



Off Script

with ATA President Jason Schilling

Let's get engaged.
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#MyClassSizeIs
Tell your classroom story to your MLA.
See teachers.ab.ca for details.

ATA NEWS

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FORWARD TOGETHER



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Provincial budget contains cut to education

Pension fund targeting a "hijacking," says ATA president.

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Ask not what the ATA can do for you...



EDITORIAL

Jonathan Teghtmeyer
ATA News Editor-in-Chief

On a cold, sunny January afternoon in 1961, in front of 20,000 Americans huddled in the deep snow that had fallen the night before, President John Fitzgerald Kennedy delivered his inaugural address.

Months earlier, in the midst of a nuclear arms race and the deepening tensions of the Cold War, Kennedy was elected with one of the narrowest popular vote margins in American history.

Kennedy sought to unify the country to present a common front against important national challenges and a significant external threat. The speech was broadcast widely on radio and the new emerging technology of television.

After the speech, Kennedy's approval rating rose to 75 per cent.

Of course, the speech is best known for the now famous challenge that Kennedy issued: **ask not what your country can do for you — ask what you can do for your country.**

Let us reflect on the words that lead into that important quote.

In your hands, my fellow citizens, more than mine, will rest the final success or failure of our course. Since this country was founded, each generation of Americans has been summoned to give testimony to its national loyalty. The graves of young Americans who answered the call to service surround the globe.

Now the trumpet summons us again — not as a call to bear arms, though arms we need — not as a call to battle, though embattled we are — but a call to bear the burden of a long twilight struggle, year in and year out, "rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation" — a struggle against the common enemies of man: tyranny, poverty, disease and war itself.

... Will you join in that historic effort? ... The energy, the faith, the devotion which we bring to this endeavor will light our country and all who serve it — and the glow from that fire can truly light the world.

Then came Kennedy's famous challenge.

I raise this, colleagues, because we appear to be headed into a monumental fight for the cause of public education in this province.

The recent budget advances cuts to school board grants totalling a net \$275 million. The Class Size Initiative, which may not have succeeded in achieving its goals, but still paid for the salaries of up to 3,000 teachers, has been eliminated.

“ The trumpet summons us as teachers ... Will you join in this historic effort? ”

And in the next three years, the government projects no further increases in total operational funding, while the system absorbs an accumulated 60,000 students in enrolment growth.

Since the budget was released, we have seen further attacks on teacher pensions and salary as well. In the intervening days, I have witnessed an incredible surge of engagement. I have seen teachers call

and write their MLAs and government ministers. They have posted to social media about their sense of disrespect.

And I have seen many teachers ask about the response of their Association.

I understand the frustration. Teachers want their Association to lead the resistance and to battle back. They want the Association to reflect outwardly all of the angst and frustration that they are feeling inside.

Trust me when I say that Association staff and political leadership have been going all out to mount a strong, effective response. And more is coming. President Jason Schilling has done significantly more news conferences and media interviews in the past six months than any other president at the start of their term.

But, to channel JFK, fellow teachers, in your hands, more than Jason's, will rest the final success or failure of our course.

The trumpet summons us as teachers. We need everyone to bear the burden of this long twilight struggle.

Will you join in this historic effort? Ask not what your Association can do for you — ask what you can do for your Association. ■

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

Rollback suggestion is wishful thinking but provocative



Q & A

Dennis Theobald
ATA Executive Secretary

Question: Last week I heard the minister of finance say that government was demanding cuts to public service salaries of between two and five per cent. What does this mean for teachers?

Answer: At this point, the Alberta Teachers' Association is proceeding to arbitration to determine teacher salaries for the 2018/19 and 2019/20 school years. Finance Minister Travis Toews's announcement should not affect the arbitration process and largely amounts to wishful thinking. However, Toews's comments point to serious threats and challenges ahead.

Teachers may recall that as part of the settlement arrived at through mediation and ratified last May by both the Teachers' Employers Bargaining Association (TEBA) and the Alberta Teachers' Association, the determination of salary for 2018 to 2020 was left to the decision of an independent arbitrator. In accordance with that settlement, the binding arbitration process was to set salary increases — the language here is important because the Association's position is that this would preclude

decreases of the sort being demanded by the finance minister. In fact, another provision allows, but does not require, the arbitrator to award an increase that could be retroactive as far back as April 1, 2019.

This arbitration process was to have been completed by Sept. 30, 2019; however, the government's passage of Bill 9 unilaterally postponed the deadline for all arbitrations to Dec. 15 and, as a

“ As the ATA and TEBA begin bargaining for the next agreement, it is clear government desires tight control over employers and their bargaining mandates. ”

result, teachers' salary arbitration hearings will take place in mid-November. Although the Association has launched a court challenge of Bill 9, it will be years before that matter is heard and finally resolved. In the interim, we will still proceed with the delayed arbitration process.

In the teachers' settlement, the issue of salary went directly to arbitration. This is not the case in the arbitrations involving other public sector unions, most notably the Alberta Union of

Provincial Employees, the United Nurses of Alberta and the Health Sciences Association of Alberta. In settlements involving these unions, a period of bargaining was required and only when those negotiations failed to result in an agreement did the parties have access to arbitration. As we understand it, in the course of those talks, employer representatives had tabled proposals to maintain salaries at current levels

and so would normally be prevented from now seeking a rollback of salary at arbitration.

In response, the government has introduced Bill 21, which allows employer representatives to step back from their previously tabled positions and to propose cuts — something that would otherwise be illegal. While it is effectively facilitating bad faith bargaining (specifically, "bargaining to a receding horizon"), the government has not gone so far as to direct the outcomes

of the arbitrations — that will still be up to independent arbitrators to determine.

Understood in this context, Toews's call for cuts does not bind the arbitrators currently dealing with public sector settlements, but it is provocative, offensive and disrespectful both of the arbitration processes underway and of the public servants involved, including teachers. While the government may want to bargain in public to advance its political agenda, the Association will not reciprocate. We will put forward the teachers' position when and where appropriate, that is, when we appear before the arbitrator.

