



See pages 8-9.

# NEWS BREAK

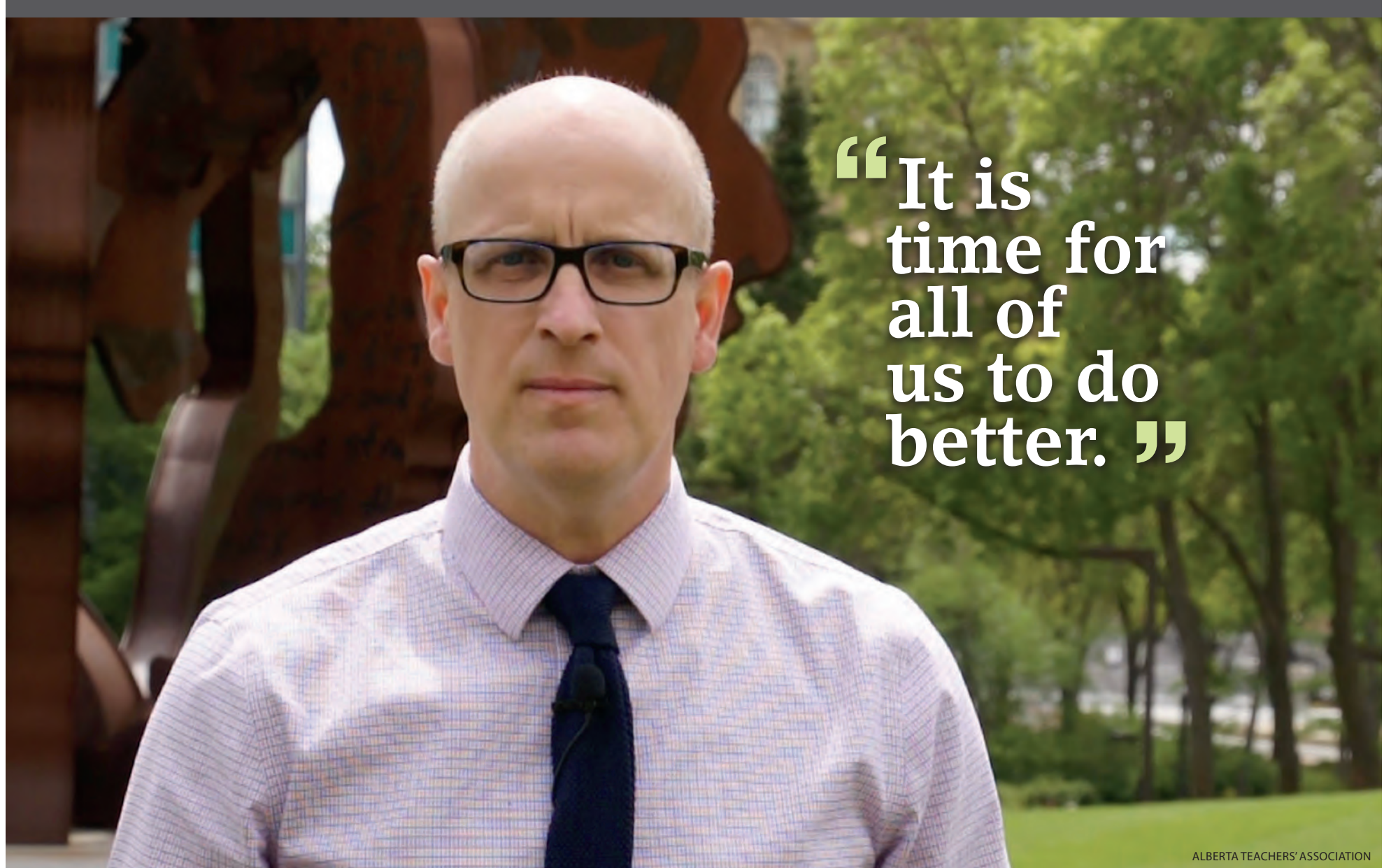
This is the last issue of the *ATA News* for the 2020-21 school year. During the summer break, news articles will be posted periodically to the [ATA website](#). Publication will resume in late August.

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# ATA NEWS

June 9, 2020 | Volume 54, Number 14

News Publication of The Alberta Teachers' Association



“It is time for all of us to do better.”

ALBERTA TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION

In the wake of anti-racism demonstrations taking place throughout North America, ATA president Jason Schilling delivers an anti-racism message at the Alberta legislature. The video message can be viewed on the [ATA's YouTube channel](#).



## Black lives matter

Standing in solidarity with those fighting for justice and equality.

Read *Jonathan Teghtmeyer's* editorial on page 2.



## Anti-racism resources available

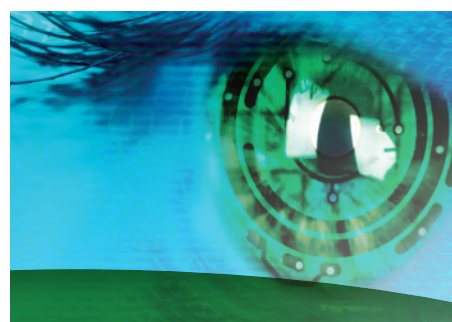
The ATA library has [assembled resources online](#) so teachers can learn about racism and plan anti-racism lessons for their students.



## School boards must provide safe conditions

Teachers must comply with return-to-work orders, but boards must ensure conditions are safe.

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



## Safety is teachers' #1 concern

ATA study shows many teachers feeling isolated and disconnected.

See story on page 4.

## Class of 2020

Teachers pull out all the stops to celebrate grads during COVID.

See page 19.



## ATRF outperforms AIMCo

Simulation shows different pension fund management would have cost teachers significantly.

See story on page 6.

# Black lives matter



## EDITORIAL

Jonathan Teghtmeyer  
ATA News Editor-in-Chief

we espouse are put to the test, let it be said that we rose to the occasion without equivocation. The nation's children pass through our classrooms. What a golden opportunity! Let's seize the moment.

### Muna Saleh, @DrMunaSaleh

Sending so much love and light to everyone in pain right now. And recommitting to living and working and teaching in anti-racist (not just "not racist") ways.

### Magaly, @magalyherrera

My career choice is no accident. I am entering a workspace where 80 per cent of educators are white. We NEED more black men and women and people of colour in education. We need more diversity. Anti-racism starts at home but HAS to be amplified in the classroom.

### Barry White Jr, @thatsbwhite

For every George, Breonna, Ahmaud, Mike, Tamir, Trayvon, Eric, Oscar, Sandra, Walter, Terrance, etc. I have taught, am teaching and will teach in the future, your life matters inside and outside the classroom!

### Zain Velji, @zainvelji

Kids see colour. Kids see race. From the time they are six months of age, kids perceive race. By the time they are two

years of age, kids can start showing a preference for playmates of the same race. Race becomes a problem when we don't talk about it with kids.

### Ahmed Hussen, @HonAhmedHussen

Anti-black racism does not stop at the border. I have heard from people who have said that we should not worry about what is happening in the U.S. because that is not our problem. As a black man and a father of three young boys, I can tell you it is a lived reality for black Canadians.

### Kaycee Madu, @KayceeMaduYEG

I've been watching clips of the protests with my children. What we're seeing is the culmination of decades of legitimate pain and frustration. From youth to adulthood, black people continue to be subject to terrible abuses, including from bad actors in police forces ... We have much further to go, but we have to get there together. This means recommitting ourselves to ending racism against black people once and for all. As Martin Luther King said, "we may have all come on different ships, but we're in the same boat now."

### David Shepherd, @DShepYEG

This is not something that only happens elsewhere or across the border. It's something that has a long history in Alberta and continues today. We've

seen highly public stories in the last few years. We're making progress, we're improving, but there's still work to do ... I commit as an elected official, a black man and a human being to continuing to listen, learn and demand better from myself, from our communities and from the systems that govern our lives. We only get a better world by fighting and working for it.

### shea martin, @sheathescholar

Grades don't matter. Cops don't check our GPA before they kill us (and even if they did, it wouldn't matter). It's time for teachers to stop treating good grades like bulletproof armor for black kids.

### Dwayne Reed, @TeachMrReed

If you teach black kids, it is your responsibility to spark conversations with them (and your colleagues) about race. If you don't teach black kids, it is your responsibility to spark conversations with your students (and your colleagues) about race. Discomfort is no excuse.

### Raj Bhardwaj, @RajBhardwajMD

Please care for each other. If you can, use your privilege: don't silently stand by when you witness racism and injustice. ■

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

I stand in solidarity with those fighting for justice and equality. Today, I am using my privilege to amplify some voices of people of colour.

