



# The Alberta Teachers' Association

11010 142 Street NW, Edmonton, Alberta T5N 2R1

T 780-447-9400 or 1-800-232-7208

F 780-455-6481

[www.teachers.ab.ca](http://www.teachers.ab.ca)

2012 12 21

Carol D Henderson  
President

Gordon R Thomas PhD  
Executive Secretary

Sharon L Armstrong  
Vice-President

Dennis E Theobald  
Associate Executive Secretary

H Mark Ramsankar  
Vice-President

Denis A Espetveidt  
Past President

## via Fax and Courier

Honourable Jeff Johnson  
Minister of Education  
424 Legislature Building  
10800 97 Avenue  
Edmonton AB T5K 2B6

Dear Minister

I have been provided with and reviewed your letter to the chairs of public, separate and francophone school boards concerning collective bargaining between teacher bargaining units and school boards which was originally distributed by e-mail on 2012 12 12 and retransmitted on 2012 12 19. I note you did not copy the letter to me.

I also note that you have directed superintendents to forward to teachers in their school jurisdictions your *#AbED News* of 2012 12 19 which links to your letter to me of 2012 12 06.

So that there is no confusion, I first want to reiterate to you and to the board chairs, superintendents, and teachers receiving copies of this letter that Government and the Alberta Teachers' Association (Association) are not in agreement on teacher compensation.

In your letter of 2012 12 06, you assert:

... the Government of Alberta initially proposed **more modest increases of 0 per cent, 0 per cent, 1 per cent and 3 per cent** over the term of this contract. To be clear, this is in addition to annual grid increases of approximately five per cent for teachers who have not yet reached the ceiling on the 10-year grid. I am pleased that the Alberta Teachers' Association has accepted our salary offer.

In fact, on 2012 11 30 the Association provided to the Premier and copied to you a package offer, only one component of which was the salary proposal you describe.

... continued

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Government chose to reject that package offer and cannot now suggest that the Association or its bargaining units are in any way bound by any component of that offer. Positions on compensation and the term of local collective agreements will be advanced and negotiated in each of the 62 bargaining units in accordance with normal bargaining practices set out in the *Labour Relations Code*. This was made clear to you in my letter of 2012 12 11 in which I stated:

Minister, absent your acceptance of our fair and reasonable proposal, we will now proceed to unrestricted local collective bargaining. This is, of course, the way teacher collective agreements have been settled for decades and is not new. Please note however, that the proposal we advanced via the tripartite process has absolutely no status in the context of local collective bargaining. Teachers and individual school boards will have to arrive at their own solutions.

With regard to your 2012 12 12 e-mail to board chairs concerning negotiations, I am concerned that you are choosing to insert yourself into a process that is now between school boards and the Association. While you are certainly free to communicate with whomever you choose about the Government's fiscal situation, plans for funding education and rationale for rejecting the Association's offer of 2012 11 30, it is unusual and, to my mind, not appropriate for the Minister of Education to be providing specific direction to school boards regarding their bargaining or settlement positions. Such intervention is not respectful of the role of school boards or the Association in the collective bargaining process and may be perceived as interference.

As we enter the new year, I trust that my comments here will help bring clarity to the current situation, facilitate productive collective bargaining and support school boards and teacher bargaining units in their efforts to conclude collective agreements.

Yours truly



Carol Henderson  
President

CDH/mm

cc Provincial Executive Council  
Local Presidents  
Economic Policy Committee Chairs  
School Board Chairs  
Superintendents of Schools  
Jacquie Hansen, President, Alberta School Boards Association  
Tim Wiles, Deputy Minister, Alberta Education