More worrying, however, is what all this bodes for the future. As the ATA and TEBA begin bargaining for the next agreement, it is clear that government desires tight control over employers and their bargaining mandates. Furthermore, if the government decides to follow certain recommendations of the MacKinnon Report on Alberta's Finances, it could introduce legislation that would allow it to unilaterally dictate settlements involving teachers and other public sector employees. This would be a recipe for strife and disruption across the public sector, the likes of which this province has never seen. ■

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



YOUR VIEWS

Teachers respond to 'shameful' government actions

FACEBOOK FEEDBACK

► On the government's decision to transfer all of the funds in the Alberta Teachers' Retirement Fund (ATRF) to AIMCo, a Crown corporation of the Province of Alberta

Patricia Paterson

A government attempt to control the \$18 billion at stake. Shameful. We must protest.

Merry Dechamplain

And we are surprised? What did we expect? There is no way that I want the government to determine the direction of my pension fund!!!!

Gale White

Time to stand up, teachers. We tell the kids to stand up and speak up. Not acceptable. This is your future

and time to defend what you earned, invested and deserve.

Paul Jespersen

We need to fight this with everything we have. This is a hill to die on.

Randy Will Jackson

Unless we have the unfunded liability added to our fund and an insurance guarantee of the principal underwritten by the province, the union needs to take this to court! This is the Conservatives trying to break the union again!

► On the provincial budget

Raylene Michelle

It's not just the teacher who suffers from these cuts, it's the students. The students who can't read, the students who can't focus because of the constant distractions of students with behavioural issues, and the students who need help from the teacher but

feel like they can't access it because the teacher is spending most of the time in class helping those who are the lowest and can't read on their own.

When teachers complain they aren't complaining to complain...they are advocating for the education of every single student in their classes!

► On the government's announcement calling for two per cent salary rollbacks in the public sector

'I am frustrated'

When I was in Grade 3, the teachers of Alberta voted to strike. I can still remember leaving the classroom, hugging my Grade 3 teacher, and telling her that I still loved her. Although I couldn't have understood then what I understand now, I knew inherently that a teacher's love for their job and students is tied to their commitment to protecting the profession and its integrity.

Here's the real truth. After all is said and done, I make \$4,033.22 a month, paid on the last teaching Thursday of each month. A two-to-five per cent rollback in wages would have me making a maximum of \$3952.56 a month. I made more than that when I was 20 doing data entry for a construction company. Before I had six years of university education. Before I spent 10-12 hours a day in a classroom planning, grading, developing, supporting and building.

The government is seeking to undermine our ability to bargain in good faith, to have access to a fair wage that, despite what you might be led to believe, is only heightened over that of other provinces because of our increased cost of living, and to strike effectively by introducing unfair legislation.

This isn't fear mongering. This is what is happening to Alberta's teachers and nurses right now.

I am frustrated. Teachers have done their share before me, and now I enter the profession ready to advocate so that we can continue to do so under fair working conditions that do not include taking a wage rollback. Teachers have taken rollbacks, a five per cent cut in the Klein era, and many years of no increases, effectively meaning a decrease due to inflation.

Our salaries did not balloon when oil was over \$100 a barrel, we did not make out like bandits then, and we will not make out like bandits now. We're just public employees, doing our best to take the 25-plus kids who enter our classrooms with different needs, learning styles, hobbies, challenges and home lives and turn them out better than we received them.

In making a decision to teach, I did not realize I would have to advocate for myself and my colleagues so fiercely. I appreciate my community's support in these matters, especially for those who are overwhelmed by politics but try anyway.

Chelsi Ryan

A stressed out first-year teacher who cares a whole lot about her students and her colleagues.

A fight by any other name ...



VIEWPOINTS

Graham Thomson
Special to the ATA News

If you want to understand the mindset of Alberta's United Conservative government, you need only grasp one number.

It's not the size of the deficit or debt or any other figure you'll find in the provincial budget.

It's this: 1,040,001.

That's how many votes the UCP captured on election night April 16.

"We won the largest number of votes ever cast for a party in Alberta history," said newly elected Jason Kenney in the days after the election (and on many other occasions since). "That is a mandate of historic proportions."

For Kenney that "mandate of historic proportions" is both shield and sword. It allows him to attack his enemies and defend his policies. It is a combination of amulet and talisman and get-out-of-jail-free card.

It is why Kenney didn't pause before embarking on his "summer of repeal" to reverse many of the policies of the previous NDP government. It's why he fulfilled controversial election promises while bending or breaking others. It's why he seems to introduce almost daily a new shock to Alberta's body politic. It's why he continues to wage war with Justin Trudeau and the federal Liberal government.

It's why public sector workers should be nervous.

During the provincial election, Kenney focused his spotlight on the issues of jobs, the economy and pipelines. Cutting government spending and balancing the provincial budget weren't cast into the shadows, but neither were they centre stage.

That has changed.

Kenney can't magically create jobs, boost the economy and build pipelines.

He's focused on government spending.

He's hoping his cuts to the corporate tax rate will trickle down into job creation and a stronger economy. But that will take time, if it works at all.

However, by cutting those taxes, the government acknowledges it will reduce its revenues by \$2.4 billion over four years (the NDP says the number is closer to \$4.7 billion). The government has also reduced its revenue by scrapping the carbon tax and by selling off the oil-by-rail contracts. Total hit to government revenues: between \$16 billion and \$18 billion (depending on how you do the math).

If the government didn't have a fiscal crisis before, it does now.

This crisis gives Kenney political cover for cuts to government spending and services. That and "1,040,001."

It's why he can tear up the big city charter agreements with Edmonton and Calgary; why his justice minister can angrily dismiss Calgary mayor Naheed Nenshi on Twitter as "Trudeau's mayor"; why he can introduce legislation to unilaterally cancel the provincial contract with physicians that left the head of the Alberta Medical Association to wonder, "What is the value of an agreement when it can be revoked at any time with no public discussion?"

It is why on a Monday, Kenney can introduce legislation that would allow the government to hire replacement workers for essential government services during a public sector strike. And then on a Tuesday, he can almost dare those workers to strike by proposing they accept a wage rollback.

Kenney is not playing a game of chicken with public sector workers. That would imply he is bluffing. He is not.

He might not frame his relationship with public sector workers as a fight, but that's what it is. He is careful not to take issue with the workers themselves, with the teachers, nurses and a myriad of others including social workers, sheriffs and jail guards. He is painting this as a struggle between everyday Albertans and "big government union bosses."