### Ahmed Ali, @MrAhmednurAli

It's a privilege to learn about racism instead of experiencing it your whole life.

### MissK, @AliyaKrall

Black teachers matter. ALL my kids are learning about the importance of equality and dismantling systems of oppression. ALL kids are seeing me in a leadership role. That matters.

### Dwayne Reed, @TeachMrReed

Teachers are like flight attendants. When turbulence occurs, our students are looking at our demeanor, what we say and what we do, to inform how they should respond. The world is real rocky right now — what are you showing your students?

### Christopher Usih, @UsihChristopher

Perhaps this is a watershed moment for public education. When the values

# Division officials must ensure safe conditions for workers



## Q & A

Dennis Theobald  
ATA Executive Secretary

**Question:** Given the ongoing COVID pandemic, do I have to return to work if I feel that it is unsafe?

**Answer:** COVID-19 is a workplace hazard. This is undeniable, particularly in the context of conventional congregated schooling. Like all workplace hazards, controls are needed to protect workers. The risk of infection with the coronavirus cannot be eliminated at this time, and as such, school authorities must take direction from the chief medical officer of health and work in consultation with their local medical officer of health. Authorities must follow the hierarchy of hazard controls: physical barriers and other measures to eliminate the hazard, administrative protocols (like physical distancing and hand washing), and personal protective equipment (like masks/face shields and gloves).

If, after adopting the best available hazard controls and following the chief medical officer's protocols, the school

authority determines that the work is not dangerous and no dangerous condition is present at the work site, the school authority can direct you to report to the school. In doing so, the employer would have to provide reason(s) why, in the employer's opinion, the work does not constitute a danger to health and safety or a dangerous condition is not present.

If you receive a directive to return to work at a school, it is a lawful order of the board and you must comply if it is reasonable. You may, however, lodge a formal protest as provided for in Article 8 of the ATA Code of Professional Conduct.

Changes made to the *Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) Act* in June 2018 require the promotion and maintenance of the highest degree of physical, psychological and social well-being of workers. Further, in Part 4 of the revised *OHS Act*, a worker has the right to refuse dangerous work if, on reasonable grounds, the worker believes a dangerous condition exists at the work site or the work constitutes a danger to health and safety. If such is the case, the worker must promptly report a refusal and the reasons to the employer, supervisor or designate, and the employer must, when safe to do

so, investigate and, where identified, remedy the dangerous condition. School authorities must, as part of their analysis, consider whether the risk of infection for a refusing worker poses a hazard to the worker's psychological health and well-being and what might be done to minimize or mitigate this risk.

If a teacher is sick, either physically or psychologically, and unfit to be at work, then they should access sick leave entitlements in their collective agreement.

If the teacher has a diagnosed medical condition that places them at risk of injury or illness if forced back into the work site, this also must be taken into consideration. If there has been no voluntary disclosure of a medical condition with supporting medical documentation outlining the required medical restrictions, and all hazard controls have been implemented and the work site is deemed safe, but the worker still does not want to return to work, employers may be in a position to terminate the worker's employment.

If an employee does provide medical documentation outlining their required medical restrictions, the duty to accommodate under the *Human Rights Act* is triggered, and as such, a conversation would be warranted. The

employer also has a duty to accommodate for family status, which is a protected ground under the *Human Rights Act*. For example, if a teacher is in a situation as a result of COVID-19 where they do not have appropriate child care, they may have cause to be accommodated by being granted a leave of absence under their particular collective agreement.

It is still too early to say if working from home will continue to be an option once school resumes in September. Once the education minister releases the relaunch strategy for schools, we will be in a better position to provide advice and direction to members.

You will appreciate that the application of OHS and related legislation to schools in the context of the pandemic is complex, nuanced and continuing to evolve. If you have questions or concerns, please contact the Association offices in Edmonton (1-800-232-7208) or Calgary (1-800-332-1280) for advice. My colleagues in Member Services and Teacher Welfare will be pleased to assist. ■

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



# Charter school history highlights value of public system



## VIEWPOINTS

**Lisa Everitt**  
ATA Staff Officer

In the early 1990s the Alberta government, led by Premier Ralph Klein and Education Minister Halver Jonson, introduced charter schools onto the education landscape under the auspices of providing greater parental choice and promoting competition between schools to force efficiencies and innovation in the public education system.

Charter schools were modeled after educational policy established in the 1980s and '90s. As Prof. Stephen Crump of the University of Newcastle, Australia wrote in 1992, the philosophy was centered around "an idealized perception of schools as able to operate like a market-place, able to express practices of competition, choice diversity and market driven funding."

The Progressive Conservative's decision to implement charter schools was met with opposition by public education stakeholders, including the Alberta Teachers' Association, because education budgets in the early 1990s were being slashed. From that perspective, it made little sense to have charter schools divert scarce resources from public education.

Critics also pointed out that charter school boards were not subject to the same democratic processes as public school boards because they were not elected by the general population. Also, charter schools, unlike public schools, didn't have to accommodate the needs of all students, raising concerns about equity and access. Finally, the ATA protested that teachers in charter schools were not active Association members and did not have automatic access to rights under a collective agreement, nor were they subject to the Association's discipline and

conduct processes (this function resides with the teacher regulation branch of Alberta Education). Despite these objections, charter schools were established, albeit under strict conditions.

For many years, the conditions under which charter schools were regulated remained the same. For example, charter schools could only be run by not-for-profit societies, they were evaluated and either renewed or cancelled every five years, groups wishing to start a charter school had to apply to local school boards first, the charter had to be unique in its pedagogy or program offering, no more than 15 charter schools could be formed in Alberta, and charter schools could not own land or facilities. As time progressed, while some charter schools failed, many charter schools have become fixtures on the education landscape, and there has even been growth in the collaboration between charter schools and public education stakeholders.

In the past 10 years, Conservative governments have begun to loosen the legislation and regulations around charter schools. Prior to the changes made by the *Choice in Education Act*, the cap on the number of charter schools was lifted, land and facility ownership by charter schools was permitted, charter renewal periods were extended to a maximum of 15 years, and the list of who can establish a charter school has been expanded to include private companies. The *Choice in Education Act* changes the charter school legislation in two significant ways. First, those wishing to establish a charter school no longer have to apply to local boards first. Instead, they can apply directly to the education minister. Second, charter schools can now replicate the services of

public schools if they are vocational in nature. When all the changes to the charter school legislation and regulation are viewed in their entirety, it becomes clearer that charter schools are being positioned as competitors to public education and for public funds.

In the latest iteration of legislative change, the *Choice in Education Act*, we see the creep toward the privatization of our public education system. The requirement of charter school organizers to collaborate and consult with public school boards before applying for a charter has been eliminated, cutting public school boards out of the process. They will no longer be able to assess whether the charter is offering a unique program, or whether they could offer the proposed program themselves.

Second, charter schools will be able to replicate the programs of public schools, specifically with respect to vocational schools. This is odd because many public school jurisdictions offer extensive vocational opportunities, including registered apprenticeship and co-op programs to explore career options, and partnerships with post-secondary institutions that allow students to earn credits towards post-secondary programs. Vocational programs are labour intensive and require investment in learning labs and equipment. It is difficult to see how a vocational charter program could succeed unless it received more money than charter schools currently receive. To be sure, this additional funding would not be provided to the public system.

In an era of austerity by the current government, it is difficult to see how the *Choice in Education Act* improves education in Alberta. Our public education system is recognized as a top-performing jurisdiction worldwide. Ninety-three per cent of parents choose public education. If anything, this is where the government should concentrate its efforts.

*Lisa Everitt is a researcher in the ATA's Government program area.*

## YOUR VIEWS

### FACEBOOK FEEDBACK

"How will your summer plans be different this year?"

**Jodie Kachkar**

I'm determined to shut down my laptop and not check work email etc. for at least a month. In that time I'm going to order a cellphone tripod from Amazon. Since I generally volunteer at various Edmonton festivals throughout the summer, I'm purchasing a ukulele and will put some time into learning to play it this summer in my down time.

**Jody Lynn**

I will be unplugging for several weeks and spending as much time as possible outdoors. I want to read for fun, spend time with my family and watch my garden grow.

**Nikki Breton**

I have been helping my parents with some projects and work around their cabin not far from the city. I plan to spend as much time as possible enjoying the sunshine in the yard at the cabin and being out on the water in the boat or on the sea-doo.

