

LEADERSHIP UPDATE

Volume 15

A publication for Alberta's school administrators

Number 3



Welcome back to school!

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 high-quality professional learning activities for school leaders in Alberta throughout the year. We hope that everyone had a great Christmas break and offer best wishes for the second half of the academic year.



Professional Learning Opportunities and News

For information about upcoming professional learning events and programs for school leaders and central office teachers and leaders, go to 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. The next uLead conference will take place May 12–14 in Banff. Registrations for uLead have been ongoing throughout the fall and hundreds of school leaders from around the world have registered to attend in May. You can be there too! Please visit uLead.ca on a regular basis as the events and news will change frequently.

“The core capacity of leaders is to increase teacher capacity!”

Amelia Peterson

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

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



Council for
School Leadership

Education Exchange Program: Take your vocation to another location!

Short-term administrator exchanges are available as two-week job shadow experiences for Alberta administrators. Participants are billeted by their exchange counterpart and work shadow in their exchange partner's school for one to two weeks. They then host their counterpart for one to two weeks in the Alberta education system. Administrators arrange cultural visits to correspond with the interests of both parties. Opportunities exist in Australia,

Germany, Spain, South Korea (for special education teachers only), and Iceland. You exchange during the summer months and you typically host your counterpart in September or October. Participants require an Alberta Permanent Professional Teaching Certificate and the approval of your district. For a successful, engaging experience, participants should be flexible, adaptable, positive, open to other cultures and comfortable with ambiguity. They

should also have demonstrated leadership qualities. Interested? Find out more at www.teachers.ab.ca.

Spots are still available for the administrator short-term exchange to Iceland in the 2019/20 school year! Please apply by January 31, 2019 at teachers.ab.ca (click on Public Education, then Student & Teacher Exchanges), or e-mail carolyn.freed@ata.ab.ca for more information.

Destination	Time frame for Alberta school administrator/teacher to job shadow overseas	Time frame for Alberta school administrator/teacher to host counterpart
Australia	Two-week period in July or August	Two-week period in May, September or October
Hessen, Germany	Ten-day period in July or August	Two weeks in October
Asturias, Catalonia or Castilla y Leon, Spain	Ten-day period to be determined based on holiday schedules	Two weeks in March, April or May
Other Canadian provinces	Ten-day period to be determined based on holiday schedules	Two-week period to be determined based on holiday schedules
South Korea *for Special Education teachers only	Two-week period during spring break	Two-week period in February
Iceland *for school administrators only	Ten-day period during spring break	Two-week period in September or October

Please note that exact dates are to be determined with the exchange liaison. Some dates may be flexible. Exchanges typically occur over breaks and holidays that stagger with the host country's school schedule.

Inquiries can be directly made to exchanges@ata.ab.ca for applications and detailed information.

uLead Conference—May 12–14, 2019

A unique opportunity awaits. Join educational leaders from around the world in the beautiful world heritage location of Banff, Alberta, at Canada's premier conference for school-based leaders, district-level leaders, and provincial and state education leaders.

Please join us in May 2019, at the Banff Springs Hotel, for a rare and historic dialogue with the world's leaders in education, in a setting that has been called the jewel of the Rockies. As always, the conference will feature a wide array of engaging, world-class keynote speakers. We expect over 1000 principals, assistant principals, district leaders, national ministers of education, and education ministry representatives from around the world to attend. Planning for uLead 2019 is well underway and the call for proposals is resulting in a breadth and diversity of school leaders from around the world planning to share their stories. This conference will be memorable and groundbreaking. Spouses and family members are also welcome and will have myriad opportunities to explore Banff, one of the most pristine wilderness areas in the world. Find out more at www.ulead.ca.