He has praised the work of public sector workers, but he has no praise for their unions.

In November of 2017, during the debate over the NDP government's Bill 24 and gay-straight alliances, Kenney, who was official opposition leader, held a news conference. I asked if he had met to discuss the GSA issue with the president of the ATA (who had in fact been asking for a meeting with Kenney for at least eight months).

"I don't believe the ATA represents all of its members," said Kenney. "I can tell you that in my travels across the province in the past 16 months, I've met hundreds of teachers who agree with me that they need the professional discretion to be able to engage parents if and when it is appropriate."

I asked him if he had made any effort to talk to the ATA.

"I have not. I have talked to a lot of teachers. In fact, I've received letters and emails from teachers in the past three days opposing this legislation."

He did eventually meet with ATA president Greg Jeffrey early in 2019. Kenney would later say he had no plans to split the ATA into a union and professional association (as some had feared), but he did tell reporters during the election campaign he wondered why principals were part of the bargaining unit.

"Principals are management and they have [a] responsibility to manage the teachers and to manage human resources in their schools."

The ATA has strength in numbers, 46,000 to be precise.

But as far as Kenney is concerned, the only number that counts is 1,040,001. ■

After 15 years writing a political column for the Edmonton Journal, Graham Thomson became a freelance political analyst and now writes regular columns for the CBC, iPolitics, Alberta Views magazine and others

Rocky View teacher wins Calgary District byelection

Laura Harris
ATA News Staff

Karen Nakaska has won the 2019 Calgary District byelection.

Nakaska will serve as district representative (DR) for the approximately 3,000 teachers in Calgary District until the current term of Provincial Executive Council ends on June 30, 2021.

Throughout her career, Nakaska has taught various grade levels, worked in traditional and alternative schools, and acquired extensive experience in both rural and urban settings. She has also undertaken various roles with Rocky View Local No. 35, including local secretary.

"I am humbled by and grateful for the support and encouragement given to me in pursuing the role of DR for Calgary District. I am honoured to have been elected to this position and am excited to have a greater platform from which to advocate for our profession, our teachers and our students," said

Nakaska. "I wish to thank Kerri-Ann Brauner for entering into this arena with me."

Voting took place online from Oct. 21 to 24. Results were announced Oct. 25.

Role of a district representative

District representatives (DRs) are elected members of Provincial Executive Council and are responsible for

- attending Council meetings and Annual Representative Assembly;
- ascertaining the views and issues of teachers in their district;
- sharing at Council meetings the views and issues of teachers in their district;
- familiarizing themselves with all aspects of Association business in order to
 - act as a resource person to the ATA locals in their district;
 - participate in Council decision making; and
 - continue their professional development. ■



Let's get engaged

The provincial budget announced Oct. 24 has caused a lot of anxiety and frustration for teachers, and rightfully so. Once again, we have a budget that asks teachers to do more with less. Once again teachers are seeing supports for students in our classrooms eroded. Once again we have education policies passed that disrespect the profession and create uncertainty in our schools. As teachers, we know that uncertainty creates an instability that is never good for our profession and our schools.

What do we do about it? This is the question posed to me most often. My answer is — get involved. Now is the time. The ATA's strength comes from the collective voice of its nearly 50,000 members. Every teacher has a role and responsibility in voicing concerns about the future of public education. Your students depend on your voice. I know from experience how busy teaching can get. Right now the majority of us are waist-deep in parent-teacher interviews and report cards. Time is a factor. However, if we as a profession fail to stand up for education, then who will? Because

“Together, teachers in Alberta need to take on the challenges that threaten the education of our students.”

teachers value public education, it makes sense to me that teachers should be the ones who advocate for it.

Like you, I am frustrated and I will use my voice until I am hoarse, but I need your assistance. The time has come, colleagues, for all of us to get involved in the issues and be engaged in our association. Contact your MLA, write a letter in the ATA's letter campaign, talk to your neighbours, go to a rally, talk to community members — there are so many ways to be engaged. Together, teachers in Alberta need to take on the challenges that threaten the education of our students. If not us, then who? ■

I welcome your comments —
contact me at jason.schilling@ata.ab.ca.

ATA pushes against talk of salary rollbacks

ATA News Staff

Teachers are tired of being told to do more with less.

That was the statement issued by Alberta Teachers' Association president Jason Schilling in response to a government suggestion that public sector workers should take a two per cent salary rollback.

"It is becoming clear, especially after the budget's pension grab, that the government has no respect for teachers and is not willing to treat them fairly. Teachers are angry and frustrated," said Schilling. "They are tired of being told that they will have to do more with less, yet again."

On Oct. 29 Finance Minister Travis Toews issued a news release calling for salary rollbacks so that public-sector wages could "be brought in line with comparable provinces to correct overspending and sustain high-quality services for Albertans."

"We cannot ask Alberta taxpayers to fund public-sector pay raises during a time when far too many workers in the private sector have lost their jobs and many others have seen significant

pay cuts in recent years," the release stated.

The announcement came as several public-sector unions are preparing to enter salary arbitrations as part of recently-concluded collective agreements. Salary arbitrations for Alberta teachers are expected to take place in mid-November.

'Not interfere'

"I am glad that we have a fair and independent arbitrator who will look at the facts and make a reasonable determination on teacher salaries. I expect the government to not interfere in the process that was agreed upon last April," Schilling said.

He pointed out that teachers have already contributed to help the government's financial woes, taking six years of zero increases in the last seven years.

Toews said the wage rollback reflects the reality of Alberta's growing debt and the unacceptable deficit his government has inherited.

Schilling disagreed.

"This government is reaching into students' classrooms and teachers' pockets in order to pay off a \$4.7 billion handout to large corporations." ■

ATA CALGARY DISTRICT Run. Promote. Vote.

CANDIDATE	VOTES
Kerry-Ann Brauner	35
Karen Nakaska	223
Abstained	0
TOTAL VOTES CAST	258

ELECTED

Karen Nakaska



About Calgary District

The Alberta Teachers' Association organizes the province into 11 geographic districts, of which Calgary District is one. It is represented on the Association's Provincial Executive Council by one district representative. The approximately 3,000 teachers of Calgary District are employed by a total of four school jurisdictions and belong to four correlating ATA locals.

