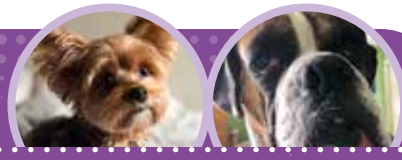


TEACHER'S PET

Keeping calm with furry friends like Pebbles and Jiminy Cricket. See page 12.



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VS
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2018 PROVINCIAL BUDGET
See page 3.

ATA NEWS

The Alberta Teachers' Association



April 10, 2018 | Volume 52, Number 15

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Talking tech

Leading experts explore the pitfalls of the digital age.

See story on page 5.

CORY HARE

Time for a budget reno

Reliance on resource revenue not a viable long-term strategy.

Read Jonathan Teghtmeyer's editorial on page 2.

Real cost pressure

Province delivers good education budget but doesn't address inflation.

Read Dennis Theobald's Q&A on page 2.

Mental health matters

Teachers' top priority should be their own well-being.

Read Viewpoints on page 3.



Finish strong down the home stretch

Spring is a time of learning ... for teachers.

Read This ... from ATA president Greg Jeffery on page 5.



In Focus

ATA workshops deliver invaluable expertise.

See story on page 6.



Breaking the Silence

New resource supports sexual and gender minority teachers.

See story on page 7.

teachers.ab.ca

WHAT'S ONLINE?

Register for seminar:
Legal Issues for System Administrators

Upcoming specialist council conferences

Respectful Schools Online Toolkit

Collective bargaining updates

Alberta needs a budget reno



EDITORIAL

Jonathan Teghtmeyer
ATA News Editor-in-Chief

\$96 billion. When last month's provincial budget landed, the thud you heard was the size of the anticipated debt that would accumulate by the time the budget is projected to balance in 2023–24.

Budget 2018, which highlighted the government's plan to bring revenue and expenses into balance over the next five years, was titled "A recovery built to last." It emphasised the government's efforts to diversify the economy while protecting public services, but I'm concerned the government missed a real opportunity to rebuild Alberta's fiscal foundation in a way that would truly last.

Government finances have been highly reliant on oil and gas revenue. In 2013–14, the government generated \$9.6 billion in resource revenue — accounting for 19.4 per cent of all revenue. The most significant reason Alberta's debt has grown in recent

years has been a collapse in that revenue stream. As average global oil prices fell from \$99 per barrel to \$45 per barrel over the following two years, resource revenue dropped to just \$2.8 billion — making up only 6.5 per cent of revenue.

This meant the deficit grew and so did Alberta's debt.

From bottomed out oil and gas revenue moving forward into economic recovery, the timing was perfect to put the budget on a new fiscal footing that would remove the dependence on oil and gas. Done correctly, future resource earnings would not need to be used for general revenue, but could instead be devoted to longer term financial prosperity through investing in capital projects, paying off debt or increasing savings, via the Heritage Trust Fund, for example.

However, in order to do that and balance the budget, government revenue would need to be supplemented in other ways. Fortunately, there is room to do that.

Alberta has by far the lowest provincial taxes in the country. Estimates contained within the budget's own documents state that Alberta would raise an additional \$11.2 billion in revenue while still maintaining the lowest taxes in Canada if it adopted the tax rates

used in British Columbia. The budget documents frame this as an "advantage," but it is actually a disadvantage.

Our irrational obsession with having the lowest possible taxes ensures that we will never have enough revenue from reliable sources to pay for core government programs and services. Keeping taxes so low ensures we will always rely on natural resources to supplement general revenue. Which consequently means that the security of education funding will also follow the volatility of oil prices.

Some will argue that out-of-control spending is actually why Alberta has large deficits and ballooning debt. However, reports from the Parkland Institute have shown that per capita expenses in Alberta tend to be middle-of-the-road compared to other provinces. And when spending is viewed relative to GDP (which corrects for higher costs and greater affordability of public services), Alberta is consistently the lowest spending jurisdiction in Canada.

Growth in spending is hardly out of control either. In the past four years, government spending has largely tracked the rates of population growth plus inflation.

In education, funding has increased to keep up with rapid student population growth over the past seven years, but the actual per-student grant rates have not kept up with inflation. Large instructional grants have received only one increase since 2011–12. This is equivalent to an 8.4 per cent cut in real per pupil funding over seven years.

It is no wonder, then, that class size reduction efforts have been essentially abandoned and supports for special needs are rapidly evaporating. This needs to change.

I am always amazed at how debt is often considered to be unfairly harming future generations, but the rapid sell-off of finite natural resources in order to sustain low taxes today is not. And neither apparently is the underfunding of education.

I wish that Alberta would truly make this a recovery built to last by rebuilding our budget with a fiscal foundation that's also built to last. However, to do that it needs to take a serious look at its irresponsibly low taxation levels.

Check out revenue.reno.ca to learn more. ■

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

Budget is good but not sustainable



Q & A

Dennis Theobald
ATA Executive Secretary

Question: What will the recent provincial government mean for Alberta teachers?

Answer: At a projected cost of \$8.4 billion in fiscal 2018, the provision of K–12 education in Alberta is the second largest functional expenditure of government, second only to the \$22.1 billion spent on health care. It accounts for about 15 per cent of the province's annual spending. Of course, the magnitude of this expenditure must be considered in terms of the enormity of the system and the resources it requires to provide some 700,000 Alberta students with high-quality learning experiences 200 days out of the year.

The recent provincial budget will ensure that new money is available to cover the continuing growth of Alberta's student population — projected to be 15,000 new students over the course of the year. This in itself is not a small commitment and should not be taken for granted. Before it was defeated in the general election of 2015, the Progressive Conservative government of Premier Jim Prentice was proposing to freeze funding, which would have forced

the education system to absorb additional students without any additional support. Accommodating the increased student population also poses a challenge, and the government has responded by budgeting \$393 million for 20 new school construction projects across the province.

However, it must also be remembered that student enrolment is not the only cost driver for education. Although inflation has remained relatively low in recent years, the incremental increase in the price of goods and services is exerting real pressure in the education sector. Failing to provide the additional funding necessary to compensate for these increased costs amounts to a cut that must be absorbed by the education system. To date, teachers and other school employees have borne much of this burden by accepting salary constraints, a "solution" that is not sustainable over the long term.

Adding to the pressure on the education sector are changing expectations and demands. Teachers continue to point out to whomever will listen that inclusion is not being adequately supported and that class sizes are growing beyond the targets first identified in 2004 by Alberta's Commission on Learning. While funding enrolment growth helps to provide stability, it does little to enable teachers and schools to establish conditions of teaching and learning that can best help every child achieve their individual potential.

Of course, the government is not unaware of these realities. The fundamental

problem it faces is that decades of dependence on uncertain resource revenues has created fiscal uncertainty and a structural deficit that surfaces whenever the value of energy exports falls. This in turn limits its ability to respond to pressures, however acute, for increases in program spending. As noted by my colleague Jonathan Teghtmeyer in his editorial, there is broad consensus among economists that the long-term solution to this problem is to broaden the province's revenue base, most likely by introducing a harmonized provincial goods and services tax.

As matters stand, of all the provinces, Alberta currently expects the least of its citizens as taxpayers — but its citizens still expect the best in education and other public services.

So what does the budget mean for teachers? It means that things will not get much worse in classrooms, but they are not going to be getting any better any time soon. Teachers now have an obligation and an opportunity to become involved in the political life of their province and in their communities to help change this reality. We need collectively to demand better from this government and from those who might aspire to replace it as well. ■

Questions for consideration in this column are welcome. Please address them to Dennis Theobald at dennis.theobald@ata.ab.ca.

