

LEADERSHIP UPDATE

Volume 16

A publication for Alberta's school administrators

Number 1



Happy Autumn Everyone!

This issue of the *Leadership Update* contains valuable information to support you in your work and to inform you of how to access high-quality professional learning activities for school leaders in Alberta throughout the year. This update contains time-sensitive professional learning opportunities for the fall, and international exchange and research project opportunities in Spain, Germany and Iceland.

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. There you can access up-to-date news about school leadership in Alberta, provincial and regional professional learning events, and the uLead annual conference.

ULead 2020 will take place April 4–7 in Banff. The call for proposals is now open and registrations will open shortly.

Please visit uLead.ca on a regular basis for news and events as they unfold.

Leadership Essentials for School Leaders

The annual Leadership Essentials for School Leaders conference will take place at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in Calgary November 18–19, 2019. This event is for school leaders (principals, assistant principals or central office teachers) who are in the first five years of their role or those who are new to Alberta. Whether you work in a leadership role in central office or in a school, there will be content of interest to you. Leadership Essentials for School Leaders is a strong support to new school leaders in Alberta and will feature many sessions to assist those attending in their roles.

This year the event will host two internationally known keynote speakers: Ryan Dunne from the University of Melbourne and Carol Campbell of the University of Toronto. Registration is free and space is limited, so apply early. Online registration is available at <https://atapd.ca/initiatives/2019-lesl/register>.

**Leaders
can build
teacher
capabilities
by
engaging
teachers in
an ongoing
inquiry into
the impact
of their
teaching
on student
learning.
—Dylan
William**



Council for
School Leadership

Foundations of Teaching Sprints Workshops

You may wish to start the year with a Foundations of Teaching Sprints workshop, which will be offered in Calgary and Edmonton as part of the ATA Agile Leadership Network professional learning series. This collaborative professional learning approach offers an opportunity to build teacher and team efficacy for teacher learning and continuous practice improvement.

Teaching sprints provides a simple, effective and field-tested approach to support your teachers in continually enhancing their practice. Teaching sprints is a flexible organizational routine that supports robust teacher professional learning. It consists of three phases: prepare, sprint and review. During the prepare phase, teams discuss student learning and consider relevant research to identify precise areas for improvement. Moving into the sprint phase, teams test out their new learning through short, manageable cycles of teaching in the classroom. A teaching sprint ends with a review phase, in which teams analyze the evidence of student learning and consider how to transfer new pedagogical knowledge and skills into future practice. Engagement in teaching sprints supports the adoption of evidence-informed practices and enables educators to collectively plan, act and evaluate their impact. The approach is aligned with the existing research evidence into the features of effective teacher professional learning and the science of behaviour change.

The mantra of teaching sprints is, “If it doesn’t work for teachers, it doesn’t work.” The process has been designed

to be simple, relevant and manageable for already overloaded teachers and their leaders. Most of all, it is designed to be adaptable to your school context and focused on the challenges specific to your classrooms and learners.

School leadership teams, working together, can take small steps that add up to enormous gains in teacher efficacy and expertise. This dynamic one-day workshop will provide school and teacher leaders with a thorough understanding of the teaching sprints approach that will allow you to get started in your school community.

Through teaching sprints, educators can

- make more effective use of available team collaboration time, supported by clear tools and protocols;
- benefit from more relevant, job-embedded professional learning focused on practical teaching and learning challenges in their classrooms;
- deepen their pedagogical content knowledge and be inspired to continually improve;
- better adopt and embed the use of research-informed practice and evaluate their impact through formative assessment;
- build trust within and across teacher teams and take collective action to help each other to improve; and
- more effectively share and spread best practices.

This dynamic one-day workshop provides school- and teacher leaders with a thorough review of the teaching sprints approach to collaborative teacher professional learning.

Numerous research studies confirm

that teaching quality has the largest in-school influence on student learning, and that high-quality professional learning can lead to improvements in student achievement. In this practical workshop, participants will be introduced to the teaching sprints process and leave equipped with the knowledge of what makes for successful team and school implementation. It is recommended that school leaders bring a team of teacher leaders to this event.

This program is designed to

- examine the importance of enhancing adaptive teaching expertise and the need for schools to support teachers to engage in deliberate practice;
- provide a systematic overview of the teaching sprints approach to collaborative teacher learning and practice improvement;
- upskill leaders to understand each phase of the teaching sprints process;
- show how robust and relevant research evidence can be used to inform practice improvement efforts;
- give practical guidance on how to successfully implement teaching sprints within their unique educational context; and
- demonstrate how to connect the teaching sprints process with teacher, team and school-level plans for improvement.

Locations and Dates

Calgary, October 24

Facilitated by Simon Breakspear

To register go to <https://event-wizard.com/GOSPRINT/0/welcome/>.

Calgary, November 19

Facilitated by Ryan Dunne,

University of Melbourne

To register go to <https://event-wizard.com/GOSPRINTCALGARY/0/welcome/>.

Edmonton, November 22

Facilitated by Ryan Dunne,

University of Melbourne

To register go to <https://event-wizard.com/GOSPRINT-EDMONTON/0/welcome/>.

