



This ... 
from ATA President Greg Jeffery

Hibernation is not an option

Read Greg Jeffery's latest instalment of *This*. See page 4.

ATA 2019/20

**PROPOSED
BUDGET**

See pages 7 to 10.

ATA NEWS

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CORY HARE

Judith Namasivayam, a Grade 11 student at Edmonton's Austin O'Brien High School, crawls under a series of trip wires during the school's first-ever Crusader Race on April 25. The timed event combined a four-kilometre run with 10 challenges requiring strength, endurance and teamwork. Additional photos on page 16.



UCP's audit idea may have merit

Digging into class size funding should turn up other shortfalls.

Read Jonathan Teghtmeyer's editorial on page 2.

Poverty is complex

Many students' families face harsh realities; teachers can help.

Read Viewpoints on page 3.



Getting ready

Bargainers prep for salary arbitration following central table ratification.

See story on page 5.

Unique program changes lives of youth

Program helps former and current youth in care transition to adulthood.

See story on page 11.

Pitfalls and Precautions

Teachers should be careful when sharing criticism of colleagues.

See page 12.



THE FACE OF EDUCATION

Coming up Rosie

ATA commercial recognized by media association awards.

See story on page 13.

Digging into class size funding should turn up other shortfalls



EDITORIAL

Jonathan Teghtmeyer
ATA News Editor-in-Chief

As a result of the recent provincial general election, I have spent some more time reviewing the education platform announced by the United Conservative Party during the election campaign. The platform includes 46 bulleted items on K-12 education, which run the gamut from very good ideas to very bad ideas.

Alberta Teachers' Association president Greg Jeffery responded to some of the problematic ideas presented, and fortunately, the UCP backed off on a couple of them during the campaign (largely as a result of teacher and parent advocacy). Days after the education platform was released, UCP spokesman Matt Solberg confirmed that the party would not pursue proposals to bring back the Grade 3 provincial achievement test and to return to a 50/50 split weighting on Grade 12 diploma exams. "We've heard concerns on this, and so we're putting that on hold," Solberg

told the *Edmonton Journal* on April 4. "We will gather more feedback before determining how to proceed."

Since the Association has already responded to a number of the negative items, it is important to also look at some of the positive ones.

The UCP platform pledges to "continue to build new schools, while ordering an immediate audit of class sizes to determine what happened to previous funding dedicated to class size reduction."

An audit of class size funding is a laudable goal. Alberta's auditor general found last year that the department of education did not have effective processes in place to measure, monitor and report on dollars provided to school boards as part of the Class Size Initiative. As a result, \$2.7 billion was invested into funding class size reductions since 2004 while class sizes ultimately grew.

What happened to the funding was, in part, discussed by the auditor general. Changes to the way the funding was provided, combined with loosened reporting requirements, led him to state that it appeared the department had effectively converted class size funding into additional base

instructional funding.

I would hope a fair audit would identify what we have suspected and in part witnessed over the past five to 10 years. While base per pupil instruction funding has remained largely constant in the past seven years, other grants have been constrained, reduced and even cut. It has been very rare since 2011 for any grants to school boards to actually receive inflationary increases.

The Association's economist, Neil Hepburn, has analyzed the financial statements of school boards and found a number of differential funding areas where school board costs are outpacing the amount of funding being provided. Here is the average annual shortfall over the last four years for some of the funding areas where shortfalls exist:

- Program unit funding: -\$1.8 million
- First Nations, Métis and Inuit: -\$5.7 million
- ESL: -\$17 million
- Transportation: -\$12 million*
- Plant operations and maintenance: -\$64 million*
- Inclusion: -\$86 million

*average shortfall for three of the last four years

To me, the situation is relatively clear. Funding is insufficient in areas like those listed above, and as costs have risen without equivalent increases in grants, school boards have had to find money to cover those costs.

And, as I have said many times before, the easiest way for school boards to deal with insufficient funding is to hire fewer teachers and to put more students in each class.

So, I look forward to an audit of class size funding, because I believe that if it is done fairly, it should identify the funding shortfalls that exist elsewhere in school board budgets. But let's not take too long to get there because, ultimately, what we need most and what we need right now is to have the funding shortfalls addressed and class sizes reduced. ■

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

Closed meetings are part of democratic process



Q & A

Dennis Theobald
ATA Executive Secretary

Question: Why do certain ATA meetings go into closed session? What do we have to hide, and what sense does it make to have a closed meeting with potentially hundreds of members present?

Answer: During the recent process to ratify the mediator's recommendation concerning a central table agreement and throughout the course of local bargaining, members of the Alberta Teachers' Association participated in general information and bargaining unit meetings that were declared to be closed. Similarly, at the Annual Representative Assembly, the budget debate and potentially other discussions will take place in a closed session.

The reason meetings may be closed is to provide a safe environment for members to voice their views. It is important, particularly in matters related to bargaining, that meeting participants not be intimidated by the possibility

In a closed meeting venue, members can be frank with each other and with the staff and leadership of the Association without being concerned that their comments might be used by outside interests to advance an agenda hostile to teachers or the Association.

that their employers might become aware of comments that may be critical or contrary to the employers' interests or views of the world.

It is equally important that members feel free to engage in open dialogue with their colleagues at these meetings, even if this involves divergent and perhaps critical views. In a closed meeting venue, members can be frank with each other and with the staff and leadership of the Association without being concerned that their comments might be used by outside interests to advance an agenda hostile to teachers or the Association.

Teachers choosing to remain in a closed meeting must respect the privilege that this extends to other participants. It is not acceptable to record or communicate the proceedings. Nor is

it acceptable to attribute to individuals comments they may have made in a closed meeting. Actual decisions, particularly votes on material motions, take place in, or are reported out to, open session and may then be communicated freely.

Members who violate the integrity of a closed meeting place themselves and others at risk. A recently concluded Labour Relations Board (LRB) hearing dealt with, among other matters, a member's decision to text out to her superintendent commentary and proceedings of a closed bargaining unit general meeting. In the process, the member compromised her superintendent, who failed to shut down the improper exchange, and slandered others present. As a result of the superintendent's participation in this

communication, the school board was found to have engaged in unfair labour practice in contravention of the Labour Relations Code.

While the member involved clearly engaged in disreputable conduct, the Association is precluded from pursuing a complaint under the Code of Professional Conduct in matters relating to labour relations. Although the member escaped having to undergo a professional conduct investigation and potentially a hearing before a Professional Conduct Committee, she was still formally censured by Provincial Executive Council.

The vast majority of Association business is conducted in open meetings; however, in some instances, formally closing meetings is necessary to ensure that members can participate meaningfully in our governance processes. In this context, respecting the confidentiality of a closed meeting is respecting democracy. ■

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

YOUR VIEWS

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear teachers of Alberta ...