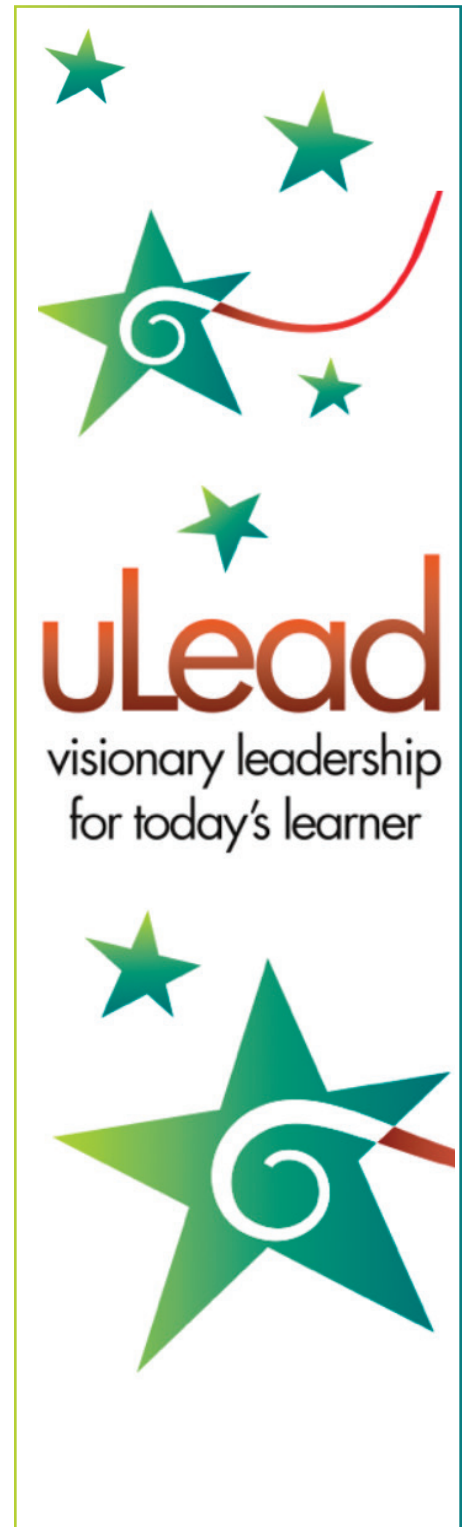
What does it mean to be a school leader within the teaching profession? The theme for uLead 2019 is **Reimagining School Leadership**, and it will prompt attending delegates to think about the role of the school leader in leading teacher learning. Particular emphasis will be given to examining the role of the school leader in helping improve teacher capacity, both individually and collectively, as the core capability of a leader of

learning, whether as a school principal, a teacher leader or a central office leader. The resulting conversation will range from how leaders support teachers in continually enhancing their teaching practices to how those leaders develop an understanding of how to design and lead professional learning approaches to have a positive effect on student outcomes and ensure a vibrant public education system for the future.

There will be preconference full-day workshops on May 12 and postconference full-day workshops on May 15. You are invited to share your story at uLead 2019, the summit of educational leadership.

Confirmed keynote presentations will be made by Lucy Crehan, author of *Cleverlands—The Secrets Behind the Success of the World's Education Superpowers*; Andy Hargreaves, author of many great books including *Collaborative Professionalism: When Teaching Together Means Learning for All*; Simon Breakspear, Damien Cooper and multiple ministers of education from around the world. More keynote presenters are being booked, and both keynote and concurrent session presenters are being added weekly.

Registration is open now with super-early-bird discounts for those registering prior to January 31, 2019 and continued early-bird discounts for those registering prior to the end of March, 2019. Your registration fee is always lowest if you are a member of the Council for School Leadership of the Alberta Teachers' Association. You can find more information and register for the conference at www.ulead.ca.



Distinguished Leadership Awards, May 2019

The Council for School Leadership is pleased to invite nominations from throughout Alberta for the CSL Alberta Distinguished Leadership Awards, with recipients being honoured in May 2019. Please consider nominating a deserving school leader for this honour.