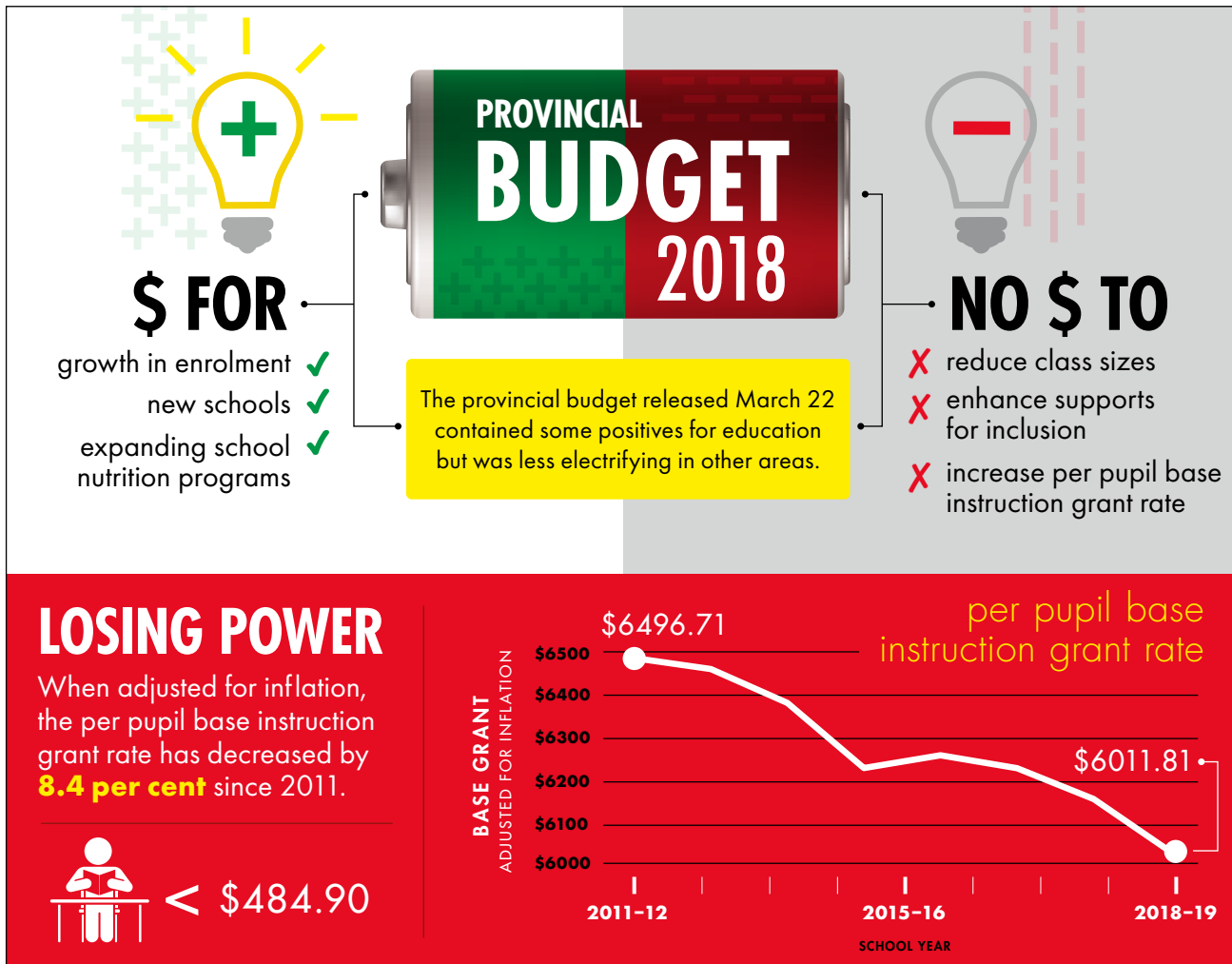
FOR THE RECORD

“What we feed our children's minds is as important as what we feed their bodies.”

- Dr. Michael Rich, expert on the impact of technology on children and youth

Read about his talk on page 5.





YOUR VIEWS

ON TWITTER

On Nick Falvo's Viewpoints column entitled "Alberta needs a sales tax"

Roger Doucet @RogerDoucet

Alberta doesn't need a sales tax, it needs a government that will live within its means. How about an article about the spending problem of the NDP? Show that you are not politically biased.

Jason Porteous @jwporteous

What in the world does this have to do with the teaching profession? I would like our ATA News directed towards improving the profession, not arguing for ANY political viewpoint. I pay good money for an association to be focused on itself instead of playing politics.

From technology lecture hosted by the Educational Technology Council

Carmen Glossop @carmenglossop

All media is educational! It's just as important to feed the brain as it is the body. It's the quality of the media that matters — Dr. Michael Rich.

Ed Pub Teachers @EdPubTeachers

"Kids hear 1% of what we say, but see 100% of what we do." — Dr. M. Rich on what parents need to do to model the behaviour that kids need to see to learn how to self regulate and limit their time on devices.

FACEBOOK FEEDBACK

On the provincial government's Budget 2018 for education

Mary Giampa D'Andrea

Very disappointing. Teachers will be spread thin and the quality of education will suffer. I feel so bad for all kids. Students won't get the time they deserve from their teacher because teachers will be putting out fires ... boo.

Scott Raible

Respectfully, this budget is far more supportive of education in our province than the UCP budget would probably be. We need to be aware of the political realities of the time we are in. Quite likely there could be a government change next provincial election and we will wish for a budget like this one.

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.

You need to matter most

Why the kids are the least of our worries



VIEWPOINTS

Jody Carrington
Clinical Psychologist

In the history of the world, we have always looked after the most sacred of our generation. We have recognized the elderly, respected those most talented by "rolling out the red carpet," and held in high regard those who led our nations (generally speaking). What about teachers? It occurs to me that some of the holiest work on our planet happens within the walls of our schools. Teachers guide our babes through their most formative years, often for more hours a day than their parents.

Increasingly, school divisions across this country have recognized the need to gain further insight into students' mental health. Particularly as school shootings and violence/threat risk assessments are on the rise, we are challenged more and more to figure out what is going on with kids these days. We are now beginning to understand that even if we have the most brilliant pedagogical lesson plans, fun white boards or strict classrooms, kids cannot learn unless they are emotionally regulated.

Over the past two years, we have talked a lot with educators about the need to "collect" a kid before being able to direct or teach them. If, for example, a kid has no stability in their life outside your classroom, is unsure if they can trust anyone, and is sure that no one believes in them, they will not be able to focus on even the most brilliant teaching plan.

As I work with educators in this country to understand students' mental health needs, what has become most apparent to me is that there has been little understanding of (or support for) those who do this important work: our teachers. Indeed, wouldn't it stand to reason that the same principles apply? If teachers feel unsupported, misunderstood, unappreciated and empty, they will have little capacity to help those they teach and care for every day.

What I do know for sure is that one of the most significant challenges we all face today is not increased "screen time," the threats of gluten, or even *Grand Theft Auto 5*. It is simply one thing: disconnection. At a time when we have the capacity to connect instantaneously to almost anyone on this planet, we have sadly never been more disconnected. We lack enough face-to-face, in-person connection with everyone in our lives — those we raise, live with, love, care for, teach. We are pressured to do "more with less" and rely on our significant advances in technology to ease this burden.

What cannot be replaced, however, is our biological need for personal connection. It is with eye contact and physical proximity that we answer the most significant question of all time: do I matter? The only way we answer this question of worthiness is based on the quality of the relationships in our lives.

Our next generation will only be able to give away what we give to them. In this generation, we

spend far less face-to-face time with our children than our grandparents did (just think about the difference in the square footage of their house and yours). Only when you have felt things like empathy, kindness and being apologized to can you give those away to someone else. If those of us caring for our babes on a daily basis are not OK, our kids don't stand a chance. Parents, caregivers and educators need to be the priority.

How do we do that? I am so honoured to be working with educators and administrators in this province to start thinking about this differently. How do we focus more on the people who teach our students? One step at a time.

Today, all I need you to think about is this: why do you do what you do? I want you to remember why you got into this business of nurturing most everyone's most precious commodity — children. And then I want you to remember that this is a job, a very important one, and one that some days you will rock at. Other days you will wish you'd become a Walmart greeter. Totally and emphatically OK.