This message comes to you on behalf of a growing group of non-partisan, progressive Albertans who are united by their belief in intersectionality, diversity and inclusion.

We are concerned about what the outcome of our recent election may mean for critical aspects of our province, including education, and we imagine you are too.

We are reaching out to you in solidarity and to express our deep appreciation for everything teachers in Alberta do for our children, our communities and our province.

We see you. We see the long hours, increasing demands and challenges. We appreciate your commitment to and love for our children, and we are

grateful for your dedication to ensuring our province has the best public education system in Canada.

Education is critical to the overall fabric of our province. It plays a vital role in building a future for everyone, regardless of their race, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, creed, ability, age or political affiliation. We want you to know that you will not be alone in advocating for teachers, for students and for the education system in Alberta.

Happy Education Week.

*Ann Bibby and Tammy-Jo Mortensen
Concerned parents*

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.

FACEBOOK FEEDBACK

Response to headline and article by Global News: "Would a UCP spending freeze mean no more teachers and thousands of new students?"

Diana Pittman Melnyk

Well class sizes in Gr.1-3 are already bigger than the "oh no! Class sizes will rise to 20-22 students instead of the recommended 17." Is this a joke? I don't know of any classes in my district that are under 22 students! NDP didn't fix that but if UCP get in it is now their fault? Give your head a shake!

Audrey Montgomery Allen

Another way to interpret "no increase": if there won't be a cut to education, they will maintain what we have now?

Laurie Skelton

First off, special needs kids aren't getting the funding and support they need now; and not a single party seems to even know anything about inclusive education, and refuses to answer any questions. And it's been asked many times.

On the ATA's online central table ratification vote

Kristan Noel Myers

Rave to the ATA online support for helping those who were locked out of their account to get their password reset! We know you don't normally work weekend hours, but we appreciate the help!!!

FOR THE RECORD

“ We must be a government for all Albertans. ”

— Premier designate Jason Kenney in his first official address to the UCP caucus on Friday, April 26.



Teachers can help address poverty



VIEWPOINTS

Amelia Bird
Special to the ATA News

As teachers, I truly believe that we have our students' best interests at heart. However, I'm not so sure that we necessarily understand some of the contexts that our students are facing outside of school, especially not to the extent that we need to.

Consider your responses to the following questions:

Does your income afford you enough money to live comfortably?

Do you have housing that you can afford?

Do you have or have you ever had access to affordable and quality child care?

Do you have a reliable means of transportation to travel where you need to go?

Do you have access to services to assist with your mental health?

Have you ever experienced racism?

These are some of the most prominent complexities that are linked to living in poverty. If any of these complexities were affecting you negatively every day, it would be difficult to focus on other parts of your life, namely school. Some of our students are living in situations where assignment completion is the least of their worries. What I have learned over the past week will forever be in my mind and has already changed the way I look at the world and the students entering our classrooms every day.

Did you know that one in six children currently lives in poverty in Alberta? This statistic alone is enough to make any teacher concerned. Poverty takes away

choice. This became very clear to me on April 11 and 12, when I attended a joint conference presented by the Diversity, Equity and Human Rights and the Well-being of Children and Youth committees.

I, along with many colleagues from around the province, participated in a poverty simulation organized by the United Way. This was one of the most immersive and intimate learning experiences I have ever had. The simulation required each of the participants to play the role of a person experiencing poverty. The simulation represented four weeks in the life of a person who had to make ends meet with rent, bills, groceries, children and work.

As teachers we need to be aware that some of our brightest students are likely using much of their brain power to problem solve for their families, to help organize and co-ordinate weekly schedules just to survive.

What struck me throughout the simulation was the number of barriers that poverty presents, from accessing supports, to being able to arrange stable banking, to having time to get everything done in a week before heading back to a job that did not pay enough to cover the bills for the next week. The amount of stress, anxiety, deep discouragement and hopelessness felt by the participants of the simulation is only a tiny fraction of what this would be like in real life, but I felt it and now understand the issue in a way that I cannot ignore.

What was also terribly disheartening was the amount of time and energy required to make ends

meet, never mind considering education, saving money for emergencies or having the luxury to entertain hopes and dreams. I think as teachers we need to be aware that some of our brightest students are likely using much of their brain power to problem solve for their families, to help organize and co-ordinate weekly schedules just to survive.

As speaker Kevin Lamoureux pointed out in his session, when children look around and see everyone with more than they have, it doesn't take long before they react to the unfairness or shut down. He also spoke of the importance of the social determinants of health and learning. Our environments/social circumstances very much affect our overall well-being.

On a note of hope, there are good people working to address poverty in Alberta, and we need to ensure that they are able to continue to do the work. Financial institutions are looking to address the barriers that keep people from setting up banking. Breakfast programs are running in numerous schools throughout the province, and many people are doing what they can on an individual level.

So perhaps you're thinking, well, what can I really do about this anyway? Making this issue matter to local MLAs is always a good place to start. Sadly, although many provinces do have poverty reduction strategies in place, Alberta does not. Poverty is non-partisan and should be an issue no matter who is in charge of this province. We need to push to end poverty. Our students deserve it. To quote the wise and inspiring Kevin Lamoureux, "Even though we didn't create the problem, do we want to be part of the solution?" ■

Amelia Bird is the educational technology teacher for Grande Yellowhead Public School Division and is a member of the ATA's Diversity, Equity and Human Rights Committee.

Alberta teacher honoured

Mark Milne
ATA News Staff

Sylvan Lake teacher Julie Lapointe has been named the 2019 citizen of the year by A Better World Canada (ABW), an international development organization based in Lacombe.

Lapointe teaches high school science at Sylvan Lake Campus and has worked with the volunteer organization for 15 years, beginning in Grade 10 when she accompanied her mother on a humanitarian trip to Kenya.

"She could see in me that I had that humanitarian spirit," says Lapointe, "At that young age, to get that perspective, it altered the way I think."

Lapointe says that first trip to Kenya had a life-changing effect. She continued her work with ABW throughout high school.

"We fundraised in our little club at H. J. Cody High School in Sylvan Lake and in that little club, with just a few students, we fundraised for a small rural school in a place called Kiprengwe in Kenya."

While attending the University of Lethbridge, Lapointe also organized a fundraiser for the 100 Classrooms project in Afghanistan. As a teacher, she now hopes to instill her sense of humanitarian engagement to her students.

"It's getting kids involved, getting today's generation engaged in making a difference, a positive change in their world," says Lapointe, "Even just getting them to think beyond their walls or their town or their school and doing what they can to make a positive change."

