and goals of schools. Thus, the second response said, “Unless the purposes of the school are clear, developing curriculum and organizing staffing patterns are pretty much guessing games” (p. 11). It encouraged the synergy of the widespread involvement of education community members with other societal groups and agencies in the planning and provision of services. It also endorsed the Worth

Commission's recommendation that "Educational planning should be correlated with general social and economic planning" (p. 17) and suggested that the provincial government should relinquish many of its controls in favour of a role as coordinator in educational planning. Governance, according to the ATA, should be centered at the local and school level.

Table 13 shows some of the values supported by the teachers' comments and recommendations made in their response to the Worth Report.

**Table 13: Teacher Values in the Response to the Worth Report**

Equality	In expanded opportunities for handicapped children Opportunities to meet individual interests In equal opportunities for rural and urban students
Accountability	Acceptance of responsibility for certification and decertification Acceptance of a role in policing both conduct and competence
Foresight	Planning as an essential activity Goals and objectives drive staffing and program decisions
Synergy	Widespread involvement of school and community in decisions Belief in the need for agencies and groups to be working together Blend of educational, social and economic planning
Humanism	Belief in the person-centered society Belief in autonomy and individualism Belief in valuing as an individual responsibility

The ATA rejected any implications the Report made that public education was "on the verge of catastrophe" and that teachers "are to blame" (First submission, p. 1).

Overall, the ATA response to the Worth Report was generally favourable and many of the values supported by the teachers are the same as those of the Commission.

Like Mazurek (1999), they appear to have accepted that the "ethos and practices" (p. 12) captured in the Worth report reflected public education.

#### *Teacher Reaction to Harder Report*

The Harder Report, created and issued by Alberta Education, rested on a different value base than the larger public reviews. No consultation process was

followed in preparing the report and there was no opportunity for input from other interested parties. Despite this, the ATA chose to make a formal response that stated “the Association rejects the position taken by the paper for changes in the program for basic education” (Alberta Teachers’ Association, 1978, p. 8). The ATA response to the Report decried its proposed reduction of the role of the teacher to “a technician who performs a prescribed task in a prescribed way to obtain prescribed results as measured by prescribed instruments” (p. 7) and charged that teacher professionalism would be “eroded considerably” (p. 8).

The ATA response criticized Harder’s Report as being based on false assumptions that failed to provide a justification of the need for changes before even suggesting which changes were necessary. It argued that Harder’s paper neglected the goals of education in favour of the goals of schooling as preparation for work; a move the ATA saw as part of a push to reduce the role of the school in developing life skills. The ATA expressed its belief that schools must develop a broad base of skills for students in order to produce students “able to cope with society intellectually, culturally, and emotionally” (p. 5). The ATA also alleged that the Harder Report failed to provide support or a rationale for its declared need for normative standards and suggested it is not possible to set a minimum standard that would be a valid measure of student abilities because formal evaluation is only one part of student evaluation and thus should be used sparingly. The ATA also argued that because no review of strengths and weaknesses had been made, there was no foundation for the report’s allegations of declining educational standards.

The ATA also accused the report of providing a false description of the

current school program. It stressed the need to accommodate individual student motivations, abilities and needs, and indicated that schools and teachers should set tests and standards appropriate for their students. The ATA further criticized the report for its failure to say how those students who fail to meet minimum standards would be helped. The ATA saw the Harder Report as a plan to fit individuals into a mould when in fact there is a need for diversity. The report's obligatory inclusion of spiritual health as a school subject was seen as an imposition on the role of home and church that ignored the rights and needs of Catholic schools. The response called the recommended changes to time allocations for course hours unrealistic and unwarranted, without basis in rational review. Strong opposition was made to the reduction of local input and to the reduction of the professional role of the teacher from that of a professional who meets student needs to one of a technician following a rigid, prescribed program. The ATA registered its strong support for the school's role in leading societal change, and alleged that Harder's recommendations reduced the school's role to the maintenance of existing institutions. It also rejected virtually every recommendation made by Harder.

The ATA brief was a reaction to the Harder Report and is therefore reactionary in its challenging tone and nature. Still, the values of the ATA are visible in the beliefs expressed in the response. These include: belief in the professional ability of teachers to diagnose and meet student needs, belief in the value of providing for individual developmental needs before societal needs or preparation for work, belief in the ability of schools to effect societal change, belief in local control, and belief in limiting accountability measures. Table 14 lists beliefs

expressed by the ATA and underlying values of those beliefs.

**Table 14: Teacher values as seen in the ATA response to Harder Report**

Value	Beliefs expressed by ATA
Worth of teachers	As leaders in education rather than schooling As leaders in society rather than maintenance of institutions As professionals able to diagnose and meet individual needs
Education	As more broad than schooling As developing the whole child
Worth of individuals	As developing life skills As accommodating student motivations, abilities and needs putting individual developmental needs before societal needs or preparation for work As meeting needs diversity rather than a mould
Rationality	In evaluation of students based in reality In evaluation of the education system

*Part III: Teacher Values Deduced from the Report Card on Education, 1996*

Responding to the statement "Changes to education seem to have been accepted well," Klein said, "Education received the smallest financial adjustment. The budget for 1997 will be only 5.6% less than the budget for 1992. Most of the savings were found through reduction in administration expenses and redirection of funds to the classrooms. The restructuring is also bringing schools and parents closer together. Innovative concepts like charter schools and year-round schooling are receiving positive response. It is a good news story." (PC Talk, January, 1996)

The above citation from Premier Klein prompted the ATA to ask its members to comment on this statement in the form of a report card on education in Alberta. Each member was asked to write a report card complete with comments. The responses presented a unique opportunity to hear from teachers regarding the Klein government's efforts to change education. Responses revealed teachers' values in relation to their work and the ongoing changes in their work.

The Report Card Survey was designed by the ATA in cooperation with the Population Research Laboratory at the University of Alberta. ATA teacher representatives in each school were asked to arrange an opportunity for teachers to complete their responses, to gather them and to forward them to ATA headquarters in Edmonton. Some used staff meetings, some arranged informal meetings and many simply put the request in each teacher's mailbox at school with a request for a response by a specified date. No record was kept of how responses were gathered in individual schools. School representatives from more than 71% of Alberta's public and separate schools returned responses from 10,554 unidentified teachers. The two-part survey questioned specific workplace conditions, and sought teachers' overall assessment of the impact of changes in education since 1993 as positive, negative or neutral. The Population Research Laboratory at the University of Alberta tallied results. School names were used by the Population Research Laboratory only to determine the appropriate provincial legislative riding for reporting the results. All school names were eliminated from the reports that grouped all schools in a particular riding. Thus, it became impossible to determine the particular individual or school from which the responses were received. The ATA reported results provincially and by provincial riding. Responses on a province-wide basis, as gathered in Part 1 of the survey, are reported in Table 15.

**Table 15: ATA Report Card 1996 Survey Results Reported Provincially**

1. Since September 1993 responses		Percent	Number of
a. my average class size has	a. increased	67.9	10,282
	b. decreased	4.0	
	c. not changed	28.1	

b. time available for spending with students has			
a. increased	3.4	10,390	
b. decreased	81.2		
c. not changed	15.4		
c. The opportunities for students to participate in extra-curricular activities have			
a. increased	8.4	10,221	
b. decreased	46.1		
c. not changed	45.5		
d. The assistance available for special needs students has			
a. increased	7.5	10,160	
b. decreased	78.2		
c. not changed	14.3		
e. The availability of technology for students			
a. increased	53.8	10,352	
b. decreased	16.9		
c. not changed	29.3		
f. The resources available to classroom teachers have			
a. increased	8.6	10,360	
b. decreased	63.5		
c. not changed	27.9		

2. My overall assessments of the impact of changes to education over the last three years (since June 1993) are as follows:

**Table 16: Teacher Assessment of the Overall Effect of Changes to Education**

Overall Effect on:	Positive (%)	Negative (%)	Neutral (%)	Number of Responses
Students	3.4	82.5	14.2	10,225
Teachers	1.8	94.6	3.6	10,333
Parents	10.8	56.5	32.8	9,821
Community	7.5	47.2	45.4	9,753
Business	14.0	43.3	56.7	9,466
School council	29.4	35.7	34.8	9,357

The Alberta Teachers' Association, 1996

This section of the results tells us only that teachers generally see a decline in school and classroom conditions for students.

Part 2 of the survey was an open-ended request to respond to the Premier's

opinion that changes to education constituted “a good news story.” In reporting the results, ATA President Bauni Mackay (1996) noted that over 98% of the teachers who responded to the survey disagreed with the Premier. She stated, “Teachers in an overwhelming number of public and separate schools have grave concerns about the changes that are occurring in their schools.”

#### *Selection of the Sample for this Study*

The study sample was drawn from the large pool of more than 10,000 responses. In order to ensure that responses from ridings in all areas of the province were included for analysis in this study, I made a purposive sampling of one large urban riding, one suburban riding, one small urban riding, one southern rural riding and one northern rural riding. No comparison of survey responses was made before that selection; one from each category of riding was selected with attention given only to geographic location. The responses which were analyzed were based on 584 response comments from the 720 teachers who answered the survey from the five selected ridings, Large Urban – 159 teachers; Suburban – 139 teachers; Small Urban – 156 teachers; Southern Rural – 126 teachers; Northern Rural – 140 teachers. All ridings selected included both public and separate schools.

#### *Seven Key Themes*

I sorted the 584 teacher responses that comprised the raw data. I grouped statements that appeared to express the same or similar beliefs and thereby identified major themes. When a response appeared to relate to more than one grouping, I assigned it to one group only on the basis of the most strongly expressed belief statement in the response. A total of 574 individual response statements divided into



seven major themes: 1) teachers are overloaded; 2) education is not valued; 3) children's needs are not being met satisfactorily; 4) government priorities are wrong; 5) the misguided government means well; 6) all is well; and 7) public education is threatened. Embedded within each theme are underlying teachers' values.

A handful of response comments, ten out of a total 584, were either outliers that targeted one school program area or reflected a "wait and see" attitude. Not one response expressed satisfaction with the changes made in education. The values underlying the outlier comments, such as the responses of three teachers who used the survey to criticize the ATA for its failure to fight back strongly enough to prevent changes, could be associated with any of several identified values. They were not categorized in any theme.

All 584 comments categorized by theme and riding are listed in Appendix 1.

*Theme 1: Teachers are overloaded.*

*It's a "good news story" because the public doesn't see the results of all the cutbacks. The public does not see the result of the cutbacks because teachers cannot say "no." There is less money, less (sic) resources, more demands, but because teachers are dealing with children they do not say no, and make up for all the shortcomings as a result of budget cutbacks. A better picture would be to look at the number of teachers on sick leave, teachers on long term disability...to see how cutbacks have affected education. (Report Card, 1996, p. 7)*

Altogether, 189 respondents criticized the changes in education as creating lower quality programs and increased workloads. Demands on teachers' time for

fundraising and administration have created what was called by one respondent “an endurance test,” as larger classes, new responsibilities, and lack of in-service to meet the demands of new program mandates have led to a feeling of being overwhelmed when they also had to compensate for inadequacies in resources. Teachers in each riding sampled commented on their own efforts and those of other teachers to put students’ needs ahead of their own needs, resulting in harm to the teacher’s physical, emotional and family needs. Teachers reported sacrificing personal time for rejuvenation and recreation as well as purchasing necessary classroom supplies with their own money. Teachers expressed concern about the ability to maintain such sacrifices. They also stated a belief that teacher dedication expressed in self-sacrifice has hidden the true effects of the cutbacks in education from the public. Much frustration was expressed by teachers who described themselves as overly stressed, underpaid, under-appreciated, and saw diminishing incentives to maintain their current level of service. Teachers’ comments indicated that the demands placed on them and their increased duties were becoming difficult to sustain. Teachers’ trust in their own ability to act altruistically was threatened. Although the respondents made strong statements declaring value in their own ability to nurture students and to sacrifice themselves as a means to achieve student success, they also questioned the soundness of continued teacher self-sacrifice.

*Theme 2: Education is not valued highly.*

*What a joke! Perhaps the premier would recognize a school. It is the large building with a lot of future taxpayers who feel they are being made into sacrificial lambs for the sake of the extravagance of their forefathers. It is the building wherein young people are becoming fatalistic and cynical instead of*

*hopeful about their futures. Perhaps the premier would like to come visit one? (Report Card, 1996)*

Many teacher-respondents stated that the Premier himself is poorly educated and does not value education as highly as they do. In 128 responses, teachers expressed their own strong belief in the value of education and their frustration that the belief does not appear to be widely held outside their ranks. Many rejected outright the belief that the current education system is “good news.” Teachers suspected some hidden government agenda, a political strategy characterized by lying, manipulation and publicity seeking. They accused the Premier and the government of refusing to acknowledge the negative effects that have resulted from the changes made to education by the government. Teachers’ comments suggested that education was being sacrificed to a right-wing corporate agenda. Specific concerns stated that under-funded schools are forced to play one program off against another with excessive emphasis being placed on testing in the name of accountability rather than education. One teacher quoted the poem, “Casey at the Bat,” suggesting “the mighty Casey has struck out.” Teachers valued education as an end in itself. They did not believe the same value was expressed in the government’s views.

*Theme 3: The needs of children are not being met satisfactorily.*

*Students have greater needs than ever before in all areas – social, emotional, physical and intellectual – but human resources are stretched so that it is difficult to address all these needs. Intellectually gifted students have been essentially ignored. Counselling funding is extremely important today and should be increased. Not all parents are happy about the responsibilities*

*thrust upon them through school council legislation. (Report Card, 1996)*

Teachers expressed a belief that educational services for children are inadequate; 86 teachers expressed concerns that students are not receiving the quality of educational service to which they are entitled. Teachers reported a strong concern about the deteriorating teacher-student relationships as a result of the increased demands on teacher time. Teachers identified their relationships with students as a priority. They expressed a belief that the price of change for students is a decrease in teacher-student contact due to a required change in teacher duties and priorities as class sizes become larger and teachers are obliged to increase their involvement in non-teaching duties, such as meetings with colleagues, administrators and parents. Special education students were identified both as students at particular risk and as students who are drawing away attention needed for other students by demanding a disproportionate amount of the teacher's time. Teachers spoke of special education students going without adequate instructional support, remaining on long waiting lists for diagnostic testing or resource help and receiving reduced or limited access to services. They also reported an increase in family problems that were, in turn, leading to a larger number of students in need of assistance in school. They were concerned that the cutbacks and the resulting denial of support services for students would lead to higher costs in social services, policing, and health services. Teachers noted as well that increased user fees for parents of each child disenfranchised those students who are financially disadvantaged because they left such students unable to access some services, programs and events.

*Theme 4: Government priorities are wrong.*

*Edchakation has not bean hert by Mr. Kline! (Report Card, 1996)*

Teachers suggested the government elimination of the budgetary deficit has been at the expense of “the young, the old and the sick.” In their view, society has been changed to create a society of “victimization” inside and outside of education. Many of their comments are overlaid, moreover, with a belief that the cuts were unnecessary to eliminate the deficit. Many showed cynicism and anger.

Teachers said that government priorities in education are wrong. They charged that budget cuts were treated as more important than students. Insufficient resources as a result of government under-funding and the misallocation of resources has created a system for which fundraising, user fees and a focus on standardized achievement tests have all increased, whereas community access, program variety and quality, learning opportunities, and supports to create an environment for student success have decreased. High standards in line with teacher values cannot be maintained without providing support for both students and teachers. Technology cannot replace teachers, yet much of the reduced funding has been directed to purchasing computers. With funding tied to the individual student and to fundraising abilities of the stakeholders at the school level, teachers saw rural schools threatened and small schools that cannot compete for funds and cannot operate economically given limited economies of scale. Post-secondary access for students in rural areas is limited by reduced service and a reduction of programs because of cost inefficiencies. Many teachers criticized the unfairness of competition between schools, as the educational system encourages the creation of winners and losers instead of providing adequate service to all. Teachers value various forms of achievement in education and the provision of opportunities for maximized success

for all students. Many commented that long-term education results will show the drastic effect of cuts only long after the cutbacks and inadequacies were put into operation. Teachers reported great discomfort with the limitations placed on opportunities for students within the education system.

*Theme 5: The misguided government means well.*

*I think the premier should make an effort to seek out several "good" teachers and listen carefully to their "news." As every teacher knows and practices, effective communication requires a receiver who reacts to the message given by the sender. (Report card, 1996)*

Some teachers from each area in the sample, 37 in total, expressed the belief that all could be fixed if only the premier would listen to advice from the "front-line" in education. They believed errors have been made, but the government actions were well-intended. Many believed the Premier was misguided and misinformed by advisors with a business agenda. Some teachers believed the changes may be in a "testing" phase and that the government is unaware of the true picture because only those directly involved saw the extent of inadequacies. Many suggested that if only the Premier would spend time in the schools he would see the folly of changes and move to improve the situation. These comments showed a high level of trust and openness that appeared to lead some to believe that if the priorities and duties of teachers were understood, the changes would be made less catastrophic for them and the students.

*Theme 6: All is well.*

*Education is a good news story in spite of actions by the premier. It is much more difficult for all stakeholders, but they are coping very well. (Report*

Card, 1996)

Only 19 of the 584 teachers responding agreed with the Premier's declaration of a "good news story." Seven of those qualified their support by suggesting that there had been some weakening of the education system and that a need for more resources exists; they advised government caution. Three others suggested the high quality of education was not the result of government actions. Two referred to support for changes but with a need for teacher input; two others commented that little drastic change had occurred in their own schools. Comments grouped within this theme also expressed a belief that if the Premier would "come and see," things would change.

*Theme 7: Public education is threatened.*

*I am concerned with the charter schools concept as I believe it will erode the quality of public schools and create a two-tiered system. Any school can be a howling success, especially on paper, if it can choose its clientele. Education is not a good news story. On the contrary, I feel that teachers and children are being abandoned, that teachers are in fact debilitated, and undermined by the PC government. (Report Card, 1996)*

Ten teachers used the survey to state their belief that public education resources are stretched too thinly and that the system is destined to fail as students fall through the cracks. They noted that two-tier education is already appearing. They viewed private schools benefiting as public schools are undermined by the provision of public tax funds for private and Christian schools that are increasingly becoming an option available to the middle class. In addition to the weakening of the public system by the introduction of charter schools, some teachers noted that public

education is being portrayed as a weakened cog in the machinery of society. They believed that government policies have failed to recognize democratic equality or provide equal access to educational opportunities for all. Both ideals, democratic equality and educational opportunities, are teachers' values.

### *Identifying Values in the Responses*

The literature reviewed in Chapter Two showed that values are motivating forces that initiate or reinforce action. As end-states or means, they can be truths, aesthetic appreciations, or moral assessments. A review of the themes in teacher comments for A Report Card on Education 1996 identified ten values. The small number is consistent with the views of Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck (1961, p.10, 341), Rokeach (1973, p. 11) and Hall (1995, p. 24) that there are only a small number of values. The link between values and needs, as identified by Rokeach (p. 11), Hodgkinson (1991, p. 94), and Campbell-Evans (1991, p. 175), is clear, because three are ends in themselves. The remaining seven are means to achieve the goals and may be seen as end-states only from a narrower perspective. A summary of the values identified is reported in Table 16.

**Table 16: Values Analysis Summary from The Report Card on Education**

<b>End-state values</b>	<b>Means values</b>
Democratic equality	1. Equal access to education 2. Trust in self and others 3. Strong public education
Educational achievement	1. Program quality
Maximized student potential	1. Teacher-student relationship 2. Nurturing role 3. Self-sacrifice

In the survey responses, teachers reported a belief in an end-state of democratic equality as a truth that contributes to our society. This belief is evident in



the teachers' comments in the survey decrying threats to public education, the creation of winners and losers, the removal of educational support for families and students, and the societal harm they see as the inevitable result of the changes enacted since 1993. Equal access to educational programs and opportunities is a value that is seen by respondents as a means to achieve democratic equality. They also expressed the belief that public education should not disenfranchise those who have special educational or economic needs or come from disadvantaged backgrounds. Teacher respondents opposed the wisdom of competition for education funding that left both rural schools and smaller schools at a disadvantage because of small enrolments.

Educational achievement was reported as an end-value for teachers, based on a belief about the importance of its payoff in life. They decried the unfair disadvantage of the rising cost of post-secondary education that increasingly limits the ability of students to consider further education as a real option. Teacher respondents criticized the low level of formal personal educational achievement of the Premier and linked it to a seeming failure on his part (and by extension, that of his government) to see value in education. They recognized the limitations that budget cuts have placed on the benefits for the education of brighter students as well as special needs students; the removal of learning opportunities for all students, and a government overemphasis on standardization for the measurement of achievement.

Success in life for students was an end-value evident in the importance these teachers placed upon the teacher-student relationship, the nurturing role of teachers in relation to students, and the sacrifice of self by teachers to maximize student

success. Respondents objected to the loss of support personnel and programs, and to the failure of the system to provide for the broad social, emotional and educational needs of the student population.

### *Summary*

In this chapter I presented the findings of the first two stages of the study. The first stage of the study is reported in two sections. The opening section of the chapter explored the values found in selected government records dating from 1935 through to the 1990s. It was followed by a second section that explored the values of teachers as found in teacher-initiated records used to provide input or reaction to the government documents. The records provided rich data for the identification not only of value expectations, but also of pressures applied to achieve them. The second stage of the study was discussed in the last section of the chapter. In this section teachers' responses and comments from the 1996 *Report Card on Education* were summarized and values identified. The responses, which were focused on the quality of education being provided throughout the province, provide rich data for contrasting what teachers believed ought to be the priorities in education with what they saw was happening. It concluded with the identification of values as expressed by teachers.

The values identified in this chapter were used in the creation of the interview schedule for face-to-face interviews with teachers. The findings from those interviews are reported in Chapter Five.

## Chapter Five

### *Findings: Interviews*

As a final step in the data collection, I wanted to enrich the data gathered from the records review and the Report Card by conducting interviews that would more solidly ground the study in the field and provide direct, personal comments based on recent experience. I conducted interviews with eighteen interviewees during the summer of 2002. By interviewing only teachers who had fifteen or more years of teaching experience, I narrowed the group to include only teachers who had been in education long enough to have had the opportunity to develop their own strong experience-based value systems before experiencing the change actions initiated by the Alberta Department of Education (now Alberta Learning). As result of the criteria, the teachers interviewed were mostly between 40 and 54 years of age. Only one, a practising administrator, was older than 54.

They included five practising administrators:

1. George (self-selected name) started teaching in 1963. When interviewed, she was working as an elementary school principal in a small urban school. She had 33 years' experience as a classroom teacher in elementary and secondary schools in and out of Canada, as a vice-principal, a principal, and as a consultant.
2. Gerry started teaching in 1969. When interviewed, he was working as a district principal in an urban school district. He had 33 years' experience in elementary and secondary schools as a classroom teacher, vice-principal, principal and senior administrator.

3. Graham started teaching in 1974. When interviewed, he was working as a high school principal in an urban school. He had 28 years' experience in elementary and secondary schools as a classroom teacher, department head, vice-principal and principal.

4. Grant started teaching in 1972. When interviewed, he was working as an elementary school principal in a suburban school. He had 30 years' experience in elementary and secondary schools as a teacher, vice-principal and principal.

5. Greg started teaching in 1970. When interviewed, he was working as a principal in a rural elementary school. He had 34 years' experience as a classroom teacher, vice-principal, principal, and as a program coordinator working from the district central office.

Four classroom teachers:

1. Alma started teaching in 1970. When interviewed, she was working as junior high teacher in a rural school. She had 18 years' experience as a classroom teacher in elementary and secondary schools.

2. Andrew started teaching in 1983. When interviewed, he was working as a teacher in a suburban secondary school. He had 19 years' experience as a secondary classroom teacher.

3. Angie started teaching at a very young age and returned to university to finish her B. Ed. in 1974. When interviewed, she was working as a teacher in an urban secondary school. She had 34 years' experience as a secondary school classroom teacher.

4. Anthony started teaching in 1972. When interviewed, he was working as a teacher in an urban junior high school. He had 30 years' experience as a classroom teacher in secondary schools.

Five "Early Leavers" who left teaching too early to draw a pension:

1. Barbara started teaching young and returned to university to finish her B. Ed. degree in 1988. When interviewed, she had withdrawn from teaching at a suburban elementary school. She had 23 years' experience as an elementary classroom and resource room teacher.

2. Betty started teaching in 1974. When interviewed, she had withdrawn from teaching at a rural elementary school. She had 28 years' experience in rural and semi-urban schools as a classroom teacher, vice-principal and principal.

3. Bonnie started teaching in 1968. When interviewed, she had withdrawn from teaching at a suburban secondary school. She had 30 years' classroom teaching experience in suburban secondary schools.

4. Breanne started teaching in 1973. When interviewed, she had withdrawn from teaching at a major urban elementary school. She had 28 years' experience as a classroom teacher, vice-principal and principal in major urban elementary schools and as a consultant working from the district office.

5. Brenda started teaching in 1969. When interviewed, she had withdrawn from teaching at a suburban high school. She had 27 years' experience as a classroom teacher and department head.

Four former administrators who had returned to the classroom:

1. Sally started teaching in 1972. When interviewed, she was working as a classroom teacher and resource room teacher in a rural elementary school. She had 30 years' experience in elementary and secondary schools as a classroom teacher, vice-principal and principal.
2. Sam started teaching in 1981. When interviewed, he was working as a classroom teacher in a rural high school. He had 20 years' experience in elementary and secondary schools as a classroom teacher, vice-principal and principal.
3. Stan started teaching in 1978. When interviewed, he was working as a classroom teacher in a suburban junior high school. He had 24 years' experience in elementary and secondary schools as a classroom teacher, vice-principal and principal.
4. Steve started teaching in 1986. When interviewed, he was working as a classroom teacher in a rural secondary school. He had 15 years' experience as a classroom teacher, department head, vice-principal and principal.

Although there was no question on the interview schedule identifying the time period of the interviewees' teacher preparation studies, most mentioned university preparation in the 1970s and in at least one instance, the 1960s. Several made reference to graduate work.

I used the same interview guide for all interviewees. The questions were intended to focus discussion on teaching; teacher-student relationships; personal development as a teacher; the purpose of teaching; expectations of self, students, colleagues, superiors, school boards and government officials; equity and equal opportunity; and, finally, on their views on the state of education as it is or could be. The questions were essentially prompts to get the participants speaking about their

own experience, understandings and beliefs. I anticipated the interviews lasting 45 minutes; most lasted slightly longer than one hour.

Participant responses to the interview questions are summarized in this chapter under five themes:

1. Beliefs about the purposes of educating youth
2. Shaping influences on participant beliefs
3. Pressure to change as experienced by interviewees
4. Costs interviewees have paid
5. Participant views on the current state of education in Alberta

*Theme One: Beliefs About the Purposes of Educating Youth*

I asked the interviewees not only what they saw as the purpose of educating youth but also how, as an individual teacher, each had acted to make that happen for students. In answer to those questions as well as questions on what makes a good teacher, the ideal teacher-student relationship, what they saw as acceptable achievement for students and the role of education in a democracy, interviewees reflected on their personal contribution to education and the rationale behind that contribution. There was a trend for answers to early questions to be supported by later responses.

Interviewees identified three purposes of education: to develop people, to build community, and to prepare productive workers. These three purposes were common to the responses from all 18 teachers interviewed, without distinction among the four subgroups in their responses. Information is reported here on each of the identified purposes, followed by a separate section on the actions interviewees

reported taking in support of what they believed to be the purpose or purposes of educating youth.

*Purpose One: To Develop People.*

The emphasis of interviewees on developing people was particularly striking. All interviewees identified the teacher-student relationship to be the core of good teaching. The personal qualities and the teaching qualities they identified as necessary to be a good teacher supported their focus. The personal qualities they identified included love, care, empathy, respect, energy and an ability to relate to other people. The professional qualities they identified included getting to know students as individuals, having the ability to recognize individual differences and to adapt teaching styles to match student learning styles.

Knowledge of curricula was reported as important but not as the essential element of being a good teacher. While Alma said, “the teacher is in charge,” she also said that teachers have shifted away from being “content specialists to being teaching specialists.” She used the term “facilitator;” Graham used “coach.” Sally simply said that, as an administrator, she had seen teachers “who knew what had to be taught and knew what was expected, but couldn’t teach it” because they didn’t develop the necessary relationships with their students. Interviewee expectations of good teaching were universally student-centered and focused on meeting the needs of individuals within the group. Angie summed up her belief by saying, “Children want to achieve; my function is to let them see growth.” The focus on the development of people as good teachers and as the purpose of education is summed up in the comment by Breanne who said, “There is something good in this person. It is my job to find it and it is my job to move that person in that direction.” Several



interviewees described the purpose of education as allowing students to develop the ability to make positive choices and feel comfortable about themselves. Brenda said the purpose is “to make them grow, to expand their horizons, to give them experiences, to make them literate, functioning, caring human beings...[able to] problem solve...to be comfortable in their own skin...to have their own ideas.” Bonnie spoke of self-respect and acceptance. George said, “We must not limit students in their development.” Sally wanted to see job training as well as liberal arts. Steve said the purpose of education is the development of the whole person, “cognitively, spiritually, emotionally and physically.” He said, “You take a whole package and you develop all parts.”

