

WINTER 2020

THE ALBERTA TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION

ATA Magazine



SMELLS LIKE A BARN

Rural education is
ripe with challenges
and opportunities.

PAGE 18

Explore Renewable Energy!

Book Hands-on S.T.E.M.
Workshops for Your Students



Discover Solar, Biogas, Wind Power and Energy Conservation
Programs for Grades 4–8

BOOK TODAY

relayededucation.com/programs

866-308-6898



Feature



18

RURAL RESILIENCE

The risks and rewards of rural education in Alberta.



Winter 2020 / Vol. 100 / N2

Feature

18 Rural Resilience

Outlook

- 4 Letters
- 5 From the President
Mot du président
- 6 Then and Now
- 8 Looking Abroad
- 10 Unsung Hero

Bulletin Board

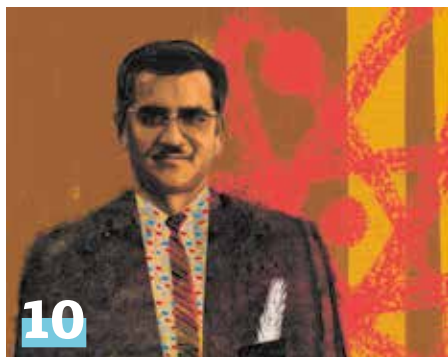
- 3 Editor's Notebook
Note de la rédactrice
- 12 Wellness
- 14 Technology
- 16 Diversity
- 30 Research Insights
- 40 In Profile

Learning Commons

- 34 From the Bookshelves
- 36 Kid Lit
- 38 In Focus
- 39 Who's Out There?

Teacher to Teacher

- 45 In My Humble Opinion
- 47 Teacher Hacks
- 48 Most Memorable Lesson



10

UNsung HERO

Community builder leaves lasting legacy.



40

IN PROFILE

Calgary teacher Kelsey McMahon taps into the power of dance.



48

MOST MEMORABLE LESSON

Connecting students with history provides lesson on moving beyond curriculum.

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Joni Turville
joni.turville@ata.ab.ca

MANAGING EDITOR

Cory Hare
cory.hare@ata.ab.ca

EDITING

Sandra Bit

ART DIRECTION AND DESIGN

Erin Solano
Kim vanderHelm
Yuet Chan

ADVERTISING

Trevor Battye Advertising Sales
trevor@tbasales.ca

© 2020 by The Alberta Teachers' Association. Unauthorized use or duplication without prior approval is strictly prohibited. *ATA Magazine* is published three times a year.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

ATA members receive the *ATA Magazine* and the *ATA News*. The combined subscription for nonmembers is \$25. Single copies of the *ATA Magazine* are \$6.50. The magazine is available in microfilm or photocopy from Micromedia Ltd., Montreal.

Articles, commentary and editorial material represent the views of the authors and do not necessarily reflect ATA policy. Acceptance of an advertisement does not imply ATA endorsement.

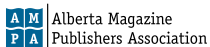
The Alberta Teachers' Association
11010 142 Street Edmonton, AB T5N 2R1
Telephone: 780-447-9400
Toll Free in Alberta: 1-800-232-7208
Fax: 780-455-6481
Website: www.teachers.ab.ca

TABLE OFFICERS

President
Jason Schilling
Vice-President
Darrin Bauer
Vice-President
Jenny Regal
Past President
Greg Jeffery
Executive Secretary
Dennis Theobald
Associate Executive Secretaries
Brian Andrais
Joni Turville

DISTRICT REPRESENTATIVES

Calgary City Kathy Hoehn
Kevin Kempf, Darren Moroz
Calgary District Karen Nakaska
Central East Murray Lalonde
Central North Robert Twerdocib
Central South Don Brookwell
Central Brenton Baum
Edmonton McMurray Nancy Ball
Greg Carabine, Carmen Glossop
Edmonton District Paul Froese
North West Peter Mackay
South East Heather McCaig
South West Katherine Pritchard



Canadian Publication Mail Agreement
No. 40065477 Return undeliverable Canadian addresses to the Alberta Teachers' Association.

ISSN 0380-9102



Contributors



DUSTIN DELFS Cover and feature

NAIT Photo Tech alumni Dustin Delfs founded Laughing Dog Photography in 2002 with

a large-format film camera and half-a-dozen daily trips to the photo lab. Eighteen years, six studios and 4,100 photo shoots later, the Laughing Dog team has worked from Vancouver to Newfoundland to Yellowknife; in helicopters, coal mines, operating rooms, NHL dressing rooms, bison herds and cookie factories; and he's still loving it, as much today as ever before!



CHRISTINA FRANGOU | p. 40

Christina Frangou is a Calgary-based writer and journalist who specializes in health and

social issues. Her work has garnered numerous awards, including a National Newspaper Award for long-feature writing. In Grade 3, her teacher read *A Wrinkle In Time* to her class, a chapter a day. Frangou couldn't bear the suspense. She got book from the library, finished it overnight and told her classmates the next day how it ended. Ms. S gave her a lecture on ruining books for other people. Frangou still loves the writing of Madeleine L'Engle.



TARYN MARSHALL p. 47

Taryn Marshall teaches Grade 1 at Father Lacombe Catholic School in Lacombe. Born

and raised in Red Deer, she's in her third year of teaching and looks forward to the new adventures that every day brings. Her favourite aspect of teaching is seeing the children grow over the course of the year and all the amazing, fun learning explorations they do together. Marshall loves to share her students' classroom activities on social media, especially Instagram, where her handle is @teachingwithmrsmarshall.



KAREN KLASSEN p. 10

Karen Klassen is an award-winning illustrator and painter based in Calgary. Her work can

be found in fashion advertising campaigns, children's books and magazines throughout North America and Europe, as well as on gallery walls and in the homes of private collectors. Her favourite high school teacher was Mr. Sutter; he was always kind and made learning easy. You can see more of her work at karenklassen.com or @karenklassen on Instagram.



JEREMY FOKKENS p. 40

Jeremy Fokkens is a portrait and advertising photographer based in Calgary. He was a profes-

sional dancer and teacher before making the switch to photography full time in 2011. Fokkens published his first book *The Human Connection* in 2014 and recently started a cross-Canada project called Back To The Land, photographing people from small towns and remote areas. To see more, visit www.jeremyfokkens.com



JoANN BLACHFORD p. 48

JoAnn Blachford began her career at Stettler Junior High School. She taught various courses—

social studies, home economics, art and language arts—before becoming a school counsellor. She is currently working as an assistant principal at Sir George Simpson Junior High School in St. Albert.

The Alberta Teachers' Association acknowledges Treaty 6, 7 and 8 territories, the ancestral and traditional territories of the Cree, Dene, Blackfoot, Saulteaux, Nakota Sioux, as well as the Blackfoot Confederacy: Kainai, Piikani and Siksika, Tsuu T'ina, First Nation and Stoney Nakoda First Nation. We acknowledge the many First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples whose footsteps have marked these lands for generations. We are grateful for the traditional Knowledge Keepers and Elders who are still with us today and those who have gone before us. Our recognition of this land is an act of reconciliation and an expression of our gratitude to those on whose territory we print and distribute this publication.



PHOTO BY RYAN PARKER

Joni Turville

Editor-in-Chief, ATA Magazine
RédaCTRICE en chef de l'ATA Magazine

A rural learning moment


MANY YEARS AGO, before I came to work full-time at the Alberta Teachers' Association, I accepted a position as one of the Association's instructors. This group of classroom teachers works with the support of the Association to facilitate workshops across the province for ATA locals, schools and jurisdictions. The training we experienced together helped me to become comfortable in facilitating adult learning and brought a great deal to my teaching practice as well. Incidentally, you can find out more about the Association's workshop program and instructor corps on page 38 of this issue.

One of the first workshops I delivered was in the northeast part of the province. I arrived at the jurisdiction office early so I could set up my materials and greet participants at the door. As the teachers came in, I moved around the room and chatted with as many people as possible.

I was astounded to learn how long people had driven to attend the workshop—two, two-and-a-half or even three hours were not unusual—and they would repeat the drive after our half-day workshop was completed.

From my suburban-centric perspective, this was quite jarring. Of course, I knew the physical size of our province and that we have many rural schools, but my commute to my central office was about 10 minutes and the longest commute within the school district was 15 minutes. For my colleagues and me, it was easy to hold after-school meetings and collaborate with each other. Somehow, I hadn't really registered the challenges a teacher might face when their colleagues were spread across many, many kilometres.

I suspect that this disconnect still exists, so I'm very excited about this issue and our feature on rural education, which is dedicated to my colleagues who teach in rural settings and those of us who have much to learn about your challenges and opportunities.

As ever, thanks for reading and thanks for all you do for the students of Alberta. 

Un moment d'apprentissage en milieu rural

IL Y A BIEN LONGTEMPS, avant de venir travailler à plein temps à l'Alberta Teachers' Association, j'ai accepté de faire partie de l'équipe des instructeurs de l'ATA. Cette équipe formée d'enseignants titulaires de classe travaille en collaboration avec l'ATA afin de faciliter, dans toute la province, la mise en place d'ateliers destinés au personnel des sections locales de l'ATA, écoles et conseils scolaires. La formation que nous avons suivie m'a beaucoup appris sur la manière de faciliter l'apprentissage des adultes, et a aussi énormément contribué à l'amélioration de ma propre pratique de l'enseignement. Soit dit en passant, vous trouverez davantage de renseignements sur les programmes de formation offerts par l'ATA et sur le groupe d'instructeurs à la page 38 de ce numéro.


Un des premiers ateliers que j'ai animés se déroulait au nord-est de la province. Ce jour-là, je suis arrivée tôt au bureau du conseil scolaire pour installer le matériel et accueillir les participants. Au fur et à mesure que les enseignants entraient dans la salle, je passais de l'un à l'autre afin de faire un brin de conversation avec le plus grand nombre d'entre eux.

J'étais sidérée par la durée des trajets qu'ils avaient effectués en voiture pour venir assister à l'atelier - deux heures, deux heures et demie et même trois heures de route étaient chose courante - et ils allaient refaire le trajet inverse après l'atelier qui durait une demi-journée.

De mon point de vue de banlieusarde, c'était pour le moins choquant. Bien entendu, je connaissais l'étendue géographique de notre province et je savais qu'elle comptait de nombreuses écoles rurales, mais 10 minutes me suffisaient pour aller au bureau central et je ne mettais jamais plus de 15 minutes pour parcourir le plus long trajet au sein de mon district scolaire. Pour mes collègues et moi, il était donc facile de rester à l'école après les réunions tenues en fin de journée pour travailler ensemble.

D'une certaine façon, je n'avais pas vraiment réalisé les défis que doit surmonter un enseignant dont les collègues sont dispersés dans des écoles situées à des centaines et centaines de kilomètres les unes des autres.

Je soupçonne que ce manque de collaboration entre collègues dû à l'isolement existe toujours, c'est pourquoi je me réjouis de la sortie de ce numéro qui met en avant l'éducation en milieu rural. Il s'adresse non seulement à mes collègues qui enseignent dans ce milieu, mais aussi à ceux parmi nous qui ont beaucoup à apprendre des défis et opportunités auxquels ils doivent faire face.

Comme toujours, merci de faire partie de nos fidèles lecteurs, et merci de tout ce que vous faites pour les élèves de l'Alberta. 

Letters

SURVEY

ATA Magazine? Alberta Teacher? Magistri?

After 100 years, is it time for a new name for the *ATA Magazine*? Please share your thoughts via this short online survey http://bit.ly/ATAMagazine_name.

Respondents will be entered in a draw for a \$100 gift card.



We want your feedback

We'd like to hear from you! Please send us general feedback, your thoughts on items that you particularly liked (or didn't), suggestions for future content, letters to the editor.

We really do want to hear from you. After all, this is your magazine.

Email your feedback to Joni Turville, editor-in-chief, joni.turville@ata.ab.ca or Cory Hare, managing editor, cory.hare@ata.ab.ca.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR — GUIDELINES

Word limit: 300

Please include

- your first and last name,
- basic information about your teaching assignment (i.e. school, grade, subject).

All letters are subject to editing for length, clarity, punctuation, spelling and grammar.



PHOTO BY YUET CHAN

New design is appealing and engaging

Just wanted to send you some feedback on the recent *ATA Magazine*. It was mentioned that work had been done to make the magazine “more appealing and engaging.”

This you certainly accomplished as I enjoyed the entire magazine. I believe the “appealing and engaging” were missing before this edition. I appreciate all the efforts to improve the appearance and overall presentation. Continue the good work.

—Sharon Goerg, retired teacher

CONGRATS!

Congratulations on a superb redo of the magazine! It's very nicely put together. Your careful attention and creativity is quite apparent.

—*Jamie Babcock, principal, Prairie View Outreach School, High Prairie*

TERRIFIC JOB!

Such a comprehensive reworking, which turned out so well. Congratulations on taking this on, and on such a fine result.

—*Larry Booi, former Alberta Teachers' Association president*

SMALLER FONT HAMPERS ENJOYMENT

I appreciate your request for feedback about the redesigned *ATA Magazine*. I found that the print is generally too small, making the redesigned magazine very difficult to read. This circumstance interfered with your goal of connecting me to the ATA and other members.

—*Gary Johnson, life member*



The revamped magazine is a must read for all teachers.

Kathy Hoehn
district representative,
Calgary City

I'm just reading the revamped *ATA Magazine*. It looks amazing!

Peter Mackay,
district representative,
North West

Editor's note

It's great that we're getting both positive feedback and constructive criticism.

Love the new *ATA Magazine* design!!

Shannon Dubé
president, Fort McMurray
Local No. 48





PHOTO BY RYAN PARKER

Jason Schilling

President, ATA
Président de l'ATA

Don't look now, but you're inspiring


PRESERVICE AND NEW TEACHERS like to ask about the future of education and, when they do, I encourage them to avoid becoming cynical about the times we find ourselves in. Pessimism is easy, so I urge them to remember what inspired them to become a teacher.

On several occasions, I have heard teachers and school leaders talk about what or who influenced them to pursue education. Whether it was a family member or a favourite teacher, the desire to be a teacher is rooted in the relationships we experience in our lives. For me, two teachers stand out clearly as influences on my drive to become a teacher.

I fondly remember the patience and grace of my Grade 8 language arts and drama teacher, Miss Briner. I clearly recall sitting in her class one day and thinking that I too wanted to be an English and drama teacher. In my first year of teaching, I found myself with that exact same teaching assignment. Miss Briner taught me that junior high (and all its drama) could be welcoming; this lesson of school being a safe space for all students never left me.