**Catherine MacLellan**

I won't be able to travel to Cape Breton. This will be the first summer I won't be home since I moved here in 2011 to teach. Instead I'll be enjoying our new home and yard.

**Brenda Kelly**

More online learning ... but for me! I'm starting a master of education program. Camping is in the books too.

**Chris Landry**

Likely no trip east to visit my family so probably golf, golf and more golf.

**Genevieve Payeur**

My four kids and I are going to unplug in July and go find out-of-the way picnic spots to recover from the intense time in front of screens. Then in August I'll be looking into flipping my classrooms and learning all about my new addition to my teacher role as classroom support teacher.

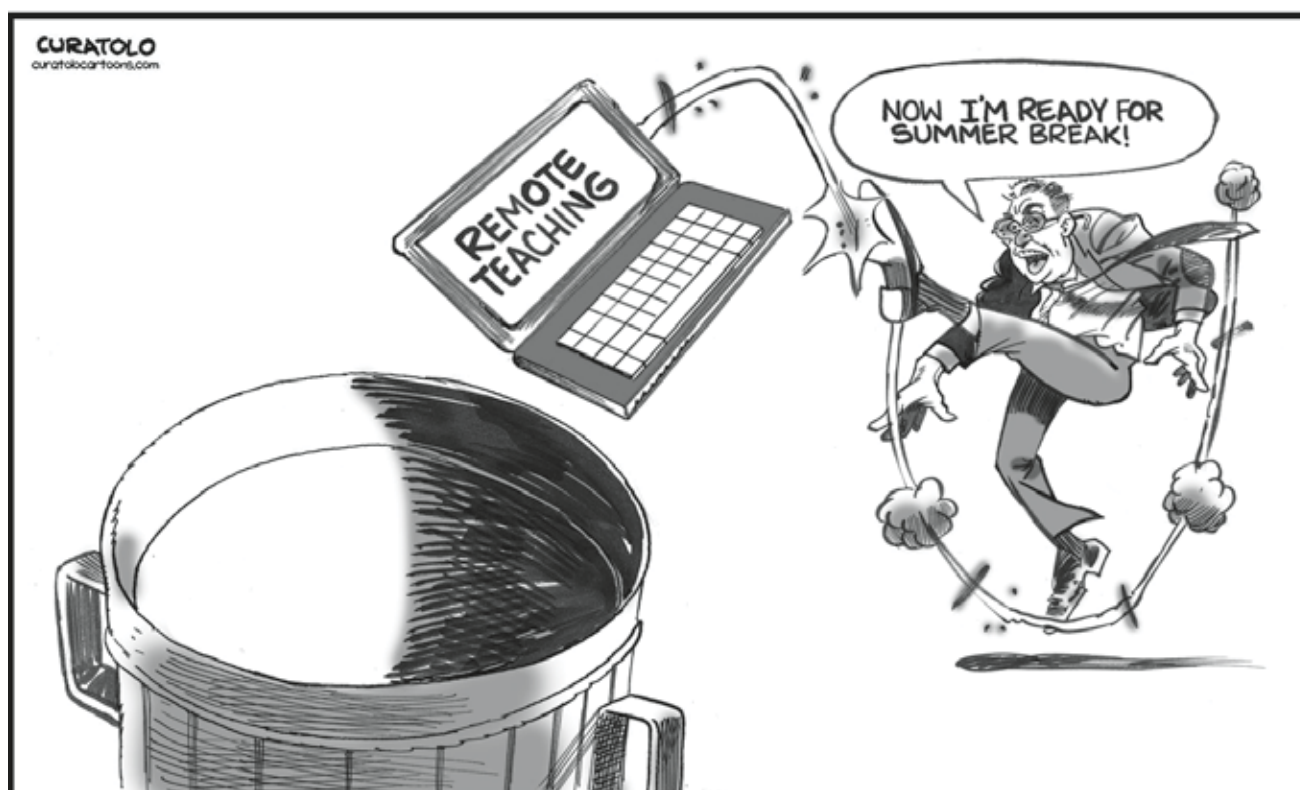
### FOR THE RECORD

“

I hope that the video of George Floyd and the ensuing uprising that's happening around the country is enough of a catalyst to convince teachers that they need to educate themselves about the history of institutional racism. They need to explore their own identity as white educators and what that means. And then they need to take action by teaching about what they've learned.

”

– Jesse Hagopian, black teacher at Garfield High School in Seattle and co-author of *Teaching For Black Lives*. Speaking on National Public Radio on June 4, Hagopian was asked how white teachers can teach for black lives.



# Safety is teachers' #1 concern

*ATA study shows many teachers feeling isolated and disconnected*

Cory Hare  
ATA News Managing Editor

School safety, student readiness and mental well-being top the list of teachers' concerns as they look ahead to a return to school, shows a new study conducted by the Alberta Teachers' Association.

Other findings show that teachers are feeling isolated, exhausted and increasingly disconnected from their students and their students' families.

Over a three-week period between April 27 and May 15, the Association surveyed more than 7,200 teachers and 900 school leaders about their experiences and perspectives during the pandemic. The survey covered five key areas: well-being, equity, technology use and online instruction, pedagogical practices and the return to public school buildings.

"This research provides the Association with a very strong pulse of the profession during the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic and clearly identifies teachers' voices on a variety of topics," said Phil McRae, the ATA's associate co-ordinator of research.

On the topic of returning to school, the research found three top concerns: school safety, overall student readiness, and the mental health and well-being of teachers, students and the community in general.

Regarding school safety, respondents were concerned about the adequate supply of personal protective equipment for teachers, maintaining physical distancing measures for students and teachers, school cleanliness and sanitization, accommodations for teachers with pre-existing health conditions and managing substitute teacher availability.

When it comes to student readiness, among teachers' concerns were declining student motivation and engagement, growing inequities accelerated by the pandemic, and child poverty and food insecurity.

Reporting on their own well-being, three quarters of respondents said they don't feel the same emotional connection to their students as they did prior to the pandemic, and 63 per

cent reported feeling isolated. Half of respondents reported feeling fatigued when they get up in the morning to face another day of teaching students at a distance, and 70 per cent reported being exhausted by the end of the day.

## Risk of compassion fatigue

With one third of respondents indicating that they are empathizing with the trauma of their students, the profession may experience a very high rate of compassion fatigue, McRae said.

Compassion fatigue refers to the emotional and physical exhaustion that can develop when helpers (i.e., teachers, nurses and others) are unable to refuel and regenerate as a result of their emotional labour and dedication to others. One of the main characteristics of compassion fatigue, as found within the research literature, is the experiencing of secondary (vicarious) trauma, McRae said.

"From this pandemic research study, the profession is learning that 30 per cent of Alberta teachers agree that they feel as though they are experiencing the trauma of some of the students they teach during the pandemic," McRae said.

The study shows that 42 per cent of Alberta teachers agree that they are affected (or people are telling them that they are affected) by the emotions of students at this time.

Teachers also identified several student populations who may be at risk, such as those living in poverty, in single-parent homes, those with special needs and English language learners. With the growing inequity across our society, these are populations that are vulnerable during the pandemic and need to be supported, said McRae.

He noted that the study will assist the Association in supporting members, and has been instrumental in informing its advocacy on a return to school buildings, and in constructing a forecast of the short, medium and longer term implications of the pandemic's impact on Alberta's school system.

