



Teacher's Pet

Extolling the virtues of our special critters. See pages 8 and 9.

DOWN
3,000
teachers
 See page 3 for details.

ATA NEWS

The Alberta Teachers' Association



December 5, 2017 | Volume 52, Number 8

News Publication of The Alberta Teachers' Association



CORY HARE

Alberta Teachers' Association president Greg Jeffery listens to an explanation by Education Minister David Eggen during a meeting of Provincial Executive Council on Friday, Dec. 1. During his visit, Eggen brought Council up to date on his recent legislative efforts and Council members relayed teacher concerns related to class size, support for inclusion, provincial achievement tests, school board surpluses, child poverty and other issues.



Christmas gift list

Some helpful suggestions for Santa this holiday season.

Read Jonathan Teghtmeyer's editorial on page 2.

In Focus

Annual Representative Assembly all about snacks and democracy.

See story on page 4.

teachers.ab.ca

WHAT'S ONLINE?

TALIS survey implementation raises concern

Members' survey on teachers' convention

Perspectives on Leadership. Read the latest issue of the *ATA Magazine*

Interpretation Bulletin No. 4: What is a reasonable workday?

Instructional and assignable time calculators

Zero interest

Teachers won't embrace further salary freezes, says ATA president.

See story on page 5.

Under review

Teacher exchange programs face uncertain future.

See story on page 6.

CIF making a 'dif'

Many projects target staffing with one-time funds.

See story on page 7.

My Christmas gift list



EDITORIAL

Jonathan Teghtmeyer
ATA News Editor-in-Chief

Dear Santa, I'm super excited for Christmas and can't wait for your arrival. Our tree is up and the house is decorated. The stockings are hung by the chimney, with care of course. I am just hopeful for peace, health and happiness, so please don't worry about bringing me anything. But I have some ideas for stuff that you could bring for some of my friends. I've been very good this year, so if you can, bring these gifts to help with my gift of happiness.

Education Minister David Eggen

I expect the minister and his MLA colleagues are receiving a lot of #MyClassSizeIs cards. The class-size averages that the government is reporting clearly don't capture the extent to which class size and composition has become an issue in Alberta schools. A good statistics calculator should help him to sort through all of the additional data.

Premier Rachel Notley

Please bring Premier Notley an awl. She recently said that the next budget would include "compassionate belt

tightening," but the premier is failing to acknowledge that the belt on our finances is already cinched tight. There is lots of length left on the belt, but the government refuses to punch holes into the end of it — tax changes could increase revenue by \$9 billion while still maintaining the lowest tax rates in the country.

Finance Minister Joe Ceci

And on that note, I hope that Santa will bring Minister Ceci a \$60 barrel of oil. Not that we should have to rely on higher oil prices to fund essentials like public education, but it would help ease the pressure while the minister transitions us away from reliance on oil and gas revenues.

UCP education critic Mark Smith

I like Mark Smith. He is a smart man who was clearly a good and committed teacher. As long as he continues to view education based on his experiences in the classroom he should be a strong advocate for students, teachers and public education. A rear-view mirror will help him recall where he came from.

UCP leader Jason Kenney

Speaking of strong advocates, Jason Kenney has some strong views on education — including curriculum and the work of the Association. Unfortunately, I'm worried that he might be listening to the wrong people on education and

The premier is failing to acknowledge that the belt on our finances is already cinched tight.

they're feeding him some bad information. Santa, please bring Jason Kenney some strong advisors to help him better understand the realities of Alberta's education system.

Students in Alberta's GSAs

It has been an interesting fall for students who participate in gay-straight alliances in schools or are thinking about joining. Much has been said about GSAs, and too much of it has not been accurate. The whole matter has been way overpoliticized. I hope that these students could receive some earmuffs to help drown out some of the silly rhetoric.

Alberta's Catholic superintendents

This group could really use a public opinion barometer. The contents of their proposal for a Catholic sexual education curriculum were very unpopular and overstepped what most people — many Catholic teachers included — viewed as reasonable. The Association supports Catholic education and Catholic teachers, but problematic stances related to human rights and sex education are undermining public support for Catholic education.

Alberta's newly elected trustees

Alberta's education system can be a large and complex system with many players with different roles. New trustees have a lot to learn. Some previously held beliefs about the ATA might not be wholly accurate. A good orientation program could help them gain a better understanding of Alberta's teaching profession.

ATA president Greg Jeffery

What do you get the guy who has everything? Greg has really hit the ground running as president. He's an effective meeting chair, a good advocate for teachers with government and a strong media spokesperson. I hate buying for these people ... just get him a gift card, I guess!

Teachers of Alberta

Santa, please bring our teachers a long and restful holiday break. I hope they have lots of time to relax with friends and family so they can come back refreshed and energized in the new year! Happy holidays, season's greetings and merry Christmas, everyone! ■

I welcome your comments — contact me at jonathan.teghtmeyer@ata.ab.ca.

New incoming standards are important to our profession



Q & A

Gordon Thomas
ATA Executive Secretary

Question: I'm a principal and I'm hearing that I will need to get another certificate to continue working as a school or system administrator. What is this all about and how do I get one? I have a continuous designation — isn't that enough?

Answer: We've fielded a lot of questions about the government's plan to move from one to three professional practice standards. At the present time, to become a teacher you must possess a certificate of qualification as a teacher — a teaching certificate. To provide the basis for teacher preparation programs and to make decisions about individual teaching practice, the Teaching Quality Standard (TQS) was established and has served as a practice standard for the past 20 years. The TQS will be

updated. So to be a teacher, you must possess a teaching certificate and you must continue to meet the TQS. None of this is new.

What is new is that, to be a principal or a central office teacher, you will need to possess a leadership certificate in addition to a teaching certificate. And to be the superintendent of schools for a board or the superintendent's chief deputy, you will need to possess a superintendent leadership certificate in addition to a teaching certificate. These new practice standards will also need to be met, just as a teacher must meet the TQS. We are moving from one to three certificates and from one to three standards.

Details are not all worked out, but it is important to recognize that the education minister wants to require the completion of an education program to remain in the role of a principal or central office teacher. The leadership certificate will provide the *right to practice* as a principal or central office teacher anywhere in Alberta, just as a teaching certificate grants the right to teach in Alberta.

Your *employment* as a principal or central office teacher is a different matter — you can't be employed in these roles if you don't have a leadership certificate or a superintendent leadership certificate (if a teacher doesn't receive a permanent professional teaching certificate, the teacher's employment can't continue). That said, the minister has indicated that incumbents will be grandfathered, that there will be a transition period and that leadership certificates may be earned at some point after a supervisory position is offered and accepted.

It is anticipated that an education program leading to a leadership certificate will be offered in communities across the province. The Association believes that the principles on which the program is based must ensure equity of access throughout the province so that the program is available to any teacher who wishes to enroll. The program would be the same wherever it is offered and delivered in a very flexible format. We will work with post-secondary institutions to ensure that the program is recognized for salary purposes.

This is a very important initiative for the teaching profession, and the ATA hopes to play a major role in program planning and delivery, given our responsibilities in relation to the profession. Classroom teachers are currently subject to a review of their professional practice if there are concerns about their teaching practice, and teachers who do not meet the TQS can lose their teaching certificate.

Once the two additional standards are in place, principals, central office teachers and the superintendent of schools (and chief deputy if there is one) of each board will also be subject to practice review and a principal, central office teacher or superintendent who does not meet the applicable standard could lose the right to practice in that role anywhere in Alberta.

These standards will provide a higher level of public assurance and professional control; they will also provide for equity across the profession. ■

Questions for consideration in this column are welcome. Please address them to Gordon Thomas at Barnett House (gordon.thomas@ata.ab.ca).



More students + teacher shortfall = larger classes



DOWN 3,000 teachers

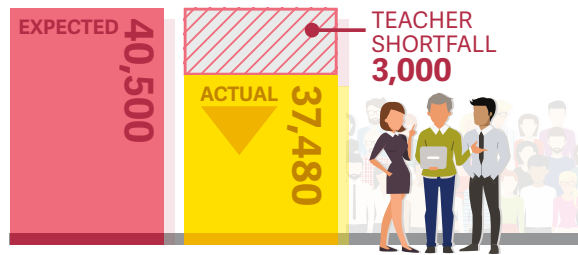
Since 2009 Alberta has experienced an increase of 100,000 students, but growth in the number of teachers has not kept pace.

#MyClassSizeIs #AbEd

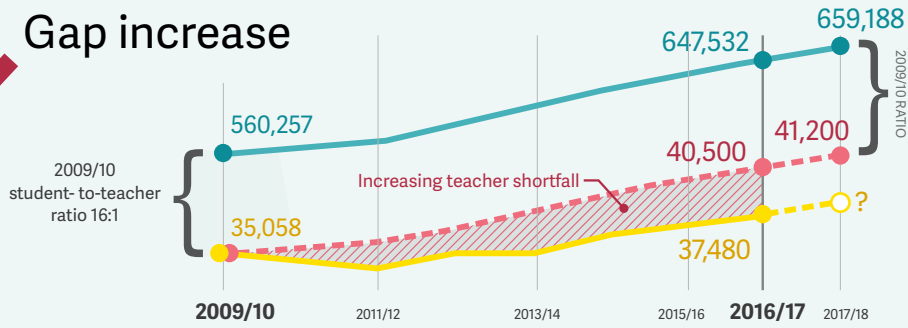
LEGEND

- Student enrolment
- Expected teaching force if 2009/10 student-to-teacher ratio were maintained
- ▨ Teacher shortfall
- Actual teaching force

2016/17 Teacher Population



Gap increase



Sources: Student numbers – Alberta Education, Teacher numbers – The Alberta Teachers' Association

YOUR VIEWS

Teachers share their views on class size (#MyClassSizeIs)

f ON FACEBOOK

Denise Larre

It's not always the class sizes that are the biggest problem. Class composition and supports are a huge factor as well. The workload increases each year and nothing is taken off the plate. I can see why there is teacher burnout!!