As an awkward high school student, I encountered my English teacher Miss Stanley, a woman I admired for her intelligence and no-nonsense attitude. You know that teacher who could stop a rampaging elephant with a stare over her glasses? That was Miss Stanley. She was tough, fair and scared the living daylights out of me. Her lesson of holding students to a high standard became ingrained into my own pedagogy. I was later fortunate to work with Miss Stanley at the ATA, but I could never bring myself to call her by her first name.

There's no doubt that we are living in troubling times for public education, so it may feel natural to question your choice of profession or to lose sight of what inspired this choice. I think it's vitally important that you, as a teacher, reconnect with that inspiration and treasure it like the precious gift that it is, as that can carry you through some difficult periods of doubt.

Just as your inspiration came when you weren't really looking for it, remember that, as a teacher, you never really know when you are, in turn, inspiring someone else. 

Vous ne le savez peut-être pas, mais vous êtes bel et bien source d'inspiration


LES ENSEIGNANTS EN FORMATION INITIALE ET LES NOUVEAUX ENSEIGNANTS aiment bien s'informer sur l'avenir de l'éducation et lorsqu'ils posent des questions, je les encourage à ne pas porter un regard cynique sur la situation actuelle. C'est facile d'être pessimiste, aussi j'insiste pour qu'ils se souviennent de ce qui les a poussés à devenir enseignants.

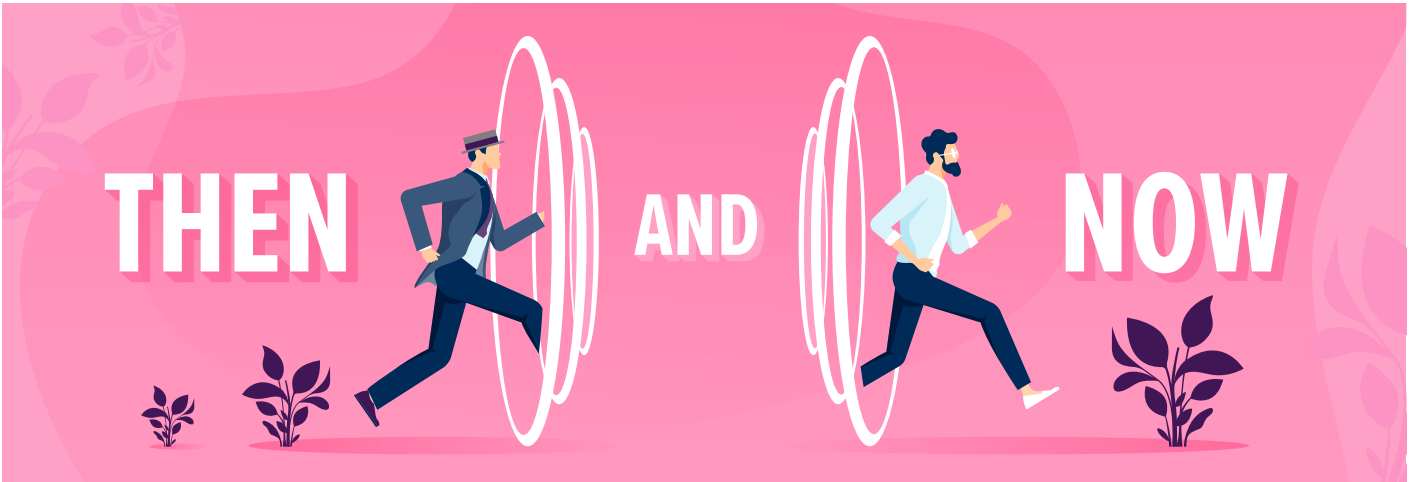
À plusieurs reprises, j'ai entendu des enseignants et leaders scolaires parler de choses ou de personnes qui les ont incités à poursuivre leurs études dans l'enseignement. Que ce soit un membre de la famille ou un enseignant préféré qui nous a inspirés, le désir d'enseigner est profondément ancré dans les relations que nous avons tissées au cours de notre vie. Pour moi, il est clair que deux enseignants en particulier sont à l'origine de ce réel désir.

Je me souviens avec plaisir de la bienveillance et de la patience de madame Briner qui m'enseignait l'anglais et les arts dramatiques lorsque j'étais en 8^e année. Je me revois très bien dans sa classe, le jour où je me suis dit, tout bas, que moi aussi j'aimerais bien enseigner l'anglais et les arts dramatiques. Et c'est exactement ce que j'ai fait ma première année d'enseignement. Avec elle, j'ai appris que l'école au secondaire premier cycle (malgré son lot d'histoires compliquées) est aussi un lieu accueillant.

J'étais un élève gêné du secondaire lorsque j'ai rencontré madame Stanley, mon enseignante d'anglais. Elle était sévère, juste, et me glaçait le sang. Sa détermination à exiger sans cesse le meilleur de ses élèves est profondément enracinée dans ma propre pédagogie.

Certes, l'éducation publique traverse actuellement une période difficile, et il peut sembler naturel que vous remettiez en question votre choix de carrière professionnelle ou perdiez de vue ce qui vous a poussés à faire ce choix. Néanmoins, comme enseignants, je crois qu'il est extrêmement important que vous vous souveniez de ce qui vous a réellement inspirés. Ravivez ce précieux souvenir, chérissez-le, car il vous aidera à dissiper vos moments de doute.

Tout comme votre source d'inspiration est apparue au moment où vous vous y attendiez le moins, en tant qu'enseignants, gardez en mémoire que vous ne saurez jamais vraiment lorsque vous-mêmes deviendrez source d'inspiration. 



We dug into the archives to find tidbits from previous ATA Magazines that are worth another look, either because of their relevance today, or as a reminder of how far we've come. You be the judge.

Match these excerpts with the year they were originally published: 1920, 1949, 1963 and 1978.

1. RIGHT TO STRIKE

Alberta teachers, long since disillusioned about the efficacy of the cap-in-hand approach of establishing their economic position in society, have adopted the techniques of free collective bargaining as a proper way to achieve their economic goals. In so doing, they have not flinched from using the painful and distasteful ultimate sanction which gives real meaning to bargaining. They have refused on occasion to give their service under conditions which they found unacceptable to them. In short, they have gone on strike after every other method of effecting settlement has failed.

Your guess: _____

2. WHO WILL DECIDE MORALS AND PRINCIPLES?

Are we prepared to teach that only one set of values is appropriate for everything in any situation? If so, which code of morality is it to be? Who will decide whether the schools should teach only moral absolutes and which principles will be taught—parents, teachers, schools, school boards or departments of education?

Your guess: _____

3. WHAT DO WE DO WITH CONTROVERSY?

Controversy is an integral part of democratic experience and hence so-called controversial issues belong in the school. Any other conclusion would imply that education is somewhat insulated from life.

Your guess: _____

4. TEACHER: PRESIDING GENIUS

The school therefore occupies a strategic position in our national development. In rural districts it forms a social centre. Not only is it the place where the children of the neighborhood are taught "the three Rs" but it is the headquarters of the social life of the entire community. ... Occupying as the school does, such a prominent place in the life of the district, its presiding genius, the teacher, should be no mere nonentity. ^{ATA}

Your guess: _____

- 1. December 1963, "Why Teachers Should Have the Right to Strike" by J. D. McFetridge. (Originally published in the "Journal for Dissent," the *Edmonton Journal*.)
- 2. May 1978, "Moral Education: In Search of the Holy Grail" by Judy Samoil.
- 3. January 1949, "Living Issues Belong in the Classroom" by Edward C. Lindeman. (Reprinted from *Educational Leadership*.)
- 4. Sept-Oct 1920, "The Rural Problem" by S. J. Dymond.

Answers

WE'VE GOT ART TO SHARE

Image credit: Philip Kanwischer, Leave, 2018.



THE ALBERTA FOUNDATION FOR THE ARTS TRAVELLING EXHIBITION PROGRAM
| REGION 3 | **TREX SOUTHWEST**
albertasocietyofartists.com/trex
trex@albertasocietyofartists.com



DETERMINATION, PERSEVERANCE AND CONFIDENCE.

They are the faces
of education.

We are the Alberta
Teachers' Association,
and we believe in them.



The Alberta
Teachers' Association

B Foothills
BRASS
QUINTET

**BRINGS THE
FIELD TRIP
TO YOUR SCHOOL**

serious fun!

BRING LIVE MUSIC TO YOUR SCHOOL!

- * CONCERTS FOR ALL GRADES AND AGES, INTERACTIVE PROGRAMS WITH CURRICULUM LINKS AND FAVOURITE SONGS
- * CLASSROOM AND RESIDENCY ACTIVITIES FOR ELEMENTARY AND MIDDLE SCHOOLS
- * INTENSIVE WORKSHOPS FOR BEGINNING TO ADVANCED BAND STUDENTS

EXPAND AND ADVANCE YOUR MUSIC PROGRAMS AT ALL LEVELS

WWW.FOOTHILLSBRASS.CA - 403.240.0269
TRUMPET@FOOTHILLSBRASS.CA


Why look abroad?

We're at an important moment in history that demands external outlook

IF, AS TEACHERS, WE ARE to be mindful contributors to societies that are increasingly defined by the transnational flow of ideas, technology, people, capital and culture—i. e., globalization—then we must establish new routines of looking outward, of scanning the rapidly changing landscapes beyond our provincial and national boundaries.

Unfortunately, much of the outward boundary crossing of the last few decades is being replaced in societies all over the world by a new inward-looking tribalism—a return of walls, if you will—where polarized opinions

have become the intractable norm and people often seek to have their own opinions or sense of truth constantly echoed back to them.

Looking Abroad is a new section in the *ATA Magazine* that aims to help break that trend by looking around the world to gain a deeper understanding of educational issues, developments and successes. By increasing our consciousness of other perspectives, we can recognize opportunities to enhance our profession, schools and local school communities. 

— ATA staff

Report warns of increased privatization in public education

Years of austerity and poor funding in Greece have led to a growing trend toward privatization in public education.

In November, Education International (EI) affiliates in Greece released a report showing that the major impact of austerity on public education in the country has been the growth of privatization and shadow education, education staff shortages, a lack of infrastructure and, as a result, increasing public distrust in public education.

Entitled "Public Education in Greece. Aspects and Trends of an Emerging Privatisation," the study's recommendations call on the government to urgently boost funding for public education, increase teachers' salaries, ensure professional development and support for education workers, and strengthen all public education structures and programs that have been neglected for years.

"This study is the newest link in a long chain of actions in support of education as a public good," said Thanasis Kikinis, president of the Greek Primary Teachers' Federation (DOE), which commissioned the study along with the Greek Federation of Secondary Education State School Teachers (OLME).

"Working together with our colleagues in secondary education, we will use the findings to intensify and focus our efforts so that each and every student in Greece has access to the quality public education they deserve," Kikinis said.

The Greek teacher unions plan to lobby the government and all parties in parliament to mobilize support for public education, call for increased state funding and various outreach activities to engage all stakeholders in the fight for quality public education.

The report's release marked the beginning of a regional strategy to fight privatization and commercialization in education in southern Europe. ^{ATA}

Education International, www.ei-ie.org/en/detail/16561/greece-report-warns-of-emerging-privatisation-in-public-education

Education unions join efforts to ensure refugees' rights

Education was one of six main themes discussed during the first ever Global Refugee Forum held in Geneva, Switzerland on Dec. 17 and 18.

On hand for the event, Education International (EI) senior co-ordinator Dennis Sinyolo pledged to mobilize EI's 400 member organizations "to make schools and all education institutions truly inclusive and welcoming to refugees."

Education International is calling on governments, the United Nations and partners to

- ensure the accreditation and recognition of refugee teachers' qualifications;
- ensure the training and professional development of refugee and local teachers;
- guarantee the inclusion of refugee children and youth in the formal education systems of host countries within the first three months following their arrival and not offer an alternative inferior track to refugees; and
- develop, finance and implement comprehensive policies to guarantee refugee teachers' right to teach and children's right to learn. ^{ATA}

Education International, www.ei-ie.org/en/detail/16584/education-unions-join-international-efforts-to-ensure-refugees-rights-in-and-through-education

New framework defines quality teaching on a global scale

In November 2019, Education International (EI) and UNESCO launched a joint framework aimed at defining quality teaching worldwide.

"Just as we would never want unqualified surgeons operating on our children, we do not want our young people to be taught by unqualified teachers," states the foreword of the 20-page document.

Launched at UNESCO's Paris headquarters, the *Global Framework of Professional Teaching Standards* outlines 10 standards across three domains:



teaching knowledge and understanding, teaching practice and teaching relations.

It's hoped that the framework will help raise the quality of teaching and learning in many countries, schools and classrooms, said Education International president Susan Hoppood.

