

## BOARD OF TRUSTEES

WARD A Cheryl Johner  
WARD B Michelle Draper  
WARD C Orville Chubb  
WARD D Ray Martin  
WARD E Ken Gibson  
WARD F Michael Janz  
WARD G Bridget Stirling  
WARD H Nathan Ip  
WARD I Sherry Adams

## SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

Darrel Robertson  
  
Centre for Education  
1 Kingsway NW  
Edmonton AB T5H 4G9  
T 780-429-8000  
F 780-429-8318  
E info@epsb.ca

October 29, 2015

Re: ASBA Zone 2/3 Questions for October 30<sup>th</sup>, 2015

Dear Zone 2/3 Directors,

Our representatives are unable to make Zone 2/3 tomorrow. We wish to have asked the following questions if we were in attendance. We would appreciate a written response in addition to a record in the minutes, as these items may impact our voting decisions or policy proposals at the Fall General Meeting.

### 1) TRAVEL OUT OF COUNTRY

As we are approaching the ASBA November 17<sup>th</sup> Executive Election, it was observed that over the past two years the ASBA President travelled to the United States on the following seven (7) occasions:

1. Las Vegas, Nevada- December 2013
2. Washington, DC- January 2014
3. New Orleans, Louisiana- April 2014
4. New York, New York- August 2014
5. Scottsdale, Arizona- November 2014
6. Washington, DC,- January 2015
7. Nashville, Tennessee - March 2015

We remain concerned about the optics and frequency of travel. We are pleased that going forward the ASBA will be posting expenses by the start of the new calendar year.

To our Zone 2/3 Directors:

- A) Were there other additional ASBA trips (not listed above) taken out of country this term?
- B) Is this representative or more, fewer, or the same number of out-of-country trips than past ASBA Presidents?

### 2) SERVICES TO CHARTER SCHOOLS

Edmonton Public Schools is supportive of public education as outlined in ASBA Policy. Charter and Private schools are not ASBA members and we actually have policy supporting the return of public funding to public education. We note in ATTACHMENT 1 that an ASBA consultant was giving governance workshops to a Charter School. It is unclear to us if this was supported or facilitated by the ASBA. If it was, it strikes us as problematic that the ASBA consultants are working to strengthen the charter school system in contradiction with ASBA Policy:

... supporting building a “viable, sustainable, equitable public education system”

... or the ASBA Vision Statement (ASBA supports publicly elected school boards...)  
...or the Mandate Statement (ASBA Provides services to school boards...)

To our Zone 2/3 Directors:

A) Could you confirm that ASBA resources (travel, accommodation, per diem) are not being used to strengthen charter schools?

### 3) EXPENSES

We remain concerned that the ASBA Board of Directors has not proposed any changes to the ASBA Travel and Expense policy, especially considering the significant concerns identified last year by our previous ASBA Director Sarah Hoffman:

“As leaders, we can’t just say that things are going to be different; we have to demonstrate our willingness to examine past and current practice and demonstrate how we are changing our practice as we live out our positive path forward.

In order to fulfill our fiduciary responsibility we need to review our policies as they relate to spending and ensure its execution (through sound controls and transparent processes).” (*February 7<sup>th</sup>, 2015 email from Sarah Hoffman to ASBA Board of Directors*)

To gain a second opinion on hotel expenses, domestic airline flights, and FOIP, we consulted the Canadian Taxpayer's Federation. Please see ATTACHMENT TWO.

To our Zone 2/3 Directors:

- A) How are the Zone 2/3 Directors holding the association accountable for their expenses?
- B) What steps are being taken to ensure economical hotel rooms?
- C) What steps are being taken to ensure economical and efficient transportation choices?
- D) Are these practices aligned with Ministerial expectations?

Thank you to the Zone 2/3 Directors for their leadership in holding the ASBA accountable on behalf of the member school boards and thank you for supporting transparency and member engagement.

