

LEADERSHIP UPDATE

Volume 13

A publication for Alberta's school administrators

Number 4



Spring has arrived!

This edition of the Leadership Update contains valuable information to support you in the work that you do and to inform you of some ways you can access very high quality professional learning activities for school leaders in Alberta throughout the year.

Professional Learning Opportunities and News

To obtain information about upcoming professional learning events and programs for school leaders you need only remember www.uLead.ca to access up-to-date news about school leadership in Alberta, provincial and regional professional learning events, and the uLead conference that takes place every year. This year, uLead will take place from April 9–12, 2017 in Banff.

If you have missed registration for the 2017 event, not to worry. The 2018 uLead event will be bigger than ever, with registrations opening later this month. The uLead 2018 conference will take place in Banff from April 15–18, 2018. Please mark your calendars, it's going to be amazing! Please visit uLead.ca on a regular basis as the events and news will change frequently, and up-to-date events are always listed there.

Teacher Growth, Supervision and Evaluation Seminar

We are pleased to announce that the Provincial ATA will offer a Teacher Growth, Supervision and Evaluation Seminar in Edmonton from August 23–24, 2017. This seminar is integrally tied to the work of all Alberta school leaders and typically fills up quickly. The seminar is open to school- and district-based administrators only.

The provincial Teacher Growth, Supervision and Evaluation (TGSE) Policy (policy 2.1.5) deals with accountability and continuous professional growth and ensures that a teacher's professional practice is under ongoing supervision. The TGSE Policy defines the process, and the Teaching Quality Standard defines the competencies for professional practice. This workshop focuses on the principal's critical role and the duties he or she must perform as outlined in the *School Act* and policy 2.1.5.

To register please visit <https://event-wizard.com/events/TGSE0817/>. You can also get more information by calling Member Services at 780 447-9400.

Striving for
professional
honour
is the
foundation
for
achieving
good
education
for all.

René Kneyber



Council for
School Leadership



Teacher Growth, Supervision, Evaluation and Practice Review Workshop for Administrators

August 23–24, 2017
DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel
West Edmonton

This workshop focuses on the principal's critical role and the duties he or she must perform as outlined in the *School Act* and the provincial Teacher Growth, Supervision and Evaluation Policy 2.15.

To register and for more information go to
<https://event-wizard.com/events/TGSE0817/>.
Deadline for registration is **June 23, 2017**.



The Alberta Teachers' Association

MS-85-6 2017 02

Mark your calendar: uLead 2018 Conference in Banff

April 15–18, 2018

About uLead 2018 — The Summit of Educational Leadership

Planning for uLead 2018 has already begun in earnest, and the call for proposals for both English and French language sessions has already begun. The theme for uLead 2018 is “Leading Schools by Design” and it seeks to provoke delegates to think about the intentional actions taken by education leaders at a school or system level to bring forth particular learning outcomes. The resulting conversation

will range from how we intentionally design the physical structures that we teach and learn in, to design theory in education, to how we might be thinking intentionally about transforming our education system to ensure a vibrant public education system as we go forward.

Registration for uLead 2018 will open in May and the call for proposals for the conference has already begun. You are invited to share your story at uLead 2018 — The Summit of Educational Leadership, from April 15–18, 2018 at the Banff Springs Hotel.

English-language proposals can be submitted to [tinyurl.com/present-at-](http://tinyurl.com/present-at-ulead18)

ulead18. Propositions pour les présentations en Français peuvent être partagées à l'aide de ce lien tinyurl.com/ulead18-en-francais.

We can't wait to see what you will have to share with school leaders from Alberta and beyond.

*NOTE: Registration for uLead 2018 will open in May with special pricing for Alberta Council for School Leadership members



Upcoming Professional Learning Opportunities

Foundations of Improvement Sprints: A Practical Process for Improving Student Achievement in Your School

Are you unable to attend uLead this year? We are pleased to share that a full-day professional learning opportunity for school leaders with Simon Breakspear will take place in Calgary on Friday, April 7, 2017. In this dynamic introductory session participants will come to understand and apply the key methodologies of improvement sprints. They will build confidence in applying the process to enable educator teams to rapidly improve outcomes and develop effective practice.