"It will also be used to conceptualize more sustained strategic shifts in policy and practice that emerge as Albertans transition out of the first waves of the pandemic and return to public schools across the province," he said. ■

## Quotes from study respondents

**What are your top two concerns or questions about your mental health and well-being in relation to the current coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic?**

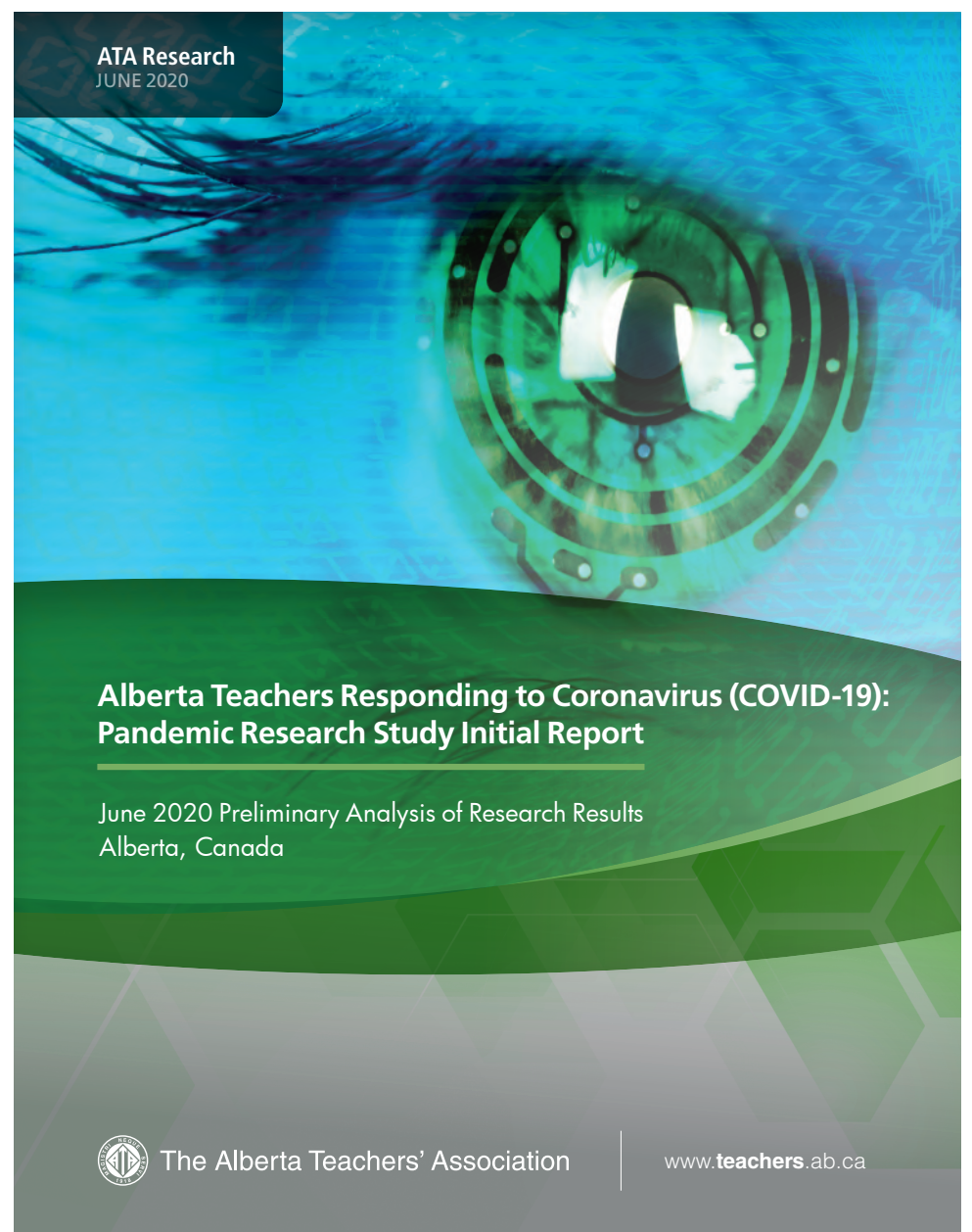
“ I believe that the large class sizes and lack of educational assistants due to budget cuts will severely impact my ability to teach all children and have them all be successful. It is incredibly hard to provide one-on-one time with struggling or gifted students in an early elementary setting.

Lots of programs are being cut that should be there to support our kids. I believe that some teachers in our profession will become burnt out from the complications of teaching online, then returning to the classroom with decreased resources to help out students. I feel for our students and families who deserve to have more support and have all their children be successful by having the necessary supports in place. ”

“ I feel sad and angry often. I feel disconnected from my students and my colleagues. I feel overwhelmed by the expectations to be working full-time from home, while also working with my own children on their home schooling. ”

## Representative sample

The ATA pandemic research study data has a confidence interval of plus or minus 1.5 per cent 19 times out of 20.



A study of its members by the ATA documents concerns about the safety and well-being of both teachers and students.

## Teachers' top three concerns on returning to school

- School safety (student, teacher and school building)**
  - Adequate personal protective equipment (PPE) for teachers
  - Maintaining physical distancing measures for students and teachers
  - Class sizes and COVID-19 safety protocols — a pervasive concern given existing large Alberta class sizes
  - School cleanliness and sanitization
  - Accommodation for teachers with pre-existing health conditions
  - Managing substitute teacher availability with teacher illness
- Overall student readiness for school re-entry (equity, poverty, curriculum and assessment)**
  - Student motivation and engagement
  - Issues of equity, growing inequities accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic
  - Growing rates of child poverty and food insecurity concerns
  - Curricular gaps upon a return to public school buildings
- Mental health and well-being (teacher, student and school community)**
  - Assessment challenges/opportunities; concerned with the burden of standardized testing
  - Declining skill development (social, emotional, cognitive, physical, behavioural)
  - Vulnerable student populations deemed at-risk, including those living in poverty, in single-parent homes, with exceptionalities (special learning needs/gifted), English language learners (ELL), First Nations, Métis and Inuit students, refugee students
  - Appropriate, timely and accessible mental health supports for students, teachers, school leaders, school staff, parents and school community
  - Mental wellness and well-being supports
  - Psycho-social and physiological well-being
  - Physical literacy and health (free play, sports and recess)

# AIMCo management would mean 1.3 billion less for teachers' pension fund

## ATRF board says Bill 22 is not in members' best interests

**Jonathan Teghtmeyer**  
ATA Associate Co-ordinator  
of Communications

The Alberta teachers' pension fund would be worth \$1.3 billion less today if it had been managed by the Alberta Investment Management Corporation (AIMCo) rather than the Alberta Teachers' Retirement Fund (ATRF).

This information is contained in a recent letter from ATRF chair Sandra Johnston to ATA president Jason Schilling. The letter outlines ATRF fund performance compared to simulated earnings under AIMCo. It indicates that Alberta teachers' pension assets would have been worth \$17.5 billion at the end of last year if they had been managed by AIMCo since 2012, instead of the \$18.9 billion the fund was worth on that date under ATRF management.

The data shows that ATRF outperformed AIMCo in each and every year from 2013 through 2019.

The analysis is part of ongoing discontent over the UCP government's Bill 22, which enabled the transfer of investment control of ATRF assets to AIMCo. The bill passed last November.

Based on this data and other reasons, the ATRF has also announced that its board of directors, "does not believe (Bill 22) is in the best interests of the ATRF plans and its members." The ATRF board uses a shared-governance model, which means half of the board is appointed by government and the other half is appointed by the ATA. This statement was posted in an [updated Bill 22 FAQ document](#) that also states that ATRF will comply with the bill, as it has now been enacted into law.

In conducting the analysis, ATRF accounted for factors that were

previously used by the government as points of dispute, including common year-end, varying asset classes and investment costs. ATRF's analysis was done by using the actual returns earned by various asset classes within the Local Authorities Pension Plan, AIMCo's largest and most comparable client. Those return rates were applied to ATRF's actual asset mix and data was compared with a common Dec. 31 year-end.

The letter states that the comparison of net investment returns are returns realized after paying all investment-related expenses, which refutes the government's ongoing claim that the management transfer to AIMCo will save money by reducing expenses.

"In short, net investment returns are what the investor earns after accounting for all costs incurred to create those returns," Johnston writes in her letter.

She goes on to point out that, over this time period, teacher contribution rates have been reduced by 1.54 per cent of pay for teachers and 1.36 per cent of payroll for the government as a result of these strong returns.

"Teachers and the government have a combined saving of around \$2,500 per teacher per year as a result of reduced contributions," Schilling said in response to the letter's findings. "Despite the government claims, it is higher net returns that lead to these contribution savings, not reduced expenses alone."

Johnston's letter ([available here](#)) was written in response to a request for the data from Schilling. He requested the updated return comparisons now that year-end reports are readily available for 2019. He also asked for an analysis of how the AIMCo's recently reported volatility strategy losses might have affected ATRF assets, if they had been part of the plan at that point.

### \$300 million cost

ATRF staff estimated that teacher plan losses would have been in the range of \$300 million due to the strategy if AIMCo was managing the investments. Johnston says in the letter that ATRF has explored the use of "short volatility" strategies, like the one employed by AIMCo that resulted in recent losses, "but, in the context of a market where conditions suggested that volatility was more likely to rise than fall, we have avoided them."

AIMCo recently lost an estimated \$2.1 billion as a result of a volatility-related investment strategy that lost money as a result of recent swings in the market. These losses are in addition to lower asset values as a result of general market declines.

### NDP bill aims to reverse Bill 22

Schilling says this information provides another opportunity for teachers to contact MLAs and ask for the repeal of Bill 22. Updated text has been posted to the email-your-MLA tool at [www.handsoffmypension.ca](http://www.handsoffmypension.ca).