I'd love to hear your thoughts. Find me at www.drjodycarrington.com. Stay tuned to some of our continued discussions within this province and this country. Your work is holy, teachers. It's an honour for me to have you read these words. Give the best you've got today to my kid (and every one else's), and it will be enough. We are so lucky to have you. ■

Jody Carrington, PhD, is a clinical psychologist and chief happiness officer of Carrington & Company.

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



Membership cards a symbol of perseverance

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, entitled From the Archives. 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.

The ATA archives is replete with treasures. Among the most precious are those that come to us directly from the organization's first general secretary-treasurer, John Walker Barnett and his family.

In 1914, Barnett built the family home on a corner lot in Edmonton's Queen Alexandra neighbourhood immediately across from the local school. The craftsman-style bungalow boasted a very modern (for the time) floor plan, wood-strip flooring, carved wood fireplace mantles, built-in seating and cabinetry. It was a comfortable, gracious home to the Barnett family for the next 32 years and it was at the family dining

The cards are, in effect, the ATA's first membership database.

room table (today on display at the provincial ATA headquarters) that the plans for the nascent Alberta Teachers' Alliance were drawn up, refined and implemented.

In the house was a den, and in that den was an unassuming walnut index file case. And in that case were housed the thousands of membership cards belonging to the very first teachers to see the need for, and the value in, joining together in collective action to advocate for public education and for better salaries and working conditions. They were willing to set aside \$5 a year, a significant amount during the Great Depression, to maintain a membership in the Alberta Teachers' Alliance.

Membership in the ATA was voluntary between its founding in 1918 and the passing of an amendment to the *Teaching Profession Act* by Premier William Aberhart's Social Credit government in April of 1936. With that amendment, membership in the newly-minted and renamed Alberta Teachers' Association became mandatory for all teachers paid by the public purse. These cards preserve the maiden and married names of teachers, their schools and sometimes the home addresses of the



This antique credenza, now housed in the ATA archives, is the original storage unit for thousands of membership cards dating back to the very beginning of the Alberta Teachers' Alliance.

pioneers of the teaching profession in Alberta. They are a treasure trove of information, a set of cherished artifacts and a cache of rich historical value.

Through a series of conscientious decisions and a great deal of luck, the case has been preserved with the membership cards intact. The cards are, in effect, the ATA's first membership database. And it is still in use today.

The archives routinely receives requests from genealogists and family historians seeking information on a relative who taught in that era. And the archives is, more often than not, able to provide information on long-lost ancestors. Regardless of their contemporary utility, however, these cards are a testament to the perseverance and commitment of forward-thinking teachers. ■

Program blends language and nutrition

SUCCESS STORIES

Erin Black
Red Deer Public School District

Smoothie Day is one of the most exciting days at Fairview Elementary School in Red Deer!

The monthly initiative allows English as a second language students to prepare and serve 237 nutritious smoothies to the entire school.

Fairview is one of Red Deer Public Schools' congregated English as a second language sites, and Smoothie Day is an opportunity for the students to be engaged, build a sense of community and learn the English language, all while having fun.

This is the second year the program has been in place.

"When we were selected for the Alberta Nutrition Pilot, we started working with a nutritionist from Alberta Health Services. We wanted to come up with something else in addition to breakfast and lunch delivery. We purchased the equipment to make smoothies so that we could continue to create nutritious choices," said Kim Walker, principal at Fairview Elementary School, adding the partnership with the nutritionist has been invaluable.

"She comes up with some of the most amazing recipes. She said that she can make anything nutritious taste delicious in a smoothie. And it's true! The



Trustees Bill Stuebing (left) and Dianne MacAulay join superintendent Stu Henry as Smoothie Day volunteers at Fairview Elementary School in Red Deer.

kids have had spinach, lentils, beans, chickpeas — you name it. She can make it taste awesome!"

Walker added the program is a great opportunity for ESL learners to practice English and for volunteers to come in and help.

"It creates such a sense of community because they are so proud of that program. The kids are proud and confident," said Walker. "As soon as one Smoothie Day ends, they are asking when the next one is."

The smoothie recipes are also published in the school's newsletters so

that families can make a nutritious snack at home.

"Our nutrition co-ordinator preps all of the vegetables and fruit, but the students measure the ingredients, read the recipes, they build the smoothies, pour them and deliver them. It is great to see the confidence grow in our ESL learners," said Walker.

She added this program would be a great one to add to any school, no matter the age of the students.

"A smoothie day would be a great leadership opportunity for students, even at the elementary level," said

Walker. "We've got students who help out anywhere between the ages of seven to 10. If you had the opportunity to purchase blenders and then work with a local nutritionist and community partners for the fruit and vegetables, I think it is a great way to build nutrition into your school life."

Adventures in toast

Another program the school runs is Try Something Different On Your Toast Tuesdays.

"Our nutritionist picks the combination of things that go on the toast. The most popular thing last year was avocado with tomato slices," said Walker, adding kids have also tried things like apple butter as well as hummus on their toast.

"Both of these programs have been so successful, and it's great to see the joy on the children's faces. We all smile in the same language! Truly, it is a great way to teach, learn and try something that is both nutritious and delicious." ■

Erin Black is a communications assistant with the Red Deer Public School District.

CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

Success Stories is a new feature in the ATA News that enables teachers to share their successes with their colleagues. To submit an idea or an article about a new program or approach that you've instituted, please contact managing editor Cory Hare at cory.hare@ata.ab.ca.



CORY HARE

Psychologist and author Jean Twenge relates the findings of her research into the effects of technology on iGen, her term for the generation of young people born in the age of ubiquitous digital technology.

Technology overuse harmful to youth mental health

Jen Janzen
ATA News Staff

Are digital devices lighting our way, or are they making our lives darker?

That was the question broached by professors Jean Twenge and Michael Rich, who spoke on April 5 in Edmonton at a public lecture entitled "(Dis)Connected, Distracted or Addicted?"

"Seeing how much face-to-face interaction teens get is really important for knowing what's going on with their mental health," Twenge said.

And, at a time when digital devices are being used by teens up to nine hours per day, that face-to-face interaction is becoming increasingly limited, she said.

Twenge, professor of psychology at San Diego State University, has been studying generational differences for 25 years. Using a data set based on 11 million teens surveyed from 1966 to 2016, she spoke about the huge shifts she's seen in what she dubs the iGen — the generation born in 1995 and later, who have spent their entire adolescent lives in the presence of smartphones and tablets.

Twenge said there are many good trends within the data.

"We have so many things going for us right now, and for our kids. Fewer of us smoke, we're healthier, we know more about nutrition."

But today's teens are also more depressed, more isolated and experience more major depressive episodes than teens even 10 years ago. How did it change so suddenly?

The answer, Twenge says, lies in the sudden appearance of smartphones. In 2012, it became official that more than half of the U.S. population owned a smartphone.

When Twenge first started noticing these changes, she didn't immediately put the blame on digital media. She looked at economic factors, but found that teen depression was going up when the economy was improving.

"We'd expect that to be the other way around, that depression was linked to an economy that was falling apart," she said.

Teens' time online has more than doubled since 2006. Recently surveyed Grade 12 students say texting, social media and generally being online adds up to about six hours a day. It's a conservative estimate,

Twenge added, noting other surveys estimate the actual time is closer to eight or nine hours per day.

"It leaves less time for other things, such as seeing your friends in person," she noted.

Sleep deprived

Rich, a practicing pediatrician who is also associate professor of pediatrics at Harvard Medical School and associate professor of social and behavioural sciences at the Harvard School of Public Health, said he is seeing more young patients come in tired. They're worried about their memories because they're forgetting things in school.

He says much of the problem is simply lack of sleep. "You ask them if they're using their phones as alarms, but they're also staying up late texting. They're always online. And they have [their phone] on vibrate so their friend can send that all-important 'WTF' at three in the morning, and they will respond in 72 seconds to prove they still care."