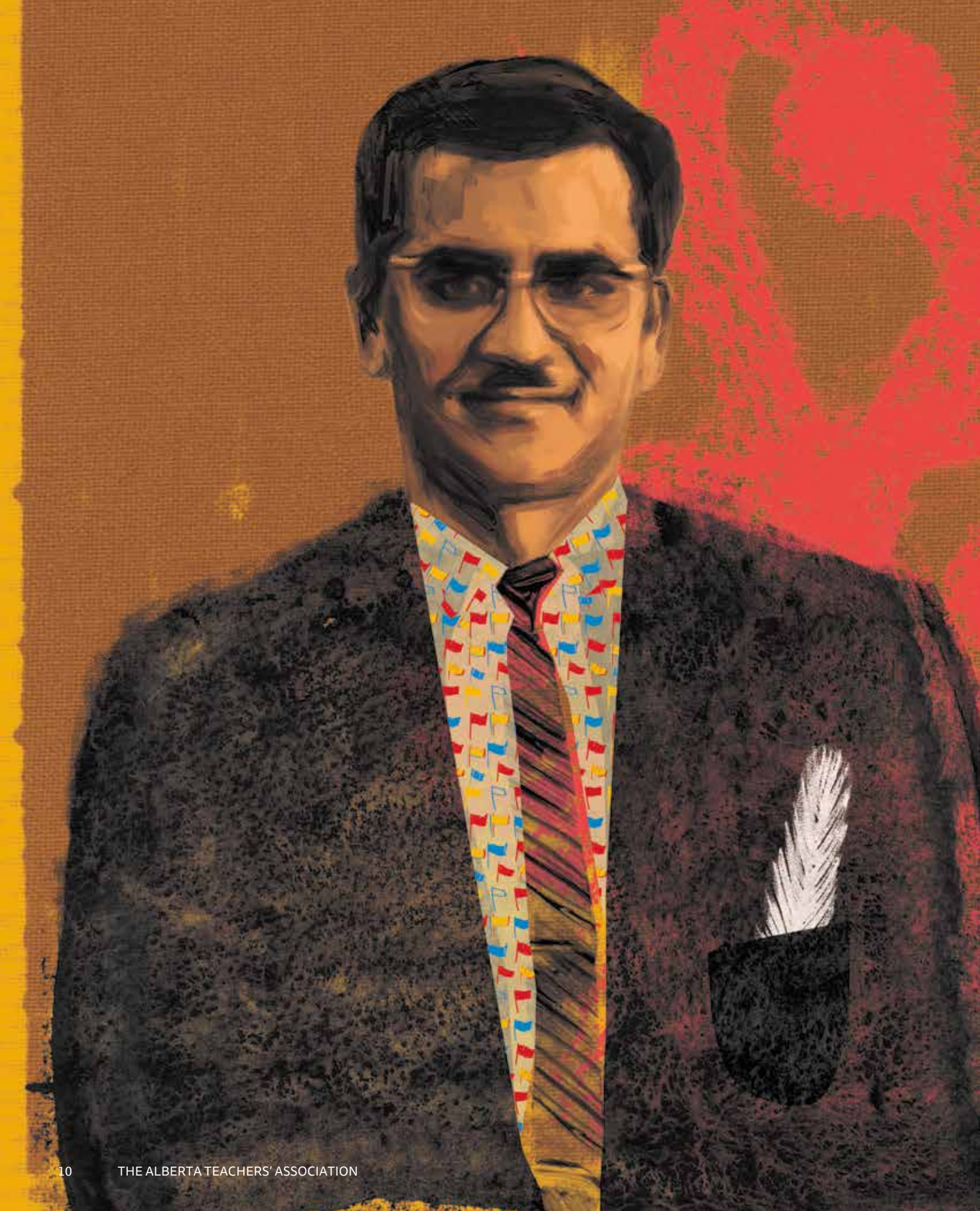
"We care deeply about the status of our profession and about the quality of the education provided to our students," she said.

Developed with the input of teachers, the standards are the result of a resolution passed at the eighth World Congress of Education International in Bangkok last July. Teacher unions and governments are being encouraged to use the framework to strengthen their teaching standards.

Stefania Giannini, UNESCO assistant director general for education, stated that the standards will be "a powerful instrument in the hands of educators."

"Their development is one of the critical steps in order to increase the supply of qualified and trained teachers necessary to ensure quality education for all children and adolescents by 2030." ^{ATA}

Education International, www.ei-ie.org/en/detail/16541/teachers-and-unesco-team-up-to-define-professionalism-for-teaching-and-learning-across-the-world



Krishan Joshee: Community builder leaves legacy of service

Maggie Shane

Archivist, ATA

ONCE SOMEONE IS YOUR STUDENT, they are always your student.

This was a core belief of Krishan Joshee, a longtime science teacher who is remembered for his social conscience and volunteerism.

“As a teacher you always need to remember that your students are a precious gift given to you by their parents,” says Joshee’s daughter, Reva Joshee, in describing her father’s philosophy as a teacher.

Born in India in 1923, Joshee saw his earliest days shaped by his maternal grandfather, a leader in the Arya Samaj movement in Punjab, which worked primarily for the eradication of caste barriers and for universally accessible education.

In 1960, Joshee, his wife Karuna and their three children arrived in Spirit River, Alberta, where Joshee took a teaching position and immediately got involved in community leadership. In 1967, the family moved to Edmonton where Joshee taught for the Catholic school board and continued his community involvement through tireless efforts to help create a federal multiculturalism policy.

“Multiculturalism is an integral part of our province and of our communities,” he wrote in 2007.

“We are fortunate to live in a place with a heritage built by people of many nations and cultural backgrounds. It is our legacy and our strength, and we celebrate it in everything that we do.”

Joshee was a founding member of many culture-focused organizations, including the Hindu Society of Alberta, the

Council of India Societies of Edmonton and the Edmonton Heritage Festival Association. He was the first person of South Asian origin to receive the Order of Canada, was inducted into the City of Edmonton Community Service Hall of Fame and received the Stars of Alberta Award.

Krishan retired from teaching in 1986, but his interest in education continued through his involvement with Edmonton’s Inner City High School, which works through a philosophy of peace to educate young people who live in extreme poverty.

The role closest to Joshee’s heart was that of founding member of the Mahatma Gandhi Canadian Foundation for World Peace in 1986. Joshee gathered a group of community leaders to commission a memorial bust of Mahatma Gandhi in downtown Edmonton. It was the first such monument to Gandhi anywhere in North America.

Joshee died in 2014. One of his last wishes was that his family continue to work with the Gandhi Foundation and Inner City High, where his family and friends have since established the Krishan C. Joshee Promise Fund, which helps students achieve their academic goals. ^{ATA}

► **Got an idea?** *Unsung Hero* is a space dedicated to honouring ATA members past and present who have had notable achievements, either within the ATA or in their private lives. If you know of a member who you feel should be recognized, please contact managing editor Cory Hare at cory.hare@ata.ab.ca.

Krishan Chandra Joshee

Helped create a federal multiculturalism policy

FOUNDING MEMBER

Mahatma Gandhi Canadian Foundation for World Peace

Hindu Society of Alberta

Council of India Societies of Edmonton

Edmonton Heritage Festival Association

AWARDS

City of Edmonton Community Service Hall of Fame

Stars of Alberta Award

Member of the Order of Canada

ILLUSTRATION BY KAREN KLASSEN—KARENKLASSEN.COM



PHOTO BY GRADY REESE / ISTOCK ILLUSTRATION BY YUET CHAN

Oh captain, ~~my captain~~ self!

Seven key steps toward taking
the helm of your own ship

Fred Kreiner

Executive Staff Officer, ATA Teacher Welfare

I'M SURE YOU KNOW THE movie *Dead Poets Society*, right? You've probably even seen it a few times—we're in the education sector, after all. Remember that moment in the movie when the students stand defiantly atop their desks belting out, "Oh captain, my captain!" to show pride and support for their inspiring teacher? Just imagine how incredibly powerful it must feel for a teacher to experience a moment like that.

My hope for you is that you are able to show that level of pride and support for yourself—whether or not you choose to broadcast it from atop a desk—and generate that feeling of power from within. But how can you support yourself to this degree? How do you get on track toward becoming your own personal captain? By making thoughtful choices to improve and maintain your personal wellness.

7 STEPS toward self-captaincy

Strike a balance

Striking the right balance between work, family and personal demands is a continual work in progress. Some days might be chock full of work, while others are more filled with family time. Just remember that setting clear expectations for yourself and others in your personal and professional relationships can go a long way toward supporting the balance you need. Each week might feel a bit different, but by setting boundaries where you can, you ensure that the scales don't tip too far to either side.

Open up

Try developing open communication channels wherever you can—from peers and supervisors to family and friends. Practice this by simply being transparent with others, which shows you're being genuine and confident.

Build resilience

Resilience helps you deal confidently with situations that might otherwise feel overwhelming, and a key contributing factor in cultivating resilience is psychological capital—a person's positive psychological state. This includes elements like self-efficacy, optimism and hope. Whether you're trying to finish off a large project or navigate a tricky workplace relationship, focus on the positives and celebrate your successes with others. This will increase your psychological capital, and most likely that of your colleagues too.

Find your focus

Plenty of evidence suggests that work can enhance well-being, and contribute to mental and physical health, improved relationships and more satisfying home lives. By focusing on what is fulfilling about your work, you'll feel healthier, more present and more engaged, which ultimately helps you be more effective.


Be a leader

We can all be leaders in the workplace. In fact, leadership starts simply with traits like positivity, trustworthiness, nurturing creativity, giving constructive feedback and owning mistakes. And there's beauty in this simplicity: anyone can integrate and model these leadership skills at any time. So, if you were looking for a permission slip to do so, consider this it!

Follow your passion

Say yes to projects that excite you, fulfil you or move you closer to big goals. Maybe that means building connections through culture-building events at work—like, say, a potluck—or meeting new people outside work by signing up for a yoga class. Activities like these help foster connections that run deeper than what you might normally experience.

Find support

You might not always feel like the captain of your ship. Just remember that the teaching profession features others who are tackling the same issues that you are. Find people you can share ideas with, rely on your support network and celebrate your successes. It starts with setting a healthy example for yourself and, remember, you're not alone. 

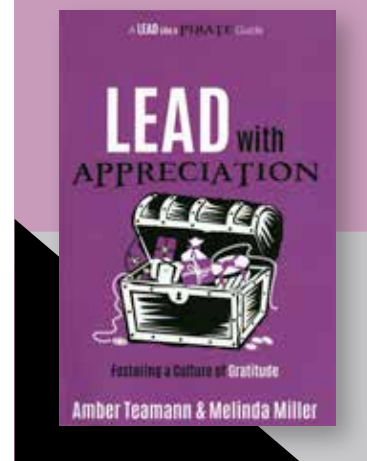
Sources of resources to help you chart your wellness course

- Mental Health Commission of Canada
- Homewood Health

Some tools to help you chart your wellness course

- **The Mental Health Commission of Canada** (www.mentalhealth-commission.ca) has great resources for employees and employers alike. With a broad search tool, it's a quick way to find impactful mental health resources.
- **Your employee and family assistance program**, like Homewood Health (<https://homewoodhealth.com>), can provide resources, e-courses, counselling, leadership supports and much more.
- **The Sandbox** (thewellnesssandbox.ca) is your go-to for all things workplace-wellness related, and especially helpful is the Dimensions of Wellness resource (www.thewellnesssandbox.ca/public/download/files/47931).
- **Your benefits provider**, like ASEBP (www.asebp.ca), can help you focus on a variety of health and wellness routes, including your health spending account.

RECOMMENDED RESOURCE



Lead with Appreciation

Amber Teamann and Melinda Miller
Available through the ATA library.



PHOTO BY YUET CHAN

Anatomy of a Makerspace

A space for innovation, creativity and collaborative problem solving

MAKERSPACES HAVE BEEN gaining popularity over the past decade in K-12 schools, libraries and post-secondary institutions. These spaces invite participants to be involved in innovation, ideation, invention and collaboration. One of the greatest strengths of makerspaces is their ability to connect students to the curriculum through authentic hands-on learning experiences. More than just a physical space, a makerspace is a mindset for creativity and problem solving.

A makerspace does not have to be an entire room filled with thousands of dollars' worth of equipment. With simple, cost-effective materials, students can be inspired to design, improve and invent.

Here are some ideas of what could be included in a makerspace:

1 Makey Makey

The **Makey Makey** is an electronic invention kit for all ages that allows users to combine everyday objects with the internet. Using alligator clips attached to any conductive material, users can control their computer's keyboard with everyday objects.

2 Breakerspace

Most stations in a makerspace encourage the construction of something. The breakerspace station encourages just the opposite. Technology and other **classroom or household items** are provided for students to disassemble, investigate and rebuild. Local reuse centres are a great source of materials.

3 Robotics

Robots are machines that can do three things: sense, act and think. They can help students gain powerful knowledge in science, technology, engineering, arts and math (STEAM). Instead of having students just use robots, choose robots they can either build themselves or transform with maker materials. Robots are now available that are accessible to students of all ages and abilities, such as Dash and Dot, Kibo, **Cublets**, K8, Mbot and Lego.

4 Media creation

Media creation consists of the use of green screen technology, stop-motion animation and digital storytelling apps and programs available for **tablets, laptops** and desktop computers, and smartphones. These applications are user friendly and enable people of all ages to learn how to use green screen technology, stop-motion animation and digital-storytelling platforms. Teachers can use these apps across the curriculum to engage students and enhance the presentation of student-created projects. This is also a powerful way to document the process of learning and ideation in a makerspace.

5 Coding

Coding, also called computer programming, is a series of instructions to a computer in a specific **computer-based language** such as Python, HTML, Java, C++ and more. Traditionally, these computer languages were reserved for university-level students and were intensely complicated. But now coding has never been more accessible to students of all ages! Thanks to block-based coding languages, students and teachers can learn to code in a safe and easy environment. There are many free and easy platforms to help you get started, such as Scratch, Google CS First, Kids Code Jeunesse and Canada Learning Code.

6 Recycled materials

Students use recycled materials to create new inventions. The beauty of this space is that it is nearly free! Students can contribute items from home: boxes, cans, bottles, bags, shop materials, fabric, toothpicks, popsicle sticks—anything! All a teacher needs to provide are a variety of common **craft materials**: glue, **tape, paper, scissors**, glitter, cotton balls, pompoms, doilies, paint ... whatever you have on hand! ^{ATA}

Information provided by the ATA's Educational Technology Council and from www.makerspaceforeducation.com, created by Alberta teacher Trisha Roffey and used with permission.

MAKER KITS IN YOUR ATA LIBRARY

The ATA library has a large collection of makerspace technology kits that you can borrow—including most of the kits mentioned on this page.

Browse through the list of maker kits to find one (or three!) to enrich your lesson plans. The website also has helpful links on different ways you can use the kits in your classroom.

The ATA library adds new kits throughout the year, so be sure to check the site regularly.

How to borrow technology

- Go to library.teachers.ab.ca and sign in with your ATA account.
- Click the Maker Kits link to see a full listing of the maker kits available in the ATA library.
- Classroom kits are mailed to your school anywhere in the province, and return postage is prepaid.

RECOMMENDED RESOURCE



The Art of Digital Fabrication

Erin E. Riley

Available through the ATA library.



PHOTO: FILE/QUET CHAN

Attendees at the ATA's Diversity, Equity and Human Rights Conference listen intently as they learn about relationality, reconciliation and antiopressive education.

ATA committee DEHRs to make a difference

Ideas to help you create inclusive spaces.

Information provided by ATA staff officer Andrea Berg

COMMITMENT, PASSION AND A WILL-INGNESS to engage in frank and often difficult discussions: these are the prerequisites for gaining a spot on the Diversity, Equity and Human Rights (DEHR) Committee. When you sit at the DEHR table, your viewpoints and perspectives will be challenged. Consensus will be elusive and hard won, and you'll be making a tangible difference in the lives of Alberta students. When you sit at the DEHR table, your viewpoints and perspectives will be challenged.

