

2023 ACSTA MLA Reception Hears Bipartisan Support for Publicly-Funded Catholic Education

Brendan Cavanagh - March 27, 2023

Publicly-funded Catholic education in Alberta received strong words of support from both provincial parties at ACSTA's reception for MLAs last Tuesday night in Edmonton. 60 representatives from 15 Catholic school divisions, as well as approximately 30 MLAs from both parties were in attendance – including the Premier, Opposition Leader, Minister of Education and Education Critic.



The event began with an Opening Prayer led by Edmonton Archbishop Richard Smith, followed by a treaty land acknowledgement and remarks from ACSTA President Harry Salm:



“The constitutional protection for Catholic education was one of the original minority protections – along with those held by our francophone and indigenous brothers and sisters – that allowed for the birth and development of the pluralistic society we have today,” President Salm stated. “In this province, over 173,000 of all students are educated by the Catholic school system. We should always keep in mind that this is an intentional decision made by Albertan families.”

In addition to acknowledging the toll that COVID had taken on the education system, NDP Party Leader Rachel Notley emphasized the importance of providing sufficient funding to Catholic schools: “In my view, public education – whether the public system, the Catholic system, the Francophone system – needs to be well-funded, so we can continue to support our kids.”

“And I also look forward to the opportunity to work with you more in the future about how we can deliver the best public education - and the best Catholic public education system here for our kids across the province.”

UCP Education Minister Adriana LaGrange spoke to the importance of choice in education, as well as the distinctive nature and value of faith-based education: “I’m so proud of our government's commitment to ensuring parents have the ability to choose a publicly-funded Catholic education for their children.”

“Catholic education is a constitutional right that many parents and students choose to exercise in our province.”



ACSTA represents Catholic school trustees to the governments of Alberta, Yukon and the Northwest Territories with the mission to celebrate, preserve, promote, and enhance Catholic education. The MLA Reception is an opportunity facilitated by ACSTA for Catholic school trustees to engage with and educate provincial legislators about the history, constitutional protections, and current significance of Catholic education in Alberta. Please contact advocacy@acsta.ab.ca for more information.