*Purpose Two: To Build Community*

Greg declared that the purpose of education is “teaching kids to work together in community.” Pulling people together in a community emerged as a strong theme throughout. Barbara spoke of the need to make students better decision-makers in a democracy. Sam suggested that education should “promote students to become productive and useful and positive members of society,” and to “make the world a better place.” Several interviewees said that education should equalize opportunities for people in what Andrew called the creation of “a homogenous democracy” that gives all people the opportunity to maximize their potential in life regardless of socio-economic and socio-cultural differences. The views expressed were tempered by a belief that schools are meeting the needs of only a portion of the students either because of the way educational programs are targeted or because of the inequities in students’ background. For example, Andrew noted a belief that home schooling teaches “one point of view the whole time and it’s the parents point

of view; kids don't get to see different ideas and different personalities...that's what public education does better than anything else; it allows students to see globally, not just a very small set." To build community is to overcome individual differences and handicaps.

*Purpose Three: To Prepare Productive Workers*

Some interviewees spoke of the purpose of education as preparation for the world of work. Angie, for example, stated directly that part of the role of education is preparing students for work. She said there is a need "to teach responsibility, punctuality, work habits, how to be effective workers, how to be learners." However, for the most part, all interviewees agreed with Sam who said, "That shouldn't be the primary focus." It was seen as an adjunct to the larger purpose of individual character development.

*Actions Driven by the Values*

For the purposes of this research, individual values were defined as motivating beliefs that initiate or reinforce action. Individual values need not always be consistent with the values of the organization but they do affect the way employees do their job. The interviewees identified ways in which the values they held to be the primary purposes for education shaped their work.

The interviewees agreed about the importance of having high expectations for all students. Interviewees defined their expectations in relation to the purposes of education and the approach they took to planning, preparing and marking student work. They gave due attention to the needs of students as individuals and the maximization of individual potential. Teachers reported providing extra assistance, variable marking schemes, marking drafts before marking a final copy, re-testing,

using improvement rubrics, and a host of other techniques designed to allow students to maximize achievement. Many spoke of the value of the student-teacher relationship in raising student achievement. Several commented on the need to allow time for individual development as a person. Many teachers acknowledged using subjective measures as well as the achievement outcomes to create a mark, described by Anthony as “relative to what their capabilities are.” Breanne may have put it best with her statement that she “tries to teach students at their point of need.”

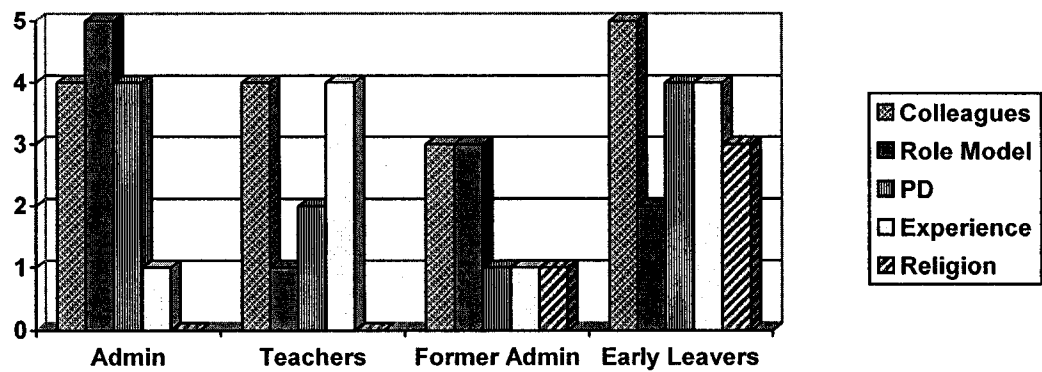
*Theme Two: Shaping Influences on Participant Beliefs*

Early in the interviews I asked the interviewees to identify the personal and professional influences that made them the kind of teachers they believe themselves to be. They were asked to reflect on role models, university preparation, professional development and teaching experiences. My questions elicited broad considerations ranging from experiences in the interviewees’ own childhood to reasons for staying in or leaving their positions.

*Clear, Common Influences*

All interviewees acknowledged having changed their professional views and actions since entering teaching; all spoke positively about their own transitions as teachers. Stan labelled it “grown, not changed, matured.” Table 17 shows the major influences by group as reported by the interviewees.

**Table 17**      **Shaping Influences on Formation as Teachers**



The overwhelming influence on their growth as reported by the interviewees was other teachers. Sixteen of the interviewees from all four groups reported learning from colleagues. Eleven interviewees also acknowledged specific role models whose influence either brought them into teaching or affected their teaching practices in the early years. Other influences included professional development, learning from experience and religion.

Interviewees also indicated that in-service professional development was effective especially where they had the opportunity to work on the change with others or were able to discuss the in-service with colleagues. Specific in-service programs identified include studying the work of Manatt on teacher supervision and William Spady on outcome-based education. Anna said, “new techniques and ideas from PD workshops, if I saw value, I did them, if not I didn’t.” Andrew mentioned using professional development workshops “to be sure I am up to those [students] that want to go on to post-secondary, learning new ways to teach basic constructs or similar concepts.” Alma is active on her convention association board and with local

professional development committees. Greg, an administrator, summed it up well with the following comment:

You put that all together with people that are sort of committed to professional development, so they are learning all the time, that's that idea of being knowledgeable, and you put that into the classroom; the results are very much there, very evident.

Some interesting differences arose in the responses between or among the identified groups. While all four of the teachers and four of the five early leavers assigned high importance to learning from their experience as teachers, only one current administrator and one former administrator mentioned this as a factor in shaping him/her professionally. All five of the current administrators and three of the four former administrators agreed on the importance to them of role models, whereas only one of the classroom teachers mentioned a role model.

Six study interviewees stated that they had changed their teaching practices since entering teaching in that their perspective on the importance of curriculum had diminished in favour of the importance of the student-teacher relationship and individual needs. Three of the early leaver group and at least one member of each of the other identified subgroups mentioned this aspect of change in professional beliefs. Greg, an administrator, said that as a beginning teacher he thought curriculum delivery, planning and organization were the most important aspects of teaching. He still believes these elements of teaching are important, but he also now believes 80% of success as a teacher is in building rapport, sharing, and communication – elements of teaching he calls “art.” Sam, a former administrator,

said that as a new teacher he thought, “Well, these, some of these old guys aren’t even following the curriculum!” He came to believe that the things the older teachers were doing with students were the important things. Other interviewees, like Stan, found the “connect” with students to be the most important aspect of their teaching from the earliest days in their teaching.

### *Differing Views of University Preparation Programs*

Study interviewees were of mixed minds about the value of their university preparation in their development as teachers. The science teachers in the group, Andrew, Sam and Gerry, expressed positive comments about the role of university in teaching content. Gerry also reported learning some methodology. One other teacher, Greg, spoke positively about the role of one theatre arts course in equipping him with communication skills. Anthony, Brenda and Betty found their post-graduate work to be rewarding and formative. Excluding two positive comments about student teaching by Graham and Sam, eight other interviewees indicated that university preparation had not helped in their formation as teachers, with comments ranging from “not at all” (Angie), “woeful (Steve), “survive the red tape” (Sally) and “means to an end” (Betty).” Five made no comment about their university preparation despite my prompt. In summary, interviewees reported some value from learning subject-content in university and acquiring some skills, but few identified university as a major shaping influence on the kind of teachers they became.

### *Theme Three: Pressure for Change as Reported by Interviewees*

Begley (1999), as cited in Chapter Two, pointed out that it is not always possible to reach consensus on the priorities and values questions that arise daily in

schools. In those cases, someone must choose a course of action. My questions sought to identify the experiences of interviewees being obliged to teach in a certain way or to satisfy objectives decreed by others. I wondered if there had been any such pressure and, if so, how they had perceived the pressure to change during their careers. I asked about changes arising from professional development and in-service activities, societal expectations for education and acceptable achievement, societal change, external pressure and the socio-economic and cultural backgrounds of students.

Every participant expressed a belief that pressure for change had increased over time. Many interviewees stated that the pressure to change their teaching was minimal during the early stages of their careers but recently had become very strong. They spoke of the nature of changes and the driving forces behind the changes. Finally, they talked about the effect of the changes on themselves and on teachers in general.

### *The Driving Forces of Change*

#### *Pressure Arising From Teachers Themselves*

Interviewees stated that some of the pressure to change comes from within. Many interviewees acknowledged pressing themselves constantly to do more and to improve through the commitment to professional development referred to earlier. However, interviewees frequently noted the intensely competitive nature of schooling at this time and the unending addition of extra duties. Angie spoke of teachers who “want to impress other teachers, parents, kids” and who have raised expectations because they “want projects, etc. to look professional; they are not

happy with pencil crayons.” Sam suggested that competition was almost institutionalized, as administrators compete with one another by continually adding services within their schools. He said that the competition at administrator meetings was virtually a poker game: “I’ll see your parent-teacher interview night and I’ll raise you a dessert night.” Duties are added to roles but none are removed. As part of his comments on competitiveness, Sam noted that once optional activities get started, they become expectations. Many others agreed that, once they added an activity for their students, an expectation developed that they would continue it thereafter.

Breanne summed it up by saying that once a school starts to provide a service,

the whole school system then starts to expect it and somehow extracurricular is no longer extracurricular. It’s now part of your hours. It’s now part of your assignable hours and you’re expected to do it.

#### *Pressure Caused by Site Based Decision-making*

Several interviewees referred to the shift of responsibilities from the district to the school level referred to as “site-based decision-making” (SBDM). Greg suggested that SBDM shifted the role of teachers from that of “being a teacher in a classroom to being a teacher in a school,” which greatly increased the workload. Grant commented on SBDM as “accountability without the responsibility.” Barbara echoed that sentiment with an example of how site-based decision-making changed the budgeting process and placed pressure on teachers to protect limited resources. As she put it:

The reason I felt that was a disappointment was, it prohibited a lot of sharing. We were given our grade level budgeting so now all of a sudden, we bought



our paints in our grade level and if another grade level ran out of paints, well, it came out of our budget, not their budgets, and I just don't feel that's a good way to develop community.

### *Pressure from Standardized Achievement Testing*

Interviewees believed that standardized testing elevated the importance of achievement at the expense of the affective goals of education. Comments ranged from criticism of the narrowness of measurement and its defining effect on curriculum to the inadequacy of standardized tests to measure what is important or relevant. Sam decried the trend to put importance only on objective measurements. He asserted:

It's more important to see the kids grow; not only intellectually but also socially and emotionally, morally in the classroom and in the school as well....my guess is that again, you have to look at achievement; if you're going to measure achievement, you have to measure achievement based upon individual growth and individual needs, individual requirements as opposed to group requirements, group standards.

Greg's comment summed up interviewee beliefs about achievement thus: [Education is] "tied too much into specific learner outcomes and not enough into general outcomes."

Interviewees returned again and again to the subject of the large scale standardized testing done by Alberta Learning in the name of accountability. Study interviewees criticized the amount of testing and the use of test scores as criteria for determining the allocation of resources. They tried to rationalize why testing was

occurring. Steve pointed out the societal concern for accountability, achievement and results and instant feedback. He believed that “numbers are where we live” and “there’s no morality in numbers.” At the same time, exam-driven curriculum was not seen as meeting students’ learning needs. In Sam’s words:

They don’t understand what teaching is all about; you can see how they think this is what the goal of education is, to have students learn material or to have students test well.

Andrew requested and received changes to his teaching assignment to teach non-academic students “because while I teach curriculum I want to teach stuff that is important to them.” Brenda expressed strong dislike of the “over-emphasis” on external testing. She gave an example of a student who was shy on entering grade 10 but at the end of the year “is playing a rabbit in a children’s play and running around talking to little kids – where is that number? What is that number?” Brenda believed the numbers detract from the teaching and reported that she never felt direct pressure to teach in a particular way but she did feel the pressure imposed by the diploma exams. She said she

quit teaching English 30 because the pressure to produce the “right answer” for an exam destroys the study of literature; we taught for an exam instead of for the love of literature; you only cared if they could answer those damned questions.

Greg emphasized the need for us to realize that, although we are in an era of accountability, some important things cannot be measured and that we sometimes measure the wrong things. He believed diagnostic testing to be more important than

achievement testing and identified his goal in testing as to “find out what kids know, not what they don’t know.” He also believed that “kids need to demonstrate skills rather than regurgitate answers on paper.” Graham simply said that the emphasis on testing “misses the whole picture of the qualitative aspect of what we are doing for kids.” Given the strong emphasis these teachers place on meeting individual needs, it is not surprising that they find fault with standardized output measures.

#### *Pressure of Inadequate Funding*

Several interviewees expressed the view that funding now determines the educational program instead of student needs. Andrew said that not all students have access to a full range of educational opportunities because:

Everything is running as a cost-plus scenario – if there are not enough students taking a course it is dropped, especially [in] rural schools. If there are not enough students to offer all courses, all students do not have access.

He expressed a belief that the change to an equity funding system<sup>2</sup> created “have” and “have not” schools based on demographics. He also believed that the changed or eliminated elective courses which were offered reduced the number of courses taught by teachers who are passionate about what they teach. Brenda talked about merging her drama course with a senior English course so that double credits were awarded to students and drama continued to be offered in the school. Shortly after this practice was discontinued, she chose to leave teaching early.

#### *Pressure to Satisfy Too Many Interests*

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<sup>2</sup> In 1994 funding formulas shifted away from a per student basis to a credit completion basis. Low enrolment courses and specialty courses were combined (e.g. physics 10, 20, 30 taught simultaneously in the same time block by one teacher) or disappeared altogether, e.g., many language and fine arts classes).

Interviewees stated that they are currently attempting to satisfy too many people with disparate interests. The effect, as Greg said, is that the job “has become like a circus performer spinning plates – jump from one to the next to keep them all spinning.”

A common theme running through the interview responses was the pressure for teachers to be “all things to all people.” Graham stated that:

Teaching has taken on a much more complex role because of the way society has changed. and teaching is much more of a demanding profession than it was ten years ago because of the dynamics of society.

Alma said that teachers have become “counsellors, sex therapists, social workers, and police fund raisers.” Many interviewees suggested that politicians have personal agendas for schools that ultimately obligate teachers to change their work. Greg’s comments sum up these beliefs. He said that many of the agendas placed on teachers by politicians, “aren’t in our realm...we can’t solve all the ills...every time something comes up in society – AIDS, alcoholism, smoking – right away school is the vehicle.”

Particular anger was expressed about the pressure on teachers to assume parental duties from parents who choose not to fulfill their responsibilities. Interviewees suggested that the responsibility had shifted from home to teachers for meeting basic food and shelter needs, emotional needs, teaching life skills and sex education, discipline, parenting assistance and family counselling. Interviewees spoke of the importance of the school as an institution that provides a stable influence in students’ lives. The pressure on teachers arises less from assuming these

duties than from the disregard of these important aspects of children's lives by those stakeholders who measure what teachers are doing for children. Interviewees expressed concern that these activities are not taken into account in the allocation of resources as well as in the measurement of acceptable student achievement.

#### *Pressure from the Business Sector*

The business sector of society was singled out both for its effect on teaching content and for its effect on the now dominant educational model. Greg spoke of the large gap between what educators and business people believe should be taught in schools. Others spoke emphatically about business demands to prepare students directly for the world of work. The use of business plans and the emphasis on management and measurement (elements of the business model) were criticized as inappropriate measures and pressures to apply in education. Breanne, for instance, accused educational decision makers of trying "to run it like a business and they forgot that these are kids we are working with and it just doesn't work like that."

#### *Pressure from Parents*

A recurrent theme was the pressure from parents to comply with their individual values and to meet what are often unreasonable expectations for their children. Barbara noted that parent pressure for the competitive success of a particular child has become intense. She said,

School shopping was something that was kind of a big change. It was in April/May; lots of people come looking in your classroom, see how you were handling it, and stand at the back of the room there and watch what was going on, whether they thought that would be an appropriate environment for their child, and that was a new thing.

She also spoke of the level of pressure for students to be better than others: “I don’t think it was there when I first started teaching.” In her final year of teaching she met a parent of a bright child who wanted to register him in Kumon math for the summer because the mother wanted “to give him a little edge for next year.” Barbara couldn’t help thinking “Ah, let a 6-year-old be a 6-year-old for a while.”

Several interviewees talked about value clashes with parents. The teachers decried the lack of support for traditional educational values. Greg provided three examples of the traditional values of teachers coming into conflict with parental values. The first involves setting standards of appearance. Although teachers may object to students wearing provocative clothing, including girls with their navels showing, some parents believe their children have the right to wear whatever they wish. The second involves respect for property rights. Some parents defended students, who were in trouble for taking another student’s property without permission, with the justification, “He only used it for a minute.” The third involves privileged children and families who are resentful and rude when the school attempts to provide opportunities for less privileged students. Other interviewees spoke of value clashes over cheating, theft or inappropriate student behaviour.

#### *Theme Four: Costs Interviewees Have Paid*

For this sub-theme I acknowledge having prior expectations as to what the responses would be. Labour turmoil throughout the province in the late 1990s and especially in early 2002 brought forth many bitter comments from teachers about the excessive costs to individual teachers and I expected more of the same would surface again. Overtly, it did not. Interviewees appeared reluctant to claim high personal

costs. I asked them to consider ways in which they have extended themselves throughout their teaching careers and how others have done the same. I asked them to expand their consideration beyond the personal costs incurred by those closest to them, and include costs incurred by all parties in education. Despite their efforts to minimize costs or deny them, many had difficulty answering the questions without negative or critical comments.

The costs mentioned in order of frequency included time, financial, health and then, by several interviewees, the impact of feeling devalued. The interviewees' statements are summed up by the comments of Graham, an administrator, who spoke of good teachers willing to do almost anything for the kids. Thus, he said, "They don't resent it." Steve reported health concerns but said, "I take from everything as much as I give."

#### *Time Costs*

All interviewees mentioned putting too much time into their work, resulting in diminished time for family life and social life. Graham spoke of suddenly realizing one day that he had, in effect, missed out on seeing his daughter grow between grades eight and eleven. Angie said that "even on holidays and trips my focus remains on the classroom and what I can use in school." Teaching was described by several interviewees as being "all consuming." Sally returned to the classroom after many years as a principal because she felt that the high degree of time required by administration did not hold corresponding value for students. She believes there were too many unnecessary demands on her time as principal and said,

“If you’re an administrator, who cares” about your time. She wanted to use the time to meet students’ needs directly, not to address the many concerns of others.

### *Financial Costs*

Fifteen of the 18 teachers interviewed identified financial costs. Graham said that the financial contribution of teachers to their students, schools and programs, when totalled, would “be probably a considerable...budget item.” Grant, another administrator, indicated that his “staff spend over \$6,000 on lunches, breakfasts,” for students annually “as part of doing business.” Barbara felt she couldn’t do her job properly without a personal financial cost. She said, “Nobody said you had to do that though” while in the same breath saying, “You need a lot of supplies to teach, over and above what’s supplied in school.” All 15 teachers reported spending some personal money on their jobs, although the amounts varied from those who spent only a small amount to Angie who reported spending “on average \$200-\$250 per month on [her] classroom.” Purchases included travel and meal costs for extra-curricular activities, stickers and other student reward costs, costs for special classroom activities, and major purchases of books and classroom supplies.

### *Health Costs*

Eleven of the 18 teachers interviewed identified health costs, including in one case a heart attack at age 42, diabetes, and many emotional and stress-related concerns, including major depression. Barbara said that she retired early because she “just couldn’t keep up with that pace.” At the time of the interview she was still unable to watch a movie because she was “unable to sit down without doing something.” Breanne said her job had “definitely cost me my emotional health...some physical health.” Steve, a diabetic, said the job often makes him tired



and physically run down. Sam returned to the classroom because he found he was extending himself as an administrator to the point of incurring an unacceptable emotional cost.

*Major Losses: Position or Salary*

Two of the identified subgroups in this study appear to have paid particular costs; that of the loss of position or salary. Monetary losses were incurred by all of the administrators who returned by choice to the classroom and by all of the early leavers who chose to withdraw from public education before they were eligible to draw a pension. Both groups suffered financial losses as a result of their decision to withdraw from all or part of their jobs. Yet, not one of the interviewees expressed concern about either the loss of salary or position.

The former administrators all reported classroom teaching to be more rewarding because it allows stronger relationships with students. Sally found that administration did not provide the satisfaction she gets from working with students. Steve also said he draws his satisfactions from the students he teaches and from “relationship building.” Sam was tired of spending “all your time with the problem part of society” and found, since he returned to the classroom, “instant gratification” in the success of his students. Stan found that, as an administrator, he lacked the freedom to schedule himself for things like student extracurricular activities. Clearly, as administrators they found the increased distance from students to be too high a cost.

All of the leavers left teaching due to varying degrees of emotional pressure. Brenda reported becoming disillusioned with the constant denigration and blaming of teachers for a variety of societal ills by parents, administrators, government and society. She said this became evident when a new school administrator “no longer provided support, trust or respect;” she eventually said, “This brings me no joy, and I left. He did not care although he knew I was a good teacher.”

Bonnie said she made the decision to leave before she became disillusioned. Betty became weary of the effect on her family and social life. She noted that her job even restricted her freedom in the community. Barbara retired because she saw her health threatened by the high demands placed on her as a teacher. Breanne suffered an emotional breakdown from which she has not fully recovered. The emotional health cost for all members of this group has been high.

*Theme Five: Participant Views on the Current Status of Education in Alberta*

I asked interviewees to comment on the benefits received from the reforms in recent years and to offer their views on the current state of education in Alberta. As a penultimate question, I asked whether “we” were doing the best we could or whether we should have done more. The interviewees frequently unpacked the “we” to identify particular groups. There was a strong overall belief among the interviewees that the people in the classroom were trying their hardest to provide the best but, as Bonnie said, “The people who could have and should have done more are the office-based group out of the school.” Or, as Greg put it, “As educators we probably are doing the best we know how, but it is hard when you don’t believe in the expectations from outside.”

Interviewees recognized that positive changes have occurred in education, referring in particular to some changes that have been brought about by advances in technology, science and current events, and to others by advances in educational research and professional development. Andrew said, “We have improved our teaching; we don’t do rote learning any more.” Bonnie also saw improved learning and said, “It’s finally coming through that kids learn different ways.” Alma put it most broadly:

We have better information on teaching practices, for example, the Safe and Caring Schools Project and student assessment, but teachers pay the price of additional time for planning.

Breanne’s comment was more general: “I think the education that the kids are getting nowadays is much better; much better than what we got 40 years ago.” Stan believed that “in the bigger picture” things are better than before because we are looking at ways to make “a larger number of kids successful.”

The opposite view was also expressed. Sally averred that she would “be hard-pressed to say” that students are “reading any better or writing any better or doing math any better.” Sam was blunt. He exclaimed, “Not a chance!” and also noted that the changes have created stress for everybody. There was a strong sense that the recent directions imposed on education are wrong. Steve said, “Now we’re on the business model and we train young people to be able to get something on the job market. But training is not what education is.” Several comments were more pointed. Grant, for example, when asked what was behind the advances and changes in education, answered bluntly, “business.” He went on to say:

And as much as the Fortune 500 complains that the children of today are not being prepared well for the rigors of society tomorrow, nobody ever talks about the social aspect. It's always geared to the technological, industrial need, and then we wonder why the jails are filling up.

There was universal agreement that the system is not doing the best it could because it is starved for resources. Interviewees stated that the current education system is not meeting the needs of a large group of students; indeed, that it is short-changing some to benefit others. Graham said plainly:

I honestly believe that our regular high school program is designed for maybe 60, maybe 65% of our student population, and it's because of the push for academic expectations as set by Alberta Learning.

In his view, the inadequate level of service means that students are limited in their access to opportunities outside the school. He believed that economically disadvantaged students have less access to upgrading and therefore less access to post-secondary education. He said, "A lot of these kids and families cannot afford that and, as a result, are at a little bit of a disadvantage." Alma pointed out that not every student has the same advantages, such as access to technology. She did not see students having equal opportunity because of the disparities in resources and funding. Sam drew an analogy, saying, "Well, kids don't all come to the classroom with the same tools. Some come with a crescent wrench and others have a full set of tools." Alma's summary was simply that "pressures have come from curriculum without resources." Grant referred to the "warehousing" of some students because

the funds don't exist to meet their needs, and he "can't imagine what educational value exists for those kids."

Greg decried the use of large sums of scarce dollars to address the non-educational, often medical, needs of students or the low return educational needs of low mental capacity students. He said resentfully that such uses of educational dollars are "taken out of the money for other students" and are short-changing average students. He stated that in order for the system to meet the needs of all students, there is a need for the service provision structure to be interdepartmental, with social services, health care and education. It is also his view that, to make access truly equal for students, an ideal system would ensure a positive learning environment – even to providing breakfast and all other resources that might be needed throughout the day. Angie opined that inadequate resources do not match the students' "right" to an education.

Interviewees expressed a belief that the system is not able to meet the widely varied needs students bring to school. In addition to recognizing handicaps caused by socio-economic and socio-cultural differences, they noted that students do not enter school with equal readiness and opportunity. Brenda asked facetiously, "Now why would your child be in English 13 if you have no books in your house?" Grant said, "We are starting even here in a wealthy community to feed kids at school. We shouldn't be, but parents can't or won't feed them."

### *Assigning Blame*

There was general criticism of the decision-making hierarchy in education that determines the allocation of scarce resources in a manner that fails to meet the

needs of students in the classroom. Barbara's comment that follows shows that interviewees saw a disconnection between educational needs and decision-making:

People that make the decisions, like the school boards, and the department of learning and the provincial politicians, I don't feel that they're in touch with reality in the classroom very much, and I wish that they could be out there and be a little fly on the wall some days and see really what happens every day.

Angie criticized leadership that has made decisions that have resulted in expensive changes later, in particular in the area of technology. Sam decried the shift in program planning away from developing programs targeted to meet the needs of a special group, such as the Integrated Occupational program, to an emphasis in which the education system is

spending too much money on evaluation, testing. That money could be spent in the classroom. We don't have enough to, enough resources to, to meet the needs of the students.

### *Summary*

In this chapter I report the information provided by teachers in the 18 interviews done in the summer of 2002. The interview guide was designed to focus discussion on the value areas identified by teachers and first reported in Chapter Four. The responses reveal that these Alberta teachers very much identify with values that were prevalent in public education from 1935 through 1972. They are aware of differing value-based expectations set by the Klein government and are not inclined to meet them. They described their formation as teachers, how their values

approach had changed over their careers and where they place their focus in practice.

It is clear that the values expressed by the teachers about the *Report Card on*

*Education* in 1996 were reiterated in the 2002 interview responses.

An interpretation of the data from the three phases of the study follows in Chapter Six.

## Chapter Six

### *Interpretation and Discussion of Findings*

Acker (1999) spoke of reform in education as a “slippery term” that connotes improvement, and commented that “resistance on the part of teachers or teacher unions, can be and frequently is constructed as standing in the way of progress” (p. 191). For 11 years through a reform movement, she monitored the work of teachers of one school in England. Still, as I noted earlier, she concluded that imposed reform works in that teachers are forced to either implement the reforms or resign. But, she found that the teachers attempted to make the reforms “fit their vision of what the school should be like” (p. 191). Based on the findings of this study, a similar situation has occurred in Alberta’s public schools.

Teachers, in their responses to both the report cards and the interviews, stated that they would be unable to accommodate indefinitely both the new expectations and the old. Both response groups of selected teachers expressed concerns about the priorities imposed on education, about student needs not being met, about overwork and costs, and about a shift in the purpose of education in society. All of these concerns appear to be rooted in an underlying value base, either in educational values that conflict directly or in conflicting perspectives in relation to one or more of these values.

In this chapter, I pull together the findings to show the areas of overlap and the similarities and differences in value stances, and then interpret those findings. In looking at the findings as a whole, I have been able to bring together my experience with the historical background, with the report card findings, with the interviews



individually and collectively, and with personal experiences to assist in determining the meaning of what was learned. I set out to look at the values of experienced teachers in Alberta and the impact on teacher-work values of re-valuing within education. The findings showed both the progression of certain values in education in Alberta and the response of teachers to that progression. The thematic interpretation also revealed several important considerations with regard to the development of system values, the clash of value systems, and the deliberate use of changing values to manipulate outcomes. These issues and others are discussed later in this chapter.

#### *Consistency in Values*

My review of the commissions and reports that have contributed to shaping education in Alberta showed a movement from the pre-Gorman parent-controlled, work-oriented system with little emphasis on the needs of individuals and minimal input to shaping society as a whole, to a system described by the Worth Report as controlled by educators with input from government and parents, committed to maximizing the individual potential of students' interests and abilities, and a great deal of influence on the maintenance and advancement of society. During the almost forty years between the Gorman and Worth reports, there remained a part of Alberta society opposed to the focus initiated by Gorman. The values of that group remained constant to the point that they were represented in the minority report within the Cameron Report, in the Harder Report and in the reform movement experienced by the teachers in this study. This study showed a similar constancy in the values of the teachers throughout the imposed reform. At least in this regard the lengthy delay in

collecting data and completing this study appear to have worked in my favour. The constancy of the values conflict should not be surprising. The stakes are high. Connell (1993) said, “The education system, then, not only distributes current social assets. It also shapes the kind of society that is coming into being” (p. 14).