The DEHR Committee was established in 2000 to study and address inequities related to gender, race, sexual orientation and other differences that could give rise to discrimination.



PEC representative Heather McCaig presents Local No. 48 president Shannon Dubé with the 2019 DEHR award.

PHOTO: FILE



PHOTO BY YUET CHAN

Hot off the presses!

DEHR's newest publication, *Promoting Success with Indian Immigrant Students*, will help you learn how the social structures, education system and fascinating cultural traditions of India may impact your students' success in your class.

DEHR Award winners

Presented annually at Summer Conference, the DEHR award recognizes projects, programs, events or activities organized by an ATA local to promote diversity, equity and human rights. Here are highlights from the last five winning entries:

2019—FORT MCMURRAY LOCAL NO. 48

- Created a teacher gay–straight alliance (GSA),
- established a DEHR grant program to support teachers engaging in DEHR work at their schools and
- participated in a Pride float for the community parade.

2018—PEMBINA HILLS LOCAL NO. 22

Organized a unique *Amazing Race*-type challenge at North Central Teachers' Convention, inspiring teachers to solve clues and locate DEHR-related sites in downtown Edmonton that represented a wide range of cultures.

2017—FOOTHILLS LOCAL NO. 16

Facilitated the SAGA Youth United 2k16. This initiative brought together GSAs from different schools in the Foothills School Division and area to connect, learn, share ideas and build friendships. Each student GSA had the opportunity to plan and host a gathering for other student GSAs in the region.

2016—LETHBRIDGE PUBLIC SCHOOL LOCAL NO. 41

Created the DEHR to Care Art Gala, in which 700 students created over

300 pieces of art to fundraise for Syrian refugees. The students raised over \$5,600 for the refugee fund at Lethbridge Family Services.


2015—THE PEACE COUNTRY'S TRILOCAL DEHR COMMITTEE (Grande Prairie and District Catholic Teachers No. 42, Northern Spirit Local No. 6 and Trumpeter Local No. 26)

- Hosted a display table and a guest speaker at teachers' convention,
- built a professional library for teachers and
- held their third annual cultural night.

Resources

The DEHR committee has helped create a wide selection of resources to support teachers in creating inclusive spaces for all students. All resources are developed in collaboration with Alberta teachers in the field.

Whether you are a teacher wanting to promote the success of immigrant students, a teacher sponsor of a student GSA or a teacher working in a K–9 colony classroom, the ATA has you covered!

If you have any ideas for new resources please contact andrea.berg@ata.ab.ca. 

RECOMMENDED RESOURCE



Your students, My students, Our students—Rethinking Equitable and Inclusive Classrooms

Lee Ann Jung, Nancy Frey, Douglas Fisher, Julie Kroemer

Available through the ATA library.

- ▶ For more information about the DEHR program, award applications, and a library of resources, please visit www.teachers.ab.ca > My ATA > Professional Development > Diversity, Equity and Human Rights
- ▶ The 2020 DEHR award applications are due May 1, 2020.

RURAL RE

While struggling with serious challenges, teachers in small-town Alberta are embracing new opportunities



SILENCE



“THAT DOG SURE IS FAST.”

Cory Hare

Managing Editor, *ATA Magazine*

Photos by

Laughing Dog Photography

I make this comment after a driving tour of tiny Kirriemuir, Alberta. Running furiously alongside the car, just a few metres beyond my passenger window, is a large black mutt, her tongue lolling and fur flying. We're halfway up to highway speed and the dog is still keeping up.

“Oh, that’s Juno,” replies my tour guide, principal Kevin Van Lagen. “She’ll go right for the tires, too. She’s going to get hurt someday.”

Located partway between Consort and Altario in southeastern Alberta, Kirriemuir consists of a general store, an agricultural feed business and a mobile home. The feed business is where Van Lagen’s wife works. The mobile home, a trim brown trailer, is where they and their family lived for their first two years in the area.

In fact, the community-owned mobile home was one of the attractions that the locals used to lure Van Lagen out of Lethbridge to take the principal job at Altario School—this after having had six principals in the previous six years.

Van Lagen’s original plan was to stay for three years then move on, but instead he and his family have put down roots on an acreage that sits within a stone’s throw of the school.

“I just don’t want to be in the city,” he says. “I sit on my porch and I look for miles and it’s quiet. I hear the coyotes in the distance. It’s a peaceful way of living—when I’m not running like crazy.”

GREAT EXPECTATIONS

Based in Hanna, Prairie Land School Division serves about 1,400 students through nine schools sprinkled across an area encompassing more than 15,000 square kilometres.

Van Lagen is principal of two K–12 schools, in Consort and Altario, both small farming communities located 50 kilometres apart on the rolling plains that are much closer to Saskatchewan than Highway 2. Altario is a twelve-minute drive from the Saskatchewan border.

Van Lagen’s bearded face tenses as he outlines the challenges faced by residents and teachers in the area. Topping the list is a lack of specialized health services. While there is a health unit with a nurse and a hospital with a doctor, the emergency department is open only sporadically, and there is no dentist or eye doctor. The lone mental health therapist went on leave, and the child mental health therapist moved away and has never been replaced.

“Access to any mental health supports are nonexistent right now besides



RURAL REALITY

“Every couple of weeks we head off to the city for an entire Saturday just to do groceries.”

—Kevin Van Lagen, principal, Consort/Altario, Alberta

what we can offer as a school,” Van Lagen says. “We have students and their parents who are struggling mightily with mental health concerns and there are no supports—none, zero.”

Accessing specialized services means the time and expense of travelling to larger centres like Red Deer, more than two hours away. On the rare occasion that a specialized professional visits from the city, the first thing they do is look at their watch and state when they have to leave due to the long drive.

This lack of services means a lot of expectations are downloaded onto the school.

“I have teachers come in [my office] and say ‘I’m done. I’m finished. I got nothing left in the tank ... there are so many needs in my class,’” Van Lagen says.

Unlike larger urban divisions, Prairie Land doesn’t have a roster of experts it can dispatch from central office, and each school is the only one for miles around.

“There’s nowhere else for these kids to go,” Van Lagen says. “Whoever comes through our doors we accept, and we have to try to create a program for them, even if we don’t have the expertise.”

ASSIGNMENTS MAY VARY

Teaching in a rural setting defined by small schools and small student populations means taking on highly varied assignments.

In Altario, elementary teachers teach triple grades (1–3 or 4–6). Junior high teachers also teach triple grades (7–9) as well as some high school courses. For a secondary teacher, a typical assignment could be something like this: Science 7–9, Science 10, Math 20–1, Biology 20 and 30, Science 30 and Health 7–9.

At most, secondary teachers teach a particular course once a year, but some

courses are taught every second year (to Grade 11s and 12s).

“You rarely get to become that expert teacher, that master teacher in one subject area, simply because your assignment is so varied,” Van Lagen says.

One way that Prairie Land deals with low student numbers across multiple locations is extensive use of video conferencing. For example, in the Math 30–1 class at Consort School, there are six students in the classroom and five others on a video screen. Each of these virtual attendees is sitting alone in a room in a different school. The teacher is also present via videoconference; she’s in her basement in Spruce Grove.

“You can’t put a Math 30–1 teacher in front of three kids, but I can put her in front of 12 to 15 kids by adding different sites throughout the division,” Van Lagen explains.

Videoconferencing creates a number of challenges for teachers, who must consider how to reach students who are not physically in the room. It’s more difficult to build relationships, both within the classroom and beyond (teachers can’t connect with students in the halls or at lunch).

Returning assignments means scanning and emailing them to each individual student, and because there are students from multiple schools in one class, the teacher must log into multiple platforms when completing a routine task such as assigning marks.

The key to making it work is preparation.

“If there is any gap in planning, the class will quickly fall apart,” Van Lagen says.

Despite its challenges, he says videoconferencing is enabling the division to keep schools open, allows students to meet more people and is preparing students well for post-secondary.



“THERE’S NOWHERE ELSE FOR THESE KIDS TO GO. WHOEVER COMES THROUGH OUR DOORS WE ACCEPT, AND WE HAVE TO TRY TO CREATE A PROGRAM FOR THEM, EVEN IF WE DON’T HAVE THE EXPERTISE.” — KEVIN VAN LAGEN

SMELLS LIKE A BARN

Van Lagen’s countenance brightens as he outlines various projects that have him feeling positive about the future, the most notable of which is the Altario School of Agriculture.

The program began a few years ago after staff held a brainstorming session aimed at creating a special identity for the struggling school, which currently has only 60 students.

“We do agriculture well—let’s celebrate that. Let’s embrace that,” Van Lagen explains.

In the fall of 2016 an old outdoor arena was transformed into a school/

community garden. Now the school plants a garden each year and uses the harvest in its hot lunch program. The program has since expanded to include the raising of steers (two last year), with the meat also used by the hot lunch program as well as community meals and other fundraisers.

Last year the school board approved the purchase of a barn, which was erected behind the school. Water and power have since been added and additional pasture area is in development, all to better equip the school to raise a wider variety of livestock, such as sheep, chickens and turkeys.

The school’s website now contains a group photo of staff and students in front of the new building along with the quote: “The best classrooms smell like a barn.” The community at large has also embraced the agricultural focus, raising or donating more than \$75,000 for the program.

“The community is great and they support us a hundred per cent at all times,” says Maggie Baier, a teacher of 35 years at Altario School.

“I think our agriculture program is number one. We’re forging forward without anybody else having done it before. That becomes a challenge but is also very exciting.”





// I THINK OUR AGRICULTURE PROGRAM IS NUMBER ONE. WE'RE FORGING FORWARD WITHOUT ANYBODY ELSE HAVING DONE IT BEFORE. THAT BECOMES A CHALLENGE BUT IS ALSO VERY EXCITING." — MAGGIE BAIER

"The school has truly become a community school," Van Lagen adds. "People speak of the school with pride."

STEPPING STONE OR PERMANENT FIT?

From a social standpoint, teaching in a small, tight-knit community has its benefits and drawbacks.

"If a community turns against you as a teacher, you're hooped," Van Lagen says. "You can't hide. There's no anonymity."

On the other hand, there are "all kinds" of social activities, such as potlucks and impromptu gatherings at the community hall.

"It's kind of like going back in time," Van Lagen says, "where the neighbours just get together and sit on the front porch."

Throughout Alberta, it's no secret that young teachers aren't flocking to rural areas—Van Lagen has seen some job openings attract only one applicant—and most who come don't stay long term.


"We get these great young teachers out of university and they last one to three years, have a significant other somewhere else ... and off they go again," Van Lagen says.

Those who stay tend to fall into one of two categories: they were originally from the area or they've found a life partner since moving there.

Van Lagen has participated in recruitment drives at universities, and he actually urges young teachers to use rural experience as a stepping stone. At job fairs, the common message from large urban boards is to get on the sub list, whereas Van Lagen can offer full-time contracts.

"You come and you teach for a year or two. If rural life is not for you, you move on with some great experience," he says.

Some, like Van Lagen himself, find that the rural setting actually is for them. Not only does it provide a welcome respite from the traffic, bustle and anonymity of city life, but it also allows for deep and lasting bonds with students and their families as well as a greater variety of rewarding professional opportunities.

"If you're willing to embrace this way of life, you can have a really great career in rural education." 

4

PERSPECTIVES IN TEACHERS' OWN WORDS

ATHABASCA DELTA COMMUNITY SCHOOL


Fort Chipewyan
K–12, 220 students

Fort Chipewyan is a fly-in community that is also accessible by ice road from Fort Smith and Fort McMurray between January and March.

For teachers who are newly hired to begin work in the fall, the first must-do is to figure out how to get themselves and their belongings into the community. This typically involves packing essential personal items into plastic containers and shipping them by air or barge, then booking a plane ticket. Upon arrival, one of the first tasks to complete is planning outbound trips for the upcoming year, such as for teachers' convention and holidays.

The northernmost school in Alberta, Athabasca Delta is the only school in the community. It has 17 teachers, three assistants and a mental health worker. This setting requires teachers who exhibit a lot of patience, flexibility and a sense of humour. Not just any teacher can enjoy working in this environment.

The school board owns housing for teachers to rent, but the cost is high. Last year the local First Nation opened a grocery store whose prices are much less than the previous long-standing store that had been operating as a monopoly. The community has a beautiful swimming pool, and also a great gym that is free for anyone to use. The lone restaurant serves pizza, donairs, fries and burgers.

To do well here, teachers need to really love teaching and the quietness of nature. 

— Elia Haydon, principal

BANDED PEAK SCHOOL

Bragg Creek
K–8, 318 Students

Last year the Alberta Teachers' Association began a three-year partnership with Iceland during which principals, teachers and students from three rural Alberta schools visited three partner schools in rural and remote parts of Iceland.

In year one (2018/19), the respective partners identified a need to address growing mental health and anxiety issues within their student populations through deeper connections with nature and sport. The second year of this project now involves ongoing reflection and action research on the impact these initiatives are having on life in the rural school community. The third year will involve a discussion of the next steps.

EXPLORING NATURE IN BRAGG CREEK

Upon returning from our first trip to Iceland in the fall of 2018, Banded Peak created CONNEX, which stands for Community, Outdoor, Nature, Nurture, Education and Exchange. The project is focused on reimagining our school's connection with community and enhancing our passion for the outdoors.

Through CONNEX, Banded Peak has reached into the community to engage our seniors, foster meaningful connections with the nearby Tsuut'ina Nation, open the "back 40" to the community via community walks, nurture students through food programs, and share promising practices with our international colleagues.

During our return trip to Iceland in November 2019, teachers and school leaders were accompanied by four Grade 8 students, some of whom had never travelled internationally. Their experience overseas, billeting with Icelandic



students and immersing themselves in school culture, fundamentally changed the way they perceive school.

From these experiences, students shared the importance of working toward the establishment of nutrition programs that reflect those of many Scandinavian countries, where students are provided government-sponsored breakfast and lunch. They also referenced the importance of “the house” or the school being a place where students can enjoy unstructured time with one another playing games, doing homework, or as Grade 8 students do, lounge.

Finally, they shared the importance of teachers providing challenging, creative and thought-provoking lessons designed to engage students in their learning. ^{ATA}

— Simon Pols, principal

HUTTERITE COLONY WITHIN ROCKY VIEW SCHOOLS*

K–9, 21 students

This is my second year teaching on a Hutterite colony, and I’ve discovered many joys.

