



SENTIMENTAL THOUGHTS



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ATA NEWS

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International Women's Day
MARCH 8, 2020



FAILING GRADE

58% of Albertans disapprove
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Front-line experience

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An homage to nurses, our kindred spirits



EDITORIAL

Jonathan Teghtmeyer
ATA News Editor-in-Chief

I've been thinking a lot about nurses. Unfortunately, my mother was hospitalized for a brief period over the past few weeks, so I've met a fair number of nurses lately.

The first thing that sticks out for me is the high degree of skill, professionalism and care they demonstrate on a regular basis. Mom received fantastic care from many nurses throughout her treatment, and we were grateful for that.

Obviously other professionals and support staff provided excellent service too: doctors, diagnostic technicians, food service personnel and janitorial staff, to name just a few. But I am mindful of the nurses in particular because my mom is a nurse.

My mom's in-hospital nursing career came to an unfortunate end in the 1990s. She worked for years in obstetrics; she enjoyed the work and she was good at it.

Unfortunately, because of the cuts of the 1990s, the work became harder and more stressful. Layoffs meant that if you were "lucky" enough to keep your job, then you had to pick up the load left

behind by decreased staffing. You had to work longer, harder and more stressful hours while witnessing more and more patients go without the care levels they needed. Sound familiar?

As time went on, conditions got worse and worse. Finally, like many of her colleagues before her, mom was forced to leave the job she loved because it just became too much.

Importantly, my mom also taught me about fighting back. She introduced me to the Friends of Medicare and took me

pay differentials for working less desirable shifts.

On one occasion last week, as I was heading in to visit my mother, I ran into one of my former students. She is working now as a nurse at the hospital in complex medical detox (wow, what important work!). Our conversation quickly turned to the trying times right now for teachers and nurses.

We shared with each other how each profession is feeling under siege and disrespected, and that funding problems

are in it for a reason other than money, that they want to make a difference. Unfortunately, this also tends to mean that some will try to take advantage of that. It might be more socially acceptable to lean on teachers and nurses in tight financial times because they do their work out of love.

At the same time, professionals in both these fields have a greater likelihood of feeling moral distress. Moral distress arises when people know what they need to do but are prevented from doing it because of situations beyond their control. It arises when a teacher sees a child struggling or a nurse sees a patient hurting because they can't access the care they need. This will only get worse as health care and education are targeted for cost cutting.

We need to advocate for better. In the meantime, we should recognize that some of our most important allies right now are nurses. We are in this fight together, and we are in it for largely the same reason.

If you know a nurse, reach out and talk to them, hug them, let them know that you're feeling what they are and that you're in this together.

I'm off to call my mom now. ■

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

“... professionals in both these fields have a greater likelihood of feeling moral distress ...”

to rallies. We fought the fight against austerity together, and still do.

Today, many nurses are working long overtime hours because of understaffing. Some nurses are keeping part-time positions — and still working overtime — because it is the only way to maintain work-life balance and manageable levels of stress.

Currently in negotiations for a new collective agreement, nurses are facing wage rollbacks and significant decreases to overtime pay and other

are going to make things worse before they get better.

It is remarkable how much nurses and teachers have in common.

Both are female-dominated professions. Also, and probably not coincidental, both are caring professions. Both see their work as important to society and undertake it with a high degree of skill and professionalism. Both are being targeted right now.

There is an expectation that people who work in these caring professions

CTF membership has many benefits



Q & A

Dennis Theobald
ATA Executive Secretary

Question: I know that the Alberta Teachers' Association belongs to the Canadian Teachers' Federation (CTF). What is the CTF, and how do Alberta teachers benefit from our membership?

Answer: The Canadian Teachers' Federation is the national organization of teacher unions, associations and federations. It represents almost all the teacher organizations operating in all of Canada's provinces and territories, with the only major exception being the Fédération autonome de l'enseignement (FAE), which represents about 45,000 elementary and high school teachers working in Quebec's public francophone school system; teachers in the public anglophone system in that province belong to the Quebec Provincial Association of Teachers (QPAT) which is a CTF member organization.

Generally, the CTF co-ordinates and acts as the agent of the ATA and other provincial teacher organizations on matters and programs affecting teachers

nationally and globally. This includes lobbying on federal legislation affecting teachers, co-ordinating advocacy and collective action on issues of concern to teachers, providing a clearing house for research, information and statistics, and operating programs that facilitate teacher co-operation in international settings.

Some examples where the CTF is making a difference for Alberta teachers include its successful campaign to create the Eligible Educator School Supply Tax Credit, a 15 per cent refundable tax credit that qualifying educators in Canada can claim on up to \$1,000 of out-of-pocket school supply purchases made by them per year.

The CTF has also been actively campaigning to preserve provisions in the Criminal Code that protect teachers from being charged with assault in situations where they have had to use reasonable force to protect themselves and others from students acting out violently in school situations.

In conjunction with the Council of Ministers of Education Canada (CMEC), the CTF has been intervening with the federal government and in the Federal Court to preserve teachers' right to "fair use" of copyrighted materials in their classrooms. The CTF is pushing back hard against the Access Copyright

consortium's attempt to force provincial governments and schools to pay millions of dollars for the presentation, sharing or duplication of limited selections from copyrighted material of all descriptions and to impose on individual teachers the onerous administrative burden of tracking and reporting classroom use of such copyrighted materials. (See pg 11.)

Research undertaken by the CTF and member organizations is shared and used in support of provincial and local initiatives. The ATA has made extensive use of CTF documentation in responding to the issue of aggression in school and in compiling evidence in support of collective bargaining. The CTF's work in the area of diversity, equity and human rights, Indigenous education, the status of women, francophone education and the teaching profession informs and supports the Association's own activities in these areas.

Alberta teachers have been very active in Project Overseas, a CTF program that places Canadian teachers with their counterparts in developing countries to assist with the development of curriculum, instruction, technology and teacher professional preparation. Since 2005, more than 100 Alberta teachers have participated, many on multiple occasions. This year another 10 Alberta teachers (the second largest

Canadian contingent) will be travelling to destinations in Africa and the Caribbean to work with our professional colleagues there.

A recent grant to CTF from Global Affairs Canada will provide teachers from Canada with additional opportunities to work with the Uganda National Teachers' Union (UNATU) in the development of girls' education in that country. Other emergent international humanitarian and relief efforts are co-ordinated through the CTF.

Most importantly, though, at a time when provincial governments are gleefully sharing ideas and policies that are hostile to teachers and public education, the CTF provides a forum for the elected representatives and staff of member organizations to share intelligence and learning across the provinces. The CTF provides a forum for collective problem solving and the sharing of best practices in collective bargaining, professional development, communication, political action, advocacy, member services, pensions and benefits.

It costs the Association \$29.30 per teacher to belong to the CTF. ■

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



YOUR VIEWS

FACEBOOK FEEDBACK

In response to a post about the curriculum report suggesting an increase to standardized testing

Ashley Brooke

School psychologists often won't even test children under the age of nine unless absolutely necessary. Standardized testing can be very stressful and does not provide the whole picture when it comes to a child's abilities and skills. There is a reason we have stopped providing standardized tests as a benchmark for children below Grade 6. This was not a spur-of-the-moment or baseless decision. It was made with the support of decades of research.