Are we addicted to technology? Twenge said it doesn't matter if we call it addiction or overuse.

"Clearly, spending five or more hours a day online on your device is a problem," she said. "It's almost like the phone is using us. It should be a tool you use, not a tool that uses you."

What can we do?

On the question of what to do, Rich says it starts with awareness.

"We have to come to a place where we realize what we feed our children's minds is as important as what we feed their bodies."

He suggests that families observe a regular digital fast: for one day a week, put the smartphones and tablets away and engage with each other.

Twenge said keeping the phone out of the bedroom altogether is a must.

"If you have the phone by the bed, even if it's on vibrate, it's not conducive to sleep. If you use it for an alarm clock, I have some very simple advice: buy an alarm clock."

Instead of developing a killer app, Rich encourages his patients to develop what he calls their 'killer be's': be balanced, be mindful and be present.

Finally, he said, showing a slide of a power button, "this is the most important feature on your device. Make sure you push it early and often." ■

Research colloquium

The public technology lecture preceded the Association's day-long invitational research colloquium entitled "Growing Up Digital in Alberta: From Distraction to Addiction." Held on April 6, this event delved into the latest research on the effects of digital technology and featured numerous discussions on the topic. Among the experts involved were Jean Twenge, Michael Rich and the University of Ottawa's Valerie Steeves.

This...

from ATA President Greg Jeffery



Burning and learning down the home stretch



As you read this you will be in that time we refer to as the home stretch. The remainder of the school year after spring and Easter breaks have wrapped up and the *push* is on toward year end. I emphasize

push because there seems to be so much to do in the time that remains — productions, concerts, graduations, helping students prepare for the next phase of their educational lives, final exams and wrapping things up in your classroom.

It does not seem, however, like the time for professional development. After all, why would we have PD sessions at the end of the year as opposed to in the fall? Although this is a commonly held view, I disagree with it.

PD for teachers is hopefully not just for this year but is learning that affects our practice into the future. We should approach PD with the mindset that it's part of our commitment to lifelong learning and embrace it at any time, even after spring break.

During a recent trip to Australia I shared our PD work with two different teachers' organizations, and they were very interested in our model and committed to further conversation about partnering with us to improve public education through research and a professional development model. Now this may be because it's autumn down under, but I choose to think that it is because of the quality of our programs.

The rest of the world looks to us as a model for teachers' organizations, and even if PD opportunities come up in "the home stretch," we should take advantage. The rest of the world wants to be more like us, so happy learning, and I hope that together we can "finish strong" down the home stretch. Maybe part of the "burn" can include some learning for us as well. ■

I welcome your comments — contact me at greg.jeffery@ata.ab.ca.

CORRECTION

An In Focus article on the Southern Alberta Regional Office (SARO) that appeared in the March 13 issue of the *ATA News* incorrectly listed Harrison as the surname of SARO staff officer Keith Hadden. The article also stated that all SARO staff officers are assigned to the Member Services program area whereas Hadden has been assigned to Government. The article also referred to Kurt Moench as the SARO co-ordinator. His title is associate co-ordinator.

The *ATA News* apologizes for the errors. ■



STORIES AND PHOTOS WANTED

If something newsworthy is going on in your school, district or local, please let us know. We will also consider articles, photos and cartoons. Please email tips and submissions to managing editor Cory Hare: cory.hare@ata.ab.ca.

Workin' it

ATA workshops provide cost-effective expertise

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 instalment focuses on ATA workshops.

There's a point early on in the Kairos blanket exercise when it takes a serious turn and participants realize they're in for a rough ride.

"Without even consulting you, we made deals amongst ourselves and divided up control over you and your lands," intones facilitator Jessica Scalzo, playing the role of "The European" as she pompously strides amongst the workshop participants, who are cast in the role of Canada's Indigenous people.

"Usually, whichever nation discovered your land first took control with the blessing of the Christian church," Scalzo continues. "This practice is now called the 'Doctrine of Discovery.'"

Just like that, 18 workshop participants are transformed from jovial to stone-faced. It's the beginning of a powerful experience that, while not particularly pleasant, has made the blanket exercise one of the most popular of the more than two dozen workshops offered by the Professional Development program area of the Alberta Teachers' Association.

Designing and presenting workshops is a core function of the PD area. Addressing both teaching and leadership competencies, these workshops cover a wide variety of topics, including teacher wellness, creativity, assessment, classroom management, inclusion, residential schools and mentoring. The workshops are delivered by an instructor corps comprised of volunteer classroom teachers who have training, experience and expertise in particular topics.

"The really great part about our



CORY HARE

Staff from Madonna Catholic School in Strathcona County participate in the Kairois blanket exercise during a professional development day. So far this year the blanket exercise has been one of the most popular workshops offered by the ATA's corps of volunteer instructors.

workshops is that these are done by people who have relevance because they are actively engaged in schools themselves," says Nancy Luyckfassel, the executive staff officer who oversees workshop delivery within the PD program area.

These volunteer instructors are spread around the province. For a nominal fee of \$100, they can be booked to facilitate on-site workshops at schools, conferences, conventions and local professional development events. Several workshops can be delivered in French.

"One of the misconceptions that I want to help people with is we don't have a stable of instructors here at Barnett House that we send out. These are teachers that are in communities, in schools," Luyckfassel says.

Gibbons School vice-principal Darla

Clark has partaken in the program's services three times this year. She says the instructors go beyond the "standard formula" of delivering content from the front of the room by making the workshops very interactive.

"I cannot say enough about the PD that they present," Clark says. "You just can't beat the price for the amount of knowledge that they can bring to us."

Madonna School principal Karen Antoniuk is also a supporter, having participated in the blanket exercise a couple of times.

"If you want some great PD for your staff, check this out," she says.

So far this operational year, the instructors that Luyckfassel oversees have delivered more than 330 workshops to more than 12,000 participants.

Besides the blanket exercise, the most popular bookings this year are workshops on classroom management and Indigenous history/culture.

Her area is constantly updating existing workshops and creating new ones to respond to demand from the field and tap into education trends. In development for next year are workshops on metacognition and mindfulness, coding, trauma-informed practice and three new Indigenous-focused workshops.

Given how much of the work is done in-house, she says the program is an example of members' fees at work.

"People often ask, 'where do my dues go?' This is a great way that they can access professional learning through us," Luyckfassel says. "We are here for them."

Teaching makes for great learning

Cory Hare
ATA News Managing Editor

For Jessica Scalzo, being part of the ATA's instructor corps is a learning experience like no other.

"It's some of the best PD you could ever do because the corps is built on people who are experts in their fields," Scalzo says.

Specializing in diversity, equity and human rights, Scalzo is one of 53 volunteers who make up the Association's corps of trained instructors. These teacher volunteers are recruited based on a three-year term and can serve up to three terms.

While the time commitment can vary greatly, instructors typically deliver between five and

10 workshops per school year, says Nancy Luyckfassel, the executive staff officer who recruits and oversees the corps members.

The work of the corps instructors tends to be concentrated around the beginning of the school year, specialist council conferences, teachers' convention season and district PD days. When an instructor is deployed, the Association covers the cost of a substitute so there is no cost to the instructor's employing board.

Each year the Association holds a recruitment drive to replace departing corps members. The next intake is in December. "I treat it like a job interview," Luyckfassel says. "It is rigorous to join."

Scalzo says that, as part of the corps, it's a privilege to



CORY HARE

Instructor Jessica Scalzo plays the role of "The European" during the popular Kairois blanket exercise workshop.

meet and learn from teachers in their communities.

"It's really inspirational to see how passionate people are about what they do with their students and with their colleagues — you can't help but have your own practice be shaped by that experience." ■

More workshops, courses and presentations

Besides the Professional Development program area, the Government, Teacher Welfare and Member Services program areas also each offer a selection of workshops, courses and presentations.