#### *Values Threads in the Findings*

As I worked through the various government records and the teacher responses, I found a series of values-based threads in the discussion. These threads provided common ground for discussion where an underlying value was consistent even when the perspective on that value was different. For example, both Gorman and Harder looked at the purpose of schooling and the nature of education for the student. Gorman saw education as a means to a full life, Harder as preparation for work. Gorman saw education centered on the needs of the individual student; Harder saw education centered on the supremacy of the needs of parents, family and society. In each case, the same value is seen from a completely different perspective.

The seven values threaded through the discussion included trust, equality, student-centered education, purpose of education, accountability, foresight, and synergy. These values threads are compared in summary form in Table 18 and in expanded form thereafter. The key words labelling threads have varied meanings so I have labelled them in the summary chart as value indicators rather than as values. Some of the discrepancies in perspective appeared to relate to ideological struggle. Helsby (1999) pointed out that reform does not occur in a vacuum and that:

Major change does not normally occur spontaneously but rather as a result of an ongoing struggle over the definition of meanings and the adoption of particular social identities. (p. 3)

She placed the current reform movement in education in a context of rapid societal change: in technology and in communications, in distrust of professionals who have failed to solve societal problems; in increased instability for families because of employment and even location as people move frequently; and, finally, in a climate of global economic change. Ideology is part of the ongoing struggle in an education system in Alberta that developed slowly and continues to evolve.

**Table 18: Partial Comparison of Findings from Data Sources**

Value Indicator	Gorman 1935	ATA 1958	Cameron 1959	Worth 1972	Harder 1977	ATA 1977	Report Card 1996	Interviews 2002
<b>Trust</b>	In teachers' ability to improve selves and others	In selves and others including authorities	In teachers Individually and collectively	In teachers and local authorities	Little respect for abilities of teachers	In teachers as able professionals	In teachers' abilities to meet student needs	In teacher abilities to meet student needs
<b>Equality</b>	Equal opportunity for students and equal access for rural and urban	Democratic authority to meet varied needs with equal access	Equal opportunity and tolerance	Social responsibility and equal access			Democratic opportunity to equal access	Democratic opportunity to equal access
<b>Student centered education</b>	Educate the whole student, develop potential at each stage of growth, cultivate personal and social character	Maximize individual student potential	Maximize individual student potential; meet varied needs and develop independent thinking skills	Individualization and self-actualization for students	Little respect for needs of individuals, supremacy of parents, family and society	Meeting needs of individuals and putting student developmental needs first	Form/maintain relationships with students, varied forms of achievement and maximized student potential	Teacher-student relationship is core of good teaching, varied forms of achievement and maximized student potential
<b>Purpose of schooling</b>	Means to a full life		Development of courageous, individual conviction	Change agent for society	Preparation for work	Preparation for life	Route to individual betterment	Ensure individual productivity and maximize potential
<b>Accountability</b>	Fair return for the dollar in human development	Exam measurements	Accreditation and exams		Exam and normative measures	Little respect for normative measures		Student needs, diagnostic testing over achievement testing
<b>Foresight</b>	New approaches	New approaches	New approaches	Choosing a future	Limited role, ability to meet needs of institutions	Education as a leader affecting changes in society	Planned change	Build society, see globally, become decision-makers
<b>Synergy</b>	Quick action	From cooperation		Early action	Limited in centralized role	Local and school control		Lost in the disconnection between policy and implementation <sup>1</sup>
<b>Underlying ideology</b>	Humanism	Shared school and societal responsibilities	Respect for various philosophies; champion of none <sup>2</sup>	Humanism, concern for the welfare of mankind	Conservatism			Humanistic teachers opposing conservatism

<sup>1</sup> Interview participants estimated that the needs of up to 40% of students were not being met because of the lack of synergy.

<sup>2</sup> A minority report showed a deep division between humanism vs. conservatism among members of the Commission.

*Value Thread One: Student Centered Education*

The first and possibly most illuminating conclusion one can reach from this data collection is that many teachers accepted or came to accept the values inculcated in the education system after 1935 by Deputy Minister Gorman, as reported in Chapter Four. Gorman said, “The supreme motives in any system of education are character building and the enjoyment of a full life” (Gorman, p. 13). He envisioned a system that developed student potential personally and socially more than as candidates for employment. This study shows that Alberta teachers put student-centered education in the form of individual development for maximized student potential as the driving force behind many of their actions. It has been a consistent value; at each point of review in the study, teachers repeated their student-centered focus.

In all of its submissions, the ATA strongly upheld a belief in student-centered education. For the Cameron Commission, the ATA proposed six principles to guide education. These principles recognize the differing abilities, interests, and needs of individuals and the obligation of education to support individual development. In their comments on the Worth Commission Report, teachers showed support for the person-centered society and the right and the ability of individuals to develop their own set of values. In rejecting the Harder Report the ATA response stressed the need to accommodate individual student motivation, ability and need. They saw the report as advocating that student development be controlled rather than guided.

In both opportunities for individual teachers to provide input to the study, they also maintained student-centered education as a strong value. In their responses

to the Report Card Survey teachers strongly opposed the current shift away from helping students with personal and social concerns. They criticized policies and practices that were leading to special education students going without support, testing or resource help, increased family problems creating increased student needs, dissatisfaction with the level of counselling and support services being cut, and the creation of problems for social services, policing, and health services. In the interviews, as reported in Chapter Five, participants reported the need for strong teacher-student relationships, and the need to teach to student needs rather than to prescribed content. Participants emphasized the role of teachers as professionals who need to know students as individuals, to recognize individual differences and to adapt teaching styles to match learning styles. They saw a major role of education as one of broadening student horizons beyond that of the family or parents so that they will see different points of view, different ideas, and different personalities. While one role for education was acknowledged as preparation for work, it was not seen as paramount to the needs of the individual. Every interview participant identified the teacher-student relationship as the core of good teaching. Indeed, it was reported as the motivator for administrators forsaking the financial rewards of administration to return to the classroom, as a reason for teachers having sought changes in assignment and for the satisfaction that teachers receive from their work. Self-sacrifice was more evident in the interviews than it had been in the Report Card. Of course, the selection of ten participants who had either voluntarily surrendered administration positions to return to the classroom or who had exited teaching before becoming eligible for

pension created a certainty of finding a loss of income for that group. The lack of resentment for that loss is what made it altruism or self-sacrifice.

The value teachers placed on student-centered education in this study is deep-seated in that it developed over a long period of time and has been sustained and propagated by teachers in the field. This study indicates that the influence of colleagues is one of the primary shaping factors for teachers; that would seem to indicate a continuing maintenance of the belief.

*Value Thread Two: Democratic Equality*

A second, closely related value held by teachers in this study was a belief in democratic equality with education as an equalizer. Again, this value had its origins in Gorman's direct attempt to change education. Gorman saw the need to provide "equal opportunity to all and distributing the burden of school costs in an equitable manner" (Gorman, p. 14).

The first two principles espoused in the Alberta Teachers' Association brief to the 1958 Cameron Commission gave support for the right of every child in a democracy to educational opportunities consistent with their ability, needs and interests. Indeed, the teachers saw the meeting of individual needs in this way as the underpinning of democracy, as opposed to meeting the needs of "the economic world" (Alberta Teachers' Association, 1958, p. 13).

The Worth Commission saw as a "citizenship right-recurrent education" which granted "a claim on schooling to each individual, according to his own life-style and his preferences for patterns of work and leisure" (p. 300). In their response, teachers offered strong support for the provision of public services and "the duty of

society to provide educational services for every child” (p. 1).

The ATA response to the Harder Report criticized the report for failing to recognize the needs of a diverse society and for its attempt to isolate the education system from a role in societal change. This was not inconsistent with previously voiced opinions.

Teachers who responded to the 1996 Report Card survey also supported the value of equal access to educational programs and opportunities as a means to achieve democratic equality. They, too, saw public education as an equalizer for those who have special educational or economic needs or who come from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Participants in the interviews shared with me ways that they attempt to overcome the limiting aspects of socio-economic status and socio-cultural beliefs, employing such equalizers as adapted lessons or marking, and provision for the unwillingness or inability of parents to provide food, clothing and other essentials for their children. Participants saw a role for education equalizing people as better decision-makers; as productive, useful and positive members of a democratic society.

#### *Value Thread Three: Educational Achievement and Accountability*

A third value held by teachers is educational achievement. It was revealed as a value for participants in the broadest sense of achievement related to the abilities and needs of individual students and accountability for meeting those individual needs – a sense of mission and vision. Gronn (1999) emphasized the necessity of mission and vision for effective leadership. Colby, Ehrlich, Beaumont and Stephans



(2003) have shown the value of a vision statement as a guiding force for decision-making at California State University. The ATA makes available a process workshop to help school staff create or review their mission and vision statements regularly. Foresight is generally seen as essential; as the adage has it, if you don't know where you are going, how will you know when you get there? Gorman initiated widespread belief in the need to capture individual interest to motivate maximum learning. He deliberately moved education away from job training or "making a living" (p. 13) to the personal needs of students.

The Cameron Commission Report showed education to continue to look very traditional, with achievement accountability through exams, but there was a visible shift to the recognition of differing levels and types of achievement. The report recommended allowing schools to be accredited and thus not needing to administer provincial achievement exams, specifying only curriculum objectives and allowing teachers to set the methodologies and recognition of expanded course options, including separate matriculation and vocational high school streams. Teacher input encouraged the expansion of programs for students accompanied by the increased professionalism of teachers. One of the principles advanced in the ATA brief to the Commission was the need for a stimulating school environment for the development of thinking skills tied to student abilities.

In their response to the Worth Report, the ATA strongly supported teacher acceptance of responsibility and accountability. The ATA proposed not only the elimination of provincial exams in favour of teacher-constructed exams, but also the transfer of responsibility for certification and decertification for either conduct or

competence concerns, to the ATA. The ATA expressed willingness to develop standards and procedures for policing professional practice comparable to other professions.

The Harder Report emphasized accountability in student achievement through standardized testing. The recommendation was soundly rejected by teachers who again held that teachers should set tests with standards appropriate to their students. Teachers subscribe to educational achievement as a value from the perspective of achievement meaningful to the student needs and interests.

Teachers responding to the Report Card survey opposed limitations being placed on opportunities for students and the narrowing of ways for students to demonstrate achievement. In their view, recent reforms in education failed to recognize the importance of varied forms of achievement and instead created winners and losers on a prescribed achievement scale.

The interviewees recognized students as successful when they demonstrate achievement/learning in the liberal arts, the fine arts and areas of personal development that are not measurable through standardized achievement testing. Acceptable achievement, to the teachers, was what brought out the highest possible achievement from each student in a way that suits that student. They were not supportive of a predetermined numeric scale as the primary measure of student achievement without respect for individual strengths and stages of development.

The contrast in perspectives on foresight revealed in the study was tied to the view of the purpose of education. Those like Harder, who want education to be utilitarian and to serve the interests of business, are less interested in foresight than

those whose views are expressed in the Worth Report, who see education as preparation for life. One may conclude that those who do not value foresight have their desire for change firmly fixed in conservative views that reject many humanistic goals.

*Value Thread Four: The Purpose of Schooling*

Gorman deliberately shifted the purpose of schooling in Alberta from assisting people in making a living to that of being a means to achieving a full life for individual citizens. There was an internal consistency in all of the teacher responses that showed they value the way the public school system builds better-developed individual citizens.

All of the teacher submissions and responses to reports promoted the responsibility of education to individual students. When the Cameron Commission in 1959 expressed the purpose of education as the development of “courageous, individual conviction,” (p. 44) teachers were in agreement. One of the six major principles of the teachers’ brief expressed the need for education to develop skills (including academics), attitudes (including citizenship), and appreciations (including the arts). Teachers approved the Worth Commission’s (1972) advocacy of person-centered education, with its definition of the purpose of education as “socially responsible individualization” (p.45) with four functions (pp. 51-55): (i) individualization or self-actualization; (ii) preservation or development of a commitment to morality; (iii) anticipation or improvement of the individual’s ability to discern and influence future events; and (iv) motivation or maintenance of each individual’s desire to continue to learn. They agreed with the role of education to

“enhance creative capacity and personal autonomy” (p. 4). Then, the ATA castigated Harder’s 1977 report for promoting education as preparation for work, and rejected its belief that social development of children should be left more to the parents.

Both in the Report Card Responses and the interviews, teachers showed support for education as a way of maximizing individual potential. The 1996 Report Card respondents noted that public education enfranchises those who have special educational or economic needs or who come from disadvantaged backgrounds, and provides increased learning opportunities for all students. Interview participants in 2002 saw the ability of public education to broaden access to learning on a global scale, to provide opportunities for those with differing intellectual or economic advantages, and as a way to help individuals override other influences in society.

*Value Thread Five: Trust in Teachers*

Gorman grounded his reform of education in the improvement of qualifications for teachers. He saw the possibility of every teacher soon thereafter having at least grade 12 to become a teacher. He expressed trust in the abilities of teachers in the “cultivation of personal and social character” (p. 13) of students.

The Cameron Commission accepted the recommendation of the ATA to give teachers both increased professional status and greater input to educational decisions. The Worth Commission stated, “Next to the learner the teacher is the most important person in schooling” (p. 237). The Commission showed faith in the ability of teachers both to have input in and to implement policy decisions. The ATA response to the Commission took offence at what it perceived to be a slight, and criticized the report for what it perceived to be the recurring implication that

Our present public education system is on the verge of catastrophe and that teachers are primarily to blame for this. The teachers of Alberta categorically deny both these assumptions. (First Submission, p. 1)

The response criticized other decision-makers for not having responded to many teacher suggestions in previous years of changes that would have improved education; changes that were beyond the control of the teachers. In its response, the ATA expressed great faith in the ability of Alberta's teachers to meet the needs of children, to supervise paraprofessional staff and to police the profession for both conduct and competence.

Individual teachers also expressed faith and confidence in themselves and their colleagues. Respondents to the 1996 Report Card Survey in every riding commented on their personal effort and those of other teachers to put student needs ahead of their own, resulting in the sacrifice of the teacher's physical, emotional and family needs. They voiced a strong trust in teachers' desire to stay the course of focusing on student needs, and recognition of the increasing toll that course was taking. That trust in self and others remained a constant in the teacher interviews of 2002. Participants expressed great confidence that those who are in the classroom were doing the best that they could and that decision-making breaks down only at the upper levels of administration and government. As Alma said, "the more distant you get from the school building, the larger your lack of understanding of what happens on a day-to-day basis." Teachers showed great faith in their own ability to meet the needs of students when they had the resources. Teachers I interviewed saw themselves and their colleagues as nurturing the students while they facilitated

learning in a role that has shifted away from teaching content to being teaching specialists who develop the whole person – cognitively, spiritually and physically.

*Value Thread Six: Synergy*

Synergy is the combined action of one or more groups focused on a common goal or goals. In the midst of a major depression, Gorman proposed a system that brought teachers, parents and school officials, even at the provincial level, together in creating a new culture of education aimed at creating a better life for all. The Cameron Commission continued a synergistic drive toward improvement of society through improvement of the individual. The Commission rejected the concept of seeking any one set of ends in favour of a system of local and centralized control with faith in teachers and a combination of accredited schools and provincial exams, varied programs, tolerance and inclusion of minority groups. It was very much a report based on synergy getting strength from all.

The Worth Commission also proposed an education system driven by widespread public consultation and involvement. Once again the Commission saw the value of synergy in setting the goals of education and providing the resources and support for decisions to be made at school and district levels as well as provincially. Indeed the Commission encouraged reducing centralized control in favour of increased local control. The teacher response also promoted cooperation at all levels with increased decision-making responsibilities at the school and district levels. It recognized the need for close cooperation between school and community agencies and direct links in planning for educational, social and economic decision-making such that work for the same goals. On one other point, the teacher response criticized the Worth Report

in a way that showed the teachers' belief in the essentialness of the teacher-student relationship. The teachers criticized the suggestion that technology could be more than another tool for teachers to use. Their response was that "schooling is essentially an interpersonal matter" (Second Submission, p. 6).

The Harder Report was a response to conservative demands for increased control of government and favoured sections of society. Harder went away from synergy to recommend reduced involvement of the educational professionals in decision-making. The categorical rejection of the Harder Report by teachers reflected their continued belief in a synergistic system of education and their rejection of control of the system by any one group. They continued to support local control, meeting diverse needs, and a role for the school and teachers as leaders in developing society.

By the time the Report Card survey was conducted in 1996, the teachers' belief in synergy was so ingrained that many teachers found it difficult to understand that everyone in society did not share the belief and, particularly, that it was not shared by government. Many responded with cynicism and despair about what they saw as lies, manipulation and publicity seeking by their political leaders. Still, despite their frustration and recognition that their goals no longer matched the government-set goals, many others suggested that if only the Premier could see what they were doing, he would be right alongside them in their goals. Some tried to rationalize the necessity for the cuts in educational service as driven by financial need. Others decried the differences and indicated that the long-term consequences

would harm society. A belief in synergy was clear; equally clear was the recognition that it was disappearing.

By 2002, the teachers interviewed recognized that synergy was gone because they saw a disconnection between their own beliefs and the beliefs of others, notably the decision-makers in the upper levels of school systems and government. They criticized the increased competition and decreased sharing brought about by changes in education. They criticized the disconnection between their views and those of education leaders in the allocation of resources now done in a way, they believed, that left needs unfulfilled for up to 40% of the students because the system had shifted more to meet the demands of business and job training. A high level of frustration and tension thus prevailed.

*Value Thread Seven: Foresight*

Showing foresight means to demonstrate prudent care and provision for the future. Gorman rejected the education system of his time, that he saw as emphasizing the preparation of students for their immediate needs, in favour of one that identified and maximized their potential to live a fuller life as individuals. Teachers were ascribed a central role in a program of planned societal change to prepare individuals to face a different and better future. The Cameron Commission faced a clear choice: that of an education system moving forward as a builder in society or one retreating to a role in the maintenance of existing institutions. The Commission demonstrated foresight and proposed a system that met diverse needs with varied courses, multiple streams and tolerance. The teacher input not only demonstrated foresight but also showed a belief in the need to develop foresight in students. To this end they



considered dozens of changes they could make in the education system and some that could be made in the larger society. For example, the teachers showed a desire to work with students in choosing and broadening their goals in life through career education and guidance. They also recommended broadening societal views on the value of technical jobs.

The Worth Commission, too, demonstrated and espoused foresight. The Commission spent a great deal of energy forecasting the future. It saw the role of education in helping individuals build skills to “attain and sustain a human and humane existence” (p. 52) in a rapidly changing world. The Commission identified anticipation of the future as one of the core underpinnings of basic education. The teacher response strongly supported the foresight shown by the Worth Commission in making recommendations for the future and in supporting the role of education in developing student foresight.

Harder showed no interest in the cultivation of foresight in education, or as a goal of education. He proposed delimiting the role of education to that of meeting the needs of existing institutions, especially the family and business. Teachers, in his view, would be essentially technicians preparing students for work. The teachers’ response to his report showed strong belief in the value of foresight in education as they continued to see a need for their involvement in developing student abilities to face all of the demands of society. They rejected the proposal to delimit their role to one of meeting immediate demands.

Many teachers responding to the 1996 Report Card survey noted the long-term effects of cuts and inadequacies in the system. They criticized the changes in

education for a lack of foresight. By 2002, the teachers interviewed spoke of the reforms as short-changing some students to meet the needs of others, of preparing students for short-term job opportunities rather than long-term life skills, of decisions made for political expediency that were costly at a later date, and of the withdrawal of funding for program development. Again, with these criticisms they were seeing a lack of foresight.

### *Underlying Considerations*

The seven key values threads weave together to form a strong belief system. Reflection on that system reveals a number of underlying considerations related to the formation and nature of the beliefs. The two key influences on formation appear to have been religion and colleagues. The nature of the beliefs is humanistic and democratic, with elements of altruism and respect for self and others.

### *Formation of Work Values*

The participants in the interviews strongly expressed the value change that had occurred for them either through their acceptance of the values of older colleagues or through discussion of change initiatives with colleagues. Sixteen interviewees acknowledged direct learning; and 11 identified specific role models. Six of the participants mentioned entering teaching as a career with views that were curriculum-bound and achievement-focused and acknowledged abandoning those views in favour of more humanistic views.

The success of the current government initiative for change in education is likely to be affected by the power of collegial relationships. This study supports Navran's (1992) view that the individual has great power in the workplace where

individual values govern action more than employer regulations. Responses to both the 1996 Report Card questions and the 2002 interview questions show that participants appear to be acting against what they see to be the ascending values of the system. They acknowledge being more affected by their colleagues than any other influence, colleagues who share their values.

Still, circumstances in society, especially in communications, have changed enormously in recent years. Menter, Muschamp, Nicholls, Ozga and Pollard (1997) examined the shift in professionalism within the public sector as no more than the latest redefinition in a constantly shifting relationship. As state activity changes, so shall the role of the state professional. They noted that:

The education workforce has played a historic role in appearing to allocate life chances through the objective allocation of educational value. Teachers, and other public sector workers, have interpreted this legitimacy function as offering the possibility to redress inequality and have pursued that possibility. Such aims have provided motivation and sustenance in their working lives. Their removal requires a redefinition and refocusing of the labour of teaching (p. 57).

If Menter et al. are correct, the experiences reported by teachers in this study and the reforms in education may be little more than the natural pains of a growth process. Even so, the process is part of a larger socio-political process; the school they were describing is simply at an earlier stage in the process. In the same book, Apple calls upon researchers not to forget the multiple relations of power, the possibility of forces operating in opposing ways, and not to “assume that education is simply a

passive actor” (p. 222). In his view, education has the ability to contribute both positive and negative forces in the ongoing struggle. Education is not just an organizational system subject to change by the larger democratic system, but it is a player in the larger system. This has implications for the actions of teachers individually and collectively in terms of applying the learning from this study in their plans. Whether the current group of older teachers is as able to pass its values on to younger colleagues, as were their predecessors, remains an open question.

Religion was also identified as a major shaping influence for many of the interviewed group, although none of the questions led participants to specifically discuss their religious beliefs. Still, religion appeared in each group of participants as a shaping influence. It was described both for its influence in personal development and for its use as a measurement tool for determining right and wrong actions. Several participants mentioned being grounded by their religion.

#### *Humanistic Values are Prevalent*

Perhaps the most obvious result from both the Report Cards of 1996 and the interviews of 2002 is the staggering degree of success of Gorman’s plan to create an educational system based on humanistic values. The power of the change model initiated by Deputy Minister Gorman is evident. The teacher values revealed in this study are much closer to those of Deputy Minister Gorman in 1935 than they are to the espoused values of Alberta Learning since 1994. My earlier reading about the goals of the progressive movement in education had led me to believe that it was far less successful than this study would seem to indicate. The humanistic values of teachers appear to have helped education to be centered on the worth of the student

as an individual. Humanism and the acceptance of humanist values are central to the question of student-centered education. They are also part of the controversy. The Gorman and Worth reports made no attempt to tone down their humanistic orientation. The Harder Report, in contrast, was decidedly anti-humanistic in favour of utilitarian conservatism. This value shift progressed to the point where it appears in regulatory documents such as the Alberta Government's *Education Business Plan* (1994) and in the writings of major education writers such as Lawton (1995) who railed against the progressive humanist tendencies of the educational bureaucracy. Older teachers appear to have adopted Gorman's goals.

In true "progressive" fashion, Gorman set out in 1935 to create a system that centered on maximizing individual potential and levelling differences between individuals and groups within society. He sought to overcome rural-urban differences and disparities and to accommodate varying socio-cultural beliefs. Despite Gorman's goals and the congruent values of teachers, traditional conservatism in the form of government program standards and testing programs has been equally consistently maintained. Except during the brief period in the 1970s when standardized achievement testing was eliminated, tight economic and cultural controls and explicitly defined standards have been upheld by standardized testing at more than one grade level.

The teachers' stance on valued educational goals and outcomes has been consistent. Input to the Cameron Commission, the Worth Commission and the response to the Harder Report was student-centered. In 1993, the Alberta Teachers' Association published a collection of anecdotes from teachers entitled *Trying to*

*Teach*. This was followed in 1995 by *Trying to Teach: Necessary Conditions*, in 2002 by *Falling through the Cracks* and in 2003 by *Trying to Teach, Trying to Learn: Listening to Students*. Each of these four publications reiterated teachers' commitment above all to the needs of students in schools while decrying their inability to meet those needs in the face of insufficient resources and inappropriate goals. Over 1,200 teachers brought forth stories for *Falling through the Cracks*. Clearly then, teachers in Alberta have strongly voiced their belief that education must center on the needs of students.

The literature appears to indicate that the educational reforms currently being experienced in Alberta cannot help but shift the system's focus away from students. Helsby (1999) cited a head teacher who, during the reforms in Britain, said that as a result of the constant need to scramble for funding and resources, "The interest in the kids was secondary" (p. 138). Apple (1993) noted, too, that the intensifying workload has caused some teachers to accept packaged learning that marginalizes their "own curriculum autonomy" (p. 137). Also acknowledging his humanistic views, he noted that the context of schooling for a child must be seen in the larger context of that student's life and schooling. In his report on a project that gave some students a special week of growth and self-discovery, he asked,

Should we have done what we did? Should we have opened these young women up to the sense of what they could do, to reawaken hopes and a sense of self-worth, only to have the door slammed shut again before we and they could go forward and build upon these initial awakenings? (p. 150)

Apple expressed the view that despite success for some students, the bigger context of schooling for others guaranteed failure and may be seen by some people as having been made worse by the brief brush with a vision of what could be. It appears that he believed they had done the right thing, but he left it up to his readers to decide. The teachers in this study, indeed the teachers in Alberta, do not appear to share the doubts expressed by Apple. And, if the most powerful shaping influence is truly colleagues, particularly senior colleagues, they may have inculcated those values and goals throughout the system. Only time will tell if the change model initiated by the current government will be as successful.

#### *Teachers Acceptance of Conflicting Views*

The terms “democracy” and “democratic” are applied to a variety of societies even though they contain some opposing beliefs. Even within our own society there is no clear agreement on how democracy applies to every individual. I noted earlier that the concept of equal rights for individuals is divisible. I used the example of rights in justice where a low-income drifter may experience the same justice system as an O.J. Simpson with quite different results. One may be overwhelmed by the resources of the system. The other may have the resources to overwhelm the system. Do they truly have equal rights? Equal opportunity? Equal access? Are rights to education different? Gandin and Apple in Apple et al. (2003) looked at the role of the school in Porto Alegre, Brazil, and described it as:

not only as a way of giving an impoverished population a quality education that will enable them to have better chances in the paid labour market and at the same time operate as empowered citizens, but also because it has

generated structured forms of “educating” the communities both for organizing around and discussing their problems *and* for acting on their own behalf through the channels of participation and deliberation. (p.218)

This descriptive paragraph could have been written about our society when Gorman initiated his reforms in 1935. Although society has changed, the issues of a labour pool, of citizen empowerment, action and status improvement continue to be at the heart of ideological views of the world today.

In this study, the teachers interviewed were as ideologically tied to their beliefs as those who appear to have set out to change them. There is a wide separation between the beliefs expressed by teachers on the Report Cards and in the interviews, and the beliefs expressed in the Harder Report of 1977 and reflected in the government initiatives since 1994. Each group appears to be on a mission with quite different goals. That ideological rigidity has the potential to undermine the credibility of both groups.

One control mechanism adopted by the government is standardized achievement testing, yet it does not appear to be highly effective. Participants in all the interview groups in this study decried the ineffectiveness of the tests for meeting the needs of students and expressed their continued participation in doing those things that meet the needs of individuals anyway. Effectiveness was acknowledged to the extent that some noted that the content taught by some teachers is dictated by the tests. As a control mechanism, it is grounded in support in all of the reports reviewed and even, although with less enthusiasm, in the teacher input to the reports.



The opposition becomes strong only at the point where the emphasis on the achievement exams increased as a content control mechanism.

Stout et al. (1994) included the question, “What should be the purposes of schooling?” (p. 5), as one of several longstanding unresolved issues in educational debate. Apple (1993) wrote about the reform movement that occurred in the United States and Britain somewhat earlier than in Canada. He wrote about the pressures from those with economic interests who believed that:

If schools and teachers and their curricula were more tightly controlled, more tightly linked to the needs of business and industry, more technically oriented, with more stress on workplace values and traditional norms and dispositions, then the problems of achievement, of unemployment, of international economic competitiveness, of the disintegration of the inner city, and so on, would supposedly largely disappear. (p. 118)

Teachers in this study attributed the same inordinate influence to the business sector in the current reform movement in Alberta. They rejected both business views and business influence. Fennell (1994) pointed out the influence that the business sector had on legislators in the Government of Alberta as early as 1972. As discussed in Chapter Four, others showed the more concrete side of business influence later, with business plans for education, and business community members sitting on influential policy groups. There can be little doubt that the reform process in education in Alberta was greatly influenced by the business sector, with a mind to having its own interests satisfied.