SCHOOL JURISDICTION	ATA LOCAL
Canadian Rockies Public Schools	Canadian Rockies Local No. 59
Christ the Redeemer Catholic Schools	Christ the Redeemer Local No. 29
Foothills School Division	Foothills Local No. 16
Rocky View Schools	Rocky View Teachers Local No. 35

Budget 2019 represents a \$275 million cut in education funding



ANALYSIS

Jonathan Teghtmeyer
ATA Associate Co-ordinator, Communications

At a time when school enrolment is expected to grow by 15,000 students per year, the UCP's new budget proposes a freeze on operational funding in education.

Budget 2019 eliminates class size initiative funding, school fee reduction grants and the classroom improvement fund, while adding a new, one-time transition fund to support boards while the government plans for a new funding framework to be adopted in September 2020 (see table below).

The per capita base instructional grants have been maintained, which has allowed the government to claim that they have funded for enrolment growth, but ATA president Jason Schilling calls this line misleading.

"The government is playing a shell game in order to trick us into thinking enrolment growth is being funded," said Schilling. "But at the end of the day, school boards have less funding per student, which means larger classes, fewer supports for students and programming cuts."

In 2018/19, each student in grades 1 to 3 generated a base instruction grant of \$6,679 and a Class Size Initiative grant of

\$1,521. For 2019/20, those same students will only generate the base instruction grant, but students at all grade levels will also generate a one-time transition grant of \$203 (for metro and urban boards) or \$356 (for rural boards).

This is part of the government's restructuring of the Class Size Initiative funding after a review concluded the program was ineffective. The Class Size Initiative would have been worth \$297 million, after enrolment growth, if it had continued in 2019/20.

"Albertans elected us with a clear mandate to conduct an audit of class sizes and determine what happened to previous funding dedicated to class size reduction," said Education Minister Adriana LaGrange on the release of the government's class size review.

"This report demonstrates that we cannot continue to throw money at this problem, rather that we must look for new solutions while continuing to appropriately fund education."

The replacement of the Class Size Initiative with the smaller one-time transition fund means a 16 per cent reduction in base instructional funding for K-3 students.



ATA president Jason Schilling shares his thoughts on the 2019 provincial budget at the Alberta legislature on Thursday, Oct. 24.

"This year, class sizes got bigger and I'm very worried that this budget will result in further class size growth for our youngest students," said Schilling. "All the research shows that class size reductions have the biggest impact at the youngest grades, yet that is where we are doing the worst job in keeping class sizes small. We have never met the 15-year-old targets for K-3 class size, and last year, 80 per cent of those classes were too large."

Schilling is quite worried about the long-term implications of the fiscal directions set out in the budget.

"The budget projects frozen operational funding for four years, which would mean 60,000 additional students and not a single additional teacher hired to teach them," he said.

The budget proposes an eight per cent decrease in the overall public sector workforce over the next four years, with most of the reductions attained through attrition.

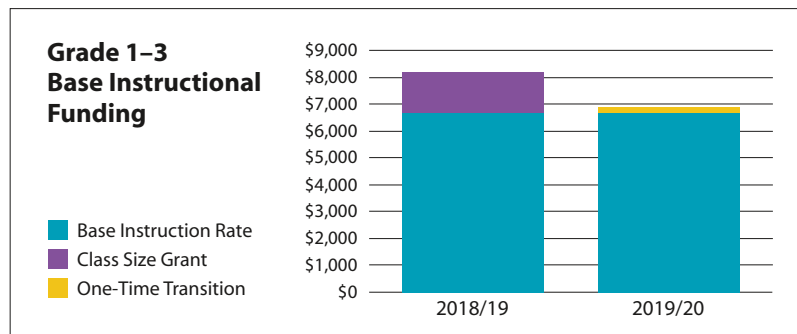
Budget positives

On a positive note, the school nutrition program will continue with an additional injection of \$5 million for support to non-profit agencies to expand the program. The program that provides breakfast and lunch to over 30,000 students will now be able to expand into additional schools and communities.

The capital budget provides funding to continue current school builds as well as \$123 million for approximately 250 new modular classrooms and \$397 million over five years for 25 new schools and/or modernizations.

BUDGET 2019 continued on page 6

Grants cut	Value
Class Size Initiative	\$291 million
School fee reductions	\$60 million
Classroom Improvement Fund	\$77 million
Replacement grants	
One-time transition metro/urban	\$100 million
One-time transition rural	\$53 million



Class size audit a political exercise – ATA president

Mark Milne
ATA News Staff

After 15 years and \$3.4 billion in class size reduction grants, a recent review by Alberta Education concluded that the additional funding has had little or no effect in bringing class sizes down to government recommended levels, especially in the K-3 grades.

"The 2019 Class Size Initiative Review was not a true audit of the problem facing our classrooms," said Jason Schilling, president of the Alberta Teachers' Association. "It served more as a political position paper to justify the government's cancellation of class size funding in the fall budget."

No new information

The review points to school boards' autonomy over fund allocation as the cause of the funding's ineffectiveness – the money wasn't being put where it was needed. Schilling says the large class sizes that are still being experienced are merely a symptom of a much

larger problem facing public education: chronic underfunding. He says the review itself was ineffective.

"Unfortunately, the 2019 Class Size Initiative Review merely regurgitates information that's already available to the public. It failed to dig into the root of the problem," said Schilling.

He maintained that underfunding in other key areas, such as maintenance, transportation, ESL, supports for special needs and plant operations, is the real reason class sizes continue to grow.

"Cash earmarked for class reduction is often redirected by school boards to shore up other underfunded basic needs. As a result, students continue to be stuffed into larger classes," said Schilling. "Removal of the class size funding altogether will only aggravate the problem."