In Government, there are about a dozen workshops on topics such as the latest research in education, student mental health, emerging technologies, politics, women in leadership and the effects of domestic violence on children. Teacher Welfare offers more than a dozen workshops focused on various aspects of teachers' working arrangements, such

as benefits, employment insurance, maternity leave, pension and retirement. In Member Services, the main workshop is entitled Healthy Interactions and is focused on conflict management. However, the program area also offers more than two dozen presentations for administrators and teachers.

"We have executive staff officers who are experts in each of these topics, and as former classroom teachers, they are also expert at delivering the content in a way that's relevant to teachers," said ATA president Greg Jeffery. ■

A list of workshops and presentations currently being offered can be found on the ATA website. Click on For Members > Programs and Services > Workshops and Presentations.

Public money feeds into private surplus

Webber Academy receives \$5 million per year in public money while sitting on \$40 million surplus

COMMENTARY

James Wilt, Progress Alberta
Special to the ATA News

Part of a Progress Alberta campaign calling on the government to defund elite private schools, this commentary is adapted from an article that appears on Progress Alberta's website at www.progressalberta.ca.

Private schools are often criticised for being exclusive enclaves that enable students of well-heeled parents to access powerful networks. Few exemplify that as much as Calgary's Webber Academy, which charges \$18,000 per year for tuition as well as a \$6,000 enrolment deposit — and received more than \$5 million in public funding in 2016–17.

Webber Academy was founded in 1997 by Neil Webber, a four-term Progressive Conservative MLA who served under both Peter Lougheed and Don Getty.

In a recent interview, the 81-year-old school president shared his rationale for founding Webber Academy.

"I thought, wouldn't it be nice some day to have a school where you have generally the top 25 per cent of the population for aptitude and the desire to learn," Webber said.

Since opening, the school moved to a 47-acre campus in the city's southwest, constructing a sizable school with two gymnasiums, a high-school science centre with five laboratory classrooms, a 500-seat performing arts centre and "cross country trails through the aspens."

The 975-student school has always maintained strong political connections.

Neil Webber's son Len worked as vice-president of business administration at Webber Academy between 1997 and 2004 before getting elected as a Progressive Conservative MLA for a decade and later as a Conservative MP. Former board member Jim Silye was elected as a Reform Party MP in 1993. Another former director, Roy Wilson, was a member of the Social Credit caucus until 1975 — when he was defeated by

Neil Webber. Veteran board member Milt Pahl was a PC MLA in the 1980s.

And of course, there's Danielle Smith — former leader of the Wildrose Party and briefly lived PC MLA — who served on the Webber board between 2004 and 2009.

Webber Academy is a top school in Alberta, if you give the pro-private Fraser Institute's annual school rankings any weight. However, as multiple studies have indicated, improved learning outcomes at private schools are almost entirely based on the socio-economic backgrounds of students.

“ It is unfair to publicly subsidize exclusive and elite private schools charging \$18,000 a year tuition while working-class families have to fundraise just to get the basic necessities of education in their regular public schools. ”

—Duncan Kinney, executive director Progress Alberta

"Students who attended private high schools were more likely to have socio-economic characteristics positively associated with academic success and to have school peers with university-educated parents," concluded a 2015 report from Statistics Canada.

According to a separate 2013 report by the Fraser Institute, the average income of parents who send their children to Webber Academy is \$190,200 for elementary school and \$216,700 for high school. While that aforementioned \$6,000 enrolment bond is refundable upon graduation or withdrawal, parents are encouraged to donate that amount to the school since it is a non-interest bearing loan. As coyly noted in Webber's latest info package: "The net present value of the bond could ensure that a donation now may be advantageous to you."

In a 2012 *Globe and Mail* feature, Debby Carreau, a human relations executive and parent of two children attending Webber Academy, explained:

"[Some parents] say, 'my six-grand today will only be worth three-grand in 14 years, but if I donate it today, I'm going to have a \$6,000 deduction'" and that "it helps the school, too."

While such depreciation over 14 years might be a bit overstated, it's clear that already affluent parents who can afford a "donation" of \$6,000 stand to benefit the most by such an arrangement.

Webber Academy has also benefitted from \$30.8 million in public funding for operating costs between 2010 and 2017. The public subsidy added to the high tuition and enrolment bonds have allowed the school to build up some impressive assets.

According to filings with the Canada Revenue Agency, the school's land and buildings are worth about \$26 million (the province does not fund capital costs for private schools). The performing arts centre, opened in 2012, cost \$14 million to build. For reference, a new public school costs about \$4.2 million. Webber holds another \$3.6 million in capital assets.

Over the last several years, Webber has also saved up significant amounts of money in cash, bank accounts and short-term investments. In 2005, Webber Academy had \$1.9 million stored away. By 2012, that had risen to \$16 million. By 2015 the amount had almost doubled to \$29.5 million, and in 2017 it spiked to \$40.7 million.

But the money isn't necessarily being saved up because the school is being frugal with expenses.

In 2016, Webber Academy spent \$255,594 on advertising and promotion, \$446,887 on travel and vehicle expenses, \$96,365 on office supplies and expenses, \$754,370 on occupancy costs and \$241,378 on professional and consulting fees. For the past two years, one person received between \$250,000 and \$299,999 in compensation — and in 2015, another received more than \$350,000 in compensation.

This for a school that has fewer than 1,000 students.

Progress Alberta executive director Duncan Kinney says it is time for this stop.

"It is unfair to publicly subsidize exclusive and elite private schools charging \$18,000 a year tuition while working-class families have to fundraise just to get the basic necessities of education in their regular public schools," Kinney said.

"Elite private schools like Webber need to get off the gravy train of public subsidies." ■

New resource supports sexual and gender minority teachers

Jen Janzen
ATA News Staff

Teachers shouldn't have to hide who they are in order to teach.

That's the theme of *Breaking the Silence*, a new resource for sexual and gender minority (SGM) teachers produced by the Alberta Teachers' Association.

To be unveiled at the Diversity, Equity and Human Rights Conference in Edmonton on April 12 and 13, the guide seeks to encourage teachers to access support from the Association.

In a 2013 study involving 3,400 teachers across Canada, 26 per cent of respondents were aware of a teacher being harassed by colleagues because they were presumed to be lesbian, gay or bisexual, while 10 per cent of teachers were aware of harassment based on a colleague's gender expression.

"A lot of work has been done to support sexual and gender minority students, but there has been less dialogue about the rights of sexual and gender minority teachers," says ATA president Greg Jeffery.

The *School Act*, however, mandates that each student and each staff member employed by a board be provided a welcoming, caring,

respectful and safe learning environment that respects diversity and fosters a sense of belonging.

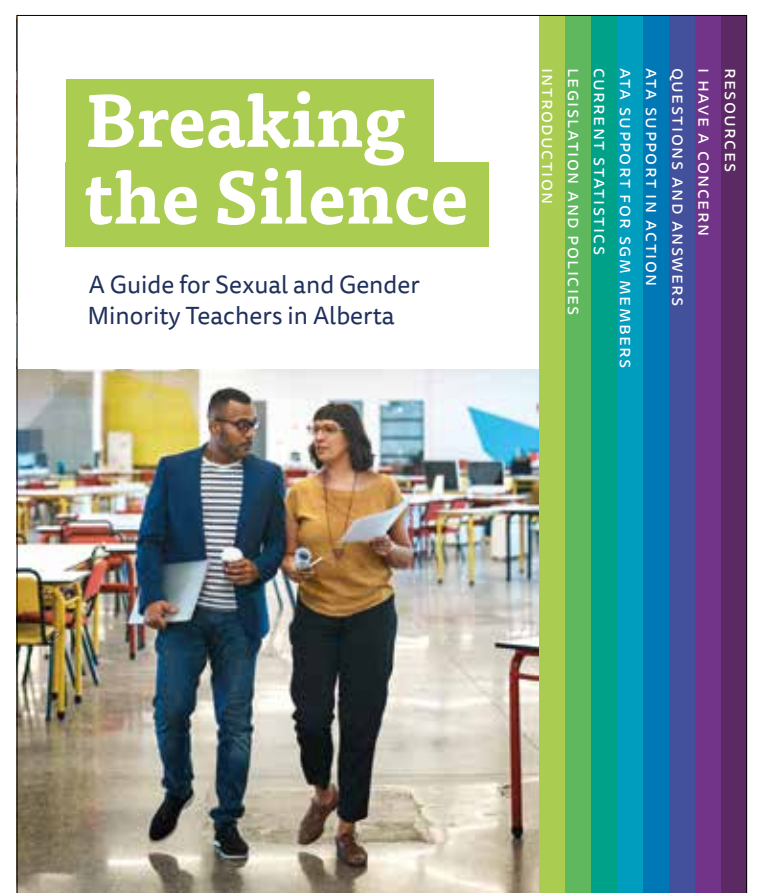
"Many SGM teachers are still directed not to 'come out' at work," states the introduction. "Others avoid sharing any personal information with colleagues while many still worry about losing their jobs, receiving parental or student complaints, or being outed at school."