Lisa DeBow

The struggle is real. Teachers seriously consider leaving just for work-life balance. We love our job (actually teaching) but working non-stop, not having supports and still not feeling you are making a dent/difference is most heartbreaking.

Barb Henker Larochelle

I just retired after 29 years in Edmonton. The smallest class I ever had was 24, and that was 27 years ago and once again a couple of years ago. I've had classes of 35, 36, 38 multiple times, even up to 43. I've nearly always had 30-plus students.

ON TWITTER

Stephen Merredew @smerredew

I am a teacher, with two HS classes of 30+, lucky compared to many of my @albertateachers colleagues across the province.

Stephanie Appelt @MissAppelt

This year has been my most challenging yet with the number of students and the levels present in a single junior high class. Students are losing out on opportunities (like science labs) because #myclasssizeis too big.

Jen Halfyard @JenAnne11

33 Grade 7s – 2 coded, 6 more uncoded LD, 3 ESL #MyClassSizeIs

Danielle Abell @Miss_Abell

Many students need my attention and focus. I get some EA support, but my class could definitely benefit from more adults in the room with the needs I see each day. I have so many young people in different places on their educational journey!

On new teacher inductions

Shealeigh Brandford @sheabrandford

Thank you @FoothillsATA for the wonderful induction ceremony and dinner. I am so blessed to be in the best profession, local and division!

jason schilling @schill_dawg

Looking forward to attending @FoothillsATA induction this evening; best part of this VP gig by far.

@BRLocal#32 @Brlocal32

Welcome to the most important and influential professions in our world today!

Letters to the editor: We welcome letters to the editor. Please limit your submission to 300 words. Only letters bearing a first and last name, address, and daytime telephone number will be considered for publication. Teachers are also asked to indicate where and what they teach. All letters are subject to editing for length, clarity, punctuation, spelling and grammar. Email managing editor Cory Hare: cory.hare@ata.ab.ca.

Speak up on violence against women and girls



VIEWPOINTS

Mark Ramsankar
CTF President

Do you remember where you were on Dec. 6, 1989, when the 14 young women at the l'École Polytechnique in Montreal were killed by a man professing to be antifeminist?

I do. I was teaching a Grade 9 science class. I stopped the class to discuss it when a student asked, "What does this have to do with science?" I said, "This affects us all!"

And 28 years later, we remember and must continue to work for change.

Violence against women and girls hurts all of us. Not only does it hurt the women in our lives, but it affects boys and men. The impact of violence on the mental health of everyone involved is devastating, and the economic and social ripple effects are far reaching.

Video games' and the media's negative portrayal of women and girls as sexual objects incites violence, degradation and rape. This depiction not only harms the way girls and young women see themselves but can also influence how boys and young men view their relationships with women and girls.

Statistics Canada reports that spousal violence has consistently been one of the most common forms of violence against women in Canada. In 2011, there were 59 female spousal homicide victims in Canada compared to seven male victims.

CTF member organizations are reporting an increasing number of threats, intimidation and violence by students targeting their peers and teachers.

Since the majority of teachers in Canada are women, they stand a much higher risk of being affected by violence at school or at home.

Facts about violence against women (#VAW)

According to Statistics Canada

- girls are 1.5 times more likely than boys to experience violence at home,
- about 26% of all women who are murdered by their spouses had left the relationship,
- Indigenous women are killed at six times the rate of non-Indigenous women and
- women are almost four times more likely than men to be victims of spousal violence.

There were 1,181 cases of missing or murdered Indigenous women in Canada between 1980 and 2012, according to the RCMP. However, according to the Native Women's Association of Canada and Status of Women Canada the number is much higher, closer to 4,000.

In addition to sexism, there are many other forms of social inequality that compound abuse and violence, including racism, homophobia, classism, ageism, ableism and religious persecution.

One can only imagine the impact on children and students who witness these acts. Almost six in 10 women with children who were assaulted by spouses said their children heard or saw the violent episode.

While not all mental health challenges can be linked to violence, people who witness violence or who are targeted by violence are more likely to suffer from mental health challenges later in life. The Canadian Women's Foundation indicates that while both men and women experience violence,

statistics show that women do experience higher incidents. The foundation also states that half of all women in Canada have experienced at least one incident of physical or sexual violence since the age of 16. These are our mothers, our sisters and our daughters.

But women and girls shouldn't have to address this issue alone. Men have roles and responsibilities when dealing with the issue of violence against women. We are all measured by our actions.

Here is my pledge.

As a teacher

I will continue to talk with students about the media they consume and will promote the development of their critical thinking skills through digital and media literacy.

I will speak up about violence and bullying in schools.

As an educational leader

I will speak out on violence against women and girls and lobby for measures and actions to counter violence.

As a man

I will continue to support the White Ribbon pledge, www.white-ribbon.ca/pledge.

I will continue to speak up about violence against women and girls in society.

As a father

I will be a positive role model for my children.

I will continue to teach them how to resolve conflict without violence.

I will continue to teach them how to be respectful and responsible adults.

My hope is that both of them grow up with equity and equality, as should be their right in our society. ■

Mark Ramsankar is the past-president of the Alberta Teachers' Association.

This opinion column represents the views of the writer and does not necessarily reflect the position of the Alberta Teachers' Association.



"I didn't know you could do worse than an F. When did they start handing out poop emojis?"

ATA motto an early act of defiance

FROM THE ARCHIVES

Maggie Shane
ATA Archivist

Leading up to its official 100th anniversary in June 2018, the Alberta Teachers' Association is celebrating its history through a number of initiatives, one of which is this column. Curated by archivist Maggie Shane and appearing in each issue of the ATA News this year, this column will feature significant moments and individuals in the Association's history as well as interesting artifacts or documents from the Association's archives.

Since 1920, the Alberta Teachers' Association (originally called the Alliance) has proudly declared "Magistri Neque Servi" as its motto.

The motto (as distinct from the round logo) first appeared in print on the cover of Vol. 1, No. 1 of the *ATA Magazine* in June 1920. It is credited to H.C. Newland, the ATA president of the day. The motto translates from Latin to "Masters Not Servants."

Although today many people associate the word "magister" with medieval uses of "magistrate" having to do with judges or masters of law, "magistri" is also the Latin plural of "teacher." So the motto (deliberately, I believe) conflated the concept of masters and teachers from the outset.

The motto was an act of defiance in opposition to those contemporary powers who considered teachers as servants to a school board or other authority rather

than as master professionals in their own right. Striving for professional status was the engine of Alliance efforts in the ATA's early years and certainly informs John Walker Barnett's "call to action" that blazes across the cover of the very first *ATA Magazine*.

Although the motto first appeared in June 1920, the image of the familiar round logo did not appear until the next issue, Volume 1, No. 2. So sometime between

June and July of 1920 a circular emblem was designed to support the Alliance's efforts to establish itself as the steward of public education among teachers, legislators and the public. The original 1920 logo featured the sleek, modern Art Deco style of the day.

The motto was not added to the logo until September 1947. The Art Deco styling persisted but "Magistri Neque Servi" was incorporated to encircle the logo.

For several years during and following the Second World War, the Association also used a classical torch version of the logo/motto.

This wartime version dominates each cover of the *ATA Magazine* between September 1941 and June 1947. In this version, the motto and the logo are once again detached from each other with the logo appearing as an emblem on the torch base and the motto appearing on the ribbon beneath. The torch appeared in various colours from turquoise to hot pink each month for those six years.

The symbolism of the torch during the war years is obvious, that the ATA would keep the home fires burning for those in harm's way on the battlefields of



Logo/motto during Second World War

A competition to replace the logo was even run in the spring of 1982 garnering many interesting submissions. Each time, however, teachers have chosen continuity of identity and honoured the work undertaken by generations of teachers under this sign. It endures. *Magistri Neque Servi*. ■

Looking for democracy in action? Attend ARA *Annual assembly fascinating even during the dull moments*

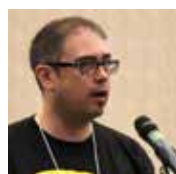
IN FOCUS

Cory Hare
ATA News Managing Editor

Welcome to In Focus, an ongoing series that shines a spotlight on the operation and programs of the Alberta Teachers' Association. This third instalment focuses on the ATA's Annual Representative Assembly.

Democracy. It's the word you hear most often when listening to experienced ATA members and staff talk about ARA, the Annual Representative Assembly that acts as the AGM for the Alberta Teachers' Association.

Occurring every May long weekend, the event sees more than 400 teacher delegates converge on a single conference room in either Calgary or Edmonton, where they spend hours countering the effects of cramped seating arrangements and sometimes spotty air conditioning with free-flowing coffee, snacks and memes shared via social media. The event is also known for the flamboyant attire favoured by some attendees, sometimes mind-numbing budget deliberations and impassioned monologues during policy debates.



Brett Watt
President,
Evergreen
Local No. 11

For teachers who have never attended ARA, it can be difficult to grasp what it's all about.

"It is this mystery animal," says Brett Watt, president of Evergreen Local No. 11 and a veteran of nine or 10 ARAs.

"Amongst my colleagues, they know that I go to this convention on the May long weekend and ... do stuff. It's something that you really have to experience."