Key Learning Outcomes

- Explore the challenge of ensuring learning growth for diverse students.
- Understand the core methodologies of improvement sprints.
- Consider how to apply improvement sprints in your unique school context by using the time and resources that are already available.

Overview

The expectations for improving student learning outcomes across schools around the world have never been higher. As a result leaders and educators need more effective approaches to meeting the needs of diverse learners and ensuring that all students are making progress in literacy and numeracy as well as other valued educational outcomes.

The Approach

An improvement sprint is a team-based method for improving student outcomes in your school. Harnessing the collaborative time that you already have available, this approach can help your school to rapidly improve outcomes through building the collective efficacy of your teachers. Our process draws on the latest research and highly effective improvement processes from both inside and outside education.

Spend the day in a dynamic workshop with Simon Breakspear as we unpack improvement sprints for you and your leadership team.

You are encouraged to register a school leadership team for this day with principals, assistant principals and/or teacher-leaders attending.

School leaders and teachers considering participating in one of the 2017/2018 cohorts of the ATA Agile Schools Network (Networked Innovation Communities Program) in Calgary or Edmonton should definitely consider participating.

To register visit <https://event-wizard.com/CSLSPRINT/0/welcome/>.

What awaits you at this workshop? Watch <https://vimeo.com/203754574/257cc55556>.



ATA Agile Schools Network (Networked Innovation Communities for K–9 Numeracy Achievement)

The ATA Agile Schools Network (ASN) is a collaborative initiative which seeks to boost the quality and equity of Alberta's education system and increase our ability to create a learning ecosystem where all students can demonstrate their numeracy skills at a level that reflects their potential.

More than 70 classroom teachers, together with their school leadership teams and a district lead teacher from each participating school district have been engaged in a process that sees innovative networked teams come together in a design hub to create and contextualise targeted teaching practices to enhance K–9 numeracy outcomes for their students. The ATA Agile Schools Network program is fully scaleable—it will grow because as teachers and school leaders learn the techniques involved in driving positive change in their schools, they in turn can train the next cohort (or innovation hub) and pass on the “how to” of the process.

This August, the current cohort met at Barnett House to learn together and identify potential focus areas for each individual teacher for the 2017/2018 school year. The group, operating as the Networked Innovation Communities (NIC) program, learned how to design and implement an improvement sprint, a team-based method for improving student

outcomes in their classrooms and schools. They also set goals for conducting an improvement sprint in their classrooms between August and November. An improvement sprint involves each teacher defining a teaching or learning challenge, understanding what is causing that challenge, designing a solution for the challenge, and implementing the designed solution in a sprint over one to four weeks of time.

The teacher then engages in a review of the process and a subsequent reset. If the solution works, it is scaled up within the school. If the proposed solution does not work, then the teacher goes through another quick sprint process in an attempt to solve the challenge he or she has identified.

A key to the success of this process is that it is the teacher in the classroom who is identifying the challenges he or she wishes to address. These challenges are not identified for the teacher through district or provincial standardized tests, for example, but are set by each teacher in a way that makes sense for the teacher's classroom and school. School leaders are an integral part of each school team and participate fully in the process.

Teachers in the cohort are not just scaling up their solutions within their school with their peers. Innovative solutions to the numeracy challenges

the teachers have been identifying are being shared with colleagues from other schools in the cohort and will be shared provincewide as well. On Wednesday, November 23, the ASN/NIC cohort met again to review the work they have been doing in improvement sprints since the beginning of the school year. They discussed implementation challenges and also discussed successful approaches that they have been engaged in. The participants discussed the impact of their work on student learning and also on their own practices in the classroom.

There is a great deal of interest throughout the province in the ASN/NIC program. One of the most positive elements of the program is that it represents teacher-driven change from the classroom level and incorporates classroom teachers, school leaders, and district-level leaders working together collaboratively, by design. Are you interested in your school possibly participating in the 2017/2018 Agile Schools Network that will begin in August? More information about the ATA Agile Schools Network is available at <https://vimeo.com/ideafactory/review/186492968/3cab8d8ea> or by contacting Jeff Johnson at jeff.johnson@ata.ab.ca.