Sincerely,

Michael Janz  
Board Chair, Edmonton Public School Board

ATTACHMENT 1:

<http://www.ffca-calgary.com/download/33548>

Foundations For the Future Charter Academy  
Public Board Meeting Minutes  
Wednesday Jan. 14, 2015  
5:30 – 9:00 p.m.  
Central Office Boardroom  
#240, 688 Heritage Dr. SE  
Calgary, AB

6:00 CALL TO ORDER

1. Review of Meeting Agenda - No changes.
2. Approval of Minutes of Dec. 10, 2014 as amended.

.....

11.5.5/6 Board PD/ Board Retreat – The retreat agenda includes Salima on the Friday night (social media), Terry Gunderson on Saturday (governance issues including delegation of authority), and a “bear pit” session on the Sunday morning.

ADJOURNMENT: 8:50 p.m.

ATTACHMENT TWO:

From: **ScottHennig** <shennig@taxpayer.com>

Date: Mon, Oct 26, 2015 at 2:59 PM

Subject: RE: Public Sector Expenses Re: ASBA

To: Michael Janz <michael.janz@epsb.ca>

Mr. Janz,

Thanks for the email. As you know the Canadian Taxpayers Federation has weighed in on these types of issues in the past, and we were fairly instrumental in pushing the Redford government to adopt the travel and hospitality expense disclosure policy that currently is in place. I appreciate you asking for our views.

I've given this some thought and here's what I would suggest:

1. Flying between Calgary and Edmonton? Generally not. I encourage my staff to either take the Red Arrow (wi-fi and workspaces lets them work during the trip), or to rent a car and drive (unless they're staying for a few days, renting is generally cheaper than paying mileage). The only time I would suggest that flying would be an acceptable method is if the road conditions are so terrible that it's unsafe to drive or take the bus (ie. the RCMP are suggesting people stay off the highways).

One other caveat, at one time I had a staff member who did not have their driver's license. They had to be in Edmonton for meetings that were not going to end until 8pm. The last Red Arrow bus left at 6pm that day, so rather than get a hotel and take the bus back in the morning, we agreed the one-way 10pm flight home to Calgary made sense. In this scenario it made financial sense, but flying between Calgary and Edmonton almost never makes sense in a time saving way. It's a 3 hour drive from Edmonton to Calgary. It's a 45 minute flight, but once you add on driving to the airport (30 mins), being there an hour early and then catching a cab to downtown Calgary, you're really only saving 30 minutes.

2. Expensing hotel rooms? In my view 60KM, might be a bit close. I would suggest, your residence would have to be at least an hour away (driving time) in order to justify a hotel stay. I know a bunch of people who commute to work daily from communities like Bruderheim to the west end of Edmonton. That's a 55 minute drive (72km). If asked to set a kilometer guideline, I'd probably pick at least 75km.

3. ASBA FOIP-able? Absolutely. We have FOIP'd both AUMA and AAMD&C in the past. These are public bodies that derive the majority of their funding from publicly funded entities. If ASBA gets the vast majority of its money from school boards and those school boards are almost entirely funded with public dollars, the ASBA should be subject to FOIP legislation.

If you have additional questions or want anything clarified, please let me know.

All the best,

**Scott Hennig**

Vice President, Communications  
Canadian Taxpayers Federation

Phone | [780.589.1006](tel:780.589.1006)

**From:** MichaelJanz[mailto:[michael.janz@epsb.ca](mailto:michael.janz@epsb.ca)]

**Sent:** October 16, 2015 1:01 PM

**To:** [shennig@taxpayer.com](mailto:shennig@taxpayer.com)

**Subject:** Public Sector Expenses Re: ASBA

Hello Scott,

I had a few questions about public sector expenses, and some more broad questions about your assessment of public spending.

- 1) Transportation between Edmonton and Calgary. Is it appropriate to fly on the taxpayer dollar? When is it appropriate to fly?
- 2) Hotel Use. If a staff member works in Edmonton and lives in Edmonton or the region, when is it appropriate to expense a hotel room? I believe the GOA requirement is 60KM to your residence is not allowed for MLAs.
- 3) Should an organization such as the ASBA, the umbrella for FOIPable school boards, be subject to FOIP? I believe the CTF has FOIPed the AUMA, the umbrella for FOIPable urban municipalities, in the past.

Thank you,

Michael Janz