

# ATA Magazine

The Alberta Teachers' Association

FALL 2018



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#### ABOUT THE COVER

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JONI  
TURVILLE

EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK

## PROFESSIONAL JUDGMENT STILL CRITICAL IN LIGHT OF NEW STANDARDS

*"The Alberta Teachers' Association, as the professional organization of teachers, promotes and advances public education, safeguards standards of professional practice and serves as the advocate for its members."*

— The Alberta Teachers' Association  
Mission Statement

In 1997 I was teaching in an elementary school in St. Albert when Alberta became the first province to introduce the Teaching Quality Standard (TQS). My principal at the time, Grace Christophers, encouraged us to go through the new standards to reflect on our practice as an orientation. I remember my first thought being, "Wait, aren't YOU supposed to tell ME how I'm doing?" This shift from external evaluation to a model where I, as a professional, was to reflect upon my own practice based on a set of standards was an approach that was different for me. As unusual

as it seemed at first, it was also empowering. In fact, it was at about the same time that I began working towards my master's degree. Being in a reflective head space made me think about what I wanted to focus on and learn as a teacher.

Now more than 20 years later, I'm at the beginning of my tenure as the Association's newest assistant executive secretary and newest editor of the *ATA Magazine*, and the 1997 standards have been updated and expanded to include school and district leaders as well as superintendents. This issue of the magazine is therefore dedicated to exploring the new standards from a variety of perspectives. It includes a history lesson from recently retired ATA executive secretary Gordon Thomas, who was intimately involved in developing the original standards and worked to establish a new growth, supervision and evaluation policy. He reminds us that initiatives of the past and present are important

for a unified teaching profession, underpinned by a professional, collegial model.

Before we get to the history, however, we deal with the present, with three articles that each focuses on one of the new standards—the Teaching Quality Standard (TQS), the Leadership Quality Standard (LQS) and the Superintendent Leadership Quality Standard (SLQS). In his summary of the new TQS, Mark Swanson notes that the new standards are structured quite differently, with six competencies, supported by indicators. He observes that the indicators will support teachers in better understanding each competency and that they will support teachers as they develop their practice over time.

Jeff Johnson views the new LQS as an opportunity for everyone in the system to grow—where leadership is distributed through a shared responsibility for student

## ATA Magazine

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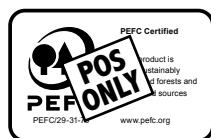
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learning. He views the launching of the standards as the beginning of a journey; however, effective implementation is key.

Executive director of the College of Alberta School Superintendents (CASS), Barry Litun, notes that the standards are a first, in that they had never been formalized for school superintendents but had been an ongoing goal of CASS. He also reminds us that even though some of the standards are new, Alberta's education system is already recognized as being among the best in the world, due to the dedication of teachers,

and evaluation policy relative to the new standards. He discusses the importance of ongoing professional growth, and that as professionals, teachers must be the authors and implementers of strategies based on their own self-assessments.

Finally, Melissa Purcell, an executive staff officer in the Professional Development program area, discusses changes that require teachers and leaders to develop and apply foundational Indigenous knowledge. She describes the standards as a step toward reconciliation since they mandate

continually reflect on their teaching practice, but that the enacting of pedagogy cannot be rigid. This is particularly important in today's Alberta where schools and learners are diverse. It is up to teachers to use their professional judgment to determine how best to meet the needs of their students within the standards and programs of study. The same is true for school and district leaders as well as superintendents—there must be flexibility to meet the standards in order to navigate unique contexts.

As we prepare for the implementation of the standards in 2019, the

The title we've chosen for this issue, *Standards Without Standardization*, acknowledges that teachers must continually reflect on their teaching practice, but that the enacting of pedagogy cannot be rigid.

school leaders and system leaders. Two additional articles round out the issue with discussions applicable to all standards. Keith Hadden, associate coordinator of the Alberta Teachers' Association's Southern Alberta Regional Office, reviews policy implications and the effective implementation of growth, supervision

that teachers and administrators learn about Indigenous knowledge and the many ways that authentic Indigenous content can be woven into classrooms and schools.

The title we've chosen for this issue, *Standards Without Standardization*, acknowledges that teachers must

Association has and will continue to develop supports and resources for members. Be sure to check the Association's website at [www.teachers.ab.ca](http://www.teachers.ab.ca) to locate resources or call in to the Association. Staff are ready and able to help members meet the standards now and into the future.



JIM BRANDON



JIM DEWALD

*On page 22 of the summer 2018 issue of the ATA Magazine, a written submission by Dr. Jim Dewald, dean of the Haskayne School of Business at the University of Calgary, was mistakenly paired with a photo of Dr. Jim Brandon, who is an associate dean and associate professor at the U of C's Werklund School of Education.*

*The ATA Magazine apologizes for the error.*

Alberta Education

# Teaching Quality Standard



MARK  
SWANSON

**UPDATED PRACTICE  
STANDARDS INCREASE  
INCLUSIVENESS**



Alberta's teaching profession has a new Teaching Quality Standard (TQS). A ministerial order signed by Education Minister David Eggen this past February brings into force a revised TQS effective September, 2019. It will officially replace the original TQS enacted in 1997 and will apply to all certificated teachers in Alberta.

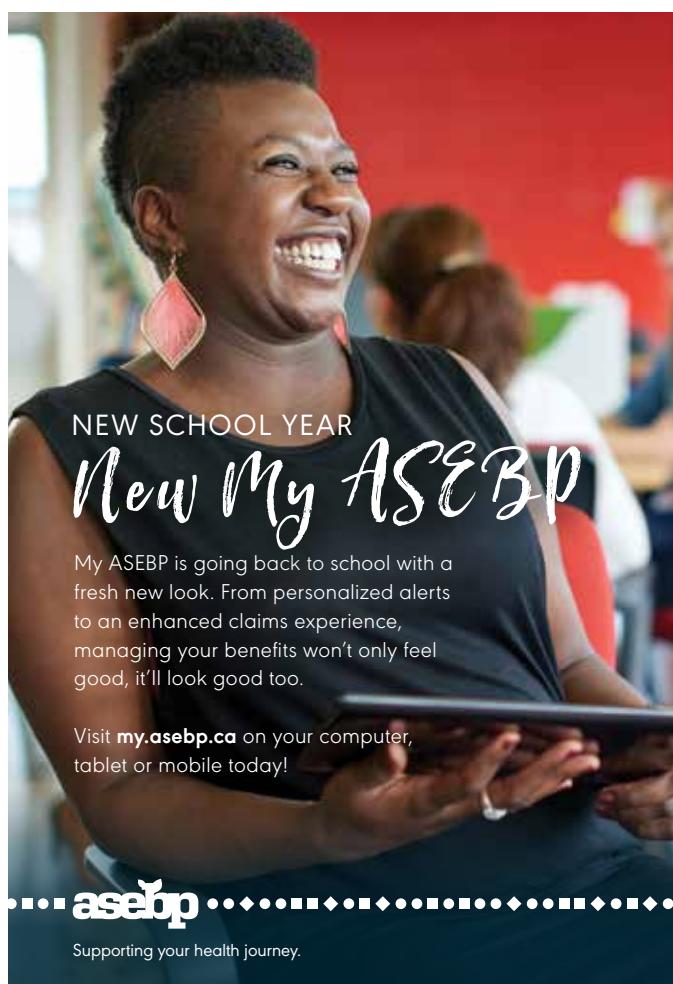
A key premise behind the TQS is that quality teaching and supporting students as individual learners are integral to student learning and success. The new TQS is a culmination of fulsome consultation with stakeholders, including the ATA, over the past several years and reflects the significant shifts in society and educational approaches since 1997.

Quality teaching occurs when the teacher's ongoing analysis of the context, and the teacher's decisions about which pedagogical knowledge and abilities to apply, result in optimum learning for all students.

Source: The Teaching Quality Standard. This eight-page PDF is available at [www.teachers.ab.ca](http://www.teachers.ab.ca).

The following chart provides a high level comparison of the 1997 and 2018 versions of the TQS.

| 1997 TQS  | 2018 TQS   |
|---|--|
| Limited preamble  | Detailed preamble  |
| A standard statement describing what quality teaching looks like in Alberta<br>Focus on “inclusiveness” is implied          | A standard statement describing what quality teaching looks like in Alberta<br>Focus on “inclusiveness” is explicit        |
| Two sets of Knowledge, Skills and Attributes (KSAs), one for Interim and one for Permanent Professional Certificate holders | One set of competencies  |
| Passing reference to technology use in teaching and learning  | Emphasis on a teacher’s use of technology for enhancing student engagement and optimizing individual learning experiences  |
| No direct mention of First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples   | Several references to First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples and a stand-alone competency requiring foundational knowledge |



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Readers of the new TQS will notice a longer and more thoughtful preamble. The 1997 TQS referenced the *School Act* that enabled the enactment of the ministerial order bringing it into force at that time and not much more. In comparison, the 2018 TQS prefaces the TQS with seven “whereas” statements. These statements outline foundational assumptions about teachers, students and learning environments. To provide clarity in interpretation and application of the TQS, definitions are now provided for key terms (competency, inclusive learning environment, indicators, local community, school authority, school community, school council, student and teacher).

All teachers are expected to meet the Alberta teaching standard in day-to-day practice. In both the 1997 and 2018 versions the teaching standard is a single sentence.

### 1997

“Quality teaching occurs when the teacher’s ongoing analysis of the context, and the teacher’s decisions about which pedagogical knowledge and abilities to apply result in optimum learning by students.”

### 2018

“Quality teaching occurs when the teacher’s ongoing analysis of the context, and the teacher’s decisions about which pedagogical knowledge and abilities to apply, result in optimum learning for *all\** students.”

\*emphasis added

At first glance the two standard statements look identical;



# Perfect Pulses on the Go

## Black Bean Bowl



MAKES:  
4-6 servings  
(6 cups/ 1.5 L prepared)



PREP TIME:  
20 minutes

### Dressing

3 Tbsp (45 mL) ..... white wine vinegar  
1 Tbsp (15 mL) ..... honey  
2 tsp (10 mL) ..... whole grain mustard  
½ tsp (2 mL) ..... ground turmeric  
¼ cup (60 mL) ..... canola oil  
to taste salt and ground black pepper

### Directions

To prepare the dressing: whisk together the vinegar, mustard, honey and turmeric. Slowly drizzle in the oil, whisking continuously. Season to taste with salt and black pepper.

Combine all the salad ingredients together in a large bowl, reserving 1 Tbsp (15 mL) sunflower seeds.

Add as much of the dressing as desired to the salad and toss to fully coat. Season to taste with salt and black pepper and garnish with remaining sunflower seeds.

**Nutrients per serving (1 cup/250 mL)** 250 Calories, 12 g Fat, 1 g Saturated Fat, 0 mg Cholesterol, 32 g Carbohydrate, 7 g Fibre, 8 g Sugar, 6 g Protein, 181 mg Sodium, 380 mg Potassium, 2 mg Iron, 77 mcg Folate

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**PULSES** are the dry edible seeds of legumes and include beans, peas, lentils and chickpeas. Pulses like black beans are a delicious source of protein and fibre and are grown in Alberta.

### Salad

1 ½ cups (375 mL) ...cooked or canned black beans (drained and rinsed)  
1 ½ cups (375 mL) ...cooked pearl barley  
1 ½ cups (375 mL) ...chopped red bell pepper  
¼ cup (60 mL) .....chopped dried cranberries  
3 Tbsp (45 mL) .....chopped fresh dill  
3 Tbsp (45 mL) .....lightly toasted sunflower seeds, divided  
2 cups (500 mL) .... packed baby arugula or spinach



# COMPETENCIES FOR TEACHERS

## 1. Fostering effective relationships

A teacher builds positive and productive relationships with students, parents/guardians, peers and others in the school and local community to support student learning.

## 2. Engaging in career-long learning

A teacher engages in career-long professional learning and ongoing critical reflection to improve teaching and learning.

## 3. Demonstrating a professional body of knowledge

A teacher applies a current and comprehensive repertoire of effective planning, instruction, and assessment practices to meet the learning needs of every student.

## 4. Establishing inclusive learning environments

A teacher establishes, promotes and sustains inclusive learning environments where diversity is embraced and every student is welcomed, cared for, respected and safe.

## 5. Applying foundational knowledge about First Nations, Métis and Inuit

A teacher develops and applies foundational knowledge about First Nations, Métis and Inuit for the benefit of all students.

## 6. Adhering to legal frameworks and policies

A teacher demonstrates an understanding of and adherence to the legal frameworks and policies that provide the foundations for the Alberta education system.

Source: The Teaching Quality Standard

however, the word *all* now precedes “students” when referring to optimum learning. A careful read of the full 2018 document reveals the underpinnings of the change. The inclusion of the word *all* reflects a shift in recognition and value for inclusiveness and diversity in learning environments. This emphasis is seen throughout the document and in particular in the new listing of teaching competencies.

The 1997 TQS was formulated with two sets of Knowledge, Skills and Attributes (KSAs—17 for Interim Certification and 11 for Permanent Certification). In the 2018 document a focus on teaching competencies and development of these competencies has replaced KSAs as requirements to hold and maintain a teaching certificate. The new competencies are as follows:

1. Fostering effective relationships
2. Engaging in career-long learning
3. Demonstrating a professional body of knowledge
4. Establishing inclusive learning environments
5. Applying foundational knowledge about First Nations, Métis and Inuit
6. Adhering to legal frameworks and policies

Each of these six competencies is supported by between three and eight indicators. These indicators assist teachers to more fully understand the particular competency and how it might be demonstrated within a teaching context. Notable is the change from two sets of KSAs to a single set of competencies. The change suggests a shift to viewing teacher development on a continuum with competencies evolving in depth and breadth over time.

Much of what is contained in the competencies and their indicators echoes what is contained in the 1997 KSA descriptors. Arguably, the method of quality teaching has not changed perhaps as much as the teaching context has changed. For example, reflecting the evolution of digital tools since 1997, competency in using technological tools to support teaching and learning is incorporated within Competency 3. Recognition of the need to meet the needs of increasingly diverse student populations is reflected in Competency 4.

Responding to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s calls to action, competencies 1 and 2 each have an indicator that relates to First Nation, Métis and Inuit perspectives and Competency 5 sets out a requirement for teachers to apply foundational knowledge about Indigenous groups.

The new TQS has necessitated a revisiting of the memoranda of agreements between the minister and Alberta teacher preparation institutions, and this is

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The Alberta Teachers' Association

currently underway. The minister has also initiated a review of the Growth, Supervision and Evaluation Policy, a companion policy document that may require revision to ensure alignment with the new TQS.

For more than two decades the 1997 TQS has guided the development and review of teacher preparation programs in Alberta. It has guided teachers in developing their professional growth plans and guided administrators in their efforts to supervise and evaluate teachers. The profession now has a new standard and looks forward to the guidance it can provide into the future.

## RESOURCES

Alberta Education Teaching Quality Standard. 2018. [https://education.alberta.ca/media/3739620/standardsdoc-tqs\\_fa-web-2018-01-17.pdf](https://education.alberta.ca/media/3739620/standardsdoc-tqs_fa-web-2018-01-17.pdf) (accessed August 23, 2018).