Hodgkinson (1991) traced the evolution of Western Education through the questions of who should rule and why. He covered religious reasons, economic reasons, and socio-political reasons. Religion, he noted, was the driving force for education for many years. In the interview section of this study, several teachers identified their religious beliefs as critical to their formation as a teacher. If the conservative views of Tim La Haye (as cited by Apple, 2003) are typical, they indeed show fear of many of the aspects that teachers in this study found provided worth to public education. La Haye said, "Modern public education is the most dangerous force in a child's life: religiously, economically, patriotically, and physically" (p. 30). The view stated by Andrew, one of the teachers interviewed for the study, summed up the sharply contrasting views of teachers in the study. When speaking about expanding children's views beyond the parents' views to different ideas and personalities, he said, "That's what public education does better than anything else." These contrasting views show very different concepts of the purpose of education. Still, the views of both conservatives and teachers center on the role of the teacher. Connell said simply, "Teachers are central to what happens in education" (p. 57). The Worth Report charged that teachers increasingly answered to "guilds" rather than to "the institutions that pay their salaries" and concluded, "The concept of teaching as a public service is disappearing" (p. 194). McLaren (1989) said, "Nowhere does the challenge of shaping social history, fashioning new cultural narratives, and rethinking the nature and purpose of schooling become more urgent than in the struggle to define the civic responsibility of the teacher" (p. 240).

There are massive contradictions that appear even in teacher views on meeting the expectations of others. At one and the same time they decry the need to be all things to all people while they expand their own programs, compete with other schools through the constant add-on of services, spend their own time, money and emotional capital and bend all procedural rules to meet the needs of individuals. They complain about the setting of inappropriate procedures and standards using business plans and business tools and, at the same time, trivialize it with attitudes such as that expressed by Breanne who said, "It just doesn't work like that." They see the value of public education as a tool to develop global realization and a worldview at the same time as they cling to conventionality and homogeneity in school standards and a view of democratic equality to level differences, expand access, and create opportunities.

Teachers appear to hold very stable middle class beliefs about society and the way to behave within society. The interviews showed that these lead to value clashes with those who hold other views in society, including those who are completely irresponsible and condone theft, lying, cheating, bullying and other actions generally unacceptable to middle class society. They also lead to clashes with some who want to see their children rise above others in society and are willing to harm or sacrifice the interests of others to privilege their own children. The clashes have arisen at this time because educational reforms have given increased importance to individual parent opinions and choice. The clashes still raise the question about the role of education in sustaining and propagating middle class beliefs.

Middle class beliefs were valued at a time when much of society was rising in social status within the middle class, opportunity was there for all who increased their education, and financial reward was forthcoming. Are they still valued when much of society is well-educated, well-off and competing for improvement in new fields against the very people with whom they are living, working and studying? Is there an obligation for more flexibility? Has the mission of education really changed or become very unclear? This study does not provide answers to those questions. It does provide some understanding and an awareness of a need for further study.

### *The Impact of Altruism*

Every one of the teachers interviewed identified the huge personal costs that accompany being a teacher. The 1996 Report Card received similar input. In the interviews, administrators and teachers alike told of the scope of their financial contribution and the enormity of the personal, emotional, health costs they are currently enduring. The willingness to endure these costs provides a test of the enduring nature of individual beliefs and thereby contributes to the identification of values. Individual, voluntary contributions in the form of personal, emotional, and health costs are sustaining progressive humanist aspects in the system and preventing a shift to a fiscally conservative, outcomes-based education system. Teachers continue to be dismissive of the costs to themselves and to feel they are balanced by the returns in student success. They continue to have faith in one another and their abilities. George, for example, said, "I have faith in the teachers' dedicated effort and professional dialogue."

Yet, there is potential for the altruistic giving of teachers to disappear. Participants in the 1996 Report Card tempered their concerns with a strong belief that seeing what was happening would bring the decision-makers around. One of the most frequent anonymous comments was "If Ralph could only see what was happening." Interview participants expressed even more strongly the feeling of being disrespected and devalued, but were more cynical and less likely to believe that awareness on the part of government would be a cure. Only one interviewee, Barbara, seemed to hold the belief that there could be a difference achieved by educating the decision-makers. Others saw hardship arising from differing values. Cynicism was evident. Angie said, "Our politicians, they just want to see the glory." At this time, teachers continue to believe that if they ceased their personal provision of extra supplies and resources, students would suffer. Teachers collectively may want to quantify just how much is being put into the system by teachers individually.

#### *Ease of Manipulation*

The teachers' focus on the child and willingness to sacrifice may have been harmful to themselves. It is perhaps not surprising that as long as teachers are willing to contribute time, money and energy over and above their contractual requirements, it will be accepted. The willingness of teachers to put students' needs ahead of personal needs makes it possible to manipulate and exploit the group. That may be what school trustees and government personnel were doing when they emphasized the professionalism of teaching as a vocation and the need to put children first, at the same time as they "de-skilled" teaching and cut services to children. The inconsistency in those two moves begs the question of motivation. The teachers

interviewed said they have responded by trying to substitute for the missing resources and services on their own initiative. The effects on teachers of changes in the 1990s in the education system are evident in teachers' comments that reveal inconsistencies between current outcome priorities and the value priorities of teachers, and uncertainty about possible desired outcomes from education. This incongruence with their values appears to leave teachers feeling weakened in terms of their ability to act, and confused about their mission. This position is not tenable in the long term.

The literature suggests that the reforms in education are destructive to synergy. While this study shows that the synergy between teachers and government was damaged by the reforms, it continues to show teachers expressing faith in one another, and a confidence in the beliefs and actions of other teachers. This faith, too, may be eroded over time. Menter et al. (1999), in their study of two schools, found that the culture of collaboration had "been eroded and replaced by a culture of uncertainty and alienation" (p. 81).

Apple (1993) concluded that:

A community, no matter how carefully nurtured and no matter how politically astute and committed its members, does not sit isolated from the contradictory economic, political and cultural dynamics of the institutions within which it resides. (p. 160)

Apple is ultimately an activist. He advocates taking the boundaries of community far beyond the concrete walls of the organization. He believes that it is the social movements that will move society away from exploitation and domination.

Education resides in several institutions, including democracy. In a democracy there is presumably an opportunity for a group of like-minded people to build synergy with other like-minded groups and organizations.

*Feelings of Disrespect and Being Devalued*

The values of teachers appear to be incongruent with pressures being placed on them. Indeed, teachers' values appear at times to be disregarded. Teachers want to meet individual needs; instead, the current thrust is for standardization. Teachers want resources to make changes and expand teaching styles; instead, the budget is reduced and costs are transferred to the teachers. Teachers want to meet goals in the needs identified for their individual students; instead, the expectations of business and government for job skills, including low-level training and technology skills are being emphasized. Teachers want flexibility and control to make professional decisions; instead, control is being lost in increased accountability for prescribed forms of achievement. This evident incongruence of values strongly suggests the conclusion that the decision-makers in education dismiss the values of teachers. Since the values of teachers formed a large part of the decision-making, as seen in the Gorman, Cameron and Worth Commission reports, this current dismissal is nothing less than a devaluing of teachers. It remains to be seen if this is a society-wide devaluing of teachers or if it is confined only to government. At the time of the Harder Report in 1977, the incongruence was minimal and a devaluing process was just beginning. Looking back, it seems hard to understand that teachers, and notably leaders in the teachers' association, did not see the Harder Report as a harbinger of things to come and act accordingly. They did not.

It is unlikely that such a signal could be missed today. The changes of the 1990s have created a teaching force that appears to be aware of the wishes of the conservative elements of society and is prepared to resist. Hall (1995) believed that there is a strong link between the longevity of an organization and how its foundational values allow individual growth within the organization. If he is correct, there is opportunity for the very dismissal of teacher values to undermine the teachers' organization and therefore the continued existence of the current power dimensions.

Gorman expressed trust in the ability of teachers to improve themselves and their students. The Cameron Report reinforced that faith. The Worth Report offered support for the expanded role of teachers and help for them to upgrade their skills and abilities. Teachers' input to the Cameron Commission, the Worth Commission, the Harder Report and in publications such as *Trying to Teach* (1993) has been student centered. Teachers in this study reported that they have made intensive self-sacrifice for students.

Ingersoll (2003) showed that teacher performance justified the trust placed in them. In writing about the reforms in Britain, he said,

There is an irony here: treating teaching as low-skill work creates a situation requiring resourcefulness, initiative, thought, judgement; in short, it turns teaching into highly skilled work...working overtime to make things work in an organizational setting that may have denied them the power and resources to adequately accomplish their tasks in the first place. (p. 188)



That same irony with regard to Alberta teachers is apparent in this piece of research. Many teachers reported having what they saw as unreasonable expectations placed on them and having to be creative and resourceful while working long hours in order to succeed. Ingersoll said that the combination of “unlimited demands and limited resources can foster competition and conflict between teachers and distrust between teachers and administrators” (p. 188).

Education is inextricably linked with power. Apple (1993) neatly encapsulated opposing views of school as “a vast engine of democracy: opening horizons, ensuring mobility, and so on” versus “a form of social control, or, perhaps, as the embodiment of cultural dangers” (p. 46). He said it is “naïve to think of the school curriculum as neutral knowledge” (p. 46). He pointed to the number of parents in recent years who are removing their children from public schooling, even for home schooling, as indicative that trust in teachers is not automatic.

Apple (1993) suggested that it is only “possible to understand why teachers are subject to greater control and to greater governmental intervention *and what the effects of such mandates are*” by looking at “Who is doing the teaching?” (p. 122). He noted that gender cannot be ignored; the greater the number of women in the teaching force the greater the external intervention. That intervention has often been for the purpose of controlling decision-making and removing the need for higher-level skills involving the application of judgement. Ingersoll spoke to the issue of disrespect shown teachers by de-skilling the profession. In his opinion it “could become a self-fulfilling prophecy” (p. 188) through cutting costs and making

replacement easier while it creates turnover. This is one of the contradictory trends in educational reform.

Acker (1999) developed an ethnographic picture of teacher-work in a British school that Hargreaves described in the Introduction of her book as showing:

how teachers' caring orientations and the resource-starved contexts in which they work can convert the virtues of care into the draining excesses of self-sacrifice. (p. x)

The same ironic picture is apparent in this study as the teachers in both the Report Card responses and the interviews revealed huge amounts of willing self-sacrifice. It also revealed a strong and steady well-organized teachers' group, possessing consistent values and beliefs and a desire to advance those beliefs, thus challenging the reforms.

### *Summary*

In Chapter Six I drew together the findings of all three stages of the study to position the beliefs of teachers in a broader picture of continual reform. Teachers' values and attendant beliefs were shown not only to be affected by the reform but also to be part of it. The historical background, the Report Card findings, and the interviews were brought together in reflections centering on seven work values of teachers around which controversy, ranging from debate to open confrontation, is influencing ongoing reform of public education in Alberta. The ability of senior teachers to maintain consistent values in the face of enormous pressure was explored as the clash of one ideology against another.

## Chapter Seven

### *Summary, Reflections and Implications*

I started with four major and four sub-questions. All have been answered. The first asked, “How can an apparent re-valuing of education in Alberta be demonstrated?” By showing the consistency of teachers’ values to 2002 with the values that were built into education by the initiatives of Gorman and reinforced by the Cameron Report and Worth Report, I demonstrated that teachers in Alberta subscribe to a set of values that, at one point, were consistent with government values. By showing the values of the Harder Report and the teacher objections to mandated changes resulting from the Alberta Learning business plans and regulations, I demonstrated that the values of government shifted and that attempts were made to impose actions driven by those changed values on teachers. Only partial success is visible. Table 18 provides a summary of the values espoused at each stage.

The second question asked, “Is there an apparent re-valuing of Alberta teachers and their work by teachers themselves?” Instead of re-valuing themselves, Alberta teachers have been inclined to criticize educational leaders for trying to impose what they see as inappropriate values. Teachers who responded to the Report Card and those who were interviewed for this research were critical of government leadership for its failure to value teachers and students. They report having continued to act consistently with their long-held values, even in the face of expectations based on different values.

The third question asked, “What tensions have arisen from any perceived re-

valuing by the provincial government?” Teachers responded to the Harder Report, to the Report Card and to the interview questions with strong statements about changes in their teacher-student relationships and the de-skilling of teachers. They told of great costs to themselves in continuing to provide services they valued in a system that targets standardization, cost-cutting and the reduction of services for students.

The fourth research question asked, “What implications for students result from the re-valuing of teachers by government?” For teachers, the essence of teaching and the essence of education grow from the teacher-student relationship. Their responses to Harder, to the Report Card questions and in the interviews indicated a belief that the reforms devalued both teachers and students.

#### *Personal Reflections*

As a person who works with the employment concerns of teachers, the values or the issues that raised tensions for teachers did not surprise me. The opportunity to discuss these issues in depth with individuals, and to lay out in this study the sources of tension, has helped me to re-examine my own understanding of the forces driving teachers, particularly of the values that teachers form and sustain. I had sensed that teachers’ values were under attack by the reform movement but had no way of identifying which values or even which parts of the reform attack. Understanding the bigger picture will permit informed choice of action and targeted responses to those changes that will have a long-term effect for me, for teachers and for students.

The questions posed at the beginning of the study were directly related to issues I have struggled with in experiencing the reform movement myself. I believe few teachers have had the opportunity to place the reforms in the wider context.

Certainly I had not. It is possible that most teachers today have never heard of Gorman. Again, I had not, and yet he had a tremendous influence in shaping the values of Alberta teachers. When teachers agreed with the values of the system he was promoting, they carried them forward themselves.

Which revelation was most important? For me to discover how ideologically rigid the teachers are in terms of the values they hold was revealing. The teachers appeared to be so convinced they had the truth that they failed to understand why others did not see the wisdom of their beliefs. Right or wrong, the ideological way in which teachers' values are expressed makes them vulnerable to those who are looking for rational underpinnings. Those values must be examined for their rational underpinnings.

Discovering the long-term nature of educational disagreement at the values level has been enlightening. Some of the organized opponents of humanistic education have been building their opposition for more than half a century. Their arguments are well financed, well developed and widely spread. Is it reasonable to think that the tension of conflicting values is sustainable in the face of such organizational commitment to changing education values? It would seem possible that just as the conservative group harboured its values during many years of isolation from influence, so the humanistic values may not be totally eradicated by current reform.

Equally enlightening was the reflection of several interview participants who identified the influence of more experienced teachers as being pivotal in the development of their humanistic beliefs. Many of the teachers I interviewed did not

enter education with a humanistic perspective on such matters as student achievement. They developed them as older teachers showed them what works. When I look back, I realize that I personally experienced much of the same change. Is this phenomenon still active? Are younger teachers still undergoing change in the same way? Again, it would seem likely that older teachers, if aware of their influence, could use it to some effect.

Smyth et al. (2000) offered a call to action when they said,

If educators do not engage in a more sophisticated struggle against the onslaught of economic rationalism into schooling, then we are doomed to become increasingly dependent on the ideas and directions of “experts” far removed from school communities. (p. 179)

In their view, there is a need to develop “counter-publics” and to keep alive a sense of egalitarianism. The current practice of accommodation by fitting changes into established practices will, in their view, only “confirm teachers as technicians” (p. 179). Teachers in Alberta have barely begun – but perhaps it is significant that they have begun – to form the alliances with groups that could be “counter-publics” which are exactly those groups able to press for egalitarianism. It may be necessary to look in places and to groups that may formerly have been seen as segregationist and elitist, to find allies interested in meeting differences. The Alberta Teachers’ Association tried unsuccessfully in 1994 to establish a definition of teaching that was encompassing and dynamic. It may be necessary to press on again.

*An Overview of Two Models of Change*

Two models of educational change offered in the literature can be applied to this study in a way that offers insights into where and how to apply pressure that will affect the speed and nature of change. The organizational life cycle offered by Cada, Fitz, Foley, Giardino and Lichtenberg (1979) and the continuum of paradigms offered by Manzer (1994) both leave room for belief that no change is complete or impervious to further influence.

*Cada's life cycle of an organization.*

Cada et al. (1979, p. 53 ff.), although writing about religious communities, described six stages of an organizational life cycle that are visible in this study in a way that increases understanding while answering some questions and raising new ones.

The first stage is a foundation period in which the vision and values of the foundational leader meet the needs of the support group and are very often adopted by the group. One could look on Gorman as the foundational leader within Alberta. This study clearly shows the adoption of his vision and values by many of the teachers of Alberta in the 1930s, through to the present day.

The second stage is an expansion period in which the foundational values are institutionalized as norms and documented; the infrastructure expands, management skills become necessary and delegation becomes important. The Cameron Commission rejected the values of organizational critics, institutionalized much of the work done to that point, and pointed the way for an infrastructure based on secure management with strong role delegation to teachers.

The Worth Commission marked the third stage, a stabilization period in which society feels its needs are being met; a stage that leads to the creation of a stable organization with an emphasis on conformity, unity and loyalty. Despite the signs that some people within society were not content, the Worth report and what followed it, including the *Goals of Schooling*, created in teachers a sense of security and a belief that they were taking the lead in meeting the goals of democracy – they were the champions of societal beliefs.

The fourth stage, a period of breakdown, is connected to the ascendance of different societal or cultural values that create a crisis of belief, confusion of values, loss of creativity and loyalty, and increased physical or emotional suffering for some people. The Harder Report of 1977 marked the beginning of this stage. The existing sense of security up to that point was so strong that the prospect of radical change was largely ignored. The breakdown period saw cutbacks in funding and challenges to the way educational services were provided. It could be argued that teachers failed to see this happening despite the never-ending criticism by conservative forces.

The fifth period is a critical period in which individuals in the organization experience “stress and doubt,” until the group loses its sense of “identity and purpose” (Cada, p. 58). The organization must then cease to exist, scale down operations, or renew itself by leaders making difficult choices. This study grew from one assessment of that type of choice fairly early in the process. Comparison of the data collected at each end of the long break between stages of this study shows that the creation of difficult choices was continuing through 2002.



The last stage is a reorganization period in which leadership redefines the foundational values to create a new product or organization appropriate to new societal and cultural values. Alberta may be entering this period. Table 19 shows the progression and major element of each period in the life cycle.

Hall posited that the longevity of an organization depends on the existence, in the foundational values, of values that “sponsor, encourage and support new ideas in the first place” (1995, p. 191). It remains to be seen in Alberta whether new values are emerging from the foundational values, or if antagonistic values are being forced on to existing values. Either way, there is plenty that needs to be studied as we approach or enter a reorganization period.

The patterns of educational behaviour that have changed or been affected by change permeate the educational system in Alberta and continue to arise from such basic questions as those pertaining to the purpose of public education, role clarity for students, parents, teachers and school administrators, relationship with the community, including the degree of education offered in the community, quality and quantity of new modes of program delivery, etc. The list is truly endless.

**Table 19**  
**Stages in the Organizational Life of Education in Alberta**

Gorman Report	Cameron Report	Worth Report	Harder Report	Govt Initiatives	Redefinition
1935 →→	1959 →→	1972 →→	1977 →→	1990's →→	Ongoing
<b>Foundation Period</b>	<b>Stabilization Period</b>	<b>Expansion Period</b>	<b>Breakdown Period</b>	<b>Critical Period</b>	<b>Reorganization Period</b>
Create a vision	Create an infrastructure	Reinforce the culture	Initiate criticism	Break existing patterns	Create a new vision

*Manzer's four paradigms.*

Manzer (1994) placed the pattern of change in four paradigms he called “educational projects.” He identified the early structure of our society as a “political paradigm” built on a limited role for the state, with societal values based on the individual but including both accountability and consideration for wants and preferences and basic rights in a system of private decision-making. In his model, the political paradigm gave way to an “economic paradigm” based on work and rewards arising from individual effort, and the centrality of a market economy to satisfy the need for a social institution that meets economic needs with minimal impact on individual freedoms.

Manzer calls his third paradigm, the one most reflective of the participants in this study, an “ethical” paradigm or “person-centered education.” He noted that “by the mid 1960s there was a growing awareness” throughout Canada of commitment to this paradigm (p. 201). The system within this paradigm included “person-centered schools, multi-denominational education, linguistic and cultural equality, and decentralization of educational decision-making” (p. 201). His view is that education studies from the 1980s and 1990s show movement away from the ethical paradigm to a “technological paradigm” based on six principles, the key points of which can be summarized as: (1) recognition of the economic transformation determined by the global economy; (2) need for a common or core curriculum for everyone; (3) limits on accommodation of individual differences; (4) focus on results over inputs or intrinsic properties; (5) public accountability through increased management and

policy direction; and (6) directions set by policy communities that include organized business and labour.

Both models are subject to some shaping, albeit through the weak involvement of Albertans in the political process as discussed in Chapter Two. Both also create “winners and losers” within society. They reveal not only who will be served but also who will lose (or is losing) service. There are large groups within society that have opportunities to create coalitions and networks to advance values they strongly support. Groups that have in the past competed for scarce resources may have to join forces. What is important is that dynamic change can be influenced.

#### *Opportunities for Further Research*

Gall, Borg and Gall (1996) described research as helping to determine what “is” in search of what “ought to be” (p. 13). Kasten and Ashbaugh (1991) referred to the study of the implementation of values as the study of “values in action” (1991, p. 64), and contended that there is a need for such research. This study explains and expands the body of knowledge about teacher-work values in Alberta. In doing so it has pointed to a number of areas for future study that will assist teachers and students in their work. They include:

1. Synergy has been very important in making the Alberta education system effective and powerful. If that synergy no longer exists or has been altered to create opposing synergistic groups, education will be affected. What has replaced the synergy? What are the intermediate and long-term effects of the change?
2. Since this study looked at a narrow slice of the teaching profession in Alberta, it is not known whether the findings are transferable to the larger teaching force. What

are the values of younger teachers? What are the forces and influences that are forming their values? What are the long-term implications of any value tensions or conflicts that may exist? An ethnographic study that isolates a younger group of teachers could be conducted to provide a more complete picture of the teaching population. This study could be replicated in whole or in part to examine the degree of satisfaction with the education system as perceived by teachers with fewer than five years of service. Alternatively, interviews could be conducted with young teachers to determine the influences, motivations and probabilities that are shaping their values.

3. Parents have a great deal of influence on the implementation of education at the school level. Many parent groups have expressed frustration over the changes in education that have resulted from current reform. Where does a synergistic relationship between parent and teacher values occur? How has any such link been used effectively for the benefit of both groups?

4. Business can be notoriously short-sighted in its planning and this can lead to a value conflict between education and business. What does the imposition of business values on education mean for students?

5. The Chief Executive Officer of Alberta Learning, the Deputy Minister, is no longer a former teacher. Increasingly, school-based administrators are also pressured or choose not to define their jobs as part of teaching. What would practising administrators see as the implications of separating administration from teaching in a manner similar to the separation between hospital administrators and doctors? Is the

essence of school administration in being a teacher? What does that mean in terms of values for teachers and administrators?

*The Climate of Change Continues*

As this thesis was being written, the report of Alberta's Commission on Learning, *Every child learns, every child succeeds: report and recommendations*, was produced. The extensive report was the work of a group of appointed Commissioners whose mandate was broad and permissive. The mandate read:

to provide recommendations and advice to the Minister of Learning on ensuring a sustainable basic learning (Kindergarten to grade 12) system that supports the lifelong learning needs of students and the societal and economic well-being of the province. (2003, p. 22)

The Commission, using a small staff of their own, supplemented by writing and research assistance from Alberta Learning, sifted thousands of submissions and their own beliefs, opinions and philosophies into 95 recommendations for action. Throughout the coming months, selected recommendations from this new report will be translated into legislation and regulations that will in turn create further change in schools. Its release has created a nexus at which value conflicts will occur and value priorities may be rearranged. It creates fertile ground for study of its own recommendations and of the effect their implementation has on all the interactions in schools, including teaching and learning.

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## Appendix 1

*Teacher Comments by Theme and Riding*

Responses from five ridings were selected for use in the study by providing responses from a general cross-section of the province. Selections included one large urban riding, one suburban riding; one small urban riding; one southern rural riding; and one northern rural riding. All the ridings contain teachers in both separate and public schools. The responses of 584 of the 720 total respondents contained written comments. Only 10 did not fit in the seven themes.

*Theme 1: The needs of children are not being met satisfactorily**Large urban.*

Not good news

Not good news for students.

As a teacher, I have had to incorporate LD and behaviour children in my class which has given me less time to work with others. I am getting no more extra help with these students than before. Due to the cuts, the music and phys. ed. teacher are gone. At present we have no music program at all. As a result of the cuts, the administration now has teaching assignments and it is often very difficult to get hold of these people when a problem arises. It is very difficult now to get psychological assessments of children. They are sometimes on the waiting list for two years. Because of the cuts to resource teachers, classroom teachers now have to do the reports, e.g., IPPs which take a lot of extra time.

Teachers are carrying a heavy load in order to accommodate the needs of society. As students are our main concern, we are working so very hard to meet them under incredibly stressful circumstances. It is hard to teach without resource support or teaching resources. The students on either end of the spectrum are not getting the support they need.

Special needs students have suffered budget cuts in our school a great deal. There are no longer the resources available to help meet their needs. Because they are now integrated into classroom with little assistance, the majority of the class also loses time from the classroom teacher.

Mr Klein is wrong. Some of the reductions may have been in the administration area but there have been far too many cuts in the area of "special needs." More and more children are falling through the cracks. I cannot understand why Mr Klein is proud of that.

Class sizes have increased reducing the teaching efficiency and the ability to help students. Special Ed programs are being phased out integrating many students who need special help. This is both detrimental to both types of students, mainstreamers

and integrated students, who need extra consideration but cannot get it in regular classroom structure.

Absolutely wrong. With more students in classes and students with behaviour problems and special needs students being integrated, the regular teacher and students have had significantly less teacher contact.

Students in high school who cannot read is not "good news." The junior high schools no longer have resource people to assess the needs of these students and/or provide extra help.

Possibly from a "ledger" the good news story is true – provincially! Local issues are not addressed! Students are being hurt with the fall out only just being felt now. But of course business and political circles will once again blame the teachers and school systems.

Increased class sizes, especially in science classes, are a safety hazard at the least.

We have more students NOT finishing high school who will never go to Adult Ed. to finish. These students will create a bigger strain on our resources in the future if we do not give them an adequate education now (social services, police, welfare, health).

When the number of ADHD students per class increase, then there is an obvious stress on teacher and students. The act of learning becomes increasingly difficult and losses to the act of "behaviour management" education in this province have now become closer to a "joke!"

From the student's point of view, it is not a "good news" story. Nor is it a good news story from the teacher's point of view.

It probably is good news for a politician who thinks in a 3-5 year time frame and is dealing with a largely quiescent teacher population. Long term though, it cannot help but be BAD NEWS for students who will inherit the consequences of current cutbacks - fewer opportunities, lower educational standards, and reduced competitiveness in the job market.

Some of the changes are fine, but not ones that affect students in the classroom.

Cutbacks in education have severely affected those students on the margins (ESL, LD, High Needs) and will come back to haunt Alberta society in the years ahead.

Baloney! As a parent there are more costs imposed on me. As a teacher, the stress level is incredible. Technology - forget it! We need money and know how to bring us up to date. As if... More importantly, the students. It really bothers me that there is limited support for the students in need.



Some of my students, as abused children, are desperately in need of counselling. But funding for counsellors has been cut so far that we never see our counsellor. He has 16 schools to look after and thousands of students to oversee. This is not a good news story.

I disagree with this. From my point of view in the classroom children's needs are being met less and less regularly. As a teacher I find my work load has increased, my stress levels have increased, my recognition and esteem in the community has decreased and my pay has decreased. I feel overwhelmed often.

Hardly! The cuts to education have had a significant impact on education in Calgary. Special needs students and other at-risk children are really losing out. Part of the problem may also be the allocation of funds by the CBE as well as their overall organization.

Those children fortunate enough to be of average or above ability are fine - parents are able to pick up the slack - however children with special needs or from poor (academic or economic) bear the brunt of the cutbacks.

I have grave concerns with cutbacks to other sectors, particularly social services/medical services; and how this directly impacts on the well being of the students coming to us. Children today are much "needier" than five years ago and the social/emotional demands on families and teachers today are much more significant. Reduction in salary pay, increase in class size, less money available for high needs, ESL and other special needs has resulted in very high stress levels thereby decreasing the quality of the learning environment.

*Clover Bar - Ft Saskatchewan.*

The kindergarten students were big losers in terms of school hours (they used to attend Fridays before). Aide time has been cut back making it a safety issue. This is definitely not the same program. Parents are great but there are major drawbacks, how would you like to change secretaries every day? You can't count on them as they often do not show up.

Good news for who? The stress that families are feeling is being felt by children. More and more children are coming to school each day unprepared to handle daily work. The support service and assistance is not available at the school to help these children. More demands are being put on educators. Services are being cut for children. What are we headed for?

