

# ATA NEWS

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**'You made a difference'**

President Greg Jeffery bids farewell

See *Viewpoints*, page 3



Students participate in the eighth annual Thermopylae Obstacle Course Race at Calgary's Valley Creek School on June 4. Including 20 obstacles and two mud pits, the 5K race serves more than 2,000 students from 24 Calgary middle schools. Watch for a feature article on the program in the first issue of the *ATA News* in 2019–20.

HOWARD TANNER



## Having more options isn't necessarily better

Expanding school choice jeopardizes access and equity.

Read Jonathan Teghtmeyer's editorial on page 2.



## Automation will spare no one, expert says

Technological advances will create strong demand for teachers.

See story on page 4.



## Taking action

Teachers active in fighting fires and coping with evacuations

See story on page 5.

## Government proceeds with *Education Act* amendments

Opposition fears for LGBTQ students.

See story on page 5.

## Pitfalls and Precautions

Abandoning students is never appropriate.

See page 8.

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## Expanded choice puts access and equity in jeopardy



### EDITORIAL

Jonathan Teghtmeyer  
ATA News Editor-in-Chief

**"Do** not read this book straight from beginning to end," warn the inside covers of the *Choose Your Own Adventure* books that were so popular in my elementary school.

"Think carefully before you make a move! One mistake can be your last... or it *may* lead you to fame and fortune!"

Choice is a powerful and seductive concept. And its use regarding education is a classic case of political framing, where a policy position gets cloaked in a term that automatically evokes either a positive or negative sentiment.

How is one supposed to argue against choice? Choice is inherently good, and therefore more choice must automatically be better — or so the theory goes.

This frame is going to be used extensively over the next few months and years. And discussion on the embedded policy positions is already being framed as prochoice or antichoice.

The Alberta Teachers' Association is not against choice. Nor — despite

popular narrative — is it against charter schools or private schools. It is against features built into the system that enhance privatization, competition and segregation in education. These elements are not constructive in advancing the goals of a public education system that seeks to ensure that all children are provided with a fair opportunity to achieve their greatest potential. (In Alberta, public education refers to schools operated by public, separate and francophone school boards.)

Private and charter schools have extensive freedom to select the types of students who are granted entrance to them. In some cases this is done through entrance requirements based on IQ test results or previous academic achievement. In other cases, the admissions process specifically excludes students with special learning needs. Sometimes the barrier is financial, as high tuition, program or transportation fees make some schools completely inaccessible to many students. And, some students are encouraged — either before or after admission — to consider public school as a more *appropriate* placement.

There are two other, less apparent barriers that also exist for many students and parents.

The first relates to transportation and logistics. Attending one's neighbourhood school is simpler, easier and cheaper than attending a school further away. Busing adds logistical challenges to the morning routine; attending after-school activities can be burdensome for students and family; and even the act of "shopping" for a school has logistical complexity. All of this complexity adds a disproportionate barrier for lower income families.

Secondly, the extent to which a parent participates in school shopping is a general indication of their level of engagement in their child's learning.

Put all together, in very general terms, students in private and charter schools tend to come in with higher academic ability, fewer special needs, more parental engagement and higher family income — all factors that are associated with better individual achievement outcomes.

To make matters worse, groups like the Fraser Institute publish school rankings to suggest that private and charter schools are better schools because they have higher test scores.

In actuality, these schools are choosing their students, more than parents are choosing the schools. Access to so-

called schools of choice is not universal and definitely not equitable.

It is often said that private and charter schools "skim off the top," while public schools serve the students that remain regardless of academic ability or learning need. Crudely put, private and charter schools teach the children that are the easiest and cheapest to educate while public schools teach the students that are more challenging and expensive to educate.

Again, public school teachers, parents and advocates are not necessarily against choice or against private or charter schools. What they are against is a system that would provide further advantage to the already advantaged, while the needs of the rest are not being met. What we want more than anything else is strong, well-supported schools for the children in the public education system.

If we are going to talk about choice in education, then we'd better, at the exact same time, be talking about how we ensure that those without the choice are being provided with top-quality educational opportunities, through a well-funded public education system. ■

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

## Boards are being overly cautious with their budgets



### Q & A

Dennis Theobald  
ATA Executive Secretary

**Question:** I'm a probationary teacher and have just been told that, although my first year of teaching was successful, my board won't be offering me a continuous contract because they are uncertain what the government intends to do about funding in the next school year. Why has this happened and what is my current status?

**Answer:** I am terribly sorry to hear about your situation and understand how stressful such uncertainty can be, especially for teachers at the outset of their careers. I want to comment on the circumstances that have given rise to funding uncertainty, how school boards should respond and, finally, what options might be available to you.

In the normal course of events, we would have expected a budget to have been put forward in the legislature in April and, shortly thereafter, the release of a new *Funding Manual for School Authorities* setting out the grant rates and funding eligibility criteria. Unfortunately, the provincial election upset the usual rollout of the budget; the New Democrat government did

not table a budget prior to dropping the writ of election and the new United Conservative government has indicated that it will only be putting forward its first budget in the fall sitting of the legislature, probably in October. Until then, the government will be bringing forward a series of supply bills to cover its expenditures, but there will be no new funding manual to direct boards in their own planning for 2019/20.

Given this uncertainty, school boards seem to be jumping to conclusions about the government's intentions regarding education funding. There are anecdotal reports that a number of boards seem to be operating on the assumption that the classroom improvement funding will not be continued, that there will be no additional funding available for enrollment growth, and that grants for programs such as school nutrition will be cancelled.