Growth, Supervision and Evaluation Policy. 2018. <https://education.alberta.ca/media/1626684/tgse.pdf> (accessed August 23, 2018).

1997 Teaching Quality Standard Applicable to the Provision of Basic Education in Alberta. Revised 2013. [https://education.alberta.ca/media/1626523/english-tqs-card-2013\\_3.pdf](https://education.alberta.ca/media/1626523/english-tqs-card-2013_3.pdf) (accessed August 23, 2018).

*A former dean of the faculty of education at Concordia University in Edmonton and a former Alberta Education official, Dr. Mark Swanson is the coordinator of the Professional Development program area of the Alberta Teachers' Association.*



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[www.calgarystampede.com](http://www.calgarystampede.com)

# Teaching Quality Standard

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## Whereas

Alberta's teachers, students, parents, educational leaders, and members of the public have a strong will to ensure all Alberta students have access to quality learning experiences that enable their achievement of the learning outcomes outlined in programs of study.

## Whereas

Alberta teachers provide inclusive learning environments in which diversity is respected and members of the school community are welcomed, cared for, respected and safe.

## Whereas

Alberta teachers play a fundamental role in establishing the conditions under which the learning aspirations and the potential of First Nations, Métis and Inuit students will be realized.

## Whereas

quality teaching occurs best when teachers work together with other teachers in the common interest of helping all students succeed in diverse and complex learning environments.

## Whereas

the Teaching Quality Standard provides a framework for the preparation, professional growth, supervision and evaluation of all teachers.

## Whereas

students, parents and other partners in education should be confident that Alberta teachers demonstrate the Teaching Quality Standard throughout their careers.

## Whereas

it is important to recognize the value of a consistent standard of professional practice for all teachers in the province.

Alberta Education

# Leadership Quality Standard



JEFF  
JOHNSON

**QUALITY LEADERSHIP  
FOCUSSES ON TEACHING  
AND LEARNING**



Quality leadership occurs when the leader's ongoing analysis of the context, and decisions about what leadership knowledge and abilities to apply, result in quality teaching and optimum learning for all school students.

Source: The Leadership Quality Standard. This eight-page PDF is available at [www.teachers.ab.ca](http://www.teachers.ab.ca).

**T**his is an exciting time to be in the teaching profession in Alberta. When school leadership is focused on improving teaching and learning, it has a significant impact on student achievement. This impact is augmented when leading teaching and learning is widely distributed so there is a shared responsibility for improving the quality of teaching across a school.

One of the most positive features of the new professional practice standards for the teaching profession in Alberta is that they clearly describe one profession in which three roles within that profession are defined. They underscore that there is a single profession—the teaching profession—in which teachers play a variety of roles to ensure success for every student and for the system as a whole. Together, the three professional practice standards provide an amazing opportunity for teachers to collaboratively work together in all of their roles to

support optimum learning for students. They offer the potential to increase collaboration rather than to divide the profession by placing barriers between those roles.

The introduction of the new Leadership Quality Standard (LQS) in Alberta provides an opportunity for everyone in the system to grow. The new standard underscores the importance of school leadership at a time when it is becoming ever more important, as school leadership teams are making critical choices about staffing, staff development, implementing curriculum, resource allocation, and design and implementation of improvement strategies (Schleicher 2012, 15–17).

Most decisions regarding pedagogy and curriculum are too specific to be made by the school leader. The introduction of the LQS will encourage school leaders to focus on leadership for learning that enables teacher

# COMPETENCIES FOR LEADERS

## 1. Fostering effective relationships

A leader builds positive working relationships with members of the school community and local community.

## 2. Modeling commitment to professional learning

A leader engages in career-long professional learning and ongoing critical reflection to identify opportunities for improving leadership, teaching and learning.

## 3. Embodying visionary leadership

A leader collaborates with the school community to create and implement a shared vision for student success, engagement, learning and well-being.

## 4. Leading a learning community

A leader nurtures and sustains a culture that supports evidence-informed teaching and learning.

## 5. Supporting the application of foundational knowledge about First Nations, Métis and Inuit

A leader supports the school community in acquiring and applying foundational knowledge about First Nations, Métis and Inuit for the benefit of all students.

## 6. Providing instructional leadership

A leader ensures that every student has access to quality teaching and optimum learning experiences.

## 7. Developing leadership capacity

A leader provides opportunities for members of the school community to develop leadership capacity and to support others in fulfilling their educational roles.

## 8. Managing school operations and resources

A leader effectively directs operations and manages resources.

## 9. Understanding and responding to the larger societal context

A leader understands and appropriately responds to the political, social, economic, legal and cultural contexts impacting schools and the school authority.

Source: The Leadership Quality Standard

development and learning, and supports all teachers to continually enhance their teaching practice and to view themselves as coleaders in an ongoing inquiry into the relationship between their teaching and student learning.

The new LQS also widens the scope of those we consider to be “school leaders.” This is a positive step forward in recognizing that all teachers are leaders and in fostering broader teacher-leadership within Alberta. There are times those in leadership roles other than the principal might be in the best position to lead a pedagogical change. These are individuals who have the most granular knowledge of various subject areas or practices.

Teachers in a variety of roles across the system can play a pivotal role in sharing new ideas or practices that can foster positive changes and growth within classrooms (Matthews et al. 2011; Spillane et al. 2011). The new standard will be applicable to assistant, associate and vice-principals, and school jurisdiction leaders, including central office teachers such as assistant superintendents, consultants and other certificated teachers. In other words, the new LQS will be applicable to all certificated teachers in Alberta who have a role in leading and supporting classroom teachers in the work they do every day.

The new LQS encourages school leaders to focus on what has great impact—improving teacher capacity. It requires school leaders to demonstrate a depth of knowledge, skill and fluency that will allow them to lead and support the development of diverse groups of teachers and therefore ensure that all teachers in the learning community have what they need to improve their practice and impact on the students they work with. This is a good thing for education in Alberta and is a step forward toward imprinting upon the teaching profession a strong focus of collaborative professionalism.

## GETTING IT RIGHT

Several principles need to be in place to ensure that all actors within the education system can co-ordinate their efforts to ensure success, as outlined by Breakspeare et al. (2017):

- Deeply engage with the profession in order to ensure ownership.
- Realize the agency of other system actors, and create cohesion.
- Start small, evaluate and expand.
- Enable leadership by putting in place the enabling policy conditions.

The professional practice standards for the teaching profession offer those in the teaching profession in Alberta the hope of being a lighthouse and an example of how the best student learning can occur in a system that includes teachers, school leaders and superintendents working



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within one collaborative profession. It is important to note that “Leadership development is not something that can be ‘done to’ the profession. Successful approaches will need to involve deep partnership and co-creation with educators, as they are the ones who must own and drive ongoing leadership development. Furthermore, the expertise to understand what

current cohort of school leaders already have master’s degrees and engage regularly in ongoing professional learning activities. Requiring them to engage in a narrow set of prescribed programs would take away their professional autonomy to identify their own learning goals in relation to preparing for their desired roles within the

## Leadership development is not something that can be “done to” the profession.

effective leadership looks like and how it can be developed is located primarily within the education profession, not within government (Breakspear et al. 2017, 98).

As we move beyond the introduction of the new professional practice standards and toward their implementation, it is essential that school leaders in Alberta work together with superintendents and other decision- and policy-makers in the educational system to make sure decisions are driven by the principles noted above. Most members of Alberta’s

teaching profession and their own pathways for acquiring that learning.

Aspiring school leaders in Alberta will continue to seek out high-quality opportunities to serve as members of the teaching profession within the roles defined by the LQS. To ensure that those learning opportunities fully reflect the new standards, those offering programs of preparation for school leadership roles must work hand-in-hand with the profession both to develop and to

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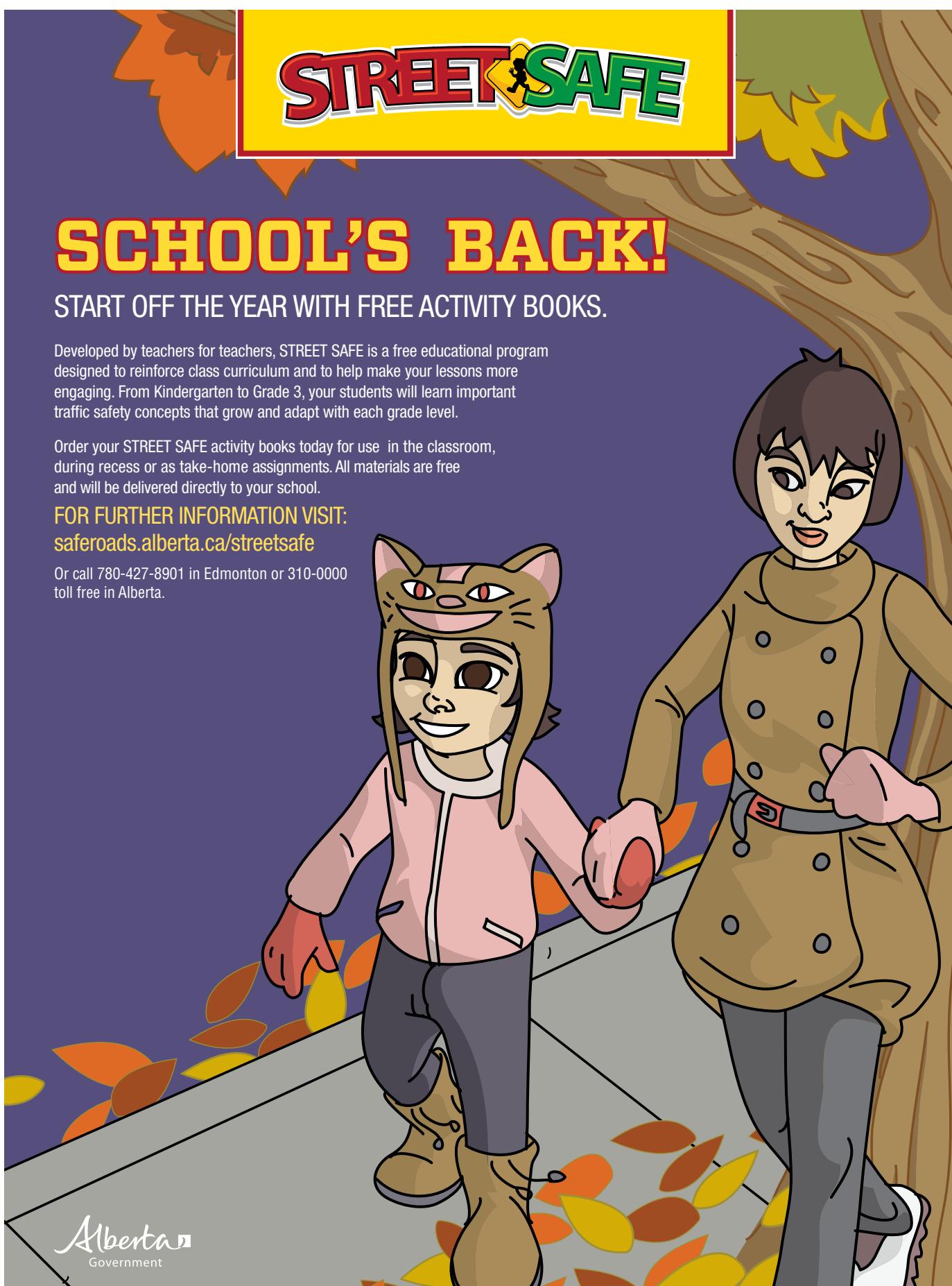
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deliver those opportunities. This is especially true since Alberta Education has indicated that it currently intends to tie required leadership certification for school principals directly to mandated leadership development programs, rather than to a demonstration of proficiency in professional practice as measured by the LQS, which is the norm in most jurisdictions worldwide.

Leadership activities should have as their goal the deliberate development of a culture that encourages every

While it may be tempting to quickly impose a systemwide structure of programs to develop the next generation of Alberta school leaders, it would be much wiser to work with the profession to build and implement such programs on a small scale. Then, after evaluating and improving them, they can be scaled up when it is clear that they are working. The aim should be for policy-makers in Alberta to significantly enhance support for school leaders rather than to impose top-down requirements for prescribed programs of preparation. This would help create a

## We have embarked on a voyage that will be an example to the world.

individual to consider themselves a leader, and participation in leadership activities within the school. This can only happen if the teaching profession, in all of its roles, is engaged in the professional learning opportunities that support it; if all actors within the system work together to ensure collaboration and cohesion; and if implementation efforts are focused.

learning ecosystem in which school leaders can focus on leadership for teaching and learning.

We have embarked on a voyage that will be an example to the world of a collaborative profession if we get it right in its implementation. What is needed now is to work with the profession to chart a course of implementation that will continue to lead us in an exemplary education system that others can follow.

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*Jeff Johnson is an executive staff officer in the Professional Development program area of the Alberta Teachers’ Association.*



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# Leadership Quality Standard

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## Whereas

Alberta's teachers, students, parents, educational leaders, and members of the public have a strong will to ensure all Alberta students have access to quality learning experiences that enable their achievement of the learning outcomes outlined in programs of study.

## Whereas

the success of all members of the school community requires inclusive environments in which diversity is respected and members of the school community are welcomed, cared for, respected, and safe.

## Whereas

principals and school jurisdiction leaders play a fundamental role in establishing and supporting the conditions under which the learning aspirations and the potential of First Nations, Métis and Inuit students will be realized.

## Whereas

principals and school jurisdiction leaders have an important role in fostering collaboration, engagement and empowerment of all partners in the education system to enable all students to achieve their potential.

## Whereas

principals and school jurisdiction leaders in Alberta schools are accomplished teachers able to create the conditions within which quality teaching and optimum learning can occur and be sustained.