I teach 21 students from kindergarten to Grade 9, with one to three students in each grade, and only one assistant. My students attend school until they’re at least 15 years old and may go further if they wish.

There are challenges with this many grade levels in one room, but I’ve learned a few key strategies that make it doable. One key strategy is grouping students by ability. Another key is to annually rotate content area curriculum. It’s also essential to teach and equip students to work independently. In some areas, I teach the same content to everyone, while differentiating the

expected response. And there are many things—music, visual art, drama, phys-ed—that we all do together.

One of the many rewards of a many-graded class is that, as they learn, work, play and celebrate with children both older and younger, my students grow up knowing how to value, respect and care for people of all ages. ^{ATA}

— Laureen Guenther, teacher

* *The name of the colony has been withheld to respect the community’s desire for privacy.*

SHELDON COATES ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Grande Cache

Pre-K–3, 180 students

Our newly installed playground backs on to a large forest and rolling mountains. All grades take advantage of the land surrounding the school; students build forts, take hikes, climb trees and explore the forest. Staff at Sheldon Coates value outdoor learning and learning through play, which help to build connections and relationships with students that go beyond academics.

Being in a remote area, we struggle to find certified substitutes and to recruit new teachers. We also have to travel on mountain highways frequently to attend meetings and professional development. While we have many services available to us, they are mainly contracted services that are based in other communities, making it difficult to achieve consistency. ^{ATA}

— Michelle Bolay, principal

“*[We] value outdoor learning and learning through play, which help to build connections and relationships with students that go beyond academics.*”

— Michelle Bolay, principal

RURAL EDUCATION TAKES THE SPOTLIGHT AT THE 2019 ANNUAL REPRESENTATIVE ASSEMBLY

RESOLUTION PASSED

Delegates at the 2019 Annual Representative Assembly (ARA) passed the following resolution.

9.4.01 Be it resolved that the Government of Alberta should engage the Association, school boards, superintendents, parents and the public in the development of a rural education strategy to ensure that students in rural areas continue to have access to high-quality education opportunities provided by public, separate and francophone school authorities.

'SWEETIE, THAT'S RURAL ALBERTA'

The following is a transcript, slightly edited, of a speech delivered at ARA 2019 in favour of a rural education strategy.

I would like to explain to some of you what I taught last year. Ready? Science 7 and 8 were together with three IPPs. Science 9, Science 9 K and E, Science 10, Science 14 were all together in Block 2. Block 3 I had Bio 20, Science 20 and Science 24 all together. Block 4 was Phys Ed 9, 10, 20 and 30. Block 5 I had Jr 7, 8, 9 and high school 10, 11 and 12 options. That was one semester.

I had 12 different courses the second semester. The reason I bring that up is I went for some PD at [a large Edmonton high school], and I was talking to one of the colleagues there, and he goes, "What did you do to get that teaching assignment?" He thought I was being punished, and I said, "Sweetie, that's rural Alberta."

In my classes, it doesn't matter if you have one student or 30, you are still prepping all of those courses, and there is no prep time. So 24 courses I prepped last year. Funding for students is based on the number of students, not on the programs. So my tiny little K–12 school had 86 kids in it; therefore, I have zero resources to teach all of those courses.

Also, in the second semester I was responsible for the full programming for two severely autistic students. I have no training in special education—none. Oh, and we had no EAs. Oh, and they were in my Bio 20 class.

I'm actually not making this up, guys. I've been doing this at this tiny little school for 10 years. I finally had to go to human resources this year and admit defeat. I said, "You have to transfer me. I can't do it. I'm exhausted. I'm burned out."

I respect all of you who have classes of 30. I don't know how you do it, but this needs to be an equally important message that we are sending to the government. Rural education is so different, and if you don't believe me, I would love for you to come out and do my job for a day because I just want a prep period—that would be great. Thank you so much.

— Delegate, ARA 2019

NO WORD FROM ALBERTA ED

Alberta Education was invited to submit a statement regarding a rural education strategy but did not respond.



Insights from rural education researcher Amy von Heyking



HOW HAVE ALBERTA'S RURAL SCHOOLS CHANGED OVER TIME?

The history of Alberta schools begins with the establishment of rural one-room school districts in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Few people now appreciate how long this model persisted. In 1950 there were still 1,545 one-room schools in operation. By 1959 there were only 275 one-room schools left.

There is a lot of nostalgia surrounding experiences of one-room schooling. Most of us have heard or read the accounts of young, mostly female teachers managing multiaged and multigraded classrooms in isolated communities. These tend to be heroic tales of long and difficult travel by foot or horse, drafty schoolrooms warmed by wood-burning stoves, inadequate teaching resources, children's hijinks, warm memories of school Christmas pageants and strong community connections.

The reality, of course, is that in some rural communities, teaching conditions were extremely difficult, and for some teachers, potentially harrowing. The ATA archives houses hundreds of letters teachers sent to the Alberta Teachers' Alliance (later Association) asking for help and practical support in navigating hostile community members, inadequate conditions and unrealistic expectations.



PHOTO COURTESY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF LETHBRIDGE

“ RURAL COMMUNITIES WENT TO ENORMOUS LENGTHS TO ENSURE THAT THEIR CHILDREN HAD ACCESS TO EDUCATION. ” — AMY VON HEYKING

But in many communities, there was tremendous support for education even in hard times, and the schools were valued as the hub of their communities. Rural communities went to enormous lengths to ensure that their children had access to education.

The history of rural schooling since the 1950s has essentially been one dominated by concerns about efficiency and modernization, with the assumption that urban schools are modern, progressive and future oriented, and rural schools are archaic, resistant to change and inefficient.

Rural education researchers often say that the single most implemented educational reform in rural areas of Canada is school closure. This is because the criteria that defined “successful” schools and school districts was not the quality of students’ learning experiences, but the efficient use of financial resources. School consolidation has been synonymous with school improvement, though there is limited empirical research to support this.

There is no question that historically, there has been an urban-rural achievement gap, and that school completion

rates for rural students have been lower than their urban counterparts. Much of this can be attributed to an urban bias in the curriculum, or at least a privileging of academic educational pathways into university programs. For many rural students, doing well at school meant having to leave their communities. Many did not need to complete high school to find relatively well-paying employment in resource industries that kept them in their communities.

Rural schools today are diverse because they reflect the diversity of Alberta’s rural communities. Many have culturally and linguistically diverse populations. The schools in the rural, agricultural communities of southern and central Alberta differ from schools in northern communities that might be dominated by other resource-based industries.


In many ways, they embody the same traits that characterized the best of rural schools in the past: they are still the social hub of their communities, and they benefit from local expertise and connection. The schools are smaller than those in urban or suburban centres, and many

classrooms are inclusive, multiage and multigrade. School cultures are positive: students feel a sense of belonging, and sometimes they have access to extra-curricular activities, like sports teams, that they wouldn’t have in more competitive urban settings.

WHAT DOES CONTEMPORARY RESEARCH SAY ABOUT SUCCESSFUL STRATEGIES FOR RURAL SCHOOLS RELATED TO ISSUES OF POVERTY, EQUITY AND RETENTION OF TEACHERS AND SCHOOL LEADERS?

Research in some Canadian jurisdictions has confirmed the importance of offering preschool programs in rural schools with a strong early-years development focus and full-time kindergarten to help ease students’ transition into schooling. Other studies demonstrate that liaison workers from local linguistic or cultural communities can facilitate the relationship between school and community. Career counsellors or career development workers have been found to be key to establishing programs that facilitate students’ experiential learning and vocational opportunities in their communities.

Small-scale qualitative studies in rural school settings have demonstrated the effectiveness of instructional approaches such as looping, culturally sensitive teaching, early literacy initiatives, subject-integrated curriculum, experiential learning and individualized learning in improving students’ academic achievement.

Studies have also demonstrated the importance of reliable information and communication technologies infrastructure in providing access and equity in terms of courses for students, but also professional learning for teachers. Co-operation and collaboration among rural jurisdictions have also enhanced professional learning for teachers, as have partnerships with universities that have included on-site local cohorts for graduate programs. These have demonstrated value in retention and leadership capacity building in rural school districts. 

Amy von Heyking is a University of Lethbridge associate professor whose research is focused on the history of Alberta’s rural schools.

UP IN THE VALLEY

Rural setting provides opportunities for growth and connection

Cory Hare

Managing Editor, ATA Magazine



IN A RURAL EDUCATION setting, you never know who will turn out to be lifer.

That's certainly not what Laurena Newman expected to be calling herself after she relocated from Red Deer to Valleyview. But 20 years later, she's firmly entrenched at Hillside School, has a vast web of contacts throughout the community, and enjoys hobbies and pursuits that she'd never imagined herself doing.

"I hunt now, I've shot guns, I've shot large animals," Newman says. "I shot a moose this year, and on social media I posted a picture and some of my friends from university said, 'like, who are you?'"

While many who venture to rural environs to begin their teaching careers leave after a few years, Newman followed the path of those who stay: she got involved in the community and married someone local.

"A significant challenge for young teachers coming out of university is meeting people in a small town," Newman says. "We have lost some of our really great young teachers because they just haven't been able to make those personal connections in our community."

On the professional front, Newman says her long tenure has enabled her to form a vast network of connections that serves her well when, for example, she needs to refer someone for mental health support or is looking for a math tutor.

"It's become easier and easier over time to meet the needs of students just because of being in the small community," she says

ANYONE WANT TO APPLY?

The availability of teachers is one of the most pressing challenges faced by school administrators in Valleyview, whether it be certificated substitutes, specialized teachers such as shop or chemistry, or simply teachers who are willing to apply for any opening.

Last year at Hillside, principal Darlene Wood had a language arts/social studies teacher resign part way through the year and was never able to replace her. This year, knowing she had a teacher going on maternity leave in the fall, she double-staffed the position for two months just to ensure she'd have a replacement.

"Those become our challenges, never-mind when it starts to be the physics [teacher], the math [teacher], my shop teacher—when those people leave or retire, that is a crisis for us," Wood says.

Jodie Chisholm, principal of Valleyview's St. Stephen's School, said her school has experienced periods of high turnover but is currently in the midst of staffing stability.

The growth of Grande Prairie, which is an hour further north, and the twinning of the highway all the way from Edmonton have made Valleyview more liveable, Chisholm says, but it's still tougher to attract applicants than it used to be.

"It's very hard to find people to come who want to stay," she says.

Wood and Chisholm both agree that the rural setting and its smaller schools provide teachers with a broader range of opportunities in teaching or leadership.

"There are a lot of opportunities in a smaller place that you wouldn't get in a larger place," Chisholm says.

Pat Galandie agrees.

Now the co-ordinator at the outreach school in Valleyview, she started out as a



ILLUSTRATION BY KIM VANDERHELM

// YOU HAVE TO BE WILLING TO TAKE RISKS. THE POTENTIAL REWARDS ARE GREAT, BUT IT DOESN'T HAPPEN INSTANTANEOUSLY."

business education teacher 29 years ago. Over the course of her first 15 years she "taught just about everything that's offered," including computer science, social studies, math, science and CALM.

She went on to become the special education co-ordinator and a counsellor.

"It seems like the opportunities are just there and you can just grab onto them," she says.

All the Valleyview teachers believe that they are able to forge deeper relationships with students in a small town.

"We know their parents. We don't hesitate to pick up the phone and make a connection," says Sherry Howey, principal of Oscar Adolphson School.

For Newman, not only is Valleyview an ideal setting in which to teach and connect with students and their families, but it represents the best of both worlds in terms of her own lifestyle. City facilities are within an hour's drive and the local recreational activities can't be beat, she says.

But getting to this point of contentment required her, as a new, young teacher in town, to step out of her comfort zone and make an effort to join social organizations. (Curling was one of her early outlets.)

"You have to be willing to take risks," she says. "The potential rewards are great, but it doesn't happen instantaneously."

Are your students Canada's next upstanders?

**Being an upstander means
defending human rights.**

Give students a chance to tell us how they're using their strengths to create change; they could be one of ten students who wins a trip to the Canadian Museum for Human Rights!



Use the Museum's free teacher-developed and tested resources with your students to encourage inquiry and action on rights-related issues.

Middle years students and teachers who use the resource and submit projects are eligible to win.

Take up the challenge in your classroom. We want to hear what upstanders are doing, so they can inspire other young Canadians to do the same.



Check out the **student-focused website**

Download the **teacher-developed** and tested **project-based learning unit plan**



Book a **virtual field trip** for your class, or **visit in person**

Enter the **Be Canada's Next Upstander** challenge



Learn more at humanrights.ca/upstander

Ambiguous but gaining momentum

ATA research delves into wellness and well-being in schools

Phil McRae

Associate Co-ordinator of Research, ATA

“What is generally agreed is that well-being is a holistic concept and that achieving healthy school communities should rely on a multifaceted, wholeschool approach known as comprehensive school health (CSH).”

—*School Wellness and Well-Being Initiatives Across Canada*



COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL HEALTH (CSH)

A multifaceted, whole-school approach to achieving a healthy school community.

CONSIDERATIONS OF WELLNESS AND WELL-BEING in schools and communities have gained momentum due to a large body of data that points to a dramatic rise in the reported cases of anxiety and depression in children and youth, including increases in suicide ideation. Concerns about the wellness and well-being of our students is also creating even greater stressors among the teaching profession and others who care for children and youth on a daily basis. As such, across Canada we are also seeing a renewed focus on understanding and supporting teacher wellness and well-being.

However, the primary focus for wellness programming and policy centers on the significant role public education plays in the lives of Canadian children, where our schools are seen as major influencers and levers of change to improve both individual and societal wellness. The J.W. McConnell Family Foundation, one of Canada’s largest philanthropic foundations, is funding the development of a national program called WellAhead with the rationale that: “Given the amount of time young people spend in school, this setting presents a unique opportunity to support and promote well-being” (WellAhead 2020).

Finding boundaries within the definition of “wellness” and “well-being” has become difficult. Within educational discourse, every organization that uses these terms seems to define them a bit differently, and each seems to have reasons for preferring one over the other. Overall, these terms appear to be on an evolutionary track similar to that of other usefully ambiguous notions like “21st century learning,” “personalization” or “inclusion,” in that they now span the many dimensions of social, emotional, mental, physical, cognitive and workplace wellness.



45 Canadian wellness and well-being initiatives are examined in the full report.

Initiatives are found nationally, interprovincially, provincially, within specific cities and within specific schools.