Nature, as they say, abhors a vacuum and it is understandable that, absent of clear and explicit direction from government, school boards would assume the worst and behave accordingly. This, however, is precisely the wrong

approach to take at this time. During the election campaign, UCP leader Jason Kenney stated that a UCP government would maintain or increase education funding and continue to build schools.

He stated on March 25 that, "We are committing to maintain or increase the current (education) budget. But that will be a function of our future budget."

Kenney went on to say that, "We're not planning for an increase in funding

*This, however, is precisely the wrong approach to take at this time.*

in our platform but there will be no cuts to education under a UCP government," although he did note that a UCP government would "seek to reduce administrative spending in the education system to push those dollars out to the front lines."

In the absence of contrary advice, school boards should take the premier at his word and hire on the basis that core funding will be unchanged and that, with most grants being distributed on a per-student basis, enrollment growth will be funded. There is no justification for premature and pre-emptory hiring freezes, staffing cuts or program cancellations, particularly when many boards are maintaining operating reserves.

Quite the opposite, it is time for boards to "create some facts on the ground."

Should the situation change for the worse with the passage of the budget in October, then school boards would be justified in making appropriate adjustments, however difficult and painful those might be for the teachers, staff, students and parents affected. Responsibility for any cuts, though, would then clearly lie at the feet of the government.

If you are on a probationary contract and your evaluations have gone well, the recommendation should be for a continuous contract regardless of whether a position exists. The recommendation is based on your meeting the Teaching Quality Standard and not on the provincial or school board budget. It does not actually commit the board to hiring you, but if a position exists the board should honour that recommendation and employ you on a continuous contract. If budget realities force the board to reduce staffing, that is a separate matter.

If you are a teacher who has been directly affected by a board staffing freeze or staffing cut, please contact ATA Member Services for advice on your specific situation. ■

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



# You made a difference in me



## VIEWPOINTS

**Greg Jeffery**  
ATA President

Two years ago, as I was packing up not one classroom but two, I found myself wondering if I had made the right decision. While the room I taught math in had changed a number of times, the band room had been mine for 33 years. There were memories tucked into every nook and cranny of that space and, as they came flooding back, it caused some trepidation about what I was leaving and what lay ahead.

While I still miss that room and the students who passed through it over the years, I have made peace with my decision. These last two years have been an experience that I would not have missed for the world. As I said in my address to the Annual Representative Assembly this past May, I had an opportunity that only 58 people have ever had, which was to lead the best teacher organization in the world. Many of you think that is perhaps an exaggeration, but I assure you it is not. I have been privileged to interact with many world-renowned figures in education and they confirmed that what we have here in Alberta is truly amazing. We all see areas in which to improve education in our province, but we are the envy of the world.

There have been many significant changes in the past two years, and I would like to highlight some of them here. The first is the introduction of the three new quality standards — one for teachers, one for school leaders and one for system leaders. Some may wonder why this rates being mentioned. I am very pleased at how these three documents mesh together and strengthen the concept that we

hold near and dear here in Alberta, that being collegiality. The similarity of the first five statements in each standard shows that whatever job a teacher may have within the public system, that person is still a teacher. This is no accident, as the ATA is the author of all three of these standards, and we should be proud of them.

*While my life as a classroom teacher was hugely fulfilling, you gave me an opportunity that profoundly affected me.*

I will also mention the removal of the pension cap so that all teachers will now receive the pension that they earned and for which they paid their contributions. This was an item that my predecessor worked toward over the course of his term in office, and I committed to him that I would see it through. I said I would, Mark, and I did.

There are things that are not yet complete, but then, I am not yet done. The ability to remain as

a member of Provincial Executive Council as past-president is very comforting for me. I can continue my work on the leadership partnership research we have begun with Queensland and with New South Wales. I will also continue to push for universal membership in the ATA. If your job requires a teaching certificate, then you should be an active member of the ATA.

As I prepare to leave this office, there is one thing that I want to share with all of you. At every new teacher induction ceremony I have spoken at over the past six years, which numbers over 100, I've always talked about one of the greatest joys of teaching — when a former student recognizes you and comes over and tells you what a difference you made in their lives. I still enjoy hearing from former students, and I want to share that feeling with you, the teachers of Alberta. I want to tell you all what a difference you made in my life.

While my life as a classroom teacher was hugely fulfilling, you gave me an opportunity that profoundly affected me. As I travelled and listened to your stories from Medicine Hat to High Level, from Wainwright to Canmore, I was constantly in awe of the faith you had in me as your president. You believed in me and I learned that I, with the support of all of you, was capable of much more than I had ever imagined. I learned that respect and dignity are character traits that will always serve me well. And I learned that hard work, whether the result is evident or not, is an achievement unto itself.

I am a better person having worked with and for all of you. Thanks for the chance, and if you see me somewhere, please come up and say hi. ■

*Greg Jeffery became ATA president on July 1, 2017. His two-year term ends June 30.*

## YOUR VIEWS

### FACEBOOK FEEDBACK

#### What is your favourite memory of the school year?

##### Krysten Elizabeth

We've been travelling to different places in Canada (Meteghan, Saskatoon and Iqaluit) in Grade 2 on our classroom "plane." At the beginning of each unit, they have to show their boarding passes, and I check their luggage. The moments as they board the plane and exit are hilarious. One student whispered to me that he is the FBI agent and to not worry, he has his handcuffs if anyone isn't behaving. Another student tipped me with cash they had made. They also have packed things in their luggage (paper bags with handles) like drawings of their parents, paper phones to call their siblings, a drawing of a special necklace, a favourite game, etc. Some of the things they think are necessary to bring on our trip are pretty funny.