## Whereas

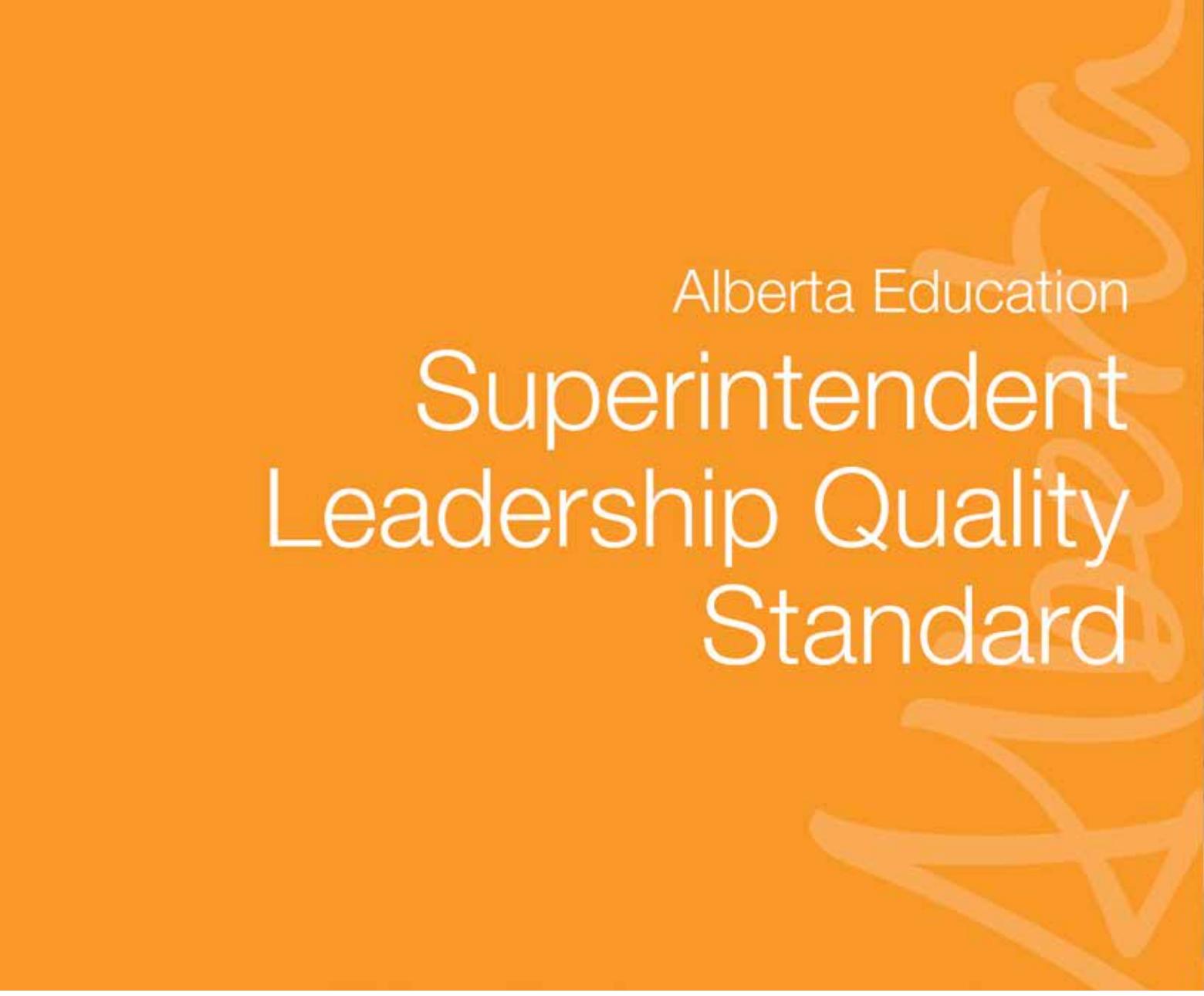
the Leadership Quality Standard provides a framework to support the professional growth, supervision and evaluation of all principals and school jurisdiction leaders.

## Whereas

students, parents and other partners in education should be confident that Alberta principals and school jurisdiction leaders demonstrate the Leadership Quality Standard throughout their careers.

## Whereas

it is important to recognize the value of a consistent standard of professional practice for all principals and school jurisdiction leaders in the province.



Alberta Education

# Superintendent Leadership Quality Standard



BARRY  
LITUN

**ALBERTA LEADS THE  
WAY IN PROFESSIONAL  
PRACTICE STANDARDS**



Quality superintendent leadership occurs when the superintendent's ongoing analysis of the context, and the superintendent's decisions about what leadership knowledge and abilities to apply, result in quality school leadership, quality teaching and optimum learning for all students in the school authority.

Source: The Superintendent Leadership Quality Standard. This eight-page PDF is available at [www.teachers.ab.ca](http://www.teachers.ab.ca).

February 7, 2017, will forever be a day of immense significance for education in Alberta, and for system leaders in our province. On that day Education Minister David Eggen signed three ministerial orders. The first was to update the Teaching Quality Standard (TQS), and the other two were to formally introduce two new professional practice standards: the Leadership Quality Standard (LQS) and the Superintendent Leadership Quality Standard (SLQS).

While all education partners were in agreement that the current TQS required updating, the minister's announcement was significant in that, for the first time ever, all system leaders and all school leaders in Alberta's public, separate, francophone, charter, First Nations and independent school authorities will be expected to meet a common set of competencies. I believe this level of assurance to the public does not exist anywhere else in the

world. I feel confident in sharing this belief because of comments made by internationally renowned education researcher and writer, Michael Fullan. The College of Alberta School Superintendents (CASS) has worked with Fullan on many occasions over the years, most recently since spring 2017, as CASS began its support for superintendents and all system leaders for the implementation of the professional practice standards. Fullan indicated that he is unaware of a standard for superintendents in any other jurisdiction in the English-speaking world.

The SLQS represents a goal that CASS has had for many years. In the absence of a formal standard, CASS developed the CASS Practice Standard more than a decade ago. This standard was expanded upon in the Alberta Framework for School System Success, a CASS publication based on the research of Dr. Ken Leithwood

# COMPETENCIES FOR SUPERINTENDENTS

## 1. Building effective relationships

A superintendent establishes a welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning environment by building positive and productive relationships with members of the school community and the local community.

## 2. Modeling commitment to professional learning

A superintendent engages in career-long professional learning and ongoing critical reflection, identifying and acting on research-informed opportunities for enhancing leadership, teaching and learning.

## 3. Visionary leadership

A superintendent engages with the school community in implementing a vision of a preferred future for student success, based on common values and beliefs.

## 4. Leading learning

A superintendent establishes and sustains a learning culture in the school community that promotes ongoing critical reflection on practice, shared responsibility for student success and continuous improvement.

## 5. Ensuring First Nations, Métis and Inuit education for all students

A superintendent establishes the structures and provides the resources necessary for the school community to acquire and apply foundational knowledge about First Nations, Métis and Inuit for the benefit of all students.

## 6. School authority operations and resources

A superintendent directs school authority operations and strategically allocates resources in the interests of all students and in alignment with the school authority's goals and priorities.

## 7. Supporting effective governance

A superintendent of schools as referred to in the *School Act*, as chief executive officer of the board and chief education officer of the school authority, provides the board with information, advice and support required for the fulfillment of its governance role, and reports to the minister on all matters required of the superintendent as identified in the *School Act* and other provincial legislation.

Source: The Superintendent Leadership Quality Standard

for a CASS-commissioned review of the characteristics of high-performing school systems.

While the CASS Practice Standard and the Alberta Framework for School System Success lacked formal status, many school authorities used the documents to establish expectations of, and professional growth, supervision and evaluation frameworks for, superintendents. This was an acknowledgement that the leadership dimensions identified in the two documents accurately reflected the actions of successful superintendents and system leaders.

The use by school authorities of the CASS Practice Standard and the Alberta Framework for School System Success mirrored the use of the Principal Quality Practice Guideline. This guideline, while never receiving formal status, was recognized by virtually all school authorities as a powerful document that could be used to establish role descriptions as well as professional growth, supervision and evaluation frameworks for school leaders.

Teachers, school leaders and system leaders have continuously sought ways to expand their knowledge and skills for their respective positions.

It should come as no surprise that the CASS Practice Standard, the Alberta Framework for School System Success and the Principal Quality Practice Guideline were the initial resource documents that the ministry and education partners used for the development of the Superintendent Leadership Quality Standard and the Leadership Quality Standard.

And while the professional practice standards outline the base core competencies for teachers, school leaders and system leaders, it should also not be a surprise that the professionals who comprise Alberta's education system often commit to levels of expertise that exceed what is stated in the standards. The fact that Alberta is recognized as having one of the best education systems in the world is an acknowledgement of the dedication of teachers, school leaders and system leaders to strive for excellence in their practice, thereby ensuring every student in Alberta is afforded the opportunity and provided the support to achieve to her or his potential.

It is important to recognize that teachers, school leaders and system leaders have continuously sought ways to expand their knowledge and skills for their respective

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positions, despite the lack of a formally recognized standard for school and system leaders, and a standard for teachers that is widely acknowledged as being outdated.

It is also important to understand that school boards, superintendents and principals have, and will almost certainly continue to use, their respective authority to establish expectations for staff they supervise. The professional practice standards will be a baseline for competency, not a ceiling. This understanding is why school authorities establish leadership development programs and mentorship programs, both of which provide opportunities for teachers, school leaders and system leaders to supplement their personal professional growth plans.

While the professional practice standards do not officially come into force until September 1, 2019, CASS and other education partners have been developing resources and providing learning opportunities for their respective members. One such resource that CASS will be making available for superintendents is the Superintendent Leadership Quality Standard: Practice Profile, a tool intended to support superintendents as they reflect on their

practice based on the SLQS indicators. CASS will be making available a similar practice profile for all system leaders in the province.

Such resources and supports, combined with changes Alberta universities are implementing in teacher development programs and education administration leadership graduate programs, will provide assurance to parents and members of the public that our province will continue to have an outstanding education system. This will ensure that every student, and especially those least advantaged or least able to defend themselves against biases or prejudices, are provided the opportunity to succeed—an inherit right of every student in a publicly funded education system within a truly democratic society.

---

*Barry Litun is the executive director of the College of Alberta School Superintendents. Prior to joining CASS, Barry served as a teacher, principal and superintendent in four Alberta school authorities, the most recent being superintendent for Lethbridge School District.*



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# Superintendent Leadership Quality Standard

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## **Whereas**

Alberta's teachers, students, parents, educational leaders, and members of the public have a strong will to ensure all Alberta students have access to quality learning experiences that enable their achievement of the learning outcomes outlined in programs of study.

## **Whereas**

the success of all members of the school community in their respective roles requires inclusive environments in which diversity is embraced and its members are welcomed, safe, cared for and respected.

## **Whereas**

superintendents play a fundamental role in establishing and supporting the conditions under which the learning aspirations and the potential of First Nations, Métis and Inuit students are realized.

## **Whereas**

quality leadership occurs best when superintendents collaborate with teachers, principals, school jurisdiction leaders, school councils and parents in enabling all students to achieve their potential.

## **Whereas**

the professional practice of teachers, principals, school jurisdiction leaders and superintendents must be informed by current, relevant educational research, with a focus on career-long improvement.

## **Whereas**

it is important to recognize the value of a consistent standard of professional practice for all superintendents in the province.

## ■ CALENDAR ■

For a complete listing of events, consult the Conference Calendar or contact Barnett House. Telephone 780-447-9400 in Edmonton or 1-800-232-7208 from elsewhere in Alberta. This information is also posted on the Alberta Teachers' Association website ([www.teachers.ab.ca](http://www.teachers.ab.ca)). Prior to attending a conference or workshop please contact the sponsoring organization to confirm dates, location and contacts.

### OCTOBER 11-13

BEGINNING TEACHERS CONFERENCE Calgary, Coast Plaza Hotel Conference Centre. Sponsor: the provincial ATA. Contact Cheryl O'Brien, administrative officer, at 780-447-9468 or [cheryl.obrien@ata.ab.ca](mailto:cheryl.obrien@ata.ab.ca).

### OCTOBER 11-13

SOCIAL STUDIES—FIRST NATIONS, MÉTIS AND INUIT EDUCATION—GLOBAL, ENVIRONMENTAL AND OUTDOOR EDUCATION COUNCIL JOINT CONFERENCE. River Cree Resort and Casino, Enoch. Theme: “Grounded in Truth, Soaring With Knowledge.” Sponsor(s): the Social Studies Council; the Global Environmental and Outdoor Education Council; the First Nations, Métis and Inuit Education Council; and the provincial ATA. Website: <https://fnmiec.atapd.ca>. Contact John Tidswell (conference co-director) at [tidswellj@gmail.com](mailto:tidswellj@gmail.com) OR Jolyne Watson (conference co-director) at [jolynewatson@gmail.com](mailto:jolynewatson@gmail.com).

### OCTOBER 12-13

COUNCIL FOR INCLUSIVE EDUCATION CONFERENCE, Coast Canmore Hotel, Canmore. Theme: “Celebrating the Challenges.” Sponsor(s): the Council for Inclusive Education and the provincial ATA. Contact Naomi Bell (conference director) at [conferencesouth@cieducation.ca](mailto:conferencesouth@cieducation.ca).

### OCTOBER 12-13

RELIGIOUS AND MORAL EDUCATION COUNCIL CONFERENCE, Banff Park Lodge, Banff. Theme: “Relevant Religious Education.” Sponsor(s): the Religious and Moral Education Council and the provincial ATA. Contact Mark Nixon (conference director) at [mark.nixon53@gmail.com](mailto:mark.nixon53@gmail.com).

### OCTOBER 18-20

FINE ARTS COUNCIL CONFERENCE, Fantasyland Hotel, Edmonton. Theme: “Arts Army.” Sponsor(s): the Fine Arts Council and the provincial ATA. Website: <https://event-wizard.com/FAC2018Conference/0/welcome/>. Contact Andreas Berko (conference director) at [levendis999@outlook.com](mailto:levendis999@outlook.com).

### OCTOBER 18

MATHEMATICS COUNCIL—SCIENCE COUNCIL PRECONFERENCE SYMPOSIUM, Delta Hotel by Marriott Radisson Edmonton South, Edmonton. Theme:

“GEEKS UNITE 2.0 Pre-Conference Symposium.”

Sponsor(s): the Mathematics Council, the Science Council and the provincial ATA. Website: <https://event-wizard.com/GeeksUniteMathScience2/0/welcome/>. Contact Tracy Onuczko (conference director, science council) at [tracy.onuczko@ualberta.ca](mailto:tracy.onuczko@ualberta.ca) OR Marj Farris (conference director, math council) at [marjf@incentre.net](mailto:marjf@incentre.net).

### OCTOBER 19-20

MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE COUNCIL JOINT CONFERENCE. Delta Hotel by Marriott Radisson Hotel Edmonton South, Edmonton. Theme: “2018 Geeks Unite 2.0.” Sponsor(s): the Mathematics Council, the Science Council and the provincial ATA. Website: <https://event-wizard.com/events/GeeksUniteMathScience2/>. Contact: Jennifer Hogg (registrar) at [MCATAregristrar@shaw.ca](mailto:MCATAregristrar@shaw.ca).

### OCTOBER 20

SECOND LANGUAGES AND INTERCULTURAL COUNCIL CONFERENCE, Grant MacEwan University, Edmonton. Sponsor(s): the Second Languages and Intercultural Council and the provincial ATA. Website: <https://slic.teachers.ab.ca/About%20the%20Council/Pages/Annual-Conference.aspx>. Contact Diana Boisvert (president) at [diana.boisvert14@gmail.com](mailto:diana.boisvert14@gmail.com).

### OCTOBER 26-27

SUBSTITUTE TEACHERS CONFERENCE, Radisson Hotel Edmonton South, Edmonton. Sponsor: the provincial ATA. Contact Keith Hadden (executive staff officer, SARO) at 403-265-2672 or [keith.hadden@ata.ab.ca](mailto:keith.hadden@ata.ab.ca).

### NOVEMBER 1-3

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION COUNCIL CONFERENCE, Fantasyland Hotel, Edmonton. Theme: “Transforming Today for Tomorrow.” Sponsor(s): the Early Childhood Education Council and the provincial ATA. Website: [www.ececc-ata.com/](http://www.ececc-ata.com/). Contact Christina Leung (conference co-director) at [Christina.leung11@gmail.com](mailto:Christina.leung11@gmail.com) OR Jenn Forsyth (conference co-director) at [jenn.forsyth@ualberta.ca](mailto:jenn.forsyth@ualberta.ca).