Lapointe was drawn to A Better World Canada because of its aid philosophy. She says ABW focuses on sustainable

projects. It sends people to places like Kenya, Rwanda and Bolivia to train the citizens, teaching them skills that can be used long after the organization has left. She was also impressed with the organization's co-founder.

"Eric Rajah is quite the hero of mine and he's a phenomenal human. I don't know how to say it other than that," says Lapointe.

It was Rajah who presented Lapointe with the award on April 7. He said the award is given to people who are modelling what it means to create a better world. With this being the 10th anniversary of Lapointe's school project in Kenya, Rajah felt it was the perfect time to give her this award.

"Every year she has consistently done something," he said. "She also inspires her family to do something every year."

Lapointe hopes to continue with her dedication to humanitarianism. She has started a humanitarian club at Sylvan Lake Campus. She wanted the students to be a part of the award celebration as well.

"It was important for me to get them the recognition because I do think it motivates them to continue engagement in volunteering and humanitarian efforts," Lapointe said. "If I can get a few students interested in continuing to make positive change, then that would be the biggest impact I could make as a teacher." ■

A Better World

A Better World Canada is currently looking for volunteer teachers to take part in its many educational projects.
www.abwcanada.ca
403-782-0325
infor@abwcanada.ca

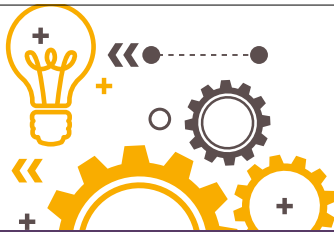


"If I can get a few students interested in continuing to make positive change, then that would be the biggest impact I could make as a teacher." — Julie Lapointe



This...

from ATA President Greg Jeffery



Hibernation is not an option

The election has come and gone, and many of us have expressed our individual opinions. So now what? Is that it until 2023? Does all the great advocacy work done by the teachers of Alberta just get tucked away until it is election time yet again? The answer I want to hear is a resounding no!

Many will say that our efforts went for naught, but I strongly disagree. During the campaign we caused the United Conservative Party to retreat from a return to Grade 3 PATs and bring back 50 per cent weightings for diploma exams. Although our big issues of class size and supports for inclusion were not addressed, Albertans are now aware of these issues, and that is something we need to build on, not save for four years from now. These issues did not go away on April 17, but they will in the minds of everyday Albertans if we let them. There has been

Although our big issues of class size and supports for inclusion were not addressed, Albertans are now aware of these issues, and that is something we need to build on.

no move on retreating from standardized testing for grades 1 and 2, mandatory teacher testing or on teacher recertification. We still have work to do and tasks we need to accomplish. Advocating for public education should not be a sporadic activity.

A large number of us, myself included, now have a new MLA, so why not go for a chat and find out where our representatives stand on our issues? If enough of us do this, the conversation may move to the government caucus room, and that's where our messages need to be heard. At least send a

congratulatory email and ask a question or two. You might become a go-to person for your new MLA on educational issues, and you can certainly feel good about standing up for the students and the teachers of our province.

Let's not go into election hibernation for four years, because public education in Alberta deserves better and 2023 may be too late.

Thanks for all you have done and for all you are still about to do. ■



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.

ATA aims to connect with new government

Cory Hare
ATA News Managing Editor

Class size is still the top issue facing teachers, and Alberta Teachers' Association president Greg Jeffery intends to take it up as soon as possible with the new education minister.

"The election is over, but our work is not done," Jeffery said. "We need to keep working to inform new members of the legislative assembly about our concerns and the importance of reducing class size."

As predicted by pre-election polls, the United Conservative Party achieved a landslide victory in the April 16 provincial general election, winning 63 of 87 seats. A new cabinet is expected to be announced May 1.

"Certainly, a meeting with whoever is named the next education minister would be number one on [my] list of priorities and perhaps a meeting with the premier," Jeffery said. "Whether or not that's possible, that remains to be seen, but we need to get things off on a good footing and we need that to happen right away."

In a move that isn't typical for the non-partisan ATA, prior to the election Jeffery issued a statement pointing out flaws in the UCP's education platform. Nevertheless, now that the UCP has formed government, Jeffery expects to forge a good working relationship with the new government and education minister.

"We're going to be working with this government for at least the next four years — and I want to stress 'working with.' We are not going into this in an adversarial position," Jeffery said. "We want to communicate to the new government that education is a file that can make their government look very good and working with the Alberta Teachers' Association will help them."

While it's not yet known who the minister will be or how warm the relationship will be, Jeffery isn't concerned.

"In my time on Provincial Executive Council, we've worked with some



FILE

“ Classroom teachers are going to keep doing the good work that they have always done with the kids in their class — that will not change. However, we would like to see fewer students in front of them. ”

—ATA president Greg Jeffery

very difficult education ministers, and we've accomplished a great deal. Lyle Oberg and Ron Liepert are two names that immediately spring to mind. And while we weren't terribly friendly with those ministers, we did get things accomplished."

At issue

On the issue of class size, Jeffery is wary of the UCP's suggestion that it will conduct an audit to determine how class size funds have been spent, given that the auditor general already flagged this in a report released last year.

"[The UCP] are acknowledging class size as an issue here. I'm not certain, however, that the audit is needed. I would go with the work of the auditor general on this one and let's just get down to it," Jeffery said.

Another issue on Jeffery's radar is the UCP platform's mention of teacher testing and the 2013 Task Force for Teaching Excellence.

"We really don't know what that one

looks like ... so I would really like to determine what the new government's thinking is in regard to that particular document," he said.

Also of concern is the UCP's pledge to lift the cap on the number of charter schools and lift charter school enrolment caps.

"We've seen examples in a number of jurisdictions in the U.S. where the charter school system is a first step in privatizing education, and that would absolutely be the wrong decision for Alberta," Jeffery said. "There's a whole lot more freedom now proposed to be granted to the charter school system."

Overall, Jeffery suggested that teachers will continue to do their work while the Association continues its work to bring action on the most pressing issues in public education.

"Classroom teachers are going to keep doing the good work that they have always done with the kids in their class — that will not change," Jeffery said. "However, we would like to see fewer students in front of them." ■

Elected to office

The following teachers were elected during the provincial general election of April 16.

United Conservative Party



Mark Smith

Drayton Valley-Devon

Alberta NDP



Deron Bilous

Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview



David Eggen

Edmonton-North West



Janis Irwin

Edmonton-Highlands-Norwood

Bargaining committee preps for salary arbitration

Mark Milne
ATA News Staff

With teachers having ratified a two-year central table agreement proposed by a mediator, preparations are underway for binding salary arbitration that will take place in the coming months.

The ATA's Central Table Bargaining Committee (CTBC) has begun work on its arguments supporting a salary increase, drawing upon statistics such as the cost of living, Alberta's gross domestic product and other economic data, said Sandra Johnston, co-ordinator of the Teacher Welfare program area of the Alberta Teachers' Association.