"Let's keep the pressure on," Schilling said. "Government MLAs need to know that teacher anger over this issue is not going away."

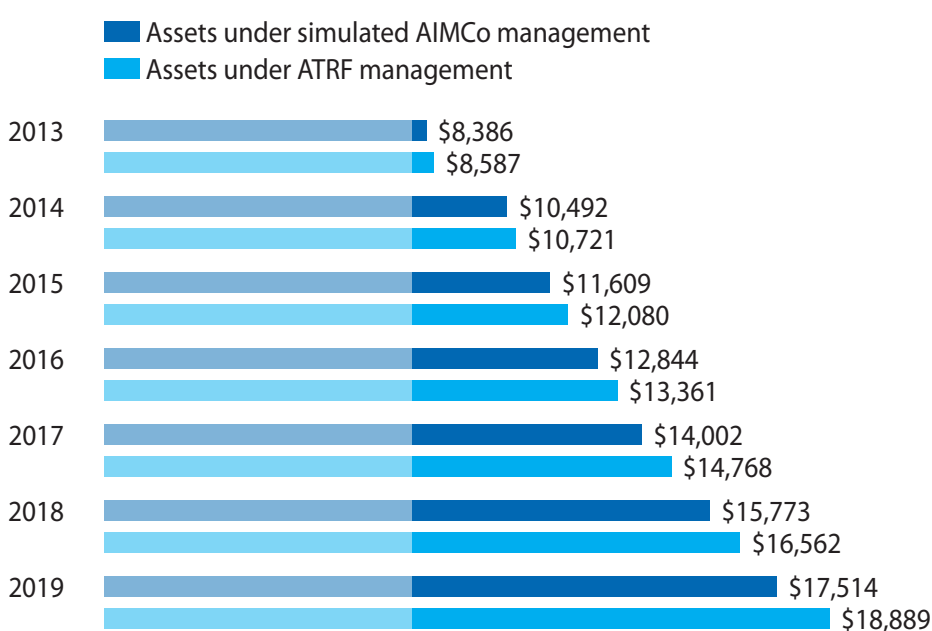
Meanwhile, it is expected that Edmonton-Mill Woods MLA Christina Gray will soon introduce a private members bill that will reverse the changes made to pensions by Bill 22.

"Your pension belongs to you," says Gray. "That money is the retirement savings of hard-working Albertans, earned during a lifetime of building this province, and Jason Kenney should not have interfered."

The NDP caucus has launched a website and petition in support of Gray's bill at [www.yourpensionisyours.ca](http://www.yourpensionisyours.ca).

### Comparison of Asset Growth | ATRF vs. Simulated AIMCo

Calendar Year-End in Millions of \$



### Calendar year-by-year comparison of ATRF actual total fund net returns with simulated ATRF total fund returns under AIMCo management.

	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013
ATRF actual total Fund net return	14.42%	2.40%	11.01%	5.65%	8.98%	12.08%	17.40%
Simulated ATRF total Fund net returns under AIMCo management	11.11%	2.26%	9.24%	5.29%	6.86%	11.79%	14.85%
<b>Difference</b>	<b>3.31%</b>	<b>0.14%</b>	<b>1.77%</b>	<b>0.36%</b>	<b>2.12%</b>	<b>0.29%</b>	<b>2.55%</b>

## ATA not keen on changes to charter and home schooling

### Choice in Education Act avoids voucher system but raises two areas of concern

**Kim Clement**  
ATA News Staff

The UCP government's *Choice in Education Act* does very little to improve education for the vast majority of students in Alberta, says Alberta Teachers' Association president Jason Schilling.

On May 28 the UCP government introduced Bill 15 — the *Choice in Education Act* — which affirms that "parents have the right to choose the kind of education they feel will be best for their children."

Schilling said the majority of the bill

has little impact on the education system as a whole, but he did flag two areas of concern: the removal of school board oversight of charter school applications and the approval of unsupervised home schooling.

"Unsupervised home education should be a concern to all Albertans. A child's right to a quality education must not be sacrificed in the name of parental choice," Schilling said.

Schilling said that home education should be subject to accountability and oversight by public boards or private operators, and public boards should still have the option to adopt a program of choice before a charter school is established.

Under the proposed changes, those wishing to establish a charter school would go directly to the minister of education rather than consulting the public school board where they intend to set up operation.

"School choice and the freedom of parents to direct their kids' education is not a policy preference; it is a fundamental human right," said Premier Jason Kenney at a news conference prior to the legislation being tabled.

Schilling said he is pleased the legislation does not introduce a voucher system for private schools and said expanding school choice must never come at the expense of public education.

Along with the bill, the government released survey results showing 62 per cent of respondents were satisfied with the amount of educational choice available in the province.

Schilling noted that parents already have plenty of educational choice, and 93 per cent of Alberta's students attend a public, separate or francophone school.

"We believe that parents and teachers want to see those students supported most," he said.

The bill proposes several changes to the *Education Act* and, if passed, will take effect Sept. 1.

# International programs hit reset due to COVID

*Planning for virtual ARA still ongoing*

**Cory Hare**  
ATA News Managing Editor

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to have ripple effects on the Alberta Teachers' Association and its operations.

A variety of work that ATA members do in the international arena is being suspended or altered this summer and in the coming months. For example, the ATA's Project Overseas committee has decided not to advertise for new participants as it normally does at this time of year. Since the 10 participants chosen for 2020 are unable to travel overseas as planned this summer, they have all been offered the opportunity to travel next year instead, said Andrea Berg, the staff officer who oversees the ATA's international co-operation work. "Nobody's surprised. This is what has to happen," Berg said of the travel cancellations. "Everyone's just being cautiously optimistic that it could happen next year, knowing that it still might not."

Project Overseas is a partnership with the Canadian Teachers' Federation that normally sends teachers to various countries in Africa, Asia or the Caribbean for two weeks during July or August.

IT for Dominica, another of the international projects that the ATA sponsors, normally sends a group of Alberta teachers to that Caribbean country during the summer to share their technological expertise. However, this summer the Alberta teacher participants will be delivering their sessions remotely, Berg said.

Change for Children, which sends Alberta teachers on a two-week teaching

tour of Guatemala each July, has been suspended for this year and organizers are considering their options for next year, Berg said.

## ARA update

Here at home, ATA officials are continuing to plan a virtual Annual Representative Assembly (ARA) to be held using Zoom in August.

The ATA has 10 teams looking into every aspect of mounting a virtual ARA, including registration, IT support and managing online delegates, said Associate Executive Secretary Joni Turville.

"Part of our challenge is to give our members a chance to engage in debate even though it's going to look and feel different than when we're in the same ballroom," Turville said.

The ATA recently observed how the Manitoba Teachers' Society conducted its annual general meeting via Zoom and is also learning from its own Teacher Welfare program area, which has been involved in local bargaining by conducting virtual bargaining unit general meetings.

The final order paper for ARA hasn't been finalized, but the intent is to conduct the core business that normally takes place, such as the reports, resolutions and budget.

"We're doing things in a different way but we're still doing the business of the assembly," Turville said.

Provincial Executive Council is slated to finalize many of the plans for ARA during its next regular meeting on June 11 and 12. The status of the Beginning Teachers' Conference, which normally takes place in the fall, is also slated for discussion. ■



ALBERTA TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION

Indigenous presenter Phillip Campiou holds up a braid of sweetgrass during a webinar the ATA recently recorded entitled Smudging Circles.

# Celebrate National Indigenous Peoples Day at home

*ATA resources among many available online*

**Cory Hare**  
ATA News Managing Editor

Although social gathering is still not possible, National Indigenous Peoples Day is continuing to go ahead.

The annual event takes place June 21, and the federal government is encouraging all Canadians to celebrate at home by taking advantage of resources and opportunities that are available online or in alternate formats.

Melissa Purcell, the ATA's staff officer specializing in Indigenous education, agrees that it's important to recognize the resiliency of Indigenous peoples and the fact that Indigenous peoples are flourishing.

"It's important to continue to acknowledge and celebrate the contributions of Indigenous peoples of this land," Purcell said.

Through its website and various social media feeds, the ATA has a variety of Indigenous resources available, including a webinar that Purcell recently co-hosted with the ATA's First Nations, Métis and Inuit Education Council. The webinar touches on the ways of Indigenous peoples and the history of National Indigenous History Month and National Indigenous Peoples Day.