### NOVEMBER 2-3

ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE COUNCIL CONFERENCE, Chateau Lacombe, Edmonton. Theme: “Empowering Learners, Upping Our Game, Inspiring Futures.” Sponsor(s): the English as a Second Language

# ■ CALENDAR ■

Council and the provincial ATA. Website: [www.eslcata.com/conference.html](http://www.eslcata.com/conference.html). Contact Nancy Musica at [nancy.musica@epsb.ca](mailto:nancy.musica@epsb.ca).

## NOVEMBER 15-17

COUNCIL OF SCHOOL COUNSELLORS CONFERENCE, Coast Canmore Hotel, Canmore. Theme: "Voices of Counselling — Owning the Story." Sponsor(s): the Council of School Counsellors and the provincial ATA. Contact Erin Luong (conference director) at [conferencedirector@ataschoolcounsellors.com](mailto:conferencedirector@ataschoolcounsellors.com).

## NOVEMBER 19-20

LEADERSHIP ESSENTIALS FOR SCHOOL LEADERS CONFERENCE, Fantasyland Hotel, Edmonton. Sponsor(s): the provincial ATA. Contact Jeff Johnson (executive staff officer) at [jeff.johnson@ata.ab.ca](mailto:jeff.johnson@ata.ab.ca) OR Mardi Veinot (administrative officer, PD) at 780-447-9470 or [mardi.veinot@ata.ab.ca](mailto:mardi.veinot@ata.ab.ca).

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**COUNSELLING INSIGHTS CONFERENCE**  
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**RESTORATIVE JUSTICE**  
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## NOVEMBER 22-24

CAREER AND TECHNOLOGY EDUCATION COUNCIL CONFERENCE, Sheraton, Red Deer. Theme: "CTF CTS — A New Frontier Wild West." Sponsor(s): the Career and Technology Education Council and the provincial ATA. Contact Alicia Teasdale (conference director) at [conferencedirector@ctscouncil.com](mailto:conferencedirector@ctscouncil.com).

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# HISTORY LESSON

## A look back at the development of professional standards for Alberta teachers

**S**ince the inception of the Alberta Teachers' Alliance (which became the Alberta Teachers' Association with the passage of the *Teaching Profession Act* in 1935), Alberta's teaching profession has sought full responsibility for its own governance. In its early years the Alliance established a Code of Honour, which was a set of non-binding conduct standards for members. Since 1935, the Association has been responsible for policing the professional conduct of active members. The Code of Ethics and the Standards of Professional Conduct (later established as the Code of Professional Conduct) were recommended to the minister of Education by a representative assembly for government approval. With revisions to the *Teaching Profession Act* in 1996, the Association was granted the right to establish professional conduct standards for active members of the Association and was given the legislated responsibility to protect the public interest (and the interest of the profession) in assuring that conduct standards were met. Since that time, the Code of Professional Conduct has been approved by a representative assembly (not the minister) and is binding on active members. The act and ATA bylaws set out how to maintain and enforce the code.

The Association has long sought the responsibility to establish professional practice standards for the profession. Ultimately, this means the responsibility for teacher certification. In 1972, the Annual Representative Assembly approved a comprehensive set of what was then referred to as competence bylaws, subject to ministerial approval and legislative amendments. To encourage a way forward with the new Progressive Conservative government led by Premier Peter Lougheed and Minister of Education Lou Hyndman (well-

known and respected by the Association and a partner with the Association's law firm), the Association's executive secretary Bernie Keeler prepared a set of proposed amendments to the *Teaching Profession Act* that would achieve the longstanding Association goal of taking on responsibility for professional practice, i.e., setting the standards to become and to remain a teacher and the practice review process itself.

While the government was prepared to grant self-governance to Alberta's teachers, to do so there would have to be a clear separation between the Association's union functions and the proposed professional self-regulatory functions. On two occasions, the government even proposed to break up the Association—a college of teachers would take over professional regulatory functions and the Association would be transformed into a pure trade union. The Association strongly objected to this unwelcome solution and the government decided not to proceed in that direction.

Discussions continued, but in the spring of 1985 then minister of education David King established the Council on Alberta Teaching Standards (COATS) and announced plans for the government, not the profession, to take on practice review through COATS—there had been enough discussion and it was time for action. Teachers saw the establishment of COATS as a slap in the face and there was action, all right—King lost his seat in the 1986 general election.

With the provincial debt growing, the election of Ralph Klein as the new leader of the Progressive Conservative party in 1992 signaled some very major restructuring across government,





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as Klein sought to slash spending (Alberta had a “spending problem” not a “revenue problem”). Klein won the 1993 general election and very quickly the public sector was expected to take a voluntary salary reduction of five per cent, as government sought to reduce government expenditures in the order of 25 per cent.

The new minister of education (and a former and very respected president of the Association) Halvar Jonson had his marching orders for significant education reform (e.g., reduction in number of school boards, effective loss of local taxation authority, increased choice in education, expansion of standardized testing). The government required every department to table a three-year business plan, and the first plan, developed for the 1994–1997 cycle, captured the Association’s full attention. The education ministry’s business plan included Goal 4, which consisted of just two words: improve teaching. Key strategies listed under the goal included “update teacher preparation and certification requirements” and “establish competencies for

It became immediately clear that teachers’ lobbying had produced some very important results.

beginning and experienced teachers.” However, a paper prepared by department officials for the consideration of COATS revealed a key element of the proposal. A teacher’s permanent professional certificate would have a five-year life (not much permanency) and the teacher would need to prove competence. The Association’s executive secretary, Julius Buski, was so concerned about the paper that he asked Provincial Executive Council to fund a series of Member Information Meetings (MIMs) across the province.

Teachers were not happy with what they saw. There would be no security of employment; boards would find ways to get rid of expensive teachers, activists or troublemakers. At every MIM, teachers were encouraged to write to senior officials in order to quash the proposal, and there was a substantial reaction against the paper from all across the province. As a result, the release of a discussion paper on Goal 4 in September 1995 was seen as a critical event for the profession.

It became immediately clear that teachers’ lobbying had produced some very important results. For starters, the discussion paper, entitled *Quality Teaching: Quality Education for Alberta Students*, made clear there would be no term certification. There would be new agreements between the minister and Alberta’s teacher preparation institutions and deans of faculties of education would attest that their graduates meet the knowledge, skills and attributes expected



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of beginning teachers. Teacher certification would reflect a professional model of teaching, with an expectation that teachers meet professional standards to be eligible to teach, not simply possess certain qualifications. In addition, a new provincial teacher evaluation policy would be established to focus on professional growth and lifelong development. The Association supported the conceptual initiatives proposed in the discussion paper.

In June 1996, Minister of Education Gary Mar tabled a policy position paper on teacher preparation, certification and evaluation: *An Integrated Framework to Enhance the Quality of Teaching in Alberta*. Faculties of education would be required to review their teacher education programs to ensure they helped achieve the basic KSAs required by beginning teachers for certification. There would be a professional practice standard (initially referred to as

## Alberta became the first jurisdiction to establish a practice standard for the profession.

Work proceeded very quickly. My colleague, Michael Podlosky, represented the Association on the committee established to work on the professional practice standard and the knowledge, skills and attributes (KSAs). I joined him later as attention turned to the development of the standard itself. I was the Association's representative on the committee established to work on a new provincial teacher evaluation policy, also an initiative based on a professional model of teaching.

the Quality Teaching Standard) supported by KSAs. The standard would be the basis for teacher evaluation practices, and teachers would be required to develop and submit annual professional growth plans. And school board teacher evaluation policies would need to be consistent with the provincial policy. Teachers new to the profession or the employer would be evaluated for competence; after that, the emphasis would be professional growth unless concerns were raised about a teacher's teaching. Work to complete the Teaching Quality Standard was a government priority, with the new Teacher Growth, Supervision and Evaluation Policy right behind.

Alberta became the first jurisdiction to establish a practice standard for the profession. In order to ensure the standard would have the most impact, teacher preparation programs were tied to the standard and the KSAs, and the provincial teacher growth, supervision and evaluation policy was based entirely on the standard. In no respect did the standard attempt to quantify teaching or to diminish the work of teachers. A teacher's professional practice involves meeting student learning needs by applying professional knowledge to their unique learning situations. It is all contextual and a teacher's reality includes many such variables. The teacher's reasoned professional judgment ultimately produces optimum student learning.



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In 2004, the *Teaching Profession Act* was amended to transfer responsibility for policing professional practice standards for active members to the Association. While the profession does not set the professional practice standard (the education minister continues to retain that responsibility), the Association established Practice Review Bylaws to fulfill its responsibility and is required to initiate a practice review hearing when a superintendent of schools refers a matter to the Association.

Given the clear success of the Teaching Quality Standard, the department updated the standard for classroom teachers and expanded the concept to include a professional practice standard for school and central office leaders and a professional practice standard for

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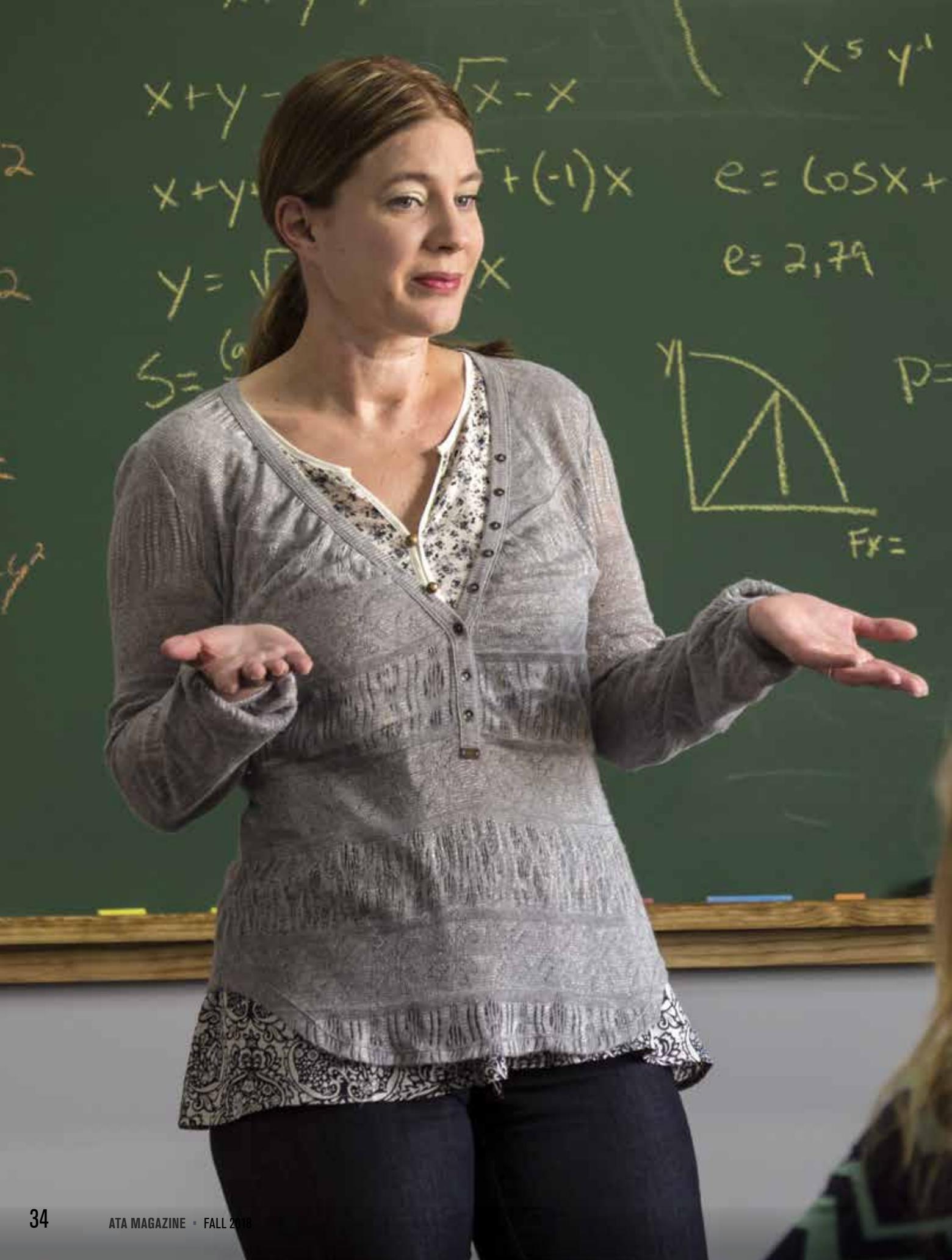
superintendents and deputy superintendents, with full implementation set for September 2019. Similar expansion of the Teacher Growth, Supervision and Evaluation Policy is also underway.

The Association continues to seek full self governance of the profession and continues to support a professional and collegial model of teaching, a unified profession and professional standards that give priority to reasoned

professional judgment. Together, these initiatives ensure high-quality teaching and school and system leadership, in the interests of the students and communities we serve.

---

*A former high school teacher, Dr. Gordon Thomas became a staff officer of the Alberta Teachers' Association in 1984 and served as executive secretary from 2003 to 2018.*



KEITH  
HADDEN



# THE POLICY IMPLICATIONS OF NEW QUALITY PRACTICE STANDARDS

One of the hallmarks of a profession is self-governance. The Alberta Teachers' Association has governed its own members' conduct since 1936. In 2009, the profession also took over the governance of members' practice. This ensures that the assessment of a teacher's competency, or more specifically, a teacher's success in meeting the teaching quality standard (TQS), is performed by teachers. Doctors assess the competency of doctors, lawyers assess the competency of lawyers and teachers assess the competency of teachers – it just makes sense. Whereas some believe that a profession should not judge its own members' conduct and/or competency, a reasonable person understands that every profession has a discrete body of knowledge that each successful practitioner possesses and that this knowledge is most effectively assessed by those most conversant with the professional context.

The implementation of three new quality practice standards in September 2019 will provide the teaching profession with an opportunity to sharpen its saw as it also ensures growth, supervision and evaluation practices continue to be in place to guarantee that the standards are effectively met.

An essential component of assessment of competency is autonomous responsibility for growth. Thus, the most effective means possible to ensure teachers are engaged in ongoing professional growth need to be in place. The

Association has had a longstanding policy that, "Professional growth plans are self-authored, growth directed, and reflect the individual's assessment of the individual's professional learning needs" (Alberta Teachers' Association 2017, 122).

Provincial policy has reflected Association policy in that teachers are required to complete annual professional growth plans based on their assessment of their own learning needs. Brady, quoted in Brandon et al (2018), recognized the importance of making decisions about teacher growth closest to those the decisions affect, when he wrote, "Instead of thinking of professional development as a top-down system of bringing best practices into the school from outside agencies, recent research has identified the teacher and their teaching context as the site at which professional development is most effectively developed" and that teacher learning is, "always embedded in the daily lives of teachers in the classroom, in the school community, in the corridors, in courses and workshops" (p. 337).