An electronic version of the document will be posted on the ATA website. Printed copies will be distributed at the DEHR conference April 12–13 and via a school mailing later this school year.

Questions? Concerns?

If you're a teacher with questions or concerns, you can

- contact Member Services or Teacher Welfare (1-800-232-7208). Make sure you contact the ATA before you speak with your employer.
- contact your board's Employee Assistance Program for confidential counselling and advice.
- know your allies. Reach out to ally colleagues in your school, school district, local or province. ■



Breaking the Silence is a new resource that will soon be available both in printed and electronic form.



Shortage of French-language teachers the subject of new research project

Ottawa – With financial support from Canadian Heritage, the Canadian Teachers' Federation (CTF) and the University of Ottawa, in partnership with the Association canadienne de langue française (Canadian French-language association), will carry out a research project on the shortage of teachers in French-language schools in minority settings in Canada.

"The federal government funding will help us get a better grasp of the causes of the teacher shortage and make concrete recommendations with our community partners," explained CTF president Mark Ramsankar. "The purpose of this pan-Canadian study is to determine what measures to take at different levels to

alleviate, or even eliminate, the shortage."

According to a 2017 CTF survey of French-language school boards in minority settings, the shortage of staff qualified to teach in French is all too real. The problem was highlighted at the 105th meeting of the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada, in June 2017.

The research project will begin in April 2018 and the conclusions will be released between March and August 2019. The research team will be contacting the various levels of government involved in training and retaining teachers in Canada and CTF member organizations in order to take the pulse of the various regions. ■

CTF appoints new director of research and professional learning

Ottawa – Sherri Brown has been appointed the new director of research and professional learning of the Canadian Teachers' Federation (CTF)



SHERRI BROWN
DIRECTOR, RESEARCH
AND PROFESSIONAL
LEARNING, CTF

Brown will lead the CTF's research and professional learning activities designed to positively influence decisions affecting the quality of publicly funded public education in Canada.

"Sherri's experience, education and skills in strategic and policy research make her the ideal person for the position," said CTF president Mark Ramsankar. "As a passionate advocate for public education, equity, inclusion, and supporting teacher activism and inquiry with research and evidence-based tools and resources, she will certainly advance the federation's goals in terms of supporting a strong national teacher voice."

Brown has more than 13 years of experience in building and supporting quality, rigorous, and nationally and internationally recognized social policy research, as well as in strategic advocacy and knowledge translation.

Before joining CTF as a researcher and policy analyst in September 2017, Brown was senior research analyst with the British Columbia Teachers' Federation. Prior to that, she worked at Simon Fraser University as a lecturer and researcher with appointments in the departments of labour studies and political science, and teaching specializations in social policy, Canadian labour markets, and the history of disability policy and advocacy.

Brown holds a Ph.D. in political science from McMaster University, a master of arts in political science from the University of Calgary and a bachelor of arts in political science from Concordia University (Montreal). ■

Community organizations that would like to partner with the CTF on the project are invited to call Sara Lafrance, acting director of the Francophonie Program, at 613-688-4308 or to write her at slafrance@ctf-fce.ca.



Hats On!
FOR MENTAL HEALTH

May 2, 2018
visit canwetalk.ca

Wear a special hat to school on May 2, 2018, to raise awareness of the importance of good mental health.



The ATA Educational Trust

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

EVERY ONE COUNTS



CONTEST

Have your students explore respect for all living things through the **Every One Counts Contest**

Group and individual prizes
Deadline: May 7

Visit everylivingthing.ca/contest



EVERYLIVINGTHING.CA

CELEBRATE
Education WEEK

The Alberta Teachers' Association
Alberta Government

APRIL 30 – MAY 4, 2018

Get 2Know 2Learn.ca

Educational resources for teachers



Gateways2Learning — Better Environment

Earth Day is an event that can be covered across grades and curriculum. For learning resources for your classroom, check out this featured site, Home Sweet Home: Committing to a Better Environment. The site includes

- connections to current Alberta curriculum,
- printable classroom activities,
- images and
- digital resources for students and teachers, all matched to grade level.

<http://gateways2learning.ca/BetterEnvironment>

Visit the Gateways 2Learning main page to find similar sites about Indigenous peoples, global citizenship, animals of Alberta, water and more at www.2learn.ca/gateways.aspx.

THE CANADIAN FORUM ON PUBLIC EDUCATION

SAFE AND CARING SCHOOLS



SAVE THE DATES
JULY 9-10, 2018
EDMONTON, ALBERTA

Canadian Teachers' Federation
Fédération canadienne des enseignantes et des enseignants

www.ctf-fce.ca

NOTICES AND EVENTS

Orange Shirt Day logo contest

Alberta students are invited to share their vision of respect, remembrance and reconciliation by designing a logo for the 2018 Orange Shirt Campaign. Carrying the message that every child matters, Orange Shirt Day is a national movement that recognizes the experience of survivors of Indian residential schools.

The submission deadline is May 15.

More information about the logo contest is available at www.safeandcaring.ca/orangeshirtday.

CLASSIFIEDS

Travel and Recreation

Vancouver Island/Ladysmith—oceanfront 2-bedroom w/ 2 full bathrooms, fireplace, heated pool, hot tub, tennis court, private dock. Sleeps up to 6. www.innoftheseastarfishgetaway.com or reenzworld@hotmail.com

Vernon—spectacular 5-star lakefront vacation rental located one km past Ellison Provincial Park. 2 bed, 1 bath, self-contained. Private dock, 300 ft beach, crystal clear water. \$1600 per week or \$280 per night, 2 night minimum. jackvanbeers@hotmail.com

Asia: Land of Amazing Contrasts!

Touring in Asia will amaze you! Experience cultural adventure by joining us either on a tour to China, July 8–22, \$3249, or Vietnam/Cambodia, July 31 – August 14, \$3949. Includes hotels, most meals, transport, guides, & admissions to sites. This is amazing value for your money. References & payment plan available. For itinerary contact e.mouland@asiancuriositytours.com, 587-436-2968.

Quadra Island Cottage, perfect for two people. \$90 per night. Website: www.daisygetaway.com. Call 250-285-3610.

Disclaimer The Alberta Teachers' Association does not necessarily endorse the products or services presented in paid advertisements or in the Notices and Events column.

Wanted

Contract teacher wanted in Calgary to teach TOEFL iBT exam prep course, June 18 to July 27. Contact Neil Hosler at 780-966-7719.

In search of French Immersion teachers at Black Gold Regional Division No. 18—Black Gold Regional Division No. 18 is actively seeking French Immersion teachers for the 2018–19 school year. Please send a cover letter, resume and two letters of reference to Michell Unchulenko, HR Coordinator at michelle.unchulenko@blackgold.ca

To Advertise

For advertising information, contact the advertising manager:
780-447-9417 direct
1-800-232-7208 toll free
email: advertising@ata.ab.ca.