Bette Maraboochi

Why are we wasting (OUR) taxpayers' money to assuage something that has been manufactured by this government? This money would better be allocated to funding Calgary and Edmonton properly; better still, allowing those boards to collect their own revenue. Why is there such a distrust of the job teachers do in educating the whole child and not just that aspect that is measured by tests?

Sandra Mancuso

All Alberta teachers should take the time to fill in this survey. It is insulting

that we are going back to achievement tests for all grades – a waste of taxpayer money which could be better spent to get resources to deal with anxiety in children. This will indeed cause more anxiety in children.

Cassandra Greve

They also spend a significant amount of money on something that in no way advances the students and therefore isn't benefiting education.

Hillary Anderson

Such an antiquated and misguided practice.

ON TWITTER

On the government's announcement of a new funding model

Mme Kathleen @MmeKathleen

With no details. No dollar amounts. No specifics. No truths. This wasn't a press release, as no information was RELEASED. It was a press appearance.

Aaron Fitchett @AaronFitchett

That's interesting. I don't read the @calgaryherald with any regularity, but it is interesting that so many ads for private schools would be published the day after @AdrianaLaGrange announces there will be a new education funding model for #Alberta. Puzzling.

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

“ It is exhausting being a teacher in Alberta right now. ”

– @MrsKeay (via Twitter)



Ontario experience a cautionary tale for Alberta teachers



VIEWPOINTS

Sam Hammond
Elementary Teachers'
Federation of Ontario

When Ontarians voted in a right-wing Conservative government in June 2018, it was only a matter of time before public services, including education, became a target for deep cuts. Ontario's experience may well be a roadmap for Albertans under the Jason Kenney UPC government.

A year and a half later, damaging cuts to public education by the Ford Conservatives have led to strike actions by all four education unions after four months of fruitless negotiations. The latest polls indicate that more than 57 per cent of Ontarians are standing with teachers and education workers against the cuts. That hard-won support was built by the actions, outreach and high-profile public campaigns of the Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario (ETFO) and other unions.

Premier Ford's opening salvo against public education began with an intended rollback of Ontario's 2015 health and physical education curriculum in an attempt to pander to a minority group of social conservatives. The previous Liberal government had introduced a curriculum update (in the works since 2010) that included content on lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer or questioning (LGBTQ) relationships as well as sexting, online bullying and information about consent.

To protest the curriculum repeal, students organized demonstrations in the summer of 2018. ETFO followed up with a rally and galvanized mass public support that fall when it sought an injunction against the government to stop the repeal. In its decision, the Ontario court ruled that teachers have the ability to meet and exceed curriculum expectations, enshrining the professional judgment rights of educators to establish inclusive learning environments.

That same fall, the government embarked on education "consultations" with the public on everything from math "back to basics" to cellphone use in schools, standardized testing and STEM subjects. There were two main problems: no education stakeholders, including unions, were involved in preparing these consultations, and the results of the consultations have never been fully released to the public. It was evident that politics would trump pedagogy in any approach this government would take to education.

“ The latest polls indicate that more than 57 per cent of Ontarians are standing with teachers and education workers against the cuts. ”

In March 2019, the Ford government announced significant cuts to public education, including unilateral increases to average class size in grades 4 to 12 and the introduction of mandatory online learning in high schools. If fully implemented, these changes would mean that upwards of 10,000 teachers would not be replaced in the K-12 system through attrition over a four-year period.

Public elementary schools have seen larger classes, a decrease in per capita student funding for 2019-2020 and the loss of teachers, including those in special education. Government proposals to increase average secondary school class sizes from 22 to 28 students and make four e-learning courses mandatory for high school students created further public resistance, even as the government proposed revising its position on average class sizes to 25 and mandating two e-learning courses instead of four.

In June 2019, just before bargaining with teacher unions began in earnest, the Ford Conservatives introduced Bill 124, which proposed a cap of one per cent on compensation and benefits for public service workers. The bill, which became law on Nov. 7, was a direct attack on free and fair collective bargaining, and in December, Ontario's four educator unions launched charter challenges against the government.

Despite 20 days of bargaining between August and December, there was little face-to-face negotiation on key issues tabled by ETFO. ETFO had proposed more supports for students with special needs, class size reductions and protection of Ontario's full-day kindergarten, which features a teacher-designated early childhood educator team in classrooms. Government negotiators said they had little mandate to address the issues and seemed focused only on cuts, including a further \$150 million cut to public elementary education.

Following work-to-rule actions centred on administrative duties, ETFO launched one-day rotating strikes across the province on Jan. 20 of this year. Neither ETFO members nor the public have been fooled by Ontario Education Minister Stephen Lecce's continuing pronouncements that negotiations have stalled because educators "want more money."

ETFO members care deeply about the protection of Ontario's full-day kindergarten program and about classroom conditions that are being negatively impacted by class size, lack of supports for students with special needs and increasing incidents of violence in classrooms. That has been evident in their unwavering solidarity, and their signs and interviews with media on the picket lines. Parents have come out in droves to support picketing members. In fact, a recent poll showed that parents support our members two to one over the government.

Rotating strikes and public pressure may prove to be the key factors in forcing the Ford government to back down on public education cuts and arrive at a fair deal that meets the needs of students and teachers. ■

Sam Hammond is president of the Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario.



Sherry Howey, principal of Oscar Adolphson Primary School in Valleyview, is one of six teachers being featured in an updated version of the ATA's Face of Education campaign. SUPPLIED

Face of Education campaign shifts focus

Teachers take over the spotlight as public relations campaign enters second phase

Cory Hare
ATA News Managing Editor

The ATA's Face of Education campaign is being refreshed with new content featuring some of your own colleagues.

Active since the fall of 2018, the advertising campaign to date has featured students talking about the challenges they face and how their teachers have made a difference. The campaign is now directing its focus on teachers talking about their daily routines and how they are trying to meet the challenges they face.

"When we first envisioned the Face of Education campaign, we knew we wanted to start with the students, but we had always planned to have a faces campaign change over time to include teachers and, perhaps in the future, parents. There are a lot of faces that are represented in education," explained Shelley Magnusson, the executive staff officer who oversees the ATA's public relations campaigns.

The new 30-second videos will begin airing right away on television, online and on the ATA website. Each video features one of six teachers, but the ATA is contacting more with the intent of shooting more interviews.

"Originally the videos were designed to tell the story of the rural teacher, but once we started we realized that we were telling the story of all teachers," Magnusson said. "So now we are looking to expand with a few more videos, this time with teachers who are teaching in urban areas."

The overall objective of the campaign is to promote the Association as a strong advocate for public education by highlighting the needs of teachers and students. While positive in tone, the student-focused videos also carry subtle messages about some of the challenges faced by students and teachers.

"Now we want to be a little less subtle but still positive," Magnusson said. "It is really important that we stay positive. We know from our polling that the vast majority of Albertans think teachers are doing a good job. We need to keep and grow that sentiment. As more cutbacks are expected in the next provincial budget, now more than ever we need the support of the public."

While the student-focused ads employed actors and scripted commentary, the new videos involve real teachers sharing their own unscripted thoughts.