How, then, do teachers ensure ongoing professional growth? How do principals ensure effective supervision and evaluation of practice of new competencies? What role does policy play in the teacher growth, supervision and evaluation (TGSE) process in Alberta?

It would be counterintuitive and counterproductive for

an external source to tell a teacher what their individual professional goals should be. Principles of adult learning tell us that the locus of control for the most effective adult learning is oneself (Chen 2014).

Those who curiously lament the notion that teachers own their own growth goals may be reassured by noting that deficits in a teacher's practice that are identified by a

evaluation of teachers (and new policy related to school and district leaders), it will be important to teachers that their stature as professionals be maintained and that assumed competence remains a hallmark of the policy. That is to say, once a teacher's evaluation has deemed them suitable for a permanent professional teaching certificate and/or a continuing teaching contract, the responsibility for continuous professional growth rests with the teacher.

**What a waste of precious resources it would be to ask teachers and principals to jump through some arbitrary hoop for the sole purpose of proving that, just like last year, they still know how to teach this year.**

principal are dealt with as part of supervision and evaluation. A teacher may also *choose* to include a principal's suggestions within a growth plan. Further, if a teacher has undergone an unsuccessful evaluation, a principal may mandate that a teacher replace their growth plan with a plan of remediation.

As Alberta Education embarks on an update to the provincial policy that governs the growth, supervision and

Barring any subsequent identifiable deficiency or a written request by the teacher, there are no provisions for formal evaluations of a teacher. What a waste of precious resources it would be to ask teachers and principals to jump through some arbitrary hoop for the sole purpose of proving that, just like last year, they still know how to teach this year.

All this points to the importance of teachers planning for their own growth. Not only is it a professional responsibility but research suggests a clear connection between teacher professional growth and improved student learning (Nye, Konstantopoulos and Hedges 2004). The Association has developed several exemplars, templates and tools to help teachers reflect on their practice and develop growth plans that will ensure continued professional improvement. These are available on the Association's website.

One of the Association's objects, outlined in section 4(b) (v) of the *Teaching Profession Act*, is, "to improve the teaching profession by meetings, publications, research and other activities designed to maintain and improve the competence of teachers." Highly competent teachers are part of the profession's commitment to public assurance. In addition to the profession's responsibility for ongoing professional growth, commitment to teaching excellence also occurs at the school level, in the form of supervision of practice.

Supervision of teacher competency calls for the exercise of reasoned professional judgment. There is no recipe for supervision of professionals. The word *supervision* itself may be a misnomer but, semantics aside, supervision of instruction is multidimensional and differentiated. Supervision of professional practice is a professional practice in itself and cannot be standardized. Supervision is instructional leadership and is one of the most complex aspects of a principal's work. It can look like a principal reading report cards, reviewing individual student program plans, attending meetings with teacher teams, visiting classrooms, observing teachers interacting with parents, students and others, holding one-on-one conversations with

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teachers, reviewing data and myriad other practices that reflect the teacher's context, the principal's context and the school's context. Supervision is purposeful but often seamless and woven into the teacher/principal's daily interactions. Blanchard, Zigarmi and Zigarmi (2013), in their review of the concept of situational leadership, remind us of the importance of considering individual styles when supporting the work of others.

Let us drill down with a specific example. Pat, a middle school principal, decides to take a closer look at how teachers

classroom of another teacher, Jesse, Pat quietly observes student writing samples that have been posted to a bulletin board. Pat is also aware that another teacher, Alex, has included assessment as part of Alex's growth plan and Pat makes a point to connect with Alex to inquire about the progress of the growth plan.

In this cursory example, Pat's staff meeting discussion, conversations with Lee and Alex and observations of Jesse's students' writing samples all constitute supervision of practice. Pat may follow up with a question or an article, or Pat may

**The new quality standards outline competencies whereas new policy will outline ways and means of ensuring teachers are meeting the competencies.**

are assessing student writing. Pat raises the issue at a staff meeting and a discussion ensues. In the next few days, Pat visits teachers' classrooms and observes students as they write. Lee, one of the teachers Pat observes, has a student-writing workshop in progress. While Pat is in the room, Pat and Lee discuss the details of the writing-workshop. In the

ask Lee, Jesse or Alex to share at the next staff meeting. Lee, Jesse and Alex may not even view Pat's practices as supervisory. Such is the nature of collaborative inquiry.

Brandon et al (2018), in their review of the literature on teacher supervision, provide a chronology of changes in supervision practices of teachers. They state that current theory supports differentiated practices of supervision, which are informed by various sources of data, such as classroom observations, pedagogic dialogue and artifacts, all to improve teaching, learning and shared instructional leadership (p 38). This is the art of instructional leadership. In the above example, Pat took a role of guiding and supporting teachers in the context of their work. Hirsh and Killion (2009) write about the importance of collaboration and an inquiry-driven approach among teachers, where they can draw upon each other's expertise and focus on student learning.

The new quality standards outline competencies whereas new policy will outline ways and means of ensuring teachers are meeting the competencies. The Association has many tools to assist teachers, including principals, with the work of professional growth, supervision and evaluation, including a newly developed Member Services' workshop on supervision.

Effective implementation of teacher growth, supervision and evaluation policy seamlessly weaves the three elements. Teachers identify their own growth goals and develop their own growth plans; principals supervise teachers' practice; and, in cases where required, a principal's supervision is a component of a teacher's evaluation. Unlike supervisory practices, the evaluation of a teacher has potential employment ramifications, so some degree of standardization is required in the evaluation of a teacher.

Teachers and principals who are being evaluated have a right to procedural fairness, including reasonable timelines, transparency, objectivity and adherence to policy. Staff



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officers from the ATA's Member Services program area assist teachers, including principals, with the process of teacher evaluation. The new quality practice standards reflect new competencies and indicators, but they do not change the fundamental democratic process that is in place to ensure that teachers and principals meet their respective standards. Fullan (in Thiers 2017) states that, "Research shows that the biggest factor in the effectiveness of a principal is the degree to which he or she 'participates as a learner' working with teachers to get to a solution" (p. 11). The new policies that will accompany the new standards will necessarily meld public assurance and teacher growth within a framework of collegiality and ongoing commitment to excellence.

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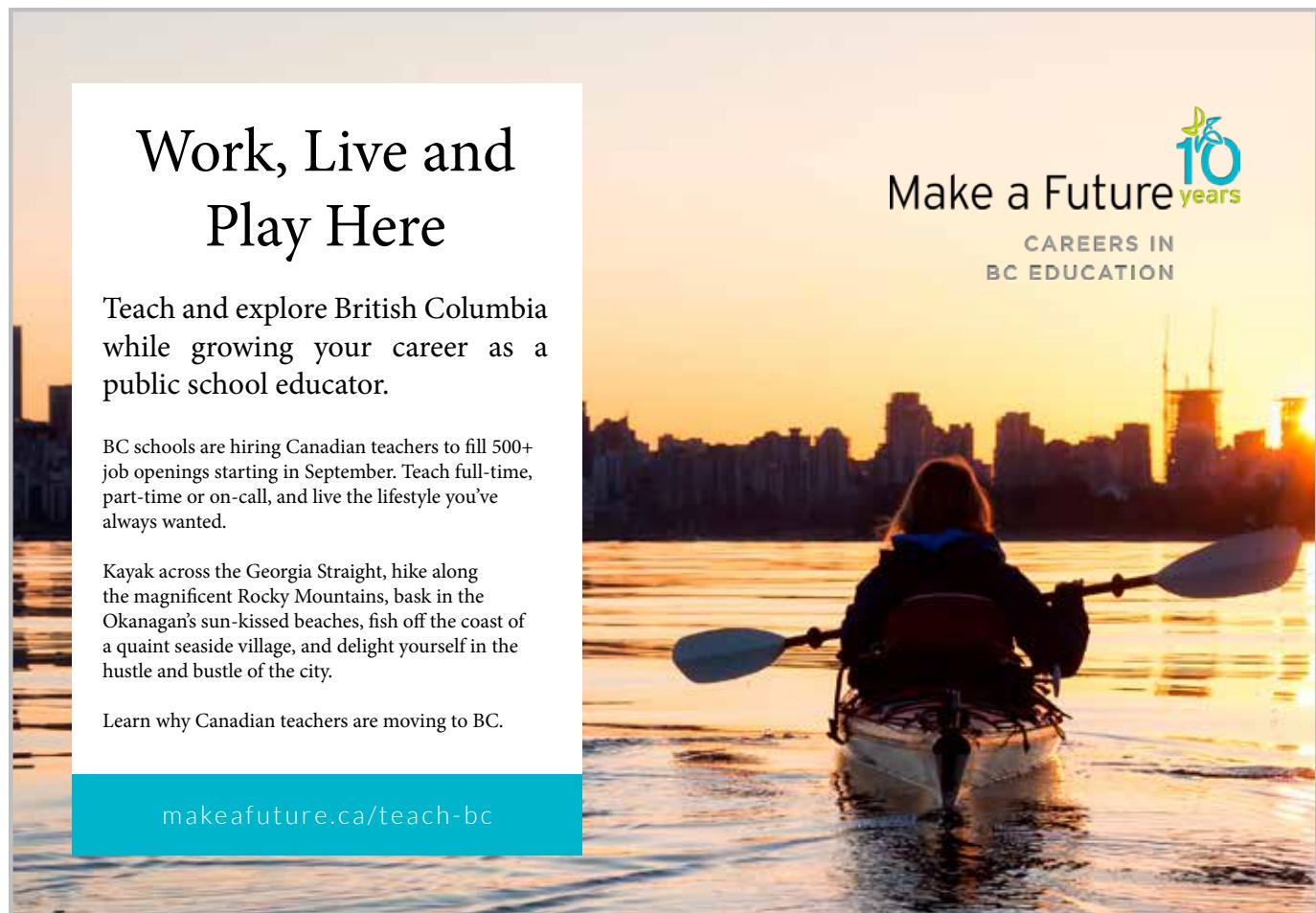
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*Keith Hadden is the associate coordinator of the Alberta Teachers' Association's Southern Alberta Regional Office.*



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## FROM THE BOOKSHELVES

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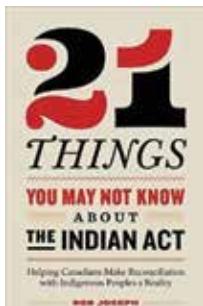
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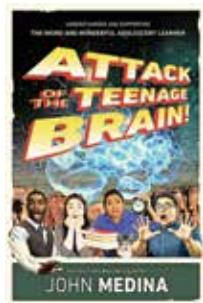
## BOOKS



### 21 Things You May Not Know about the Indian Act: Helping Canadians Make Reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples a Reality

Joseph, R. 2018. Vancouver, BC: Page Two Books (342.710872 J83)

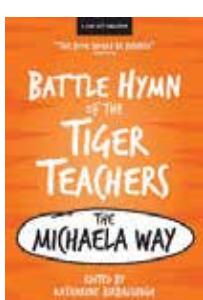
The *Indian Act* has governed Indigenous peoples in Canada since 1876. In that time, it has upended Indigenous cultures as it removed the rights and roles of women, forbade religion and restricted the movement of people off the reservations. Joseph discusses the impact these rules had on Indigenous peoples and shares ideas with Canadians, armed with this knowledge, to act for reconciliation.



### Attack of the Teenage Brain!: Understanding and Supporting the Weird and Wonderful Adolescent Learner

Medina, J. 2018. Alexandria, VA: ASCD (370.1523 M491)

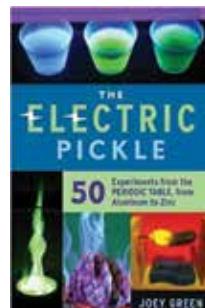
It's not their fault [their brains act this way], it's just their turn. Using engaging language, Medina clearly explains the neurobiology of the adolescent brain. He details how the teenage brain perceives reality and how it makes astounding decisions that baffle adults. A useful book for anyone who works with teens.



### Battle Hymn of the Tiger Teachers: The Michaela Way

Birla, K. (Ed). 2018. Melton, UK: John Catt Educational Ltd (371.2 B617)

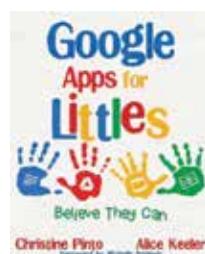
The teachers at the Michaela School have reframed teaching as an exciting and rewarding career by changing from a child-centred practice to a teacher-centred perspective. These passionate teachers share their stories of how they achieved meaningful change for their students.



### The Electric Pickle: 50 Experiments from the Periodic Table, from Aluminum to Zinc

Green, J. 2018. Chicago, IL: Chicago Review Press (540.78 G796)

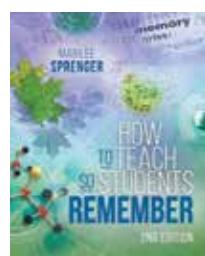
This book of interesting chemistry experiments will activate student curiosity in any grade. Pickle batteries, black light jello and helium balloons will entertain as well engross students while they learn about the amazing chemistry of everyday objects around them.



### Google Apps for Littles: Believe They Can

Pinto, C. and A. Keeler. 2018. San Diego, CA: Dave Burgess Consulting, Inc. (371.33 P659) Aimed at K-3 teachers who are uncomfortable in using technology in the classroom, this excellent guide provides many

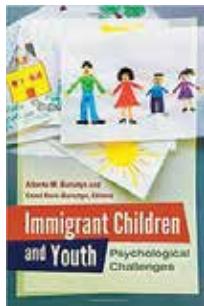
useful ideas and activities to get children using Google Suite. Written in a lighthearted style, the authors give teachers practical advice in using the technology themselves as well.



### How to Teach So Students Remember

Sprenger, M. 2018. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (371.102 S768 2018)

The mechanism of memory is of critical importance for teachers and learners. What makes some memories fleeting and forgettable? What makes others vivid and easily retrievable? Sprenger discusses how teachers can use the science of memory to help students remember what they learn in class.

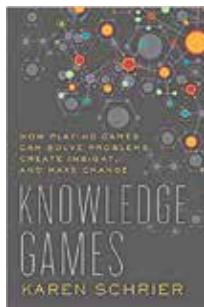


### Immigrant Children and Youth: Psychological Challenges

Bursztyn, A. and C. Korn-Bursztyn (Eds). 2015. Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger an imprint of ABC-CLIO (371.713 B968)

With immigration rates increasing around the world, the challenges facing immigrant children are becoming more relevant in every classroom. The authors

examine the impact of language barriers, mental health needs, disabilities and social acculturation on immigrant students and consider how teachers can act to mitigate the effects of these challenges on students' overall success.

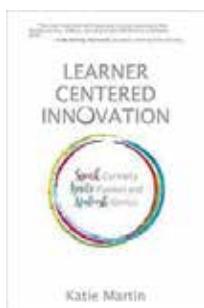


### Knowledge Games: How Playing Games Can Solve Problems, Create Insight, and Make Change

Schrier, K. L. 2016. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press (793.01 S378)

An interesting book that looks at games, not as just teaching tools that pass information to users, but as tools for developing new knowledge. The author

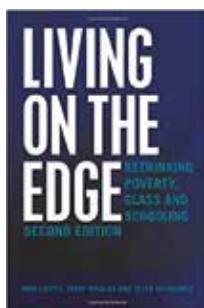
gives examples such as Foldit, the protein folding game that scientists created for the general public to play that had players develop stable and efficient models of folded proteins. The results gave scientists a model for protein structure prediction and a better understanding of protein design.