##### Lori Karoly Szmul

I have a student in Grade 5 who did the classic "bye Mom, love you" as she walked out of my class. She giggled through her embarrassment and decided to make it our thing. Every day she waits to be last, and flounces out the door waving "bye bye, I love you!" Her mom thinks it's hysterical.

##### Devon Joel Donahue-Reid

First thing in the morning, a student I've really bonded with walks into the room and sees me. He breathes this sigh of relief and says "Oh, thank goodness! I didn't do my hair properly today either." Immediately, I frantically started fixing my hair and told him how I'd spent a half hour on my hair that morning. He realizes I'm a bit offended and becomes exasperated at his mistake. He exclaims, "I'm sorry! I'm just trying to bond with you!" Although he didn't mean to insult me, I loved how he was authentically him at that moment. It made my day, actually, as I had a really good laugh.

##### Nicole Mooney

I got to spend an afternoon playing Murder Mystery with a group of students, in which the vast majority of suspects turned out to be KGB double agents. It was glorious.

##### Cassandra Greve

Going back to visit my students with my two-month-old son. They were in love and so thoughtful, giving him shade (we were outside), smiling and talking gently with him.

##### Carmen Todosychuk Wasylynuik

After working with a student for almost three years, last week I chaperoned him to Halifax, NS, to participate in the National Skills Competition. I have never taught this provincial gold medalist student a course at school, but I did get to work with him on the side, specific to this national competition. Last week he said to me, "Mrs. Was, you're not a teacher or a chef, you're my friend." To me, the best part of teaching is building relationships and lifelong friendships with the young adults I teach.

### FOR THE RECORD

“

Deep summer is when laziness finds respectability.

”

—Sam Keen



## ATA prepares for salary arbitration despite delay tactics

ATA News Staff

Negotiators working on behalf of Alberta's teachers are not changing their approach to arbitration, as outlined in recently concluded collective agreements, despite government efforts to delay.

That's the message contained in a new Bargainers' Blog post by Sandra Johnston, co-ordinator of the Teacher Welfare program area of the Alberta Teachers' Association.

In the post, dated May 30, Johnston explains that the central table agreement teachers ratified in April includes an arbitration process to determine whether teachers will receive a salary increase.

The agreement clearly outlines an interest arbitration process with Sept. 30 as the deadline for completion, Johnston writes. The Association served notice on May 2 to initiate the process, and three days of hearings are scheduled for mid-September to meet the Sept. 30 deadline.

Since the United Conservative Party formed government following this spring's general election, the United Nurses of Alberta and the Alberta Union of Provincial Employees have been asked to delay arbitration proceedings that are allowed for in collective agreements, Johnston writes. The Association received an invitation to a consultation meeting with the government on the subject of delaying arbitrations but did not attend.

Johnston's message to teachers: the ATA will stay the course.

"While we prepare for interest arbitration, we are also watching these developments carefully and will respond as the need arises," she writes. ■

### Read more

To read Johnston's more detailed explanation of the situation, and stay abreast of further developments, active ATA members can access the Bargainer's Blog by visiting [www.teachers.ab.ca](http://www.teachers.ab.ca) and clicking on My ATA > Members Only.

## CORRECTION

The front page of the May 28 issue of the *ATA News* included photos of a new statue that has been installed at Barnett House. The photo caption incorrectly stated that the name of the statue is *On Her Shoulders*. The correct name is *On The Shoulders Of Our Teachers*. ■

## Automation will affect every job, expert says

*Teachers will be in high demand due to societal need for retraining*

Cory Hare

ATA News Managing Editor

In a future that is approaching more quickly than we can fathom, many jobs that currently exist will be automated, but high demand for reskilling will mean an increased demand for teachers.

This message was part of a technology talk delivered by Dominic Barton — author, internationally renowned business leader and strategic advisor.

"The scale of what we're going through now is something that we haven't seen in 500 years — it is a massive amount of change," Barton said in reference to a fundamental economic and social transformation that is taking place globally.

Hosted by the Alberta Teachers' Association and its Educational Technology Council, the June 5 talk was entitled *(un)Intended Consequences: Artificial Intelligence, Automation and the Future of Public Education*.

Technology is at the centre of the change the world is currently experiencing, Barton said.

Some experts predict that human-level artificial intelligence (AI) will be a reality by 2029. Barton doesn't think this level of AI will happen that quickly — he suggested that humans tend to overestimate the speed of impending change but underestimate the scale.

### Education is the "game changer."

"Every single job is going to be affected by automation," he said.

Increased automation will eliminate some jobs but will also increase the number of other jobs, although we have no idea what these new jobs might be, Barton said.

What is clear is that AI and automation will profoundly change the way people work and what jobs exist. This, in turn, will require us to learn continually, he said.

"Lifelong learning is one of the biggest changes that we're going to have to get ready for and it's happening at a speed that we're not prepared for as a country," Barton said.



Author and management consultant Dominic Barton talks about the potential implications of artificial intelligence during a talk at the Fantasyland Hotel in Edmonton on June 5.

Given this, education is the "game changer," Barton suggested.

He said it will be necessary to develop an education system for people aged 25 to 85, but also to fundamentally review how we handle K-12 education.

"If every other organization has to look at things, we have to challenge our orthodoxies."

One mindset the education world would be wise to avoid is to view education as job training, he said.

"What are we teaching people for? Because if we're teaching people for a job, I'm not so sure that job is going to be there," Barton said.

The future will bring an increased demand for teachers, as people seek to retrain for new jobs throughout their lives. In this future, "softer" skills like creativity, communication and teaching will become the most important.