"There's a whole variety of webinars that have been recorded and made available for teachers to access until the end of June," Purcell said.

## Interest still high

Following the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, Indigenous education became a central component of Alberta's updated Teaching Quality Standard as well as newly developed standards for school and division leaders.

Interest in Indigenous knowledge has been high among teachers throughout the province, but experienced a temporary lull when teachers were suddenly forced to switch to remote and distance teaching. After a couple weeks of adjustment, Purcell noticed an increase in requests for available resources and support.

She will continue to deliver live webinars directly to schools throughout June. "Teachers are still engaged and they're continuing to be inspired by colleagues, by others, to engage in this work," Purcell said. ■

## Keep up to date with the ATA's online PD offerings

- Facebook: [fb.me/ATApd](https://fb.me/ATApd)
- Twitter: @ATA\_PD
- Upcoming and recorded webinars: [https://teachers-ab.libguides.com/ATA\\_PD/SupportsForOnlineLearning](https://teachers-ab.libguides.com/ATA_PD/SupportsForOnlineLearning)

## National Indigenous Peoples Day

The Government of Canada invites Canadians to learn more about the heritage, cultures and contributions of First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples by reading a digital copy of one of the books from the #IndigenousReads reading list or by exploring a virtual exhibit at your favourite museum. [www.rcaanc-cirnac.gc.ca](http://www.rcaanc-cirnac.gc.ca)



FILE

Project Overseas will not be recruiting new participants for next year. Instead, participants chosen for 2020, who have had their travel cancelled due to COVID-19, have been offered the chance to travel in 2021.

## NOTICE

On Feb. 3, 2020, a hearing committee of the Professional Conduct Committee established under the *Teaching Profession Act* found that Brian Stanley Clark engaged in unprofessional conduct. The hearing committee ordered that Clark's membership in the Association be cancelled effective Feb. 3, 2020.





# What a year it has been

When I ran for the job of ATA president, I knew it would be a busy one. Partway through last year, my first as president, I created a list of issues that the ATA had dealt with since I took office on July 2, 2019. I kept the list going for the rest of the year. It's only partially complete, and a list can't fully capture the work and energy expended by ATA staff, Provincial Executive Council and other ATA members, but it does provide a glimpse of what turned out to be one dramatic year.

There are still several weeks to go before the end of the 2019/20 school year. As we put a tumultuous year behind us, I wish you a restful summer. You deserve it. ■

## JUNE 2019

**19** Bill 9, the *Public Sector Wage Arbitration Deferral Act*, halts wage arbitration talks with the ATA and other public sector unions until the end of October.

**24** Government announces return of Grade 3 PATs/SLAs.

## JULY

**3** Bill 8 amends the *Education Act*, removing protections for GSAs in schools.



## AUGUST

**16** Government cancels memorandum of understanding that named ATA as partner in new curriculum development.

**22** Announcement of Curriculum Advisory Panel. Active teacher reps excluded from panel.

**29** Alberta lifts ban on seclusion rooms.

**31** School fees/transportation cap removed.

## SEPTEMBER

Last week of August/first week of September: start of school year with no budget.

**1** Removal of *public* from official school board names takes effect.

**3** Mackinnon Report recommends spending cuts and legislated public sector salaries.

## OCTOBER

**18** Government cancels Class Size Initiative and recording of class size data.

**24** Budget tabled with \$275 million shortfall in education funding.

## NOVEMBER

**8** Survey conducted for *Choice in Education Act*.

**19** CBE and other boards report job losses due to funding shortfall.

**21** Bill 22 passes, enabling the transfer of control of teachers' pension plan assets from ATRF to AIMCo.

**29** Politics in the classroom (social studies question creates stir on Twitter).

**30** UCP AGM adopts policy in favour of voucher education system.

**30** Government calls meeting to "bring balance back" to labour relations code.

## DECEMBER



**2** PISA results released.

**20** Teacher discipline makes news as education minister overrules ATA discipline recommendation.

## JANUARY 2020

**29** Curriculum Advisory Panel/Ministerial Order on Student Learning releases recommendations; professional judgment of teachers called into question.



## FEBRUARY

**10** FOIP request reveals \$136 million cut to education in Budget 2019.

**18** Funding formula press conference.

**25** Throne speech references MacKinnon Report, curriculum and standardized testing.

**27** Budget 2020 references "own source revenue" and new funding model. Cuts still present.

**27** March for What Matters attracts 13,000 public sector workers and supporters to Alberta legislature.

## MARCH

**3** Alberta Distance Learning Centre service agreement to end in 2022.

**13** COVID-19: Classes to continue during pandemic.

**15** COVID-19: Classes cancelled for students; remote emergency teaching begins.

**20** COVID-19: Government announces ongoing education requirements.

**28** COVID-19: Announcement by government on operations includes layoff of 6,000 substitute teachers and 20,000 education support staff.

## APRIL

**2** COVID-19: ATA cancels or postpones events including meetings, Annual Representative Assembly and Summer Conference.

**14** COVID-19: ATA continues representation with government on working from home/school, rumoured teacher layoffs.

**30** COVID-19: Discussions about re-entry to school considerations (ongoing), premier announces students will not return to class this academic year.

## MAY

**1** AIMCo discloses a loss of nearly \$2.1 billion; efforts continue to repeal Bill 22.

**1** Concerns raised about PUF funding as programs across province start initiating cuts.

**21** Education minister releases audit findings on CBE, and says she'll fire trustees if they don't make changes outlined in a ministerial order.

**28** The *Choice in Education Act* is tabled in the legislature, with impacts on charter and home schooling.

# Council updates guidelines for teachers' conventions



## EXECUTIVE REPORT

Danny Maas  
ATA Executive Staff Officer

Provincial Executive Council recently approved a number of new administrative guidelines concerning the purpose of teachers' conventions, convention programs and exhibits. The decisions begin the process of implementing recommendations from the Committee on Convention Review (CCR), which recently concluded a review process that began during the 2017/18 school year.

Council approved a statement of purpose of teachers' conventions, which reaffirms the principle of devoting two teaching days each year for conventions, at which members may access a variety of professional

development activities to improve and maintain their pedagogical and leadership competence.

Guidelines now clearly state that all convention sessions (including keynote presentations) should be clearly linked to the Teaching Quality Standard (TQS) and/or Leadership Quality Standard (LQS) or the Association's mandated objectives and priorities. The content of the sessions must be consistent with Association policy, must reinforce the honour and dignity of the teaching profession, and must model the importance of high-quality, teacher-directed professional development.

Council also directed conventions to provide ample time and space for teachers to engage in a variety of meaningful learning and reflection activities that promote the development of both individual and collective efficacy.

Finally, the majority of convention exhibits must be education-related and relevant to the work and needs of teachers and school leaders. Health and wellness vendors must have products supported by school

division benefit plans, and commercial vendors with little or no educational relevance will be phased out by 2024.

### Check out the convention review website

A detailed breakdown of these new administrative guidelines has been uploaded to the Convention Review Implementation page at [teachers.ab.ca](https://teachers.ab.ca) under My ATA > Professional Development > Teachers' Conventions. ■

If you have any questions or comments about teachers' conventions or convention implementation, please contact me at [daniel.maas@ata.ab.ca](mailto:daniel.maas@ata.ab.ca).



# 2020 gotcha! PHOTO CONTEST

# ANNOUNCING THE winners

COVID-19 did not dissuade camera-carrying teachers from bombarding the *ATA News* with dozens of photos for the **2020 Gotcha! Photo Contest**.

Here are the judges' top three picks along with some honourable mentions.

### CONTEST JUDGES

**Yuet Chan**  
Veteran *ATA News* photographer and graphic designer

**Cory Hare**  
*ATA News* managing editor

### PRIZES AWARDED

First	\$200
Second	\$100
Third	\$50

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

1<sup>st</sup>



### 1<sup>st</sup> PLACE – SNOWSHOE

*As a storm rolls in overhead, outdoor education students conduct an exploration by snowshoe of the Ann and Sandy Cross Conservation Area southwest of Calgary.*

**Photographer:** Tyler Dixon, Marshall Springs School, Calgary

**Date of photo:** March 12, 2020

**Judges' comments:** This photo evokes many feelings, whether it's an appreciation of nature's breathtaking grandness and our relative human smallness, or maybe just a little chill and shiver. Contributing to the photo's strong impact are the expanse of sky and the lines formed by the horizon and snowshoe trail, which draw the eye to the procession of intrepid snowshoeing explorers.

## BE READY!



Teachers, keep your cameras at the ready for special education-related moments during the 2020/21 school year.