### Learner-Centered Innovation: Spark Curiosity, Ignite Passion and Unleash Genius

Martin, K. 2018. London, UK: Impress (370.15 M381)

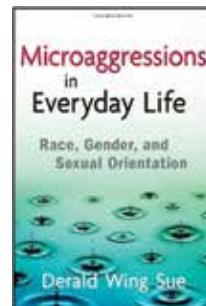
Inspiring and practical, this well-written book provides teachers with concrete ideas for changing their classroom into a learner-centred environment. Reviewers are raving about this book.



### Living on the Edge: Rethinking Poverty, Class and Schooling

Smyth, J. et al. 2018. 2nd Edition. New York, NY: Peter Lang (371.82694 S667)

A persistent issue in education is the connection of poverty to student underachievement. The authors examine and critique several theories that have evolved to explain the connection before offering their own more useful theory.



### Microaggressions in Everyday Life:

Race, Gender, and Sexual Orientation  
Sue, D.W. 2010. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley (305 S944)

At a recent conference in Edmonton, antiracism educator Jane Elliot said, "Microaggressions only feel micro to the people doing them." Sue looks at how the subtle and often unconscious biases of the privileged

have a severe impact on disadvantaged groups through the build up of daily microaggressions. Sue makes readers aware that small behaviours they may dismiss as inconsequential have an impact on people around them.

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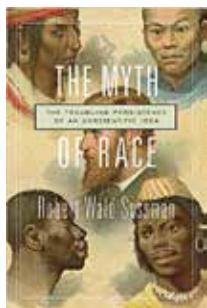
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## ■ FROM THE BOOKSHELVES ■



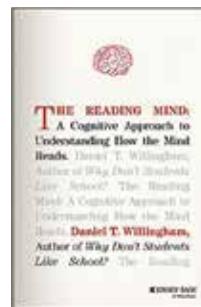
### The Myth of Race: The Troubling Persistence of an Unscientific Idea

Sussman, R. W. 2014.

Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press (305.8 S964)

We live in a time of overt racism. White people are calling the police when a nonwhite person enters their neighbourhood or joins them for a campus tour at a college. It is therefore

surprising to read that race does not exist. The myth of race has been developed by pseudoscience and its generalizations about relationships between skin colour and other characteristics. Sussman constructs a powerful argument against the politics of racism in this masterful book.

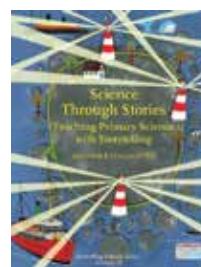


### The Reading Mind: A Cognitive Approach to Understanding How the Mind Reads

Willingham, D. T. 2017. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass (418.4019 W733)

In this captivating book, Willingham explains how the brain works to accomplish the amazing complex task of reading. Although he purports to writing only about how the brain reads and not how to teach the brain

to read, teachers will find many useful insights for their literacy instruction practice in this book.



### Science through Stories: Teaching Primary Science with Storytelling

Pottle, J. and C. Smith. 2015. Herts, UK: Hawthorn Press Ltd. (372.677 S644)

Storytelling is a well-known successful way to engage primary students in learning, but it is not often applied in science lessons. The authors have created stories along with follow-up

activities that engage students in science.

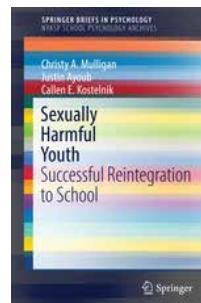


### The Secret Science of Superheroes

Lorch, M. et al. (Eds.). 2017. London, UK: Royal Society of Chemistry (372.35 L865)

What do superheroes need to have for breakfast to fuel their super-strength? The authors discuss the chemistry, biology and physics of superheroes and answer fun questions about how superheroes would function in the real world. Great ideas for hooking even

the most reluctant student into the fun side of science.



### Sexually Harmful Youth: Successful Reintegration to School

Mulligan, C. A., J. Ayoub and C. E. Kostelnik. 2016. Cham, CH: Springer (150 M959)

It is not easy to read a book on the topic of students with sexually harmful behaviours, and it is more difficult to consider how they can be reintegrated into school after they return from juvenile detention or treatment. This

important book provides teachers and administrators with useful information about the role the school plays in the treatment of these students.

## JOY IN NATURE

Do you work with youth ages 13-19? Apply to win a mountain adventure trip with your classroom, youth group or club!

The prize includes free accommodations with Hostelling International, an outdoor activity (skiing in the winter or white water rafting in the spring) and interpretive programming at a park!

### APPLICATIONS FOR:

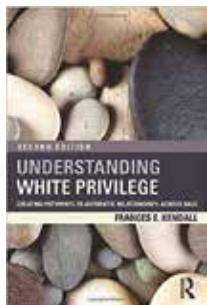
Jasper Winter 2019 Competition opens August 27 and closes November 30, 2018

Jasper, Nordegg and Kananaskis, Spring Competitions opens January 3, 2019 and close March 3, 2019

Brought to you by the following organizations:



## ■ FROM THE BOOKSHELVES ■

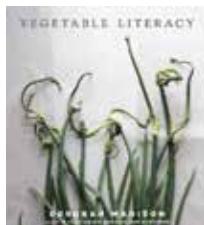


## **Understanding White Privilege: Creating Pathways to Authentic Relationships across Race**

Kendall, F. E. 2012. 2nd Edition. New York, NY: Routledge (305.809 K33)

White people have privilege in our society. Even the poorest and most disadvantaged white person still has privilege that a person of colour does not have because of the colour of their skin. Kendall encourages white

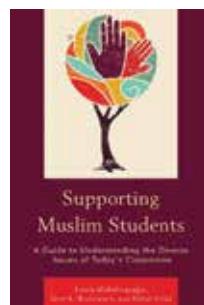
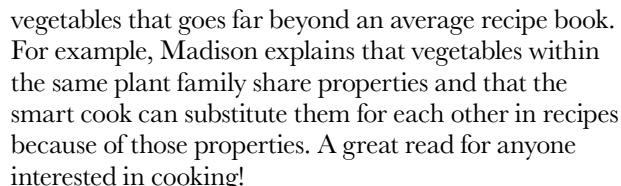
readers to look at how race affects of our understanding of experiences and relationships.



## Vegetable Literacy: Exploring the Affinities and History of the Vegetable Families, with 300 Recipes

Madison, D. 2018. Berkeley, CA: Ten Speed Press (641.65 M182)

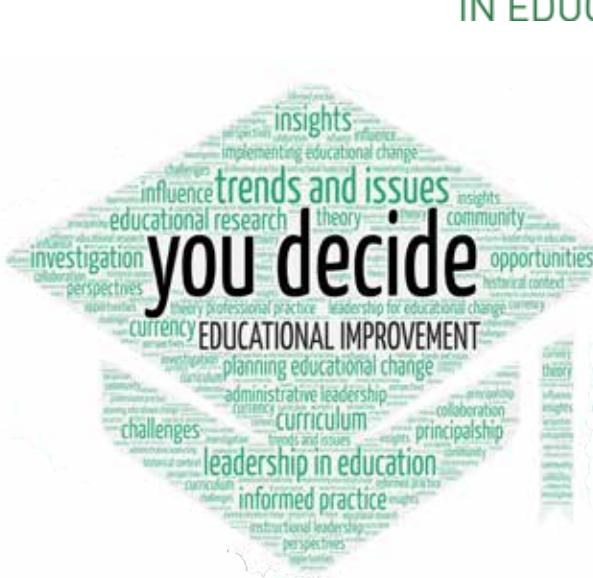
For those teaching culinary arts, this book provides an understanding of



# Supporting Muslim Students: A Guide to Understanding the Diverse Issues of Today's Classrooms

Mahalingappa, L. et al. 2017. New York, NY: Rowman and Littlefield (344.710 M214)

Although written for an American audience, *Supporting Muslim Students* is relevant to Alberta teachers. The authors present basic information about the Muslim community that all teachers should know and includes teacher-specific information on such topics as peer relationships, bullying and antibias pedagogy.



UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA  
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The Master of Education in Educational Studies (MES) is designed to empower a culture of informed practice through investigation of the complex challenges and exciting opportunities associated with leading educational improvement from where you practice.

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## ▪ FROM THE BOOKSHELVES ▪

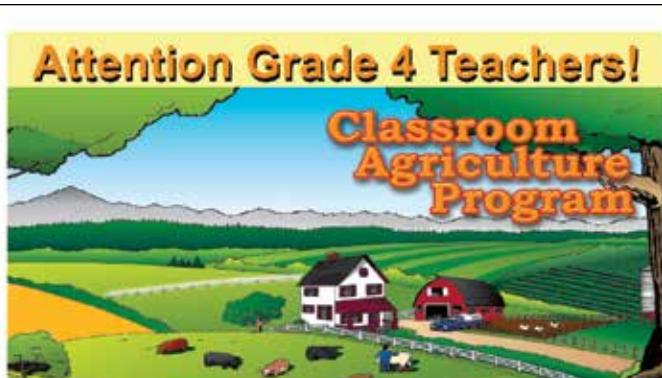


**Visual Note-Taking for Educators:  
A Teacher's Guide to Student Creativity**  
Pillars, W. 2016. New York, NY: W. W. Norton & Company (371.335 P641)

Anyone who has ever watched Mr. Dressup knows the amazing power of sketch-noting. Stories and lectures come alive when they are interpreted into pictures that trigger our memories. Pillars provides solid explanations of why students need to engage in visual notetaking and how they can be challenged to engage in this new medium.

## TECHNOLOGY

Did you know that our library loans new technology to teachers? We have a whole collection of circuit boards, preassembled and DIY robots, 3D pens and virtual reality goggles that you can borrow just by contacting us. Take a look at our whole technology collection on the library site (<http://library.teachers.ab.ca>) in the MakerSpace Collection box.



Register for a **FREE** one hour presentation on agriculture.

CAP is an in-class presentation that complements the grade four curriculum.

Students will learn about:

- \* The food they eat and where it comes from
- \* Opportunities in agriculture
- \* The economic and environmental impact of agriculture

Our presentations are delivered by volunteers in the agricultural industry.

Presentations will occur in the Spring of 2019.

Registration deadline is December 21, 2018.

Register online at [www.classroomagriculture.com](http://www.classroomagriculture.com).



Programs are offered based on volunteer availability. All classes registered before the deadline will receive activity booklets and a teacher's resource kit. Over 23,000 students enjoyed the program last year.

CAP is endorsed by the Ministers of Education, Agriculture and Forestry.



### Robotic Arm Edge

Owirobot. 2017. Carson City, CA: Owirobot (ROB 1) Our newest piece of technology is a build-it-yourself robotic arm. The kit comes with many parts in addition to those listed in our parts list. To turn this kit into a functioning arm, you will need four D batteries, long needle-nose pliers, a diagonal cutter and a Phillips screwdriver.

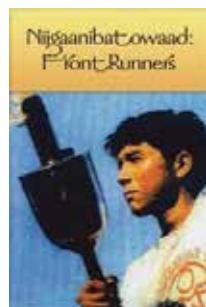
## DVDS

### Ambassadors of the Sky

Yanchyk, B. 2016. Edmonton, AB: Brandy Y Productions. 45 min. (AV AMB) Canada is a leader in the fight against light pollution and is the only country in the world with standards for dark sky preserves. These preserves strictly control artificial light to minimize its impact on wildlife. This documentary examines that three preserves within Alberta: Wood Buffalo, Jasper and Elk Island national parks.

### Composing Music: The Power of Music: P-5 Teaching Inspired by El Sistema

Annenberg Learner. 2014. Vaughn, ON: Visual Education Centre. 27 min. (AV COM) Featuring music teachers from across the US, this film demonstrates new teaching strategies to encourage musical citizenship in students.



### Niigaanibatowaad: Front Runners

Robinson, L., L. Jarvis and L. Lewis. 2008. Ottawa, ON: National Film Board of Canada (AV NII)

Inspired by the true story of 10 outstanding Canadian athletes who were selected to carry the Pan Am flame 800 km to the games in Winnipeg but who were refused entry to the stadium because they were Indigenous. This film tells the story of what happened and how an apology from the Manitoba government was finally issued 32 years later.

## LIVRES EN FRANÇAIS/FRENCH BOOKS

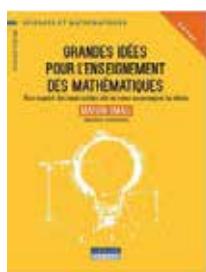


### Concevoir des espaces scolaires pour le bien-être et la réussite

Mazalto, Maurice. 2017. Paris, FRA : L'Harmattan (371.62 M475)

Cet ouvrage aborde l'importance de l'architecture scolaire pour développer la qualité des relations, améliorer la transmission des connaissances et favoriser le plaisir d'apprendre. La conception des espaces scolaires traduirait, selon l'auteur, des intentions

éducatives plus ou moins affirmées qui influencent le vécu des utilisateurs, notamment en ce qui concerne leur bien-être. Le livre examine les volontés conscientes ou inconscientes inscrites dans les murs des écoles, soulignant au passage des exemples d'installations efficaces et proposant des solutions architecturales susceptibles de générer davantage de bien-être et de réussite pour l'ensemble des acteurs.



### Grandes idées pour l'enseignement des mathématiques : pour acquérir des bases solides afin de mieux accompagner les élèves (5 à 9 ans)

Small, Marian. 2018. Montréal, QC : Chenelière Éducation (510.71 S635)

L'enseignement des mathématiques aux élèves de 5 à 9 ans peut paraître complexe et difficile. Comment faire

pour rendre cette tâche simple, facile et pertinente? Cet ouvrage, agrémenté d'exemples visuels pertinents et de suggestions d'activités concrètes, aide enseignants et élèves à établir le lien entre les notions qu'ils connaissent déjà et les nouvelles. L'auteure, experte canadienne chevronnée en mathématiques, a écrit ou collaboré à l'écriture de nombreuses collections en mathématiques pour le primaire et le secondaire et de plusieurs ouvrages didactiques.



### Grandes idées pour l'enseignement des mathématiques : pour acquérir des bases solides afin de mieux accompagner les élèves (9 à 14 ans)

Small, Marian. 2018. Montréal, QC : Chenelière Éducation (510.71 S635)

L'enseignement des mathématiques ne peut se résumer à suivre une liste de tâches à effectuer et à cocher des cases pour indiquer que les élèves ont appris une nouvelle notion ou développé une nouvelle compétence. Le présent ouvrage propose donc plus de 50 grandes idées pour enseigner plus efficacement les mathématiques aux élèves de 9 à 14 ans, tout en inculquant à ces derniers la confiance nécessaire pour bien comprendre les notions qui leur sont présentées.