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 to provide avenues for research and the sharing of best practices. The corps 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 the Council for School Leadership, a vibrant network of educational leaders with the confidence and capabilities to lead innovative change for 21st-century learning.

The deadline for nominations is midnight, March 31, 2019. All nominees must be active members of the Council for School Leadership to be eligible to receive the award. Nominees can join the CSL at any time by going to tinyurl.com/JOIN-

CSL. Complete your nomination online at tinyurl.com/CSL-Leadership following the guidelines below:

Compose a short description of your nominee's leadership in each of Alberta's Principal Quality Practice Competencies.

Provide proof that your nominee has consented to being nominated (required), and his or her school name, school telephone number and email address.

Provide supporting evidence of your nominee's leadership in each of Alberta's Principal Quality Practice Competencies:

- Fostering effective leadership
- Embodying visionary leadership
- Leading a learning community
- Providing instructional leadership
- Developing and facilitating leadership
- Managing school operations and resources
- Understanding and responding to the larger societal context

Detailed information about the Principal Quality Practice Competencies can be found at tinyurl.com/PQPCOMPTEENCY. Prior to submitting the survey you will also have an opportunity to enter additional comments regarding the nominee, should you wish to do so.



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

Q & A: What Does Legal Cannabis Mean for Teachers?

Robert Mazzotta

Coordinator, ATA Member Services

Question: With cannabis now legal in Canada, how are teachers affected?

Answer: Legalization has not changed the expectations for teachers regarding the use of cannabis. It has long been the presumption that teachers report to school ready to work and free from impairment. Consequently, the use of cannabis, or any other drug, cannot impair a teacher's performance while at work. This includes impairment from alcohol, prescription medication or even over-the-counter medication. Many board policies state that teachers cannot be impaired while at work, and the Alberta Teachers' Association supports this expectation.

Teachers who are using medicinal marijuana need to ensure that the THC content is zero. This guarantees that the marijuana can be used for pain relief or as prescribed by their physician, but that it contains no hallucinatory component.

While some boards require teachers to disclose their use of the medicinal oil, we do not concur with this expectation because this product should not impair the teacher's performance. Teachers would not disclose other medications they are taking; medicinal marijuana should be no different.

If a teacher requires a workplace accommodation due to a medical issue, this would need to be shared with the



employer so the accommodation can be implemented. However, if no accommodation is required, there is no need to disclose the information.

Finally, it is important that teachers remember that the Code of Professional Conduct governs their behaviour at all times. While possessing and smoking cannabis is now legal, the question remains as to whether or not being seen purchasing, smoking or in possession of marijuana constitutes unprofessional conduct. This will ultimately be left for a Professional Conduct Committee to decide.

Teachers simply need to remember that they are role models and are setting an example for students, and that as teachers they are charged with upholding the standards of the profession at all times.

This article first appeared in volume 53, issue 5 of the ATA News.



Join us at uLead this year
www.uLead.ca



ULEAD 2019

May 12-14, 2019

Register at www.uLead.ca

uLead Conference
Banff Springs Hotel

Each year, the Council for School Leadership of the Alberta Teachers' Association hosts one of the most respected conferences worldwide for school leaders, aspiring school leaders and central office teachers in Banff.

We invite you to join us in May for uLead 2019, Reimagining School Leadership.



The Alberta Teachers' Association

The Heart of Leadership for Learning: Leading Teacher Learning

Jeff Johnson

Executive Staff, ATA Professional Development

This is an exciting time to be in the teaching profession in Alberta. When school leadership is focused on improving teaching and learning, it has a significant impact on student achievement. This impact is augmented when leading teaching and learning is widely distributed so there is a shared responsibility for improving the quality of teaching across a school.