Assessment Matters — It's All about the Verb

Before you stop reading, this article is not a grammar lesson! It's about increasing assessment accuracy.

Assessment must be based on learner outcomes, and while most will agree with that statement, there is a fundamental principle of assessment practice embedded within that statement that bears further discussion.

Because the various programs of study were written at different times and by different development teams, the language of those outcomes varies greatly. In essence, though, current outcomes typically fall into a knowledge/skill/attitudes framework.

If we are not careful, it's easy to look at knowledge outcomes as content—what students need to know. On further examination though, even the knowledge outcomes include some sort of verb that describes the actions that

students must do to demonstrate their knowledge. While content is important, it is the verb that specifies the student action, which in turn provides the evidence of learning.

For example, a social studies outcome that asks students to evaluate the impact of a particular event cannot be assessed through an item or task that only gathers evidence of students' ability to identify or describe the key elements of that event. While content is important, it cannot be the focus for assessment for such an outcome. As such, teachers have some leeway in helping students learn the content while they differentiate for student needs. Reading material at an easier level can be provided for students; group conversations can support and deepen students' understanding; and formative feedback can be provided to

clarify misconceptions. No marks are awarded during this part of the instructional process.

Well before the summative assessment, students need to know what it means to evaluate the impact of an event and how to weave their content knowledge in with their argument. They need to see the skill modeled, and they need to have feedback on their early attempts. Alternate assessment formats need to be considered: just because a student has difficulty with written expression doesn't necessarily mean they have trouble with the skill of evaluating impact.

The old debate about content and skill doesn't need to be a debate. It's more like a road trip where skills are the driver and the content navigates the way and sets parameters.

Assessment accuracy matters, and working to be more accurate doesn't limit our ability to meet the diverse learning needs of our students. In fact, it may open doors that previously felt closed.

To learn more about assessment accuracy and supporting diverse student needs, visit www.aac.ab.ca/go, where you can access resources and information about AAC publications that will support professional conversations on this topic.



Distinguished Leadership Awards

The Council for School Leadership (CSL) is pleased to invite nominations from throughout Alberta for the CSL Alberta Distinguished Leadership Awards with recipients being honoured in May.

The CSL Distinguished Leadership Awards create a learning community of outstanding principals throughout Alberta who can share professionally, interact collegially and act as mentors to new colleagues. They provide avenues for research and sharing of best practices. The cadre of distinguished Alberta school leaders are people who are looking to challenge the status quo, improve learning in their contexts, and be equipped for higher levels of leadership. These individuals will become role models in a vibrant network of educational leaders with the confidence and capabilities to lead innovative change for 21st century learning: the Council for School Leadership.

Please consider nominating a deserving school leader for consideration for this honour.

To nominate a school leader visit www.ulead.ca to submit a nomination online before the end of March.

Once you have entered the nomination site, you will be asked to

make a short comment related to your nominee's leadership in each of Alberta's Principal Quality Leadership dimensions. The additional information provided below will help you complete the nomination form once you click on the link to nominate a colleague.

The deadline for nominations has been extended to midnight, April 21, 2017. All nominees must be active members of the Council for School Leadership to be eligible to receive the award.

What will I need to do?

- ◆ Once you have entered the nomination site you will be asked to make a short comment related to your nominee's leadership in each of Alberta's Principal Quality Practice Leadership dimensions.
- ◆ You will be asked to provide an indication that your nominee has consented to being nominated (required) and provide the nominee's school name, school telephone number, and email address. Your nominee must be a member of the Council for School Leadership to be eligible to receive the award. Nominees can join the CSL now at <https://csl.teachers>

[.ab.ca/Joining%20the%20Council/Pages/Types%20of%20Membership.aspx](https://www.csl.ab.ca/Joining%20the%20Council/Pages/Types%20of%20Membership.aspx).

- ◆ You will then be asked to enter your supporting evidence (several sentences) for your nominee's leadership for each of Alberta's Principal Quality Practice Competencies including
 - fostering effective leadership,
 - embodying visionary leadership,
 - leading a learning community,
 - providing instructional leadership,
 - developing and facilitating leadership,
 - managing school operations and resources and
 - understanding and responding to the larger societal context.