The Annual Representative Assembly convenes every May long weekend in Calgary or Edmonton.

Parliament of the ATA

ARA's role in the overall workings of the Association is outlined in the *Teaching Profession Act*. While Provincial Executive Council (PEC) fulfills the Association's executive function, ARA serves as its parliament.

Each year the assembly approves the Association's annual budget, decides on revisions to its bylaws, determines the programs to be offered in the following year and establishes the Association's policy on educational issues.

"We are a democratic organization — we're very proud of that — and the forum for our policy decisions is our Annual Representative Assembly," said Executive Secretary Gordon Thomas.

The assembly is composed of 425 delegates representing all 55 locals, which are each entitled to a certain number of seats based on population (each local is guaranteed at least two representatives). Each local decides on its own how to allocate its spots. Locals wishing to have resolutions considered at ARA must have them approved by a majority of their members and submit them to the Association by Dec. 15.

PEC members also attend ARA and can participate in the open discussions. Executive staff attend in case their expertise is required to answer questions from the floor.

The weekend also includes speeches by the ATA president, executive secretary and several visiting dignitaries. Often, the minister of education or another government representative makes an appearance or delivers a speech.

The Association hands out honorary memberships and other awards and a pension plan update is delivered by a live person with a long list of credentials. This fact doesn't deter some delegates from grilling the pension expert about specific aspects of the plan's investments or coaching the expert on the merits of ethical investing.

One way that ARA differs from the AGMs held by most other teacher organizations is that its agenda does not include the election of board members, because the ATA prefers to hold its council elections through a completely separate process that's open to all members. This means ARA is free of overt displays of politicking.

"We don't do that; we do policy," Thomas said.

IN FOCUS continued on page 10

ATA gears up for next round of central bargaining

ATA News Staff

Work continues on securing local agreements for teachers in 51 of the 61 bargaining units, but that will not hold up preparations for the next round of central bargaining. The two-year agreement reached last spring between the Alberta Teachers' Association and the Teachers' Employer Bargaining Association will expire on Aug. 30, 2018.

The Association's Central Table Bargaining Committee (CTBC) is already well on its way to preparing for the next round of bargaining.



Jason Schilling,
ATA vice-president

"There is lots of work to be done," says new CTBC chair and Association vice-president Jason Schilling. "We have already put together a research plan to collect information from teachers and a communications plan to ensure that members stay informed."

Schilling says that the committee's work has now turned to building a survey to find out about teachers' needs in bargaining, which will then be used to build the opening proposal.

"List bargaining starts in March," Schilling said. "And then we anticipate starting central negotiations sometime around May."

The *Public Education Collective Bargaining Act* prescribes a three-phase negotiation process that begins with list bargaining to determine whether specific matters will be discussed in central negotiations or held for local negotiation, followed by negotiations on the central matters and then negotiations at the local tables. The act outlines timelines specific to each phase and states that list bargaining must begin before the end of February.

Schilling says that it is very important for teachers to be engaged and ready to participate.

"Our work will be led by teacher voice," he said. "We will send out a survey in January and then we will start to build the opening proposal."

Schilling said the team has listened to feedback and introduced changes to adapt the internal processes used in the last round, which was the first round under a new bi-level bargaining model instituted by the NDP government. For instance, he said that teachers will have a greater opportunity to review and provide feedback on the opening proposal for central negotiations.

He also said that the use of proven tools, like the Bargainers' Blog and telephone town halls, will be expanded to ensure that teachers are kept informed and engaged.

Joining Schilling on the Association's Central Table Bargaining Committee are ATA vice-president Jenny Regal, Edmonton McMurray district representative (DR) Darrin Bauer, North West DR Peter MacKay and South East DR Heather McCaig. ■



With a fresh 30-centimetre blanket of snow beckoning, vice-principal Robert Skulsky prepares to flop backwards onto the ground in order to create snow angels along with students at Walter and Gladys Hill Public School in Fort McMurray. Photo taken during recess on Nov. 28 by Grade 4 teacher Thania Breitzkreuz.

Teachers cool to further wage freezes, ATA president

Cory Hare
ATA News Managing Editor

With the provincial government touting messages of fiscal belt-tightening and public sector wage freezes, the Alberta Teachers' Association is answering with a simple counter message.

"Teachers feel that we have done our part on this, and I think it's time for our government to stop looking at the expenditure side to help get them out of this deficit situation. They need to look at the revenue side," said ATA president Greg Jeffery.



Rachel Notley,
premier

On Nov. 16 in a speech at the annual convention of the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties, Premier Rachel Notley said the next budget will see the government "carefully and compassionately tighten our belts."

And on Nov. 28 Finance Minister Joe Ceci suggested the government would like public sector unions to help the province's economic recovery by accepting no pay increases in their next collective agreements. By Dec. 1, Ceci was backtracking on his comment in communications with public-sector unions, saying that the government is committed to participating in free and open collective bargaining with its employees and with other unions representing public sector workers.

The province is currently in talks with the Alberta Union of Provincial Employees, the Health Sciences Association of Alberta and the United Nurses of Alberta. Ceci referenced last spring's two-year deal with teachers, which includes no salary increases, as an example that he'd like other unions to follow.

His comments came during a news conference in which he delivered a second-quarter fiscal update touting a robust economic recovery that will bump Alberta's GDP growth to four per cent this fiscal

"Referring to our last agreement seems almost like a warning to some of the other public sector unions; however, I'm going to choose to not take it as a warning to us because we've done our part," Jeffery said.

"We are going to have some expectations in terms of the next round of collective bargaining, and I don't think this announcement changes those expectations."

No new taxes

In a statement provided via email, Education Minister David Eggen stated that education is one of the most important investments the government can make.

"That is why, when the recession hit two years ago, we had a choice. We could have made things worse by throwing thousands of people out of work and cutting programs or services. Rather than choose the path of extreme and risky cuts that some are still calling for, we chose to support Albertans by investing in services like education and building new schools," Eggen stated.

The government is targeting \$400 million worth of in-year savings this fiscal year and has achieved \$300 million of this so far through administrative efficiencies.

"As we work to carefully balance the budget, we are targeting long-term operating expense growth below population growth plus inflation," Eggen stated.

"Our government has been clear in our commitment to protect and improve education and health care as we reduce the deficit responsibly."

On the tax front, in the early part of its mandate, the government increased the corporate income tax rate by two per cent and introduced higher personal income tax rates for Alberta's highest earners, measures that are expected to raise more than \$1 billion in 2017-18.

"With Alberta's economy emerging from one of the worst recessions in a generation and many families still struggling, our government is not planning to increase tax levels for families or businesses," Eggen stated.

Parental support needed

Jeffery said it's important to give the government credit for funding growth in student enrolment; however, he noted that cuts in other areas like ESL funding and credit caps for high school students have had an impact.

"It's death by a thousand cuts and the squeeze is being felt at the classroom level through increased class sizes," he said.

Last month the Association launched a campaign to raise awareness of the issue of class size and complexity. The campaign is aimed at influencing the government's budgetary process and has generated considerable interest among teachers.

"What will truly make a difference is if parents choose to become involved in that conversation," he said. "Certainly teachers have an opinion and they live it every day, but parents have a vested interest, I think, in class size in this province and we need them to be telling the government their stories as well." ■

Meeting scheduled

The government is beginning budget consultations with stakeholders in the next few weeks to discuss Budget 2018. ATA president Greg Jeffery has been invited to attend a prebudget consultation meeting with government representatives in mid-December.



Stay informed

Teachers can stay informed of all bargaining developments and news by ensuring that they have a login for the Association website at www.teachers.ab.ca.



"Alberta children should not have to pay for the shortfalls in government revenue."

—Greg Jeffery, ATA president

year rather than the 2.6 per cent that was forecast in last spring's budget. The deficit is now forecast at \$10.3 billion compared to the \$10.5 billion that was forecast in the first-quarter update.

Rather than focusing on spending cuts, the Association believes the government should look at increasing revenue by adjusting its tax regime. If Alberta's tax regime was in line with that of B.C., the next lowest taxed province, the government would bring in an additional \$8.7 billion in revenue, Jeffery said.

"Alberta children should not have to pay for the shortfalls in government revenue," he said.

With the Association set to begin the next round of central table bargaining in the new year, Jeffery is choosing to ignore government talk of wage freezes.

Future uncertain for international exchange programs

ATA News Staff

Teacher and student exchanges administered by the Alberta Teachers' Association could cease to operate beyond next year due to a funding cancellation by Alberta Education.

Staff of the Association's International Education Exchange Program (IEEP) have been advised that Alberta Education will not renew its contract with the ATA once it expires on June 30, 2018.

"This decision is simply short-sighted," said ATA president Greg Jeffery. "Exchange is an outward-looking collaborative activity that helps us learn about the international community and become active global citizens."

The IEEP program manages exchanges for teachers and administrators to numerous overseas locations, including Australia, Germany, Spain, Denmark and the United Kingdom. It also offers high school student exchanges to Quebec, Germany, Japan, Mexico and Spain.

Under a partnership agreement reached in 2010, the Association administers the program under contract to Alberta Education.

Over the past 15 years, the program has extended exchange opportunities to teachers and students in more than 50 school districts. This year the teacher exchange program has participation from more than 20 districts and the student exchange program from more than 15.

While details remain sketchy, it appears that the department intends to download the responsibility and costs of the international exchanges to individual school districts and participants, Jeffery said.



Since 2010, the Alberta Teachers' Association has administered the International Education Exchange Programs (IEEP) on contract to Alberta Education. ATA staff has learned that the contract will not be renewed when it expires on June 30. The program is under review and it's not known what form it will take in the future.