"I think we're only in the early beginnings or the early chapters of a 100-chapter book," Barton said. "We haven't seen anything yet." ■

### See it for yourself

The talk was livestreamed and is available for viewing on the ATA's YouTube channel: <https://youtu.be/nBs79gYnkJU>

## ATA communications team wins award

ATA News Staff

The communications team that organized last year's World Teachers' Day event on behalf of the Alberta Teachers' Association recently received an award from an international communications group.

The Award of Excellence for Communication Skills was presented by the Edmonton chapter of the International Association of Business Communicators, and celebrates teams that are following best practices in the projects they work on.

"I was quite impressed with what was possible here in [a very short timeframe]," one of the judges commented. "There were many samples provided that illustrate the thoughtful planning and execution of this event, which included key messaging alignment, consistency and were all appropriate to the identified audience."

The 2018 World Teachers' Day event was held at the Alberta legislature grounds and involved the dedication of a sculpture commissioned in honour of the Association's 100th anniversary. A member from each local was invited to attend. After the ceremony, a celebratory lunch for all staff was held at Barnett House and, that evening, the City of Edmonton lit up the High Level Bridge in yellow and blue to celebrate 100 years of public education in Alberta.

During the week leading up to the event, Association staff took to social media to tell stories of their favourite teachers, and children across Alberta were invited to print off cards to give to their teachers. ■



Teachers from around the province gathered at the Alberta legislature grounds on Oct. 5 to celebrate World Teachers' Day with the unveiling of a sculpture to commemorate the ATA's 100th anniversary. The ATA recently won an award for its communication efforts around the event.

# Teachers cope with wildfire evacuations

Mark Milne  
ATA News Staff

When the wildfire evacuation order was issued for Wabasca – Demarais on May 29, teacher Terri-Lynn McLeod immediately jumped into action. Like many residents, McLeod packed up her most important belongings and some clothing, but with one difference.

“My suitcase stayed open on the spare bed, ready for a few last-minute items. I would only be leaving if things got really bad,” she said.

McLeod is not only a teacher at Mistassiniy School in the Northland School Division, she is also a captain with the Wabasca Fire Department. Since the evacuation order was issued, McLeod has been putting in grueling 12 to 18 hour days.

## You're going to be OK

McLeod's first task was to make sure all of the Wabasca's residents were evacuated. She recalls knocking on one door in the early morning hours of May 31. A nine-year-old girl answered, saying her grandparents were asleep. After getting the child to waken her grandparents, McLeod noticed the young girl's hands were visibly shaking.

“I took hold of her hands and told her that she would be OK,” said McLeod. “I knew that if they left, they would be OK. I couldn't tell her that her home would be OK, because I just didn't know that, and still don't.”

Dylan Brushett works as an educational assistant at the Mistassiniy School in Wabasca. He recalls the air being thick and absolutely disgusting to breathe in.

“When they announced poor air quality in our area, I knew evac was just around the bend,” he said.

Brushett and his fiancée decided to volunteer at one of the evac centres in Edmonton. He says there were a lot of families from the reserve without the proper ID.

“A lot couldn't file for their relief money yet, and you could tell the community members were in a struggle.”

## High Level evacuated

“Oh, my gosh! If that town goes, it will not recover,” were the first thoughts



Wildfires near High Level forced the town to be evacuated for nearly two weeks. Schools will remain closed for the duration of the school year due to smoke damage.

TOWN OF HIGH LEVEL

of teacher Elizabeth Cabezas when she heard the wildfires were edging dangerously close to her home town of High Level.

Cabezas was in Edmonton attending the ATA's Annual Representative Assembly when the evacuation order was issued.

“I didn't even have a chance to grab any of my important belongings,” she said.

Cabezas, who teaches at the Florence McDougall Community School, was one of the 4,000 residents of High Level who were part of the May 21 evacuation.

“We had staff who left with their children but left their husbands here because they were volunteer firefighters,” said Cabezas. “I think they did an amazing job. All of them.”

Once High Level was evacuated and the rest of the county was put under an eight-hour notice, Fort Vermillion School Division superintendent Mike McMann decided to close all the division's 14 schools, a move that affected 235 teachers and roughly 3,500 students.

“There's no one in their right mind that's going to put children in schools and

then expect parents to collect them when the situation turns red,” said McMann.

Once the evacuation order for High Level was rescinded on June 3, teachers were allowed to return to their classrooms for a maximum of four hours a day to finish up report cards, IPPs and collect student materials. Smoke damage

*“I'm extremely proud of the Fort Vermillion School Division employees for doing our part to help our neighbours and to get through this.”*

—Mike McMann, Fort Vermillion School Division superintendent

to HVAC systems made the schools unsafe for students, so the remainder of the school year was canceled. Students in the division have been exempted from all PATS and diploma exams.

“I'm extremely proud of the Fort Vermillion School Division employees for doing our part to help our neighbours

and to get through this,” McMann said. “Leaning into hard stuff is what FVSD does well.”

As of press time, seven schools in the Northland School Division remain closed.

## Communication is key

The ATA has received a few calls from teachers wondering what they should or shouldn't do when returning to work.

“Our advice is to basically follow the directions of the board,” said Robert Mazzotta, co-ordinator for ATA Member Services. “Don't go to the schools unless you're supposed to.”

Mazzotta said Member Services is there to assist teachers with any concerns about the options available to them.

“For all questions about employment matters, they should call Member Services directly. If they have a question about sick leave or they want to leave early or whatever, they should call Teacher Welfare and access whatever provisions exist in their collective agreement,” he said. ■

## Highlights from the legislature

### Opposition hammers away at education funding

Kim Clement  
ATA News Staff

The spring session of the 30th legislature began on May 22. Funding was the most talked about education-related topic during Question Period.