You will also be asked to describe a promising practice in leadership that your nominee, if selected to receive the award, would be prepared to share at a Council for School Leadership professional learning event in the following year.

Prior to submitting the survey you will also have an opportunity to enter additional comments regarding the nominee, should you wish to do so. Please consider nominating a worthy candidate today.

To find archived issues of *Leadership Update*, go to www.teachers.ab.ca and click on Other Publications (under Publications), then go to School Administrators.

Feedback is welcome. Please contact Jeff Johnson, executive staff officer, Professional Development, at jeff.johnson@ata.ab.ca.

Great Sources of News for School Leaders

Are you searching for interesting articles and ideas about school leadership? You will find some very timely articles in a range of school leadership documents that are available online.

Canadian Association of Principals (CAP) — The *CAP Journal* is published quarterly and is the official voice of the Canadian Association of Principals. The winter 2017 edition of the *CAP Journal* contains a very interesting article entitled “Work-Life Balance and the Principal/Vice-Principal Relationship.” http://marketzone.ca/ebooks/CAP/2017/CAP_T0117_EMAG/html5forpc.html?page=0

European School Heads Association (ESHA) — The *ESHA Magazine* is published regularly throughout the year and contains very interesting articles that highlight issues Alberta school leaders share with their European colleagues. The most recent issue contains discussions on entrepreneurial education. <http://www.esha.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/ESHA-magazine-February-2017.pdf>

National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP) — *Principal* is a magazine produced five times per year by the NAESP. The March/April 2017 issue features great articles about incorporating technology into learning in creative ways. http://www.nxtbook.com/nxtbooks/manifest/principal_20170304

You may also wish to check out their principal’s blog, which is full of great tips for school leaders, at <https://www.naesp.org/front-page-blog-archive>.

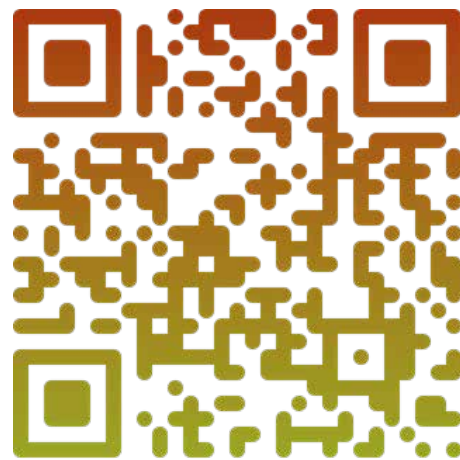
National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) — *Principal Leadership* is an online periodical of the NASSP focusing on school leaders’ real needs and offering them practical, hands-on strategies for improving their schools in a constantly evolving educational environment. <https://www.nassp.org/news-and-resources/publications/principal-leadership/principal-leadership-archives/principal-leadership-volume-17-2016-17/principal-leadership-march-2017>

Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) — A massive, searchable and free collection of scholarly research materials on school leadership is available at AITSL’s comprehensive archive. <http://www.aitsl.edu.au/school-leadership-ecollection>

iTunes U — Alberta Teachers on iTunes U — Each month, new courses and materials are added to the Alberta Teachers on iTunes U site at tinyurl.com/ATAiTunes. Currently new courses on Alberta’s School Leader Standards are being added to the site.

Alberta Teachers on iTunes U

This month new courses to support leadership for French immersion will be added to the Inclusive Classroom collection. Take a few moments to look at the great resources you will find in the ATA on iTunes U collection to support your work. Watch for a variety of new courses in April and May to support you in your leadership role. To access the site, please visit tinyurl.com/ATAiTunes or scan the QR code on this page.



Council for School Leadership

As an Alberta school principal or assistant principal you are encouraged to select the Council for School Leadership as your automatically renewing specialist council. If you are not already a member of the Council for School Leadership please take a moment today to follow the link bit.ly/joincsl, and follow the steps to join this school leadership specialist council. It is custom-made for school leaders and aspiring school leaders.