One of the most positive features of the new professional practice standards for the teaching profession in Alberta is that they clearly describe one profession in which three roles within that profession are defined. They underscore that there is a single profession—the teaching profession—in which teachers play a variety of roles to ensure success for every student and for the system as a whole. Together, the three professional practice standards provide an amazing opportunity for teachers to collaboratively work together in all of their roles to support optimum learning for students. They offer the potential to increase collaboration rather than to divide the profession by placing barriers between those roles.

The introduction of the new Leadership Quality Standard (LQS) in Alberta provides an opportunity for everyone in the system to grow. The new standard underscores the importance of school leadership at a time when it is becoming ever more important, as school leadership teams are making

critical choices about staffing, staff development, implementing curriculum, resource allocation, and design and implementation of improvement strategies (Schleicher 2012, 15–17).

Most decisions regarding pedagogy and curriculum are too specific to be made by the school leader. The introduction of the LQS will encourage school leaders to focus on leadership for learning that enables teacher development and learning, and supports all teachers to continually enhance their teaching practice and to view themselves as coleaders in an ongoing inquiry into the relationship between their teaching and student learning.

The new LQS also widens the scope of those we consider to be “school leaders.” This is a positive step forward in recognizing that all teachers are leaders and in fostering broader teacher leadership within Alberta. There are times those in leadership roles other than the principal might be in the best position to lead a pedagogical change. These are individuals who have the most granular knowledge of various subject areas or practices.

Teachers in a variety of roles across the system can play a pivotal role in sharing new ideas or practices that can foster positive changes and growth within classrooms (Spillane, Parise and Sherer 2011). The new standard will be

applicable to assistant, associate and vice-principals, and school jurisdiction leaders, including central office teachers such as assistant superintendents, consultants and other certificated teachers. In other words, the new LQS will be applicable to all certificated teachers in Alberta who have a role in leading and supporting classroom teachers in the work they do every day.

The new LQS encourages school leaders to focus on what has great impact—to improve teacher capacity. It requires school leaders to demonstrate a depth of knowledge, skill and fluency that will allow them to lead and support the development of diverse groups of teachers and, therefore, ensure that all teachers in the learning community have what they need to improve their practice and impact on the students they work with. This is a good thing for education in Alberta and is a step forward toward imprinting upon the teaching profession a strong focus of collaborative professionalism.

Getting it Right

Several principles need to be in place to ensure that all actors within the education system can coordinate their efforts to ensure success, as outlined by Breakspear et al (2017):

- Deeply engage with the profession in order to ensure ownership.
- Realize the agency of other system actors, and create cohesion.

- Start small, evaluate and expand.
- Enable leadership by putting in place the enabling policy conditions.

The professional practice standards for the teaching profession offer those in the teaching profession in Alberta the hope of being a lighthouse and an example of how the best student learning can occur in a system that includes teachers, school leaders and superintendents working within one collaborative profession. It is important to note that leadership development is not something that can be “done to” the profession. Successful approaches will need to involve deep partnership and cocreation with educators, as they are the ones who must own and drive ongoing leadership development.

Furthermore, the expertise to understand what effective leadership looks like and how it can be developed is located primarily within the education profession, not within government (Breakspear et al 2017, 98)

As we move beyond the introduction of the new professional practice standards and toward their implementation, it is essential that school leaders in Alberta work together with superintendents and other decision- and policy-makers in the educational system to make sure decisions are driven by the principles noted above. Most members of Alberta’s current cohort of school leaders already have master’s degrees and engage regularly in ongoing professional learning activities. Requiring them to engage in a narrow set of prescribed programs would take away their professional autonomy to

identify their own learning goals in relation to preparing for their desired roles within the teaching profession and their own pathways for acquiring that learning.

Aspiring school leaders in Alberta will continue to seek out high-quality opportunities to serve as members of the teaching profession within the roles defined by the LQS. To ensure that those learning opportunities fully reflect the new standards, those offering programs of preparation for school leadership roles must work hand in hand with the profession both to develop and to deliver those opportunities. This is especially true since Alberta Education has indicated that it currently intends to tie required leadership certification for school principals directly to mandated leadership development programs, rather than to a demonstration of proficiency in professional practice as measured by the LQS, which is the norm in most jurisdictions worldwide.