May 30—**Rachel Notley** asked Premier **Jason Kenney** to provide a clear answer on whether or not there will be funding for enrolment growth or cuts to the education budget. Kenney responded by reiterating the commitment to “maintain or increase funding” and that the minister of education is currently working with the treasury board to determine the reference levels for transfers to school boards. The information will be made available as soon as a final decision has been made. He concluded by stating that everyone needs to work together to ensure quality education while “bringing balance” back to the province's finances.

June 4—**Rachel Notley** asked Premier **Jason Kenney** about the government's plans for funding education, noting that school boards are “guessing” about funding levels for the upcoming school year. Kenney answered that the government expects school boards to properly manage the resources that are made available to them, and more information is forthcoming.

June 5—**Shannon Phillips** (NDP—Lethbridge-West) asked Education Minister **Adriana LaGrange** and Finance Minister **Travis Toews** if the necessary funds for the school nutrition program and the Classroom Improvement Fund will be provided. Toews answered that the government was clear during the campaign period that they will continue to maintain education funding, while looking for opportunities to deliver a world-class education systems in a more “efficient and intentional manner.” ■

## Education Act sparks debate over LGBTQ protections

ATA News Staff

On May 5 the UCP government introduced Bill 8, the *Education Amendment Act*. This legislation amends the *Education Act* that the previous Progressive Conservative government passed but never proclaimed. The new act does not contain protections that the NDP instituted in 2017 making it illegal for teachers to notify a parent if a child has joined a gay-straight alliance.

This aspect has raised concern from opposition members, but Education Minister **Adriana LaGrange** says the new act has Alberta leading the nation.

“Under the new *Education Act* we will have the most comprehensive GSA, QSA, inclusive legislation in Canada,”

she said in introducing the bill. “I've been in contact with students recently from the LGBTQ-plus community, and they have told me that they are really looking towards the balanced approach that we are putting forward.”

Opposition leader **Rachel Notley** said the act removes the obligation for school districts to have a LGBTQ-supportive policy, thereby allowing schools to discourage kids from asking for GSAs.

“It removes protection from being outed, thereby scaring kids away from GSAs. It removes government enforcement provisions, thereby allowing schools to block GSAs,” Notley said. “You know that as many as half of boards will abandon GSAs, and you're okay with it because your values are more important than the safety of those kids.” ■



FILE  
Rachel Notley, opposition leader



FILE  
Adriana LaGrange, education minister

# 2019 gotcha! PHOTO CONTEST

# AND THE WINNERS ARE ...

Camera-carrying teachers from around the province bombarded the *ATA News* with dozens of photos for the 25th annual Gotcha! Photo Contest.

Here are the judges' top three picks, along with some honourable mentions. Prizes are awarded as follows: first, \$200; second, \$100; and third, \$50.

The contest judges were Yuet Chan, veteran *ATA News* photographer and designer, and Cory Hare, *ATA News* managing editor.



1st

### 1st – Fresh snow

*Students rush into the schoolyard for recess after a fresh dump of snow.*

**Photographer:** Marissa Szawlowski, Belmont School, Edmonton

**Date of photo:** Dec. 14, 2018

**Judges' comments:** There's nothing like fresh snow to inspire pure joy and enthusiasm in the faces of children. This photo captures these elements within a context of stark light and shadows that add an epic quality to the image. Also contributing to the photo's strong impact are its depth and a sky containing lines that draw the eye down to the scene below.

## HONOURABLE MENTIONS



### LEFT – The Lion King

*Grade 7 student Aiden Saganis plays the part of Simba in the school play.*

**Photographer:** Rod Ince, Terrace Ridge School, Lacombe

**Date of photo:** March 5, 2019

**Judges' comments:** This photo is all about colour and the mournful look in the actor's eyes.



### RIGHT – Surprise fire drill

*Students make the best of it during a surprise fire drill. Facing the camera are (L-R) Kyra Tauber, Gwenaelle Mouafo Fome, Xander Leblanc and Kaleb Potts.*

**Photographer:** Danielle Jean, Muriel Martin Elementary School, St. Albert

**Date of photo:** Jan. 20, 2019

**Judges' comments:** Airborne snowflakes elevate this photo from routine to notable. Facial expressions also help – rather than lamenting their lot at being outside in their shirtsleeves, these children are embracing the adventure.

2<sup>nd</sup>



**2nd – Ready for recess**

*Grade 4 pupil Amaan Makeui, originally from South Sudan, is ready to head outside for a break after spending many hours working hard inside.*

**Photographer:** Janice Gibney, Our Lady of Fatima School, Calgary

**Date of photo:** May 10, 2019

**Judges' comments:** Sometimes a simple image of a single face can be very effective. With this image, a sense of irresistible intrigue is created by the juxtaposition of the student's face and the jacket's fur. The student's enigmatic expression only heightens the appeal – what is she thinking?

**3rd – Up for grabs**

*Students from Medicine Hat's Monsignor McCoy High School battle with opponents from Chinook High School in Lethbridge.*

**Photographer:** John Laing, Medicine Hat High School

**Date of photo:** Jan. 12, 2019

**Judges' comments:** A chaotic moment during an intense game is captured, leaving the viewer (and possibly the players) to wonder, what the heck just happened?

*The ATA News thanks all teachers who participated in this year's Gotcha! Photo Contest.*



3<sup>rd</sup>



**HONOURABLE MENTION**



**TOP – Come and get it**

*Anei Majock and Joe Bilton engage in a little pick-up basketball.*

**Photographer:** Dawnelle Salant, St. Mark School, Calgary

**Date of photo:** April 15, 2019

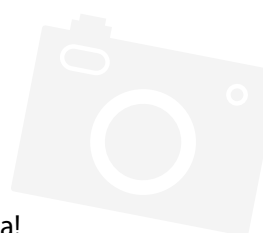
**Judges' comments:** This photo captures the innocent joy of play.