Primary Funding Sources



government grants

private donors

initiatives funding

Budget Range

\$20,000 \$6,000,000



REPORT CONCLUSION

As wellness and/or well-being have become focal points of conversations across Alberta for teachers working in inclusive K-12 classrooms, the Alberta Teachers' Association wanted to better understand how this concept was being defined in academic literature and which organizations are working to support schools in this area. To this end, the Association partnered with Ever Active Schools to conduct an extensive review of the current research, and an environmental scan to identify the key initiatives, organizations or groups being funded to support wellness and well-being in Alberta and across Canada.

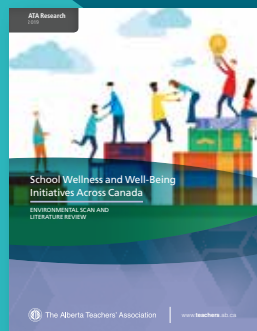
Our review found that there is no universally agreed upon definition for wellness or well-being related to school-based health; it is an ambiguous notion. While many wellness and well-being

Wellness and well-being defined in the literature

While healthy eating, physical activity and mental health were the most commonly reported elements of well-being, other elements noted included those shown in the graphic below.



To learn more about comprehensive school health, check out the Joint Consortium for School Health website jcsh-cces.ca.



▶ The full research monograph is available digitally on the ATA website under Public Education > Education Research > Research Publications.

conversations are primarily centred on the social, physiological and emotional outcomes for students, various dimensions of wellness are increasingly being added to the discourse, for example, financial literacy, healthy eating, physical fitness, aggression, technology addiction and vocal hygiene. What we did find, however, was that there is a generally agreed upon concept in the K–12 research that achieving healthy school communities should rely on a multi-faceted, whole-school approach known as comprehensive school health (CSH).

WHAT IS THE SCOPE OF ACTIVITIES BEING UNDERTAKEN AND HOW ARE THEY MEASURED?

Organizations undertake many different activities to advance well-being in schools, such as developing policy, providing professional development, creating and sharing resources and operating school-level programs. Some organizations have a strong focus on research and evaluation, and regularly measure their impact. Others focus on counting program outputs, citing their capacity to undertake in-depth measurement as a barrier to comprehensive measurement.

Future priorities include aiming for sustainability, improving engagement, providing more professional development, working across systems and enhancing government relations.

CAUSE FOR CONCERN

There is growing concern that non-governmental and private interests around the world are rushing to both define and fill the ambiguous space related to wellness and well-being in schools. For example, the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), a nongovernmental organization that helps governments design and implement strategic policies, has two new initiatives focused on measuring and responding to childhood well-being.

The first is the OECD *International Early Learning and Child Well-being Study*, which intends to use tablet computers to test five-year-olds for literacy, numeracy, executive function, empathy and trust. The other initiative is a future focused competency framework known as OECD 2030 that plans to assess

different cultural value orientations around the world to support individual and societal well-being.

While both of these initiatives appear on the surface to have laudable goals, careful consideration must be taken before Canadian schools adopt either of these benchmarking tests.

Academic and early learning organizations across many nations are heavily criticizing the *International Early Learning and Child Well-being Study*. As Wasmuth (2017) states: “Don’t even get me started on the collection of child-based data on a global scale without the consent of children, parents or practitioners. Or with assessing five year olds on a tablet. How flawed and meaningless are the results? How do you assess trust and empathy, or the complexities of learning and development?”

In terms of OECD 2030, there is concern that this will be making culturally and contextually sensitive comparisons on different national values as they relate to well-being.

In the private sector, technology companies have also been racing to capture a market for the monitoring, managing and real-time reporting of student behaviour, with a specific goal of altering class well-being through digitally tracked behaviour modification tools. One particular behaviour management tool, ClassDojo, is used in 95 per cent of K–8 schools in the United States and 180 other countries (ClassDojo 2020). This company sells, maintains and monitors software that tracks students’ behaviour in the classroom and allocates negative or positive points (i.e. dojos), based on the observed behaviour.

Among the critics of Class Dojo was the renowned blogger and teacher Joe Bower (2014), who pointed out that, “ClassDojo reduces children to punitive measures where the misbehaviour is seen as nothing more than an inconvenience to the teacher that needs to be snuffed out. ClassDojo judges and labels students by ranking and sorting them and distracts even well-intentioned adults from providing children with the feedback and the guidance they need to learn.”

If we are to truly take stock of the wellness of our students, in all its manifest forms, certainly the human dimension of positive teacher–student

relationships will become central to the practice, as opposed to the application of mechanistic or Pavlovian behaviourist software programs. This is a cautionary tale for digital assessments writ large. As educational psychologist Gerald W. Bracey, research columnist for the *Phi Delta Kappan* education journal, points out, there “is a growing technology of testing that permits us now to do in nano-seconds things that we shouldn’t be doing at all” (Matthews 2004).

The wellness of children, youth and, indeed, adults requires many sustained, resourced, thoughtful and strategic actions if we are to collectively address individual and societal well-being. Now that we know more about the initiatives in Alberta and across the country that are currently addressing well-being in all of its growing complexity, we need to begin considering how we can work together in new and hopeful ways to enhance comprehensive school health and the lives of our students, teachers and school leaders. ^{ATA}

References

- Alberta Teachers’ Association. 2019. *School Wellness and Well-being Initiatives Across Canada: Environmental Scan and Literature Review*. Edmonton, Alta: ATA. Also available at www.teachers.ab.ca/SiteCollection-Documents/ATA/Publications/Research/COOR-101-27%20School%20Wellness%20and%20Well-being%20Initiatives%20cross%20Canada.pdf (accessed December 11, 2019).
- Bower, J. 2014. “6 Reasons to Reject ClassDojo.” *For the Love of Learning* (blog), November 21, 2014. <http://joe-bower.blogspot.ca/2014/11/6-reasons-to-reject-classdojo.html> (accessed December 11, 2019).
- ClassDojo. 2020. “About ClassDojo: Fast Facts.” ClassDojo website. www.classdojo.com/about/ (accessed February 10, 2020).
- Matthews, J. 2006. “Just Whose Idea Was All This Testing?” *Washington Post*, November 14. www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/11/13/AR2006111301007.html (accessed December 11, 2019).
- Wasmuth, H. 2017. “Baby PISA Is Just Around The Corner: So Why Is No One Talking About It?” Early Childhood Education (ECE) PolicyWorks website. <http://ecepolicyworks.com/baby-pisa-is-just-around-the-corner-so-why-is-no-one-talking-about-it> (accessed December 11, 2019).
- WellAhead. 2020. “Helping Integrate Social and Emotional Well-being into K–12 Education.” WellAhead website. www.wellahead.ca/ (accessed February 10, 2020).

ENJOY THE WONDERS OF SCIENCE AT YOUR SCHOOL!

TEACHERS!

Book your **Science in Motion (SIM)** visit before May 1, 2020, and you'll be entered for a chance to win ONE FREE DAY of SIM programming. Visit twose.ca/sim for SIM Program Guide.



Winner will be drawn on May 2, 2020 and notified via email. Visit twose.ca for Contest Rules & Regulations

Supported by:



Express your concerns on crowded and complex classrooms.

#MyClassSizeIs

MLA Letter-Writing Campaign



Alberta's classes are too big and lack the support required for successful inclusion.

MLAs need to hear about the learning conditions in Alberta's classrooms.

Write a quick letter to your MLA!



The Alberta Teachers' Association

CTRI CRISIS & TRAUMA RESOURCE INSTITUTE

Many of our workshops are now live-streamed or available on-demand! Visit our website for details.

ALBERTA WORKSHOPS SPRING-SUMMER 2020



CRISIS RESPONSE PLANNING

Edmonton: May 14

This workshop focuses on how to organize effectively and quickly at a time of high stress so that groups are better prepared to respond to the emotional needs of those affected by a critical incident.

GENDER AND SEXUAL DIVERSITY IN YOUTH

Edmonton: July 14-15

This workshop reviews gender and sexual diversity from the adolescent perspective and offers strategies for creating more accessible and welcoming environments.



Please visit our website for details and for info on more workshops and events coming to Alberta in 2020.

10-DAY CERTIFICATE PROGRAM in SUMMER 2020:

Crisis and Trauma Response
Calgary, AB: July 20-31, 2020

This program provides participants an opportunity to develop a set of competencies to effectively respond to critical incidents.

Please visit our website for details.



info@ctrinstitute.com ♦ www.ctrinstitute.com ♦ 877.353.3205

Check it out!

These resources are now available through the ATA library.

The ATA library has great resources for teachers in print and online. Library staff are happy to mail out whatever you need to wherever you are, and we prepay the return postage for you. Drop us a line at library@ata.ab.ca and let us know how we can help you with your teaching this year.

1. *Learning in the Making: How to Plan, Execute, and Assess Powerful Makerspace Lessons*

A book for teachers that emphasizes the pedagogy rather than the technology in makerspaces. Readers will learn how to develop and assess powerful learning for their students.

2. *Génocides : usages et mésusages d'un concept*

À l'ère des revendications mémorielles de toutes sortes qui investissent le débat public, l'auteur, professeur de science politique à l'université Rennes 1, s'interroge sur l'usage « inflationniste » du terme de génocide. Il plaide pour une définition rigoureuse des pratiques génocidaires et met en garde contre les captations politiques qui menacent aujourd'hui de brouiller leur compréhension.

3. *Digging Deeper: Making Number Talks Matter Even More (Grades 3–10)*

Authors Ruth Parker and Cathy Humphreys tie the strategies in this book directly to the online videos of their classroom practice.

4. *L'instinct de volonté : comment renforcer votre persévérance et mettre fin à la procrastination pour atteindre enfin tous vos objectifs*

Cette capacité à contrôler notre attention, nos émotions ou nos comportements qu'est la volonté peut transformer notre vie. Elle peut améliorer notamment notre santé et notre bien-être, nos relations, notre succès professionnel... Ce livre propose un programme complet pour identifier vos objectifs, renforcer votre maîtrise de vous-même et commencer à transformer votre vie.

5. *Knowing the Past, Facing the Future: Indigenous Education in Canada*

An essential read for teachers who want to create a better future for all their students, both Indigenous and settlers.



Your colleagues recommend

Teachers suggested these reads via Facebook.

Jennifer Albrecht

From The Ashes by Jesse Thistle. This is an excellent pick. The selection is Canadian, timely, educational and a page turner.

Andrew Bullen

How To: Absurd Scientific Advice for Common Real-World Problems by Randall Munroe. I like the sense of humour and rigour of it all.

Kelly Johnston

The Reason You Walk by Wab Kinew. The story is beautifully written and mesmerizing from beginning to end.

6. *Practicing Presence: Simple Self-Care Strategies for Teachers*

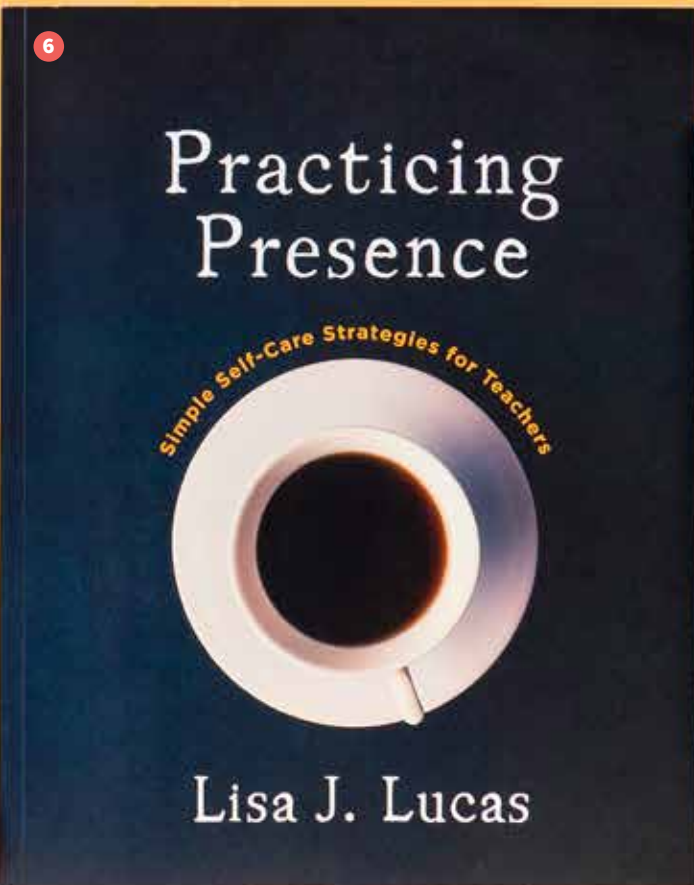
This book offers insights into handling the stresses of work and home for teachers while taking time to appreciate the small things and be present in every moment.

7. *Reader, Come Home: The Reading Brain in a Digital World*

Picking up from her previous exploration of reading and the brain in *Proust and the Squid*, Maryanne Wolf discusses what is now happening to the brain as it adapts to reading digital media.

8. *Design Thinking: A Guide to Creative Problem Solving for Everyone*

Design thinking is the crux of makerspaces. This small book demonstrates how design thinking can be used to solve a host of problems in all sorts of industries.



Information provided by ATA librarian Sandra Anderson.

PHOTO BY YUET CHAN

Chad Durling

The Coddling of the American Mind by Greg Lukianoff and Jonathan Haidt. Nonfiction about how our intent to protect today's children may be backfiring.

Anna Nowakowski Hayes

The Overstory by Richard Powers. A wonderful book about trees told through stories about people. I've never read a book like it. Absolutely wonderful.

Irene Deatcher

You Look Like a Thing and I Love You: How Artificial Intelligence Works and Why It's Making the World a Weirder Place by Janelle Shane. Shane has taken what is (to me) a complex idea and made it very understandable and humorous. The main title came from an experiment whereby she trained artificial intelligence to generate pickup lines.

What book would you recommend for novel studies for grades 5 to 9?

The Cay

I read it in Grade 6. Had such a huge impact on me. It makes me and my students cry every time.

Erica Pawliuk

The Breadwinner

I really enjoyed the discussions that came out of doing *The Breadwinner* (Deborah Ellis) with my Grade 6s.

Marissa Lemke

A Mango-Shaped Space

My Grade 8s are doing *A Mango-Shaped Space*. Great for many cross-curricular ties such as health, character education specifically about acceptance of others and self, topic of worldview in social. I've also been able to link in some art as well.

Crystal Roefs

Airborn

Going to start *Airborn* by Kenneth Oppel with my Grade 6s after the November break. I can't wait!...well, maybe I can wait a little...