"After May 1, we can provide notice to the Teacher Employer Bargaining Association (TEBA) to commence the arbitration process for salary," Johnston said. "We have started doing that research and working with legal counsel to determine who our nominee would be at the tribunal."

In early April, Alberta teachers voted 78 per cent in favour of the agreement, which stipulates that salary increases will be determined through a binding arbitration process.

The arbitration tribunal will consist of three arbitrators: one selected by CTBC, one by TEBA and a third agreed upon by both parties. Salary arbitration must be completed by the end of September, and any increases will be retroactive to April 1, 2019.

Need to keep pushing

The agreement brings greater consistency among collective agreements across the province and includes improvements to health benefits, maternity leave, administrator allowances, substitute teacher pay and other areas for teachers who lagged behind their colleagues working elsewhere, wrote CTBC chair Jason Schilling in his latest Bargainer's Blog.

He acknowledged that he was disappointed that the agreement didn't address the two major issues of classroom

size and supports for inclusion.

"I know that many were disappointed in the inability to get movement on important classroom condition factors," Schilling wrote. "We must not give up on this important fight. We must make this an even bigger political issue."

"We saw a significant increase in turnout over the last ratification vote," Schilling added, "and we need to continue to increase that engagement as we move forward, pushing for improvements that students and teachers need."

The previous central agreement expired Aug. 31, 2018, and negotiations for a new agreement began on Sept. 10. Talks broke down in December, and the CTBC applied for a government-appointed mediator, who released recommendations in early March.

Local bargaining

The ratification of the central agreement also sets in motion the third phase of the bargaining process. Bargaining units have 60 days from ratification to open local bargaining. In this phase,

the 61 bargaining units will meet with their respective employers to negotiate issues specific to their jurisdiction.

"Our local Teacher Welfare Committees in each bargaining unit are busy surveying members and putting together their initial proposal," Johnston said. "Wellness spending accounts are going to be the big one in this round."

Aside from the salary component, all new local agreements will be retroactive to Sept. 1, 2018. ■

The following bargaining units are still negotiating their 2016-18 contracts, which will, in effect, already be expired when ratified.

- Conseil scolaire FrancoSud
- Conseil scolaire Centre-Est
- Conseil scolaire Centre-Nord
- Horizon School Division
- Canadian Rockies RD

Poverty a huge barrier for many students, says expert

Jen Janzen
ATA News Staff

We have to level the playing field before children get into the classroom.

That was the message delivered by Kevin Lamoureux at the Association's Diversity, Equity and Human Rights Conference, held in Edmonton on April 12.

The University of Winnipeg faculty member and education lead for the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation spoke about how child poverty affects students on a fundamental level, before they even get into a classroom. Poverty, he says, is like living permanently without a good night's sleep.

"For many kids, you're not even starting at the starting line," he said. "All of their internal resources are focused on survival."

Lamoureux cited a study that found

similar outcomes between children growing up in poverty and children born addicted to crack cocaine.

"Poverty reduces a child's brainpower for learning. It takes away choice," he said.

Even motivational concepts like high school graduation and future employment aren't processed the same way when a child is living in poverty, Lamoureux said.

"You're trying to dangle this carrot in front of these kids, and it's nothing but an insult. 'Get a job? Nobody in my family has a job.'"

Rather than focusing on test scores, Lamoureux said, education needs to focus on levelling the playing field before curriculum even comes into the equation.

"What's standing in the way of some of those test scores right now is not lack of ability. You've been saddled with the responsibility of responding to a society where not everyone starts off in the same place."



YUET CHAN

“Poverty reduces a child’s brainpower for learning. It takes away choice.” — Kevin Lamoureux



During a United Way poverty simulation activity at the Association's Diversity, Equity and Human Rights Conference, participants experienced a full range of encounters, obstacles and challenges that replicated a month in the life of a family living in poverty. Emotions ran high at times when participants struggled to make ends meet.



PHOTOS: YUET CHAN



The Alberta Teachers' Association

2019/20

PROPOSED BUDGET

The budget proposed by Provincial Executive Council (PEC) is just a step away from becoming the approved budget for the 2019/20 fiscal year. The final (and very important) step in this process is membership approval. On the Victoria Day long weekend, local delegates to the 102nd Annual Representative Assembly (ARA) will gather in Edmonton to consider, among other matters, the approval of the proposed budget.

While a budget is often viewed primarily as a financial document, the budget of the Alberta Teachers' Association is also a reflection of the Association's activities, programs and priorities for the upcoming year. During budget deliberations, PEC makes critical choices, balancing financial considerations and member feedback, before then presenting the proposed budget at ARA to delegates. At ARA, delegates, in addition to assessing the financial implications, will also examine the merit of the proposed programs and consider their value to members, to education and to the Association.

Based on feedback from locals demonstrating considerable support for the programs and services proposed, Council is recommending a fee increase of \$15 to the annual Association fee of \$1,242, resulting in a fee of \$1,257 for the 2019/20 fiscal year. The following pages provide highlights of new programs and completed or discontinued programs that make up the proposed 2019/20 budget.



Overview of proposed 2019/20 new initiatives

Program of support to school leaders – Professional Development

The draft budget proposes providing a program of support for school leaders and member teachers with jurisdiction-level assignments to enhance their capacity in instructional supervision to work effectively and collaboratively with teachers, while fulfilling their roles as defined in the *School Act* and related regulations.

Women’s symposium – Professional Development

The Women in Leadership Subcommittee of the Diversity, Equity and Human Rights Committee has been charged with undertaking a needs assessment on the status of women in leadership in Alberta and with developing a project plan based on the results of the research. A women in leadership symposium would begin to address the challenges outlined in the needs assessment. The symposium would offer sessions to develop skills such as networking and public speaking to assist women who are in or who are seeking leadership roles. This symposium would be critical to providing opportunities for networking and professional growth for members.

Professional staff FTE – Member Services

This role will help manage discipline processes and support related executive staff and committee work. This increase in the Association’s capacity is necessary to ensure that the Association can meet legislated requirements and provide timely investigation, hearing and reporting related to the professional conduct and practice review processes.

Teacher safety in schools – Member Services

As part of the 2018/19 Committee on Aggression in Schools and Communities mandate, recommendations will be made to address the growing problem of violence and threats targeted at teachers. The proposed budget includes provisions that will result from those recommendations to provide support to school leaders to enhance their capacity to ensure that the occupational health and safety of staff is addressed and to monitor the implementation of the new occupational health and safety legislation.