**BE READY!**

Teachers, keep your cameras at the ready for special education-related moments during the 2019–20 school year.

You might want to keep your best shots for submission to the 2020 Gotcha! contest but also consider sharing "routine" photos during the year — the ATA News is always looking to show what's happening in education around the province.

The contact is managing editor Cory Hare at [cory.hare@ata.ab.ca](mailto:cory.hare@ata.ab.ca).



# Abandoning students is never appropriate



## 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.*

At a recent hearing of a Professional Conduct Committee, a teacher was facing charges that he had abandoned his classroom and that he had also failed to leave substitute plans.

The committee heard evidence that the teacher left students unsupervised when he vacated his classroom. The teacher had left the classroom in frustration with a difficult group of students. Nevertheless, the teacher never sought help and support to deal with the student behaviour, despite many options being available for him to do so. The teacher made a conscious choice to leave his students in an emotionally charged state.

In abandoning the students, the teacher had not made

administration aware that he was leaving, nor did he leave behind any alternative program that could have been delivered by someone else. While it is sometimes necessary to step out of a classroom for a brief time, this teacher simply left the room with no plans or intent to return, or any plan to accommodate for his absence.

Additionally, the committee heard that on another occasion the teacher failed to provide any plans for a previously scheduled absence. The teacher was an experienced teacher who was aware of the steps and procedures for being away from school, including leaving behind substitute plans.

It is inappropriate to leave at-risk students alone without adult supervision. It is never appropriate for teachers to abandon their students and their classroom when a situation becomes too difficult. Failing to provide lesson plans for a substitute teacher

creates challenges for a teacher's students and also for a colleague who arrives at the school expecting to have a plan established for the day. This also impacted school administration, who were required to create and develop plans for the substitute teacher during the teacher's absence.

The Alberta Teachers' Association has expectations that teachers will treat all students with dignity and respect and be considerate of their circumstances. That did not happen in this case. Further, by failing to provide substitute plans for a scheduled absence, this teacher failed to maintain the honour and the dignity of the profession.

The teacher was found guilty on both charges. He received fines totalling \$650 and a letter of severe reprimand encompassing both charges.

It is common for teachers who are fined by the Professional Conduct Committee to have a deadline for payment imposed upon them. In this case, the teacher has 60 days from receipt of the final report of the committee to pay his fines. Failure to do so will result in suspension of membership in the Alberta Teachers' Association. ■

# ATA backing away from 2Learn

ATA News Staff

The Alberta Teachers' Association will discontinue its funding of the online resource clearing house 2Learn.ca at the conclusion of this fiscal year, and the site is scheduled to go dark at the end of August.

The website came into the ATA's custodianship in 2017.

Since that time, the Association has been evaluating its use, scope and utility to Alberta's teachers. Following a debate at the 2019 Annual Representative Assembly over the Victoria Day weekend, 425 teacher delegates representing all ATA locals carried Resolution 2-39. It read:

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Alberta Teachers' Association

urge the Government of Alberta to take over the operation of 2Learn.ca in order to begin actively developing and reorganizing its online teaching resources to reflect the new curricula.

Discussions are now underway to fulfill the assembly's resolution. ■



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## Are you interested in facilitating Indigenous education workshops?

**BECOME AN INDIGENOUS EDUCATION PD FACILITATOR!**

The Alberta Teachers' Association is seeking outstanding classroom teachers representing all grade levels and subject areas from across the province. The three-year appointments for these assignments will begin in the 2019/20 school year.

The application process has two parts:

1. Provide a letter of interest, including the following:
  - Areas of interest and expertise in Indigenous education
  - Experience leading professional development
  - Reasons for applying
2. Provide a resumé outlining education, work experience, leadership experience, publications, presentations and volunteer experience.

**Successful candidates** are expected to deliver 7–10 workshops per year and are required to attend two training sessions per year. The Association covers release time and associated expenses and provides an honorarium for workshops delivered.

As a courtesy, please advise your superintendent and principal that you will be applying prior to doing so. All applicants must be active or associate members of the ATA, have at least five years of teaching experience and hold an Alberta teaching certificate.

**APPLICATION DEADLINE IS JUNE 24, 2019.**

Send your letter of interest and resumé to Melissa Purcell, ATA Executive Staff Officer, Indigenous education, Alberta Teachers' Association, 11010 142 Street NW, Edmonton AB T5N 2R1, or e-mail information to [melissa.purcell@ata.ab.ca](mailto:melissa.purcell@ata.ab.ca).

*In making application to become an Indigenous Education PD facilitator for the Alberta Teachers' Association, you are voluntarily providing your personal information to the ATA. Visit the ATA website for more information.*

## ATAeNEWS

Get the ATA News delivered direct to your inbox.

→ **ATA eNews**

The new ATA eNews will deliver essential content from the print version of the ATA News 15 times per year.

→ **ATA eNews-Flash**

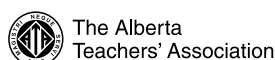
ATA eNews-Flash will be distributed periodically as news happens, providing breaking stories related to education in Alberta.

Visit the [signup page](#) to subscribe to one or both of these services:  
[bit.ly/2Subscribe\\_Now](http://bit.ly/2Subscribe_Now)



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

Visit [teachers.ab.ca](http://teachers.ab.ca) for applications and details.



The Alberta Teachers' Association



## CLASSIFIEDS

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## NOTICES & EVENTS

### Volunteers needed

The Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) Edmonton is looking for volunteers to answer its 24/7 distress line. As a distress line volunteer, you are the first and often the only contact a caller has when they need support, information, understanding or a listening ear.