"These videos, because they are real and unscripted, tell the story of teachers' heartbeats," Magnusson said. ■

Teachers reignite push for control over pension funds

#HandsOffMyPension campaign now calling for repeal of Bill 22

Kim Clement
ATA News Staff

The Alberta Teachers' Association is once again encouraging teachers to advocate for their pensions.

The #HandsOffMyPension campaign, which launched in November 2019 in response to Bill 22's introduction in the legislature, is being relaunched with a new call to action: "repeal Bill 22."

"Teachers have told us loud and clear that they are not prepared to accept the government's takeover of their pensions, so we're pushing the government to do what is right: undo this terrible legislation," said ATA president Jason Schilling.

Bill 22, the *Reform of Agencies, Boards and Commissions and Government Enterprises Act*, mandated the transfer of \$16.6 billion of assets from the Alberta

Teachers' Retirement Fund (ATRF) to the government-owned Alberta Investment Management Company (AIMCo). It was first introduced to the legislature on Monday, Nov. 18, and received royal assent four days later on Nov. 22.


The move outraged teachers, who felt they had not been consulted before the sweeping change was implemented.

The initial #HandsOffMyPension campaign had a strong response, with 35,000 email messages from over 20,000 teachers, and ATA president Jason Schilling is hopeful that the relaunched campaign will help reverse what he calls a "hijacking" of teachers' pensions.

The government said the move is estimated to save \$41 million in administrative costs, equivalent to \$500 per teacher per year, despite ATRF data on past performance suggesting that the fund had been achieving higher returns. ■

What can I do?

**SEND A MESSAGE
TO YOUR MLA TO
REPEAL BILL 22**



Teachers are again being encouraged to visit www.handsoffmypension.ca to send a message to their MLA asking for a repeal of Bill 22 and proper consultation with teachers about how they want their pension invested.

Failing grade

Poll shows growing disapproval of government's handling of K-12 education

Jen Janzen
ATA News Staff

Public opinion polling showing that Albertans are dissatisfied with the province's handling of K-12 education should be "a wake-up call" to government, said Alberta Teachers' Association president Jason Schilling. "Our polling results show that Albertans are concerned about the

funding of public education. They see class size as an issue; they see complexities as an issue," Schilling said at a news conference on Feb. 19.

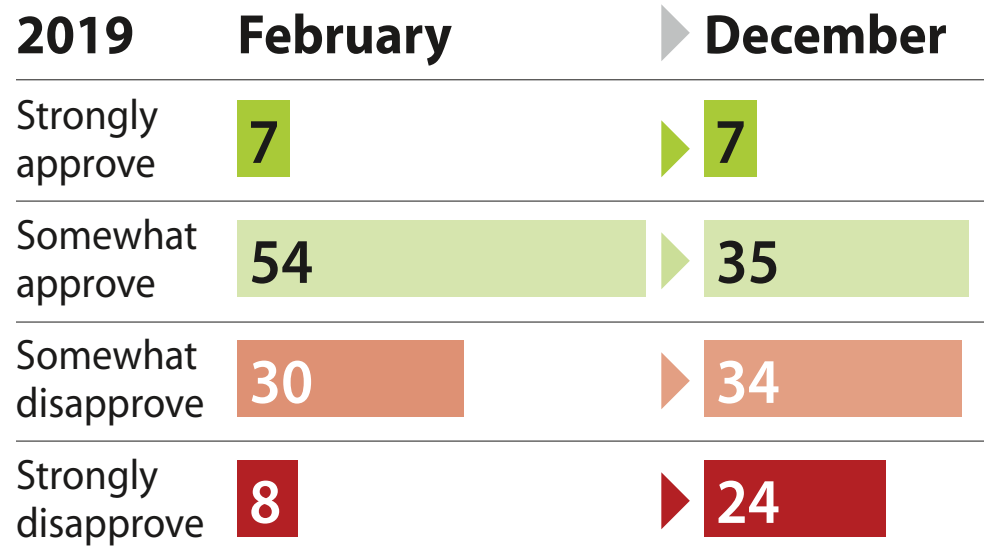
"I'm hoping [the government] will listen to Albertans and put money back into schools."

The poll, conducted by Environics in December 2019 on behalf of the Association, indicates that disapproval has risen 20 percentage points between February and December of last year. It also states that more than 75 per cent of Albertans would favour more funding to reduce class sizes and provide more supports for students with additional education needs.

"Students come with a variety of learning needs that need to be addressed in class," Schilling said.

"Some have special needs, some are struggling with English as a second language, some are struggling with writing, and having a smaller class allows me as a teacher to build relationships with more one-on-one support to help their success."

With two-thirds of Albertans believing class sizes are too large, and 58 per cent saying that education



is underfunded (up 11 points from February 2019), the views expressed in this survey were shared across urban and rural areas.

Schilling says the poll results should be a major red flag to the provincial government.

"There is still ample opportunity for the government to regain the confidence of Albertans by putting into

place effective policy, re-establishing relationships and making appropriate investments in schools," he said.

There were 805 responses to the Environics survey, which was conducted from Dec. 4 to 19, 2019. More data from the poll is available on www.teachers.ab.ca > News and Info > News Releases. ■



Documents prove education funding has been cut

Government funding claims contradicted by documents obtained by freedom of information request

Jonathan Tegtmeyer
ATA News Editor-in-Chief

School boards are slated to receive \$136 million less funding for the 2019/20 school year, compared to 2018/19, according to documents obtained by the Alberta Teachers' Association under a freedom of information (FOIP) request.

This is despite repeated assurances from the government that it had maintained funding for K-12 education.

When the UCP government released its first budget in the fall of 2019, it included funding profiles that outlined what each school board can expect to receive in the current school year but excluded the actual financials from the previous year — information that is normally found within the school jurisdiction funding profiles.

"By forcing us to FOIP this data, I'm convinced the government did not want the public to know the extent of education cuts," said ATA president Jason Schilling.

The premier and other government officials have "painstakingly attempted to argue that operational funding has been maintained" while pointing to the government budget document that uses a March 30 year-end to obscure the impact on school boards, which use August 30 as their year end, Schilling said.



Documents obtained from the government via a freedom of information request show that education funding for 2019/20 has been cut by \$136 million. FILE

Just three days before the budget was released, Finance Minister Travis Toews said in the legislature that, "We were very transparent in our platform during the election that we were not going to cut K-12 education funding."

Education Minister Adriana LaGrange was quoted in the legislature on October 23, stating, "We've been very clear that there are no cuts to education."

With the release of these documents, Schilling says such pronouncements have been debunked.

In an emailed statement responding to the FOIP release, Alberta Education Press Secretary Colin Aitchison reiterated the government's pledge.

"We have honoured our commitments to Albertans and maintained education funding at \$8.223 billion, equal to last

year's budget, and the base instruction rate for each student remains the same," read the statement.

The school-year impacts differed from board to board depending on their specific demographics. Two boards, Northland and Palliser, received increases in overall funding, and three more boards received almost the same amount of funding: Northern Gateway, Pembina Hills and Livingstone Range. The remaining 56 school boards received funding cuts ranging from 0.4 per cent to as much as 5.4 per cent.

In the 2019 provincial budget, base instructional funding was maintained at \$6,680 per student for K-9 students, but other grants, such as the Class Size Initiative, Classroom Improvement Fund, and School and Transportation Fees Reduction Grant were eliminated. The total of cut grants amounted to \$428 million, with some of the funds being repurposed to cover the costs of enrolment growth and to fund a \$153 million transition grant. The net result, just revealed by the ATA's FOIP request, is the reduction of \$136 million for the 2019/20 school year.

This \$136 million cut amounts to a total two per cent reduction in funding to school boards. When combined with a projected 13,000 student enrolment increase, the funding cut is equivalent to \$441 — about four per cent — less per pupil.

The government will introduce Budget 2020 on Feb. 27, two days after the spring session of the legislature resumes with a speech from the throne. The budget will include a new funding framework for K-12 education.

The full set of FOIPed documents, a summary of the data and other quotes from government officials are posted to the ATA website, under News and Info > News Releases. ■

Final four

The four Alberta school boards that experienced the deepest cuts, by percentage

	Total funding difference	Per cent funding difference
Greater St. Albert Roman Catholic Separate School Division	-\$3,229,000	-5.4%
Living Waters Catholic Separate School Division	-\$1,227,000	-5.3%
Canadian Rockies School Division	-\$1,015,000	-5.1%
Medicine Hat School Division	-\$3,541,000	-4.5%



Release of new funding framework light on details

Cory Hare
ATA News Managing Editor

Albertans would like them to do so," he said. "And I'm scared that they're going to miss this opportunity to do right by the students."

While specific numbers will have to wait until the budget is released Feb. 27, LaGrange said the government is committed to holding overall education funding at its current level of \$8.223 billion.

"Our new funding model gives schools more of what they want — flexibility, stability and predictability. Flexibility to invest provincial dollars in areas that make the most sense for their communities. Stability in the number of grants and what the province expects for reporting. And predictability in their funding envelope to allow for better planning well ahead of each school year," LaGrange said.

Schilling said he will have more to say after budget day.

"It's a little bit light on details, so I actually have a lot of questions about it," he said. "We just need to see the specifics. It's hard to make a really good educated guess. You need to actually see the numbers." ■

The power of one word

As I have been travelling around to teachers' conventions, I have been asking teachers in attendance what is one word they would use to describe public education in Alberta today. I've watched as audience members have pondered what word they should choose and then shared their responses with me, sometimes all at the same time (which I loved, as it reminded me of my students).

I've appreciated the honesty in the words that teachers shared and, as words do, these told an interesting story. *Uncertainty, frustrated, disrespected* and *anxious* first rang out from the crowd. Sadly, these words did not surprise me, as we have heard considerable angst from teachers this school year, and rightfully so, with so much uncertainty around budget, curriculum and classroom diversity issues, to name a few.

However, throughout the crowds, another set of words also emerged: *hopeful, thankful, privileged to be a teacher*, and that *teaching is a joy*. I was grateful

to hear that despite the negativity we are seeing, the joy of teaching still burns brightly among my colleagues. I talked to many teachers who lit up as they told me about their students or the new things they learned at convention.

I recall days as a district representative when things would be stressful with bargaining or with the government. It would seem at times that the situation might never improve. For me, the saving grace of those days was my students and my classroom. Working with students has always been a joy to me as a teacher, and I know we have all had those days when everything just "clicks." It is those moments in the classroom that remind us why we are teachers. Those moments also remind us why it is important to stand up for public education. Thank you for the work you are doing in our public schools, and thank you for sharing your words about public education with me. ■

Alberta's new education funding model will delay funding for student growth, said ATA president Jason Schilling.

"New students need funding on day one," said Schilling. "Not year two."

Education Minister Adriana LaGrange announced the framework at a news conference Feb. 18. The new framework will allocate per pupil funding based on a moving three-year average enrolment rather than a one-year enrolment count. The funding model will also reduce the number of funding grants from 36 to 15, and replace the credit enrolment unit method of funding high school students.

Schilling pointed out that using a moving average will hurt jurisdictions with growing enrolments and expressed concern at the direction the government appears to be headed.

"The government has an opportunity here to fund public education as

Donation improves library service to members

Cory Hare
ATA News Managing Editor

The ATA library is growing its collection of teacher resources thanks to a \$2,000 donation from the Edmonton Public Teachers Local No. 37.

"It's an acknowledgement that we are on the right path and that our resources are useful to ATA members," said ATA librarian Sandra Anderson.

"It's also a wonderful gift to teachers, as it not only increases the access to resources for Edmonton teachers but also for teachers around the province."

The Edmonton Public local has been a regular supporter of the library for several years. Local president Heather Quinn said the local sees the library as a valuable resource.

"The best thing about the ATA library is that its entire holdings are aimed at helping teachers in their profession," Quinn said, "so we're glad to help when we can and we encourage our members to make full use of it." ■



ATA librarian Sandra Anderson (right) shows Edmonton Public local president Heather Quinn some of the makerspace resources that are available at the ATA library.

YUET CHAN

Did you know

Any ATA member can borrow materials from the ATA library no matter where they are located. Library staff send requested materials by mail and prepay the return postage. Library staff can be reached at library.ata.ab.ca.



International Women's Day

March 8 is International Women's Day, which celebrates women's social, economic, cultural and political achievements, while also calling for a more gender-balanced world.



Association works to address gender imbalance

Kim Clement
ATA News Staff

Women are the majority group in education, yet they are not proportionally represented in leadership roles.

Why is it important for the Alberta Teachers' Association to have a Women in Leadership Committee?

"I am tempted to just simply state because it is 2020," says committee chair Kathy Hoehn, who is a district representative on Provincial Executive Council.

Many teachers are familiar with the Alberta statistics: although women make up 74 per cent of the teaching profession, only 41 per cent of school administrators are women. In central offices, only 11 per cent of superintendents are women.

Women are underrepresented in leadership positions within the Alberta Teachers' Association as well. For example, Provincial Executive Council is currently made up of 65 per cent men and 35 per cent women. Over the course of the ATA's 101-year history, just 15 per cent of its presidents have been female.

The gender imbalance within its educational leadership positions is something the Association would like to see change, and a key part of the mandate of the Women in Leadership

Committee is building networks of support for women to explore leadership in the teaching profession.

The research informing the work of the Women in Leadership committee points to gendered norms and gender-based discrimination as contributing to the glass ceiling for women who wish to lead in politics, boardrooms, companies and educational institutions.

It's important for the Association to lead the way in developing the leadership potential of 75 per cent of its members, Hoehn says. Research shows that organizations derive many benefits — related to their finances, productivity and creative problem solving, to name a few examples — when women have an equal voice around the decision-making table.

For the Association, having a Women in Leadership Committee will also engage members that were not otherwise engaged in the organization, as evidenced by the people who put their names forward to be part of the committee itself, Hoehn says.

She cites the following quote from Melinda Gates as to why the Women in Leadership Committee is important.

"For most of history, women haven't had an equal say in the norms that shape a society, or an equal number of seats at the tables where decisions are made. We haven't had an equal chance to determine what kind of world we live in." ■

About the Women in Leadership Committee

The ATA's first committee on women in leadership was struck in 1975. The committee's 1976 report on the role and status of women acknowledged that the role of women in society was changing, but named education as one sector that was slow to change.

From 1975 until the present, the ATA has had a number of committees devoted to women and other aspects of diversity.

In 2018 the Diversity, Equity, and Human Rights (DEHR) Committee struck a Women in Leadership subcommittee with a mandate to examine the experiences and obstacles affecting women in educational leadership. The subcommittee was the first Association

group to administer a needs assessment survey to examine teachers' perception of gender discrimination, barriers to leadership that women face, and the supports that the Association could provide to assist women who aspire to leadership positions.

At last year's Annual Representative Assembly, delegates accepted a resolution that the Association form a standing committee on women in leadership. The committee's mandate includes reviewing ATA structures and practices to identify opportunities to promote and enhance gender equality and women's participation in all aspects of employment and Association life.

Timeline of committees

- 1975/76
Committee on the Role and Status of Women
- 1979/80
Committee on Stereotyping and Discriminatory Practices
- 1980/81 to 1986/87
Stereotyping and Discriminatory Practices Committee
- 1987/88 to 1991/92
Human Rights Committee
- 1989/90
Task Force on Women in Administration
- 1990/91 to 1997/98
Women in Education Committee
- 1998/99 to 1999/2000
Gender Equity in Education Committee
- 2000/01 to present
Diversity, Equity and Human Rights Committee
- 2019/20 to present
Women in Leadership Committee



International Women's Day

Which woman or women inspired you to be a leader?



Adriana LaGrange

Education minister
MLA for Red Deer-North

One of the women I admire most is a modern-day saint, St. Teresa of Calcutta [Mother Teresa]. While born into what appears to be a middle-class family in 1910, Anjezë Gonxhe Bojaxhiu (later to be known as Mother Teresa) lived an ordinary life. Her desire to serve God, become a nun and live out her vocation as a missionary led her on an extraordinary, adventurous life whereby, at the age of 19 (a novitiate of the Sisters of Loreto), she taught at a school near her convent in Darjeeling in the lower Himalayas.

Following her solemn vows in 1937, Sister Teresa taught at the Loreto Convent for nearly 20 years and was appointed headmistress in 1944. Although she enjoyed this work, she could not ignore the poverty and the cries of the poor in the slums of Calcutta. Thus, in 1946, Mother Teresa responded to an inner call to live among and help the poorest of the poor.

Initially she founded a school and then began tending to the poor, the hungry and the sick. Soon other young women were inspired to join her. In 1950, the Missionaries of Charity was formed with the mission to care for the most marginalized and the most vulnerable in society. The needs dictated the responses, which led to the creation of hospices, leprosy outreach clinics, orphanages and schools. More than 600 mission schools and shelters in more than 120 countries are served by approximately 5,000 Sisters of Charity and 450 Brothers of Charity and many more lay volunteers.

Mother Teresa saw a need, she took a leap of faith, overcame tremendous obstacles, hardships, doubts and criticisms to do the right things for the right reasons. In so doing, many, many lives were positively influenced by the hope and love that this modern-day saint brought to everyone she encountered.

I believe we can all be challenged to be better versions of ourselves and heed the words of St. Mother Teresa: "Not all of us can do great things. But we can do small things with great love."



Sarah Hoffman

Education critic, Alberta NDP
MLA for Edmonton-Glenora

As we prepare for International Women's Day, I'm reflecting on the powerful and intelligent women who have inspired me along my leadership journey. I'm a lifelong learner, so it won't surprise many of you that one of the first women who supported me was my mom, Sylvia Hoffman. Mom was my first teacher. She and I explored the world together. She was an elementary school teacher, and she regularly brought me into her classroom to "help" her prepare. I would organize the books, bundle classroom materials and practice sitting in a desk while raising my hand. Mom's top priority was teaching kids to love school. She succeeded.

My Grade 6 teacher, Bambi Horseman (Bradley), was the first teacher I remember who let us sit in groups. She trusted us to regulate our work and social time, and she created opportunities for students to mentor one another. This is the first time I really felt like I could be a leader in the classroom. She helped us think about how we could take information, synthesize it and turn it into something useful for our larger school and community. We were all student leaders.

The final woman I want to highlight is Rachel Notley. In 2010 it was Rachel who asked me to run for the board of Edmonton Public Schools. I was uneasy with the idea at first, thinking that I was best suited to work behind the scenes. But Rachel persisted. Then, in the lead up to the 2015 provincial election, Rachel asked me to run for Alberta's NDP, and then asked me to join her cabinet. The opportunity to serve my community as an MLA has been one of the greatest privileges of my life.

There are great women all around us, but these are three of the exceptional women who inspired and supported me in developing my leadership potential.



Jenny Regal

ATA vice-president

Who inspired me on my leadership journey with the ATA? Lynn Nishimura, Bauni Mackay and Carol Henderson. This trio of formidable women were all presidents, two when I became more actively involved in my Association in the early 1990s, and the other when I was Calgary Public president.

Lynn was one of my first local presidents. I saw her at general meetings and, after I became a school representative, at our Calgary School Representative meetings. She was passionate, articulate and knowledgeable. She had an aura of authority and humour. I clearly remember the first time she called me by name. I was floored that the president of my local knew who I was. She encouraged me to get more involved. I did so, in fits and starts, over decades, and have not regretted a moment.

Bauni was our provincial president when I first attended the Annual Representative Assembly (ARA). I looked up at the dais and saw this woman who commanded my attention. Like Lynn, she was passionate, articulate and knowledgeable. She was strong. She was our leader. I didn't know her, but she made quite an impression on me. She inspired me. A woman could be provincial president.

Carol was a force of nature. I was first aware of her during ARA debates. Her humour and intelligence were evident. Who could forget the time when she, as chair, called herself out of order? She was our provincial president when I was first elected to Council. She impressed me with her quiet strength and wisdom. As past president, she proved time and again that she did not suffer fools lightly. She was ready to take on the world in support of public education. She knew how important it was to keep the awesome responsibility of good stewardship of all aspects of our Association in front of Council.

Women are leaders. We own sets of skills that inspire others and get things done. Find women who inspire you and then take on the world!



Kathy Hoehn

ATA district representative – Calgary City
Women & Leadership Committee Chair

I grew up in rural Saskatchewan where roles were gendered. My father was not ordinary – he would cook, clean and mend his own clothing. My mother never commented on or questioned his actions. In this subtle way, I learned that roles do not have to be gendered.

When we moved to Alberta in 1997, I didn't intend to take a full-time teaching position, as our four children were still quite young, but I was offered one and I accepted. My principal, a woman, provided the support and compassion necessary for a successful return to teaching. She encouraged a work-life balance. I appreciated her advice and the mentorship she provided.

The political landscape in Alberta at the time pushed me into becoming a school representative. I wanted a voice in what was happening in education in the province. The support of my colleagues helped me find that voice. Alexandra Jurisic, president of the local, noticed that I was bringing issues, concerns and questions forward at meetings. She mentioned to a mutual colleague that I should consider an executive position. It was that encouragement that emboldened me to do so. A few years later, another local president, Wendy Beier, suggested I run for district representative. I didn't. I felt my family would be too heavily impacted. It was my teacher colleagues Jen Arko and Monica Chung who finally convinced me that I could and should run for district representative.

Without the encouragement of women, I would not have chosen a leadership path in the Alberta Teachers' Association. I continue to find strength in the kind words and constant encouragement from an ever-growing network of women – the Nicoles, the Cathys, the Marys, the Suzannes, the Cindys, the Lisas, the Tashas, the Kelseys, the Heathers, the Marcies, the Allisons – I wish I could name them all.



International Women's Day

She said; she said

We asked our Facebook followers to tell us about women who have inspired them.

[Former ATA president] Carol Henderson is one of my favourite women of all time and a serious badass leader.

Nicole Mooney

My assistant principal, Amy Maclean, and my local ATA president, Kristel Fisher Laderoute. Both of these ladies are moms, administrators, coaches and university students. They work so hard to ensure that their schools are running well and work for the kids in their care. They balance many plates in the air, and I am in awe of how successful and supportive they both are. I am a better teacher to be able to work with both of these ladies.

Laurie Jean

My Auntie Lasha was an extraordinary teacher, and the anniversary of her passing is March 8. She always told me "she burnt her bra for me" so I always think of her on March 8, both for missing her and for how I hope I make her proud as a teacher.

Sarjenka Kuryliw

My mom, Sharon Nicholson. She has always been the strongest, most compassionate woman I know. She raised my siblings and I on her own while working two jobs. If that wasn't enough, she took in foster kids and turned their lives around. She taught me to be caring, thoughtful, strong and independent. I have her to thank for making me the successful woman I am today!

Amber Nicholson

My mother. She was forced to quit her formal education when she finished grade 8, but she never stopped learning. She read whenever she had a chance, right up until her health was such that she couldn't do it anymore. She taught Sunday school at her local church all of her adult life; she mentored women who were younger than she was; she ran the local ladies benevolent group; she was an active committee member on an NGO; she raised five kids and pushed them all to get all the education they could. All five of us kids did post-secondary of one form or another: six post-secondary degrees and at least five post-secondary diplomas among us. She passed away three years ago and at her funeral so many people commented on how much they had learned from my mother.

Carolyn Dyck

Laurie Jean no matter what's happening in your own life, you always take the time to support others. You are one of the most thoughtful people I know.

Amy Maclean

My daughter, Tara Szmul. She's loved football for years, played in the WWCFI since 2013, and even though the team in Grande Prairie has folded, she tried out for Football Alberta to play in the Canadian championships being held this summer. She's a mom, an EA for a young boy with severe cerebral palsy, and she's my hero. She also tried out with bronchitis and a throat infection! We will know if she made the team any day now! (Update: she made it!)

Lori Karoly Szmul

When I worked with Shelley Magnusson on CAPEC (Communications, Advocacy and Public Education Committee), she showed me that she was a Boss Lady who was intelligent, articulate and opinionated! And she rocked every minute of it. And I needed that!

Shannon Rae Dube

Laurie Jean [has inspired] me too. I wouldn't even be a teacher if not for your encouragement.

Kristel Fisher Laderoute

Summit approaching

March 8, International Women's Day, will mark the first day of the ATA's inaugural Women in Leadership Summit, taking place at Barnett House in Edmonton.

Delegates who attend the two-day summit will hear from several keynote speakers, learn how to establish a Women in Leadership Committee in their local and enjoy several networking opportunities.

For registration information, contact:
 Lisa Everitt lisa.everitt@ata.ab.ca
 Kim Clement kim.clement@ata.ab.ca



**WOMEN IN
LEADERSHIP**
AN ATA SUMMIT

Your students aren't your colleagues



PITFALLS AND PRECAUTIONS

Cory Schoffer
ATA Secretary to Professional Conduct Committees

Pitfalls and Precautions is a series that aims to educate teachers on professional conduct issues by highlighting situations addressed by the ATA Professional Conduct Committee.

A school as a workplace cannot be equated with other workplace environments. For example, there are few workplaces where a significant majority of people present are minors. I worked retail and at a restaurant when I was in high school. There were lots of minors working alongside me, but few actual adults were around (especially in the restaurant environment). Nevertheless, in those workplaces, the adults and the minors work together. In a school, the minors in the workplace are students. They are not colleagues.

At a recent hearing of a professional conduct committee, the hearing panel heard a case in which the lines between teacher and student interactions in a classroom became decidedly blurred. The committee heard the case of

a teacher who used inappropriate language with students in a Career and Technology Studies lab setting.

The inappropriate language used by the teacher covered a gamut of situations and references that made students feel very uncomfortable in the class. Included were comments related to a student's drug use and intimidated domestic violence and spousal abuse. Further, the teacher singled out and targeted the lone female student in the class with derogatory comments designed to target her physical appearance.

In addition to the series of comments made by the teacher, it was also brought forward that the teacher used physical force to restrain a student. During a particular incident, the teacher was loud, upset and angry.

The teacher's administrators had reminded him of his professional obligations and expectations, which included both verbal and written direction, on more than one occasion. Nevertheless, the teacher's behaviour

did not change. The persistence of this behaviour demonstrated a lack of understanding of the impact of his actions.

The hearing committee found the teacher guilty on four charges of unprofessional conduct. The teacher failed to treat students with dignity and respect and was not considerate of their circumstances. The teacher also failed to maintain the honour and dignity of the profession.

Though not specific to this case, I have heard teachers in similar circumstances indicate that they are simply preparing students for "the real world" and what things will be like when they work in industry. These defences do not hold any water! The teaching profession does not condone this type of behaviour, either in classrooms or in industrial settings.

A penalty of a three-month ineligibility for membership in the Alberta Teachers' Association and a recommendation that the minister suspend the teacher's teaching certificate for three months was imposed. It is important to be reminded that a suspension of Association membership means that a teacher cannot work for a public, separate or francophone school division in Alberta during that time. If a teacher was under contract at the time of the suspension, they could no longer adhere to the terms of their contract of employment, and

their employment would be terminated immediately. Likewise, the suspension of a teaching certificate means that a teacher cannot work for a private or charter school authority that requires a teaching certificate. Additionally, to have membership in the Association reinstated, a teacher would need to make an application to Provincial Executive Council (PEC).

The teacher remains suspended beyond the three-month period stipulated in this hearing until such time as the teacher makes an application to PEC. If PEC approves a reinstatement request, then the teacher becomes eligible for ATA membership; otherwise, the teacher remains suspended.

In imposing a penalty in this case, the hearing committee considered a number of factors. The conduct was deemed to be serious. In hearing testimony from students, the committee ascertained that they were made to feel uncomfortable, anxious, worried and unsafe in this teacher's classroom. Their self-esteem had been undermined. The committee cited the experience of the lone female in the classroom, who was made to feel exceptionally uncomfortable due to the misogynistic comments directed toward her and toward women in general. The comments and behaviour of this teacher undermined the trust that the public has in the public school system, and the teacher failed to understand the impact of these actions. ■

DEHR = GRANTS.

The Alberta Teachers' Association

APPLY FOR A DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS GRANT TODAY

The Alberta Teachers' Association is offering **grants of up to \$2,000 to schools** for projects that support the Association's vision of a public education system committed to educating all children well in an inclusive setting.

For more information or to download an application form, go to www.teachers.ab.ca and follow the links under My ATA > Programs and Services > Grants, Awards and Scholarships > Grants Supporting Diversity, Equity & Human Rights.