Status of women committee – Government

It is imperative that the Association move to be more reflective of the population served and to offer support for female teachers who

would like to move into leadership roles in the Association and throughout the sector. Establishing this committee would help the Association build capacity among female members and enhance the Association’s reputation as an agile and resilient learning organization that builds member commitment.

Governance review – Government

A governance review was launched in 2018/19 to define governance roles and key functions of Council and senior administration. Once this review is complete, it will be necessary to evaluate, prioritize and implement recommendations emerging from the review. The goal will be to improve representation and decision making and review resources and processes so that the Association will be able to mobilize quickly to take advantage of opportunities, to respond to threats and to effectively manage risk.

Professional Staff 0.3 FTE – Government

A 0.3 FTE increase to the staffing complement for the translator position, currently at 0.7 FTE, will assist in providing translation and editing services to all program areas as needed and providing further capacity to assist and support professional discipline processes.

Research – Government

The introduction of the revised Teaching Quality Standard and Leadership Quality Standard creates a unique opportunity and requirement to undertake a research study focused on teachers’ experiences with the implementation of the standards. This research over two years will inform the Association’s advocacy on behalf of teachers and school leaders by documenting the impact of the standards on teaching practices, leadership practices, school culture, educational development across the system and collegiality within the profession.

Professional Staff 0.5 FTE – Operations

Design standards and expectations have increased, so the proposed budget includes funding to increase the current graphic design staffing complement by 0.5 FTE to reduce ongoing production backlogs and allow for more timely service to program areas and subgroups.

The proposed budget for the activities described above is \$320,000.

Completed/discontinued initiatives

A number of programs will be completed or discontinued at the end of 2018/19 and therefore do not form part of the proposed budget for 2019/20. These programs include the Committee on Understanding Aggression, the Blue Ribbon Panel Review, the Education Program for Central Office Teachers, the 100th Anniversary Celebration and support of 2Learn.ca.

The budget allocated for these programs in 2018/19 was \$181,000.

Proposed annual fee for 2019/20

Provincial Executive Council is proposing a \$15 increase to the Association member fee for 2018/19, bringing it to \$1,257 per member for 2019/20.

	2018/19 approved fee	2019/20 proposed fee
Funding for programs for which the local rebate does not apply	\$162.00	\$159.00
Funding for programs for which the local rebate applies	\$864.00	\$878.40
Local rebate	\$216.00	\$219.60
Total Fee	\$1,242.00	\$1,257.00

Budget by program area

There are two parts to the Association's budget. The first part includes programs funded by a fee that is subject to a local rebate. In other words, for each dollar of the membership fee that is applied to this part of the budget, 20 per cent is rebated to local associations to fund their operations. The second part includes programs funded by a fee that is not subject to the local rebate.

Part 1: Budget subject to local rebate

The table below compares program area expenditures for the 2018/19 approved budget and the 2019/20 proposed budget. It also provides a general description of the mandate of each program area.

Program area	Mandate	2018/19 approved budget	2019/20 proposed budget
Teacher Welfare	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To improve the economic well-being of teachers through work in collective bargaining, pension and insurance To effect increases in the funding for education 	\$3,867,800	\$3,891,800
Member Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To provide services to individual members on matters requiring discipline, legal assistance and professional relations To provide general service to and consultation with locals, sub-locals and staff as requested To enhance awareness of the Association's services 	\$5,306,900	\$5,417,800
Professional Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To provide for the improvement of teaching practice through specialist councils, conventions, curriculum work, current issues, local leadership development, assistance to local PD committees, field service and representation to other subgroups To prepare a corps of instructors and facilitators To improve the preservice education of teachers and liaise with other agencies in these fields and extended field experiences 	\$5,707,000	\$5,899,800
Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To govern the Association and provide for its obligations beyond Alberta's borders To liaise with other organizations within Alberta To maintain communications internally with the membership and externally with the public To improve conditions for education through political involvement of members 	\$9,036,100	\$8,690,700
Building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To provide and maintain physical facilities for Association offices in Edmonton and Calgary 	\$2,903,100	\$2,953,500
Operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To provide for the financial and business operation of the Association, including business management, finance, general administration, human resources and document production To provide services to other program areas and subgroups 	\$5,059,500	\$5,486,500
Nondepartmental commitments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To provide for items that are not directly part of any other department and for items affecting all or most other departments but which cannot be reasonably provided for within the department 	\$1,894,200	\$1,941,800
Food Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To provide a catering service for participants at various meetings and other functions held at Barnett House To operate a cafeteria service for staff, tenants and the public 	\$808,700	\$850,600
Information and Technology Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To maintain and safeguard the Association's information technology systems and equipment and to develop and maintain electronic capabilities and processes required by other program areas 	\$2,236,300	\$2,249,700

Part 2: Budget not subject to local rebate

Member fees required to fund the second part of the budget are not subject to the local rebate, and 100 per cent of these fees are available to fund provincial Association programs. The table below compares expenditures and allocations for the 2018/19 approved budget and the 2019/20 proposed budget, and provides a brief description of the nature of the expenditures.

Expenditure and allocation	Description	2018/19 approved budget	2019/20 proposed budget
Canadian Teachers' Federation	Provides support for the Canadian Teachers' Federation based on a per capita fee.	\$1,092,900	\$1,090,000
Capital fund	Provides an annual allocation to the fund, which is used to purchase any capital assets and to fund capital projects.	\$1,087,600	\$1,127,500
Special emergency fund	Provides an annual allocation to the fund, which is used to fund emergent actions as approved by Provincial Executive Council.	\$9,200	\$0
Technology services project development	Provides annual funding for projects related to membership application services; online services; unified communications; strategic technology management; and reporting, workflow and form services.	\$700,000	\$700,000
Specialist council membership grants	Provides the annual operating grants to the Association's 21 specialist councils.	\$870,000	\$725,000
Accountability action plan	Provides funding to support international partnerships focused on advancing system reform, as well as collaboration with subgroups and like-minded teachers' organizations that advance the profession's views.	\$135,000	\$135,000
Mortgage	Provides for principal and interest payments on the mortgages in place for construction renovations.	\$2,200,000	\$2,275,000
Public relations campaign	Provides funding for a multidimensional public relations campaign to highlight the work of the Association and teachers. The purpose is to increase public awareness about the importance of public education and the need for appropriate funding for education.	\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000
2Learn.ca	The budget allows for continued enhancement and further development of new content for this program.	\$146,000	\$0

Unique program changes lives of youth

Program helps former and current youth in care transition to adulthood

Cory Hare
ATA News Managing Editor

Kayla Sheard has had it tough. When she was about 10, her mother attempted suicide, which led to a late-night knock on the door by police and her being taken to a foster home.

"I had never felt more scared in my entire life, and I remember crying myself to sleep because I just wanted to go home," Sheard recalls.