All volunteers receive 71 hours of intensive basic training in communication skills, knowledge of community resources, suicide awareness and prevention, crisis intervention, bereavement and special calls.

To learn more, contact [volunteer@cmha-edmonton.ab.ca](mailto:volunteer@cmha-edmonton.ab.ca) or visit <https://edmonton.cmha.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](mailto:advertising@ata.ab.ca).

**Next Deadline** Thursday, Aug. 22, 2019, 4 p.m. (publication date Sept. 3, 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

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



## Leadership and Superintendent Leadership Certification In-Service Programs

After a series of successful inservice sessions were delivered during the winter and spring, the following sessions are planned for the summer.



# WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP COMMITTEE

*needs your voice*

The Annual Representative Assembly approved the establishment of the Women in Leadership Committee, and we are looking for three field members to share their voices.

Apply online now!

The complete application information is available on the ATA website. If you have any questions, please contact **Lindsay Yakimyshyn** at [lindsay.yakimyshyn@ata.ab.ca](mailto:lindsay.yakimyshyn@ata.ab.ca), 780-447-9425 or 1-800-232-7208.

**Application Deadline:**  
**JUNE 30**

Date	Location	LQSa	LQSB	SLQS
2019 06 24–25	High Level—High Level Public School	●		
2019 07 02–03	Edmonton—ARCA Banquet Hall	●		●
2019 07 02–03	Calgary—Best Western Calgary Plaza Hotel	●		●
2019 08 14–16	Kananaskis—Pomeroy Kananaskis Mountain Lodge			●

Eligibility to attend summer sessions is based upon one's leadership position in the 2018/19 school year.

All those seeking leadership certification are encouraged to facilitate the process by updating their information at [education.alberta.ca/TWINS](http://education.alberta.ca/TWINS).

Register online at: <https://abedleadershipcert.ca/register>.



The Alberta Teachers' Association



## Catering and room rentals at the Alberta Teachers' Association

We have conference rooms for groups ranging in size from 10 to 350 people, with a variety of catering options. Bar service is available.

In-house audiovisual equipment is also available for rent. Complimentary guest parking is available in visitor parking. The facility is smoke-free.


For more information please call 780-447-9400 or e-mail [meetingrooms@ata.ab.ca](mailto:meetingrooms@ata.ab.ca).

 The Alberta Teachers' Association

0P-00-128 2019 06



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

 Substitute Teachers' Conference

The **Joy of Teaching**

**October 18 (eve)–19, 2019**

Register online at <https://event-wizard.com/events/2019STC>

Registration deadline—October 16, 2019

PD-287 2019 06

# Supporting your students in your schools

Alberta Education is funding Alberta Distance Learning Centre to support Alberta schools to

- provide online and print courses taught by ADLC teachers to **your** students
- provide course content to Alberta teachers to use in **your** classrooms

There are no fees for instruction. Some courses require materials that can be downloaded at no cost. Alternatively, hard copies of these materials can be purchased from ADLC.



Contact our Partner Support team

info@adlc.ca

1-866-774-5333

adlc.ca

# ADLC

Alberta Distance Learning Centre

**STUDENT VOTE**  
Canada 2019

This October, join more than 9,000 schools in the federal parallel election.

**REGISTER YOUR SCHOOL TODAY**  
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1-866-488-8775



The ATA Educational Trust

Supporting teachers' professional learning

This year, the ATA Educational Trust will award over \$90,000 for

- **\$600** grants to help teachers with attending a conference, workshop, seminar, institute or symposium; and
- **\$500** grants to help teachers attend an ATA specialist council conference or event. The names are chosen in a draw.