Rhonda Borowski

The Marrow Thieves

With Grade 8s. Really amazing Indigenous sci-fi.

Hannah Fiest

Fish in a Tree

What a heartwarming story about being different. It works so well broken into read-aloud pieces, and the characters are super relatable for the age group. I would say it's best suited for Grades 4 to 7.

Shannon Louise

My Side of the Mountain

Today's technology-driven students are quickly whisked away through character Sam Gribble's forest adventure in Jean Craighead George's *My Side of the Mountain*. It's a classic that many of their grandparents enjoyed when they were children.

Michelle Holdway



PHOTO BY YUET CHAN

Reasons to join before you're 65!



1 Two great discount programs

The Boom Group and Edvantage discount programs offer savings much greater than the annual membership fee.

2 Savings on home and auto insurance

Up to 45% savings with our partner TW Insurance.



3 Twelve scholarships

Up to \$40,000 available to the relatives of ARTA members (perfect for your children, grandchildren, nieces or nephews!)



4 A unified voice

Advocacy for issues affecting teachers across Alberta.



5 Planning ahead

Access to a life insurance plan specifically designed for ARTA members.



6 Travel discounts

Through ARTA's partnerships with Collette Travel, TripMerchant, and Merit Travel, you can visit the seven continents without breaking the bank.



7 Subscriptions to news updates

news&views, a quarterly magazine, and ARTAfacts, an email newsletter, feature excellent information on wellness, health, and retirement planning.

news&views

ARTAfacts

8 Be proactive

Joining now will keep you informed about the Retiree Health Benefits Plan when you eventually need it — one less thing to worry about.



As long as you've contributed to the ATRF pension for five years, you are eligible to join — you don't even have to be retired!

Email us at info@arta.net, Give us a call at 1-855-212-2400, or check us out online!

Highlighting ATA programs and resources

ATA Instructor Corps are eager to bring professional development right to your school or district.

NEW AND NOTEWORTHY WORKSHOPS

Enhancing Teacher Practice Through Andragogy

This fun and active workshop looks at andragogy (the science and practice of adult learning). It provides a multitude of tips, techniques and tools that can be used to create positive professional development opportunities and can also be transferred to classroom planning and instruction in K-12 settings. Bring this workshop into your school and positively impact the learning for all in the building.



Recognizing and Addressing Anxiety in Schools

Is anxiety affecting you or your students? Consider participating in this workshop to gain a better understanding of the most common anxiety disorders and how these disorders impact students and staff. Instructors will share and demonstrate a variety of strategies to help support those affected.



WHO ARE THE ASSOCIATION INSTRUCTORS?

- Seventy-seven teachers, counsellors and administrators from 35 different school jurisdictions around the province
- ATA members who are active in classrooms and schools and possess a wealth of knowledge, experience and wisdom

WORKSHOPS ARE researched and written by and for Alberta teachers, and are constantly being revised and updated to provide the latest in educational strategies and information.

POWERFUL PD—RIGHT TO YOU!

Have a workshop at your next

- staff meeting,
- PD day,
- conference,
- convention,
- specialist council event,
- local meeting or
- professional learning community (PLC).

The \$200 fee includes participant materials, all necessary supplies, instructors' expenses and up-to-date information. Workshops are appropriate for groups of five or more teachers. Sessions can vary in length, but a two-hour minimum is ideal. There are 41 different workshops, seven of them in French.

The ATA facilitated approximately 400 workshops from September to December 2019.

The content is only one part of the learning that happens. During each workshop, learning processes and strategies are modelled, and these can be incorporated into classrooms immediately following the session.

HOW TO ACCESS WORKSHOPS

A list of available workshops can be found at teachers.ab.ca. Click on My ATA > Professional Development > Workshops, Courses and Presentations.

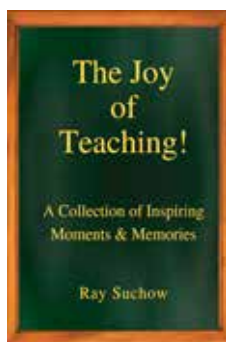


Scan the QR code on the left to access the PD workshop request form and e-mail the completed form to pdworkshops@ata.ab.ca.

Information provided by ATA staff officer Nancy Luyckfassel.

Creative colleagues

Teachers are actively creative when they aren't teaching. Some write books. Others produce podcasts, create art or make music. Here's a collection of works produced by colleagues who are "out there."



BOOKS

The Joy of Teaching: A Collection of Inspiring Moments & Memories

This chapbook is a collection of classroom moments that celebrate both the joy of teaching and the unique energy received from it. Often, these special moments become priceless to us, and can form the basis of an ongoing joy and strength that endures across

decades. It is this blessed empowerment—the ability to give, receive and give back—that embodies the essence of what we do. It is where the joy of teaching can truly be found.

RAY SUCHOW

Christ The King High School, Leduc
rsuchow@gmail.com

Self-published, 2019
Available on Amazon and Kindle

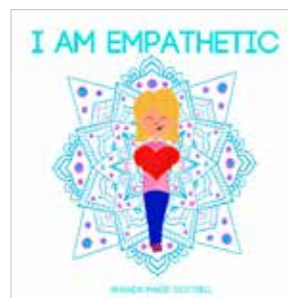
The Power of Coaching: Life Coaches Share their Secrets on How To Change Your Life

I am a chapter contributor to a publication entitled *The Power of Coaching: Life Coaches Share their Secrets on How To Change Your Life*. The title of my chapter is "Beginning Anew." My writing is focused on the common life experience of starting over, or beginning anew.

JENNIFER ALBRECHT

The Learning Connection, Edson
jennalbrecht1216@gmail.com

iUniverse, 2020
Available wherever books are sold in both print and digital formats.



I am Empathetic, Teaching Kids About Empathy

Empathetic is a big word! Teaching kids to be empathetic and to understand empathy can be a challenge. Help the kids in your life understand empathy and build positive relationships.

Being empathetic is an important skill that requires balance. If someone is overly empathetic, people and situations can take advantage of and deplete a person's energy, leaving them feeling exhausted. It is important for kids to understand that when showing empathy, it is also so crucial to set boundaries and ensure that they are balanced and healthy first so they can truly help others.

AMANDA COTTRELL

Chaparral School, Calgary
amcottrell@cbe.ab.ca, www.artmindfulnessandcreativity.com

Self-published, 2019
Available on Amazon



From the Frying Pan into the Fire

Born in a rural village in 1965, in what was then Rhodesia, young Judith grew up in a large and extended family of subsistence farmers. She remembers her early years as being carefree, peaceful and close to nature. Like most in her village, she is unaware of the fomenting resentment against white minority rule.

This heartfelt social history takes us behind the scenes to show how families were separated, villages bombed and strafed, people starved, civilians massacred and indigenous sons forced into the Rhodesian army. This first-hand account takes us into the horror of the 15-year guerilla war that finally led to Zimbabwean independence in April 1980, a war that ended Judith's childhood and thrust her into the realities of a brutal 37-year dictatorship that would see rampant corruption and civil strife that is still widespread today.

JUDITH MAWOKO

Ecole Providence School, McLennan
judithmawoko@yahoo.ca

Friesen Press, 2018
Available at FriesenPress.com and Amazon

► **Got an idea?** If you'd like to make a submission for publication in *Who's Out There*, email a summary and photos to managing editor Cory Hare at cory.hare@ata.ab.ca.





The dancing life

Calgary teacher Kelsey McMahon uses dance to connect students to school

CHRISTINA FRANGO

Freelance contributor

THERE ARE SIGNS EVERYWHERE that Kelsey McMahon's classroom is an extraordinary place: the *Dirty Dancing* poster on the wall, the motivational cards with phrases like "if ballet were easy, everyone would do it."

For 15 years, McMahon has taught dance and visual arts at Calgary's Forest Lawn High School. The school sits in one of the most ethnically diverse and poorest neighbourhoods in the city. Here, McMahon has built one of the most successful high school dance programs in Alberta.

"The aim isn't to create professional dancers," she says. "It's to create people who are able to think outside the box and who are able to work with others."

Every year, between 200 and 300 students come through her classroom. It's a white-walled dance studio with black rubber flooring and McMahon's desk pushed against a wall. Her students train in ballet, hip hop, jazz and contemporary dance. They practice through choreography on an imaginary stage marked out with coloured tape on the floor.

As part of the dance program, McMahon created and cocoaches the school's competitive dance team. It's the only school-based dance team in Alberta that vies against private studios in competition.

Most of the dancers that her students are up against have been in formal dance training since

childhood. In comparison, many of Forest Lawn's dancers had never set foot on a stage before they joined McMahon's dance class. They're a diverse mix of genders, races and sizes.

That's their trademark, McMahon tells her students during her precompetition pep talks.

"It doesn't matter what your costume is, it doesn't matter if our team looks different than the other teams. Our diversity is our strength."

In a school where students struggle with attendance, the value of a class like ballet is easily underestimated, says McMahon. But dance often engages students so they come to school more often. They bond with other students in a way that's very different from a traditional class like physics or English.

"Fine arts are often what get students to connect to school. It's what gets them to form communities within the school and to find value in school."

"If you don't have those things, sometimes students won't come."

Her students' enthusiasm is sky-high. This fall, during auditions for the dance team, 60 students showed up to compete for the 15 to 20 slots.

More important than pliés or posture, McMahon wants her students to learn skills that they can use outside of school—things like courage, teamwork and the confidence to take on new challenges.

"I don't take kids to competitions so they can win trophies. I take them to show them that they are capable, just as capable as anyone else."

That said, her students do win trophies. In the last two years, they've picked up multiple awards, winning citywide competitions with routines in hip hop and jazz.

Some have even gone on to win scholarships. Since joining the dance team two years ago, Grade 12 student Jehad Kalas has garnered more than \$900 in scholarships.

Kalas doesn't know if he'll pursue dance after high school. His chief motivation for dance is camaraderie rather than a career. "For me, the biggest thing is community. We are a team," he says.

OPENING DOORS

McMahon comes from a different background than many of her students. Growing up in Edmonton, she started formal dance training at five and continued throughout high school. She spent summers in New York City, working and training as a dancer while completing her education degree at the University of Alberta.

At 22, she was en route to New York City for dance when the Calgary Board of Education offered her a job teaching dance at Forest Lawn. She jumped at it, though friends questioned why she wanted to work in a school with a tough reputation.


Today, with her plaque for Forest Lawn Titans Coach of the Year 2018 resting against the wall behind her, McMahon offers the same answer that she did then: "Performing arts programs are essential for all schools, but especially for schools where the population comes from interrupted schooling or are vulnerable youth."

Elise Jans, McMahon's colleague and cocoach of the dance team, said the dance program is a credit to McMahon's commitment to her students.

"She does a fantastic job of opening doors for kids where they want them and that's not something that every teacher can do."

It isn't easy to fund a competitive dance team in a city not known for dance and in a neighbourhood not known for wealth. But that's how they've done it. All the funding comes from bake sales, bottle drives and donations, driven largely by the coaches, the students and their parents.

For her part, McMahon still lives a bit of the life of a dancer. She spends her evenings hand-sewing beads, appliqués and fur onto bodysuits and dresses for her students.

"I am seriously good with a glue gun." 



AT THE BARRE WITH **Kelsey McMahon**

Why is dance so important to you?

When I started dancing I was very shy, and it was a way for me to be larger than myself. It gave me a place where I could be expressive and outgoing. Now that I'm an adult, I see the power that dance has in terms of building community. It gives us all the space where we can be part of something larger than ourselves, where we can connect with others and find a space to belong.

At what age did you realize this was the case?

I always loved to dance, but I realized that I *needed* to dance when I was in high school. That's when I knew it would be my lifelong pursuit.

What do you love most about dance?

At this moment in my life dancing is about release. Teaching full time, being a learning leader, being on multiple committees and having two young kids at home keeps my mind very full. When I'm dancing my mind is free and I can breathe. It is a great gift to give yourself to be lost for a little while.

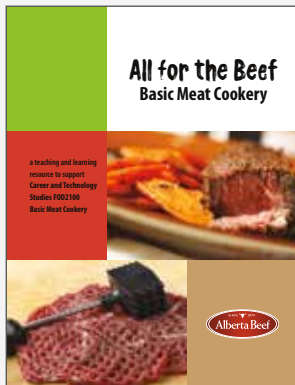
- **Got an idea?** In Profile features an interesting teacher in each issue of the *ATA Magazine*. If you know of a teacher who would be a good profile subject, please contact managing editor Cory Hare at cory.hare@ata.ab.ca.

All for the Beef

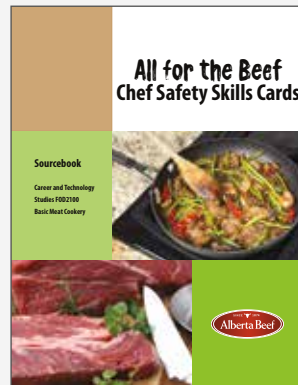
Alberta Beef provides **FREE RESOURCES** for CTS FOD2100 and a new, updated elementary program for K to Grade 5.



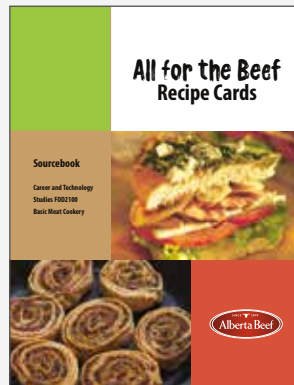
"All for the Beef" Sourcebooks



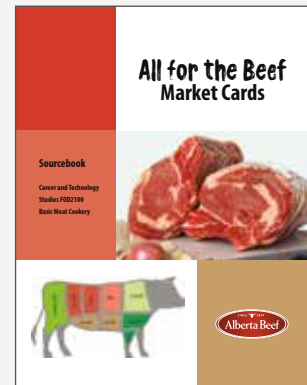
Basic Meat Cookery



Chef Safety Skills Cards



Recipe Skills

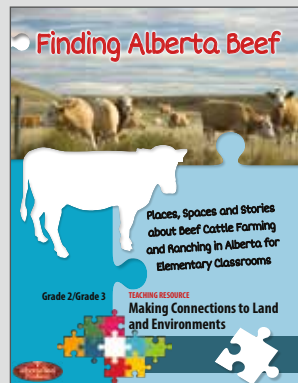


Market Cards

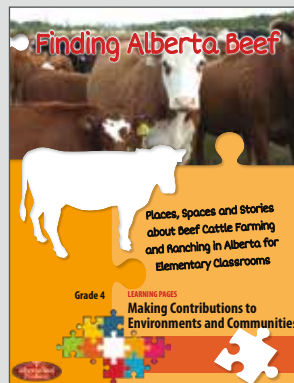
"Finding Alberta Beef" Teaching Resources & Student Learning Pages



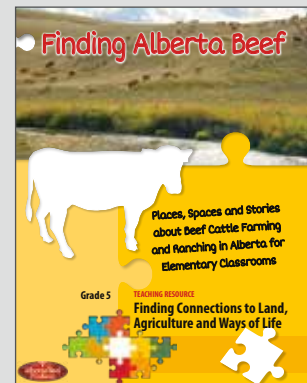
Kindergarten/Grade 1



Grade 2/Grade 3



Grade 4



Grade 5



These and other resources available at AlbertaBeef.org/education

Engage in Real Science

It's time to engage your students in a national STEM project from Let's Talk Science! Materials provided at no cost to the educator.