You might want to save your best shots for submission to the **2021 Gotcha! Photo 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.

Submit your photos to managing editor Cory Hare at: [cory.hare@ata.ab.ca](mailto:cory.hare@ata.ab.ca).





2<sup>nd</sup>

**2<sup>nd</sup> PLACE – GOING FOR TWO**

Grade 12 student Mason Jorgensen of the Hunting Hills Lightning takes to the air on his way to the basket during the Scott Doan Memorial Tournament in Red Deer.

**Photographer:** Lesley Young, Hunting Hills High School, Red Deer

**Date of photo:** Dec. 13, 2019

**Judges' comments:** This photo cleanly captures a moment of concentrated athletic effort. Freezing the subject at a considerable height while also displaying an animated facial expression contribute to a strong composition, as does the inclusion of the basket at the top of the frame.

**3<sup>rd</sup> PLACE – RED...HOT...PEPPER**

Grade 1 pupil Carley Lam (the photographer's daughter) participates in her school's activity day by demonstrating her newly acquired skill of jumping rope.

**Photographer:** Huong Ly, Marion Carson School, Calgary

**Date of photo:** April 29, 2020

**Judges' comments:** Joy, innocence and a little bit of air are all captured in this photo, which conveys a feeling of freedom and fun. The shadows add an interesting element to the composition.



3<sup>rd</sup>

**2020 got a no! PHOTO CONTEST HONOURABLE MENTIONS**



HM

**PEEK-A-BOO**

Grade 6 student Makena Hollinger pulls her hoodie tight to avoid the camera while attending her school's outdoor education camp.

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

**Date of photo:** Sept. 25, 2019

**Judges' comments:** A glimpse of a single eyeball through a tuft of hair and a bunched up hood lends an air of mystery to this photo.



HM

**OH, WHAT A FEELING!**

Students from Smith School's grade 4/5 class ham it up for the camera while snowshoeing around their community.

**Photographer:** Caitlynn Chernish, Smith School, Smith

**Date of photo:** March 6, 2020

**Judges' comments:** This photo embodies the exuberance of youth with dynamic facial expressions and airborne antics.



HM

**BANNOCK MAKING**

Kindergarten and Grade 3 students from St. Theresa School in Wabasca brave cold and wind to make bannock during the winter carnival festival, held in the school yard.

**Photographer:** Tatsuya Goto, St. Theresa School, Wabasca

**Date of photo:** March 12, 2020

**Judges' comments:** The cooking sticks and overhead structure form geometric lines that draw the eye and create visual interest. Great angle of view, and the smoke adds atmosphere to the photo.

# Are you eligible for federal income support?

## ATA Teacher Welfare Staff

Teachers have special regulations when it comes to federal income support programs such as Employment Insurance (EI). Prior to March 15, 2020, regular EI benefits were available to teachers who lost their jobs through no fault of their own, and who were available and able to work, but could not find work. Casual or substitute teachers could be paid regular EI benefits during nonteaching periods.

**COVID-19 has changed access to federal income support benefits for some Alberta teachers.** However, if you are already receiving regular EI benefits, you will continue to receive these benefits until the end of your benefit period. You cannot be paid EI benefits and the Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB) for the same period.

If you became eligible for regular or sickness EI benefits before March 15, your claim will be processed under the pre-existing EI rules. You will not receive the CERB.

If you became eligible for regular or sickness EI benefits on or after March 15, you will receive the CERB. **You do not get to choose.**

You are only allowed to choose if you started a new EI claim within the last 52 weeks and there are still weeks payable on that claim. If you are in this situation, you can choose to

- automatically reactivate (renew) your existing claim at the existing benefit rate; or
- request that Service Canada end your existing claim and open a new claim

for the CERB, provided you meet the eligibility criteria.

If you choose to end your existing claim, any remaining weeks payable on that existing claim will be lost; your decision is irreversible and not subject to reconsideration.

### What is the Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB)?

The CERB provides temporary income support to teachers who have stopped working related to COVID-19. Teachers who are eligible for regular or sickness EI benefits or who have recently exhausted regular EI benefits may also be eligible. The new CERB provides \$500 per week for a maximum of 16 weeks.

The CERB is available from March 15, 2020 to Oct. 3, 2020. You can apply no later than Dec. 2, 2020 for payments retroactive to within that period.

The CERB is available to teachers who stop working for reasons related to COVID-19; for example

- you have lost substitute teaching work;
- your temporary contract ended;
- you are in quarantine or sick due to COVID-19 and are on unpaid sick leave;
- you are taking care of others because they are in quarantine or sick due to COVID-19, and are on an unpaid leave of absence; and/or
- you are taking care of children or other dependents because their care facility is closed due to COVID-19 and are on an unpaid leave of absence.

Beyond these examples, there may be other reasons related to COVID-19 why you may have stopped working and be eligible. However, voluntarily quitting your job is not an eligible reason.

Alternatively, you can apply for the CERB if

- you are eligible for regular or sickness EI benefits; or
- you are a former EI claimant who used up your entitlement to your regular benefits between Dec. 29, 2019 and Oct. 3, 2020.

To get the CERB, you may not earn more than \$1,000 for a period of at least 14 consecutive days within the initial four-week period of your claim or \$1,000 in total for each subsequent claim. Retired teachers who have returned to teaching but have stopped working for reasons related to COVID-19 and meet the other eligibility criteria

can apply for CERB. Pension income does not affect eligibility.

It is important to note that if you are a teacher under a continuing contract, you cannot be paid federal income support benefits during nonteaching periods such as summer break. However, if your teaching contract has ended, you were employed on a casual or substitute basis, or you qualify for benefits with an occupation other than teaching, you could qualify for federal income support.

However, if you are employed on a casual or a substitute basis for any part of the qualifying period, but have since signed or agreed to a regular teaching contract for the following school year, you may not be entitled to benefits during any nonteaching period. ■

*If you need advice or assistance, contact Teacher Welfare at 1-800-232-7205.*

## Financial wellness workshops available

On behalf of the ATA's Teacher Welfare program area, financial wellness workshops continue online. They are presented by Capital Estate Planning and MNP and cover topics such as saving for an emergency fund and debt reduction strategies.

Sessions are held regularly, and any teacher can register to attend from anywhere in the province.

If you are interested, contact Elizabeth Walton, Capital Estate's communication specialist, directly at [ewalton@capitalplanning.ca](mailto:ewalton@capitalplanning.ca) or 780-463-6139 to receive a list of session dates that will work with your schedule. You can also view information on their website, [www.capitalplanning.ca/resources/financial-wellness](http://www.capitalplanning.ca/resources/financial-wellness). ■

# It's unprofessional to skip conference sessions



## 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.*

Teachers are afforded many opportunities for professional development throughout a given year. The Alberta Teachers' Association alone offers many such events (Beginning Teachers' Conference, Leadership Essentials for Administrators, teachers' conventions, specialist council conferences, to name a few). Other organizations have a wide array of PD offerings, and teachers attending them can have their expenses covered either through their ATA local, their school or their school division. A professional conduct committee recently heard a case where attendance and reimbursement didn't quite align.

In this particular case, a teacher had sought permission and applied for funding to attend a conference organized and hosted by the ATA. The teacher received authorization from their principal to be absent from school

to attend the conference. The teacher's ATA local also confirmed that it would pay for subsistence (meals, travel, accommodation) related to the teacher's conference attendance. These layers of approval meant that, on the days of the conference, the teacher's attendance at the event was mandatory.

When the conference ended and the teacher returned home, the teacher submitted expense receipts. The teacher received payment as reimbursement for expenses that were incurred. The costs of the absence were borne by the employer. It turns out, however, that the teacher did not attend the conference as required and as anticipated by those who approved and paid for the teacher's attendance.

The conference took place during a Thursday evening, a full day on Friday and half day on Saturday. While evidence indicated that the teacher did travel to attend the conference, the teacher did not sign in at any session nor at the main registration desk and did not attend the conference on Thursday, Saturday, or for much of the day on Friday. The teacher

acknowledged having attended only a couple of breakout sessions on Friday morning and spending time with family members rather than attending sessions.

The professional conduct committee found the teacher guilty of one charge of unprofessional conduct. The teacher failed to act in a manner that maintained the honour and dignity of the profession by failing to attend conference sessions despite attendance being mandatory. In citing reasons for the finding, the committee commented that registering for the conference and receiving both permission and funding approval made attendance mandatory. Attendance was a condition for the absence and for expense reimbursement.