Next Deadline
Friday, April 13, 2018, 4 P.M.
(publication date April 24, 2018)

Please note: advertisers are encouraged to book their advertisement space early—space is limited.

Cost
Classified ads: \$1 per word plus GST (\$15 minimum); *Display ads*: varies according to size
Payment
Prepayment is required. We accept VISA, Mastercard, cash or cheque.

Circulation: 44,000

2018 gotcha!

Cash prizes available!



PHOTO CONTEST

The ATA News invites you to get your camera out and start shooting those award-winning photographs.

1st place: \$200 2nd place: \$100 3rd place: \$50

GOTCHA! Contest rules

- 1 Photos taken by active and associate ATA members of education- or school-related activities are eligible. (Hint: photos depicting action are best.)
- 2 Entries must be submitted by the member who took the photos.
- 3 Photos taken between Sept. 1, 2017, and May 15, 2018, are eligible.
- 4 Please email photos to cory.hare@ata.ab.ca. Entries must be received by 5 p.m. on May 15, 2018.
- 5 Each entry must be accompanied by a description of the activity; the names (if possible) of the people in the photo; the date when the photo was taken; and the photographer's name, school and contact information.
- 6 Cash prizes will be awarded to entrants whose photos place in the top three, as follows.
First place: \$200; second place: \$100 and third place: \$50
- 7 Each winner will also receive a certificate of merit, as will those receiving honourable mention.
- 7 Up to 20 additional entries may be selected for an award of honourable mention.
- 8 Each entrant may submit up to five photos but no entrant can win more than one top-three prize.
- 9 A panel of individuals with photography, publishing and teaching experience will judge the entries. The decision of the judges is final.
- 10 Winning photographs will be published in the ATA News.
- 11 Photos submitted for the contest may be published in the ATA News, the ATA Magazine or other Association publications.
- 12 Please read carefully. Failure to comply with any of these rules may result in disqualification.

Get snapping and good luck!

A teacher's time is valuable.



So we'll give you up to \$150 in prepaid gift cards[†] for taking the time to switch to us.

That's money right into your pocket. Switch your auto insurance to Morgex and we'll give you a \$100 prepaid gift card. Switch your home insurance too and we'll give you a \$50 prepaid gift card. Now you can understand why we insure over 18,000 teachers in Alberta!



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Morgex Insurance is a tradename of Johnson Inc. ("Johnson"), a licensed insurance intermediary. Home and auto policies primarily underwritten by Unifund Assurance Company ("Unifund"). Described coverage and benefits applicable only to policies underwritten by Unifund in Alberta. Johnson and Unifund share common ownership. Eligibility requirements, limitations, exclusions or additional costs may apply, and/or may vary by province or territory. †Certain conditions apply. Offer available Mar 1/18 to Jun 30 /18 ("Promotion Period"). Open to calls placed during the Promotion Period by persons who: (i) are legal residents of AB and 18 years of age or older; (ii) purchase a home and/or auto policy underwritten by Unifund during the Promotion Period; and (iii) mention the promo code(s) ("Eligible Person(s)"). Eligible Persons include both existing customers and persons who do not currently have a home and/or auto policy underwritten by Unifund. Maximum limit of one (1) pre-paid gift card ("Card") per Eligible person for each: (i) auto policy purchase (valued at \$100 CAD), and (ii) home policy purchase (valued at \$50 CAD). Allow 8 weeks for Card delivery by mail. Johnson reserves the right to discontinue this promotion prior to the end of the Promotion Period by posting a notice on its website at www.johnson.ca.

Be a part of the Greatest Outdoor Show on Earth, with this exciting summer job opportunity!

You can work for two weeks and earn extra money for your holidays! (Possibility of extension or return year after year.)

Join the TEAM from Lammlé's Western Wear and work with us during this year's Calgary Stampede! We are looking for enthusiastic people to join our 2018 Stampede Team!

If you feel that work should be fun, enjoy selling merchandise and meeting people from all over the world, then we would like to meet with you. We ask that all members of our Stampede Team are available to work all 10 days of Stampede (11 if scheduled for Sneak-a-Peek). In addition to hourly wages, each team member is eligible for an additional performance bonus.

Interested applicants can e-mail to resume@lammles.com.



HOTEL RATES

A directory of special rates at some of Alberta's hotels is available online or in hard copy. Available online at www.teachers.ab.ca under Publications.

Hard copy available from Doreen Link at SARO—403-265-2672 in Calgary or toll free at 1-800-332-1280.



SLIP US A TIP!
We want to hear about news in your school, district or local.

Please email managing editor Cory Hare at cory.hare@ata.ab.ca.

THEATRE ALBERTA PRESENTS
ARTSTREK | A SUMMER THEATRE SCHOOL FOR TEENS
WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE'S
MACBETH

THEATRE ALBERTA
Alberta Foundation for the Arts
RDC
EDMONTON COMMUNITY FOUNDATION
edmonton arts council
Edmonton
calgaryarts development
Calgary

JULY 2018 AT RED DEER COLLEGE #ARTSTREK SCHOLARSHIPS AVAILABLE REGISTER ONLINE AT WWW.THEATREALBERTA.COM

Leave of absence

Teachers on leave of absence from their school board are still under contract to their board and are therefore active members of the Alberta Teachers' Association. Bylaw 9(2)(b) states that the annual fee for this category of active membership shall be \$96. Members qualifying under this category should forward their cheques for the full amount to the Alberta Teachers' Association, 11010 142 Street NW, Edmonton T5N 2R1. Attention Membership Assistant—Teachers who know of colleagues on leave of absence are asked to notify them of this bylaw.

TEACHERS, BRING YOUR STUDENTS

**TO THE SKILLS CANADA NATIONAL COMPETITION, JUNE 4 - 5, 2018
EDMONTON EXPO CENTRE
EDMONTON, AB**

SEE CANADA'S BEST IN SKILLED TRADES AND TECHNOLOGY COMPETE TO BECOME NATIONAL CHAMPION IN THEIR RESPECTIVE SECTORS.

- Free event! Doors open to the public daily at 8:30am
- Participate in over 50 Try-A-Trade® and Technology activities, including welding, hair dressing, cooking, carpentry, cabinetmaking, 2D-3D animation, and many more!
- Essential Skills Stage: participate in interactive demonstrations hosted by industry and education partners.
- Watch over 550 provincial and territorial champions from across Canada compete for gold, silver and bronze medals in over 40 trade and technology competitions.
- Register your class and give them the opportunity to participate in and learn about skilled trade and technology career choices.



JUNE 4

8:00am – 4:00pm
Competition Day 1

8:30am – 4:00pm
Open to public and school tours

8:30am
Official Launch on the Essential Skills Stage

8:30am – 4:00pm
Career Zone exhibitors and Try-A-Trade® and Technology activities

9:30am – 2:30pm
Essential Skills Stage interactive demonstrations

9:30am – 12:30pm
Essential Skills Forum

JUNE 5

8:00am – 4:00pm
Competition Day 2

8:30am – 4:00pm
Open to public and school tours

8:30am – 4:00pm
Career Zone exhibitors and Try-A-Trade® and Technology activities

9:30am – 2:30pm
Essential Skills Stage interactive demonstrations

Competition area Try-A-Trade® and Technology activities will be held at: Mechatronics; Mechanical CAD; CNC Machining; Welding; Autobody Repair; Aerospace Technology; Plumbing; Electronics; Electrical Installations; Industrial Control; Bricklaying; Mobile Robotics; Cabinetmaking; Carpentry; Hairstyling; Aesthetics; Fashion Technology; Automobile Technology; Cooking; Car Painting; Landscape Gardening; Refrigeration and Air Conditioning; Graphic Design Technology; Sheet Metal Work; Industrial Mechanic; Architectural Technology and Design; Outdoor Power and Recreational Equipment; Video Production; 2-D / 3-D Computer Animation; Workplace Safety; Heavy Equipment Service; Photography; Baking; Sprinkler Systems; IT Network Systems Administration; Web Design and Development; IT Office Software Applications.