Leadership activities should have as their goal the deliberate development of a culture that encourages all individuals to consider themselves leaders, and participation in leadership activities within the school. This can only happen if the teaching profession, in all of its roles, is engaged in the professional learning opportunities that support it; if all actors within the system work together to ensure collaboration and cohesion; and if implementation efforts are focused.

While it may be tempting to quickly impose a systemwide structure

of programs to develop the next generation of Alberta school leaders, it would be much wiser to work with the profession to build and implement such programs on a small scale. Then, after evaluating and improving them, they can be scaled up when it is clear that they are working. The aim should be for policy-makers in Alberta to significantly enhance support for school leaders rather than to impose top-down requirements for prescribed programs of preparation. This would help create a learning ecosystem in which school leaders can focus on leadership for teaching and learning.

We have embarked on a voyage that will be an example to the world of a collaborative profession if we get it right in its implementation. What is needed now is to work with the profession to chart a course of implementation that will continue to lead us in an exemplary education system that others can follow.

References

- Breakspear, S L, A Peterson, A Alfadala and M S Khair. 2017. *Developing Agile Leaders of Learning: School Leadership Policy for Dynamic Times*. World Innovation Summit for Education (WISE) Research Series. www.wise-qatar.org/sites/default/files/rr.7.2017_learnlabs.pdf (accessed January 3, 2019).
- Schleicher, A., ed. 2012. *Preparing Teachers and Developing School Leaders for the 21st Century*. Paris: OECD. www.oecd.org/site/eduistp2012/49850576.pdf (accessed January 3, 2019).
- Spillane, J P, L M Parise and J Z Sherer. 2011. “Organizational Routines as Coupling Mechanisms: Policy, School Administration and the Technical Core.” *American Educational Research Journal* 48, no 3: 586–619.

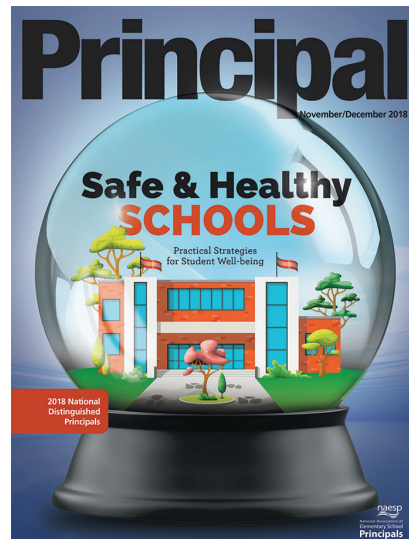
Great Sources of News for School Leaders

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.



European School Heads Association (ESHA) Magazine is published regularly throughout the year and contains articles that highlight issues Alberta school leaders share with their European colleagues. The most recent issue contains an interesting discussion about ideas for ensuring high school completion. Subscribe to it for free at www.esha.org/eshamagazine/.

The **Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership** (AITSL) has a massive, searchable and free collection of scholarly research materials on school leadership. Access AITSL's comprehensive archive at www.aitsl.edu.au/school-leadership-collection.



Principal is an award-winning magazine written specifically for K–8 principals and published by the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP). The November/December issue features great articles about the role of the school leader in fostering engagement within the school community. Find it at www.nxtbook.com/ygsreprints/NAESP/principal_20181112/.

You may also wish to check out their blog, **The Principal's Office**, which is full of great tips for school leaders, at www.naesp.org/front-page-blog-archive.

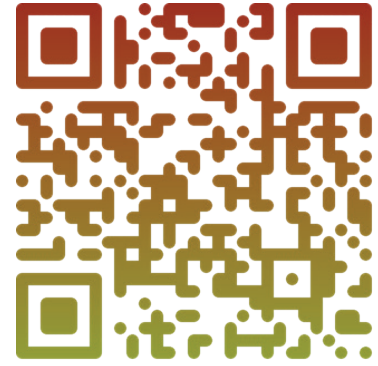


Principal Leadership is a publication of the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NAESP) that focuses on school leaders' real needs, offering them practical, hands-on strategies for improving their schools in a constantly evolving educational environment. The November issue features information about leadership for science education: www.naesp.org/2018/11/02/principal-leadership-november-2018/.

iTunes U— Each month new courses and materials are added to the Alberta Teachers on iTunes U site at tinyurl.com/ATAiTunes.

Alberta Teachers on iTunes U

A series of new videos have just been added to the Alberta Teachers on iTunes U page featuring Alberta school leaders sharing their thoughts about the new professional practice standards for the teaching profession, including the Leadership Quality Standard that will become active in September, 2019. These are well worth subscribing to and are full of good ideas that school leaders, including principals, assistant principals and central office roles, should consider regarding their leadership work. The series is called “Reflections on Leadership” and the videos are suitable for use in staff meetings or any professional learning activity where a short video may serve as a prompt to stimulate thinking and conversation about the competencies in the school leadership standard. Watch also in iTunes for an upcoming regular podcast also called “Reflections on Leadership.” iTunes U also has a variety of courses that look in-depth at ideas and best practices for school leadership within Alberta. To access the site, please visit tinyurl.com/ATAiTunes or scan the QR code on this page, or search for “Alberta Teachers” within iTunes.



Council for School Leadership

As an Alberta school principal, assistant principal or central office teacher, you are encouraged to select the Council for School Leadership as your automatically renewing specialist council. It is custom-made for school leaders, aspiring school leaders and all those to whom the new Leadership Quality Standard will apply (principals; assistant, associate and vice principals; school jurisdiction leaders, including central office teachers, assistant superintendents, consultants and other certificated teachers). With a new school leadership standard coming into force on September 1, 2019, now, more than ever before, it is important that you join the CSL and make this specialist council your no-cost specialist council. If you are not already a member of the Council for School Leadership, please take a moment today to go to tinyurl.com/JOIN-CSL and follow the steps to join this school leadership specialist council.



THE FACE OF EDUCATION

We believe in public education

The Alberta Teachers' Association is encouraging teachers, parents and other concerned citizens to show their support for public education by participating in the Pledge for Public Education campaign.

Public education provides students from all backgrounds with learning experiences to discover and develop their potential, their passions and their gifts, allowing them to make significant contributions to their communities.

Public education prepares learners for life, and Alberta's public education system* is widely recognized as one of the best systems in the world.

We believe in public education, and we believe in providing students with the best opportunities for success.

How can you support the pledge?

1. Visit www.IBelieveInPublicEd.ca and add your name.
2. Encourage your colleagues, friends and family to sign on.
3. Share your support for the pledge on Instagram, Facebook and Twitter, using #IbelieveInPublicEd.

What's next?

This fall we are collecting the names and e-mail contacts for supporters who believe in public education and support small class sizes, supports for special needs, full-day kindergarten and access to counselling services. Later, we will contact supporters with information about actions they can take to advocate for students and to voice their support for public education.

Stay tuned for more information as the campaign rolls out.

* In Alberta, public education refers to public, separate and francophone schools.



The Alberta Teachers' Association

The pledge for public education

- I believe all students should be able to learn in small-sized classes.
- I believe all students with special learning needs should receive the supports and resources they require for success.
- I believe all students should have the opportunity to benefit from fully funded junior kindergarten and full-day kindergarten programs.
- I believe all students should have access to a teacher-certificated school counsellor in their school.

I believe in public education

iBelieveInPublicEd.ca

**LEADERSHIP
UPDATE**

An ATA/CSL publication for school administrators



The Alberta Teachers' Association