"The Association has communicated to Alberta Education that it's willing to continue the partnership, particularly as it relates to teacher exchanges, but so far there are no indications of any substantial progress toward a solution," Jeffery said.

In a prepared statement provided via email, Education Minister David Eggen said Alberta Education is working with the ATA, school boards and other government bodies to review the model used to deliver exchange programs.

The government is looking to create a new governance model that will allow the department to co-ordinate certain exchange programs provincially while collaborating with school authorities to take on key operational functions, he said.

"While the roles and responsibilities within the exchange programs might look different, the ATA's role has not yet been defined. We value their input and experience as we proceed with this review," Eggen said.

Eggen also said the government values intercultural understanding and is committed to ensuring that teacher and international student exchanges continue.

Applications being accepted

The funding decision was communicated verbally to program staff in mid-October. Since IEEP is contractually obligated to continue operation until the end of the current school year, it will continue to seek, accept and process applications for exchanges that would

begin after July 1. However, potential participants should be aware that the Association can't promise continuing support for applicants heading out on new exchanges beginning or extending past the expiry of the contract, Jeffery said.

The IEEP partnership was established in order to save the program when Alberta Education was making budget cuts. In subsequent years, the Association has grown the program using its communication and outreach capacity and experience with teacher exchanges operated by the Canadian Teachers' Federation and Education International.

Jeffery reiterated the value of such exchanges: "When exchange students, teachers and principals are immersed in other cultures and education systems, they are not simply ambassadors showcasing the quality of Alberta teachers or our province's education system on the world stage, they return to the province positioned to think critically and integrate their body of international educational experiences into making our province and its education system better for all."

The impending cancellation of the IEEP partnership will not affect the Association's commitment to Project Overseas, Masulita Uganda and Change for Children Guatemala, all of which the Association supports in conjunction with the Canadian Teachers' Federation. ■

For more information

Anyone with questions about the status of the programs can contact Alberta Education at 780-427-7219.

Finnish exchange delivers positive experiences



EXECUTIVE REPORT

J-C Couture

ATA Associate Co-ordinator of Research

"I don't want to be shy anymore. I want to be positive and do the best work possible and be outgoing at my workplace."

This was the sentiment expressed by Jiina Salomaa, a student from Turku Vocational Upper Secondary School in Finland. In 2016 Salomaa had spent a month living with two Canadian families as part of a network of six Edmonton high schools involved in the Finland-Alberta (FINAL) partnership program co-ordinated by the Alberta Teachers' Association.

Salomaa shared her view as part of a panel of Finnish students and teachers participating in the first Canada-Finland vocational network-training seminar held Nov. 9 in Turku, Finland. This inaugural summit hosted Finnish students, teachers and principals from Canada and Finland, officials from the Canadian Embassy to Finland and members of the Finnish National Agency for Education. Along with the FINAL network, for eight years these partnerships have included

municipalities from across Finland and three Canadian provinces: Alberta, Manitoba and Quebec.

Jean Stiles, the principal representative on the Association's international partnership steering group, represented Alberta schools at the summit.

"The work to establish international networks between schools in Canada and Finland seemed a natural fit as both our countries share common values and goals for education and for community life," Stiles observed.

Finland has shown a strong commitment to developing equity by broadening the parameters of success in school, student mobility and teacher autonomy. It has been involved in extensive partnerships within the European Union and beyond, including Canada, China, India and Japan.

Stiles said the presentations by students and teachers at the summit carried a consistent message.

"Throughout the day it was clear that amidst the volatility of environmental

challenges and increasing economic and political instability, both Alberta and Finland share a commitment to sustaining an inclusive society where the values of curiosity, empathy and human relationships are central to educational development," she said.

The summit presentations and demonstrations illustrated how exemplary teaching and school leadership practices could directly involve students in informing educational change.

The day finished with a compelling presentation entitled Best Practices to Next Practices by one of the Finnish partnership leaders, who stressed that competence must become more than a series of decontextualized outcomes.

For example, Finnish students who spend a month in Canada are expected to return with a reflective journal documenting their learning experiences, including suggestions for the Finnish Agency for Education on how to enhance the internationalization of vocational education in order to strengthen the competitiveness and quality of Finnish working life.

Throughout the Turku summit, a number of participants expressed interest in expanding the possibility for more Canadian students to spend time in Finland just as the Finnish students experience a month exchange in a Canadian province. In this respect, Edmonton Public's school network has

been the only partnership to see Canadian students return to Finland and live with Finnish families for two weeks as they visited vocational schools.

Sustained student time in schools in other countries was a key element highlighted by both Andree Noelle Cooligan, the Canadian ambassador to Finland, and John Kaye of the Embassy of Canada to Finland.

"Co-operation by our countries is on a great level but it can still be enhanced and deepened," Kaye said.

"Co-operation by our countries is on a great level but it can still be enhanced and deepened."

— John Kaye, Embassy of Canada to Finland

This Turku summit continues some of the critical work that has been undertaken between Finland and Alberta for the past eight years, said ATA president Greg Jeffery. The Association has been instrumental in supporting these international partnerships since 2010.

"Our partnership networks involving Norway and New Zealand continue to have positive impact not only in schools, but [they] have also helped to inform educational change in curriculum redevelopment, high school redesign and how we define student success," Jeffery said. ■



ISTOCK

Highlights from the legislature

Opposition and government spar over Catholic sex education

Kim Dewar
ATA News Staff

The fall session of Alberta's legislative assembly, which officially began Oct. 30, resumed sitting Nov. 27 after a one-week constituency break. Below are highlights of education and labour issues raised from Oct. 30 to Nov. 29.

Curriculum redesign

Oct. 30 - Angela Pitt (UCP—Airdrie) asked Education Minister David Eggen if government would release the names of those involved in the curriculum rewrite. Eggen noted that more than 35,000 people have participated in the curriculum review, which will be evidence-based. Pitt stated that children should not be used as tools to push the NDP world view and expressed concern that the social studies curriculum will be free of important history. Eggen suggested the UCP would out kids who are gay and also "out" teachers who are writing curriculum. Eggen added that he intends to protect teachers and professors from Twitter attacks by Jason Kenney's "attack dogs."

Catholic school sex education curriculum

Oct. 30, 31 and Nov. 7 - Ric McIver (UCP—Calgary-Hays) and Leela Aheer (UCP—Chestermere-Rocky View) questioned Premier Rachel Notley about her remarks in response to a proposed Catholic sex education policy. McIver asked Notley to apologize to the Catholic community for alleging that Catholics "condone marital rape." Notley noted that the Catholic education curriculum document in question contained some "very concerning statements" that discriminated against sexual minorities and also discouraged safe health practices. Notley said it was important for her to clarify how government would respond to the document.

Nov. 7 - Ric McIver (UCP—Calgary-Hays) asked Education Minister David Eggen if he believes that Catholic schools intend to teach and promote marital rape. Eggen responded that neither he nor the government suggested that and added that the member was simply trying to score political points with his accusation. Eggen concluded by reiterating government support for choice between public, Catholic, charter, home-schooling and francophone schools.

Indigenous curriculum content

Oct. 31 - Eric Rosendahl (NDP—West Yellowhead) asked Education Minister David Eggen how the ministry will ensure that all students learn to respect and understand Indigenous peoples. Eggen answered that as of June 2016 government is building new mandatory curriculum including First Nations, Métis and Inuit culture teachings throughout all grade levels in all subject areas. He added that together with the national Truth and Reconciliation Commission, the ATA, First Nations,

and post-secondary institutions, the government is building authentic culture and language to teach.

Tommy Douglas book read in schools

Oct. 31 - Angela Pitt (UCP—Airdrie) asked Education Minister David Eggen about the appropriateness of NDP MLAs reading the Tommy Douglas story *Mouseland* to Alberta students during a recent classroom visit. Eggen answered that it's important to have Canadian content in curriculum and that Douglas is a celebrated Canadian. Pitt asked if Eggen would denounce the reading of "propaganda" and demand that his colleagues cease their behaviour immediately. Eggen noted that as a teacher, he believes it's important not to ban books.

School construction

Nov. 6 - Thomas Dang (NDP—Edmonton-South West) asked Education Minister David Eggen what the government is doing to ensure that schools are equipped for children to perform their best. Eggen, noting that the P3 model used in the past has proven to be deficient, answered that Alberta is in the largest infrastructure build of schools in the history of the province. Dang asked what the minister is doing to ensure that there is sufficient funding for teachers for student growth. Eggen answered that government has funded for student enrolment.

Diabetes support in schools

Nov. 7 - Karen McPherson (AP—Calgary-Mackay-Nose Hill) asked Health Minister Sarah Hoffman why government has not created policies to work with schools and parents in order to address the needs of diabetic students. Hoffman answered that progress has been made with Type 2 diabetes but there is room for improvement with Type 1. Education Minister David Eggen added that government is looking into it further and noted the importance of funding education properly and not making deep cuts.

Advanced placement courses for rural students

Nov. 15 - Glenn Van Dijken (UCP—Barrhead-Morinville-Westlock) asked Education Minister David Eggen why advanced placement programming is not available in rural areas. Eggen said the programming is very worthwhile, and expressed a desire to look for ways that government could provide it to all students in the province.