I would challenge the premier to spend some time in my classroom and watch how difficult it is to struggle to help 32 grade one students with little or no help. For these children, education is not a good news story. It is simply not possible to provide for all of their very diverse needs in such a large group. Their education is suffering, and

will continue to do so for many years into the future, due to the conditions they are forced to learn under now. Ultimately, we will all suffer as a result of the cutbacks of the past three years. No, Premier Klein; this is definitely not "a good news story."

"Public education works" is a joke. There is no way to meet the needs of all the students in a class of 30+. In a 30-minute period, time must be given to presenting information and if that is only 15 minutes you then have 30 seconds per student for individual attention times eight periods in a day; that is four minutes per child. This does not take into account any interruptions, disk problems, etc. We are doing our children a great disservice.

It depends where he visits and what he wants to see on the surface. Digging deeper he will see stress, fewer materials, more behaviour problems, only children with severe special needs getting help. Many students are falling through the cracks.

In kindergarten we have seen our teaching hours decreased to the point where there are topics we no longer can cover. The teacher assistant time has dropped from two full-time aides (one enrolment aide and one special-needs aide) to one aide for 1½ hours. Two years ago we were able to give 28 children special assistance where this year we are down to five. Who said the cuts would be away from the classroom!

Some good news - reduction in administration expenses.

Negative impact - support for special needs students, library services.

Education is not a "good news story" for the students in a class of 29 or more students. It is not a good news story for the students who need extra help and attention: the resources are not in place to assist these students.

When eight children in my grade 1 class did not have ECS mostly due to fees it is negative. When I have children with real problems and there is very little extra support, it is negative. When I have one very bright light and again there is not the support that used to be, it is negative. Children are coming to us with many more emotional and behavioural problems and teachers are hard pressed to deal with these issues and teach at the same time.

Our school board is again telling us that there will be staffing cuts and little money for resources. This means larger class sizes, even less resources for children with special needs and fewer resources for the average student. Our quality of education in our system is falling steadily. We once were one of the best school systems, I fear now that we will fail due to lack of funds. We were "Strathcona County." I wonder what the benefits were to become "Elk Island School Division." I have yet to see any.

Good news for whom? The greatest impact is to students with mild to moderate disabilities. Programs to support these students have been cut drastically. They are left to cope on their own with few resources.

Sorry I cannot agree. Students are not receiving the attention which occurred in years past. Class sizes are so large that classrooms cannot hold all the students - and much of my time is spent in settling and disciplining the larger groups. Morale is low for both students and staff – ultimately this results in a "poor news story" in the classroom – ultimately into the community.

Average class sizes at this school have increased. Some classes have as many as 40 students. Due to future cuts we expect to have three less teachers.

If "good news" is that teachers are able to do less but expected to do more then he's right. Students who need special programs are not getting them and this affects everyone.

Because of cutbacks in staff, students are not getting the programs they could be, clubs have been cut back and the total atmosphere of education in schools has changed. I have found that generally teachers are becoming totally burnt out trying to be positive.

Ralph forgot to mention that teachers gave up 5% of their wages which helped his "savings" he referred to in "PC Talk." Ralph needs to spend some time in a classroom to observe the "good news story". There are students who shouldn't be there because they are mentally challenged. The programs we used to have for these students have been cut and no longer exist.

How can it be good news when

- 1) student/teacher ratio is greater
- 2) students' needs are higher
- 3) student resources (both material and human) have decreased
- 4) stress levels are higher on both students and teachers
- 5) more social behaviours are becoming the responsibility of teachers, not just academic behaviours.

Students have greater needs than ever before in all areas - social, emotional, physical and intellectual - but human resources are stretched so that it is difficult to address all these needs. Intellectually gifted students have been essentially ignored. Counselling funding is extremely important today and should be increased. Not all parents are happy about the responsibilities thrust upon them through school council legislation.

The students are receiving less individual help; there are fewer support staff and programs. The lowering of counsellor and learning assistance time has impacted on families as well as classrooms.

Mr Klein's "gospel" will not have the longevity of the original one because the long-term effects will not be beneficial to the disadvantaged or disenfranchised. Neither does it appear to be friendly to little ones as the original "good news" message was.

With so many problems in the family, we need more counselling time, reasonable class sizes (20-25 in elementary or 25-30 upper grades) and more special help for the children who continually move in and out of schools as the parent(s) go from one job to the other. Their disruptive lives at home mean an even more routine consistent and attentive life at school - not less! The last role model the government could/should have based their decision on was the New Zealand program which has had devastating/regressive results since its inception.

*Northern rural.*

It seems as if the "rules" are constantly changing. This makes for difficult decisions and lack of continuity. This is particularly true in special education. Students who once qualified for assistance (funding) now do not and other who didn't qualify now do. Also there appears to be funding for half time TAs only and there are children in the system who cannot function in our schools without full time TAs.

The amalgamation of boards has created large central offices, with more non-teaching personnel than before in some areas. There are fewer teachers and larger classes. The "cuts" have been to teachers, not administration. In some cases former administrators have redefined their job description so their costs appear as "instructional" costs, but they do not teach. Please! Count the number of actual teachers and see for yourself.

Money available for kindergarten has been reduced so that aides for classes can no longer be afforded. Parent volunteers are not always available nor are some reliable folks. Some high risk children are no longer getting that extra help. Funding for special-needs children only. Five. Some special needs students need a full-time aide. Some borderline special needs students are getting no aide and with increased classroom sizes, not much extra help from teacher.

This is not true! There is less aide time so the children have less one on one.

The Ednet is available to the school but up to this point we have not been able to access it (connection problems). It's politically wonderful to say schools are on the Net, but it is inaccurate because it doesn't work and it is being cut off June, 1996. We are just beginning to feel the affects in the rural schools. The extra meetings we have to have for school planning take away from classroom planning. I believe the relationship we teachers had with our School Board/Central office has greatly deteriorated since the amalgamation took place.

We need lower student/teacher ratio for a good news story.

Education is not "a good news story." Everyone involved directly in education has seen a decrease in the quality of education. This is mainly because of the lack of staffing in schools.

Too much teacher time spent in meetings. Reduced funding and assistance for special needs students places more demands on classroom teacher, and robs the average student of individual assistance. Teachers spend an excessive amount of personal and classroom time disciplining problem students and documenting all the incidences. When parents discipline their kids more learning can occur for everyone.

Our school presently has nine full time teachers. For next year we are being cut by 2.25 teachers. That is about 25% of our staff. As a result we will not have enough time for extracurricular activities. All of our classes will be split grades. I think this will have a very negative impact on the education of the students. Not a good news story!

With the cutbacks in staffing there can't be as many extra-curricular activities offered. I am against the school based budgeting and decision-making. That's wasting a lot of our time and energy on non-teaching activities. I do not feel that education is a good news story. I feel that with the lack of centralization, schools will not be consistent. I do not like the idea of Parent Councils. Parents already have too much power with too little knowledge. Ralph Klein gets a C- from me.

Students are receiving less time with teachers on an individual basis. Class sizes have noticeably increased; these two factors alone challenge the premier's observation. The situation is NOT "a good news story." Excellent teachers are leaving the profession due to these changes.

There is far too much to do and no time to do it. Human, personnel aspects are suffering.

Teachers generally seem frustrated and impatient with the kids and each other. Enthusiasm has dwindled - not real "good news."

Only for the very bright and well-to-do students. The very bright do well no matter what - they would probably do better. The well-to-do can hire tutors to assist them.

*Small urban.*

Amount of department budgets has decreased when costs of equipment continue to increase. Amount of money for field trips and special programs (swimming in P.E.) has been cut due to transportation and cost of sub fees.

It is not a "good news story." Ralph needs to come into the schools and see that we are feeling the pinch. Class sizes have increased and there just isn't the money to put into resources which is really hampering education. With the family unit changing, there is a definite need for increased resources for special needs students.

Since the move is towards site-based management, many groups (parents, community) have become more responsible for the education of children. However,

this means more administrative duties (paperwork) for the teachers, which is very draining. In many cases this leads to more stress leaves and higher burnout, which in turns has a negative effect on students.

The only good news is that administrative costs are down, where they should be. The bad news is that the cuts were too extensive and teachers and students will pay the price. The business model cannot be applied to immature young humans.

The premier has obviously not spent much time in a classroom in the last few years. I have been at the same school for the last 12 years. Since the cutbacks, there have been many changes - the majority affect students negatively.

Mr. Klein obviously has selective hearing. Is he implying that the ATA, which is teachers, has been mute? Were it not political suicide, Mr. Klein would be delighted to let all schools be privatized, so that his government wouldn't have to deal with the expense and bother of educating children. It is obvious that he does not have children's' interests at heart.

There is a tension in the air. The push towards a business type model means greater competition. But we must remember the purpose of business is to put competition out of business. Is this the type of climate we want for our children?

I feel it is not a good news story. Site-based management has been very stressful for teachers and principals. There are a lot more meetings which take away from teacher planning time and energy. We have lost resource room time due to more emphasis on student numbers, rather than needs of students at our school. I feel students are suffering. Let teachers teach, and put the money toward student needs.

That depends on whether you look at the money aspect of education, or the quality of education or the quality of education you can offer to children who need more one on one because of learning disabilities. Some require special attention because of traumatic situations to deal with at home. Spending more money on testing does not solve the problem. If kids are not getting the love they need from home, their academics won't be there. We have to start at the root of the problem.

He has obviously not been in the classroom. Students are slipping through the cracks. We cannot offer them enough help and special assistance. Teachers' workloads are increasing and this will result in burnout and long term disability. Parents are seeing a lot of negativity and are quick to criticize. Unequal distribution of resources creates many negative feelings.

Utter nonsense! He is out of touch with the needs of students. Decreased funding has led to an increased workload for teachers with less attention being available to devote to needy youngsters due to large class sizes. Invest in our future - invest in the youth of today for "tomorrow's" sake.

It is not a "good news story" in the classroom. The cuts are hurting what really

matters most, the children!

As a special ed. teacher, I am very concerned that the funding for the students in my class is no longer protected. E.M.D. and T.M.D. students need specialized programming. It will not be long before these programs are cut and there will be inequalities in their education, based on where they live. It is inhumane to put them into classes where they have no mental-age peers.

Increased class size and increase in curriculum expectations with a decrease in wages, support staff, materials, and equipment, create stress for students and teachers. The increased involvement of parents and community is positive as long as we don't get too business oriented.

It is the complete opposite and is a "bad news story." The children who will make up the future of Alberta are suffering dearly.

Definitely not! We are under greater pressure to provide more opportunities with less time, fewer dollars, and increased class sizes. When will society wake up to reality?! Children are our greatest commodity. In my opinion, we are headed in the wrong direction, and it will have serious repercussions in the future.

Right - maybe from a political perspective. The politics of education has come at the expense of students, not the least of which is the stress placed on teachers. Taxpayers should be suspicious of 1 in 20 civil servants being on disability. Suspicious of a government that would create a situation in which that many people would be in that condition.

In some ways there has been some good news. However, the classroom teacher has not experienced any, thus the students have suffered. Classes of 40+ students are not conducive to individualized instruction. We are not meeting the needs of many students. These students are not the people our MLA'S will hear from.

The worst is yet to come - with reduced coordinators and Central Office support, things are sure to unravel. With decreased special needs students, we will need cash for aides and equipment.

*Southern rural.*

When there are 30 or more students in a class, several having severe emotional or intellectual problems and I don't have the time to give them the individual help they so desperately need, that is not good news!

*Theme 2: Teachers are overloaded*

*Large urban.*

This teacher disagrees for the following reasons:

Students have the same need for extra assistance and yet my time per student has been negatively impacted by the addition of an extra full class of 30+ students;  
 Help for LD and BA students has shrunk drastically;  
 Teacher morale is at an all-time low;  
 Time for rejuvenation and recreation has disappeared for me personally;  
 I play a continuous game of "catch-up" and I am definitely losing - emotionally, financially and in every aspect of my personal and professional life. I am nearing the end of my ability to "bounce back" and yet the logical end of my years of service is still to long a way off. Society in general and each individual Albertan will eventually pay for the short-sightedness of this "Klein & Co." "good news story."

It is not "good news" to my wife and myself, who among other things suffered a 5% pay cut so that other members of society could be left untouched by cutbacks (corporations and high salaried individuals). Doing a lot more with a lot less is unacceptable.

The "good news" is that we have worked to minimize the immediate negative outcomes. There are serious problems that have arisen because of the removal of support networks, within education and within the community that we serve. The ongoing effects have yet to be documented, addressed or even acknowledged. They, however, will be real! The story has just begun.

Increased class sizes and a higher pupil-teacher ratio is not a good news story, and less support staff does not help anyone.

Most of the 5.6% drop in funds was absorbed in teachers' salaries not as quoted. The changes are not acceptable.

For students, parents and teachers, education is not a good news story. Large class size with integrated special needs is the norm - the load is impossible for teachers - students lose! Teachers' morale is very low - added to the problems of trying to meet individual students' needs is the government position that there is no money for a wage increase.

Please pressure the premier and education minister to return the 5% reduction in salaries that we all took three years ago.

It's a "good news story" because the public doesn't see the results of all the cutbacks. The public does not see the result of the cutbacks because teachers cannot say "n." There is less money, fewer resources, more demands, but because teachers are dealing with children they do not say no and make up for all the shortcomings as a result of budget cutbacks. A better picture would be to look at the number of teachers on sick leave, teachers on long term disability...to see how cutbacks have affected education.

It is only a "good news story" now because we were in excellent shape before the



restructuring. Teachers are working very hard, and soon it will take its toll unless they feel the support and financial commitment to education.

Ralph - you are breaking our backs. There must be some relief in sight or there will be more stress leave, or major strike. Let's work together to secure and ensure the "Alberta Advantage."

More stress placed on teachers because of larger class sizes and having to deal with special need students with fewer resources. Teacher morale is extremely low in my estimation. Economically teachers have lost a tremendous amount of buying power with our 5% reduction in pay yet the cost of living and bills continue to rise. This is not a good news story!

Not a "good news story." More teachers requiring assistance due to the added stress. Teachers are being expected to work for beyond what should be considered reasonable. Students are "losing out" as a result of this.

Demands on education have increased dramatically; resources have been reduced. If there is a feeling that this is "good news," it is because teachers have increased their work load terrifically to protect their students from these major reductions. I'm exhausted!

Many of the cuts made earlier are now affecting the classroom teacher. Cuts made to support services, i.e., library, special needs) make it much more difficult and time consuming for the teacher. This impacts the amount of time that can be spent on individual students with problems.

The stress level at the teaching level has risen greatly in the last three years! This has a great effect on the delivery of education in the classroom.

I think his statements are garbage - the morale especially in the system has deteriorated. It is very difficult to give more and more of yourself when you earn less and less. Let Mr Klein follow me around for a couple of days and see if he can keep the pace while working for less money. I have seen the decline in students' attitudes as well. I would be very prepared to speak to Mr Klein on the phone and explain in detail my feelings.

I disagree. The integration of special needs children into the classes with little or no help makes it very difficult for teachers to teach properly. More stress! What about the other children. Don't they count? The expectations for teachers to be "super teachers" of every subject with little or no materials. The resources do not keep up to change. Are we expected to spend our own money?

Not at all! Teachers seem to be absorbing the impact of the changes - more illness and certainly very, very low morale! "If you don't take care of the goose, it's not going to lay anymore golden eggs." Remember that story? Teachers need to gain

respect and trust back. We have none since reduction occurred.

It's only a "good news story" if you look at it in the light of no tax increase. Teachers are frustrated and tired of doing more with less and being expected to be all things to all people. There is no support to in-service for the changes and no support to help less-advantaged parents learn how to become effectively involved in their child's school.

Budget cuts were achieved "on the backs" of teachers in the CBE, not administrators. I lost over 8% initially (1993) due to the 5% plus 3.6% cut in benefits, and will never recoup the financial loss. How dare MLAs ask for an increased salary!!

If education is indeed a "good news story," then it is the result of an increase in the amount of work and effort expended on the part of classroom teachers in our school systems. Teachers are meeting the challenge by working harder. Unfortunately this has a dramatically negative effect on teacher wellness.

I have more students, more teaching time, more special needs students AND less prep time, less personnel help (aide and resource), less money!

Right. Low teacher morale. Overworked staff. So many changes and not enough time to deal with them. Salary cutbacks. Parents having to pay extra for many things but expecting the same quality of education. Downsizing. It's an endurance test - not a job. Too stressed to appreciate any rewards from the job. Horrid!

Not true! Resources and funding have decreased. Class sizes have increased. Stress levels are at an all time high as teachers struggle to cope.

If it's "a good news story" that is only because the branch, which has been desperately weakened, has not yet been ripped from the tree. It's still hanging there, but it's sick, and only a matter of time will prove how really sick it is. If life appears to be going on as usual, that is because, once again, classroom teachers put in yet more and receive less. This, too is part of the sick branch. Soon it will break off. Good! We need a total restructuring in education, in government: our system is sick.

Some good news!! Stress is at an all-time high; morale is at an all-time low. Teachers are the people who deliver education to students. Stressed out, undervalued, disrespected teachers who feel more out-of-control of their professional lives with each passing month cannot deliver good education to students. If you really want to know the "good news" in schools, talk to us. I don't mean principals, superintendents, school boards or consultants. I mean classroom teachers. Call a meeting - if we're not too exhausted, demoralized or fed up, we will attend!

He has forgotten to mention those people directly responsible for education provided at less cost. No thanks has ever been mentioned for a measurable economic contribution, i.e., greater than 5% contribution.

A political statement that bears no relationship to reality. It does not take in teacher morale that affects all aspects. There is less for everything, and the only reason it may be perceived as "good news" is on the backs of teacher who are dedicated, etc and are not willing to let kids suffer.

It is only a "good news story" because teachers are knocking themselves out at extreme costs to their physical, emotional and family lives to make up for the government blunders.

Teachers are the scapegoat. Give monies back to them. They already are "glorified volunteers". Just take a look at the stress related LTD claims. Time for government to take a reality check.

A primary caregiver needs to be a major tax deduction for the first 9 years of every child's life, so that the parents who have them can be responsible for not damaging them! We don't get paid enough to do all of it as educators.

Perhaps he should check on the increased number of teachers on stress leave. It is understandable that a "drop out" would not fully understand the impact especially on average to above average students.

Thirty-one to one pupil teacher ratio in academic subjects is not a positive or a good story. The large classes and low morale for low pay - not a good story.

Please calculate the "real" loss in buying power of a teacher's wages since 1990. Wage cuts and more working hours vs. inflation.

If it continues to be top notch its only because teachers are giving even more of their own valuable time and renewed effort to make it as positive as possible for the students.

Morale is low; resentment is high. I believe that as teachers we have tried to cushion the blow to students. While we've meant well, we've done more damage. By keeping up appearances, we haven't allowed the public to know just how bad things are. By working harder for less and less money, we've become a sorry group - tired, beaten undervalued and underpaid.

Because the nature of most teachers is to be very resourceful and very positive it could easily be seen from the outside to have little or no negative effects on education. However, if the premier cared to look more closely I believe he would find in actual fact that the negative effects of his restructuring are deep and long lasting for students, teachers and our society.

Education is not a good news story at this point in time. What you find in schools are extremely dedicated teachers who are doing a job funded largely out of their own pockets and putting in long hours due to the lack of sufficient support staff in a

school. Inequalities have become evident from school to school: the newer schools being the "haves" and the older schools being the "have-nots." Working conditions are not promoting a positive environment for the children, parents and teachers. I feel that the teaching staff in our schools has been grossly taken advantage of at this time, and yet we keep on doing the very best we can considering all that has taken place.

I would like to know how? What is going to happen or is happening for this statement to be made. There have been too many cutbacks and more expectations placed on teachers. The morale has declined. What incentives do we have to continue as educators in Alberta?

We need smaller class sizes. Charter schools are not the answer. Parents of charter school students don't realize until graduation that their children are not at appropriate academic levels. Teachers are spent and very distracted from the classroom priorities due to increased administrative demands.

It's a good thing teachers are doing the best with what they have (more higher needs students in larger classes). That's the good news! The bad news is: How long can teachers be expected to work effectively under such conditions? I foresee a lot more "teacher burnout" in the future.

Teachers are people who have chosen to work to educate children and because of their dedication, continual upgrading and focus on learning and teaching students are still well served by public education in Alberta. School administrators have chosen to put children first by staffing and organizing so class size, time and resources are available and appropriate. What is our government doing to support public education? A public Thank You to public educators would be a welcome change and a beginning.

The cutbacks have increased our workload considerably. We have not been able to offer a strong program in our school after these cutbacks. Education has not been "a good news story".

The "good news story" is about all the dedicated teachers who keep on in an idealistic humane manner doing more with less and for less; who keep on searching out ways to teach every child included in a class.

In the last two or three years we have lost a phys. Ed. and a music specialist. Most of us have no music training, therefore, we are not teaching music. No choir; no intramural program. We are high needs - are paying for our own psychologist. Morale is not good at times - in spite of having an excellent group of teachers who work together very well.

It is in terms of money and budgets but certainly not in the human factor. The responsibility to the teacher has increased while the resources have drastically decreased.

I feel teachers once again have been dumped on to fix society's ailments. Those of us in high needs are overworked, overstressed, underpaid and unappreciated. The students have survived only because as professionals (staff and individuals) we continue to take the !!! and put our students needs first. Public education works because of the dedicated PROFESSIONAL TEACHER, not because of Klein's cuts!

*Clover Bar - Ft Saskatchewan.*

He has no idea of the stress of trying to teach students with fewer resources and less time. Also trying to please parents who are often stressed out themselves from the tough economic situation.

Not a "good news story." Last year 20 teachers terminated. This June, 21 teachers terminated. Bigger classes, zero aide time for students or staff. No money for books, computer equipment. Decreased money for professional development. Terminated teachers not given anything - unlike the doctors' package! - Unfair! Teachers have taken the brunt on financial cutbacks. Expectations are increasing, site-based management has added incredible amounts of work; for less money. Teachers are burning out at an incredible rate. When do we get back what we've given up?

Ha! The arrogance of this government is appalling. I have 33 students with learning levels which range from grade 2 to grade 7 (I teach grade 5). I spend hours trying to create lesson plans for such a wide range of learners. I have a continual cold from October on and feel on the edge of tears frequently. How long can I physically keep this up?

No it's not. Class loads have increased in quality of students with difficulties as well as quantity. Teachers are "raising" the students. I am a teacher, not the parent. Where's the parent? Teachers won't retire at 65 anymore. I wanted to teach for my entire working career. Now I won't even be 50% close to that. The stress level is too high!

"A good news story" but only temporary. This is achieved at the expense of teachers and their families. It is not fair from a teacher's perspective. We have no time for our families, we work harder for less money, and many of us are getting ill due to pressure. Where's the good news?

Well, he did decide to continue or reinstate funding an "illegal" program (kindergarten) - not full funding as many districts offered 440 hours. I get to teach three grades instead of one. I get to have 30 kids instead of 20 in a class - "the more the merrier." I work from 7:30 a.m. - 6:00 p.m. and mark from 7 p.m. until 10 p.m. I used to work 8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. plus 1½ hours of homework at night. PS. I forgot to mention the extra work of integrating the kindergarten in split K/1 into my ECS class for field trips, special events and snacks. I don't know what a hobby is anymore.

Perhaps it is a "good news story." However, it used to be excellent. Teachers are extremely overworked, in many cases depressed because of these changes. In my opinion the government has damaged what was an excellent system.

The Alberta government's attempts to equalize have far from done that. There is more inequality in education than ever before. Large jurisdictions have increased problems in equity as well as cuts to funding and availability of services to special needs students. Education is surviving because of the dedication of teachers and willingness of educators to take on more with less - this is the only good news in education given the present situation.

The impact of the cuts on students has been diminished solely on the backs of teachers. The "good" news of teachers rolling over for worsening conditions and decreased salaries will change very quickly if our needs are not addressed very soon.

Not so. A few years ago there was a "stress" on teacher wellness. We now have heard all about the "benefits" resulting from education cuts but very little on teacher wellness. Obviously the two do not go hand-in-hand. Let R K or the current Minister of Education come work in my class for two weeks to a month (none of this one day, drop-in stuff!) and then see if they can call education "a good news story."

Stress levels have increased dramatically. As a result, sick leave has increased and general overall job satisfaction has deteriorated. Good teachers are finding that the negative effects of their jobs (stresses) are affecting their personal lives. The options are to leave teaching to lower levels of expectations in order to maintain sanity. Mediocrity is encouraged. Student programs have been cut.

That statement is a "white wash." The reality of the situation is that teachers are having to do more with less. There are more students to teach, some with special needs. Teachers' time is in great demand. The support to supplement classroom instruction is not there and yet teachers are expected to meet the educational, social and emotional needs of each child.

The amount of work that has increased in the past three years has been overwhelming. I feel like I literally cannot keep on never mind give students an excellent education. With the incredible increase in work (increased class size, decreased prep time, teacher aides, etc.) the day has not increased. Our 5% wage cut with the additional 2% increase with the cost of living has meant an 11% wage drop yet the trustees I hear gave themselves a 17% raise! Where is the justice? Our future is being sacrificed.

Walk a mile in my shoes! I am responsible for the assessment, programming and educational plan for 1,000 kids in two schools - and am making HALF what my colleagues are in private practice. How much more can a person be stretched??

Please note - the good news is that we are doing our professional best. The reality is that we are stretched to our limits...the number of stress leaves say a lot!

If so, it is because teachers are doing more with less and giving more of their time for the students. Cutting funding to special classes like Basic Core is a terrible mistake. Integrating these students increases stress on a classroom greatly and leads to these students being frustrated and having their needs not met. Restore funding to these programs or social costs for these people will cost many times what we are paying now.

Premier Klein needs to listen far more carefully to the REAL story. The only reason that the cutbacks have not been totally devastating is the incredible commitment and selflessness of teachers. The full ramifications of these cutbacks will not be realized for many years - when our society is completely falling apart. To Mr Klein - STOP THE DESTRUCTION.

More to do, less time for preparation, larger class sizes, less help and more problems with integrating students from IOP with regular classes.

His "reporters" are obviously not speaking to the people most directly affected - the classroom teacher!

Programs for kids (i.e., special needs) have been butchered! This isn't good news. Teachers are feeling the pressure to try and compensate and levels of stress are skyrocketing. Teacher burnout isn't good news either! Education can't be treated like a business transaction.

Larger class sizes, inclusion of special needs students into regular classes and fewer educational assistant hours has resulted in more negative responses from parents. I've tried to fill the void with volunteers, but there has been quite a turn over which has resulted in a great deal of on-going training. The students are learning, but I am becoming burnt out with regular 12 hour days.

I disagree. Teachers are overloaded. There are more kids with problems who are harder to teach and as class sizes increase teachers' burnout.

Stress levels continue to increase and the full effect is yet to be experienced. Teachers are exhausted and expectations are increasing while positive supports dwindle. Morale is low.

Teachers are too busy to protest.

It is a good news story in that we are doing more with less but the burnout rate will and has increased. I think business will be happy. They will see schools are more businesslike but we are not selling Big Macs to customers who ordered them. Our product and customers are quite different.

I agree with restructuring specific education areas; however, the classroom should not have been affected. Added stress and anxiety due to uncertainty has affected my teaching career.

I don't believe that education is a "good news story." There is more and more pressure for teachers to continue their excellent level of instruction while using less resources (aide time) and teaching more students.

We're dancing as fast as we can trying to meet all the needs of the students - trying to stay on top of curriculum, trying to attend mini-in-services to keep up to date and improve our skills, spending our own money for materials, dealing with many uncertainties, uncertain families, increased social problems, less social service safety nets, etc. Parents under stress expect the school to do more and more with less - less resources, services, time, and support. Foster children are the neediest and put enormous strains on our already overloaded, under funded resources.

It is difficult in today's world to teach a junior high class of 32-35 with the wide span of abilities mixed in.

Do more, fewer dollars. More demand on teachers' hours. More demand on administration.

I have larger class sizes - 27 in grade 2. Two behaviour students integrated with no support. This disrupts the learning of other 25 students. Fewer resources and no aide assistance - absolutely none - depend on parents who are also working to support families and we need help - parents do the best they can to make up for assistance required. Stress on families and teachers, parents, children and teachers is great. We are desperately trying to provide needs that families and students require and demand (counselling, integration, etc. and have no money for these or less time! Come and shadow us! See things from our viewpoint! STRESS IS UNBELIEVABLE!

The "good news" is that my own children are almost finished school and do not face the "years" of a tightened budget. "Good news" is that some surplus spending in the upper admin is less. "Bad news" - PATS - force teaching to the test. Parents view they have "more" say and often their concerns are with their own and do not consider the effects of dealing with a group, therefore more teacher time to listen and respond to the queries.

- integration without aide time
- more students, fewer resources (material and learning)
- more paperwork.

Our morale and energy level have sunk to a new low. Our 5% reduction has not been returned and our workload increased. You cannot expect people to work with the young (who require so much energy and time) and treat them like second class citizens. We need encouragement and help in order to do our best in a difficult job.



Education is "a sad news story." Students are being taught by teachers who are under stress - resources, job security are questionable.