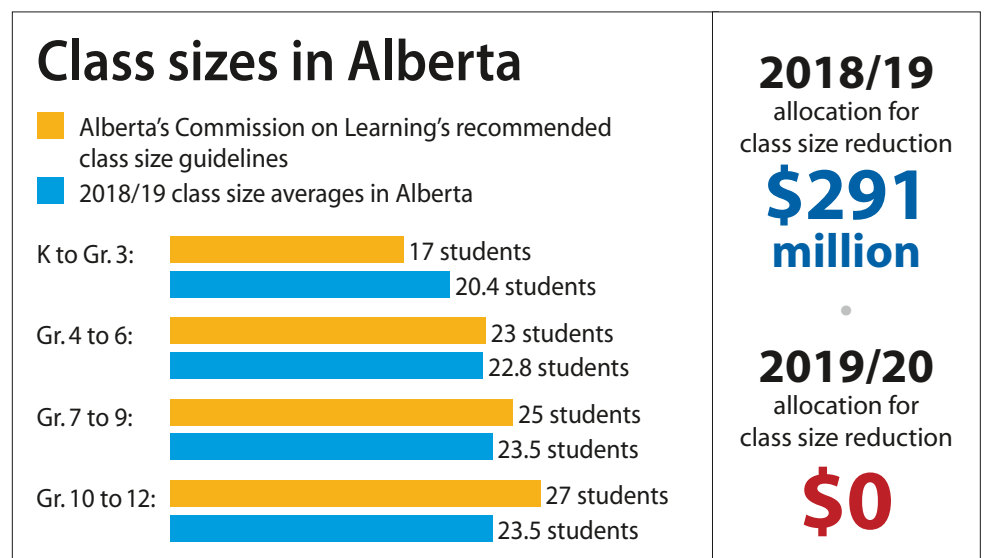
Funding and accountability

Schilling said the only solution to the persistent problem of oversized classrooms, especially in the crucial K-3 grades, is to increase total funding for public education and introduce a form of accountability into the system that would

ensure school boards are using the funds for the purpose they were intended.

While class size averages for grades 4-12 appear to have met the recommended levels, it must be taken into account that those numbers are merely averages. There still is a problem with oversized classes at higher grade levels, which are offset by smaller student populations elsewhere.

The Class Size Initiative was the result of a recommendation from Alberta's Commission on Learning (ACOL). It was introduced during the 2004/05 school year and resulted in the immediate hiring of 1,250 teachers. To date, an estimated 2,900 teachers have been hired and/or retained as part of the initiative.



Many discipline issues are resolved without a hearing



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.

Each year, the executive secretary of the Alberta Teachers' Association receives many requests for professional conduct investigations. Often these are referred to as "complaints," but this is not accurate. A complaint implies that someone is just letting us know that there's a problem, though it doesn't necessarily rule out that there is some action to be taken. Nevertheless, the intent of the person requesting the investigation (referred to as the complainant) is not at all relevant. The *Teaching Profession Act* obligates the Association to conduct a preliminary investigation into all allegations of unprofessional conduct that are brought forward.

In this space, I often write about matters that go to hearings, providing some information about the evidence that was established at the hearing and the outcome of the particular case. I also try to tie the outcome of hearings into the bigger picture of what is going on in classrooms every day. It is important that ATA members and the public at large are aware that this process is taking place, and that the process works to root out the unprofessional behaviour of teachers. Hearings, findings and penalties aren't the only components of the professional conduct process. While we cannot write about the specific details of cases, it is important to shed

some light on the part of the process known as the "invitation."

When an investigating officer concludes a report and submits the matter to the executive secretary with recommendations for action, aside from recommending a hearing or that no further action is warranted, the investigating officer can recommend an invitation. Investigating officers take these recommendations very seriously, and on matters where an invitation is considered, a great deal of thought and deliberation takes place before the final recommendation is provided.

So what is an invitation? Well, in these cases, it is deemed appropriate for the investigated member to have a face-to-face meeting with a senior member of the teaching profession, and for this purpose, those senior members of the profession are members of Provincial Executive Council (PEC). PEC members are provided training in their role to conduct the invitation.

When an invitation is ordered, the PEC member will arrange to meet with the member and is provided with the investigating officer's report so that he or she will have background on the facts of the case and can be prepared for the meeting. During the meeting, the PEC member will discuss the specific details of the case with the investigated member. The PEC member will seek assurances about future behaviour, as well as acknowledgement of the unprofessional nature of the behaviour that led them to this point. It is expected that the investigated member will be contrite

and will accept that his or her actions were unprofessional. It is also expected that there will be a serious commitment with respect to future behaviour.

It is difficult for anyone to be in a conversation wherein their actions are admonished, where they have to admit to wrongdoing and commit to changing their behaviour. Members take these conversations very seriously, and their future actions reflect that. A successful invitation will yield this contrition and commitment, and the PEC member will write a report to the executive secretary outlining the success or failure of the invitation. A successful invitation will close the matter, while an unsuccessful invitation will lead to the matter proceeding to a hearing of the Professional Conduct Committee.

Investigating officers do not recommend an invitation on every case. There is wide discretion afforded to investigating officers as they make their recommendations, but it is clear that there are matters that require the attention of a professional conduct hearing. These cases are not afforded an invitation.

Further, there are occasions in which investigated members are not contrite in dealing with an investigating officer. The investigated members may not acknowledge that there was anything unprofessional in their actions, nor do they accept that there is a need to change their behaviour. In a situation like this, an investigating officer would be loathe to recommend an invitation as it is apparent that the invitation would have little to no chance of succeeding.

Ultimately, an invitation is a successful tool at the Association's disposal to be able to exercise its important role as a professional regulatory body, while at the same time ensuring that the process does not get bogged down with unnecessary and expensive hearings on matters that could best be dealt with in other ways. ■



BUDGET 2019

continued from page 5

New school announcements are still forthcoming.

Pension changes a "hijacking"

The teachers' pension plan is also a target of this year's budget. Tucked away on page 120 of the fiscal plan is a directive to transfer all of the funds within the Alberta Teachers Retirement Fund (ATRF) to AIMCo, a Crown corporation of the Province of Alberta.

It was a unilateral decision by the UCP government and was executed without any prior consultation with teachers or the ATRF. The ATRF was made aware of the change only 15 minutes prior to the budget delivery.

The government points to reducing redundant administration and building a "made in Alberta" portfolio as the reasoning for the move. A large part of the ATRF's investments already include Alberta's oil and gas industry and the administration is salaried by the fund.

Schilling likens the move to a "hijacking" of teachers' pensions and says there are still many questions around the move that need to be answered. The ATA is withholding any official action until more information is brought forth. The Workers' Compensation Board and Alberta Health Services will also be expected to move their funds over to AIMCo.