School nutrition programs

Nov. 28 - Barb Miller (NDP—Red Deer-South) asked Education Minister David Eggen about the success and cost of school nutrition programs. Eggen answered that last year there were 14 school districts taking part and each one received about \$250,000. Eggen noted that the pilot program fed about 5,000 students per day and now, with the program having expanded, it's feeding more than 22,000 students daily. ■

Staffing a top priority for CIF projects

ATA News Staff

The Association's current #MyClassSizeIs campaign is drawing attention to not only the size of Alberta classrooms but also the complexity of student needs that exist within them. Through social media, teachers are sharing information about their classrooms to raise awareness of learning and teaching conditions.

Some teachers have reported having more than 10 students over the recommended class sizes and wide ranges of student needs to meet. ATA president Greg Jeffery hopes teachers like these will get some relief this school year with the \$75-million Classroom Improvement Fund (CIF).

"It seems every year Alberta classrooms get more challenging," Jeffery said. "Even in the centres where classrooms aren't getting bigger, they are getting more complex because then you have combined grade levels. I'm hopeful the CIF will help teachers across the province get whatever resources, training and supports they need to meet the needs of students in their classrooms."

Some boards have not publicly shared a lot about how their CIF committees have decided to spend their funding. Others have shared information with the media or have made mention of it in reports or meeting minutes posted on their websites. Information from a sampling of school boards indicates that staffing — certificated teachers and support staff — is a priority. Money has also been earmarked for professional development, as well as for classroom materials, resources and technology.

Northern Lights Local No. 15 president David Ripkens made sure teachers had input into how the CIF would be spent in Northern Lights Public Schools.

"We polled the local membership soon after the announcement about CIF was made," Ripkens said. "Teachers made it

What is CIF?

The Classroom Improvement Fund (CIF) was part of the central table agreement reached between the Alberta Teachers' Association and the Teachers' Employer Bargaining Association last May. The one-time grant is to be distributed among Alberta's 61 school boards based on 2016/17 student enrolment. The amount of funds allocated to school boards ranges from \$13 million (Calgary Board of Education) to \$149,000 (Northwest Francophone Education Region).

To receive the funds, school boards and teachers had to strike a committee to jointly develop a proposal for how the money will be used in their school jurisdiction. The deadline to submit the proposals to Alberta Education is Dec. 15.

clear that kids should have equal opportunity to benefit from the classroom improvement funds. For some that now means more teachers in their school; for others, it means literacy or technology resources at their fingertips."

Ripkens is content that the Northern Lights CIF committee (made up of an equal number of board and teacher representatives) did what was best for students.

"Being granted CIF money was not a foregone conclusion," he said. "The collaborative relationship between the ATA local and the school board created the conditions to make it happen. Kids get to reap the rewards. This is a textbook win-win." ■

A sampling of CIF proposals

School board	CIF amount	In the proposal	Source
Christ the Redeemer Catholic Schools	\$1,262,000	\$600,000 staffing \$229,000 professional development during summer months \$750 per school for "classroom improvement products"	Board meeting minutes Sept. 12
Golden Hills School Division	\$820,000	Projected allocation: 51% certificated staffing 39% support staff 7% substitutes and other	Board budget report June 20
Pembina Hills Public Schools	\$797,000	Cover shortfall in supports for students with learning and behaviour needs, including teachers, program assistants, resources and PD	Barrhead Leader Oct. 17
Northern Lights Public Schools	\$736,000	Hiring additional teachers to address areas of need, e.g., assisting small rural schools with multiple-grade-level classrooms Hiring support staff Hiring of board assessment consultant Resources and materials	Board media release Nov. 1
Grande Yellowhead Public School Division	\$594,000	Almost 80% of funds toward new materials for individual schools; the rest for in-house teacher PD initiatives	Board media release Oct. 20

Teacher's Pet

Critters large and small entertained and educated



LISA

Mammoth donkey

Owner: Louise Givens, assistant principal, Monsignor J.J. O'Brien School, Calgary

Lisa is a wonderful companion who enjoys figuring out the job I'm trying to do, whether it's opening or closing a gate while riding her, training her sister to ride alongside us or moving cattle. Lisa focuses on the task and makes things easier for me. Trail rides on her are fun and enjoyable, and I trust her instinct to find a safe path. There is no better way to spend a day than with her.

Training a donkey has taught me that patience, relationships and trust are at the forefront of any progress I hope to make. Donkeys only do things they feel are safe; it is my job to make sure she feels safe and trusts me before she will do anything new, much like children, who learn better when they know they are in a safe environment and trust their teacher. Rewards for "baby steps" are critical to both donkeys and kids, and without patience, you can't get far with either.



ALFIE

Holland lop bunny

Owner: Heather Morren, Grade 4, Inglewood Elementary, Edmonton

Alfie is awesome because he has a fun personality. In the morning he runs laps around me for attention. When I exercise he comes and cuddles with me (and gets in the way). He also loves to cuddle on the couch (especially when I have candy).

Alfie is great for helping me relax at the end of the day. He also comes into the classroom about once a semester to visit with my students. They love when he visits.



LUNA AND IRIS

Abyssinian guinea pigs

Owner: Esther Clintberg, Grade 3, St. Catherine Elementary/Junior High School, Edmonton

Luna and Iris spend the week at school in my classroom, mostly sitting on a pad in a student's work area and being carried around while the student works.

They were adopted from the Edmonton Humane Society, which has led to class discussions about organizations for social justice. They were also used in a discussion to help identify healthy and unhealthy foods. I have used them as pet therapy animals for a student having a hard day and as rewards for students working independently. They help to control the noise level in the classroom and have helped a student to focus on a 45-minute test. Luna and Iris, who are both girls, are very communicative with each other and the students.

Luna and Iris are well loved in my classroom and enjoy lunchtime when the kids bring them fresh veggies and fruit from home. They are probably very glad to come to my home on the weekend when they get to run and eat all day.



GRAVEL

Domestic shorthair cat

Owner: Jill Rauscher, Grade 1, Eleanor Hall School, Clyde

This summer, my husband and I found a newborn kitten in the middle of a gravel road and have nursed it over the last few months. As part of our science unit, *Needs of Animals and Plants*, I received permission from our administration and parents to have our kitten join us in class.

Besides helping us with science, Gravel is helping the children learn about animal body language and how to regulate their own behaviour, and he has given them an audience to practise their reading. Gravel has also been used elsewhere in the school to help with behavioural concerns and for speech therapy. In fact, Gravel is so amazing that he was able to get one of the nonverbal students in our pre-kindergarten program to talk!

and small keep teachers nd grounded.

We asked teachers to send in a picture of their pet, along with a summary of how the animal is special and helps them in their profession. Here are just a few responses:



DAISY

Golden retriever

Owner: Jocelyn Littlefair, Assistant principal, A.E. Bowers Elementary School, Airdrie

Last year, I engaged in a conversation with my school principal about the benefit of therapy dogs. She thought our school would really stand to benefit from one. I did a bit of research and decided that our family dog, Daisy, would have the perfect personality for this type of service. In April, Daisy and I became certified as a therapy dog and handler through both the Chestermere Therapy Dog Society and St. John Ambulance.

Since then, Daisy has worked at my school every Monday, Wednesday and Friday. She is available to work with any child whose parent has signed the permission form (which includes almost every child in the school!). She listens to children when they read and cuddles with them when they want. She asks them to take her for a walk when they need a break. She helps children who are "feeling big feelings" and greets families in the morning during supervision.

Daisy has been an invaluable addition to our school. We couldn't imagine A.E. Bowers without her.



DUDLEY

Pomeranian

Owner: Michelle Wile, Student services, Northland School Division, Peace River

My dog, Dudley, has been a part of the classroom and my career since I arrived in Alberta more than three years ago. Dudley has participated in the classroom as a special guest for the students, and was even part of a science experiment in the Grade 4 room last year! Dudley has posed for countless pictures and filmed a number of videos using a Go Pro camera, so the kids have some contact with him, even when he can't make it into the school. In my new position with Northland School Division I spend a lot of time travelling to a variety of schools in our division, and Dudley is my number one co-pilot on such adventures.

There are a number of things that make Dudley special. Dudley is a caring and loyal companion now that my son is grown and away at college. Dudley's companionship makes long trips on the road more fun and less lonely. Students love to hear stories about Dudley and see his pictures, so he is still very much a part of the classroom, even while I explore another area of education.



TEKA

Sun conure parrot

Owner: Ilana Manning, Grades 5-9 Music/Band, Dr. Martha Cohen School, Calgary

I'm a special birdie for several reasons. I'm an amazing dancer, well versed in both slow and fast dance styles. I am also a superb cuddler. I know my cuddling helps my owner Ilana relax after a long day at work. I also like to nibble her face and preen her eyebrows (this is a well-known, ancient parrot relaxation technique). I also like to rub my beak against her face. This means I love her, and I love Ilana a lot!

I am a big help to Ilana's career. I am her number one supporter. I have heard every right (and wrong) note she has ever practised on her various instruments, heard every piece she has arranged for her band students, and danced along to every piece she had to study throughout university. I am 100 per cent confident that my dancing is the reason she achieved such high marks on her music exams. In conclusion, you can thank me for her education and career successes.



BOBBY

American quarter horse

Owner: Chantal Laforest, Social Studies, English Language Arts, French as a Second Language, Lester B. Pearson High School, Calgary

Bobby is special because he is a very kind and versatile horse. Bobby is now 21 years old, and I've been riding him since he was five. He has been my partner in crime for 16 years, so he's been forced to dress up for a lot of different events, such as Halloween, Easter, Christmas and birthdays.

Bobby helps me in my profession because he teaches me how to be kind and patient by being kind and patient with me. He has helped me with my teaching because sometimes he doesn't understand things the way I'm trying to explain them to him, so I have to find another way. This is what I do in class. I draw on what my students already know and then trick them into building on it and learning something new.