Good news in his opinion. I think it is time for the ATA to send a province-wide message, that message being a province wide strike. All of the reactive type things the ATA has done in the past three years have done nothing. It is time to get proactive. I am tired of taking a beating and if it continues I will lift my pension and tell a weak ATA where to go!!

"Good news" in that the government does not spend as much money as it did in the past. The results will be seen long term and his shameful attack on education and teachers in particular will have long lasting effects. However, the ATA's weak will has not done anything to fight back. I would like some "good news" in the form of a pay raise which would return my 5% and then meet inflation.

I'm tired of listening to it and I wish someone (ATA) would do more about the situation in schools for students and staff. We should get something for our \$54/month!!

*Northern rural.*

Now teachers are expected to raise funds for extracurricular activities, accommodate individual differences in larger classes and teach split levels. Has Ralph Klein ever been in a classroom since his great decision? Where is money saved - on the front lines not in administrative frills!

Teaching more students with less time and materials, for less money – you figure out this math.

Teachers are dedicated to the education of students. This selflessness has led to increasing stress among the professional staff.

De la poudre aux yeux! Il faut faire une analyse approfondie. Je crois que ce sont les enseignants qui ont subit les coupures car ils aiment leurs travail et leurs élèves. Regardez le taux d'absentéisme "burnout."

No comment!! As a principal I have more to do with previous time constraints. The constant adjustments to rapid changes - good or bad? These changes have not affected the performance of kids who are kept insulated by teachers. The 5% decrease in my salary is a sore point - less bread on my family's table. Good news or political posturing? Finally and in all fairness, the archaic and narrow minded Spirit River School Division #47 did benefit tremendously from amalgamation. What a breath of fresh air!!

The teachers are the good news story: they are compensating and tolerating a lot of inane shuffling and changes that are either negative or done for "their own sake." Political aims can't be educational aims. Never can a dollar be the bottom line in

education. Students must be the only ones in that position.

What is positive? How is it a good news story? What was the "before the changes" picture?

As a teacher, I do not feel as if it has been "good" news. I have taken a salary reduction and prep time seems to be minimal, especially when one teaches courses such as Language Arts. I do not feel as if we are progressing in this career. We are becoming more and more restricted in all areas of this job.

It's good news that teachers will always work even harder to pick up the pieces because we are dedicated to our profession. What the government has done is definitely not good news.

This year our division has lost 20/200 or 10% of our teaching staff - this is NOT good news. Our school was given 8% less funds to run our school - this is NOT good news. Our students will be in more multi-graded core subject classrooms than ever before. Finally, we are losing half of our library aide time - this is NOT good news. Teachers as always are endeavouring to still provide education at the same level. Which is what is neutralizing the effect in the greater community. Only a "good news story" because teachers are the kind of people who can always "make do" and make the best of a situation. While we are being paid less (5%) and must take on more and more responsibility, e.g., integrating special needs students, offering counselling services, teaching manners, behaviour, and skills that previously were taught at home, teachers still enjoy their students and want the best possible for them. We continue to strive for excellence, offer extracurricular activities, etc., to best meet the needs of our students.

Cuts are forcing teachers to do without. Students don't notice the changes too much, but get less. The workload is greater for teachers. Field trips are cancelled.

Technology has increased; but demands on teacher time - especially in smaller schools - are also on the increase. There are a lot of expectations in a small community. So...although there are innovative ideas occurring - in rural areas we do not feel the impact too readily!

To the general public and student body, things appear to be the same at school. This is due to teachers continuing to provide the extras like extra-curricular activities, while their workload is increasing and prep time and salary is decreasing. Sooner or later this will result in burnout.

From a provincial budget position it's good news. From the perspective of the student, especially those with special needs, it has not been good news. Teachers are making do with fewer preparation periods and stretching resources but the long term effects will be NEGATIVE.

Teachers have increased their work loads in order to lessen the impact on students. We are cracking under the strain. The only positive that I can see is the amalgamation of school boards. As a parent I'm tired of fund raising and volunteering. As a teacher I'm tired of fund raising and putting in extra time. Enough is enough. And the government increases my taxes!!

When one sees that special needs assistance has decreased, it is hard to address that as a "good news story." Our youths are tomorrow's leaders. We must all take responsibility however we must be careful that we don't forget the essential, the child. The teachers are doing their best to meet those needs. This survey was hard to evaluate as numbers decreased. Was it because of money??

We are doing a great job of education in Alberta, but the system is going to suffer from the cutbacks. We didn't feel it until this year. Next year doesn't look good! The cuts to Kindergarten have not been good.

We are doing a great job of education in Alberta, but the system is going to suffer from the cutbacks. We didn't feel it until this year. Next year doesn't look good! The cuts to Kindergarten have not been good.

When employees can overcome adversity, adapt to massive change and fulfil the expectations, the good news story is that teachers are competent and devoted to their profession. It's time to reward the hard work teachers have done to fulfil "the plan."

Teachers are working too hard to make the best of a bad situation. Teachers make sure that students suffer as little as possible, but teachers are stressed out. The premier's comment is a surface impression.

I tend to disagree with his statement. With increased class sizes and more expectations and responsibilities, there have been visible stresses and tensions placed on our school and staff. More often I see and hear dissatisfaction among both students and staff. Where can the line be drawn?

Politically for him yes. Short term - yes; long term - no. We as teachers are forced to do more paper work, more politicking, spend more time justifying, and more recreating of curriculum. Less support and more interruptions. Overall less teaching time with students. However we will survive and keep things going for the kids.

The impacts of the cuts to education are, for the most part, not as "rosy" as our premier might suggest. Because of the cuts, teachers are certainly under more stress and with increased class sizes the quality of education will suffer. However, teachers are still expected to perform many functions.

If it were not for the dedication of school staff and administrators, education would surely be a "not so good news story." Health and Education may have needed some pruning to become more efficient, but Ralph's "clear cutting" policy regarding both will only lead to erosion of the eventual silting up of the way education and health

care are delivered with disastrous consequences to recipients.

Some individuals are doing things which qualify as "good news." Morale, however, is lower, possibly because of some of the cuts to education.

I totally disagree. We continue to receive drastic cuts, more work, higher expectations and less opportunity fulfil these expectations.

It has nothing to do with the cuts that some of these areas have improved. It has to do with better management and teacher commitment for students!

It is a good news story if someone comes to school on weekends, before (7 a.m.) and after school (5 p.m.) and in the middle of August to observe the teachers working and planning for the students.

It doesn't feel like a good news story when you're in it. We have increased meetings and workloads due to things like site-based decision-making, an idea imposed too quickly. There seems to be more special needs kids and less time to help them. Family problems are very significant too and I find the kids I'm dealing with have more on their minds and are harder to teach.

I do not see how this can be viewed as a "good news story." With reductions in staff, more time spent in meetings with school based management and a general feeling of teacher "burnout" - the news has recently been "all bad."

The only good news is that we as magicians - doing more with less - are at the end of our proverbial ropes!!

Not true - too much stress on teachers with large class size, less support, less resources and lower pay.

We have less support for special needs students. We have more and more students who need aide support to function (and to allow others to learn) in a regular classroom. So many parents don't do their job as far as making sure children are well-rested, fed and disciplined. We're supposed to work miracles with very little support. Teachers have supplemented a lot of the cuts. We buy a lot of our own craft supplies, science supplies, and books.

The premier has got to see that doing more with less is not "good news." We will not be able to keep up this pace for long.

Since most teachers are working harder and longer hours yet the non-academic students feel defeated before they even begin – all is not well.

Since most teachers are working harder and longer hours yet the non-academic students feel defeated before they even begin – all is not well.

*Small urban.*

The public in general is not aware of the impact of the changes because dedicated educators are doing much more with much less and this message is not “in the face” of the public, as it is with healthcare.

More kids under stress at home which is brought to school to increase the stress for teachers. Increased demands on time to help kids with academic, social, and emotional problems.

Students and teachers are under more stress with the larger classes and less resources to use in the classroom. Teachers are spending more time on the job doing more than teaching to help make students be successful. Teachers are not paid close to what they deserve for the amount of time they spend doing their job.

The only good news is that teachers still continue to work hard at their teaching in spite of taking a 5% wage cut (which helped generate a "surplus" this year). School-based management has tried to fix a system which was working very well in our district with the result that, as principal, I have less time to get into classrooms and work with teachers and students. I am not impressed with the changes which appeared to be for show and to demonstrate the power of the government to its loyal supporters. I am also disgusted with the Klein government's encouragement of the attacks on teachers and the teaching profession.

More user pay is happening with programs so parents will feel an impact. Mr. Klein should be thankful that teachers are keeping the system going so students don't suffer.

Teachers are being asked to do more. We have to spend more time because of class sizes and because of new responsibilities. Students suffer because of larger class sizes. The public does not see this because of propaganda from the government and because teachers take up the slack. This is not acknowledged and we are not appreciated for it.

Taking away administration from the school district has really impacted on taking teachers out of the schools. So for instance, I used to see teachers working with students from 3:30 - 4:30 each day, now I see teachers rushing to attend meetings to discuss items that administration used to do. Many good teachers are considering career changes because of all the negative impact of the cutbacks.

If it is a good news story, it is due to the dedication of teachers and a government that won't listen! I attended a meeting of parents who said that they did not want the new responsibilities of parent council, but the government says they do. As a teacher who sits on the P.A.C. at our school, I deeply resent the time and energy taken up by teachers, principals, and parents to run parent councils and the preparation for site-based management.

Education has been confused and disorganized. School councils are perceived by parents at large to be their "hacks" to tell principals and teachers what to do. Meeting with councils and all the political crap involved has more than doubled my work load as an administrator. This school just had an excellent, thorough review. It is a great school, but the staff is exhausted and tired of being treated like idiots.

If it is a good news story, it is only because of dedicated teachers who continue to do the best for the students, in spite of the cutbacks in money. Teachers must put more hours in to deal with students and the demands of site based education. While time remains the same, there are more meetings staff must attend to keep the school running. Being in the classroom to educate students is the reason we have teachers. Let us stay there.

It is the hard work of teachers that has prevailed and even corrected, in some cases potential negative impacts of this government's debt.

Teachers have simply done more with less and the results will appear in the future of our province. The downloading of so many functions indirectly influences energy and time available for students, especially those at the far end of the spectrum.

School-based budget has meant a major increase of workload to administrators and teachers. There are more committees, more responsibilities, more students, with less time and money. Teachers are going on long term disability and stress leave more. Education is a "good news story," because teachers are dedicated and are finding ways to cope. Can this continue? Do we really want to just cope? I hope not!

Education is a good news story, because we, as educators are great compensators. We work harder, and have more kids in classes. We go to more meetings, collaborate interminably, sign up for more P.D. sessions, and are called on to justify! This, despite salary and per student grant cutbacks. It is not a good news story, because this pace and these expectations cannot be kept up.

It might be good news if you live in an isolated area and the schools are given access to technology. The integration of emotionally, socially, and physically challenged students has put tremendous stress on teachers. We are paid to teach and I would really like to do that for a full day.

He obviously has not been into a school lately. His accountant has given more money to E.C.S. at the expense of the 1 - 12 programs. Ralph needs to talk to working teachers who are being asked to teach more to increased class numbers with fewer materials. Is it a surprise that more teachers are out on stress leaves?

The downloading of the business plan to the site has made for increased time demands on teachers. These time demands are from aspects of education that in many ways do not directly impact students. I do support the need to keep costs down,

but I am extremely concerned about the fragmenting of our excellent public school system!

There is not a lot of "good news," if any. It is the dedication of the teachers and long hours to make things work. I have been teaching for eight years and it is only in the last couple of years that there is a great amount of teacher burnout and stress. I wonder why? Wake up Ralph!

I am earning \$250 less each month. I have larger classes and fewer school dollars to spend on resources. Yes, I think all of Alberta needed to make some changes, but I believe education has been made to pay unfair proportions. If education is a good news story, it is because of the ingenuity, creativity and professionalism of teachers, not the Klein government.

Education may seem to be a good news story simply because teachers continue to strive to do the best job they can. How long can this continue without teacher burnout?

Teachers and parents are the ones who feel the impact of educational changes. They are the ones taking up the slack because their child's/student's success is important to them. But at what long term cost overall? Teachers are on long-term leaves, now more than ever.

The only good news is that teachers are still doing their utmost to deliver the best possible education to their students. The real story is that teachers are severely stressed. I've seen grade one classes with 31 students and that children are paying the price for the terrible cutbacks which Ralph Klein calls good news. Education is a stressful story. Teachers are trying to do more things, cover more areas, do more counselling, and more extra curricular.

Financially it is a good news story. Doing more with less is taking its toll on staff with more staff facing burnout and long term disability. The government has to decide whether education is a priority as a service.

Good news in the sense that it is still occurring. Teachers are like the nurses - we are making the government look good, but killing ourselves in the process. We are hiding the real cost of education.

Education may be classified as a good news story since the cutbacks have had very little obvious setbacks in the classroom. Since teachers have continued to put in all of the extra work to implement exceptional programs without support, cutbacks appear great. Once you look under the surface, however, the teachers who are making it the "good news story," are the ones who are destroying themselves in the process.

Education is a "good news story" only because teachers and schools are unwilling to see their clients, the students, really suffer changes in education. Changes have led to larger class sizes, fewer resources, and a great increase in job related stress. The

public, in general, is unaware of the long term effects of these changes and are not as concerned with education as they are with the health industry.

We cannot close beds and have waiting lists. We meet the needs of students who come to our door and we continue to do the best we possibly can. There was room for improved efficiencies, yet more important is improved effectiveness. While teachers have accommodated changes, the load is getting to be too much in the classroom. I supported some changes, but I do feel we must ensure an outstanding education system as a real part of The Alberta Advantage.

It remains as good news because people in education dug deeper and put more time, effort, and commitment into making sure students did not experience the full impact of education cuts. People in education have definitely made sacrifices.

It's not a good news story for me. In order to handle the increased workload, I am working part-time. I took a 25% cut in salary, but I am still putting in full-time hours. I think as a whole, we are continuing to deliver a quality education to our students. As teachers, we are suffering financially, and emotionally. Our family life is suffering because we have less time to spend with them.

The "good news" for the Premier, is that he has instituted these changes with a minimal short drop in the quality of education. The teachers have worked hard to cope. If it continues, the reaction might be; if education is a minor priority by this government, then they will treat it as such.

If teachers having more students in a classroom to teach is good news, then education is a "good news story." If teachers having less time for individual instruction is good, then education is a "good news story." Students are receiving less one on one time with the teacher. Teachers have lower salaries, therefore, less disposable income to inject into the Alberta economy. This is not good news.

It is a good news story only as long as the school staff can or are willing to maintain the level of education currently being offered. As budget cuts finally filter down to the school level with school based management, the full impact will be felt. We cannot maintain these performance expectations much longer. It is becoming unhealthy for everyone.

I think that if the public is not aware of the negative impact of present policy, it is due to the fact that teachers are professionals. Teachers truly care about their students; many are giving 120+%. Burnout and illness cannot be far behind.

Education is a good news story because of dedicated, caring, hardworking teachers. Soon these people will be so overworked and stressed that they will not be able to continue at their present levels of input. Who suffers? The children do. The children of the province need more government support, not just words!

The premier's slash and burn philosophy to education is anything but a good news



story. Teachers are consummate professionals and if the public and government have seen no changes to education, it is because the teachers are showing so much care and concern for their students. They are not allowing the changes to affect their students, and are in fact taking the brunt of the changes themselves.

Teachers are doing fine on their own. Teachers continue to buy materials to make classrooms "good news." For these expenses, teachers are not reimbursed by schools because there are no funds. We cannot even claim employment expenses as a tax deduction.

The premier's observation is true to an extent. It is good news that the teachers have been able to take on the cuts, added stress, and extra work load, but still manage to deliver the same program, extra curricular included. What has been the cost? Higher levels of stress leaves, absenteeism, fund-raisers, conflict and job dissatisfaction. How long until the kids are affected?

Teachers continue to work extremely hard to maintain education quality. I do not believe that education is in any way a "good news story" for teachers.

This comment shows how out of touch Mr. Klein is regarding the reality of education in Alberta. Teachers are bearing the burden of cuts and burning themselves out, so that the kids will be affected as little as possible. Resources have decreased and expectations continue to increase. We are heading in the wrong direction and our whole system is becoming weaker. We should model ourselves after an effective system, not New Zealand, England, and the United States.

*Southern rural.*

I think the Premier should look at the number of teachers on stress leave. I agree things like exam results are going up, but at what cost to wellness of teachers and students.

Teachers are struggling to maintain the quality of education to their students in spite of cutbacks. Parents and students have felt minimum effects because teachers have absorbed the blunt. How about a survey on teachers' finances, time, stress, and family relationships? As well as their feelings of inadequacy in the classroom from the extra burdens.

For the most part things are good, but the premier has not caused this, nor should he take credit for it. Excellent, professional teachers and administration with the help of supportive parents are the reason.

Teachers are becoming more stressed. They are asked and expected to do more in class, out of class, and extra curricular activities (e.g., fund-raising). Business and

industries are getting tired of being asked to donate for every school for every need that government has withdrawn/decreased funding. Parents are weary of the fund raising demand for high involvement in school operations. Only a handful is now dominating the decision-making (school council only voting member).

Klein is fooling himself stating that education is "good news." If it wasn't for concerned educators holding things together, it sure could have been a different story. As far as I'm concerned Klein has just been lucky.

From a teacher's viewpoint, we make sacrifices of time to include more meetings to work with school councils. Paramount to children our special needs teaching position has been reduced and our special needs students has increased and this has created more input from teachers to try to hold status quo.

In general teachers are in charge of more children for longer times, for less pay. The children are on average harder to motivate, discipline and show less respect for authority. Too many students view life by what they can get out of it rather than what they can put into it.

I am a new teacher so I do not have the experience to make any great judgements. I feel that more demands and responsibilities are continually placed upon teachers, with reducing financial support.

I have observed that in trying to overcompensate for decreased budgets and increased paperwork more teachers are overextending themselves and become burned, stressed and often end up on long-term medical leaves or end up taking early retirement.

Teachers are being asked to do far more with far less, and for less money. We're tired of being teacher, social worker, counsellor, cook, cleaner, builder as all resources and services are cut.

It's a good news story because the teachers have made it that way.

Mine is a very specialized situation. If I were commenting on the regular schools, I would say that teachers are becoming extremely stressed out. If I were in the regular schools, I would be retiring this June. In this school I am happy to continue teaching for several more years.

Not really a good news story - higher work loads and increased class size has made my job more difficult as a whole.

Resources are distributed differently, so I feel we have a greater say. Education may be a "good news story," but teachers are taking a toll in their lack of empowerment over the changes. Had all the changes been done with more of a "togetherness" attitude, rather than blame being placed on the classroom teacher... We took pay

cuts too. Many teachers are now busy fund-raising to continue activities that could no longer be afforded.

They are seeing only what they want to see. I don't think they really know what is going on. Teachers make lemonade out of lemons. Despite cutbacks, teachers are dedicated to helping students. The premier cannot take credit for this.

Education is a "good news story," but not because of the premier. The good news is the dedicated, concerned, and hardworking teachers of Alberta who have continued to persevere under great duress from government, parents and community. We have maintained and improved in almost all areas of teaching and learning.

Teachers being teachers have ensured students are not negatively affected. They have compensated, but at the expense of their own health and personal financial situation. Although most areas listed above are not drastically affected, much of the negative impact has been placed squarely on the shoulders of school administration and teachers. The long-term effect will eventually be felt by all.

I disagree that down-sizing the administrative budget at the jurisdiction and school level is a positive move. Today's society is more complex and, consequently, so are today's classrooms. Teachers cannot be expected to fulfil their schools' mandate without the support of specialized district level personnel. In addition, it is becoming increasingly difficult to address the number of students with emotional problems.

Only if you are not trying constantly to do more with less and help make decisions about dealing with decreased budgets and trying to keep all the stakeholders happy so they won't perceive you as a grumpy old grouch who doesn't belong in a classroom.

Teachers have taken a decrease in wages and are having a difficult time recouping those losses. Regions are reticent to award wage increases of even 2%. Are we not worthy of adequate compensation for our very important profession? I think so.

If teachers did not have such a deep sense of calling, cutbacks would have had worse effects. Reduced resources have made program delivery much more difficult and less effective.

Teacher morale has seldom been lower. This is not good news for students or education in general.

I cannot buy badly needed resources and textbooks because our school does not have money in the budget. I spend approximately \$200-\$300 a year of my own money for resources for my students.

The fact that teachers and educators are so dedicated in this province can only be summed up as a "good news story." The increase in available technology can help to

improve things, but, until more is done to counteract the costs of long distance, there cannot be "equity" throughout Alberta.

The cuts tended to magnify by time it got to our level of involvement. Administration from main office (region) has tended to direct the major part of cuts at us, the front line individuals in education.

It is a good news story for him because he has reduced spending and reduced teacher salary. This is good news for the government on monetary terms. That makes better "news" headline stories than the duller "Teacher Overwhelmed by Meeting Student, Gov't Exam, Central Office, Curricular and Extra Curricular Needs."

Very difficult to consider a 5% loss in salary as "good news!" Seems very difficult to recoup this loss.

Opportunities have come with being in a larger division, but the negatives outweigh the positives:

1. Larger class sizes
2. Less help with special needs students
3. More technology, but fewer "basic" supplies

For parents, yes. For students, fewer services. For teachers, more and more with less time. It would be OK if teachers were allowed to teach, but they are expected to be everything. Doctor, nurse, psychologist, social worker, etc. As well, inclusion is great for the student, but an extra amount of work for the teacher.

My survey shows few changes, but this is not necessarily a good sign. I feel positive educational programming should have seen increases in available time, assistance, and resources. Teachers, because of the changes, have had many demands placed upon them at all three levels - school, divisional, and provincial. We are becoming stressed and frustrated with increasing expectations and restraints that have a negative effect on the quality of education we can provide at this time to our students.

*Theme 3: Education is not valued highly*

*Clower Bar - Ft Saskatchewan.*

I guess cutting, slashing and burning can constitute a "good news story." Let's see how he rebuilds the educational system.

Good News - in what way(s)??

1. Amalgamation has screwed us - especially financially
2. Cuts have caused a general overall poor attitude and increased stress - less positive
3. The only good thing I can see is the "top heaviness" has decreased, i.e., fewer central office staff to make up "work" projects.

If he thinks stressed-out teachers, shortage of help for children who desperately need it, fewer books, paper makes education "a good news story" he must want to take education back a century or so...HELP! The quality of education is in jeopardy! Shortly, it will become a two-tiered system; one for the rich, one for the poor.

The only way education can be seen as a "good news story" is if:

- a) You're talking about political promises of a yet-to-be balanced budget...yes: a huge amount of funding was cut.
- b) You're talking about unsung heroes: - teachers, school staff, administrators, school boards, SACs and parents who have shown exemplary efforts despite being under-funded.

Ralph Klein will point out elementary and junior high test scores and say, "See, no effect!" Give me a copy of the Biology diploma exam in September and see my kids' results! The whole testing idea is a scam to show positive results.

The premier has his head in the sand.

The premier is out-of-touch with reality.

I would suggest that the premier is not in touch with teachers or schools. He may not be experienced enough in "real" school management to make any statements regarding the impact of restructuring.

Whether you look at education as a service or integral part of society, you cannot deny that it has become less effective. Reduction and cuts are occasionally needed but when they threaten the entire system they must be re-evaluated. The good news story is really a bomb and trap in the making. While the short term story may look good it is the long term that will be effected, and that is a "sad news story" in the making!!

If doing more with less is a "good news story." I'd hate to hear a "bad news story." I am making less money than I was in 1992 and all costs have gone up. My classroom was designed for a maximum of 30 desks - I have 35. Kids still need individual help and attention!

The premier is "dreaming in Technicolor" as usual. His cuts may be helping the "bottom line," but they are destroying the social fabric of this province.

He obviously has not actually gone into schools in this area and talked with teachers and students about what has been happening here or he could not make such comments. I believe he only hears what he wants to hear and/or doesn't report to the public the parts he doesn't want to hear.

If more teacher burn-out is a good news story - then the premier is right.

The premier does not have first hand experience. I feel he has taken an "ostrich like" stance on the needs of humanity within the public service sectors.

The only "good news" is that he saved money. That is not an education story.

How can anyone say that education is a good news story with all the cutbacks? There is more stress on educators and students. Parents are also feeling the stress.

I would hate to see the day when the premier observes that education is "a bad news story." The cuts have had a very negative impact on all people involved in the teaching of children.

He needs to boast about something.

This is dreaming in colour. By increasing class sizes we are now jeopardizing our students' futures. Redirection of funds to the classroom was probably a good idea. There were too many boards. The problem is that we need more teachers and the funds seem to be lacking for that.

Totally out of touch!!

Premier Klein knows little to nothing of what really is going on in the schools. If he thinks "mob" control is teaching he's burying his head in the sand. There is more violence in the schools, overcrowding probably is a factor. Reduced funds means less available materials and books but still new books are being mandated by Department of Ed. How are these to be paid for and at what cost to the rest of the school? Take a look at stress in your teachers - those on long-term disability - Prozac users, etc. This is not a "good news story."

A "good news" story is the gospel message of Jesus Christ. Christ has the miraculous power of creating more from less, i.e., the loaves and fishes. Educators are not miracle workers. We cannot create more from less.

His flippant attempt to discredit the genuine concerns of students, teachers and parents demonstrates his arrogant indifference to the desires of Albertans.

Our premier is out to lunch! All he has to look at are the amount of stress leaves that teachers are presently suffering from.

If people believe this Fairy Tale, then they will be shocked by the unhappy ending!!

I do not agree with Ralph's assessment.

Education has suffered and is in very bad shape.

He doesn't know what he is talking about!

What does the Premier know about education when in fact he was a drop-out? When was his last time in a school?

This is selective listening/reporting by the Premier who has proven to be a subjective and therefore unreliable spokesperson for education in the province. The ATA must ensure that this kind of reporting is countered - loudly and clearly in a highly public forum.

The premier is out-of-touch with reality.

*Northern rural.*

Compared to the recent mass murders it probably is. Otherwise we are in the same position now as health care was 18 months ago and we are following the same road.

One can get any impression they want, if that's what they want, i.e., if I'm told to get results I can get the results wanted, no matter what.

In the sense that it provides lots of copy.

You can get stats to say anything you want; basically through reporting only "pertinent" information.

Wrong!

What a joke! Perhaps the premier would recognize a school. It is the large building with a lot of future taxpayers who feel they are being made into sacrificial lambs for the sake of the extravagance of their forefathers. It is the building wherein young people are becoming fatalistic and cynical instead of hopeful about their futures. Perhaps the premier would like to come visit one?

For someone who never graduated, how could he be sensitive to a "good news - bad news story" in education. The only empathy he has is towards getting re-elected in 1997. Klein has no vision of the future, which is one that depends on the marketable skills of our youth.

We have had amalgamations (forced) as well as cutbacks so for us education is NOT "a good news story."

Sounds like so much pre-election rhetoric to me. A bland generalization intended to buoy the spirits of a beleaguered population.

If the province only wants to get the "good news" out, then it won't get out. However, if the province looked at the negatives out there, there are lots too.

So are increases in taxes...since their increase is always less than originally projected...hence a decrease! - "a good news story." The more fortunate will always take advantage of the opportunities...however an ever increasing number of our youth will have to either go into business or risk working for minimum wages - if they can find employment. To an undertaker, death is "a good news story."

If education is "a good news story" we are in trouble!

I have been in education over 30 years and find this statement very hard to digest.

Sorry - wrong!

He's a bloody liar.

Good news for whom??

Are you serious!!

Money being re-directed to the classroom is not totally recognized. My staff is decreasing for next year. Also, with small budgets in operating and maintenance, I fear for the condition of our schools in years to come. Boards are also uneasy about future funding.

What is "good" about certain areas of the curriculum which have no resource material - only a very broad suggestion as to what is to be taught? Also, teachers' hands are well tied in respect to discipline. The money allotted to school systems is not enough to run the programs the way we would like to.

When education makes the news it is usually only the positive things that are seen. The whole story is not getting out. Most community members are unaware of what is going on within schools and boards except for these isolated "news stories."

There is no good news. We are putting our future at risk.

The general attitude of teachers that I know is not good. Stress levels are increasing rapidly and the recent cutbacks only compound the problems. Comment on report that MLAs may not receive an increase in pay stated that it would be difficult to find good representatives. The reply stated that they knew what they were getting into. As a teacher of 15 years, I did not know, and now find I work harder and make \$2,200 less a year.

We are sinking - the system is eroding away - "a bad news story."

Any cuts will have an adverse effect. Only reinstatement to previous levels will restore previous quality.



Bigger classes - less prep time - more demanding - fewer funds available - where are we going? And what's the good news?

"Oh, somewhere in this favoured land the sun is shining bright;  
The band is playing somewhere, and somewhere hearts are light,  
And somewhere men are laughing, and somewhere children shout;  
But there is no joy in Mudville - mighty Casey has struck out."

-Ernest Lawrence Thayer

*Southern rural.*

Mr. Klein needs to listen to those people who are directly involved in the process of educating our youth. We care, does he? We are accountable as our students are. Mr. Klein only knows what he wants to know about what is happening with education. He truly needs an education.

