



ALBERTA
EDUCATION

Office of the Minister



JAN 21 2016

AR91472

Ms. Lisa Holmes
President
Alberta Urban Municipalities Association
300, 8616 - 51 Avenue
Edmonton AB T6E 6E6

Dear Ms. Holmes:

Thank you for your October 22, 2015 letter requesting my response to the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association (AUMA) resolutions for 2014 and 2015. As the Minister of Education, I am pleased to respond on issues pertaining to my ministry.

In your letter, you referenced Alberta Education's initiative to work with stakeholders on issues related to school sites. The *Guidelines for Planning School Sites* was recently circulated among all the stakeholders who contributed to this report, including AUMA, for final input before it is released publicly. The report summarizes input that Alberta Education staff received and calls for collaborative work among provincial departments, municipalities and school authorities to clarify the respective roles and responsibilities in the process leading to the construction of schools and playing fields. These important public facilities need to be delivered in a timely manner; well serviced (e.g., water, power, sewer); and located on appropriate sites (e.g., size, topography, accessibility, clear of contamination). A longer-term planning process and the availability of a Joint Planning Agreement should facilitate access to the required funding.

With regard to the 2014 and 2015 AUMA resolutions, I agree that municipalities and school authorities should be aware of what they are expected to contribute in the process of building a new school. The *School Capital Manual* (March 2015) addresses the respective roles and responsibilities of government, the municipality and school authority. In a number of communities, there is an agreement between the municipality and school authorities that clarifies issues such as allocation of municipal and school reserve land, use of playing fields and community use of schools. Joint planning at the local level enhances the communication between the parties and is strongly encouraged.

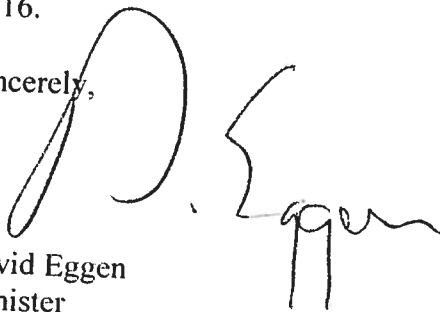
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The AUMA's 2014 resolutions included "that the Government of Alberta, when developing new schools, fulfill the role of a contractor and share the costs associated with the development of the lands for the placement of a school structure." This recommendation requires further analysis related to the nature, extent and cost of the proposed new role for government, as well as the implications associated with such a change. Alberta Education's capital funding does not currently cover such items, and the *School Capital Manual* states that total project cost does not include extraordinary site costs, site acquisitions, access roads to the site, services to the site or any other landscaping features beyond a five-metre perimeter of the building envelope. The school jurisdiction should work in consultation with the local municipality and the site developers to ensure these items are addressed.

If your staff or members require clarification from Alberta Education about these responses to the AUMA's resolutions or about school site matters, I encourage them to contact Dr. Avi Habinski, Director, Capital Planning South, at avi.habinski@gov.ab.ca or 780-427-2272 (dial 310-0000 first for toll-free access).

Thank you for sharing AUMA's 2015 resolutions. I wish you and your members the best in 2016.

Sincerely,



David Eggen
Minister

cc: Honourable Brian Mason
Minister of Infrastructure

Honourable Danielle Larivee
Minister of Municipal Affairs