### Outils d'enseignement :

#### au-delà de la baguette magique

Wirthner, Martine. 2017. Berne, CHE : Peter Lang (370 W798)

Comment les nouveaux outils d'enseignement transforment-ils les pratiques des enseignants, et comment ces transformations sont-elles source de développement professionnel? L'auteure cherche à répondre à ces questions par l'entremise des conclusions d'une recherche en didactique du français menée avec des élèves de 13-14 ans. Dans le cadre de cette recherche, des enseignants ont expérimenté un outil pour enseigner l'écriture d'un résumé informatif. L'ouvrage fait état des effets de l'outil sur les pratiques des enseignants et sur leur perception de l'objet enseigné.

## PLAYSAFE: Don't Let It Happen to You



In The War Amps new "kids-to-kids" safety video, Adam and Rebecca lead viewers on a SAFETY WALK™ to help them spot the dangers in their neighbourhoods. Along the way, they introduce stories from other young amputees who, like them, have lost limbs in accidents. Together, they deliver the hard-hitting but positive PLAYSAFE message.

This valuable resource for educators can be viewed at [waramps.ca/playsafe](http://waramps.ca/playsafe)



The War Amps



MELISSA  
PURCELL

# FROM INSPIRING TO REQUIRING

New professional practice standards  
feature Indigenous content

The recent release of three new sets of professional practice standards calls upon teachers, central leaders, principals and superintendents to engage in education for reconciliation. Each of the professional practice standards includes competencies and indicators specific to Indigenous education, such as fostering effective relationships, engaging in career-long learning, and developing and applying First Nations, Métis and Inuit foundational knowledge. These new professional practice standards take effect September 1, 2019.

These new standards are a significant step towards reconciliation through education because they mandate all teachers, central leaders, principals and superintendents to engage in Indigenous education. This is a monumental shift away from inspiring teachers to engage in Indigenous education to *requiring* teachers to engage in Indigenous education.

“I don’t know what I don’t know” is a common reaction that non-Indigenous teachers have when they think about engaging in Indigenous education, which may appear overwhelming to those who are at the beginning of this learning journey. If you ever feel this way, remember that it’s important to be brave, ask questions and continue to seek opportunities to learn through culturally responsive

experiences, including current resources, supports and information. In addition, it is important to be willing to learn alongside your students, families, community members and colleagues. Embrace opportunities to learn from First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Elders, Knowledge Keepers and Cultural Advisors through conversations, classroom opportunities, land-based learning experiences and any other possible opportunities.

Developing and applying foundational Indigenous knowledge is a learning journey that requires dedication over a lifetime. As we continue this journey, we need to remember the importance of maintaining the authenticity and integrity of Indigenous cultures, languages and histories. It is also important to consider multiple ways to weave authentic Indigenous content into our classrooms and school communities for the benefit of all students and in support of reconciliation. In addition, it is important to acknowledge significant events throughout the school year—such as National Indigenous Peoples Day, Métis Week, Reconciliation in Education Day, Orange Shirt Day—to support the development and application of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit foundational knowledge. While significant events are very important, it is equally important to consider ways to acknowledge and celebrate Indigenous cultures, languages and histories.



**SKILLS EXPLORATION DAYS**

Skills Canada Alberta

**NORTHERN**  
JANUARY 22 & 23, 2019  
EDMONTON

**SOUTHERN**  
JANUARY 29 & 30, 2019  
CALGARY

Junior high program that focuses on Design Thinking while introducing students to the trades and technologies

Registration opens November 7, 2018

For more information visit  
[skillsalberta.com](http://skillsalberta.com)

every day and to consistently reflect on ways to increase your foundational knowledge. As stated in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's Calls to Action, we are called upon to contribute to and lead reconciliation efforts.

Wherever possible we need to develop and apply our Indigenous knowledge in collaboration with local Elders, Knowledge Keepers and Cultural Advisors, including students, parents/guardians and community members. Developing and fostering meaningful relationships with these contacts using appropriate cultural protocols is fundamentally important to reconciliation and supports the changes to the professional practice standards. In addition, using culturally responsive resources, supports and information while collaborating with Indigenous

The Association is committed to supporting teachers, principals, central leaders and superintendents with support specific to Indigenous education.

contacts is integral to maintaining the richness and diversity of First Nations, Métis and Inuit cultures, languages and histories. Continue to seek opportunities to learn from others and deepen your learnings of Indigenous cultures, languages and histories.

The Association is committed to supporting teachers, principals, central leaders and superintendents with support specific to Indigenous education. In June 2016, Alberta Education, the Alberta Teachers' Association, the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation and four other education stakeholder organizations in Alberta signed the Joint Commitment to Action to ensure that all students learn about the histories, cultures and world views of First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples. The ATA is fulfilling its commitment through the Walking Together: Education for Reconciliation Professional Learning grant project. The Association continues to develop numerous resources and workshops to support the changes to the professional practice standards that are specific to Indigenous education.

These resources can support your learning journey and should be localized to your region in collaboration with local Indigenous community members. This will ensure that the authenticity and



# A SIGNIFICANT STEP TOWARD RECONCILIATION

## Competencies specific to Indigenous education

### Teaching Quality Standard

#### Applying Foundational Knowledge about First Nations, Métis and Inuit

##### **A teacher develops and applies foundational knowledge about First Nations, Métis and Inuit for the benefit of all students.**

Achievement of this competency is demonstrated by indicators such as:

- (a) understanding the historical, social, economic, and political implications of:
  - treaties and agreements with First Nations;
  - legislation and agreements negotiated with Métis; and
  - residential schools and their legacy;
- (b) supporting student achievement by engaging in collaborative,

whole school approaches to capacity building in First Nations, Métis and Inuit education;

- (c) using the programs of study to provide opportunities for all students to develop a knowledge and understanding of, and respect for, the histories, cultures, languages, contributions, perspectives, experiences and contemporary contexts of First Nations, Métis and Inuit; and
- (d) supporting the learning experiences of all students by using resources that accurately reflect and demonstrate the strength and diversity of First Nations, Métis and Inuit.

### Leadership Quality Standard

#### Supporting the Application of Foundational Knowledge about First Nations, Métis and Inuit

##### **A leader supports the school community in acquiring and applying foundational knowledge about First Nations, Métis and Inuit for the benefit of all students.**

Achievement of this competency is demonstrated by indicators such as:

- (a) understanding the historical, social, economic, and political implications of:
  - treaties and agreements with First Nations;
  - legislation and agreements negotiated with Métis; and
  - residential schools and their legacy;

(b) aligning resources and building the capacity of the school community to support First Nations, Métis and Inuit student achievement;

- (c) enabling all school staff and students to gain a knowledge and understanding of, and respect for, the histories, cultures, languages, contributions, perspectives, experiences and contemporary contexts of First Nations, Métis and Inuit; and
- (d) pursuing opportunities and engaging in practices to facilitate reconciliation within the school community.

### Superintendent Leadership Quality Standard

#### Ensuring First Nations, Métis and Inuit Education for All Students

##### **A superintendent establishes the structures and provides the resources necessary for the school community to acquire and apply foundational knowledge about First Nations, Métis and Inuit for the benefit of all students.**

Achievement of this competency is demonstrated by indicators such as:

- (a) supporting staff in accessing the professional learning and capacity-building needed to meet the learning needs of First Nations, Métis, Inuit and all other students;
- (b) engaging and collaborating with neighbouring First Nations and Métis leaders, organizations and communities to optimize

learning success and development of First Nations, Métis, Inuit and all other students;

- (c) understanding historical, social, economic, and political implications of:
  - treaties and agreements with First Nations;
  - legislation and agreements negotiated with Métis; and
  - residential schools and their legacy;
- (d) aligning school authority resources and building organizational capacity to support First Nations, Métis and Inuit student achievement; and
- (e) pursuing opportunities and engaging in practices to facilitate reconciliation within the school community.



THE ALBERTA FOUNDATION FOR THE ARTS TRAVELLING EXHIBITION PROGRAM | REGION 3 | **TREX SOUTHWEST**  
[albertasocietyofartists.com/trex](http://albertasocietyofartists.com/trex) | [trex@albertasocietyofartists.com](mailto:trex@albertasocietyofartists.com)



integrity of the work is maintained and will provide a deeper, richer awareness and understanding of the content.

## RESOURCES ONLINE

Walking Together: Education for Reconciliation resources and workshops are available on the Alberta Teachers' Association webpage at [www.teachers.ab.ca](http://www.teachers.ab.ca). Click on My ATA, then Professional Development.

Additional information about the professional practice standards is available on Alberta Education's webpage, <https://education.alberta.ca/professional-practice-standards/>.

We have a professional responsibility to engage in Indigenous education in support of the changes to the professional practice standards, and we need to continue to strive towards maintaining the authenticity and integrity of First Nations, Métis and Inuit cultures, languages and histories. We must continue to seek opportunities to learn from others and, above all, to be unafeard of making mistakes.

*“When it comes to culture — you’re never going to be right, but you’re never going to be wrong. You’re never going to be right if you are not open to other perspectives, and you’re never going to be wrong if you act with an open heart.” — Stoney Elder, Paul First Nation*

*Melissa Purcell is an executive staff officer with the Alberta Teachers' Association focused on Indigenous education.*

# THE FACE OF EDUCATION

They are the faces of joy, fascination and hope. They are the faces of education.

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



The Alberta Teachers' Association

## NEW CAMPAIGN HIGHLIGHTS VALUE OF PUBLIC EDUCATION



The Alberta Teachers' Association's latest public relations campaign, The Face of Education, is designed to remind people that public education exists to serve our children, and that the ATA is "the face" of public education.

The campaign's objective is to increase public awareness that the Association is a strong advocate for public education. We do this by highlighting that the needs of teachers and students are the same if we are to create optimal conditions for learning.

This campaign, developed based on the results of extensive polling and focus groups, will continue to use a variety of media to reach the public, such as television ads, movie theatre pre-roll, print ads, grocery ad bars, magazine and billboard ads and radio. The campaign also includes a heavy online presence. This campaign will also include an opportunity for people to support public education—in Alberta, public education refers to public, separate and francophone schools—by signing a pledge for public education at [www.IBelieveinPublicEd.ca](http://www.IBelieveinPublicEd.ca).

## 2LEARN CONTINUES TO GROW



The 2Learn website is now in its second year as part of the Alberta Teachers' Association; the website's curated collections of educational resources continue to grow. There are many 2Learn pages, or resource collections, that are valuable to Alberta teachers.

The Student Sites are filled with curricular resources with interactive or media elements, such as videos and virtual explorations. These sites can be accessed from the main 2Learn site and are organized by grade level, subject and curriculum outcome.

The Enjoy pages and Special Editions are also very popular 2Learn features. Enjoy Pages are filled with curated resources and media relating to specific themes and seasons. The Special Editions are collections of resources on topics of

current interest and importance. The resources in these featured collections are chosen to meet the needs of teachers and students in their classrooms. In addition to the theme-based collections described above, educators can explore other 2Learn pages that curate teaching resources about digital literacy, inclusion and digital creation.

Watch for some exciting changes coming to 2Learn this fall. Visit [www.2Learn.ca](http://www.2Learn.ca) to read the latest news and access featured resources.

## GROWTH PLANNING TOOLS AVAILABLE

September and October are growth planning season. The Professional Development program area of the Alberta Teachers' Association has resources to help teachers and school leaders with the growth planning process. The Association's website contains sources of evidence and growth plan templates as well as a revised and updated version of the comprehensive digital, interactive tool entitled Reflection on My Professional Practice.

The tool helps teachers and school leaders reflect on the knowledge, skills and attributes of their professional practice as related to the competencies outlined in the new Teaching Quality Standard (TQS) and the Leadership Quality Standard (LQS).

To access all resources related to growth planning, visit [www.teachers.ab.ca](http://www.teachers.ab.ca). Click on My ATA>Professional Growth Plans.

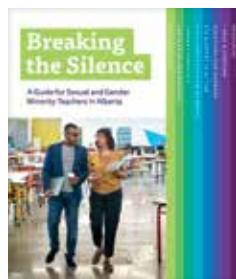
## SPECIALIST COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP HAS BENEFITS

As a benefit of ATA membership, active members are entitled to join one specialist council of their choice each year at no cost. Specialist councils are an integral part of the Association's activities. Granting members automatic membership in a specialist council is a step toward increasing professional development opportunities for teachers throughout Alberta and a way of promoting the professional expertise of teachers in curriculum and specialty areas.

Regular membership is restricted to active members of the ATA and to associate members who are ineligible for active membership as specified in ATA bylaws. Regular members are entitled to all the benefits and services of council membership, including the right to vote and hold office. Each council is operated by volunteer teacher members who contribute their time, talents and enthusiasm to plan and implement programs and activities for the councils. Specialist councils organize annual conferences, produce publications, maintain websites and offer regional workshops and seminars.

For more information, visit the ATA website ([www.teachers.ab.ca](http://www.teachers.ab.ca)) and click on For Members and then on Professional Development.

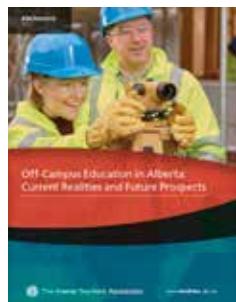
## NEW ATA PUBLICATIONS AVAILABLE



*Breaking the Silence: A Guide for Sexual and Gender Minority Teachers in Alberta*  
The Alberta Teacher's Association is committed to fostering understanding and acceptance of sexual and gender minority (SGM) teachers and works to protect the conditions of professional practice for all members. This guide was written to help break the silence that still surrounds the experiences

of SGM teachers in schools. It is a source of information and support for SGM teachers who have questions or concerns about matters related to their employment.

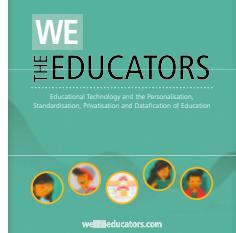
(PD-80-40 2018 04)



*Off-Campus Education in Alberta: Current Realities and Future Prospects*  
This study explores select off-campus coordinators' (OCCs) responses to questions about their employment experiences, administrative responsibilities and working conditions. The report raises awareness about the important role of OCCs and emphasizes their often inconsistent and nonformalized positions in Alberta schools.

(COOR-101-14, 2017 12, 64 pp)

### LITERATURE REVIEW



### *We The Educators*

This literature review works to provide a balanced view of the standardisation, personalisation and privatisation of learning to inform an analysis of the converging fields of educational technology and datafication. It is part of a larger project, "We the Educators" ([www.wetheeducators.com](http://www.wetheeducators.com)), which

brings the concepts explored in this research to life through video animation in English, French and Spanish.

(COOR-124, 2017 04, 20 pp)

## RESPECTFUL SCHOOLS ONLINE TOOLKIT

A new online toolkit is available to help teachers and principals create respectful school learning environments through human rights education.

Developed by the Alberta Teachers' Association in collaboration with various partners, the Respectful Schools Online Toolkit provides curriculum-related activities, lesson plans and resources that help teachers demonstrate concepts like fairness, equity and inclusion.