It's a good way for the premier to get publicity as education affects the majority of people. It's bad that he does it in a way basically negative to teachers.

Good news only to his ears and eyes. Some has been good and necessary, but most cutbacks never took place in the positions they were supposed to take place in.

The changes to education are a "good new fairy tale," not a good news story. I know of nobody who considers these changes as positive!

What else can a man say who wants to be re-elected?

It is a "good news story" only in relation to other areas that have been negatively affected. Perhaps what the premier meant was it is a "better" news story than healthcare, Multicorp, Jane Fulton...

The only good news doesn't concern education at all. Increase in oil revenue has given the government more money which they should return to education.

The premier has obviously not been talking to school staff, students or parents.

I'm not sure how it can be "good," when everyone involved in education has been hurt in one way or another.

Well, at least "Ralphie-Boy" lives in a different world doesn't he? Didn't he say the same about Health Care? Time for him to get realistic!

Klein (our little Hitler) doesn't value or understand the need for an education. Not surprising in that he failed to complete his own formal education. It seems that he's more concerned about selling out Canada and Alberta to big business and the United States.

Oh really? When was the last time that he sat in a classroom or has really talked to teachers at the grassroots level? Teachers are on more committees than ever! Quite a good news story when you consider how much less we are learning.

Who is he listening to? The pressure is from the top to make students assembly line products with inspection control. Accountability which loses the whole focus of education. We are all responsible to provide the child with the best chance to succeed.

It's a bunch of garbage.

My first comment would be "it is a good news story to whom?" Ralph Klein doesn't have a clue what teachers do or what is involved in teaching children. All he does is make cuts which negatively affect all the people who are involved. We as teachers will always try to make do with less. But why should we have to? The only smart decision he made was in not accepting that honorary degree!

Klein is not actively involving himself in the education system. He is an outsider creating assumptions based on the opinion of his advisors.

Such is not the case.

He has not been in the classroom for an extended period of time and he believes "one" teacher.

False!

What a joke!

How many teachers has the premier actually contacted? Increased class sizes plus even higher expectations of teachers by the public hardly constitutes a "good news story."

*Theme 4: Government priorities are wrong*

*Large urban.*

Klein is a businessman and has no idea what goes on within the realm of education in this province. He's a pathetic embarrassment of a leader.

The changes are NOT good news. The stress level on students, staff and parents has increased significantly. The changes are financial bottom line. Less monetary resources ALWAYS decreases quality, any comments to the contrary are merely political rhetoric. The Alberta PCs are obviously interested more in appearances than in reality or the true welfare of Alberta students. We in schools know that it is becoming impossible to maintain in light of the current short-sighted political

agenda.

How can it be good news to say that the quality of education has been eroded and compromised? By short-changing young people, the government is setting up a long-term decline in the advantages and opportunities for intellectual and entrepreneurial success. Success breeds success. In making the environment for success less inviting, the government ensures a decline in the very advantages it touts as Albertan.

Any savings no matter the cost is good news?

Education needs increased funds for resources, school structures and teacher and support staff salaries.

...only in that dollars have been saved. Quality is going and costs are high for students and parents. Morale is down, stress is up, and people are suffering.

The futures of our students are being sacrificed on the altar of the deficit god. How can that be a good news story?

The restructuring was done to reduce costs and costs have been reduced, the end! Class sizes are too large, special needs are not being met, money is not there for programs, technology is passing us by in schools and teachers are under great stress. One does not require even an honorary degree to know that if you remove all supports, that which is being supported will fall.

I guess Mr Klein's children being in private school, it would be "good news" to him. I also suppose that if "money" is your only moral yardstick, what you judge to be "good" or "bad" would be influenced by that variable only. Perhaps the premier would like to look at the obscene amount of money being spent on testing. Now there's a source of money!

Our future is our children. If they are not educated properly we all lose. We are giving higher needs schools more and more hurdles to climb because they are carrying a heavier load. It is more than a "news story" it is a travesty.

Saying that education is "a good news story" makes teachers feel like we are on exhibition and under everyone's thumb. We feel that our actions and performances are open to everyone's scrutiny without ever having the true picture of what takes place in a classroom under this government's reign.

Resources to help teachers and students have been drastically reduced, i.e., science centre with supplies, resource closed down; art special supplies (i.e., paper maker) unavailable (locked in storage) because no personnel. ESL services diminished. Money for resources, technology diminished.

Get real!! As a teacher with this board for 17 years I have "witnessed" many

changes - some for the good, but over the last three years budget cutbacks have been felt at all levels in education!! Lack of money for student programs, support equipment, teacher support services and educative community development have provided a viral rot to the foundations of education.

There are a lot of things that need to be looked at in education before the education of our students will improve. Number 1 is classroom size and right now we are headed in the wrong direction.

If good news means loss of learning opportunities for our students with the demise of our music program, our phys. ed. specialist and reduction of teacher-librarian time, then it is. But I would hardly call this Good News! Ralph - change the channel!

ECS has been nearly devastated by the cuts and many excellent teachers have moved up to another grade. Parents are expected to pay taxes to support schools, but are asked regularly to pay for supplies, field trips, option programs, etc., etc., etc. Alberta now has one of the least-funded education programs in the country. Where's the "good news"?

The premier has used certain segments of society to solve the government's debt problems. Teachers had to take a substantial cut in wages, special needs children were placed in regular classrooms without adequate resources to meet their needs and more and more parent groups have to raise money to provide essentials in the classroom. If that's what the premier calls a good news story he should blink to clear his vision!

Resources have really decreased, so the support for teachers is diminished and the expectations and stress greatly increased. Individual quality educational support such as psych, ESL, behavioural, resource teacher, etc, has been decreased and is detrimental to helping high needs students to rehabilitate to function better not only at school, but in society! All people will eventually pay for current cutbacks!!

There is no "good news story" in our school. Cutbacks have affected programming (less resources, assistance especially for high needs children) and teacher morale a great deal. Parent involvement has not increased. This year I/we had fewer parents than ever! Certainly charter schools will be successful – I would do a much better job if I had smaller sized classes, more resources, and a group of "supportive" parents too. I would suggest that Mr Klein spend a few weeks in a high needs school to see the "good news story" there. I wonder which teacher an MLA talked to?

With all of the decrease in services how can we say education is a "good news story"? Spend some time in my classroom of 31 (7 ADHD, 2 LD, 1 Behaviour). Try to get some help for that behaviour student. Congested classrooms are not good for our children. **START REINVESTING IN EDUCATION!**

Not really. Too many pressures due to integration. Special needs are everywhere.

Integration is great - but not the total solution.

In order for all children to benefit, smaller schools need to be allocated more money.

Stop cutting in education. Invest in the future by investing in education.

I think many of the cutbacks in education are not short term consequences. Many of the outcomes will be felt in the next ten years in society. Teachers and students have both been negatively affected by the cutbacks.

With increased expectations re technology and increased changes in technology to keep up with, schools are unable to change fast enough on very limited funds. There is a risk of obtaining computers, say, at the expense of maintaining outdated, worn out, microscopes in rooms badly in need of repainting and patching. Staff is pushed to the point of exhaustion.

Good show-off. From the political point of view (as Trudeau said years ago) education is not a business and shouldn't be run like a business. Politicians have no clue of how it is to work with the cuts. Those students are our future, what are we offering them to work with? Who is to be blamed? Not those kids.

We will pay a terrible price in the long run for cutting services to ESL, gifted kids or others with special needs - we can pay a little now or a lot more later! Someday I will be old and will be dependent on these young people - will they care for me then if I don't care for them now? We are creating a terrible society where we victimize the young, the old, the sick and the poor. But to quote Jim Dinning, "There are winners and there are losers!"

Obviously, by the government's deeds, the teaching profession has been knocked down to that of a second class or second rate occupation. Their actions now will affect quality of education down the road. Klein's lack of regard for education based on his personal lack of success and that of some of his offspring is very upsetting. The business community's view of what is education is very limited in scope and is not necessarily the right philosophy for society's overall goals for education. In some areas of the world education and educators are regarded highly. It is this individual's hope that Klein's political poker game eventually causes him to fold. As goes education so goes society. This government's philosophy is heading our society for big social problems down the line. Economic bottom line is important but not the be all and end all!

"Good news" for whom?? Tight budgets have meant fewer teachers to teach more students, less instruction and time for students with learning difficulties/behaviour problems, a screaming need for upgrading and increasing access to technology by students and teachers, no dollars for aging schools to be repaired/painted/upgraded, libraries ignored because of teacher-librarians and assistants needed elsewhere and no budgets/or little budgets in an INFORMATION AGE!!!

If good news means – teachers and students must do more with less; students will learn to use technologies without having access to the technology; teachers morale is decreasing while stress is increasing; special needs students have less assistance; new curriculum is being implemented without adequate funding, then Mr Klein is correct in his statement.

Nothing could be further from the truth. The premier, as a "high school dropout," is not a person who is capable of recognizing the damage being done to the educational system in Alberta. The impact of the havoc he and his government have wrought on education in Alberta will not likely be fully evident for another ten years, enough time for Mr Klein to escape to Ottawa where he can do further damage!!

He's out to lunch at the St Louis.

Is he living "never-never land?" Does he know what education is? Can he be honest? Can he see beyond the needs of his party? Does he have any idea what's needed in the future? And what kind of education is needed for it?

He has obviously not been in a classroom lately.

Boo!

B.S.

Obviously he has not been a classroom recently!! Nor do I suspect that he would admit anything negative if it bit him!

As if! What you refuse to see or listen to can be perceived as such I guess. The stress and inability to cope with so much more is too much!

It is not. When was the last time he spent a considerable amount of time in a school. What about my 5% cut. MLAs haven't taken a cut, have they? Has he had to deal with parents who want more help for special needs kids? Klein needs a reality check!!

It certainly hasn't been a "good news story" for me or the children that I teach. As a kindergarten teacher I have found the last three years to be very negative for teachers, students and parents. It has been a very unsettling time for us all.

What about the report on education that indicated that cost of education had already declined, before Klein came into power (three days before), before his budget cuts. Of course it's a good news story. It makes him look like a hero to all but teachers.

Whose "good news story" - his or the teachers? Since Klein's government has been in power I have witnessed and experienced negative impacts and changes. I work harder for less and I am tired of defending my profession. Teaching was once

considered a "good" profession. These days I find we are considered the reason for society's ills. If Klein thinks that his restructuring has had a positive impact on our educational systems, then he doesn't really realize what's going on. It's the teachers who made the difference by standing together and becoming a united front when the government attacked and made our profession look "bad". Dedication and a sense of obligation is what make our system work, not Klein or his government.

That is a "sick" comment. The danger of such a comment is that people believe it. How can a system that no longer can address the individual needs of students be considered "good news?" While the diversity of students is increasing we need more resources to help, not less.

The premier hears only what he wants to hear, and not what he needs to listen to. Ask Ralph to attend one of our general meetings and listen to what teachers really have to say!! Not what he thinks they are saying. Remember - Ralph used to be part of the media, and the media manipulates information/quotes to their benefit.

It says much more about the premier and his power of observation than it could ever say about education. He does not value education (his own Grade 10 education level) and chooses to continue to whitewash the problems we are experiencing.

"A good news story" for someone who is not in the school where the action is. All sounds good but in reality the morale in the school has deteriorated. When you treat people with little dignity, the amount of trust declines.

What fairyland is he living in? He'd better have a closer look:  
 -at the morale of teachers - having many more duties to do on the one hand and being treated inhumanely on the other. We don't work well under those circumstances.  
 - the assessment of students - we are told we are to assess differently and yet bottom line is we have a provincial exam in June that the premier uses to spout off what students know and don't know.

I feel that his observations have everything to do with business and politics and nothing to do with education!

Ridiculous.

Like most politicians, Mr Klein takes neither a long range nor philosophically sound view concerning the role of education in society. I suppose it's little wonder, since an educated populace thinks and that is something most politicians fear. Am I jaundiced? Definitely!

As a reflection of what is really happening in education, the premier's comments are fairly typical of the willingness of this government to see what they want to see. I presume that anything we may say to the contrary will be dismissed as whining by "special interests."

How can all these changes and setbacks be "a good news story?" Since education is of little importance to the premier (and he has made that quite clear) it's no wonder he'd come up with a ridiculous statement like that.

I refuse to comment on statements coming from an ignorant person who does not have, like teachers, at least one university degree. Klein is so remote from the education reality he has no vision for the future. He thinks only in terms of money not in terms of people.

He is not seeing education through the eyes of a teacher! He is seeing what he wants to see (which is not what it really is). He should take his blinders off and really make an effort to see "Education in the 90s - as it is!"

Let's get in touch with reality, please.

The premier cannot see any farther ahead than his nose...the impact of the cuts is ongoing.

*Clover Bar - Ft Saskatchewan.*

The premier's consistent misinterpretation of the current situation only reinforces my belief that he is deliberately undermining public education in favour of a system which will cater to those parents capable of buying their children the education they feel they want for their children. We must seriously question if the premier understands the concept of democracy and equality for all.

If education is a "good news story" today, the extent of the cutbacks and their detrimental effects will make a "good history lesson" tomorrow. Shouldn't we have already learned from our mistakes? Must history repeat itself?

Education is going backwards - the really important changes that are necessary in education are not being made because of the chaos that the system has been thrown into.

The attempt to make the education system conform to a business model is misinformed and harmful. We do not/cannot control our raw materials, or all of the outside societal, economic and family pressures that affect student learning. The business model does not and is not working.

If he considers more stress, more students and less money "good news" he is right!

The statistical evidence regarding Alberta's standing among other provinces and territories would indicate the reverse. We are certainly not spending the same dollars on education as other less fortunate provinces. In addition, the entrepreneurship/business model for education has some major limitations which left



unchecked will create a two-tier system of education.

Educational reform should mean that there have been meaningful improvements at the classroom level. Change in my classroom has been entirely negative. This is not reform. It is simply penny-pinching. This is a poorly thought out policy that in the long run will cost the government extra dollars in adult retraining.

Education is an investment in the future, so the bad news about the negative results of cutbacks will not be noticed for a while. Large class sizes mean that low and average students do not get the attention they need and they will become more frustrated if this trend continues. How will drop outs or poorly educated students contribute to "the Alberta Advantage?"

The impact of the changes which have been made will not be really apparent for some years to come. At that time, when crime rates are increasing, unemployability increases and the number of dysfunctional citizens increases, please don't blame teachers. I feel sick to think that our government has chosen technology over people.

Appalled! If that is our premier's assessment of our future generation, then we are going to be "paying" for this lack of vision for quite a few years. We need to put all types of resources into education.

From an outside observer's viewpoint the financial picture may look better, but the reality is different.

Education is definitely NOT a good news story. Changes in education have NOT been received well by teachers (who are the ones in the classroom), but perhaps appear OK to the general public who don't know what the changes have done. Restructuring by parent/teacher involvement have led parents to a belief that they have more "rights" to just walk in a classroom for whatever reason (please be courteous and knock!) Small groups of parents (SAC) are making large decisions re school policies that affect all families, etc, etc.

A "Happy Medium," please.

Possibly so in comparison to health care; certainly not in comparison to the rest of Canada or to other countries.

The full impact is yet to be felt. Site-based management is likely to create new problems. Continuing cuts do not bode well. Stress levels are very high. We are still riding on good work done in previous years. The effects will attenuate over time.

The impact of monetary reductions in education will not be immediately apparent to the public. It will take a number of years before they realize that there are negative impacts on our students. Remember - it takes 12 years for them to become "products" of the system.

He's just as likely to see the Edmonton Journal as light reading. Perhaps he should "blink" and take another look. The County of Strathcona due to regionalization but in particular equalization has greatly suffered. The overall quality of education has become a mediocre system as compared to before the "Klein Revolution". Parents have fewer program choices. Business involvement is up (by necessity). Community access is more costly. Class sizes up, teachers disgruntled.

Parents see that schools are being run like a business which in our economical/philosophical environment seems like a good idea. Capitalism is running amok. Capitalism benefits the richer and makes fewer rich and more poor. It does not benefit students, community or the world.

We used to be a designated community school with staff and budget that could offer activities to students and the community. Counsellor time has been cut in half although the need for testing and counselling remains very high. Administration time has been cut but now they are expected to go to school based budgeting as well as continue everything else. Teacher morale is low - expectations continue to increase.

Not to the children who have become a value-added commodity. Business faction seems to be suddenly expert on education, so students are treated accordingly. Teachers feel undervalued and ignored. Parents may be feeling more involved and this is positive. However, it is always the same parents who remain involved no matter what.

If a price tag on human lives is your value system, then cheap = good. If your value system is based on the belief that an individual is unique and special, that citizens have a democratic right to equal access; that our children deserve the best our present knowledge allows us to offer then, then cheap = bad news.

Options for special needs children are decreasing. Teacher/board contracts are prolonged - no settlement for current school year. Teacher's wage rollback (5%) proved to be unnecessary as government surplus declared.

Not only have many positions been lost through "cutbacks" but we are continuing to lose more every year. The availability of courses continues to depend on high enrolment numbers and only high enrolment numbers. Supplies are becoming very scarce. Ordering books for courses has become a small nightmare of: "Do we have enough money in the budget for ....?" And, "If we don't, where do we get it from?"

*Northern rural.*

Education is not considered by me to be a "good news story." Cutbacks have resulted in increased stress, with increased testing (achievement) comes increased stress on students to "perform." Too much public funds are being used on private schools. I have no problems with giving parents choice, but if a private school is

chosen, then parents should be willing to pay.

We have a lot to be proud of within our educational systems. There is not enough priority being placed on education and the increased loads are having a negative impact upon students and teachers. Public tax money should NOT be spent on private/Christian schools. This money and MORE should be injected into public education to ensure success into the future. I would certainly not call the deterioration of a fine system "a good news story."

Education cutbacks have not resulted in "a good news story" especially for small rural schools. School-based budget does not allow for small schools to function economically.

Bullshit! At the expense of the young, the sick and the old - the deficit will be eliminated.

This is definitely not the case in rural schools. Very few (if any) rural schools have the computers and/or other equipment to implement the Career and Technologies Studies program mandated by Alberta Ed. No funding is available for preparing teachers for the new requirements put forth by Alberta Ed. Much extra time and expense is spent by teachers who now want to upgrade. Others, who are not upgrading, are holding back progress.

Money is being pumped into the system but on the average the end-product is not of any quality as it was five years ago. Too many students are being shuffled through the cracks and they graduate being border-line illiterate. Students do not regard education very highly and are content to just "get by." Striving for excellence is passé! On the whole, "society" does not hold much regard for the educational institutions.

Equal opportunity for all is not a reality. Post secondary education has become an impossible dream for many rural students. The "loans" for living expenses are totally inadequate.

I am concerned about the suggestions of how teachers are to be evaluated. If they are judged by government tests, e.g., CAT tests every three grades (if one or two of the three teachers are weak, other teachers suffer). There is a suggestion that evaluations are considering using professional development as part of an evaluation. With school-based budgeting, money spent in this way will be begrudged. I feel that this whole attitude lends itself to teachers teaching to tests and fudging marks rather than teaching to students - poor students are as important as good students.

I strongly disagree. I see the schools being turned into small businesses with the focus on budget instead of pedagogy. I especially resent the funding structure for special needs students. It creates a need for unnecessary labelling. Besides which, the criteria is inappropriate. Students who obviously need funding do not qualify.

The current setup will result in the demise of small rural schools!

If "good news" means allowing the general population to believe that education comes third after deficit priorities and international trade, then I guess Ralph is right. I disagree totally!

"Good news" has a definition solely attained through the application of the accounting equation to basic human needs, which according to Mr Klein makes perfect sense; ergo, quantify and identify and balance in numbers only, and Alberta does meet  $A = L + C$  (at any cost.

Comment made by someone on the outside, and only concerned with dollars. The effects of cutbacks can only be measured over time so the detriment to Alberta will only be felt when Ralph is long gone. We, as educators, rolled over far too quickly and accepted Ralph's medicine which made it "seem" things were going smoothly. Our silence or limited response was tantamount to acceptance. We must not give up the fight to save what is left of our heritage, namely our young Albertans in our classrooms.

Mr Klein was only looking at the dollars involved in education.

"Good news" to whom?

Cuts in funding have resulted in more fundraising for parents and students. Schools fees have increased. Minimum basic resources are available - no extra for "gravy."

It is good news only if you are a taxpayer with no direct connection to education.

Community schools are a thing of the past. That is most unfortunate. Parents were more involved and the community (in small towns) could use school facilities. Now there are charges for every use of the school.

Education may be finding ways to deal with cuts. But it is forcing schools to spend time being "creative" with their budget, playing one program against the other, and within jurisdictions schools compete and argue with each other over funds. Not what I would call an improvement.

There has been an awful lot of work put on the school with site-based management and at our site we have very little admin time.

We're not bleeding to death as quickly as Social Services and Health. Site based management has put more pressure on administrators to do non-instructional leadership type activities.

We have just now gotten extra money for technology. The teacher is the most

important resource. In order to attract good people there has to be professional equity with other professions. There needs to be substantial increase in salary to attract new teachers. There needs to be increased money for more teachers to give better personal instruction and assistance.

*Small urban.*

It may not remain a good news story when staff burn-out increases and when materials deplete, technology becomes outdated, etc. It is imperative that the education system grows and replaces itself all along. That's not happening. We're relying on "yesterday."

The good news is that teachers are not dropping dead on the job. A huge portion of our job has become coping with issues that skim from external sources (violence, assault, medical issues, etc.) that seriously distract from one's ability to meet curricular requirements. The governments attack on education has hindered our ability to harness public support. Thanks Ralph.

Does he ever listen?

Bull...

He has a dream that one day every person in Alberta will be as well educated as he is.

This is not a "good news story."

To the premier, education is a "good news story," because he has on many other issues, insisted on wearing blinders and seeing only what he wants to see. Yes, our education system is top notch, but for conservative MLA'S to stand in the legislature and maintain that the cutbacks will not seriously erode our education system, is either sheer ignorance, or an outright lie. The cuts have had a very real impact, most of it very negative, and to maintain that they have not is dangerous. A dangerous illusion that could only be disastrous for the future of all Albertans.

How would he know? How many classroom teachers has he interviewed? What basis of assessment is he using as a measure of "good news?"

We have more testing in place than anything else as a result of Ralph's policies. Why do we have to test grade 3's? The costs of printing, administering, and evaluating these exams are wasteful. Class sizes of 33-34 students in a grade 9 class are overwhelming. Site-based management makes schools a business as opposed to a learning centre.

How does he know? Who reports to him? Does he ever listen? Did he hear the results of the round table discussions?

Edchakation has not bean hert by Mr. Kline!

Teacher morale is low. Teachers are underpaid, and under-appreciated. Remember you get what you pay for.

The Premier is obviously neither a student nor a teacher.

A good news story is a definite misjudgement of the effects of spending cuts. Increased class sizes, with less teacher access are not positive consequences.

Recent health and education stories have been scary, to say the least.

His kindergarten policy remains bizarre.

I believe any person who makes comments such as "it's the only way I would have gotten a degree," has no idea about the dedication, commitment and time teachers, students, parents and community give to schools and education. Ralph Klein puts little, if any value on education. His inappropriate comments reinforce this perception of him time after time.

Good news for whom?

The Premier's level of education is really apparent in that statement. His junior high school education was obviously not enough! He and the rest of his bandits are so caught up in the money issue, that they are turning a blind eye to the real problem. His beliefs will soon change when he sees the effects of the educational cuts in the youth of the future.

Ridiculous propaganda! This man is incredible the way he can distort the truth. Reducing education opportunities from kindergarten to university is the most regressive policy a government could conceive. This must be a "corporate" agenda to downsize the society to facilitate their war on democracy.

More lying propaganda, based on zero or unfounded research.

Yanking dollars without knowing the consequences is a political strategy, not an educational one!

We seem to have a lot of negative publicity if it is such a good news story! When it compares to all the damage he is responsible for, education might seem like good news. However, what has happened to education is a disaster, unless you are a rightwing business person.

It is a good news story only because of dedicated staff who are burning out. By nature, teachers refuse to give up on students (our future) and have taken the burden

on ourselves. We are losing the battle to the private sector, and I feel this is all due to the government's hidden agenda.

Less funding has meant a reduction in time for resource help for weaker students. Fewer resources available in the schools; reduction in field trips which provide excellent educational experiences. There is an imbalance in salary scales between the public sector and private sector, even though the cost of living is the same for all.

We need to make sure that the students of today have the same opportunities as the students had in the past.

Many teachers are over burdened with duties that are related to the business and management of a school. We would prefer to spend our energies on "teaching" children in the classroom.

No, it is not a good news story. I am alarmed at the emphasis on standardization (achievement exams). These tests are not true indicators of our students' abilities or skills. More money is needed for special needs, technology, and smaller class sizes so students get the attention they need.

Education is not a "good news story" when you have such big classes where you cannot give the children the attention they need. Integrating special needs has not helped this situation. Teachers have bigger classrooms with many more levels of ability in one room.

It is not a "good news story" as long as class sizes are over 25. Every number above 20 diminishes the benefits every student in the class receives in a school year. Generally students' attention and listening skills are decreasing (due to what's on T.V., Nintendo, etc.) and they require more individualized attention.

Funding cuts are further eroding the equality of education. Class sizes are bigger; there are fewer resources to use. Educators are stressed by job security and reduced income. Administrators and councils waste valuable time trying to handle issues that could be dealt with elsewhere more effectively.

I think it is hardly a good news story when the class sizes are larger. The time spent with each student is significantly less, and the resources are diminished.

From my evaluation, I believe the last three years to be generally a "bad news story." Classes need to be smaller and more time needed for teachers. The recent money available to new technologies is a step in the right direction.

We have more testing in place than anything else as a result of Ralph's policies. Why do we have to test grade 3's? The costs of printing, administering and evaluating these exams are wasteful. Class size of 33-34 students in a grade 9 class is overwhelming. Site based management makes schools a business as opposed to a

learning centre.

With site-based management you have given the task of running small businesses to a group of people trained and focused on educating. There has been minimal effort made to train these people to run this business successfully.

Anything can be said, but the proof is in the pudding. Teachers are much more stressed, more need disability insurance and the company ASEBP is making that nearly impossible. Sick teachers are forced to go on unemployment insurance because of the stress is too high. Elementary kids are writing too many government exams, and teachers are teaching how to write exams, not the essentials like reading and mathematics.

I do not agree and have concerns about a decline in education. One concern that I have is the decline in resource people at the central office level. I don't feel that committees made up of classroom teachers are sufficient. Another area of concern is parents who continually have to fund-raise to cover costs such as our new computers. Too much government paperwork being required at "all" levels.

More pressure on teachers. Students being taught for exam results. Less money, renovations and furniture. More sickness among staff, along with salary cuts, is still hurting.

The cuts in education will take quite a while to be felt. Many schools are getting older and desperately need new ventilation and heating systems. Our furniture is wearing out and we have no money or future money to replace it. I think that there needs to be more of a push to get more technology into the schools and to provide time and money to make the teachers up to date in this area. Most people are not really aware of the true picture of education - they get only what they see in the media, unless they have a child in the system.

The cuts to fund education have had a bad effect on teachers (stress, students, less materials and books). Parents worry about the future of their children; standards have to be lower because of large classes. The schools are shabby, because there is no money in the budget.

More and more of my time is being spent managing resources. Site-based management may have merit if the funds were available to provide equity throughout the school. Currently it is a "steal from Paul to pay Peter" situation. Principals, and teachers, should be spending their time being educational leaders and providers, not ledger keepers. If I had wanted to be an accountant, I would have made that decision at the start.

Things like computers have been purchased, but audio visual machines have fallen into disrepair and have not been purchased. With a general increase in pupil/teacher ratio, it cannot help but be negative. As these students proceed through the system,



problems will be compounded. At present we have class loads of 33-35.

The stress on teachers has increased. If this is considered to be "good news," I'm surprised. I suspect that the reorganization at the school district/county level has been effective. In the elementary classrooms, we are struggling with a reduced resource base - both equipment and finances (books for class and library use).

Decisions affecting the "front line" people, the teachers, continue to be made by individuals who are very detached from reality or practical situations. Site based management has put far more pressure on the administration to become concerned with financial matters, more than with students and teachers needs. Many inequities still exist between schools in the same districts and between jurisdictions in Alberta. Please restore funding!

Most people really don't know the main issues and only see the surface issues through the media. The real effect of the cuts in education will show up in the future after all has been stretched to the maximum.

*Southern rural.*

Such is not the case.

The premier has obviously not been talking to school staff, students or parents.

Klein is not actively involving himself in the education system. He is an outsider creating assumptions based on the opinion of his advisors.

My first comment would be "it is a good news story to whom?" Ralph Klein doesn't have a clue what teachers do or what is involved in teaching children. All he does is make cuts which negatively affect all the people who are involved. We as teachers will always try to make do with less. But why should we have to? The only smart decision he made was in not accepting that honorary degree!

He has not been in the classroom for an extended period of time and he believes "one" teacher.

False

It's a bunch of garbage.

Who is he listening to? The pressure is from the top to make students assembly line products with inspection control. Accountability which loses the whole focus of education. We are all responsible to provide the child with the best chance to succeed.