Additionally, the committee determined that the actions of the teacher violated the trust of colleagues, the employer and the public at large because the teacher failed to honour a professional commitment. The teacher's failure to honour the professional commitment was exacerbated by the decision to engage in personal business during the time that the conference was in session. This brings disrepute to the profession. Further, the teacher filed an expense claim and received payment for expenses that were incurred at the event, despite having attended very little of the actual conference. The actions of the teacher reflect poorly on the profession.

The professional conduct committee imposed a letter of reprimand and a fine of \$300 dollars. In addition to the penalty, the teacher was ordered to reimburse the local in the amount of the paid expenses, and to provide proof

of payment to the Association within 60 days of receiving notice of the written decision. As with any cases where a fine is levied, the teacher must pay the fine in full and on time; otherwise, their membership in the Association will be suspended.

This penalty is in keeping with precedent cases of a similar nature. Teachers are under significant public scrutiny, and their professional development opportunities are often subject to scrutiny. The public and the profession expect that teachers will behave in a manner that upholds the honour and dignity of the profession. The penalty reflects the condemnation of the behaviour and is also intended to act as a deterrent to this teacher and others who may consider not attending conferences that they have been approved to attend.

Attending conferences often provides teachers with opportunities to travel outside of their school community. This gives teachers the ability to interact with colleagues on a social level, and may even give teachers a chance to reconnect with loved ones and friends. There is nothing wrong with seizing these opportunities outside of the regular schedule of the conference. Many conferences will schedule their events to allow this type of flex time and to afford attendees the ability to enjoy the venue or surrounding area. Nevertheless, there remains an expectation that teachers will attend the sessions that they have committed to attending as their first and utmost priority. ■

# ATA NEWS

## Editor's note

Dear *ATA News* readers,

You may notice more advertisements than usual in this edition of the *ATA News*. We have had to cancel the spring issue of the *ATA Magazine* due to issues related to the COVID-19 pandemic. Magazine advertisers were offered space in the *News* instead and many have taken us up on that offer. We thank them for their patronage and thank you for your continued readership.

Jonathan Teghtmeyer  
*ATA News* Editor-in-Chief

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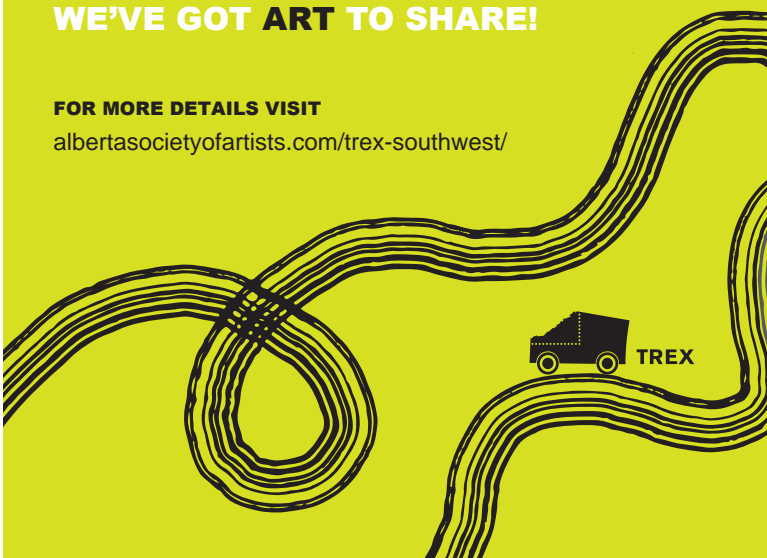
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While schools remain closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the *ATA News* will be available in a digital format only. Visit [bit.ly/2Subscribe Now](https://bit.ly/2SubscribeNow) and sign up for the *ATA eNews* to receive an email when a new issue is available.

The most recent issue is always available at [teachers.ab.ca](https://teachers.ab.ca) > News and Info > ATA News.

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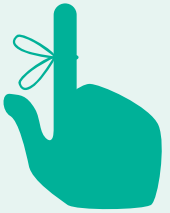
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## BOLT

BLENDING AND ONLINE  
LEARNING AND TEACHING



MOVING EDUCATION  
ONLINE (MEO)

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**Jason Schilling**

*Teacher, President  
Alberta Teachers' Association*

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The Alberta Teachers' Association reminds you  
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The Alberta Teachers' Association

[teachers.ab.ca](http://teachers.ab.ca)

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**Gary Smith**, Assistant Principal, Prince Charles School

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**Jackie Fuga**, Physical Education Specialist, Hillcrest School

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# ATA EDUCATIONAL TRUST DEADLINE EXTENDED

**Due to COVID-19 and the cancellation of many classes and events, the Board has extended the deadline for 2019/20 program recipients by one year.**

- If you received a B T Keeler Continuing Education Bursary with a claim deadline of August 31, 2020, you now have until **August 31, 2021**.
- If you received a Morgex/Johnson Insurance Centennial Fund for Professional Development or an award to attend an ATA specialist council conference with a claim deadline of December 31, 2020, you now have until **December 31, 2021**.

Please refer to the website for more information!

ARF-40



## EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

**SUBMISSION DEADLINE:  
JUNE 25, 2020**

Please address submissions to Anne-Marie Huizing, ATA Staff Advisor, Fine Arts Council, 11010 142 Street, Edmonton, AB, T5N 2R1 or fax 780-455-6481.

### EVENTS REGISTRAR/ADMINISTRATOR

- Administrative services are required for a minimum of one annual virtual conference
- Term: July 1 to end of conference in October 2020
- Designing and preparing all conference materials
- Confirming registrations and maintaining contacts and records for all delegates
- Confirming session presenters and maintaining contracts and records for all
- Various other duties as needed

Successful applicants must be familiar with both Beanstream and Event Wizard.

For details, contact FAC president Dawn Marshall: dawnarlenemars@gmail.com

**We're still here for you.**

We continue to provide vital member services online and by phone while our offices remain closed.

Learn more at: [ATRF.com](http://ATRF.com)

## 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.



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# TALENT

June 9, 2020 | Volume 54, Number 14



# CLASS OF 2020

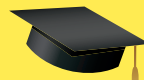
*Across the province, many schools are coming up with creative ways to recognize their graduates! We asked teachers how their schools were celebrating their excellent grads.*



MATTHEW HALTON STAFF

We loaded up two buses with staff members and personally went to each graduate's house on May 23. We had a grad box for each graduate that contained their cap and graduation certificate, along with any awards or scholarships that they may have received. We played *Pomp and Circumstance* as the graduate and their family gathered on their doorstep or front lawn, and pictures were taken of this special day for them.

**Kevin Sheen**  
Matthew Halton High School  
Pincher Creek



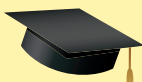
We are hosting our mass and ceremony using live feed/YouTube. I will speak live, use recorded speeches from others. For the traditional diploma part, each grad will have a slide with their picture and mission statement that will be read. We were able to rent their grad gowns for three weeks so they can then pick up, take family pictures on their own and wear them during the online ceremony (all contactless pick up and drop off). It will be awesome!

**Jodi DeKlerk**  
Notre Dame Collegiate  
High River



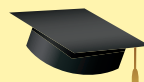
We are hand-delivering grad packages to students with a podium and mini ceremony at each stop.

**Jennifer Light Vermillion**  
Bonnyville Centralized High School  
Bonnyville



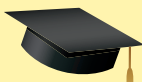
We are doing a Grade 9 farewell video for our kids, with speeches and awards online. We are a CBE school; it's up to each school to come up with ideas.

**Sylvain Renaud**  
Calgary



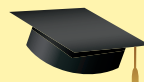
We put up banners on our main street. We will have individual banners for each graduate and will have a small ceremony for them on the 19th of June.

**Sylvie Dumont**  
École du Sommet  
St. Paul



Our high school hand-delivered a beautiful package to the grads with their cap. Our local ski hill is also doing a grad where the students can ride the chair lift and have their picture taken.

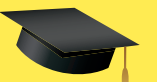
**Nathalie Lavigne-Sikora**  
Red Deer



SUPPLIED

My high school hand-delivered certificates, caps and tassels along with personalized bumper stickers for 382 graduates. Proud to work here! And proud of our graduates!

**Lesley Jean Young**  
Hunting Hills High School  
Red Deer



SUPPLIED

Grad parade. Grads driving the parade route, townspeople six-foot distancing, cheering and celebrating their success from the sidewalks.

**Sharalyn Joy**  
Milk River Elementary  
Milk River



# CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL GRADS FROM THE ALBERTA TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION