



**QUIZ TIME!**

Test your Christmas movie knowledge. *See page 12.*



Pension questions answered. *See page 5*

# ATA NEWS

December 10, 2019 | Volume 54, Number 6

News Publication of The Alberta Teachers' Association

## Jobs saved

Calgary board finds funds to prevent teacher layoffs.

Situation "completely mishandled," says ATA president.

*See story on page 4.*

*Note: Article updated Dec. 12*



DARRYL PROPP

Lucia Lorenzin, a Grade 1 student at Ecole Morinville Public School, takes a short break for a photo op during recess on Dec. 4. Photo taken by Grade 2 teacher Darryl Propp.



### Essential data

Tracking class sizes provides accountability.

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



### Legal challenge?

How is the ATA countering the government's pension grab?

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



Your voices carry a long way.

*See page 5.*



**DIGITAL NEWS**  
The ATA News is available in a new digital format.

For the latest issue, visit [teachers.ab.ca](http://teachers.ab.ca)  
> News and Info  
> ATA News.

Subscribe to receive an email when a new issue is available.  
[bit.ly/2Subscribe\\_Now](http://bit.ly/2Subscribe_Now)

## Class size data equals accountability



### EDITORIAL

Jonathan Teghtmeyer  
ATA News Editor-in-Chief

"In today's digital landscape, data is a powerful resource — one that can unleash enormous social and economic innovation."

Those are the words of the late Manmeet Bhullar, then minister of Service Alberta on the introduction of the Alberta government's Open Data Portal in 2013.

"By opening up government data, we are helping to make this innovation possible," he said.

In response, then ATA president Carol Henderson called for class size data to be uploaded into the new public portal.

"We know that reporting (jurisdictionwide) averages hides the fact that there are extraordinarily large classes in many schools," she said.

It took more than five years of pressure, a ground-breaking auditor general's report and a tenacious reporter's week-long investigative series to finally get the data shared. By November 2018, then education

minister David Eggen authorized the posting of class size data for every classroom in the province going back to 2004.

In his February 2018 class size report, auditor general Merwin Saher concluded that, "because of the department's lack of public reporting throughout the initiative, Albertan families have remained uninformed about how effective that funding has been in achieving the desired class size targets."

Minister Adriana LaGrange's press secretary said the reporting was created to track progress on the "failed Class Size Initiative," and since that \$291 million fund has now been eliminated, there is no need to require reporting.

I have a big problem with this. Not just because small class sizes matter to students' educational experience, but because I consider class size to be an important barometer of education funding health generally.

school board grants were cut in 2011 and others were cut again in 2013. As costs rose, school boards have had to take money from base funding to cover unescapable increasing costs in other areas: supports for special needs, plant operations, maintenance and transportation.

Across the province, school boards are underfunded in these areas to the tune of \$187 million per year (on average). And that shortfall is coming from instructional funding.

Ultimately, school boards cannot escape rising costs, like that of diesel fuel. The main lever they have to deal with underfunding is to hire fewer teachers and pack more kids into each classroom.

So as funding started to falter in recent years, we saw the teacher ratio rise back up over 17 and the average K – 3 class size return to over 20.

The loss of this valuable classroom data will make it very difficult for us and other public education advocates to hold the government accountable.

I'm worried that is the real reason they decided to eliminate the reporting requirements. ■

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

*"I consider class size to be an important barometer of education funding health generally."*

He also took aim at the use of class size averages.

"The department's use of average class sizes as its target has an inherent limitation as it obscures the actual number of classes that have not met the (Alberta Commission on Learning) suggested levels," Saher wrote.

Now, just a year after the data was released, the government says it is planning to stop tracking and publishing class size data. Education

From 2004 through 2009, the government made important investments in public education, including the introduction of the Class Size Initiative, which supported the hiring of 2,900 teachers across the province. The student-teacher ratio dropped from over 17 to under 16 and the average K – 3 class size dropped from 21.8 to 18.2.

Since then, base funding has not kept pace with inflation. A number of

## Where is the legal challenge over our pensions?



### Q & A

Dennis Theobald  
ATA Executive Secretary

**Question:** When will the Alberta Teachers' Association launch a legal challenge against the provincial government's hijacking of teachers' pension assets?

**Answer:** One of the first steps the Association took when Bill 22, the omnibus legislation enabling the transfer of control of Alberta Teacher Retirement Fund (ATRF) assets to the Alberta Investment Management Corporation (AIMCo), was tabled in the legislature was to have our legal firm, Field LLP, identify any possible avenues for legal response.

Unfortunately we have not identified any credible legal challenge that would enable us to potentially overturn or block the amendments to the *Teachers' Pension Plan Act* provided for in Bill 22.

It is natural to assume that when a government undertakes some action that seems to be inherently unfair and procedurally objectionable, there must

be some way to raise a challenge in court. In reality, under our system of democratic, parliamentary government, the judicial branch generally defers to the legislative branch, allowing Parliament and provincial legislatures to pass laws concerning matters within their jurisdiction as they see fit. The exception is when a law violates the Constitution of Canada, which sets out the powers of the various levels of government and the rights of citizens.

by the government with the Alberta Teachers' Association, co-sponsor of the \$16.6 billion teacher pension plan, was a 10-minute telephone call with me just before the bill was tabled, these savvy observers have a point. Unfortunately, it's not a valid legal point.

While there exists in common law an expectation that government must act fairly, which includes some expectation of consultation, the Supreme Court of Canada has established that legislative

expectation that government will behave fairly is an unwritten constitutional principle, it cannot be used as a basis for invalidating legislation based on the content of that legislation.

This does not mean that the Association is throwing in the towel. Our focus must now pivot to ensuring that the arrangements that are established between ATRF and AIMCo emerging from Bill 22 are fair, reflect the ownership and moral rights of teachers as contributors and beneficiaries, and contribute to the long-term sustainability of the plan.

In the course of the debate on Bill 22 and in response to the overwhelming response from teachers, active and retired, Finance Minister Travis Toews and government MLAs have made all manner of assurances and promises. The Association will take steps to hold government to these promises. To achieve this, we will engage in representation, advocacy and member mobilization. And, to quote our lawyer Jim Casey, "if necessary, we still know our way to the courthouse." ■

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

*"The Association will take steps to hold government to these promises."*

After close examination, our lawyers have concluded that the provisions in Bill 22 concerning the ATRF, while offensive in many ways, are constitutional. There is no cause for action on that basis.

Some savvy observers may speculate about the possibility of challenging the government's subjugation of ATRF assets to AIMCo control because of its failure to consult with the party most affected, Alberta's teachers. Given that the sum total of consultation undertaken

decision making is not subject to this duty of fairness. The court has ruled that to impose such a duty would place a fetter on an essential feature of democracy. As noted above, legislatures are subject to constitutional requirements for valid law-making, but within their constitutional boundaries, they can do as they see fit. Ultimately, the wisdom and value of legislative decisions are subject to review only by the electorate. Further, while the



# YOUR VIEWS

## FACEBOOK FEEDBACK

### On the education minister's social media post about a Grade 10 social studies exam question:

#### Denise Sandy Baker

Wow, so frustrating and discouraging that they continue to undermine educators in Alberta.

#### Alan Skinner

Regardless of whether these are good questions, I find it chilling to think that the minister of education is criticizing me and my colleagues by posting snippets of exams on the internet for public criticism. Am I supposed to go through my exams, looking for questions that the government might consider "politically charged"?

#### Stephanie Amstutz

Keep politics out of our classrooms! Except in Grade 6, where the entire Social Studies curriculum revolves around the provincial government.

#### Nicole McRae

This type of message towards our educators fuels hate and is not appreciated. Thank you ATA for sticking up for us.

#### Carol Knott

Did she read question #15? The reader probably thinks...? These questions are designed to apply knowledge of perspective and bias. Clearly the minister is applying her lack of curriculum knowledge and is showing HER bias by seeing the word "oil sands" and assuming ALL teachers are secretly plotting against it.

#### Jennifer Black

The attack on teacher professionalism by this government is so upsetting. ATA, it is vital that we keep trying to provide the minister with accurate information. I am feeling pretty disgusted right now.

#### Nick Adams

What's ironic is that the UCP blasts our education system and likely has no idea what those questions are asking.

#### Jessica Baudin-Griffin

"We said during the election that we were going to be taking politics out of the classroom, and that's exactly what we will be doing." Perhaps Ms. LaGrange needs to go back and take Social Studies 10 to examine her own biases.

#### Ken Der

The minister shows a total lack of leadership. Despite what she thinks, a social media rant is not the way the leader of our education system, or any government rep, should act.

#### Lindsey Birrell

This is also a very normal question to see on an exam. It's testing critical thinking and understanding the point of view of a person's opinion. Pretty sure we WANT our students to be educated on how to understand diverse opinions. Shame on you, LaGrange!

#### Shannon Fraser

How can you take politics out of the social studies curriculum??? It's all about different perspectives and understanding different ideologies and worldviews?! Indoctrination is a product of ignorance.

Letters to the editor: We welcome letters to the editor. Please limit your submission to 300 words. Only letters bearing a first and last name, address and daytime telephone number will be considered for publication. Teachers are also asked to indicate where and what they teach. All letters are subject to editing for length, clarity, punctuation, spelling and grammar. Email managing editor Cory Hare: cory.hare@ata.ab.ca.

## FOR THE RECORD

### Calgary Grade 10 Social Studies Exam

14. Which of the following is one of the valid arguments against Oil Sands development?

- a) Oil sands development means destruction of tracts of forest
- b) Oil sands development means lack of investment opportunities
- c) Oil sands development decreases the creation of jobs
- d) Oil sands development means more spending on local businesses

Please use the following source to answer question 15

The proposed [oil] sands development will tear a hole in Canada's lungs – our vital boreal ecosystem . . . It is essential that an integrated land management plan be in place that recognizes and protects the integrity of this critical ecosystem.

15. The author of the above quote probably thinks.

- a) Oil sands development has its problems, but is overall a benefit to Alberta
- b) Oil sands development should be speeded up
- c) Oil sands development should have more restrictions on it
- d) Oil sands development is the best thing that ever happened to northern Alberta

**Keep politics out of our classrooms!**

“It is deeply concerning that anybody would think that these were appropriate questions for a Grade 10 Social Studies test. Alberta has a great story to tell about our responsible energy sector, and educators should not be attacking it. We said during the election that we were going to take politics out of the classroom, and that is exactly what we will be doing.”

- Education Minister Adriana LaGrange, via *Twitter*

# The power of a pause



## VIEWPOINTS

Mary Frances Fitzgerald  
ATA Council of School Counsellors

Colleagues, the fierce energy and dedication we have been using this school year need to go on pause for one minute, a morning, one day, a few days, a week or even longer. The outer noises of politics, schedules, expectations, celebrations, academics, hustle and bustle need to soften into silence. We need to pause, regroup and be still.

Pausing is a simple act, yet we find it hard to do. In positive psychology, one might call a pause an act of mindfulness, which simply means we are recognizing our brain and body chatter. We need to deactivate our overstimulated nervous systems, articulate and minimize our distressing thinking patterns and find an anchor in the art of the pause. Recognizing the chatter is simply metacognition, the act of observing our thinking patterns that yearn for space, quiet or at least a decrescendo. Metacognition allows the brain to build capacity to pay attention to our thoughts, feelings and actions.

When we stop to notice our thinking, we are taking a natural pause, yet we might not recognize the thinking patterns we are using on a constant basis.

Let us take a moment to focus on a few patterns that cause distress, and if we start to recognize our patterns, when under less stress during the holidays, we may learn to replace the thinking with a powerful rejuvenating pause.

“We need to deactivate our overstimulated nervous systems, articulate and minimize our distressing thinking patterns and find an anchor in the art of the pause.”

One distressing pattern is “all or nothing” or “black and white” thinking, which makes no allowances for grey. This can cause distress because answers are not always “this or that” or “yes and no.” Our lived experiences have shown us that there are multiple layers to any situation.

A companion to all-or-nothing thinking is overgeneralizing. This is characterized by statements such as “all teachers are worried for their future,” which may, in reality, not be true.

If we pause, we may check our inner chatter and find that our thinking is black or white or overgeneralized and understand this thinking is not accurate. It is the act of naming your thinking style that is mindful and certainly worthy of a pause.

Another common pattern is jumping to conclusions, which involves mind reading, fortune telling or magical thinking – you might find yourself thinking you know what another person is thinking. For example, to this day, if I am called to a visit with the principal, I jump to conclusions and my inner chatter starts yelling a list of potential failings. This is usually accompanied by butterflies in my stomach. This is sometimes humorous for me, as in my training I know how to name and counteract my negative thinking; however, I still find myself in this uneasy predicament. After I name my negative thought pattern and tell myself I am jumping to conclusions, I then must check for the truth of my thinking. Thinking about one's thinking is not always easy, and I work on my pauses through the process.

Your pause may offer opportunities to absorb rejuvenation in tiny bursts, like feeling the sun's warmth on your face, observing the natural laughter of children, hearing the crunch of your boots on fresh snow, smelling the fragrance of a spruce tree or recognizing the gustatory joy of festive bites.

During the holidays, the pause allows us to wax nostalgic, connect with our grief and joy while we sparkle in our moments of hope. Yes, there are very real hard and harsh situations in our world, in Alberta and possibly in our homes. The gifts we can give to ourselves are self-compassion, self-kindness and self-worth. During your holidays you should reflect and recognize all that you have accomplished, endured and made possible for yourself, your families, your students and your world.

Teachers, we certainly understand how to give care, comfort and compassion to others, but most often we forget to give it to ourselves. The holidays give you opportunity for self care. May you find the joy of rest, a good sleep, a few moments without noise. May you feel a quiet contentment, a moment of equanimity and the delight of hope. May you refresh your need for peace and gratitude.

And remember: give yourself the gift of a pause. ■

Mary Frances Fitzgerald is a long-time school counsellor who now works as a consultant to reduce stigma, create awareness and build capacity regarding mental health and social justice issues. She is vice-president of the ATA's Council of School Counsellors.

# NEWS BRIEFS

ATA News Staff

## Arbitration case heard

Whether or not Alberta teachers receive salary increases is a decision that is now in the hands of an independent arbitration tribunal. Representatives from the Alberta Teachers' Association and the Teachers' Employer Bargaining Association (TEBA) presented their respective positions before the tribunal in mid-November. A decision is expected sometime in the new year.

The arbitration tribunal includes an Association nominee, a TEBA nominee and a chair agreed to by both sides.

This arbitration process to decide the salary issue is the last step of a bargaining process that began in the spring of 2018 and yielded a central table settlement that was ratified in May 2019. The agreement covers the time period from Sept. 1, 2018 to Aug. 31, 2020. ■

## Election financing

Changes to election finance rules that may affect organizations like the Alberta Teachers' Association appear to be coming next spring. The government has been consulting with public sector unions but isn't saying what changes are in the works. (The ATA was invited to consult but declined due to the short notice provided).

"We haven't made any decisions on changes, period," said Labour and Immigration Minister Jason Copping. "Once we finish the consultations, then we'll figure out what changes we're going to make that fulfil our campaign commitment."

Last spring during the general election, the United Conservative Party pledged to protect unionized workers from "being forced to fund political parties and causes" without explicit approval. The party also promised to prohibit groups that are formally affiliated with political parties from running political action committees, a move viewed as targeting the Alberta Federation of Labour (AFL).

On Nov. 26, the CBC reported that the government intends to change the *Election Finances and Contributions Disclosure Act* adopted by the previous NDP government. The act restricted spending by political action committees in the months before an election and prohibited unions and corporations from donating to political parties.

AFL president Gil McGowan said he anticipates that the new legislation will "gag" unions by restricting their ability to engage in political campaigns.

"They will ... say that they are doing this to protect the rights and freedoms of individual Alberta workers, but let's be serious. The UCP is the boss's party, not the workers' party," McGowan said.

"The law they're about to introduce isn't motivated by concern for ordinary working Albertans. And it's not motivated by concerns about freedom, rights or democracy. In fact, it's the exact opposite of all of those things." ■

## Ontario teachers strike

After eight months of bargaining, Ontario teachers are taking strike action as frustration mounts over what they feel is a lack of meaningful engagement by the Doug Ford government.

The Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation (OSSTF) says the government isn't addressing crucial issues like class size, e-learning and members' job security. The federation launched a one-day strike on Dec. 3, after previously engaging in information pickets and the limited withdrawal of administrative services.

"In light of the government's refusal to engage in meaningful bargaining, it is time to send a clear message that the teachers and education workers of OSSTF/FEESO are ready to defend Ontario's publicly funded education system," said OSSTF president Harvey Bischof in a news release.

The Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario started a work-to-rule campaign on Nov. 26 and members of the Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association recently voted 97.1 per cent in favour of taking strike action if necessary. ■

## Minister cool to voucher system

Although delegates at the United Conservative Party's annual general meeting adopted a policy calling for a voucher system that would fully fund private schools, Education Minister Adriana LaGrange expressed no interest.

On Nov. 30, delegates at the party's AGM in Calgary voted 307 to 267 in favour of adopting a policy proposed by the constituency association in

Lacombe-Ponoka. The policy calls for implementation of "an education 'voucher system' that will provide for equal per-student funding regardless of their school choice, free from caveats or conditions."

"At this point in time, I'm just undertaking a funding and assurance review model, but it does not include a voucher system," LaGrange told *Star Edmonton*. ■



THE CANADIAN PRESS / DAVE CHIDLEY

Hundreds of protesters march outside the Alberta United Conservative Party annual general meeting in Calgary on Nov. 30.

# Funding situation leaves Calgary teachers in limbo

Mark Milne  
ATA News Staff

Both the provincial government and the Calgary Board of Education have "completely mishandled" the situation that has resulted in teacher layoffs being announced then partially reversed, said Alberta Teachers' Association president Jason Schilling.

"They have conducted a fight in a very public domain. They should be better at their jobs," Schilling said.

Just one week after the CBE announced that 321 temporary teacher contracts would be terminated due to budget restraints, Alberta Education announced it would allow all school boards to allocate up to 50 per cent of their Infrastructure and Maintenance Renewal (IMR) grant to staffing. To access the funds, school boards are being asked how much of their reserves are also being used to avoid layoffs and

what other cost-reducing measures are being implemented.

Schilling sees the move as an admission by the government that the fall budget fell short of fully funding education.

"In actuality there is a shortfall of \$275 million, which has now resulted in job losses," Schilling said.

The CBE took immediate advantage of the one-time IMR offer and applied

for \$15 million to help offset its \$32 million shortfall. According to a CBE board report, the division intends to use the funds not only for staffing but also to reduce transportation fees. Board officials are unable to predict how many teaching jobs the cash infusion will save.

The situation doesn't sit well with Schilling.

"Will they or won't they have contracts?" he said. "It's irresponsible

for our government, who should be looking after the well-being of Albertans, to make teachers go through this roller coaster of emotions."

Bob Cocking, president of Calgary Public Teachers Local No. 38, said he's disappointed that more of the money isn't being earmarked for jobs.

"One hundred per cent of that should go to saving the staff," Cocking said.

The Calgary board isn't the only division facing layoffs. Divisions across the province are facing layoffs to make up for their funding shortfalls. Many other school boards are avoiding teacher layoffs by dipping into their reserves. As of Dec. 3, only three divisions have applied for the IMR funding.

Cocking sees the IMR grant assistance and reserve dipping as a short-term solution to chronic underfunding.

"This is a temporary measure," said Cocking. "Not a solution."



“ Many teachers started the year excited about their brand new career ... And now it's just been shut down. ”

– Bob Cocking, president, Calgary Public Teachers Local No. 38

CALGARY TEACHERS  
continued on page 6

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



# Your pension questions answered

ATA News Staff

With the passage of Bill 22, the *Reform of Agencies, Boards and Commissions and Government Enterprises Act*, teachers are left with many questions about next steps. The bill legislated the transfer of assets from the Alberta Teachers' Retirement Fund (ATRF) to the government-owned Alberta Investment Management Company (AIMCo).

The *ATA News* seeks to answer teachers' most common questions here. Members who require further advice should call Teacher Welfare at 1-800-232-7208. If teachers require information about their pension specifically, they should call ATRF at 1-800-661-9582.

### Q Is my pension safe?

Yes. The transfer of assets from ATRF management to AIMCo management does not, on its own, jeopardize the financial security of the plan.

### Q Will the ATA be fighting Bill 22 in court?

Association lawyers are still advising on legal avenues to advance the interests of teachers, but it looks quite likely that a legal challenge on the constitutionality of the bill would not be successful. See Q&A on page 2.

### Q What are the next steps?

ATRF is required to transfer \$18 billion in assets to AIMCo by the end of December 2021. ATRF and AIMCo must negotiate an investment management agreement by the end of June 2020. That agreement will outline the process and timelines for transferring the assets, but more importantly it will include ATRF's directions to AIMCo on how the investments are to be made.

### Q Will ATRF still exist?

Yes, ATRF will continue to be the trustee for the plan and will continue to manage the administration of the pension. The board remains in control of determining how the pension fund is invested at a strategic level, and it retains ownership of the plan's assets. It will continue to make pension payments to retirees and provide customer service to teachers — you will likely notice very little difference in your interactions with ATRF. The ATRF board will continue to make governance decisions related to the establishment of contribution rates.

The government has promised that the ATRF board will retain control over the investment policy and strategy. The government's budget documents state, "AIMCo is expected to provide maximum returns to its clients and processes will be expanded to support broader agency involvement."

### Q So, what is actually changing?

ATRF will no longer be the direct managers of the funds and will no longer directly employ the fund managers. ATRF will become an investment client of AIMCo's. It has been said that AIMCo will provide customized asset management to meet the required returns and inherent risks for the plan, but ATRF will have no opportunity to use any other asset managers.

### Q Are any changes coming to AIMCo?

The budget announcement contained an expectation that ATRF will solely use AIMCo to manage the plan assets, which was then codified in Bill 22. The expectation that the organization of AIMCo include more involvement by the agencies was not formalized by legislation. How AIMCo will be responsive to the needs of the agencies whose money they invest is a legitimate question for teachers to ask their MLA.

### Q Can't we do more?

At this point, the most important opportunity to advance members' interests is through the negotiation of the investment management agreement with AIMCo. This negotiation is in ATRF's hands. Fortunately, members have applied considerable pressure on this issue, which should result in a better bargaining position for ATRF. Further contact with MLAs to express disappointment with the decision and the expectation for future consultation is the best opportunity to leverage your frustration into future value, because it is extremely unlikely that the government will reverse course on this decision.

### Q How will this change my pension deductions or my future pension payments?

Hopefully there will be no changes. The government has said that AIMCo will provide higher returns after costs are deducted, resulting in reduced contributions for teachers and government. That is yet to be seen, and ATRF data on past performance has suggested that ATRF had been achieving higher returns — this was disputed by government. If returns do not match established benchmarks, then contribution rates may have to go up in the future.

There is no change to the benefits that active and retired members can expect to receive — retired teachers will notice no difference. Pension benefits can only be changed through negotiation by the Association and government or through further legislation.

### Q Should I take my money out of the pension plan?

No. You receive the best value by staying in the plan. On average, retired teachers receive eight dollars in benefit for every dollar that they contribute into the plan. If you are thinking about pulling your contributions out of the plan, contact ATRF or Teacher Welfare for advice before making a final decision. ■



## Your voices carry a long way

One of my main roles as ATA president is to "make representation," which translated into everyday English means to attend in-person meetings with the government to express teachers' views. Such meetings can be initiated by the ATA or by government people. Some are part of a series of regular monthly meetings that I try to maintain with the education minister to discuss ongoing issues. Others are one-offs to address a specific topic.

Right now, as I work in my office at Barnett House in Edmonton, I can see a whiteboard that has a list of several representation meetings with Alberta Education that have either taken place recently or will take place in the very near future.

In my last meeting with the minister, we talked about issues pertaining to Bill 22 (teachers' pension), class size and composition, curriculum and a rather uncomfortable dialogue about a social studies test question.

We also talked about the forthcoming *Choice in Education Act* and the ongoing consultations related to this potential legislation. On this topic I expressed to the minister that the ATA will continue to advocate for funding to support public education in Alberta and will adamantly argue against any kind of voucher system — we cannot allow the erosion of one of the best education systems in the world.

The ATA has also attended recent consultations with the Curriculum Review Advisory Panel and with the government on its desire to bring "balance back" to labour legislation.

Why am I telling you all this? Well, I just want you to know that there are a variety of ways that the ATA advocates for its members. Some ways are splashier and grab larger headlines, whereas other ways are subtle and occur in the background.

Though not as dramatic as splashy headlines and grabby sound bites on the news, our representation work to government is vital. It allows us to draw attention to the government's plans and explain how our policy as an association works or does not work with their ideas. This work is important because it is informed by what the ATA hears from you through your district representatives on Provincial Executive Council.

Unfortunately, like most advocacy work, these meetings don't always bring about our preferred decisions, but I can assure you that through our ongoing efforts to make representation on your behalf, Alberta teachers are being heard. ■

I welcome your comments —  
contact me at [jason.schilling@ata.ab.ca](mailto:jason.schilling@ata.ab.ca).



**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](mailto:cory.hare@ata.ab.ca).

# New executive staff officer joins Professional Development program area

ATA News Staff



Danny Maas was appointed to the position of executive staff officer in the Professional Development program area by Provincial Executive Council at its October 2019 meeting. He assumed his new role on Dec. 2.

Maas brings to the Association extensive knowledge and experience in the area of educational technology, as well as exceptional skills in project management and program development. He began his 26-year career with Edmonton Catholic Schools, advancing to various technology-related leadership roles as well as a two-year secondment to Alberta Education. Since 2013 Maas has held the position of professional development manager, emerging technology, Learning Services-Innovation.

Maas has experience with the Alberta Teachers' Association at both the provincial and local levels. At the provincial level, he has been an ATA Local No. 54 delegate at the Annual Representative Assembly, a long-standing executive member of its educational technology specialist council and participated in numerous Association events and conferences. At the local level he has been a member and chair of Local No. 54's Professional Development Committee.

At the University of Alberta, Maas earned a BEd and masters of education in educational studies and leadership in educational technology. ■

## 5 MORE THINGS

about Danny

### Who or what inspired you to be a teacher?

My mom was an elementary teacher for 30 years in a small town in Alberta, and through growing up as a teacher's son, I saw what a great opportunity this profession provided to help people. She continues to be a person who carries herself with positivity, and I've always tried to model myself after her in that way. Thanks, Mom!

### Knowing what you know now, what advice would you give yourself in your first year as a teacher?

Trust in yourself that showing love and kindness to students as you build them up is key. Also, never stop learning while at the same time acknowledging your own strengths and talents.

### What is the greatest life lesson teaching has taught you?

Always be a student of the game and seek improvement. Learning in any area of life gives you the tools, energy and confidence to take on life's challenges!

### Favourite song to put you in a good mood

*Three Little Birds* by Bob Marley

### Favourite TV show

*The Leftovers*

## CALGARY TEACHERS

continued from page 4

The funding situation has left many teachers upset, anxious and worried about their future, said Cocking. "Those emotions are turning into anger," he said.

Cocking noted that the anger is directed primarily at the government, not the school board.

"Many teachers started the year excited about their brand new career," said Cocking. "And now it's just been shut down."

### Concern for students

Approximately 150 teachers attended a special information meeting held on Nov. 25 to address the potential CBE layoffs. Schilling joined Cocking at the meeting to provide information about what to expect in the coming weeks.

Teachers began to share their concerns not only for themselves but for the students who will be facing incredible upheaval in the new year.

"The teachers were upset," said Schilling. "Some were crying because of the effect it will have, actually more on their students and not necessarily on themselves."

Schilling says the recent layoffs are a symptom of a much larger funding problem.

"And who's caught in the middle?" asks Schilling. "Students and teachers, and I think this public fight was an unfair way to for both the school board and the ministry to behave."

As reported in the *Calgary Herald*, LaGrange said the funding move is a response to boards' desire for flexibility.

"I have heard from school boards that they want flexibility in funding and in other areas of education," LaGrange said, "so this is a year where they can access that additional flexibility."

Both Schilling and Cocking have heard that the government may introduce a new funding model in the new year. They hope it will address the funding needs for enrolment growth, class size reduction in the lower grades and support for inclusion. ■

COUNTRY CLUB TOUR

**Golf Shop Clearance Center NOW OPEN**

**Monday – Saturday 9:30am – 5:00pm**

**Sunday 10:00am – 4:00pm**

**Below Cost on all Men's & Ladies Apparel**

**Golf Clubs  
Golf Balls  
Golf Shoes  
Hat's, Gloves and More!!!**

**CCT GOLF CENTER**  
11925 – Kingsway Ave

**780-408-8687**      [www.countryclubtour.com](http://www.countryclubtour.com)

## 2020 Country Club Tour Membership Card Privileges

DON'T GOLF WITHOUT IT

~~\$200~~

**\$100 Plus GST**

If purchased before December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2019  
Limited Quantities Available

Raven Crest, Sandpiper, River Ridge

### 18 Holes with Power Cart

Monday – Thursday

Reg. Rate \$75.00

**Member Card Rate \$39.50**

Friday, Saturday, Sunday & Holidays

Reg. Rate \$89.00

**Member Card Rate \$49.50**

### 9 Holes with Power Cart

Monday – Thursday

Reg. Rate \$45.00

**Member Card Rate \$29.50**

Friday, Saturday, Sunday & Holidays (After 5:00pm)

Reg. Rate \$55.00

**Member Card Rate \$39.50**

### Montgomery Glen

### 18 Holes with Power Cart

Monday – Thursday

Reg. Rate \$55.00

**Member Card Rate \$30.00**

Friday, Saturday, Sunday & Holidays

Reg. Rate \$65.00

**Member Card Rate \$39.50**

All Rates Plus GST

50% OFF Driving Range Baskets

15% OFF Regular Priced Apparel

7 Day Booking Privileges

Unlimited Golf at all 4 CCT Golf Courses

Play any CCT Golf Course any day, anytime

# Teachers should be proud of PISA results

Jen Janzen  
ATA News Staff

They might not capture the whole picture, but the 2018 PISA test results are a cause for celebrating Alberta public education, said ATA president Jason Schilling.

Alberta received high marks in the triennial test by the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), ranking third in the world for reading and science, and eighth for mathematics. "These are outstanding results," said Schilling, "and Alberta's teachers should be very proud. We have outstanding schools with amazing teachers and a world-class curriculum."

When asked at a news conference why the Association is celebrating these results when it has said in the past that Canada should drop out of PISA testing, Schilling said it's important to

recognize Alberta public education as a beacon for the rest of the world.

"I've stood here the last couple of weeks — or months really — in this province and watched public education come under attack by the government," he said, "and been told by people in power that we're spending more money on classrooms and not getting good results. This test disproves that."

The test also speaks to the need for stability in education funding, Schilling added, referring to the province's \$275M cuts to public education.

"The whole world will continue to watch Alberta as a leader in education. The most important thing we can do in this province right now is maintain stability in our world-class system."

PISA tests are administered by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). For more information, visit [www.pisacan.ca](http://www.pisacan.ca).



## The problem with PISA

Although Alberta's results are high, they do not tell the whole story about education, and that's why Association policy — as well as that of the Canadian Teachers' Federation — recommends moving away from standardized testing.

"We are celebrating the success, but we do need to have further discussions about PISA," Schilling said, adding that the tests are only a snapshot of a moment in time.

"These tests assess a narrow criteria," Schilling said. "I want to focus on making sure the whole child is educated. We want to ensure that Alberta students are getting the best education, not just enough education to complete a two-hour exam."

## Congratulations

to ATA Member **Erin Warburton**, recipient of the John Mazurek Memorial - Morgex Insurance Scholarship for 2018/2019.



Randy Pearson of Morgex Insurance is proud to present Erin Warburton, from Calgary, Alberta with her cheque for \$2,500.

The John Mazurek Memorial-Morgex Insurance Scholarship consists of \$2,500 to be used for an approved professional development course or part of an organized program of study in the field of business education and/or the use of computer technology in education.

1-888-262-9522  
Morgex.com



Morgex Insurance is a tradename of Johnson Inc. ("JI"), a licensed insurance intermediary.

### To Advertise

For advertising information, contact Trevor Batty at Clevers Media  
1-778-773-9397 | [trevor@cleversmedia.com](mailto:trevor@cleversmedia.com)

#### Next deadline

Thursday, Jan. 2, 2020, 4 p.m. (Publication date Jan. 14, 2019)  
Advertisers are encouraged to book early — space is limited.

Circulation: 38,000

We accept Visa, Mastercard, cash or cheque.

#### Disclaimer

The Alberta Teachers' Association does not necessarily endorse the products or services presented in paid advertisements.

## 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

arts, culture, & wellness  
leisure, environment, & recreation  
legacy, impact, & engagement  
community, unique, & personal  
gift, priorities, & services  
learning, health, & recreation



**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."

## Learning legacy.

Join Gary, Jackie, and the many teachers who are leaving a legacy with ECF. Your fund set up for your cause in a way that you choose to give. Contact our Donor Services team to find out more.

[donorservices@ecfoundation.org](mailto:donorservices@ecfoundation.org)

**Give. Grow. Transform.**

Call 780-426-0015 or  
visit our website [www.ecfoundation.org](http://www.ecfoundation.org)



# Start Your Overseas Teaching Adventure!

Teaching abroad is a wonderful opportunity to grow professionally, experience different cultures, learn new skills and enjoy an amazing adventure all at the same time!



The International School  
OF MACAO | 澳門國際學校

Pre Kindergarten to Grade 12  
[www.tis.edu.mo](http://www.tis.edu.mo)



"I am proud to serve as the Head of this outstanding Alberta-accredited school"  
- Mark Lockwood.



## BE PART OF OUR **SUCCESSFUL** AND **EXPANDING** OVERSEAS SCHOOLS



"Our family came to Macao in 2010 intending to stay for two years and return to our lives in Edmonton. But, Macao soon stole our hearts and the collaborative ethos at the heart of The International School of Macao has stretched us and inspired us ever since. If you're looking for a large, rigorous school with a small town, family feel...The International School of Macao is for you!"  
-Amanda and Lester Kiat



"I love working at TIS because it is awesome to watch so many students find passion and enthusiasm for all the different clubs, teams, classes and events that are offered here."  
-Todd Voykin



Alberta Accredited  
International School  
Canada

We are seeking innovative and collaborative Alberta certified teachers to join our family of affiliated international schools that teach the Alberta provincial curriculum. TIS is an IB World School offering the International Baccalaureate Diploma.



"Teaching at TIS has shaped me not only as an educator but also an internationally minded individual. This experience of teaching internationally has been so worthwhile because of the close knit and supportive community of teachers, staff, students, and parents at TIS that make it feel like family."  
-Pamela Lo



How to apply?

Scan to see available positions or check school websites for vacancies and application details.



Canadian International School  
OF PHNOM PENH

Nursery to Grade 7

[www.cisp.edu.kh](http://www.cisp.edu.kh)





# International CHILDREN'S FESTIVAL of the ARTS

**THE BEST FIELD TRIP OF THE YEAR!**

**MAY 26 – 31, 2020 • St. Albert, AB**  
**CHILDFEST.COM**

**FESTIVAL FEATURE**

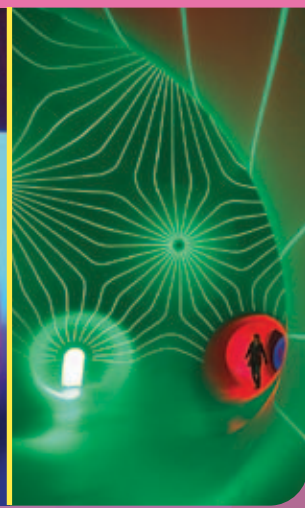
## Dodecalis

An immersive sculpture of light, colour and air

### LUMINARIUM

WWW.ARCHITECTS-OF-AIR.COM

Architects of Air  
 By Alan Parkinson



**GRADES: K-6**

Experience a day of arts and cultural learning for through diverse Feature Performances and interactive Workshops from around the world!

**Value Packages**

starting at \$12

**Important Dates**

**January 7** – brochures mailed to schools

**February 10** – school & group tickets on sale

**FEATURE PERFORMANCES**



DANCE/MUSIC

**OTÂCIMOW ᐃᑦᑦᑦᑦᑦᑦ STORYTELLER**



THEATRE

**LOOK AT THE TOWN!**



MUSIC

**LE GROUPE SWING**



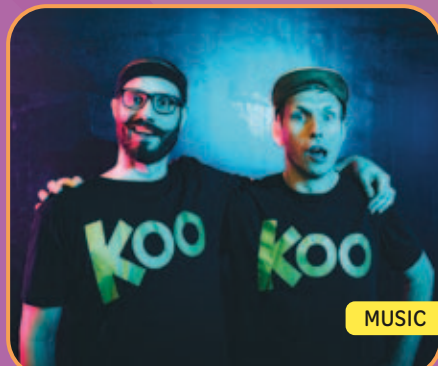
MUSICAL THEATRE

**DISNEY'S MY SON PINOCCHIO JR.**



THEATRE/PUPPETRY

**THE MAGIC CITY**



MUSIC

**KOO KOO KANGA ROO**

**WORKSHOPS**

- Beyond Bollywood (Dance)
- Butterflies, Bees & Other Bugs!  
Presented by Musée Héritage Museum
- Fizzlewit's Fairy Finding Tours (Theatre)
- Indigenous Peoples' Experience  
Presented by Fort Edmonton Park
- Landwatch  
Presented by Art Gallery of St. Albert
- Printmaking a Great Impression
- Shaz-ama-doo! (Magic)
- Trad'badour (Music)



Alberta  
Accredited  
International School  
Canada



## The Canadian International School of Guangzhou in China

CIS is a Pre-Kindergarten to Grade 12 school and the first fully-accredited Alberta school in China.