STEVIE

Boxer

Owner: Diane Hansen, Student support consultant, Elk Island Public Schools, Sherwood Park

Stevie is very special to our family. She loves to run and play. She helps remind me to take time to have fun and enjoy life.

Flock to Facebook for more furry photos!

Check out the ATA's Facebook page for a photo gallery containing additional Teacher's Pet submissions: www.facebook.com/ABteachers

IN FOCUS

continued from page 4

Let's talk policy

Debates on policy motions are at the heart of ARA. These resolutions can originate from PEC or individual locals and establish the Association's position on a wide range of issues. Discussions at recent ARAs have dealt with issues such as Catholic education, international testing, child poverty and women in leadership roles.

ARA proceedings adhere strictly to Robert's Rules and unfold according to a carefully planned agenda, with the president, vice-presidents and past president taking turns as chair. The process can be confusing and intimidating for first-time delegates, as can stepping up to one of the microphones to express an opinion. Even veteran delegates can find this scary.

"It is still terrifying to stand up in front of 400 people and say this is right or this is wrong but I feel that my voice is heard by my peers by being at ARA," said Deanna Simmons, an outspoken delegate from Edmonton Public Local No. 37 who has attended three ARAs.

Although speaking at ARA can be intimidating, Simmons says the assembly provides a positive atmosphere.



Deanna Simmons
Edmonton Public
Local No. 37
delegate

"I've always felt a very supportive environment around me, whether or not my opinion agrees with the majority."

Even so, ARA is not completely free of friction, sometimes providing a special blend of conflict and collegiality. Some debates are emotionally charged, and attendees do their best to sway their colleagues with the best arguments they can muster.

"I've had some great verbal battles with very good friends of mine in the Association and once it's done, it's done," said ATA president Greg Jeffery, an ARA attendee since 1990.

"We're debating in the best interest of Alberta teachers and the assembly will eventually get it right. Maybe I'm on the winning side; maybe I'm on the losing side."

Sometimes during an extended debate the room is ready to move on but some delegates choose to continue speaking their minds, generating grumbles that fill the air and attendees' Twitter feeds. In these moments, it's usually just a matter of time before a delegate uses his or her turn at the mike to "call the question."

This brings about a vote and, if two-thirds of the assembly agree, further debate is suspended and the motion being debated is immediately brought to a vote. These decisions inevitably bring a counter-backlash both in the room and on Twitter from those who feel that democracy is being stifled.

Many ARA delegates are regulars, and some have a reputation for being powerful orators, such that the room perks up when they take their turn at the mike, Jeffery said.

ARA also provides its share of light moments. Retiring members of PEC, local presidents and long-time delegates are often regaled with parting words and gifts, some gag oriented. However, despite the regular moments of levity, the overriding mindset is that everyone is there to take care of business.

"It's not a big tea party," Thomas says. "The profession has some gravitas and you see it in action at ARA."

Good memories

ARA also delivers some moments that linger in the memory for years. One such moment for Thomas came in 2001, when the assembly adjourned so delegates could board a fleet of buses, head across downtown Edmonton to the Alberta legislature and hold a debate on the front steps. It was a time of budgetary constraints, and the assembly passed a resolution calling on the government to establish classroom conditions that would allow teachers to meet students' learning needs and to negotiate fair salary increases for teachers.

For delegates, ARA is important because it enables them to have a voice in the Association's operation and policies.

Another memorable moment for Thomas came in 2014, when then education minister Jeff Johnson made a brief appearance just two weeks after his Task Force for Teaching Excellence produced a report that teachers viewed as a blatant attack on the teaching profession. The mood in the room at ARA was very frosty, and Johnson received no applause. After he'd left, delegates passed a resolution declaring that Alberta teachers had no confidence in the minister.

"That was the headline and the lead story on the news all weekend and of course it didn't improve an already very poor working relationship," Thomas said. "But it also honestly reflected the views of teachers and teachers wanted that known."

For Jeffery, a standout moment is the budget debate during his first ARA in 1990. Back then the event took place during the spring break of the public system in its host city, either Edmonton or Calgary, and ran from Wednesday until Saturday. And in those days the budget was always heavily contested, prompting delegates to wager how late it would go.

Jeffery was a bit off when he selected 8:30 p.m. as the debate didn't end until after 1:30 a.m.

"It was crazy but fascinating," he said.

In 1994, ARA was moved to the May long weekend, running Saturday all day and Sunday from morning to 10:30 p.m. Any business that remains is taken care of on Monday morning.

For delegates, ARA is important because it enables them to have a voice in the Association's operation and policies.

"It's a democracy that you don't tend to see that often," Watt says. "More often our democracy is all about ... voting for somebody who's going to be our voice whereas this is actually voting about what we're going to do."

By the end of ARA, more often than not, exhausted participants leave feeling relieved and with a sense of unity and accomplishment.

"It's an exhausting three days but the sense of fulfilment I get is quite astounding," Watt says.

For Jeffery, as a table officer who sits on full display at the front of the room all weekend and who is available during down times to field questions from delegates, it's also a tiring but gratifying weekend.

"It's a good kind of tired when it's done." ■



CAROLINE HENDERSON

Three-year-old Claire Henderson reads a copy of the ATA News acquired from her mother Caroline, a teacher at St. Boniface Catholic Elementary School in Edmonton.

Get 2Know 2Learn.ca

Educational resources for teachers

Feature topic: Hour of Code and coding resources

Are you participating in Hour of Code this year? December 4 to 10 is the Hour of Code learning week.

2Learn.ca has curated resources to help you and your students get coding, whether you are in an elementary, junior high or senior high classroom. Visit the Create 2Learn coding page for apps (both iOS and Android), web tools and web apps that can help students from early elementary to high school learn the basics of coding.

Visit 2learn.ca/create/ProgCoT.aspx to access coding resources.

If you are looking for related media or lesson ideas, check out the teaching resources for coding. Click on the Teacher Support button on the right side of the page. You will find videos, articles and guides to becoming a coding teacher.

Apply now

for an ATA Fellowship or Scholarship



Applications are now being accepted for the following:

ATA Doctoral Fellowships in Education

- Two awards of \$15,000
- For members entering or in first year of a doctoral program in education

Nadene M Thomas Graduate Research Bursary

- One award of \$5,000
- For a member enrolled in a graduate program in education
- A research focus on teacher health issues and/or teachers' working conditions

John Mazurek Memorial—Morgex Insurance Scholarship

- One award of \$2,500
- For members who pursue relevant professional development

For more information and to apply

- Visit www.teachers.ab.ca>For Members>Grants, Awards and Scholarships
- Contact Barb Bossert barb.bossert@ata.ab.ca 780-447-9461 (Edmonton area) or toll free 1-800-232-7208

Application deadline:
Wednesday, February 28, 2018



The Alberta Teachers' Association

Principal abused position to violate relationship boundaries



PITFALLS AND PRECAUTIONS

Gaylene Schreiber
Secretary to ATA Professional Conduct Committee

Pitfalls and Precautions is a series that aims to educate teachers on professional conduct issues by highlighting situations addressed by the ATA Professional Conduct Committee. The purpose of the series is purely educational, so some non-essential information from the actual case may be omitted or changed.

A hearing committee of the Professional Conduct Committee declared a principal ineligible for membership for two years and recommended that the principal's certificate be suspended for two years after finding the principal guilty on three counts of unprofessional conduct for failing to uphold the honour

and dignity of the profession.

The committee heard that, in two different relationships, the principal had abused his position of power with a subordinate to attempt to manoeuvre the female staff member into an intimate relationship with him. The committee also heard that the principal had made a separate sexual advance on a third colleague. In this case, the principal exploited a mentoring relationship for personal gratification.

The female staff involved in these situations were affected in a number of ways. One felt emotionally and mentally abused while another indicated she believed her job

security was jeopardized. In the third instance, both the teacher who was propositioned and her husband were very upset about the overture.

The principal's manipulative behaviours were repeated and occurred over a period of several years. He adopted a stance of coyness to avoid detection by other school staff and created an untenable situation for the female staff involved. The committee noted, "The profession expects that school leaders will not act toward colleagues in a manner that causes personal or marital distress. This was not (a) youthful indiscretion, but an insidious and premeditated pattern of

behaviour that warrants a very significant penalty...The profession expects school leaders to act as role models for other staff, act in a manner that is trustworthy and that upholds the honour and dignity of the profession at all times."

Under the Association's by-laws, a teacher who is suspended from membership in the Association is not automatically accepted back into the profession upon the conclusion of a term of suspension. A suspended member may apply to Provincial Executive Council for reinstatement. Successful application for return to membership is very rare. ■

Change for Children teaching tour gears up for Guatemala

ATA News Staff

Last summer four Alberta teachers shared their skills, knowledge and experiences with teachers and students in Nicaragua as part of a Central American teaching tour. This coming summer, four more Alberta teachers will have the chance to do the same in Guatemala.

The teaching tour is a pilot project supported by the Alberta Teachers' Association

and Alberta-based Change for Children (CFC). It is in its second year and, though the destination has changed, the focus on facilitating the professional development of teachers in Central America is the same.

Tour participants will engage in hands-on training and information-sharing with local teachers at CFC partner educational institutions, community-based cultural centres and NGO partner organizations.

Travel days for the tour are next July 6 to 20. ■



The Change for Children program will send four Alberta teachers on a tour of Guatemala in 2018. It operated in Nicaragua last year.

To apply: Teachers who are interested in this unique professional development opportunity can submit an application to the ATA-Change for Children project before the deadline of Dec. 15.