Several partners will host large-scale Try-A-Trade® and Technology activities: UA Canada; Recreational Vehicle Dealers Association (RVDA); Volvo Construction Equipment; Stanley DeWalt; Volkswagen Audi, and more.

Pre-register your school online at the Skills/Compétences Canada website.

Travel subsidies are available on first come first serve basis!



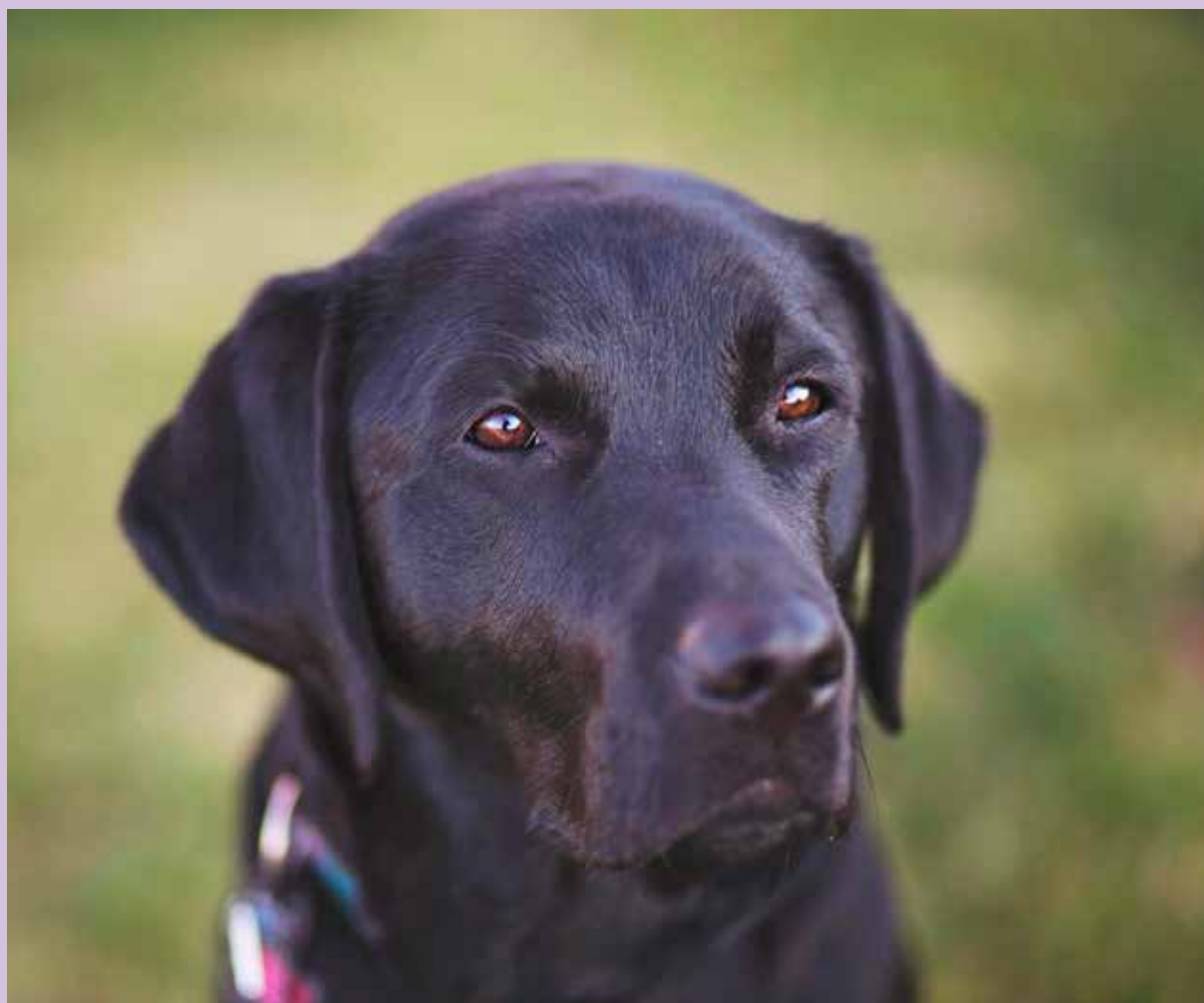
TALENT

April 10, 2018 | Volume 52, Number 15

TEACHER'S PET

Furry companions provide calming influence

We asked teachers to send in pictures of their pets along with a summary of how the animal is special and helps them in their profession.



SAGE

Black Labrador retriever

Owner: Megan Cote, Grade 2, Pat Hardy Primary School, Whitecourt

Sage was graciously donated to Pat Hardy Primary School in 2014 by Dogs With Wings Assistance Dog Society in Edmonton. She was trained as a therapy dog to assist children with learning difficulties and those who have high anxiety in a variety of situations, such as when reading and communicating.

Since Sage arrived at our school, the hallways echo with calls of "Sage!" as she passes by. Children who were once afraid of dogs have now conquered their fear. Children who once hated reading now bring books to the playground with them, hopeful that Sage will be out there for them to read to. Students who have weak verbal skills are now clearly saying words such as "dog," "walk" and "pet."

We've heard from parents who used to have trouble getting their kids out of bed and ready for school in the morning that their children are now eager to come to school to read to Sage before class starts. Students who used to display signs of anxiety at school experience these feelings less, and when these feelings do occur for them, they simply ask to go visit with Sage and all worries are diminished.

I am the lucky teacher who gets to have Sage in my Grade 2 classroom on a daily basis, as well as take her home at night. I personally feel that Sage has become a huge part of the heart of Pat Hardy. Watching Sage work with students each day gives me a feeling of unbelievable pride. She is truly making a difference for each and every one of the children at our school.



CHARLIE

Yellow Labrador retriever

Owner: Karin Brusse-Paterson, Grade 2/3, Killam Public School, Killam

What makes Charlie special to our family is that we are his third home. Of all the dogs we have owned, this guy has the most character and quirks! He is also the most affectionate dog and can sense my moods. He listens as well as entertains me, makes me laugh when all I want to do is cry. I am never alone and Charlie gives me a distraction from what can be a stressful day. He gets me outside and keeps me active.



JIMINY CRICKET

Boxer

Owner: Natalie Darwent, Annie Gale School, Calgary

We're foster parents for two local rescue organizations and fell head over heels with this boy and never considered giving him to anyone else. After a long, hard day or an easy, fantastic day, he is just so happy to have me home to himself when I walk in the door. My students love to hear my stories about him.



PEBBLES

Yorkshire terrier

Owner: Karlee Hren, Grade 3 math and science, Ellerslie Campus School, Edmonton

Pebbles makes long and stressful days bearable. With her sweet face and constant love I am able to recharge and feel rejuvenated as I prepare for helping my students each and every day! Her unconditional love and personality provide such happiness that I am able to maintain a work-life balance that has made me a better teacher. My students see me refreshed and committed to our time together.



LÉO

Standard rex cross

Owner: Christine Vezeau, Grade 3, École La Mosaïque, Calgary

Léo has been a class pet for five years now. He will often sit beside the kids when they are sitting on the carpet in the reading corner. He is not shy about asking for their attention. Special needs kids like to come to my class to visit with Léo. They all know his name and they like to pet him. Léo is always willing to be petted and to play with them.

Even the teachers come to my class to have a calm moment with Léo. I sure enjoy having him around. He makes every day better. He makes me laugh when he jumps on the floor and he seems to be well aware that he is showing off his abilities to an audience.



CASHMERE

Alley cat

Owner: Myra Rybotycki, Fine Art, Spruce Grove Composite High School, Spruce Grove

Cashmere is a great companion who helps me relax by setting a good example.

ALL PHOTOS ARE SUPPLIED