### 2020-2021 Job Openings:

- Principal
- Assistant Principal Elementary
- School Guidance Counsellor
- Athletic Director
- English Language Learner Department Head
- Elementary Homeroom Teachers
- High School English Specialist
- High School Math Specialist
- High School Science Specialist (Chemistry, Physics, Biology)



### How to Apply

If you have a Bachelor of Education (Canada, USA, Australian, Britain, etc.) or the equivalent, we invite you to apply to us directly with your resume and references to be sent to the principal [Tanya.Thiessen@cisgz.com](mailto:Tanya.Thiessen@cisgz.com). Successful candidates are required to have Alberta certification.

**More Info:**  
**School Website:** [www.cisgz.com](http://www.cisgz.com)  
**Email:** [HR@cisgz.com](mailto:HR@cisgz.com)

Small class sizes, state of the art technology, fully resourced brand new classrooms, a supportive career environment and global travel opportunities



The management and staff of Morgex Insurance would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to Alberta Teachers for your dedication to our children's education.

Wishing you all the best for the holiday season and happiness for the new year.

**1.855.772.8036**  
**Morgex.com**



Committed to Teachers in Alberta



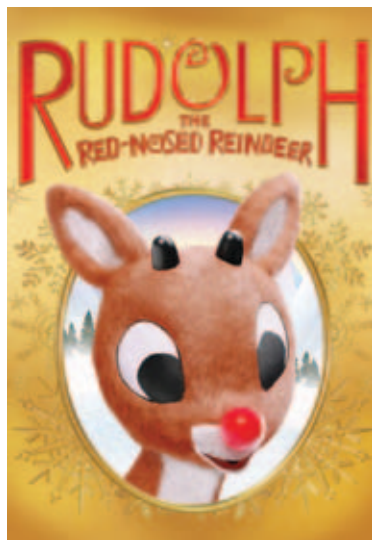
# TALENT

December 10, 2019 | Volume 54, Number 6



## Christmas Movie Trivia

As good ol' Kris Kringle puts the finishing touches on his "naughty or nice" list, here's one last chance for you to get on his good side by tapping into your wealth of Christmas movie trivia. Test your knowledge to see if you'll get a candy cane or lump of coal in your stocking this year.



- 1 What piece of pop art was immortalized in *A Christmas Story*?
- 2 What does the sound of a ringing bell on the family's Christmas tree signify in *It's a Wonderful Life*?
- 3 Which Christmas classic was selected for preservation in the United States National Film Registry by the Library of Congress as being "culturally, historically or aesthetically significant"?

- 4 The actor who played Clark Griswald's son Rusty in *National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation* also played a main character in what popular sitcom that ran from 2007 to 2019?
  - 5 In *Home Alone*, where did Kevin's family go to spend Christmas?
- Bonus question:** True or false: The gangster movie that Kevin is watching on video is from a real film.

- 6 How many ghosts appear to Ebenezer Scrooge in *A Christmas Carol*?
  - 7 Which well-known Christmas movie starred George Clooney's aunt?
  - 8 Who sang "You're a Mean One, Mr. Grinch" in the 1966 cartoon *How the Grinch Stole Christmas*?
- Bonus question:** What other voice is he known for?

- 9 In what year does *The Polar Express* take place?
- 10 In the stop-motion 1964 classic, *Rudolph, the Red-Nosed Reindeer*, how do Rudolph and the gang disarm Bumble the Abominable Snow Monster?
- 11 What movie introduced the song "White Christmas"?
- 12 What is the name of the villain in *Die Hard*?

- 13 Peter Billingsley, the actor who played the lead role of Ralphie in *A Christmas Story*, also appeared in another classic Christmas movie. Name the movie and character.
- 14 The song "Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas" comes from what movie?
- 15 What is the name of Jack's dog in the *Nightmare Before Christmas*?

Questions provided by ATA News staff.



1. A leg lamp. | 2. It means that an angel has just earned its wings (and that George Bailey's guardian angel, Clarence, got his promotion). | 3. *Miracle on 34th Street*. | 4. *The Big Bang Theory* (Johnny Galecki as Leonard). | 5. Paris, France. **Bonus question:** *Angels with Filthy Souls* was created specifically for *Home Alone*. | 6. Four. | 7. *White Christmas*, in which Rosemary Clooney played half of a singing sister act. | 8. Thurl Ravenscroft (not Boris Karloff as many people believe). **Bonus question:** Tony the Tiger — "They're Grrreat!" | 9. 1955 | 10. Hermey the elf removes all his teeth. | 11. Many believe it was released in the 1954 classic *White Christmas*, but it was actually introduced 12 years earlier in *Holiday Inn*, also starring Bing Crosby. | 12. Hans Gruber — not to be confused with Franz Gruber, the teacher who composed "Silent Night". | 13. Ming-Ming the elf in *Elf*. | 14. *Meet Me in St. Louis*. | 15. Zero.

## WILL YOUR STUDENT BE THE NEXT SAFETY STAR?

### JSSS presents the Youth Workplace Safety Video Contest:

- Three prizes of \$1500 available.
- Theme is "Take Control of Your Own Safety".
- Open to all Alberta youth aged 15-24.

Help your students showcase their film and/or workplace safety knowledge.

### Why enter?

- Winning students' schools will be recognized.
- The video is a great idea for an in-class assignment.
- This is their chance to earn cash while promoting safety in the community!

Visit: [jsss.ca/video-contest/](http://jsss.ca/video-contest/) for more information.

Get more info on workplace safety for teens: [www.jsss.ca](http://www.jsss.ca)