APPLICATION DEADLINE: April 30, 2020

PD-80-38e 2020-02

Alberta Advisory Committee for Educational Studies

Descriptive or Experimental Studies APPLICATION FOR GRANTS

The Alberta Advisory Committee for Educational Studies (AACES) invites applications for grants up to \$6000 to support descriptive or experimental studies in education.

Online applications and the guidelines for grant applications are available at:

www.teachers.ab.ca>Public Education>Education Research.

Deadline: October 15 and May 1 annually, 4:30 pm



CTF/FCE ADVOCACY

Our Canada.
Our profession.
Our voice.

Teachers must produce 7 years of lesson plans and classroom materials?!



What is the current Federal Court Order between Access Copyright and the Canadian Ministries of Education?

Teachers in more than 500 schools across the country, following a Federal Court Order, must provide 7 years' worth of lesson plans and classroom materials, as part of an on-going dispute involving Access Copyright (a Canadian licensing agency).

What does this mean for educators?

The Federal Court Order is mandatory and educators must comply with it or be held in contempt of court. Failure to comply is a serious matter and penalties for failure to comply will be set by the court, but the potential consequences are unclear at this point. In gathering files and materials from the past 7 years, teachers are not required to recreate materials that either no longer exist or are incomplete.



Who has been targeted by the court order?

Teachers in 530 randomly selected schools across the country (outside British Columbia and Quebec) are impacted. Earlier, the provincial and territorial education ministries and a select number of schools boards were required to complete a similar discoveries process that demanded all electronic files and print materials in their records respecting copyright information.



When are teachers required to comply with the court order?

Teachers must comply by February 28, 2020. Teachers' files will be transferred to Access Copyright legal offices for their review.



Why are Quebec and British Columbia exempt from the court order?

Quebec is exempt as copyright in the province is overseen by Copibec, another copyright licensing agency operating in Quebec.

In British Columbia, the current provincial government agreed to pay the Access Copyright tariff for copying print materials, which has resulted in the exemption of schools in that province.

How is the CTF/FCE addressing the issue?

The CTF/FCE participates in the Copyright Education Coalition, which includes the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC). Together with our Copyright Education Coalition partners, the CTF/FCE plans to be active on social media in supporting teachers' use of fair dealing, especially during Fair Dealing Week from February 24 to 28.



Why is copyright an on-going discussion for the CTF/FCE and our Members?

Although Canadian public school educators have access to a full array of supplemental materials for their lessons under the Copyright Act, we cannot take that access for granted. Access Copyright claims that teachers do not respect copyright law and intends to use teachers' own records to prove it. Provincial and Territorial Ministries of Education (except BC, Quebec and Ontario) and all the school boards in Ontario sued Access Copyright to recover \$26 million that they overpaid in 2010-12. Access Copyright refuses to repay despite a Copyright Board decision requiring it to do so.

Access Copyright will agree to stop the requested record searches as ordered by the Federal Court, if ministries and school boards agree to forgo \$26 million in payments and go back to paying an annual tariff that cost the K-12 school system millions of dollars per year.



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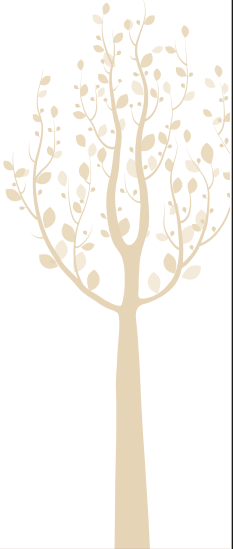
The ATA Educational Trust

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

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Apply to serve on an ATA committee!

The committees

To assist it in the business of the Association, Provincial Executive Council maintains committees that address topics of concern to teachers and carry out various aspects of the Association's affairs. Each year, a number of practising teachers are selected to serve on Association committees as well as to represent the Association on boards and committees of other organizations and provincial bodies (such as Alberta Education and education faculties).

The commitment

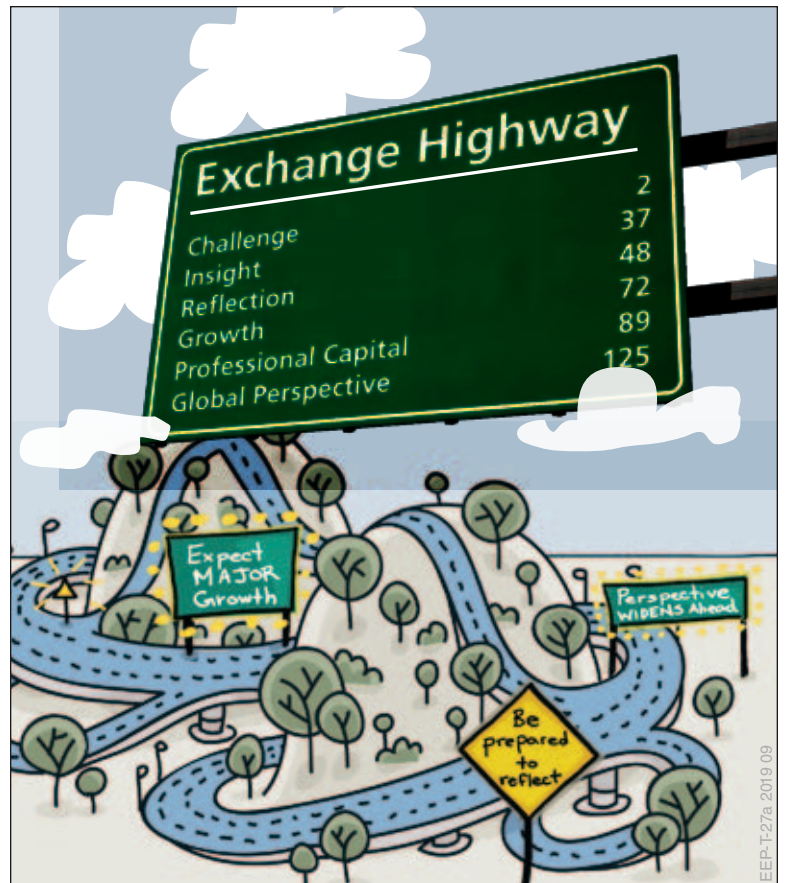
Committee members come prepared to speak—from their perspective as a field member—to the forces affecting the respective committee's work.

The term for each of these positions begins July 1, 2020. Standing committee positions are generally three years in length. As a committee member, you would attend the committee's meetings (the number of meetings varies by committee). Travel and incidental costs, as well as release time, are covered to enable committee members to attend meetings.

Check out the list of opportunities and application information on the ATA website

(My ATA > Members Only > Provincial Committees > Serve on a Committee).

The deadline for applications is April 15.



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

Visit teachers.ab.ca for applications and details.

The Alberta Teachers' Association

Alberta



All applicants are encouraged to reach out to their district representative(s) to better understand the work that Association committees undertake.

If you have any questions, please contact Lindsay Yakimyshyn at lindsay.yakimyshyn@ata.ab.ca, 780-447-9425 or 1-800-232-7208.

COMM-209 2019 04



SLIP US A TIP!