Grant application deadline: September 30

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



## We're Celebrating Teachers!

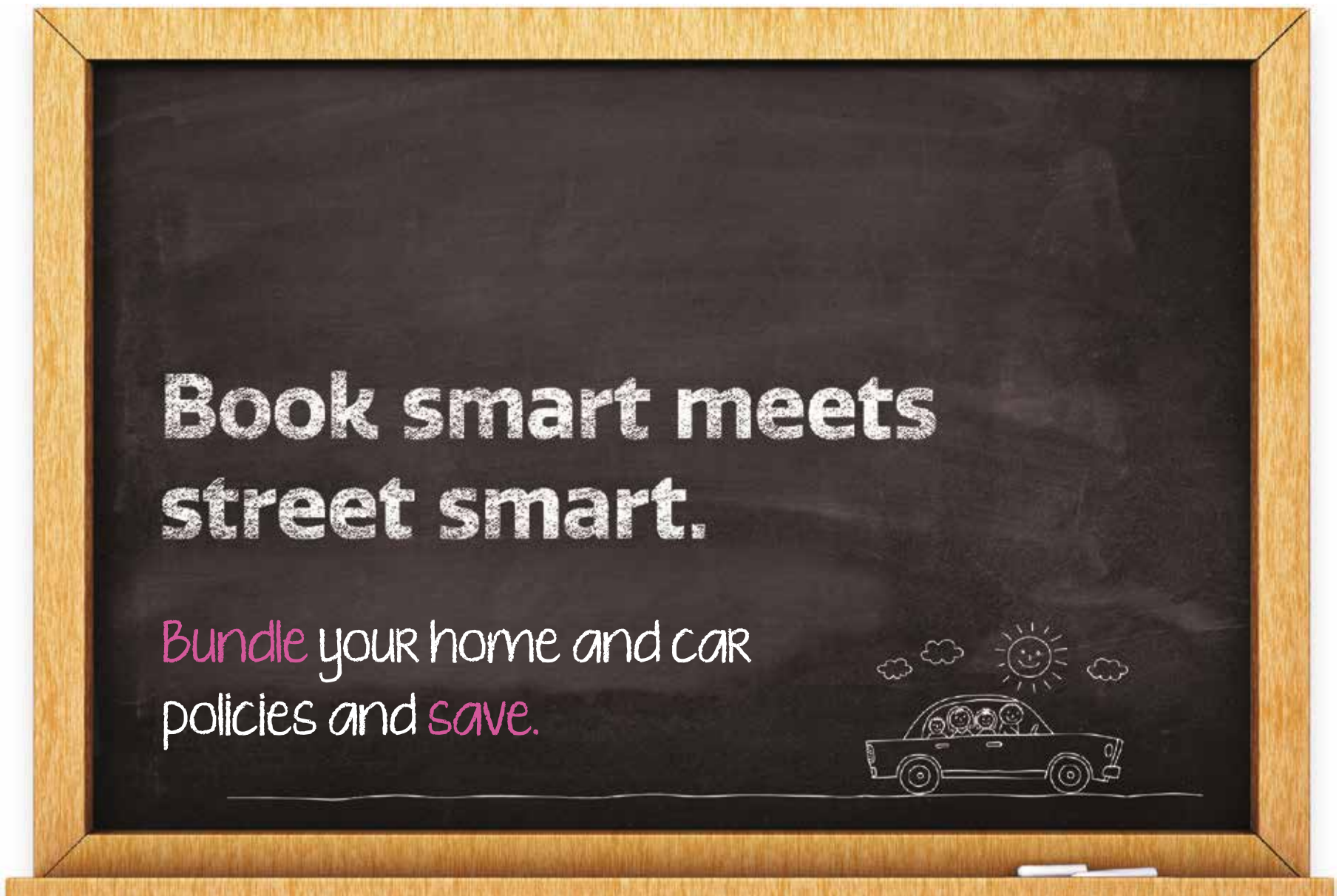
From now until October 31st 2019, members of the Alberta Teachers Association can **SAVE 10%** off their Kitchen Craft Cabinetry!

Your ATA Card must be presented upon purchase to receive the discount.

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## Bike club grows student skill and confidence

### SUCCESS STORIES

Robert Michon  
Special to the ATA News

Students at École Parc Élémentaire in Fort Saskatchewan are getting a crash course in all things cycling thanks to a new after-school program hosted by parent volunteers. From now until the end of the school year, close to 40 students in the school's Bike Club will be meeting once a week after school to improve their cycling skills and learn how to stay safe as they bike around the city.

"This is my first time in a bike club, and so far it's awesome," says Grade 4 student Kai Levesque.

"I joined the group because I love going for bike rides and riding to my friends' houses, but I'm having so much fun learning to ride on the obstacle courses as well."

The club is open to students from kindergarten to Grade 6, and meets every Tuesday after school. Safety is the primary focus, but parent volunteers also want to help students of all ages develop the skills and confidence they'll need to become avid cyclists.

"Most of the students who attend already enjoy being on their bikes, but the bike club will reinforce why biking is fun and how to be safe," says Jake Derksen, the parent coach of the club.

"We're lucky in Fort Saskatchewan to have access to so many paved trails as well as over 25 kilometres of mountain bike trails. By the time our club wraps up for the year, we want our youngest riders to become more confident and adventurous on their bikes and our older riders to be responsible, conscientious cyclists."

When students graduate from the course at the end of the year, there will be a special bike rodeo celebration, where they will traverse obstacle courses and show their parents how far their skills have come.

"On the surface, our students are learning to become better cyclists," says principal Dan Verhoeff. "But at the same time, we're showing them the importance of healthy living and exercise, the joy of spending time together outdoors and encouraging them to get out and explore their community." ■

Robert Michon is a communications and public engagement assistant for Elk Island Public Schools.



Parent volunteers Mike Levesque (left) and Etienne Tremblay help Grade 1 student Reese Sieben during an after-school bike club that has been operating at École Parc Élémentaire in Fort Saskatchewan this year.

SUPPLIED

## Alberta student wins national 'brain bee'

Jen Janzen  
ATA News Staff

An Edmonton student has been crowned the "best brain in Canada."

Jenny Sun from Old Scona Academic High School won the 12th annual Canadian Institutes of Health Research Canadian National Brain Bee championship at McMaster University in Hamilton.

"It didn't feel real at all," recalled Sun, who is planning to pursue a degree in neuroscience in the fall. "The people that I met there were all very intelligent and well studied, and I didn't feel as if I was more qualified than any of them."

This national competition convened some of Canada's brightest high school students from across the country. Modelled after a traditional spelling bee, the contest tested their knowledge of the human brain, neuroanatomy and patient diagnosis.

To get ready for the competition, Sun worked with Hailey Pineau, a PhD student at the University of Alberta, who helped to organize the Edmonton Brain Bee. Pineau created quiz questions to stump Sun, and worked with a colleague to introduce Sun to real brain tissue samples.



Jenny Sun (right) of Edmonton recently won the Canadian National Brain Bee championship. Also pictured is second place finisher Alexandra Alac of Waterloo.

SUPPLIED

"One really cool thing about this competition is that it brings kids together from all over the country who share a common interest in neuroscience," Pineau said. "These kids are the future of neuroscience, and the competition may foster friendships and collaborations that will last a lifetime."

The national competition was held on May 25. Along with the coveted "best brain in Canada" title, Sun was awarded \$1,500 and a paid internship this summer in a University of Alberta neuroscience lab alongside Dr. Harley Kurata. ■