The toolkit was developed due to a 2015 amendment to the School Act that added a requirement that school boards, students and parents contribute to a "welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning environment that respects diversity and fosters a sense of belonging."

The toolkit contains resources, articles and real-world best practices related to human rights and human rights education. It's available at [respectfuschools.ca](http://respectfuschools.ca).

## STUDENTS CHALLENGED TO DEVELOP GREEN INITIATIVES

The Climate and Environment Student Action Challenge is back for the 2018/19 school year, and it's up to you to take action! Alberta students from kindergarten to Grade 12 can apply for up to \$1,000 from Alberta Environment and Parks to make their environmental action projects a reality.

The Student Action Challenge asks Alberta students to develop initiatives or projects that promote healthy environments and ecosystems or reduce carbon emissions. The program encourages stewardship in Alberta youth as they gain hands-on experience tackling environmental issues that directly impact them, their schools or their communities. Plan a project for the school year, make it happen and share your results with Alberta.

For more information or to apply for a grant visit [aep.alberta.ca](http://aep.alberta.ca). The deadline to apply is Oct. 31 at 4:30 p.m.

## CONGRATULATIONS!

The summer 2018 issue of the ATA Magazine contained a reader survey that included a draw for a \$100 gift card.

The draw winner is Laurie Klassen, the English language learning coordinator and learning support co-coordinator at St. John Paul II Collegiate in Okotoks.



The survey received more than 500 responses, which will help the magazine's editorial team shape the publication in the months and years to come. The editorial team thanks all participants for their contribution.

DENNIS  
THEOBALD

## STANDARDS REFLECT VALUES OF ALBERTANS

**T**here are often insights in the meanings and origins of words. This issue of the *ATA Magazine* is all about standards and is written in response to the issuance by the Alberta Government of three new practice standards, one for teachers, one for school and system leaders, and one for superintendents. When considered in this context, the word “standard” is conventionally taken to mean a required level of quality or attainment, or a common measure used for evaluation.

But there is a much older sense of the word, that is still with us today: a standard is a flag or a banner, originally used in a military or religious context. A standard, in this meaning, provided a rallying point and means of identifying and distinguishing one group from another. On the battlefield, standards were essential in organizing and coordinating the movement of soldiers in what were often chaotic and frightening circumstances. The annual “Trooping of the Colours” was originally intended to ensure that every soldier knew which standard was theirs.

In this role, standards soon took on a symbolic quality. They became, quite literally, consecrated objects and there was no greater disgrace than to have one’s standard captured by an enemy. The standards themselves were honoured, and even today visitors to the Alberta legislature will note the retired regimental standards or colours that are displayed around the rotunda.

Consider then the symbolic weight of the new quality standards for teachers, leaders and superintendents. Which collectively communicate broad messages about what Albertans value and stand for.

The first of these is inclusion, which is identified as one of the six enumerated competencies for teachers. As Mark

Swanson demonstrates in his article, the expectation now explicitly contained in the teaching quality standard, that the goal of a teacher’s professional practice is to insure “optimum learning for all students,” establishes the centrality of inclusion. The significance of this should not be diminished: inclusion generally and in schooling particularly, is culturally and politically the greatest challenge of our time and a manifestation of a broad civil/social movement that began in the last century to eliminate barriers to individual participation in all aspects of life in the community. The struggle to establish equitable opportunity for every person is now established in the teaching quality standard as central to the role of the teacher, the school and the school system.

The second value that defines the new standards is professional collegiality. As the standards were being developed, there was some question whether principals and central office teachers should have separate standards. The government wisely determined that the creation of a single leadership standard would firmly anchor leadership in the school context.

As a result, the leadership and, for that matter, the superintendent standard are philosophically an extension of the teaching standard, all three reinforcing the importance of fostering effective relationships, professional learning, visionary leadership and community. Ultimately, the leadership standard together with the teaching and superintendent standards, establishes an expectation that the relationship between teachers in schools, principals, certificated jurisdiction staff and superintendents will be one of respectful collaboration. This is a significant departure from more traditional models of management and leadership that emphasize command, control and top-down communication. Instead, the new standards require all

participants to create a community of learning and professional governance.

Emerging from the darkest history of our country is the value and expectation shared across the three standards that teachers and schools will actively promote reconciliation. It is a profoundly sad fact that our education system, and not just the residential schools, has been an instrument of oppression for Indigenous peoples. All three of the quality standards recognize the critical role that teachers, and schools, must play in righting this historical wrong and its ongoing consequences. This begins with understanding foundational knowledge of First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples but goes far beyond this to require active development of processes, programs and institutional culture that will welcome, respect and help raise up the Indigenous community and its children.

The three quality standards are the legislated administrative criteria against which teachers in their various roles will be measured, and every teacher has the responsibility to understand and meet the standards that apply to their work. In this context, the mission of the Alberta Teachers’ Association will be to ensure that teachers in all their roles are properly supported directly through Association programming and services, but also by holding school authorities and the government responsible for doing their part. Furthermore, the Association is charged with enforcing the teaching practice standard and it has the ultimate responsibility to ensure that member teachers demonstrate competent practice in compliance with that standard. But beyond this, think about that older sense of the word “standard.” As a profession, we are called upon collectively to carry these standards forward in the hope that doing so will create a better education system for students and a better society for all.



GREG  
JEFFERY

## ■ FROM THE PRESIDENT ■

# STANDARDS HELP ALL TEACHERS BE AT THEIR BEST

February 7, 2018 was a day to celebrate. That day I was there to witness Education Minister David Eggen introduce a ministerial order that would see three distinct quality standards guide the practice of the teaching profession in Alberta: one for teachers, one for principals and one for superintendents.

Many of you, especially those who have taught in another province or country, might wonder why these standards are cause for celebration. To explain, let me take you back to the first third of my own teaching career. After the familiar evaluations for continuing contract and permanent certification, teachers were then on a summative evaluation cycle. Every three years we faced a series of in-class visitations that had the potential of ending in a referral to the Council on Alberta Teaching Standards (COATS) for a review of our teaching practices. Practice reviews were performed by appointees of the ministry, placing the careers of teachers in the hands of

the Teaching Quality Standard (TQS) and the Teacher Growth, Supervision and Evaluation (TGSE) policy.

Passed as a ministerial order in 1997 and still in existence today, the TQS is a set of standards describing the select knowledge, skills and attributes (KSAs) that teachers are expected to possess and demonstrate at different stages of their careers. While similar, the new TQS uses competencies and indicators in place of KSAs, and there is no differentiation between interim and permanent certificate holders. TGSE policy mandates that school authorities, ECS operators, superintendents, principals and teachers work together to develop and implement policy ensuring that all teachers practice consistently in keeping with the TQS.

Today, using the TQS to guide the development of their growth plans, teachers demonstrate their commitment to professional development and

than 20 years now. The revised TQS will come into effect in 2019, along with new standards for principals and superintendents.

The interconnectedness of the three standards is very significant for me. In all three documents the first two competencies speak to building and fostering effective relationships and a commitment to professional learning. All three standards ensure First Nations, Métis and Inuit education for all students. These similarities strengthen the idea that we are all part of a single profession, the profession of teaching. This unity is again emphasized by the fact that it's only later on in the school leader and superintendent documents that the management roles are addressed. Teaching and learning are clearly profiled as primary goals for all of us affected by these standards. The model of collegiality that has served Alberta so well has been maintained and, in my mind, strengthened through

**Teaching and learning are clearly profiled as primary goals for all of us affected by these standards.**

individuals who likely had never set foot in a classroom. Coats for Kids was a good concept. COATS for teachers, not so much.

It was the mid 1990s, and some might say that the teaching profession was on a backslide, or at least on the way to one. In addition to COATS, there was a proposal by the Klein government that would require teachers to requalify for their teaching certificate every five years. The backlash from teachers was swift and effectively resulted in two things that helped restore our status as professionals:

maintaining the high standards in place to ensure Alberta students receive the best possible education. With many thanks due to Alberta teachers, the implementation of the standard and the policy was a success. In fact, its success was a factor in the dreaded COATS being dissolved and the Association being given responsibility for reviewing and evaluating the practice of teachers whose competency is questioned (a first for a teachers' organization in North America).

Provincial standards for teachers have been in place in Alberta for more

the interrelationship of these three standards, and this should provide comfort as well as a sense of pride to all of us working for the students of Alberta.

As ATA president and as one with a grandchild in the public education system, it is reassuring to know there will be provincial standards not only for teachers, but for principals and superintendents. If we in the public education system are to provide Alberta students with quality education, we all need to be at our best—quality standards help us do that.



PHIL  
MCRAE

## HIGH STANDARDS WITHOUT STANDARDIZATION!

In public education systems we need to adopt a new mantra, “high standards without standardization,” because standards and standardization are not the same thing. Having high standards doesn’t mean that we (students, teachers, schools) all reach our potential in the same standardized way. As Andy Hargreaves so wisely states, “We need standards with flexibility, not standardization with force, if we are to get the best from our teachers” (<http://andyhargreaves.weebly.com/100-quotes-to-teach-and-lead-by-76-100.html>).

This is especially important in Alberta as a new K–4 program of studies is implemented in tandem with the release of our updated teaching quality standards (TQS), the introduction of new school leadership (SLS) and superintendent standards of practice. A fundamental issue for Alberta going forward will be to advance high professional standards, without simply adopting a narrow and standardized approach to curriculum, assessment or professional practice(s).

Standards set a bar of expectations—critical for a healthy society—for example in food safety or the quality of doctors and teachers. But high standards are not the same as standardization; having high standards doesn’t mean

Albertans want high educational standards for our children, but standardization in education actually narrows learner choice, curriculum, opportunity and value, and is a hallmark of what Pasi Sahlberg (2016) calls the GERM (Global Education Reform Movement). Sahlberg (2016) coined the term GERM to describe a particular type of educational change focused on increased competition between schools for student enrolment; standardization of teaching and learning in schools; a hyperfocus on reading, mathematics and science in schools at the expense of arts, music, physical education and social studies; and reliance on a system of standardized test-based accountability (holding teachers and schools accountable for students’ achievement through external [large-scale] standardized tests).

Fuelled by organizations such as the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the GERM compels schools and nations to compete for scarce resources and seek vaguely described competitive advantages rather than collaborate. To facilitate managerial accountability, the GERM requires the maintenance of a large bureaucratic infrastructure that generates a seemingly endless stream of standardization, benchmarks and performance indicators—all to feed data infrastructures (Lingard and Sellar 2013; Sahlberg 2016). At its essence,

At its essence, standardization may empower a cheaper process, but it is only through high standards with flexibility that we empower great schools for all and protect our students.

that we all reach them in the same way. When a process is standardized, it can be repeated at a lower cost. Industrial manufacturing was built on these principles to reduce cost and standardize output. In the private school movement in the United States and sub-Saharan Africa we now see standardized and scripted curriculum increasingly automated (Riep and Machacek 2016) along with rigidly conformist schools being sold to the public as not only more efficient, but cheaper. As Youngjoo (2010) suggests, “the assumption of expecting the same output by providing the same input disregards the uniqueness of individual students” (p.18).

standardization may empower a cheaper process, but it is only through high standards with flexibility that we empower great schools for all and protect our students.

Calling for “high standards without standardization” is a refrain I have used in several keynote addresses recently, and it emerges from a 2017 collaborative research study entitled *We the Educators* conducted in partnership with Education International, the Alberta Teachers’ Association and the Canadian Teachers’ Federation. This recent work is intended to generate a new conversation about the future of

public education and can be found at [wetheeducators.com](http://wetheeducators.com). It includes several short videos and a comprehensive review of the research literature on the topic of standardization. Below is an excerpt from the full literature review found at [wetheeducators.com](http://wetheeducators.com).

Standards in education have the potential to both promote and threaten equity.

While standards can manifest in education through, for example, curriculum, learner paths and assessments, they have come to primarily denote “specifications of what should be learned and assessed, open to public scrutiny and, thus, a means of holding both teachers and the education system accountable” (Lepota and Murray 2014, 6).

On the one hand, some advocates (such as McClure 2005) claim that standardization improves accountability and transparency, particularly in terms of the distribution of resources. Further, standards, when implemented fairly with the appropriate context in mind, can establish clear and productive expectations for students, teachers and education systems (Lepota and Murray 2014).

But to what extent is transparency of inherent value (Morozov 2013)? Moreover, does too much focus on outcomes call into question the purpose of education (Biesta 2010)? Some critics (such as Skerrett and Hargreaves 2008 and Tröhler 2014) suggest that standardization inhibits appreciation of, or responsiveness to, student diversity and exceptionailities (for example, students with special needs or students learning the language of instruction). In part, this is because effective teaching cannot be “carried out by following standard procedures” (Hargreaves and Fullan 2012, 78). In addition, in reducing variety, standardization reduces choice (Blind 2013). Mike Rose (2010, 23) observes the limitations of standards, noting that they “can be used to limit access and stratify students into educational tracks, or can lead to an overly prescriptive and narrow curriculum” that can impede both teacher autonomy and student success. Youngjoo Kim (2010, 18) goes as far as to disparage standardized learning and assessment practices as “cognitive deforming and intellectually stunting.”

An established body of evidence illustrates that educational development, in all its diverse manifestations, is most effectively achieved through innovations undertaken by networks of schools committed to building the adaptive

capacity of high-quality teachers, rather than by standardized system edicts or narrow policy directives (Hargreaves and Fullan 2012; Hargreaves and Shirley 2009). This is one of the many reasons why the Association supports Alberta teachers’ professional judgement, action research initiatives and the many international research partnerships that engender localized learning, all sustained through high standards (not standardization) of professional practice.

*Dr. Phil McRae is the associate coordinator of research for the Alberta Teachers’ Association and an adjunct professor within the faculty of education at the University of Alberta.*

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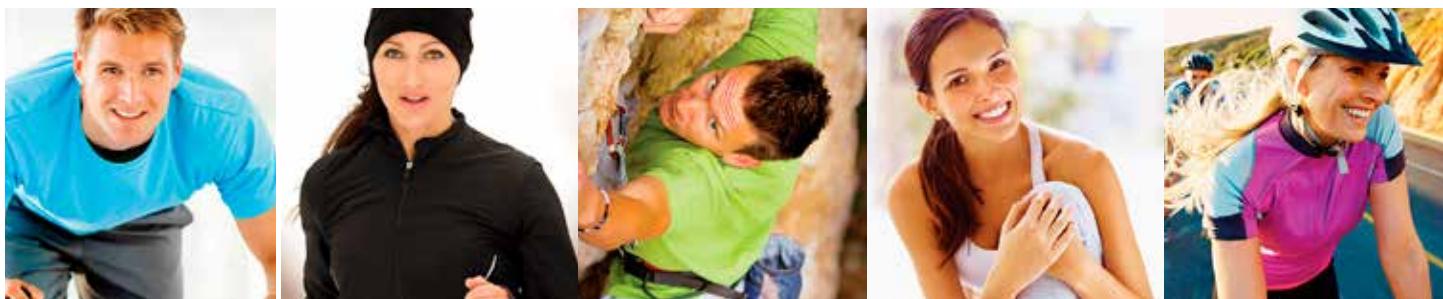


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