LIVINGSPACE

Grades 6 – 9

How do you think your 'Living Space' on Earth compares to that of the International Space Station? Let's Talk Science has partnered with the Canadian Space Agency to help students explore how environmental influence human well-being through a classroom monitoring experiment that teaches data analytics, programming and digital literacy.

Register Today!

letstalkscience.ca/livingspace

TOMATOSPHERE™

Grades K – 12

Use the excitement of space to teach scientific inquiry at every grade level. Using two sets of tomato seeds provided by Let's Talk Science – one that has travelled to the International Space Station, and one control set - participants investigate the effects of outer space on seed germination.

Order seeds today!

tomatosphere.letstalkscience.ca

let's talk
science

letstalkscience.ca

Thank you to our generous supporters!

Visionary Supporters

AMGEN®

Mitchell A.
Baran

Canada

FONDATION FAMILIALE
TROTIER
FAMILY FOUNDATION



UNIVERSITY
of GUELPH



Tomatosphere™ Consortium

let's talk
science



STOKES
SEEDS

Cold, Dark Winters

How do you perk up your students when their get-up-and-go is gone?

HERE ARE SOME OF YOUR RESPONSES: movement breaks, scavenger hunt and some friendly rivalry.

Jami Antle

Check yourself and make sure you have high energy! Be a model for your children and always keep positive, create engaging lessons, and reinforce when they're doing awesome work. Students are sponges, and if you aren't on your A game, it is likely they won't be either. So often teachers forget to reflect on their own practice and change up what they are doing.

Deb Gerow

When I was principal of a school in India, I purchased clocks for the classrooms so that the teachers would know/remember when periods ended. (There were no bells, just a drum at the end of the day.) They were worried that students would clock-watch. I told them that if I noticed my students doing that, it was a signal to me to change up the activities to get them engaged again.

Leslie Currie

I send my junior high kids on a silent scavenger hunt around the school. How many exit signs are there? What library book is under 300.8? How many cars can you see in the parking lot? etc. — I never really know the answers, but they don't need to know that.

► See more at [facebook.com/ABteachers](https://www.facebook.com/ABteachers).

Steve Kirkpatrick

When I taught elementary, the good old rock-paper-scissor battle would be good. Kids compete against a classmate. If they lose, they follow the person who beat them around the room and cheer them on. Eventually there are two large groups cheering to see who will win.

Jennifer Black

Debate, Would You Rather, Kahoot!, snow-ball discussion, fly-swatter reviews.

Elisa Waingort

Movement. Turn and talk.

Alison Stewart

Our school has implemented a 20-minute move-work-breathe break for all of our elementary students throughout the day. It's proving to have incredible results!

Barb Larochelle

For high school English, I tried to imagine my long classes as three mini blocks, one of which would involve them getting out of their desks and moving to another part of the room or at least talking to others.

Christine Ruten

Sing, dance, take a movement break, give them a snack, play our favourite playlist, play a few rounds of Would You Rather or read to them.

Rachelle Campeau

We stand up, do a stretch and then a quick gallery walk around the room to check out the progress. High-level classes can also engage in short critiques, either blind (sticky notes) or by a discussion at the end.

Rae Hawes

I give them a few minutes to talk to each other and to walk around! They often just need a quick break to do nonacademic work.

Erin Krysko

GoNoodle! My Grade 1s love this one for some reason I don't understand!

► Learn more at [GoNoodle.com](https://www.gonoodle.com)

Lorraine Ungarian

GoNoodle, stretches; if it's just individuals, then I suggest they go get a drink so they can refocus when they get back.

Alexis Bristow

Chair cardio!! Push ups, lifting the chair, squatting behind the chair! Then some deep breathing to get some oxygen pumping through their brain!! And some tunes as well!

Help students find their tech side

Bow Valley College is committed to helping students acquire the skills to succeed in Canada's rapidly growing tech industry. We offer two year programs with flexible learning options that give students the skills and confidence needed to find success in tech.

bowvalleycollege.ca/tech



```

BVC:\>confg career -app_development

xdlc:::lllc:::.....xMNNNNNN
lc::':::cloool:::c'.....'kNNNNNN
xol::c,,,':::cloddolc,,,'.....oMNNNNNN
kkxxko:::col:::codxodddc'.....oMNNNNNN
00000kkkkk00kkk0000kko,,,':::oMNNNNNN
00000kkk0000000kkkkkk000d:':::l0NNNNNN
k000000x00000000k0000c':::kNNNNNNNN
k000000NNNNNNMXXKKKK000c':::xNNNNNNNN
k000000NNNNNNMXXKKKK000c':::cKNNNNNNNN
0k0000000000000k000kdc':::kNNNNNNNN
llodk@0XKKKKKKKKKKk00kdcdMNNNNNNNN
xxx00k000000k00k00000kNNNNNNNNNN
000000k00000000k00000NNNNNNNNNN
00000000k000000k00000NNNNNNNNNN
d000cldk00000k00000NNNNNNNNNN
0k0dc:::0k00000k00000NNNNNNNNNN
0k000kkk000k00000NNNNNNNNNN
0000000000k00000NNNNNNNNNN
000000000k00000NNNNNNNNNN
k000000k00000llodc0NNNNNNNNNN
X0000k0d0llodc0NNNNNNNNNN
0000kxolccldkkkk0NNNNNNNNNN

```

[***** 100% *****]

Employment connection achieved.
Launch career? Y N

BVC:➤ Prompt Your Career



UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA
FACULTY OF EDUCATION

be the
LEADER
they need

Courses that fulfill the academic requirements for school and system leadership certification in Alberta.

APPLY NOW! uab.ca/gcsl





SMILE if you LOVE shaving cream!


Foamy activity fosters fine motor skills

Taryn Marshall

Grade 1, Father Lacombe Catholic School, Lacombe
@teachingwithmrsmarshall

WITH MY GRADE 1S, I like to spread shaving cream in a tray so they can practice their number sense, alphabet and spelling words. It is a simple but great fine motor activity for any age. Students can practice anything from spelling a name to drawing a descriptive picture!

BONUS: It is a great way to clean tables!

I would recommend any and every teacher use this in their classroom to engage all students and for its ability to hit a range of outcomes. 

► **Got an Idea?** Teacher Hacks is a place for colleagues to share their awesome ideas. If you have a hack that you'd like to share with your colleagues, please email a summary and photos to managing editor Cory Hare at cory.hare@ata.ab.ca.



BONUS: It is a great way to clean tables."

HANDS-ON LEARNING

Though some research has questioned the legitimacy of differentiation of learning and styles and preferences, there are just as many studies that have examined this topic and found positive impacts for students.

Anecdotally, teachers themselves may also notice a difference. For example, Samantha Cleaver, in a Scholastic.com article called, "Hands-On Is Minds-On," noted that her students were highly engaged when doing tactile tasks.

As always, teachers are the designers of learning for students and make judgements based on their knowledge of pedagogy and what actually works for students in their classrooms.

—Joni Turville

Humanity in the classroom

Connecting generations has lifelong impact

JoAnn Blachford

Assistant Principal
Ecole Sir George Simpson School, St. Albert



ILLUSTRATION BY ERIN SOLANO

THE CHALLENGE:
How to make the hardship of a war that occurred decades ago seem real to today's students.

ONE OF MY MOST memorable lessons came early in my career at Stettler Middle School where I developed a unit in Language Arts 8 on the Second World War and Remembrance Day. We read stories, studied poems, watched videos and clips—all to do with Canada and how the war impacted and changed lives then and now.

It was very emotional to bring in my great uncle's flight cap and a few other mementos to share with the students, along with the letters he wrote to his mother at home in Saskatchewan. He was a pilot and was shot down by the Nazis, declared missing in action and, after an agonizing wait, pronounced deceased. It was life-changing for my students to read his words and realize that he was just a few years older than they were.

At the beginning of the unit, I challenged the students

“ It was then that I realized that ... bringing humanity to the classroom is how we make a lifelong impact on our students. ”

to let the older generation know that they understood their sacrifices. They showed their understanding by donating to Chartwell Colonel Belcher Retirement Residence in Calgary, as one of the staff had a parent living there. The residents were doing a fundraiser, and our class bought two \$300 bricks—no small feat for a school in rural Alberta!

It was then that I realized that, although curriculum is important, bringing humanity to the classroom is how we make a lifelong impact on our students. ^{ATA}

- ▶ **Got an idea?** Maybe you created a lesson that totally flopped or were on the receiving end of a lesson that was truly inspiring. Whatever your story, please summarize it in up to 300 words and email it to managing editor Cory Hare at cory.hare@ata.ab.ca.

Be one with your Finances

A man with a beard and glasses is meditating in a lotus position on top of a large pink piggy bank. Behind him are several yellow rays of light. The text "Be one with your Finances" is written in a large, black, sans-serif font, arching over the man and piggy bank.

In partnership with Homewood Health, ASEBP is here to help covered members and their dependants become more confident with their finances and work towards personalized ways of managing their money and investments.

For 24-7 in-person, online and over-the-phone assistance on a variety of supports and resources

English: 1-800-663-1142 | En Français: 1-866-398-9505



www.asebp.ca

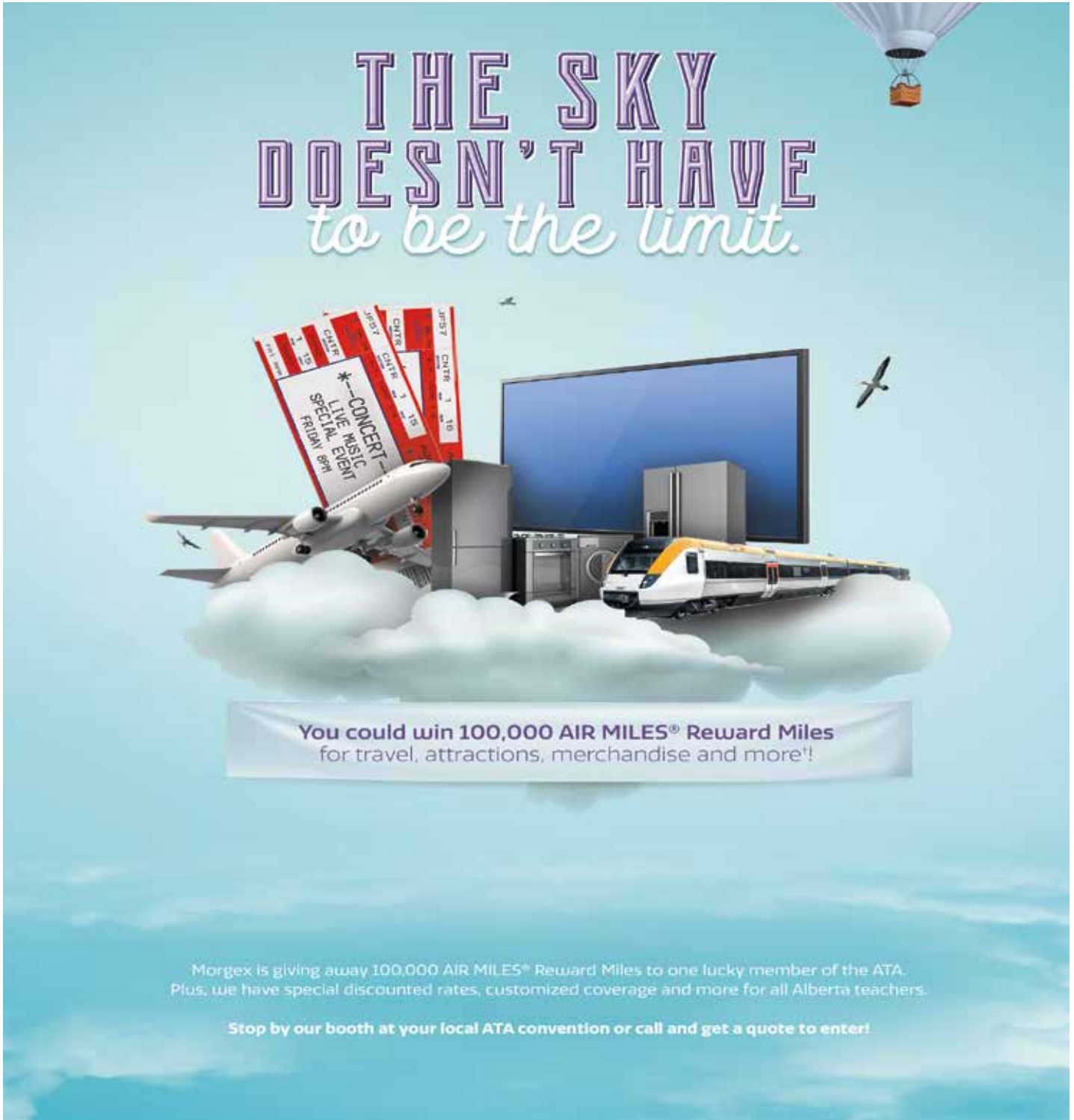


@AlbertaSchoolEmployeeBenefitPlan



@ASEBP





**THE SKY
DOESN'T HAVE**
to be the limit.

You could win 100,000 AIR MILES® Reward Miles
for travel, attractions, merchandise and more!

Morgex is giving away 100,000 AIR MILES® Reward Miles to one lucky member of the ATA.
Plus, we have special discounted rates, customized coverage and more for all Alberta teachers.

Stop by our booth at your local ATA convention or call and get a quote to enter!

Call to get a home
or car quote today.
1-888-262-9522

