



ALBERTA
EDUCATION

Office of the Minister
MLA, Calgary-Elbow



AR87912

January 27, 2015

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

Dear Ms. Rice:

Thank you for your December 18, 2014 letter and the opportunity to meet with you to discuss common issues of concern to the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association (AUMA) and the Government of Alberta.

I appreciate you elaborating on the issues raised at the meeting, including the AUMA's resolutions presented to the committee reviewing the *Municipal Government Act*, as well as your comments on the reasons for delays in achieving municipal permitting during school construction projects.

I agree that there is a need to promote joint municipal and school planning at the local level, as identified by the working group, in order to address challenges associated with development of school sites. The AUMA will have an opportunity to provide further input on the Guidelines for Planning School Sites document before the report is finalized.

It is also important that stakeholders (school jurisdictions, municipalities and government) clearly understand their respective responsibilities regarding funding for school construction; providing appropriate school sites in a timely manner; funding for site servicing; resolving issues of off-site levies; and playing fields development. A joint-use agreement between municipal and school authorities could be an appropriate mechanism with which to clarify responsibilities and accountabilities. Other potential mechanisms could also be explored to help each party fully understand its responsibilities.

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Regarding your comments about communication with municipalities, I attended a meeting about this issue with the Mayor of the City of Calgary, the Chair of the Calgary Board of Education, respective staff of these organizations, as well as representatives from Education and Infrastructure. At the meeting, it was indicated that the creation of a single point of contact for school projects within the City of Calgary and enhanced communication between the parties has resulted in a reduction in the time it takes to process permit applications associated with school construction.

I appreciate you following up on common issues, and I look forward to continuing to discuss our mutual concerns regarding the development of school sites.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gordon Dirks". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end.

Gordon Dirks
Minister
MLA, Calgary – Elbow

cc: Honourable Diana McQueen
Minister of Municipal Affairs

Honourable Manmeet S. Bhullar
Minister of Infrastructure