It's a bunch of garbage.

Oh really? When was the last time that he sat in a classroom or has really talked to teachers at the grassroots level? Teachers are on more committees than ever! Quite a good news story when you consider how much less we are learning.

Klein (our little Hitler) doesn't value or understand the need for an education. Not surprising in that he failed to complete his own formal education. It seems that he's more concerned about selling out Canada and Alberta to big business and the United States.

Well, at least "Ralphie-Boy" lives in a different world doesn't he? Didn't he say the same about Health Care? Time for him to get realistic!

I'm not sure how it can be "good," when everyone involved in education has been hurt in one way or another.

The only good news doesn't concern education at all. Increase in oil revenue has given the government more money which they should return to education.

It is a "good news story" only in relation to other areas that have been negatively affected. Perhaps what the premier meant was it is a "better" news story than healthcare, Multicorp, Jane Fulton...

What else can a man say who wants to be re-elected?

The changes to education are a "good new fairy tale," not a good news story. I know of nobody who considers these changes as positive!

Good news only to his ears and eyes. Some has been good and necessary, but most cutbacks never took place in the positions they were supposed to take place in.

It's a good way for the premier to get publicity as education affects the majority of people. It's bad that he does it in a way basically negative to teachers.

What a joke!

Mr. Klein needs to listen to those people who are directly involved in the process of educating our youth. We care, does he? We are accountable as our students are. Mr. Klein only knows what he wants to know about what is happening with education. He truly needs an education.

How many teachers has the premier actually contacted? Increased class sizes plus even higher expectations of teachers by the public hardly constitutes a "good news story."

Perhaps good news is reducing deficit, but once the negative results of cutbacks

filters out into the community, there will be a "bad news" story because then we'll see the increases in violence and criminal activity that we are already feeling in schools.

We work just as hard as ever, whether paid more or less. The difference shows in staff morale. Administrators work much harder at the business side of education and have less time to be "principal teachers." Combining jurisdictions has caused negative struggles. We were a happier unit before regionalization. I do not see the benefits since 1993.

Since "restructuring," we have combined two school divisions, but retained all the senior level administration and central office. Our class sizes have increased. There is much more time spent on paperwork and meetings, which means less for students. Our "school-site" administrators are no longer part of the teaching staff, but have become "management," increasing alienation and frustration.

Smaller rural or county schools are losing out! They cannot compete with site based management.

The only good news is from the Premier's point of view not spending money on education. Students are not getting the quality education that will enhance our province in years ahead. Cutbacks are severely hurting the ability of schools to provide the type of education necessary for Albertans to keep pace with the rest of the country and the world. In brief, Klein is short-sighted, on the wrong track with education, and unless major changes are made, we will never regain our educational status.

Yes, a good news story for him, but with larger school boards, less money from funding, our education is suffering. Our class size is too big and kindergarten has really suffered. It is no longer education for all but rather those who can afford it, especially in kindergarten and university.

Education for some school boards who spent all of their money before amalgamation benefited some schools to the detriment of others. In essence not all schools are equally funded and I see our system splitting into one for the rich and another for the poor. Site based management will lead us towards this as well. This is okay for business, but I don't think competition like this is how to run our school system.

A "balanced" budget does not always equal "good news." There are still problems in creating such huge divisions. Staff cuts result in overworked, frustrated teachers. More computers do not mean better quality teachers or education. They are not the end all, be all to problems with the system (neither are more tests).

We have been hurt by the cuts to education as far as the classroom situation exists today. Resources have been decreased and money for extra curricular activities has been curtailed.

It's good news if you don't have children in school. Fewer resources are available due to financial restraints. School based budgeting is death to small schools. Teacher morale is at an all time low. Too many changes too fast.

Please look at cutting back on spending/employees (in other words, the bureaucracy) of the department of education. Resources can be spent better at the grassroots level on students. We do not benefit from the layers upon layers of bureaucrats running our school system. Less government, not more please!

Since regionalization, we rarely see our administrators due to the time constraints and the large area they must cover. Have we really saved money? Or does the travelling for meetings and phone calls cost us nearly as much?

Parents are feeling the financial crunch as more and more costs are charged to them. Communities and businesses are been asked to contribute for every extra curricular, as well as curricular support such as technology.

*Theme 5: Public education is threatened*

*Large urban.*

Only in that it is cheaper. Many students will fall through the cracks. Many parents will move to private schools.

Education, public education that is, is generally portrayed as a weak cog in the overall machinery of society. "Rules" regarding education do little to meet the needs of the students and Alberta's future.

*Clover Bar - Ft Saskatchewan.*

For him! Other provincial leaders feel that cutting will help their deficit. Two-tiered education (rich get to pay for the school they wish their kids to attend) is a real and very scary smudge on the horizon. "Back to Basics" should mean students attend their neighbourhood school.

*Northern rural.*

I still believe strongly in public education. I feel more and more the fiscal cuts are becoming more important than the students.

*Small urban.*

Education is a very complex issue. Some good changes, too much pressure for success on exams at an early age. Funding for programs will be a hard climb to attain previous levels. Public Education must work, and I'm not sure it will in the future.

The institution of public education is being eroded. Teachers' workload is reaching extreme levels. Soon the only viable alternative for the children of the middle class and upper middle class will be private school. Save public education! Public education is at risk with all the cuts being made. Teachers are being made to do more and more to larger classes with fewer resources. Teacher burn-out is inevitable.

What about the 5% loss taken by teachers? Charter schools cannot be assessed at this point. Two-tier possibilities beginning to appear. Good news only because collectively the players still have not spoken out effectively.

I am concerned with the charter schools concept as I believe it will erode the quality of public schools and create a two-tiered system. Any school can be a howling success, especially on paper, if it can choose its clientele. Education is not a good news story. On the contrary, I feel that teachers and children are being abandoned, that teachers are in fact debilitated, and undermined by the PC government.

No - teachers - healthcare workers, are fast becoming only a segment of the working force that had no raise in salary. Charter schools may well make public schools a place for only disadvantaged children.

*Southern rural.*

As per usual, the premier bases his comments upon a non-representative sample. To put it bluntly, Mr. Klein has blinders on. Public Education, it would seem, is destined to fail given the damage done. An unfortunate situation.

*Theme 6: The misguided government means well*

*Large urban.*

Klein should "walk a mile in our shoes."

Not a good news story for all areas of education but it is good news in some areas. Changes are needed but the trial period could be crucial if the changes are "testing" (experimental) in nature. There needs to be input from teachers where the changes are needed.

Perhaps Klein needs to make more than the "odd" classroom visit, i.e., spend a day in a high needs, oversized classroom to really get a full picture of this "good news" story!

The "bad news story" was reducing ECE time to part-time positions only.

The premier needs to spend a day in a high needs classroom to be able to make an accurate assessment of the impact of the cuts to education.

He needs to visit several schools to get the TRUE picture.

I think the premier should make an effort to seek out several "good" teachers and listen carefully to their "news". As every teacher knows and practices, effective communication requires a receiver who reacts to the message given by the sender.

I think the premier should visit the schools to see what it is really like. His cuts have inhibited public education.

Obviously the Premier is by no means aware what truly is going on in our schools.

I'd like to hear his reaction after teaching in an inner city school with a class who has behaviour, slow learning, average and bright kids and with no help for one month, following the curriculum.

He needs to do a "grass roots" tour to see what has been desecrated over the past three years. However, we as teachers do have a tendency to roll over and do more with less without questioning the reasons for it.

The premier should visit a few schools and listen to how stressed out teachers feel. They should be recognized and paid for their efforts. Their mental health affects everybody concerned.

He has obviously not been in a classroom lately.

*Clower Bar - Ft Saskatchewan*

I feel Premier Klein needs the experience of being in the class for a period of time to realize the challenges we face. He has no idea of the range of students we deal with.

Please stop and listen to the people in the "front lines" i.e., teachers. In 10, 15 years the "good news story" will undoubtedly be a "bad news story" when we are supporting more inmates and unemployed people in our society.

Premier Klein is obviously misguided and misinformed. The cuts to education will manifest in an increase of welfare cases in years to come.

The education of our young people should be a priority! Cutbacks to funding are not the way to achieve Klein's goals.

*Northern rural.*

Tell him to come and see what's actually happening!

Mr Klein should be visiting the classrooms and talk to the students and teachers!

Shows his ignorance of what is going on.

I don't see how an education system that is causing negative results on everyone involved can be a "good news story". I think that only those directly involved see the extent of the changes, but they are definitely far from positive. We are taking away from our future.

Ya, right! He should come to school.

The premier has obviously not spent anytime in any schools in the northern part of the province.

Good news for budget perhaps, but NOT good news in terms of people involved in school systems. Education was cut too deeply in financial terms. Teachers are overworked and this affects everybody in a severe negative way in the schools. The premier should spend less time pouring over budget figures and more time inside the classrooms of the province. Maybe he could learn the real moral of the story.

Klein needs to get into the classroom and see how split classes are affecting students and teachers. How increased workloads on teachers are causing a high burnout rate. How extra-curricular activities are being cut and the schools are left to pick up the slack both with administration, coaching and fund raising.

I think Premier Klein should spend a lot more time himself in schools before he judges the impact his restructuring has had on schools. Statistics and paper documents do NOT reflect the real impact. What may be working for a few schools, it hasn't for many others!

*Small urban.*

I don't see the premier in the classrooms.

I think the premier is being led to say this by his advisors who are very out of touch with reality in education. The cuts were designed to reduce waste at the higher levels of administration, but have not achieved this. They were placed on the backs of the students and teachers. Wake up Ralph!

The premier obviously doesn't have a clue what's happening in most classrooms across Alberta. He needs to wake up!

The premier does not have the whole story. He needs to talk to teachers and find out about work load and ever increasing expectations with never any reduction in other areas to compensate. He needs to talk to students about class sizes and time for teacher/student contact.

I believe he needs to visit some schools. Ours is new, and therefore the situation (resource wise) is good. However, in class size there are at least 30-40 students. Some non-academic classes have too many students, and are not able to get much extra help. Funding for special needs is way too low, and policies like changing the amount of funding mid-year is very tough with site-based budgeting.

He needs to follow a teacher around for a day. Tell him to look at the percentage of teachers on psychological disability, and the numbers of teachers getting out of the profession.

The premier is out of touch with education. Some people have the perception that since they went to school (20 years ago) they know what education is all about. This is a problem Mr. Klein needs to work on, his attitude about education. Before making decisions regarding education, he needs to spend perhaps one month of full days in a school. Only then will he be able to begin to see the impact the budget has made on education, students, and teachers. Maybe then he will see where money needs to be spent.

Come to my classroom for a few days and try to teach something to 35 or more students effectively. Come see our school and how repairs are needed to give a healthy school environment. Not such "good news!"

*Southern rural.*

Shows just how misinformed Klein really is. He does not realize that cuts made will erode our social programs. Cuts are also negatively affecting us now. A discussion with one teacher does not represent all teachers in all situations. Unfortunately, it appears they are trying to run schools like a business where the number of students represents the number of dollars. We are here for the kids and money invested today builds leaders for tomorrow.

Maybe the premier should spend an entire day with a school teacher.

It would benefit greatly if the premier were to visit various schools throughout the province. This way he would get a true idea as to how the cuts affected individual areas. He needs to visit schools and meet with the teachers individually to really hear how education stands today.

I don't agree. Large class sizes are not conducive to good education. All parents need to be held responsible for their children's actions. The government needs to talk to teachers more to find out what is going on in education.

Mr. Premier, get in the real world and take some time to go to a classroom. Try teaching a class of thirty students for a couple of days and see if you think education is a "good news story."



*Theme 7: All is well**Large urban.*

The amount of cuts is a positive statement. But the cuts in student services and consultantships have been felt.

"A good news story" implies an improvement in services and overall school climate. I believe the educational system is second to none. However, Mr Klein's observation was very short-sighted. More improvements are needed.

More cuts at top admin. We don't need eight associate superintendents. More money for special needs.

*Clower Bar - Ft Saskatchewan.*

I strongly agree! As a teacher with nearly 20 years of experience in Alberta, I have been watching the impact of the cuts to education as they affect regular classroom teachers. Some changes, like school district amalgamation were long overdue and welcomed. Other changes, like the cuts in spending, will affect Alberta's children for years to come.

Change towards collaborative planning and consultation between staff members (and sight based management) are "good news" in that individual strengths, weaknesses, team building partnerships are encouraged.

Some of the restructuring and redirecting has been good. I find for myself and most colleagues I've talked to that we have more to do with less time to do it. Class sizes in our school have not changed a lot, but a lot less help for the weaker students. No more challenge programs - less admin time, less counsellor time. We do have a great volunteer program.

*Northern rural.*

Our school was affected more and differently by an amalgamation we went through in '93-'94. Some things cannot be compared to pre-'93 years. Generally I don't feel our school and education has been greatly affected by the changes.

It is a good news story when things go wrong; otherwise little is said about education. It is good news when parents know more about what is going on in their children's education.

A Hutterite school is a specialized teaching environment with needs met differently. Many of the above items are not really applicable.

I agree that government cannot spend more than it takes in. I agree we have to be fiscally responsible. I do however hope that the government will start re-injecting

some dollars into education now that they have balanced the budget. It would not take a lot of money to make things better.

It might look good here but with the amalgamation of the schools, a lot of resources got pooled together. When these will be used up, we will feel the effect more.

Yes - as there seems to be less waste re paper, recycling books, pens/pencils, etc.

There's potential for good news but a lot of wrinkles to be ironed out. Hopefully there will be some philosophical and practical changes to education over the next few years accompanied by the resources needed to implement them.

*Small Urban.*

The Premier would like us to believe in his "good news story." Is it really good news that we seem to be giving parents more choice in their child's education. The ATA appears so threatened by this! Why? Is this the reason for the "Public Education Works" promotion? Public Education seems to be working very well, so why the promotion?

The reduced number of school boards and board members was good news. Too much money is being spent on hardware and technology - go slow!

Yes, but it has nothing to do with the government.

*Southern rural.*

Education is just fine. All power is in few hands, so why bother with trivial surveys?

Education is a good news story in spite of actions by the premier. It is much more difficult for all stakeholders, but they are coping very well.

In our small school, the education has been perceived as positive, which does not necessarily have anything to do with the changes from the government's initiatives.

*Outliers*

*Large urban.*

Integration of special ed. students into their home schools is great, but they and their teachers need adequate support. Having a full time LST at (school name) has made integration work well. This is not the case at all schools, because many do not have an LST.

The bad news was reducing ECE time to part time positions only.

*Suburban.*

There is little flexibility for consultation time with parents, staff, students) Time allotted for special ed and learning assistance has gone from 1.0 full time position to 0.4. Needless to say fewer needs are being met with such a decrease. There is little flexibility (given such changes) to deal with changes throughout the year(s), i.e., transfers in. It's too early to tell how these changes over the last three years may affect school councils, business and community but I believe we all stand to gain/or lose as a result, depending on the next few years.

*Northern rural.*

Education is a "neutral" news story, some good and some bad. Class sizes in this school are actually down a small amount. I believe the stress level of teachers is generally greater now than in 1993.

*Small Urban.*

Every time the provincial administration changes, our focus totally changes also. From program continuity to site based management. This is extremely difficult as a teacher, as it does not directly relate to our students. It is also hard to be committed to something that may change at a moment's notice.

*Southern rural.*

At least most cuts have taken place at government levels. Our division made drastic cuts before the government so our situation changed earlier.

Schools have been working very hard to handle the changes in education without compromising education itself. I feel schools are still reacting to and implementing the changes in education, doing the best we can with what's available to us. It's too early to assess the impact as a "good news story."

## Appendix 2

*Per-student education spending, US and Canada*By state and province or territory, all figures in Canadian dollars<sup>3</sup>

1. New Jersey	\$14,931	21. West Virginia	\$ 9,113	42. New Mexico	\$ 7,305
2. New York	\$12,969	22. Illinois	\$ 9,103	43. British Columbia	\$ 7,160
3. Connecticut	\$12, 943	23. Ohio	\$ 9,097	44. Ontario	\$ 7,140
4. District of Columbia	\$12,344	24. Virginia	\$ 8,868	45. South Dakota	\$ 7,130
5. Alaska	\$12,276	25. Nebraska	\$ 8,866	46. Oklahoma	\$ 7,059
6. Massachusetts	\$11,253	26. Iowa	\$ 8,863	47. Alabama	\$ 7,038
7. Rhode Island	\$11,252	27. Montana	\$ 8,495	48. Tennessee	\$ 7,019
8. Delaware	\$10,933	28. Kansas	\$ 8,312	49. Manitoba	\$ 6,858
9. Pennsylvania	\$10,870	29. Georgia	\$ 8,227	50. Idaho	\$ 6,815
10. Wisconsin	\$10,488	30. Florida	\$ 8,215	51. Arizona	\$ 6,763
11. Michigan	\$10,276	31. Kentucky	\$ 8,156	52. Arkansas	\$ 6,758
12. Maryland	\$ 9,833	32. Missouri	\$ 8,132	53. Quebec	\$ 6,569
13. Vermont	\$ 9,824	33. Colorado	\$ 8,126	54. Mississippi	\$ 6,318
14. Minnesota	\$ 9,771	34. California	\$ 8,119	55. <b>Alberta</b>	<b>\$ 6,042</b>
15. Maine	\$ 9,739	35. Texas	\$ 8,072	56. New Brunswick	\$ 6,018
16. New Hampshire	\$ 9,561	36. Hawaii	\$ 7,973	57. Saskatchewan	\$ 5,722
17. Indiana	\$ 9,168	37. Louisiana	\$ 7,881	58. Utah	\$ 5,348
18. Washington	\$ 9,166	38. North Carolina	\$ 7,786	59. Nova Scotia	\$ 5,308
19. Wyoming	\$ 9,156	39. South Carolina	\$ 7,769	60. Prince Edward Island	\$ 5,147
20. Oregon	\$ 9,136	40. Nevada	\$ 7,685	61. Newfoundland	\$ 5,018
		41. North Dakota	\$ 7,506		

Sources: Alberta Education, *93rd Annual Report and 4th Annual Results Report, 1997/98*.

National Center for Education Statistics, *Early Estimates of Public Elementary and Secondary Education Statistics: School Year 1998-99*, April 1999.

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<sup>3</sup> Conversion rate: US\$1 = CAD\$1.4725 (May 28, 1999).

## Appendix 3

*A Report Card on Education in Alberta 1996*

This appendix reproduces the survey provided to teachers in every school in the province in June 1996 by The Alberta Teachers' Association. In its original form it was an 8 ½ x 11 single sheet folded in half to form a four-page brochure.

Page 1:

*A Report Card on Education in Alberta 1996*

MLAs are telling us that they are not hearing from teachers about education. We realize the constraints under which districts, schools, principals and teachers are working and it is important for the members of the provincial legislature to know what is happening. This is not a survey for school assessment or for school jurisdiction assessment. Its sole purpose is to provide a constituency by constituency view of education for MLAs from the teachers' perspective. The results will be tabulated by constituency and presented as one set of statistics with no reference whatsoever to school names. We need the school's name to locate the correct constituency.

Page 2:

In his interview with *PC Talk* in January 1996, Premier Ralph Klein indicates that education is the "good news story" of the restructuring that has taken place in Alberta. In responding to the statement "changes to education seem to have been accepted well," he states, "Education received the smallest financial adjustment. The budget for 1997 will be only 5.6% less than the budget for 1992. Most of the savings were found through reduction in administration expenses and redirection of funds to the classroom. The restructuring is also bringing schools and parents closer together. Innovative concepts like charter schools and year round schooling are receiving positive response. It is a good news story."

On February 15, 1996, an MLA stated in the legislature that "our educational system is top notch." He continued "I talked to a teacher as recently as last night on the phone. My question was: have you seen a difference in the classroom since the educational cuts? This teacher said, 'No.'"

It would be appropriate at this time, almost three years since the restructuring started to look at what has happened in your school and to give each MLA in the province a report card from teachers on what has happened to education in each constituency over that three year period

Page 3:

Name of the school: \_\_\_\_\_

Please check the appropriate box

1. Since September 1993

- a. My average class size has
- a. increased            1
- b. decreased           2
- c. not changed         3
- b. Time available for spending with students has
- a. increased            1
- b. decreased           2
- c. not changed         3
- c. The opportunities for students to participate in extra-curricular activities have
- a. increased            1
- b. decreased           2
- c. not changed         3
- d. The assistance available for special-needs students has
- a. increased            1
- b. decreased           2
- c. not changed         3
- e. The availability of technology for students has
- a. increased            1
- b. decreased           2
- c. not changed         3
- f. The resources available to classroom teachers have
- a. increased            1
- b. decreased           2
- c. not changed         3

Page 4:

2. My overall assessment of the impact of changes to education over the last three years (since June 1993) are as follows:

	1 Positive	2 Negative	3 Neutral
Students			
Teachers			
Parents			
Community			
Business			
School Council			

3. Please comment on the premier's observation that education is a "good news story."

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When you have filled out the survey please return it to your School representative, who, in turn, will mail it to the Association. Surveys will be collated according to constituency and returned to your ATA local for presentation to the MLA.

## Appendix 4

*Participant Demographics*

Code	Name	Title	M/F	Rur/Urb	Level	Previous	Years Exp	Interview
A1	Gerry	Principal	M	Urban	Elem/Sec	Secondary	33	2002 09 04
A2	Grant	Principal	M	Urban	Elementary	Secondary	28	2002 09 02
A3	Graham	Principal	M	Urban	Secondary		28	2002 09 02
A4	Greg	Principal	M	Rural	Elem/Sec	Elementary	34	2002 08 01
A5	George	Principal	F	Urban	Elementary	Secondary	26	2002 07 01
C1	Steve	Return to Classroom	M	Rural	Secondary	Elementary	15	2002 08 02
C2	Sally	Return to Classroom	F	Rural	Elem/Sec	Elementary	27	2002 08 09
C3	Stan	Return to Classroom	M	Urban	Secondary	Elementary	24	2002 08 06
C4	Sam	Return to Classroom	M	Rural	Secondary	Elementary	20	2002 08 07
R1	Breanne	Early Retiree	F	Urban	Elementary		28	2002 08 30
R2	Betty	Early Retiree	F	Rural	Elem/Sec	Elementary	28	2002 07 07
R3	Bonnie	Early Retiree	F	Urban	Secondary		30	2002 07 06
R4	Barbara	Early Retiree	F	Urban	Elementary		23	2002 08 08
R5	Brenda	Early Retiree	F	Urban	Secondary		27	2002 08 08
T1	Anthony	Teacher	M	Urban	Secondary		30	2002 09 03
T2	Angie	Teacher	F	Urban	Secondary		34	2002 07 05
T3	Alma	Teacher	F	Rural	Secondary	Elementary	18	2002 07 08
T4	Andrew	Teacher	M	Urban	Secondary		19	2002 07 02



## Appendix 5

*Pre-interview Focus Questions**Value-based Statements*

This brief questionnaire is intended to focus on your beliefs about teaching. Each section focuses on a particular topic and you may find it valuable to read all of the questions in the section before responding to that section. For each of the following statements indicate whether you personally disagree strongly (DS), disagree (D), agree (A), or agree strongly (AS) by circling the appropriate letters.

**Section A**

- |  |    |   |   |    |
|--|----|---|---|----|
| 1. The teacher's job is to help students maximize their potential. | DS | D | A | AS |
| 2. The teacher's job is to teach the curriculum.                   | DS | D | A | AS |
- 

**Section B**

- |   |    |   |   |    |
|---|----|---|---|----|
| 1. High standards in education are achieved by helping students at their level of need. | DS | D | A | AS |
| 2. High standards in education are achieved by adhering closely to curriculum.          | DS | D | A | AS |
- 

**Section C**

- |   |    |   |   |    |
|---|----|---|---|----|
| 1. All students should have equal access to educational opportunities.    | DS | D | A | AS |
| 2. All students should have access to programs that meet their interests. | DS | D | A | AS |
| 3. All students do have access to programs that meet their interests.     | DS | D | A | AS |
| 4. All students should have access to programs that meet their needs.     | DS | D | A | AS |
| 5. All students do have access to programs that meet their needs.         | DS | D | A | AS |
| 6. All students should have access to programs that meet their abilities. | DS | D | A | AS |
| 7. All students do have access to programs that meet their abilities.     | DS | D | A | AS |
- 

**Section D**

- |  |    |   |   |    |
|--|----|---|---|----|
| 1. Schools in some neighbourhoods have more resources than others. | DS | D | A | AS |
| 2. Schools in all neighbourhoods have the resources they need.     | DS | D | A | AS |
- 

**Section E**

- |  |    |   |   |    |
|--|----|---|---|----|
| 1. Teachers are most effective when they develop positive relationships with their students.   | DS | D | A | AS |
| 2. Teachers must not allow emotional distractions of students' personal lives to prevent delivery of the prescribed subject content. | DS | D | A | AS |
| 3. Teachers are provided the time and resources to develop positive relationships with their students.                               | DS | D | A | AS |

**Section F**

Consider questions 1-9 from the perspective of two possible ways to complete the initial sentence using either “have striven” or “should have striven.”

1. As a teacher, I have striven or should have striven to overcome all obstacles to meet the needs of the children even at direct personal cost.

	Have striven	Should have striven
	DS D A AS	DS D A AS
2. Other teachers	DS D A AS	DS D A AS
3. School-based administrators	DS D A AS	DS D A AS
4. System-based administrators	DS D A AS	DS D A AS
5. School boards	DS D A AS	DS D A AS
6. The Department of Learning	DS D A AS	DS D A AS
7. Elected provincial politicians	DS D A AS	DS D A AS
8. The teachers' association	DS D A AS	DS D A AS
9. <u>The cost to myself has been large.</u>	<u>DS D A AS</u>	

**Section G**

1. Educational programs are the best we can make them. DS D A AS
2. Educational programs are the best we can pay for. DS D A AS

## Appendix 6

*Interview Guide**Section A*

1. What do you think makes a good teacher? What brought you to this belief? How has your belief changed since you began teaching?
2. What are the personal and professional influences that made you the kind of teacher you are? Please consider role models, your university preparation and your experiences in teaching.
3. How did the influences on your teaching change over the years? Please consider direct pressure plus such influences as professional development and in-service activities. Have there been pressures to make you a particular type of teacher and if so, how successful were they?

*Section B*

4. What is the purpose of educating youth? What do you do as a teacher to make this possible? What changes have you seen in societal expectations throughout your career?

*Section C*

5. How do you measure acceptable achievement for students? Is that consistent with external pressures on you? Has it always been?

*Section D*

6. How does acceptable student achievement tie in to the role of education in a democracy?
7. How is achievement restricted by the socio-economic or cultural background of students in a school? Should achievement be restricted by the socio-economic or cultural background of students?
8. Is it necessary and/or sufficient to make equal educational opportunity available to all students?

*Section E*

9. What is the ideal teacher-student relationship?

*Section F*

10. How much have you had to extend yourself to help your students reach their potential? What type of personal cost has there been to you (professional, financial, health other) in order to provide this level of help (if any)?
11. What do you see others doing How has this changed over the years?

*Section G*

12. It may be fair to assume that there will always be advances in teaching and it is certainly true that there are always changes. What has prompted those advances and changes

throughout your career? Have they made education better? Are we doing the best we know how? If not, why not?

## Appendix 7

### *Terminology Used in the Study*

**Democratic equality** is an end state value seen as a truth that contributes to our society. It includes a moral and ethical right for all students to legal, social and economic equality.

**Educational achievement** is an end value that teachers believe important for its payoff in life.

**End state value** is one that represents a desired goal or outcome.

**Equal access** to educational programs and opportunities is a means value for the achievement of democratic equality.

**Means value** is one that contributes to the achievement of another end state or means value.

**Nurturing role** is one in which one party is a guide and benefactor for the other as growth occurs. It is a means value for the achievement of student success.

**Program quality** is a means value based in the ability of the program to reach desired outcomes.

**Public education** is the government sponsored and financed system to which all students are guaranteed access by right of citizenship. It is a means value for democratic equality.

**Re-valuing** is a conscious or unconscious change of an existing value system by action or policy.

**Self-sacrifice** is a willingness to forgo personal gain or advantage for the benefit of others. It is a means value for the achievement of student success.

**Student success** is an end value of maximized individual potential when broad social, emotional and educational needs are met.

**Synergy** is a cooperative or collective action that is able to produce greater results than any separate part of the cooperative. It is a means value for the achievement of student success.

**Teacher-student relationship** is the personal support and respect between the two individuals. It is a means value for the achievement of student success.

**Trust** is a means value based in confidence in one's integrity and/or ability to achieve goals. It is a means value necessary for several other values.

**Value** is defined as a motivating belief that initiates or reinforces action. Whether end-states or means values, they can be truths, aesthetic appreciations, or moral assessments that need not always be consistent with the values of the organization but can affect the way employees do their job. The following definitions grow from or reflect the way individual values are identified and used in this study.

A **value system** is a set of beliefs that an individual thinks to be right, good and fair. It may contain both end state and means values.

**Valuing** is a conscious or unconscious change of an existing value system by action or policy.