Outside of education

The UCP's inaugural budget introduces a plan to cut spending by 2.8 per cent and balance the books by 2023, although this budget projects a deficit of \$8.7 billion, \$2 billion larger than the last deficit posted under the NDP government. Total debt is projected to climb to \$93 billion by the time the budget is balanced in 2023.

Elsewhere the budget notes that the government will provide a total of \$4.7 billion in corporate tax cuts over the next four years. It also touts an Alberta personal tax advantage of at least \$13.4 billion, noting that Alberta would collect that much more in taxes if it adopted the tax regime of Ontario, the next lowest taxed province in the nation.

Post-secondary education saw tuition caps removed and a five per cent funding cut to advanced education. A performance-based funding formula will be in place by 2020/21. Student loan interest rates will also increase from prime to prime plus one per cent.

Health care, the province's largest expense, will see a slight increase of approximately \$200 million, bringing its funding total to \$20.6 billion per year. One hundred million of those additional funds will be directed towards a mental health and addictions strategy.

Capital funding to municipalities will be cut by nine per cent over the next two years, which will force municipalities to either defer or find alternative funding for major projects and infrastructure. ■

— With files from Mark Milne, ATA News staff

Council opens door to local women-in-leadership committees

PEC POINTS

Audrey Dutka
ATA News Staff

Highlights of the Provincial Executive Council meeting held October 24–25, 2019, at Barnett House in Edmonton


1. Approved in principle and referred to Finance Committee for review and costing a proposed list of programs on which the Association should focus in 2020/21.
2. Authorized the executive secretary to appoint an official trustee to the Canadian Rockies Local No. 59.
3. Authorized staff to engage government officials in discussions concerning the Association's assumption of responsibility for certification of a unified profession.
4. Named Danny W. Maas to the position

of executive staff officer, Professional Development, with a start date to be mutually agreed upon.

5. Amended the frame of reference of the Committee on Council Election Processes, appointed field members to the committee and allocated \$16,800 from contingency to provide for two meetings of the committee.
6. Appointed an alternate chair to the Professional Conduct Complainant Appeal Committee for the 2019/20 year.
7. Approved the Association's 2019/20 capital budget.
8. Amended the administrative guidelines related to Summer Conference to reflect current programming and reimbursement guidelines.
9. Approved in principle and referred to Resolutions Committee two proposed resolutions to amend policy to help substitute teachers acquire permanent certification by removing barriers in obtaining an evaluation.
10. Approved the names of five teachers for addition to the Association Instructor name bank. The bank is used as a source

of appointments to the Association Instructor corps as the need arises.

11. Approved for distribution a sample frame of reference for locals who wish to form a women-in-leadership committee.
12. Approved a date change for the Well-Being of Children and Youth conference to May 9, 2020, in Edmonton.
13. Accepted in principle the report and findings of the Committee on Convention Review; referred the report and findings to staff to develop a draft implementation plan for presentation to Council at its January meeting; and disbanded the Committee on Convention Review with thanks.
14. Authorized the purchase of a table of six at the Parkland Institute Annual Fall Conference, taking place November 15–17, 2019, in Edmonton.
15. Named council and field members to serve on Association committees and amended the frames of reference for the School Leaders Issues and Concerns Committee and the Indigenous Education Committee. ■



The Alberta Teachers' Association

Communities of Practice Inquiry Grant

A Matching Grant Available from the Association Through ATA Locals

Proposals that support communities of practice activities occurring between November 1, 2019 and June 30, 2020, will be accepted until April 1, 2020.

To apply and for more information go to <https://bit.ly/2LYuwJR>

Teacher Growth, Supervision, Evaluation and Practice Review Workshop

for Administrators

January 30–31, 2020
Best Western Premier Calgary Plaza Hotel and Conference Centre

To register and for more information go to <https://event-wizard.com/events/TGSE0120>. Register online by **January 24**.

MS-85-6-2019-09



SEEKING FURRY SUBMISSIONS!

The ATA News is seeking entries for Teacher's Pet, which profiles teachers' furry, feathered or even scaled friends.

If you have a cuddly companion that you'd like to share with your colleagues, please send us a picture, along with the following required information:

- Your name, grade, school and the subject(s) you teach
- Your pet's name and breed

Also, please answer these two questions:

- 1) What makes your pet special?
- 2) How does your pet help you in your profession?

A selection of entries will be published in an upcoming issue of the ATA News.

Please email your submissions to cory.hare@ata.ab.ca.

DEADLINE: DEC. 2



Gary Smith,
Assistant Principal,
Prince Charles School

"I have left a will intention to ensure a fund is created after I am gone to continue to help children learn."

Jackie Fuga,
Physical Education Specialist,
Hillcrest School

"Sport and fitness was important to both me and my brother. I am pleased to continue to promote his legacy through the David Fuga Memorial Fund."

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Le 19 novembre de 9 h à 17 h
Le 20 novembre de 9 h à 17 h

LIEU DES ENTREVUES
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Edmonton (Alberta) T6C 3N1

Nous désirons exprimer notre gratitude à tous les candidats pour leur intérêt envers le Conseil scolaire Centre-Nord. Cependant, nous communiquerons uniquement avec ceux et celles retenus pour une entrevue. Le Conseil scolaire Centre-Nord favorise l'équité en matière d'emploi.

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ATTENTION, TEACHERS

ATA News advertisements of institution programs

Advertising by institutions offering educational programs is accepted by the ATA News on a commercial basis. There is no guarantee these institutions fulfill the requirements for consideration as a recognized institution for salary grid purposes.

Teachers considering enrolling in educational programs for purposes of increasing salary levels should consult the Teacher Salary Qualifications Board Principles or inquire directly to the Teacher Qualifications Service regarding the acceptability of the program.



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EEP-127b 2019-09

Information isn't always black and white. Talk to your ATA Library.



library@ata.ab.ca
 780-447-9400

The Alberta Teachers' Association



Applications are now being accepted

ATA-CHANGE FOR CHILDREN Teaching Tour

Guatemala | July

Spend two weeks in Guatemala assisting with the professional development of fellow teachers in the areas of language and communication, mathematics, and technology for learning.