Find the application form on the Alberta Teachers' Association website: For Members > Programs and Service > International Cooperation > ATA-Change for Children 2018 Teaching Tour.

Christmas gift ideas from your ATA library



Sandra Anderson
ATA Librarian

Library staff often see interesting products as we work to build our makerspace collection. We want to share with you some of our discoveries that really engage imaginations and that would make great Christmas presents this year.

3Doodler CREATE is a pen that works like a 3D printer and allows you to create dimension drawings using plastic as an "ink." For older children and adults, the pen can be had for \$120. **3Doodler Start** is a child-safe version of the pen that is available for \$70.

Bloxels are a great tool for physically and digitally creating video games. Builders use 320 blocks to create characters, objects and backgrounds that they photograph and upload to the free app. The price is about \$50.

Stikbot Zanimation Studio is a wonderfully inexpensive stop

animation kit that comes with three posable figures, a green screen background and props, and a tripod for a smartphone. The free app allows users to seamlessly insert any background into the green screen portion of the photos. You can find this kit for only \$25.

Google Cardboard is a fun 3D headset that will remind us of the stereoscopes many of us used as children. This item requires a smartphone or a newer iPod, to which users can download dozens of free apps. The demo app allows users to tour world capitals, visit museums and explore the Arctic. Our staff tried this headset and were amazed at how quickly an hour went by! Great for any age. There are many manufacturers for these headsets and prices range from \$10 to \$40.

MakeDo Cardboard Construction is one of our favourite kits for stimulating the imagination. It's a simple set of plastic screws with a screwdriver and a childproof plastic saw. Children can put together cardboard in entirely new ways to make amazing cardboard objects.

Start saving those cardboard boxes now if you plan to buy this kit! Sets start at \$18.

Makey Makey is a circuit board that can make almost anything into a keyboard you can attach to your computer. Want to play piano on a bunch of bananas? You can do that! Want to make a workable game controller out of playdough? You can do that too! Standard kits sell for \$60.

Ozobot Bits are little robots that will follow lines drawn with thick markers. Children can learn the concepts of coding by making the robots do tricks when putting dots of certain colours into their lines. More advanced programming can be done with Blockly software. A single robot is \$65; a set of two is \$120.

Snap Circuits Kits come with sturdy components that are used to create all kinds of electronic devices that can survive quite a bit of rough play. Instruction booklets provide directions for dozens or even hundreds of different projects (depending on the kit). Kits range from \$35 to \$120. ■



f CTF-FCE @CanTeachersFed www.ctf-fce.ca

CTF advocacy brings results

Ottawa – Last April, the Canadian Teachers' Federation (CTF) joined the Fédération nationale des conseils scolaires francophones (FNCSF) (National Federation of Francophone School Boards) in notifying the CBC ombudsman of their deep concerns about the educational value of the CBC series *The Story of Us*. In a joint news release, the organizations recommended that educators refrain from using the series unless the CBC made changes to avoid exposing students to an incomplete and distorted history of our country.

The CBC contacted CTF immediately to meet and discuss ways to move forward. This meeting took place June 29 at the CTF office in Ottawa. At

the end of the meeting, the parties agreed to work together in the review of the teachers' guide tied to the 10-part television series.

The 73-page teacher's guide, now available on the CBC Curio platform, is a vehicle for inquiry-based learning, and offers valuable ideas for developing students' critical thinking skills, for various media literacy activities and more. One of the guide's objectives is "to address several key aspects of the series that were criticized – specifically to explore pre-colonial Indigenous history, early settlements and the history of Acadians in what would become Canada."

Educators can use the series episodes in conjunction with the guide and the Facebook Live events: <https://curio.ca/en/collection/canada-the-story-of-us-plus-roundtable-discussions-2514/>. ■

TIME IS
RUNNING
OUT!

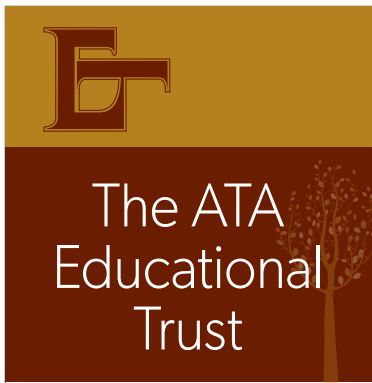
Complete the
fall convention
review survey
by Dec 31, 2017.

The Alberta
Teachers' Association



www.surveymonkey.com/r/CCR-Members

✉ Sign up for email to receive Members' Updates: <http://bit.ly/1uJm122>



The ATA Educational Trust is a charitable organization that has been supporting public education and providing grants to advance teaching practices in Alberta for over 30 years.

This year, the ATA Educational Trust will award over \$80,000 in grants. This includes **\$700 Dr B T Keeler Continuing Education Bursaries** for teachers wishing to advance their knowledge and teaching skills in a subject area through taking courses.

Application deadline:
May 1, 2018

www.teachers.ab.ca >
For Members > Programs and Services > Grants, Awards and Scholarships > ATA Educational Trust

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CTS WORKSHOPS

INTRODUCTION TO:

FABRICATION

SMAW/GMAW Foundry Sheet Metal
Workshop: Feb 24/25 (Sat/Sun)

PHOTOGRAPHY

Workshop: March 10/11 (Sat/Sun)

CABINETRY

Fabrication: \$350 Workshop: April 21/22 (Sat/Sun)
Photography: \$325
Cabinetry: \$325

FOR MORE INFORMATION AND REGISTRATION FORMS VISIT:
CTSWORKSHOPS.CA
Bill Brandley email: ctsworkshops@icloud.com

THE WORKSHOPS ARE HELD AT CCHS IN VULCAN. VULCAN IS SITUATED 1 HOUR SOUTH OF CALGARY AND 1 HOUR NORTH OF LETHBRIDGE.

SEASON'S Greetings

The management and staff of Morgex Insurance would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to Alberta Teachers for your dedication to our children's education.

Wishing you all the best for the holiday season and happiness for the new year.

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Teacher Growth, Supervision, Evaluation and Practice Review Workshop for Administrators

January 25–26, 2018

To register and for more information go to <https://event-wizard.com/events/TGSE0118/>.
Deadline for registration is **January 19, 2018**.



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January 24th-26th, 2018

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Tanis & Joshua Lovestone



"TIS is located in Macao, a safe city environment with many travel opportunities! I previously completed my AFX practicum at TIS and am now a first year teacher. I believe it's an excellent place to begin your career in education as TIS creates a collaborative and supportive environment for all teachers."

Caitlin Britton



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"Working at TIS has been an enriching experience due the school's strong sense of community and collaboration. It is a place where building positive relations with students and colleagues is easy and has encouraged me to stay abroad longer than I originally intended."

Jason Liu



Canadian International School
OF PHNOM PENH

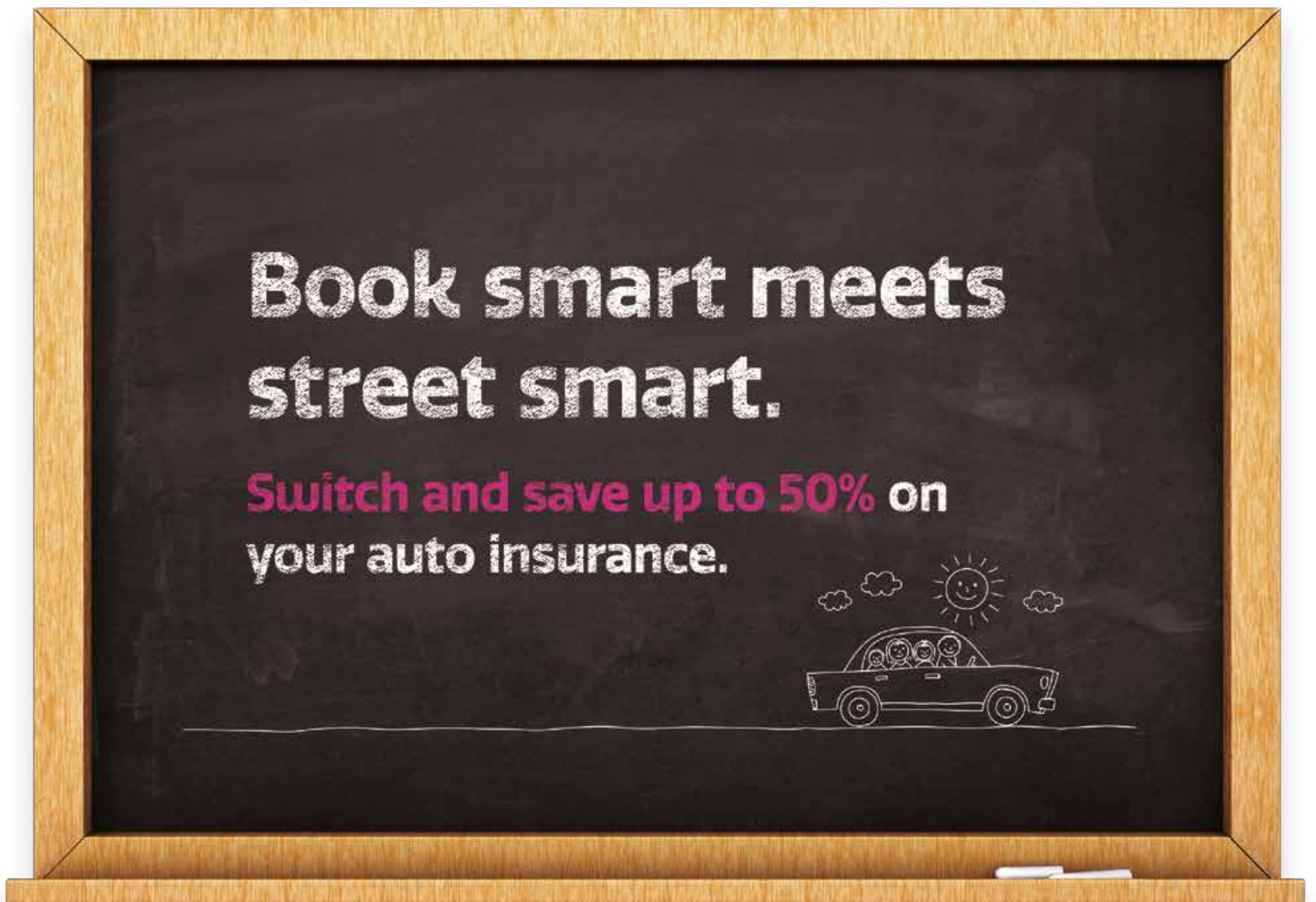
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Committed to Teachers in Alberta