After splitting the next year between three foster homes, Sheard spent years bouncing back and forth between her parents. At 16 she was homeless and raising a baby boy. She went on to lose custody of her son and attempt suicide three times. Throughout her youth she felt terrified, lonely, neglected and lost, battling addiction and struggling to form normal relationships.

"My story is long, my story is sad and my story is true," Sheard says, "but it is still being written every single day and every single day I move forward and I keep my head high."

Now 27, Sheard is on a path toward a career in interior design, a shift she credits to Advancing Futures, a program within Alberta's Ministry of Children's Services.

"It's been a life changer," Sheard says. "If this hadn't happened, I would just be wallowing in my own misery and hating the world."

Created specifically for former and current youth in care, Advancing



SUPPLIED

"My story is long, my story is sad and my story is true, but it is still being written every single day and every single day I move forward and I keep my head high."

— Kayla Sheard

Futures provides funding to students to pursue upgrading, a trade and post-secondary education, as well as help to successfully transition to adulthood. Each student is connected to a program coordinator who provides social and emotional support, including life skills coaching and assistance navigating adult systems.

"Advancing Futures is unlike anything else in Canada because we provide that extra support," says program coordinator Kari Castle.

Since the program's inception in 2004, 2,627 students have received funding and 1,200 students have graduated with a certificate, trade, diploma or degree. In the 2017/18 academic school year, 730 students received funding. Every youth in the program has a rich story and a variety of needs ranging from life skills to mental health support, housing and child care.

"Success varies on so many different levels for students. Success can mean getting to school every day or completing one semester," Castle says. "The success really comes in seeing them be so proud of themselves and their accomplishments."

Last year the government released an action plan entitled *A Stronger, Safer Tomorrow*, which contains a recommendation to improve post-secondary opportunities for youth involved with the child intervention system. To help achieve this, Advancing Futures will focus on increasing youth participation in the program by 20 per cent per year over the next five years.

"Part of our recruitment strategy is to focus on raising awareness among teachers and other educators, because Advancing Futures is not as well known as it could be in the Alberta

school system," Castle says.

Teacher Michelle Cowan-Chiu, a guidance counsellor with the Calgary Board of Education's Chinook Learning Services program, is well aware of the Advancing Futures program and she's seen its impact on youth.

"They have a future that otherwise they may not have had because they just didn't have the support that you find in a traditional family," Cowan-Chiu says.

"Some of these kids have been in six, seven different high schools," she says. "They haven't had a stable family, so Advancing Futures is giving them that stability."

Sheard says the program helped her take her mind off her problems and grow as a person. As well, the funding enabled her to upgrade her high school education then earn a two-year diploma in interior design. She's now a matter of weeks away from completing a second certificate, in kitchen and bath design, at Bow Valley College.

Once she's done her program, Sheard hopes to find work in her field and, in a few years, possibly start her own business.

"I've been through a lot," she says. "I had a lot of really bad breaks and this is probably one of the best things that's ever happened to me." ■

Information about Advancing Futures is available at alberta.ca/advancingfutures.

Exchanging Experiences 2019/20

Full-year and short-term exchanges for educators and administrators.

Travel, refresh and renew your commitment, passion and dedication to education and lifelong learning in a new and exciting environment!

Applications now open for teachers and school leaders in Alberta.

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Applications at www.ieep.ca



The Alberta Teachers' Association

Alberta
Government

Be careful in sharing criticism of colleagues



PITFALLS AND PRECAUTIONS

Cory Schoffer
ATA Secretary to Professional Conduct Committees

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.

A professional conduct committee recently heard the case of a teacher who undermined students' confidence in other teachers by speaking to students about a conflict she had with another teacher. Additionally, the teacher was charged with speaking to parents about her conflict with her colleague.

The committee heard that the teacher returned to her classroom following a difficult meeting with her principal. The teacher proceeded to share with the students that she would be leaving the school after the school year was over, and that this was because the principal did not respect the teacher. Additionally, the teacher shared with parents that she would be leaving the school, and that the reason for her departure from the school was the principal.

The teacher was found guilty of

unprofessional conduct. The teacher received a letter of severe reprimand for each of the two charges. The teacher also received two fines, totalling \$500. If the teacher fails to pay the fines within 90 days of receipt of the hearing committee's written decision, she will be declared ineligible for membership in the Alberta Teachers' Association.

The Code of Professional Conduct does not prohibit teachers from offering criticism of their colleagues, including their colleagues in school administration. What the code does do is spell out how these criticisms are to be properly raised. Discussing your criticisms of your principal with students and with parents is never appropriate. These people are not deemed to be proper authorities. It is not relevant that the teacher may have previously shared her concerns with her principal if she then chose to share these same concerns with people who were not proper authorities, like students and parents. ■

Council endorses VP Regal for CTF candidacy

PEC POINTS

Audrey Dutka
ATA News Staff

Highlights of the Provincial Executive Council meeting held April 4-5, 2019, at Barnett House in Edmonton

1. Approved the disbursement of the \$3,500 earmarked for international assistance and allocated \$6,500 from contingency to the Idai Solidarity Fund to support teachers, their families and school communities affected by Cyclone Idai.

2. Authorized the co-ordinator of Teacher Welfare to write a letter of censure to a teacher identified as having communicated with their employer during a closed meeting of the bargaining unit.

3. Due to concerns related to health, security and programming, cancelled the ATA Masulita, Uganda Professional Development Project, effective immediately, and offered the remaining funds for the project to the Uganda National Teachers' Union for professional development opportunities for its members.

4. Authorized the president to write a letter to the minister of education urging him to increase or expand French immersion course offerings at the senior high level delivered through distance education, blended learning and/or online learning.

5. Unanimously endorsed the candidacy of Jenny Regal for the position of vice-president of the Canadian Teachers' Federation.

6. Named Tim Jeffares to the executive staff of the Association, with initial placement in Member Services/Government (Professional Discipline), effective June 1.

7. Authorized the executive secretary to negotiate and conclude an agreement with the University of Alberta for the part-time secondment of a Member Services executive staff officer, with compensation being directed toward securing additional casual staff services in the Member Services program area to maintain service to members.

8. Extended the competition deadline for the position of executive staff

officer, Teacher Welfare and named three members of Council to a staff selection committee for the position.

9. Approved for submission to the Canadian Teachers' Federation (CTF) resolutions urging that the CTF lobby the Government of Canada to allow wellness spending accounts to be tax exempt in the same manner as health spending accounts, lobby the Government of Canada to advocate for the right to clean drinking water in all Canadian communities and prioritize poverty reduction in CTF's advocacy efforts.

10. Received the report of a hearing committee that found a teacher guilty of two charges of unprofessional conduct for failing to treat a pupil with dignity and respect and be considerate of the student's circumstances and failing to act in a manner that maintains the honour and dignity of the profession. The teacher slapped a student in the face after the student spit in the teacher's face, thus contravening articles 4 and 18 of the Code of Professional Conduct. The hearing committee imposed the penalty of a letter of severe reprimand and a fine of \$200 for charge one and a letter of severe reprimand for charge two.

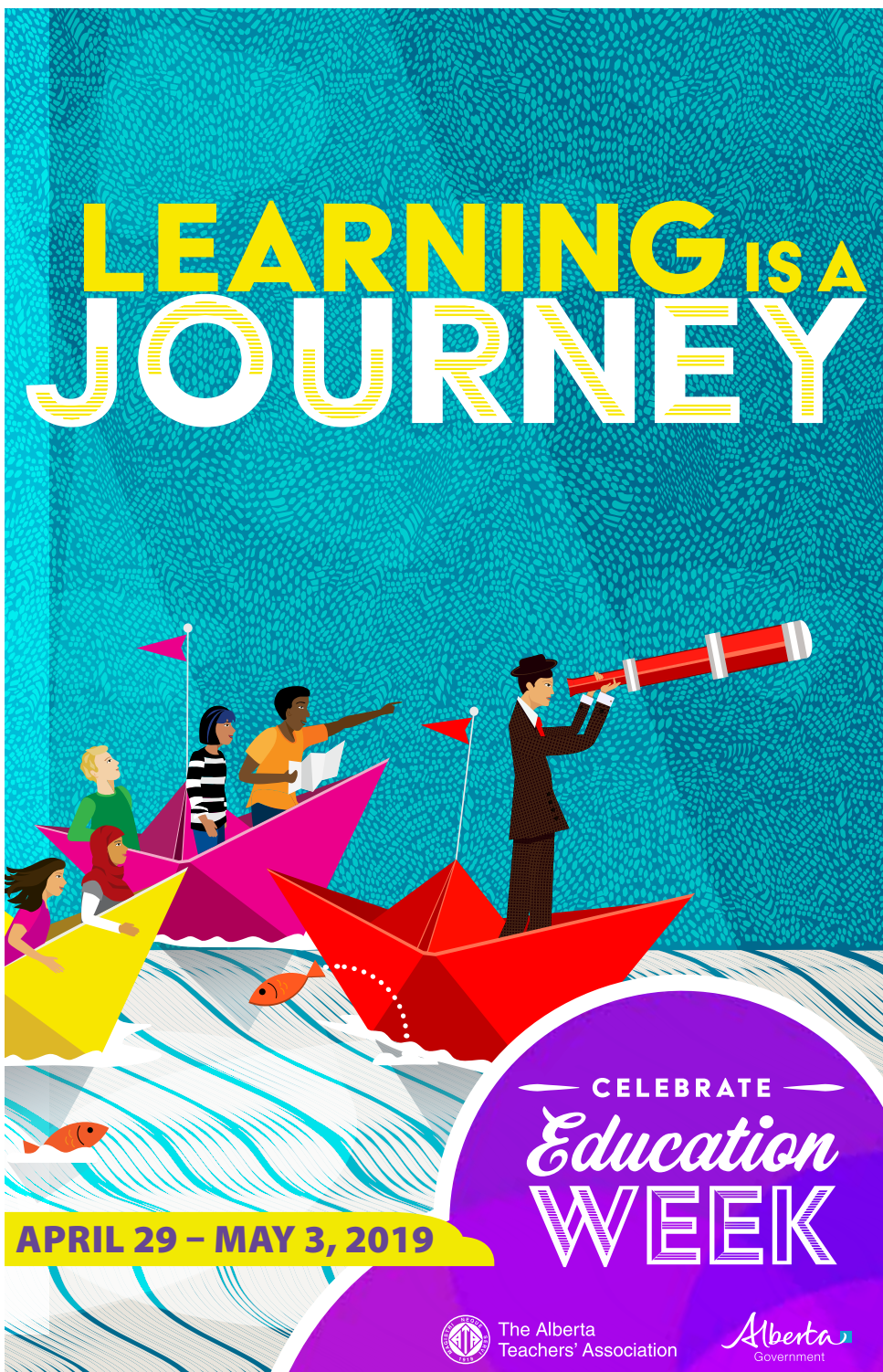
11. Amended the Administrative Guidelines to clarify that field members must be members holding the highest level of membership available to them (active or associate membership under Bylaw 4) in order to serve on Association committees and to represent the Association on external committees.

12. Awarded the Alberta Teachers' Association Doctoral Fellowships in Education, the John Mazurek Memorial—Morgex Insurance Scholarship and the Nadene M Thomas Graduate Research Bursary.

13. Approved the names of 21 teachers for addition to the Association Instructor name bank and approved the names of five teachers to the Association Administrator Instructor name bank.

14. Changed the Committee on First Nations, Métis and Inuit Education from ad hoc to standing committee status, changed its name to the Indigenous Education Committee and approved bridge funding to sustain the Indigenous Advisory Circle for 2019/20.

15. Changed the name of the School Administrator Issues and Concerns Committee to the School Leader Issues and Concerns Committee. ■



NOTICE

On the following dates, a hearing committee of the Professional Conduct Committee established under the Teaching Profession Act found that the teachers listed below engaged in unprofessional conduct.

Dec. 3, 2018 Lazhar Abida

The hearing committee ordered that Lazhar Abida is ineligible for membership in the Association for a period of one year, effective Dec. 3, 2018 until Dec. 2, 2019.

Dec. 12, 2018 Mark Aitchison

The hearing committee ordered that Mark Aitchison is ineligible for membership in the Association for a period of two years, effective Dec. 12, 2018 until Dec. 12, 2020.

ATA ad nominated for industry award

Mark Milne
ATA News Staff

A commercial from the ATA's Face of Education campaign was nominated for a Rosie Award, presented annually by the Alberta Media Production Industries Association (AMPIA).

The 30-second commercial, entitled *Face of Education — Jacob*, was nominated in the category of "Best Television Commercial Under \$50,000."

Produced by Geffen Media, the commercial is part of a comprehensive public relations campaign created by the Alberta Teachers' Association along with Tag Advertising.

"It's always nice to win an award," says Todd Sloane, Tag's owner and creative lead, "but I think this is just the cherry on the top of some great creative [work] that we've done over the years with the ATA."

The commercial features a student named Jackson recalling how a teacher positively impacted his life. It wraps with a classroom of young students saying good morning to their teacher, Mr. Jackson.

"So it ends up the child was so inspired by public education that he or

she became a teacher," says Sloane. A similar spot was also produced using a female student named Mia.

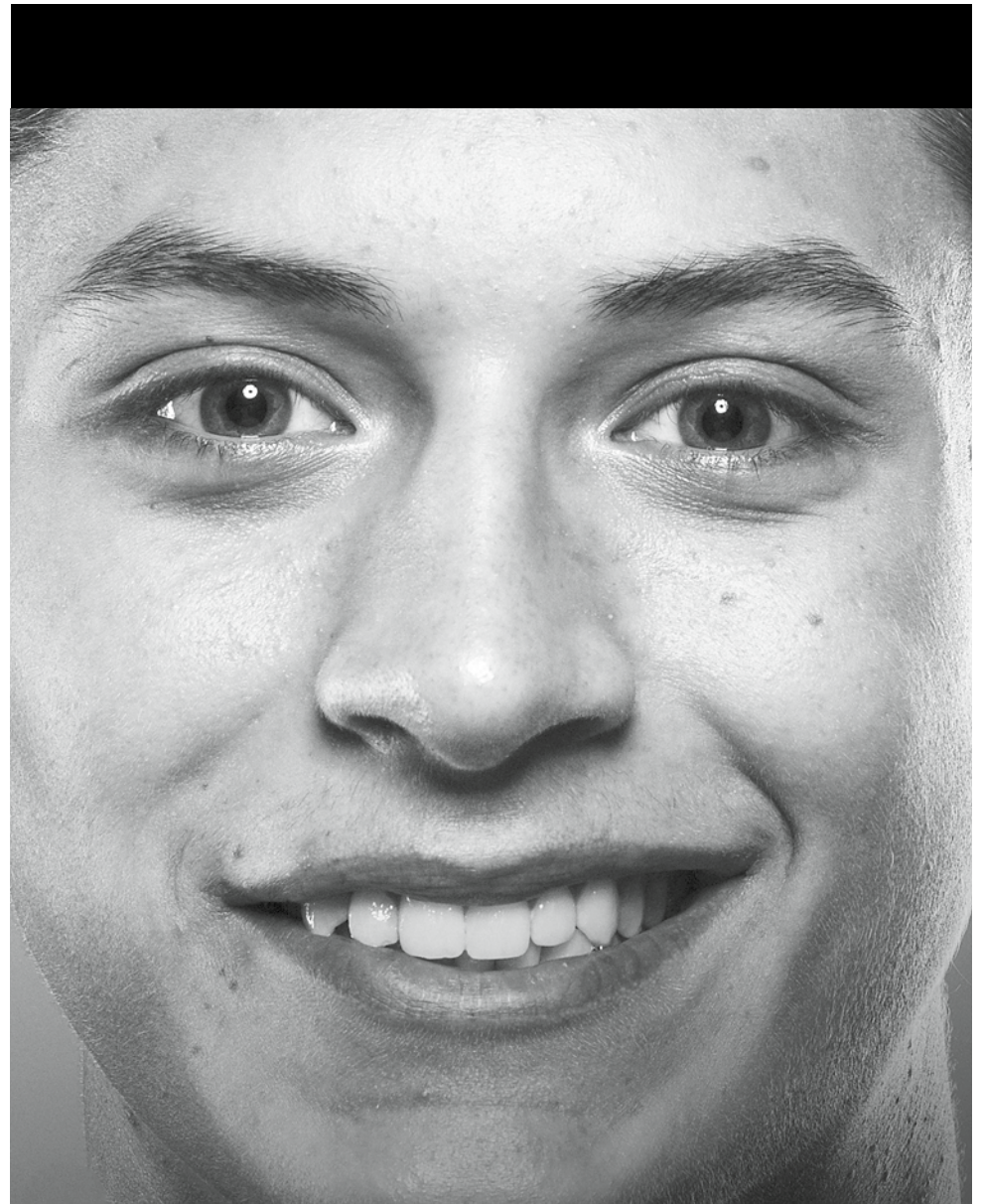
ATA executive staff officer Shelley Magnusson oversaw the ad campaign throughout the various stages of development and production.

"You know, we're all just teachers here, doing our jobs," Magnusson said, "So to get recognized by an outside agency that what we're doing is good is kind of nice!"

Geffen Media produced the commercial spot. Sloane said the director, Eppo Eerkes, did a fantastic job pulling out the actor's emotions for the spot. It was Geffen Media that submitted the ad to AMPIA under the name *Face of Education — Jacob*, which refers to the actor's proper name rather than his character's name. The commercial has also been nominated for an Anvil award, to be presented by the Ad Rodeo Association in early May.

This year's AMPIA awards received more than 600 entries, which were whittled down to 323 finalists in 57 categories by 59 industry professionals from outside the province.

The ATA commercial was up against five other entries. The Rosies took place on Saturday, April 27 at the Edmonton Convention Centre, in downtown Edmonton. ■



THE FACE OF EDUCATION



The Alberta Teachers' Association

iBelieveinPublicEd.ca

The competition

Best Television Commercial Under \$50,000

ATB Financial: *Choose Alberta GIC — The May Family*

Enmax: *Connecting You — Christian Bagg*

Enmax: *Energy Connects Us — Wonder*

Inn From the Cold: *Home for the Holidays*

Westman Village: *Step Into*

You can view all the Face of Education commercials by heading to www.teachers.ab.ca.

They're located under the Campaign tab in the News and Info menu.



Teacher Growth, Supervision, Evaluation and Practice Review Workshop

A Workshop for Administrators

August 22–23, 2019 | Barnett House | Edmonton

This workshop focuses on the principal's critical role and the duties he or she must perform as outlined in the *School Act* and the provincial Teacher Growth, Supervision and Evaluation Policy 2.1.5.

To register and for more information go to <https://event-wizard.com/TGSE0819/0/register>.

Deadline for registration is **August 16, 2019**.



The Alberta Teachers' Association

MS-856

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May 1, 2019

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The Alberta Teachers' Association



Canadian Mental Health Association
Alberta



COMM-1900

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(publication date May 14, 2019)

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: 38,000



ATA Indigenous Education Award

The purpose of this award is to recognize projects, programs, events or activities organized by a local association to promote Indigenous education.

DEADLINE TO APPLY JUNE 1, 2019

For more information, visit www.teachers.ab.ca > My ATA > Professional Development > Indigenous Education and Walking Together

 The Alberta Teachers' Association

PD-WF-34a-2019 04

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The Alberta Teachers' Association

TALENT

April 30, 2019 | Volume 53, Number 12



PHOTOS: CORY HARE



Strength and teamwork

Students from Edmonton's Austin O'Brien High School test their mettle at the school's first-ever Crusader Race on April 25.

2019
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, 2018, and May 14, 2019, are eligible.
- 4 Please email photos to cory.hare@ata.ab.ca. Entries must be received by 5 p.m. on May 14, 2019.
- 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!