Collaboration on action plans and incentive strategies to promote school attendance are other components of this teaching tour, with the overall goal being to enhance the quality of education offered to the marginalized Mayan Mam Indigenous population of Guatemala's western highlands.

Travel and living expenses are covered by the ATA.
 Spanish language ability preferred.


To apply, visit teachers.ab.ca > For Members > Programs and Services > International Cooperation > Change for Children

For more information, email lorena@changeforchildren.org.

▶ **Application Deadline: December 15**

An ATA International Cooperation Program

COOR-61-18a 2019-08



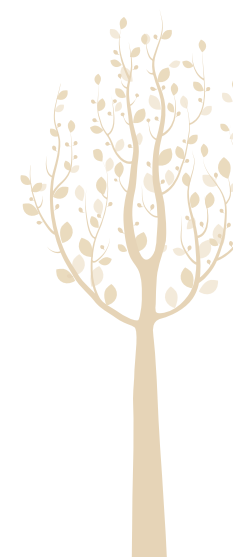
The ATA Educational Trust

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

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

Application deadline: May 1, 2020

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



AR-ETF 30a 2019-09

CHANGES TO TEACHER SALARY QUALIFICATIONS PRINCIPLES

Deadline for no-cost re-evaluations: January 31, 2020

Please note the following changes to the Teacher Salary Qualifications Board Principles for the Evaluation of Years of Teacher Education for Salary Purposes effective July 1, 2019: Subsections c) and d) of Principle 2.01, which deals with recognized institutions, have been amended to read

c) recognized by the Ministry of Education in the home country or is listed in the Association of Commonwealth Universities publications, or

d) recognized by the Ministry of Education in the home country or is listed in the International Association of Universities publications, or

If you have been previously denied credit under Principle 2.01.c) d), you may submit a TQS application for re-evaluation at **no cost until January 31, 2020**. Please make sure to indicate the reason for re-evaluation in section J. Review of the TQS Application Form. Applications for re-evaluation after January 31, 2020, will be accepted subject to the regular fee, as outlined in section F. Application Fee of the TQS Application Guide Book.

It is the responsibility of the teacher to ascertain if changes of principles and their application may affect the evaluation of qualifications for salary purposes.

For more information, please contact TQS at 1-800-232-7208.



TW-145 2019 08

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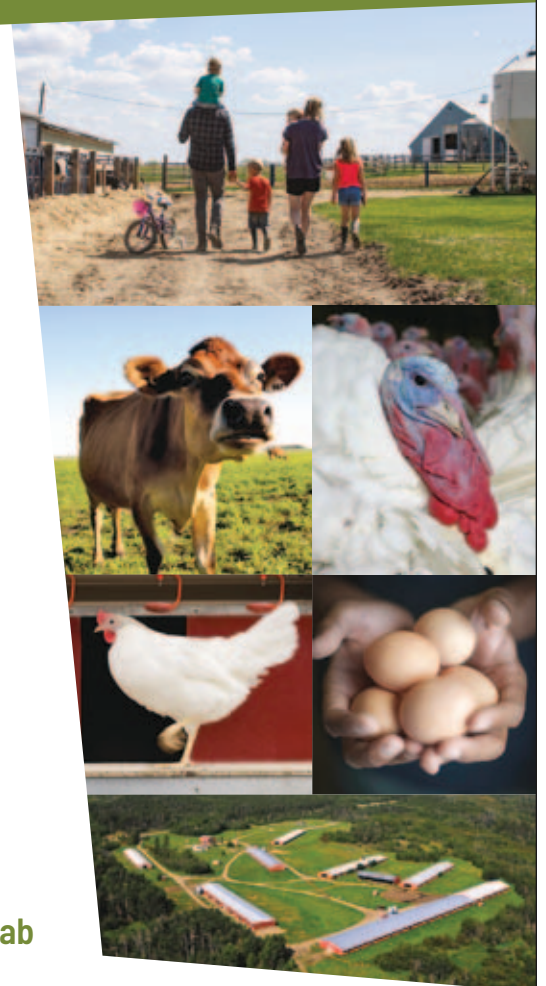
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The Alberta Teachers' Association



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Become a Professional Development Facilitator!

PD facilitators are assigned to work with specific locals on a regional basis. They work with PD chairs and PD committees to provide professional development within the region and support the work of Professional Development staff officers.

The Alberta Teachers' Association is seeking outstanding classroom teachers representing all grade levels and subject areas from across the province, including francophone schools. The three-year appointments for these assignments will begin January 2020.

The application process has three parts:

1. Provide a letter of interest, including the following:
 - Areas of interest and expertise (for example, assessment, FNMI education, inclusive education, student engagement)
 - Experience in leading professional development
 - Reasons for applying
2. Download and complete the application form on the ATA website (see below for website information).
3. Provide a resumé outlining education, work experience, leadership experience, publications, presentations and volunteer experience.

Successful candidates are expected to attend two training sessions per year, as well as the PD Course seminar at the ATA Summer Conference in August. The ATA covers release time and associated expenses to complete the work and provides an honorarium. Please do not apply if you are unable to attend all days of the conference or if you cannot commit to attending all training sessions.

As a courtesy, please advise your superintendent and principal that you will be applying. All applicants must be active or associate members of the ATA and hold an Alberta teaching certificate.

APPLICATION DEADLINE IS NOVEMBER 15, 2019.