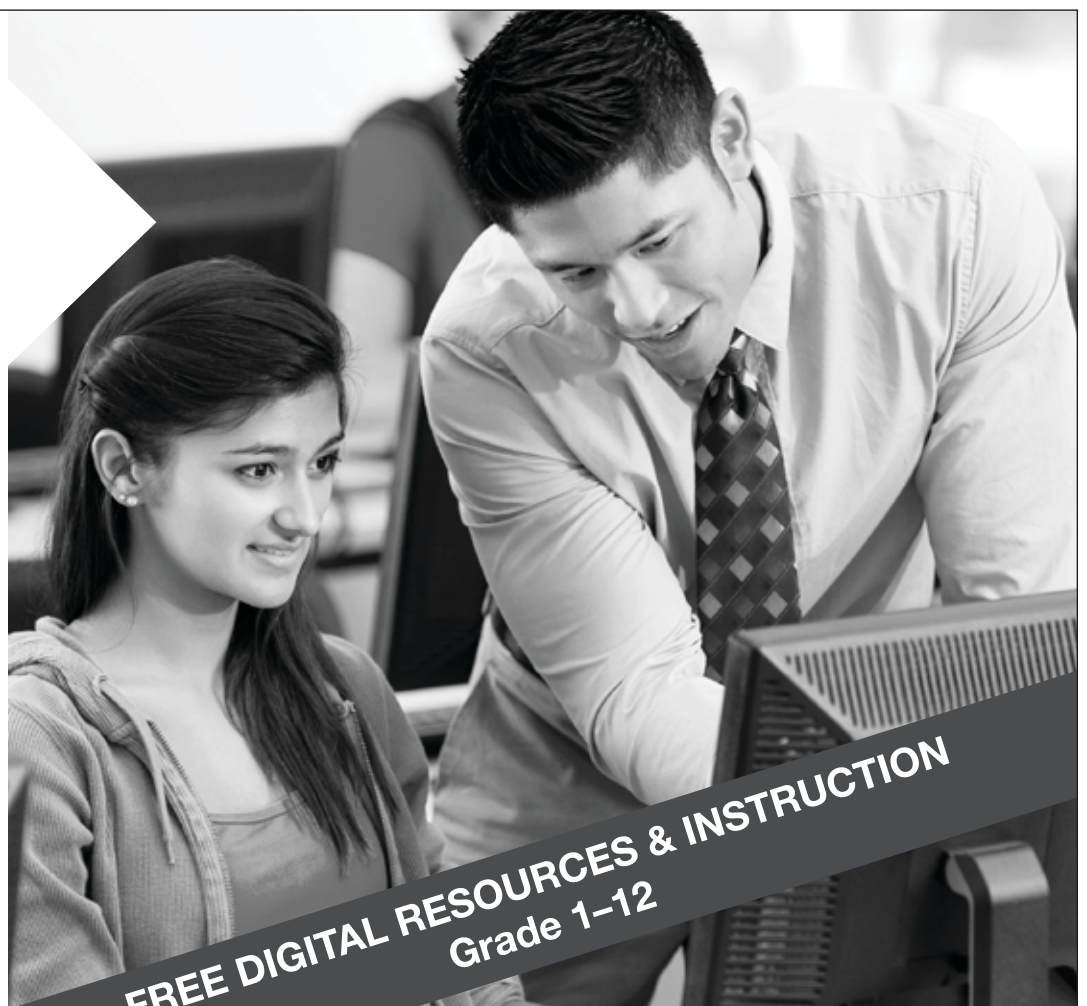
We want to hear about news in your school, district or local.

Please email managing editor Cory Hare at cory.hare@ata.ab.ca.

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TALENT


February 25, 2020 | Volume 54, Number 9





On Valentine's Day we asked teachers to share a happy sentiment about a colleague.


 **Lori Sagbo** – Fresh off of a semester off, she's at school at 7 a.m. and often there into the evening. She rocks the heck out of her amazing closet to keep those art and cosmetology students on their toes, and constantly develops new and improved courses! – **Rebecca Carr**


 **Rebecca Carr** is the lady of the hour. Her Viking name would be Rebecca the Tireless. She never stops. If she isn't planning interesting assignments and projects, she is encouraging, fact finding, advice giving, confidence building, organizing and, most of all, making our school a place I want to be working at. – **Lori Sagbo**


 I have two. **Sandra O'Flaherty** is an amazing VP. She is kind, caring, empathetic, phenomenal with the students and staff alike. She is an excellent role model for all others around her! Right behind her and modelling those same characteristics as a teacher is **Katherine Kelly**. She is all of the above as well, and she continually amazes me with her energy. – **Heather Gagne**


 **Carmen Cornelius** is a master teacher and a thoughtful colleague. Her dedication to connecting the outdoors to our daily life has lead to the improved mental and physical health of our students and staff. She championed our school division's outdoor classroom and brought learning alive for so many of her students. She has changed lives. She inspires me to be a better teacher and person. I am grateful for your mentorship, our conversations and for all the ways you bring wellness to the forefront of this profession. – **Char-Lee Thompson**


 I think about the positivity **Travis McNaughton** brings to everything he does. He altered the way I see students and parents. As my friend and former principal, his kindness works like a seed that continues to grow in the work he does daily with students and staff throughout Parkland School Division. I cherish the time we shared a building and the conversations we had – some hard and some hilarious. Thanks for the listening ear and the kind words. I still keep these questions up on my wall: What are we learning? Why is it important? and How do we know we are doing good work? I call them my Mcnaughtonisms. – **Chelsea Leigh**

 **Christy Haggarty** is a treasure. She never ceases to astound me with her deep capacity for love. She is a soft place to land for so many students. She is an inspired and inspiring educator, and I'm so proud to call her my friend. – **Jessica Scalzo**

 **Seda Teacha** is so supportive, in and out of the classroom. She can also always brighten my day with kind words and knowing just when I need chips!!! – **Cindy Potter**


 **Cindy Potter** is the best "waker upper" – she calls me with a cheery song when I don't want to go to work. She also just knows when I need a hug without me asking. I love working with her. – **Seda Teacha**

 **Marissa Humphreys** has an incredible, easygoing way of making all students feel comfortable in her music class, and she also knows just what to say to get you to smile/laugh till you cry. This is her first year, and you'd think she's been doing it forever – she makes it look easy! – **Devon Bajura-Macaulay**

 **Rebecca Boorse** is a faithful role model in our Catholic school. – **Tasha Lyne**

 I couldn't ask for a better teaching partner! **Carol Rogers** is always there for our students when I have been pulled away from the class. She is always two steps ahead and keeps me up to date on anything that is missed. Couldn't do this year without her. – **Rachelle Coral**

 **Jennifer Green** teaches a love of music and creativity that will stay with her students forever. Plus she's an awesome lady. – **Lisa-Marie Szyron**

 **Samantha Smith**, even though it has only been 100 days working together, it feels like we've been friends for much longer! You're a great listener and an amazing teacher who I'm lucky to work with!! – **Karen Varze**

 **Jenn Emm** is always caring for everyone around her. No matter how tough things get, she is always there to lend a helping hand or a caring, compassionate ear. – **Michael Versteegt**



Heather Racz of W.H. Croxford High School in Airdrie and Justine Merritt of St. Sylvester School in Calgary shared photos of their desks on Valentine's Day.



SUPPLIED