

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## RE-IMAGINING OUR SCHOOLS: Creating a Strategic Framework for School-Community Collaborations

The educational experiences of many children are compromised by health, social, and economic factors that require services beyond what any school in isolation can provide. If these issues are to be addressed, re-imagining our school system to embrace parental and community partnerships is necessary.

School-community collaborations, championed in some Canadian provinces, the United States and the United Kingdom are seen by some as a long overdue and essential educational reform.

Re-Imagining Our Schools explores the state of school-community collaborations in Alberta and seeks to provide a perspective on what Alberta Education could do to strengthen such collaborations. From this exploration several recommendations specific to Alberta Education were developed.

**It is the foremost task - and responsibility - of our generation to re-imagine our enterprises and institutions, public and private. *Tom Peters***

**In an effort to encourage and support the implementation of school-community collaborations in Alberta, Alberta Education should:**

### **Provide systemic infrastructure to enhance school-community collaborations**

- Support community and divisional planning with multiple stakeholders.
- Create technological support for joint data collection and sharing.
- Report disaggregated education and health data at community, divisional, and provincial levels.
- Develop “fast-track” review panels to assist with administrative issues.
- Provide training and personnel at the local level to support school-community collaborations.
- Enhance the development of inclusive schools and curriculum.
- Ensure recognition awards such as the Minister’s Education Leadership Recognition Awards (MELRA) reflect a commitment to school-community collaborations.

### **Ensure public assets and school infrastructure are child and community-focused**

- Ensure new schools are built to encourage joint school and community usage.
- Provide capital support to renovate existing schools to facilitate community usage.
- Address liability, rental, and caretaker costs of school facilities for community groups.

### **Strengthen community-focused planning**

- Create school-based resource coordination teams to map, coordinate, and connect resources inside and outside of schools.
- Help schools and communities identify the “feeder issues” that contribute to a lack of school success and the community organizations that could make a difference in addressing those issues.
- Support research into the development of criteria for determining appropriate school-community collaborations.

### **Support the development of a provincial child and youth agenda**

- Frame the nature and scope of interventions for children and their families.
- Align and bridge policy across departments to reflect this agenda.
- Establish inter-departmental funding structures to support this agenda.
- Commit to a “whole school” model of school-community collaboration as a central strategy.
- Ensure schools and facilities are designed as a shared platform to support this agenda.