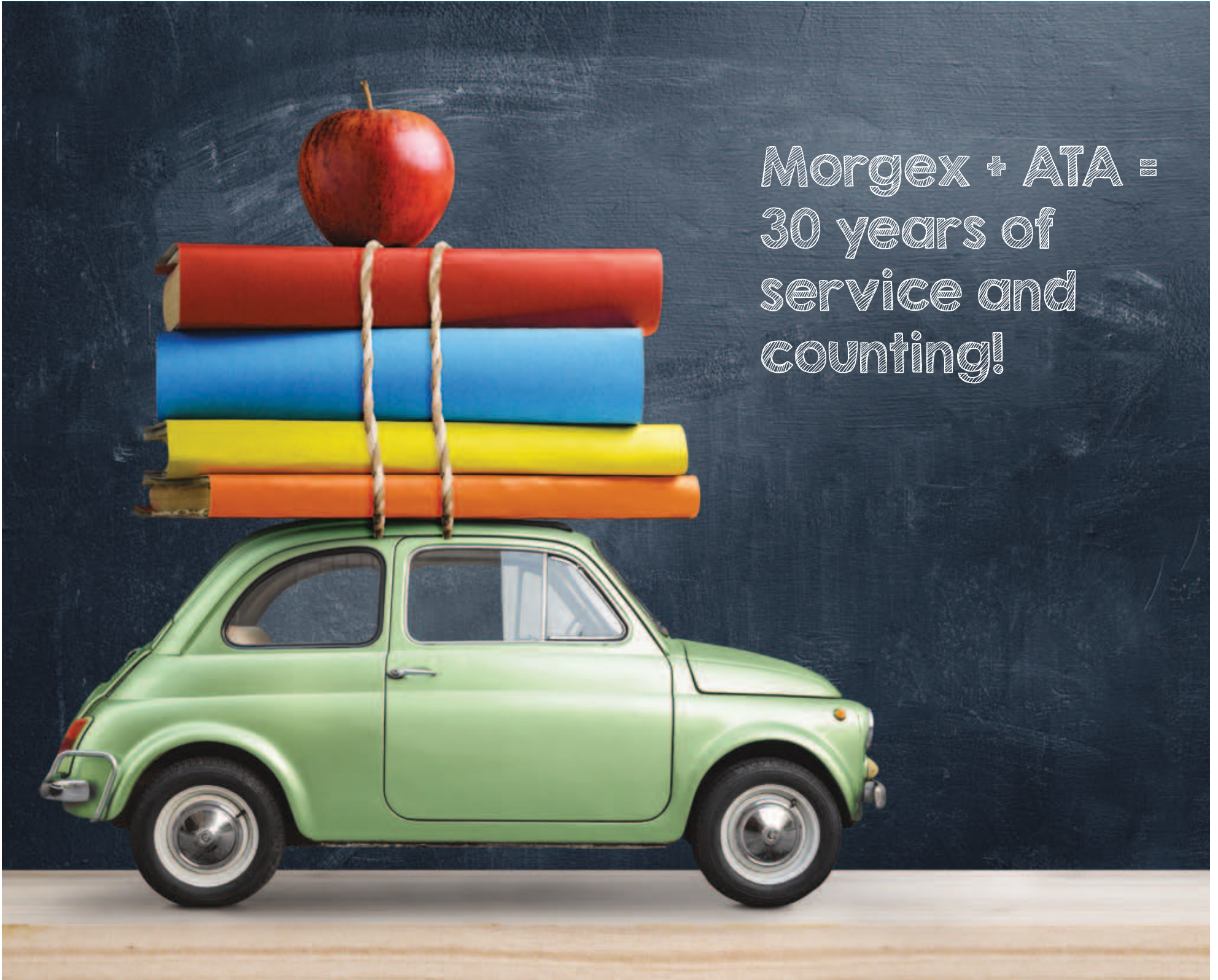
Send your letter of interest, resumé and completed application form to Mardi Veinot, Administrative Officer, Professional Development, Alberta Teachers' Association, 11010 142 Street NW, Edmonton AB T5N 2R1, or e-mail them to mardi.veinot@ata.ab.ca.

For more information or to download an application form, visit www.teachers.ab.ca > My ATA > Engage with Us > Getting Involved as an Individual > Joining a Corps > Professional Development Facilitators.



The Alberta Teachers' Association

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Students need open and caring allies

Amazing Race winner shares Indigenous perspective with teachers

Jen Janzen
ATA News Staff

Show up for your students and you can save their lives.

That was the message brought forth by James Makokis, a Cree physician who works with two-spirit and transgender patients, as he spoke with Edmonton Catholic teachers at a professional development event on Oct. 28.

Makokis, who identifies as two-spirit and uses male pronouns, is also a recent winner of the *Amazing Race Canada* along with his husband Anthony Johnson. Makokis spoke with teachers about the importance of openness as it relates to Indigenous education and working with LGBTQ2S+ youth.

"Indigenous society is a fully intact puzzle, evolving over thousands of years," Makokis said, referring to precolonized societies. "Then colonization happened, and the puzzle was thrown up into the air. Now there are pieces scattered everywhere."

He urged teachers to think of this puzzle when they see Indigenous students struggling at school.

"You see kids who don't come to school, kids who aren't engaged in learning, kids with low self-esteem, kids with addiction issues and a home environment that might be in chaos. We are constantly working within our own nations to put that puzzle back together."

How can teachers help? By bringing regional teachings into the classroom, helping to uncover stories about the land, and modeling critical thinking, especially in terms of sources that present a colonized view of Canadian history.

"We have many good allies like you who are uncovering the history of this country and teaching it in a way that is actually representative of what has happened here, to make better lives for your students," Makokis said.



James Makokis, recent winner of the *Amazing Race Canada*, poses for a photo with teachers following a talk hosted by the Edmonton Catholic Teachers Local No. 54. Pictured with Makokis are (L-R) Patti Liogier, Colleen Skeels and Sara Borchiellini.

Makokis presented examples of field trips he's been involved in, such as taking students to Jasper to learn about the history of the land and the importance of specific locations.

"[Indigenous education] gives students the self-esteem, the resilience, all of those things that are going to encourage them to be successful in school," he said.

Puberty presents challenges

In terms of working with gender diverse students, Makokis said that trans youth especially may have a hard time when puberty hits.

"People can be completely different because their bodies are changing in a way that doesn't reflect how they feel inside, and they really need teachers who are open and caring."

He suggested that teachers identify themselves as allies and talk to the student directly.

"I know it can be uncomfortable to have those conversations, but start having them, because you can save lives," he said.

Makokis showed images from the filming of the *Amazing Race* in which he and his husband wore rainbow skirts.

"We wanted to show young people that if no one else in [their] life supports them, that we do," he said.

He added that he can see that society's attitudes towards gender and sexuality are changing, and he can tell that the young patients that he sees have a more supportive school environment.

"I know it can be uncomfortable to have those conversations, but start having them, because you can save lives."

"They come see me about their hormones and they're scared, but they see all these things that you're doing for them, and they see the teachers who are putting themselves out there," he said. "You're awesome ambassadors at creating safe and inclusive schools."



JEN JANZEN

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