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at www.teachers.ab.ca

NOTICES AND EVENTS

CLASSIFIEDS



Canadian
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Guangzhou

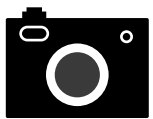
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Ms. Lorianne Tenove, Head of School, Lorianne.tenove@cisgz.com
Ms. Lucy Bertrand, HR Manager, Lucy.bertrand@cisgz.com



SHOOT US A SHOT! Have an education-related photo you want to share? Send it in!

If we use it as the main photo on our front page, we'll send you \$50! Email managing editor Cory Hare at cory.hare@ata.ab.ca.

Education society hosts author

Hear Laurel Deedrick-Mayne, Edmonton author and winner of the \$10,000 Alberta Readers' Choice Award, speak about her first book, *A Wake For The Dreamland*. DKG, an international women educators' society, invites you to its 10th annual author's breakfast to hear about the 10-year process of researching and writing the book, which takes place in Edmonton, Peace River and Europe during the Second World War.

Where: Robertson-Wesley United Church, Memorial Hall, 10209 - 123 St., Edmonton

When: Saturday, Feb. 3, 10 to 12

Cost: \$20

Questions or reservations: loraber@telus.net; clarkwinchesters@shaw.ca

Registrations open for Energize Oil Country program

The Energize Oil Country program is a health and wellness program aimed at children from Grades 1 to 9. The purpose of the program is to get kids active, with participants pledging to be active for 60 minutes per day over the course of the 10-week program. Kids are encouraged to keep up with the program with challenges and prizes throughout the season. The grand prize includes a class trip to Edmonton's Rogers Place to watch the Oilers take on the Vancouver Canucks.

More detailed information about the program can be found at www.edmontonoilers.com/energizeoilcountry.

Award program celebrates environmental excellence

Do you know an individual, group or business that has gone above and beyond in the protection of

the environment? Nominations are now open for the Emerald Awards, which recognize outstanding environmental achievements in 12 categories that encompass large and small businesses, individuals, not-for-profit associations, community groups, youth and governments. Nominations can be made at emeraldfoundation.ca.

Watersheds offer potential for project-based learning

The Caring for Our Watersheds program asks students in Grades 7 to 12 to answer the question: What can you do to help improve your watershed? Students research their watershed and create a written proposal on one realistic project idea. Proposals are marked by community judges and all students receive feedback, a participation gift and the opportunity to have their projects funded. Ten finalists (individuals or in small groups) are asked to prepare a five-minute verbal presentation, which they present at a final competition and award ceremony. Prizes ranging from \$300 to \$1,000 are available to finalists and their schools.

Caring for Our Watersheds can be applied to several science and social studies curriculum outcomes to provide a project-based learning opportunity. It is offered throughout the province by the City of Calgary, in the south, and the Battle River Watershed Alliance, in central and northern Alberta. Program ambassadors are available to visit classrooms for a free presentation on watersheds and the Caring for Our Watersheds program.

For more on the program, visit CaringForOurWatersheds.com.

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TALENT

December 5, 2017 | Volume 52, Number 8

'Tis the season

WE ASKED TEACHERS

What is the all-time favourite Christmas present you have ever received and why?



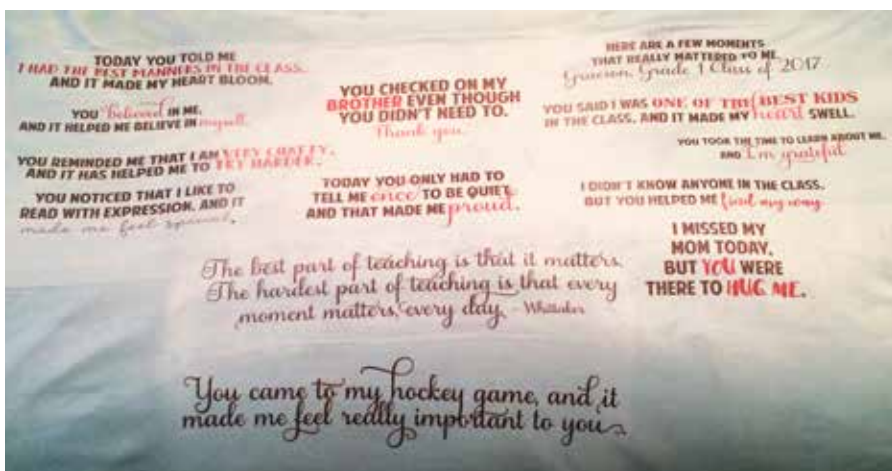
SUPPLIED

**LISA DEBOW
(LEBOUTHILLIER)**

I had moved from New Brunswick to Alberta a few years ago and greatly missed my two daughters, who were still living in NB. I often shared stories of my daughters with my students over the course of the year. My second year teaching in Alberta, one student gave me a custom-made tree ornament with our family name at the bottom and each of my three daughters' names and mine, painted above four elves cuddling in a big bed. I was beyond touched as it was going to be the first Christmas without my girls. This student knew my heart was with my daughters, and her thoughtfulness really made me tear up and smile.

JENNIFER EILEEN

My favourite was a swim pass.



SUPPLIED

ANNE NICHOLSON

A cozy blanket with quotes from one of my students about things I had done and said throughout the year. It's a real treasure! Thanks, Graeson.

AMY MALKE

From two students, one whose last name was Button, the other Penny. They were best friends and super cute together. For Christmas they made me a picture frame of them and me smiling with buttons and pennies and gold bits all around and the words "Best Buds" all written in their goofy Grade 2 writing. Those boys are 23 now. I'm old, but we still keep in touch.

SHERRI SIMMONDS

A student hand-knitted an infinity scarf. She explained how she chose the colour based on what she saw me wear and what I liked — so perceptive and thoughtful.

ODESA NGUYEN

For four years I taught music to a student with special needs who was never able to participate in the Christmas concert. He loved music and could sing a bit of the song and knew all the actions, but being on stage with the lights and the crowd was overwhelming. In his last year at the school his classroom teacher and EA and I were all in tears as we watched him finally perform with his class in his very first concert. His mom came up to me in the hallway a few days later and gave me a box of chocolates and told me she always wanted to see her son perform but never thought he could stay on the stage. I can still picture his smiling face and excitement whenever I plan a Christmas concert.

HEATHER QUINN

My mom. Fifteen years ago in early November my mom had a class five aneurysm and wasn't expected to survive. On Christmas Day we celebrated together as a family in the Glenrose hospital, where she was getting rehabilitation and physio and relearning many things. That Christmas the gifts we exchanged were meaningless compared to still having her with us.

CHERRA-LYNNE OLTHOF

My favourite Christmas present (because it made me laugh so hard) was two and a half Chicken McNuggets. It was based on a McDonald's advertisement at the time. The boys were so proud to "present" me with this gift. Later on they gave me my real gift — a porcelain Santa figurine — but the McNuggets have always stuck in my memory.



SUPPLIED

BRENDA PARKER

My first teaching position was on a fly-in reserve in northern B.C. I made a real effort to connect with the families of my students and to become part of the community. Just before I left for the Christmas holidays, one of the mothers brought me a beautifully wrapped gift. Since I wasn't expecting any gifts, I was touched by her thoughtfulness. I was even more touched when I opened the gift to find a beautiful Bradford Exchange plate, with a wintery scene that was reminiscent of the little community where we lived. There was nowhere to shop in the community, so I have no idea how she got the gift ... she must have either ordered it in or purchased it on a rare trip out. It brought me to tears at the time and now, 23 years later, it is still displayed in a special frame in my home. It was the first gift I received as a teacher!

NICOLE MOONEY

My favourite was a reindeer made out of a candy cane. I teach high school and have never before or since gotten a handmade craft for a gift. I was incredibly touched that my student took the time to make it for me.

BRITTANY MARIE

It was my least favourite at the time, but the year I was 17 my mom got me a sewing machine. I was so disappointed that morning, but I've really come to treasure it now. I've made many quilts and given them to people I love, which has made me so happy!

LARA RIPKENS

I got a series of letters one year from students, past and present, detailing what I meant to them and how I positively affected them (this was when "What does a teacher make?" was spreading through social media). Still get teary-eyed looking through them.

LESLIE CAMPBELL

A single nickel wrapped in sparkly paper and given to me by a wide-eyed Grade 1 boy I will never ever forget. We learn the biggest lessons from the smallest people.

AMBER NICHOLSON

My favourite was from a student in Grade 6 who took time to make me homemade bath salts to relax with while she served a dinner at a shelter in my name. Very thoughtful!

COURTNEY FOOTE

My engagement ring!