Note: If you are unable to attend this workshop and would like to see one in your school district or area, please contact Jeff Johnson at jeff.johnson@ata.ab.ca.

Dialogue Dinners

Empowering Women for the School Leadership Journey

Edmonton, October 22

The Council for School Leadership is proud to provide an opportunity for you to share dinner with your colleagues and engage in dialogue and networking on the topic of caring for your whole self with perspectives shared by three respected leaders in education in Alberta. Join us as these strong leaders share their personal experiences, challenges and successes through insights and stories lived as school leaders within the teaching profession.

This event is limited to 50 delegates, so participants are encouraged to register as soon as possible at <https://event-wizard.com/FOR-THE-JOURNEY/0/welcome/>.

Featured Speakers

Tisa Haesch is in her 30th year as an educator with the Edmonton Catholic School Division and has served as an administrator for 12 years. She is in her second year serving as the manager of Inclusive Communities. She is committed to supporting school teams in cultivating inclusive, welcoming, safe and caring learning environments for all students. She looks forward to sharing her journey of self-care and the pillars that in her experience help you care for your whole self.

Joanne Wynn is a school leader with Edmonton Public Schools. For the past 3½ years she worked in district supports services. Joanne has recently embraced the opportunity to return to a school setting by accepting the principal assignment at Ecole Avalon School.

Colleen Alpern has been a school administrator for almost 20 years with Elk Island Public Schools and is pleased to share a few thoughts about supporting yourself on this complex journey we call life.

An Evening with the Honourable Adriana LaGrange

Edmonton, November 27

The Council for School Leadership is proud to provide an opportunity for you to share dinner with your colleagues and hear insights from Minister of Education Adriana LaGrange, who will discuss topics and issues in education she feels are important to school and district leaders. If time permits, she may field questions from the audience following her presentation.

Registration is limited to 50 delegates, so participants are encouraged to register as soon as possible at <https://event-wizard.com/CSL-Dinner-2019/0/welcome/>.

uLead 2020

A unique opportunity awaits. Join educational leaders from around the world April 4–7, at the Banff Springs Hotel, for a rare and historic dialogue with the world’s leaders in education at Canada’s premier conference for school-based leaders, district-level leaders, and provincial and state education leaders.

What does it mean to be a school leader within the teaching profession? The theme for uLead 2020 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.

As always, the conference will feature a wide array of engaging, world-class keynote speakers. We expect over 1,000 principals, assistant principals, district leaders, national ministers of education and education ministry representatives from around the world to attend.

Planning for uLead 2020 is under way, 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 the beautiful world heritage location of Banff, one of the most pristine wilderness areas in the world. Find out more at www.ulead.ca.

Registration for uLead 2020 is now open at www.ulead.ca, with super-early-bird discounts for those registering prior to October 31 and continued early-bird discounts for those registering after October 31. The call for proposals for the conference will continue until the end of October. A host of keynote speakers will be announced within the coming weeks. Already confirmed as keynote speakers are Beatriz Pont, senior education policy analyst with the OECD; Barbara Watterston, author of *Step In, Step Up—Empowering Women for the School Leadership Journey*; and Steve Munby, the driving force behind the UK’s national organization for school leadership. There will also be preconference full-day workshops on April 4.



Share Your Voice on Inclusive Education

International Education Exchange Program

On behalf of the Alberta Teachers' Association (ATA), you are invited to share your voice on the issue of inclusive education in Alberta schools. To support implementation of the new Teaching Quality Standard (TQS) and Leadership Quality Standard (LQS) as it relates to inclusive education, and to provide an update on inclusive education in Alberta classrooms and schools, we are requesting your participation in a short five- to ten-minute Association survey.

The survey is completely voluntary and should be completed on or before Friday, October 18, 2019.

To access the survey, go to <http://m.sgizmoca.com/s3/2019InclusiveEd>. If you have any questions, please contact Jason Daniels at the University of Alberta; e-mail jason.daniels@ualberta.ca; phone 780-492-6332. Alternatively, contact Melissa Purcell at the ATA; e-mail melissa.purcell@ata.ab.ca; phone 780-447-9497.

The plan for this study (Pro00090943) has been reviewed for its adherence to ethical guidelines by a research ethics board at the University of Alberta. For questions regarding participant rights and ethical conduct of research, please contact the Research Ethics Office at 780-492-2615.

Thank you for your contributions to the profession of teaching and for your leadership in Alberta schools and school communities.

Take your vocation to another location!

The Alberta Teachers' Association and Alberta Education are pleased to offer short-term exchanges for school administrators under the Educator Exchange Program (EEP). This program provides a suite of international professional development opportunities for school leaders and teachers. Visiting another education system is an effective and enjoyable way to promote cultural understanding and to reflect upon and enhance practice. The exchange offers a unique opportunity for teachers to learn, compare and contrast various aspects of education between systems.

How Does It Work?

The 10-day job shadow is a reciprocal arrangement. School administrators are matched with a partner administrator. The exchange administrators will shadow each other at their respective schools for approximately 10 days.

When Does the Exchange Happen?

Alberta school leaders will host their overseas counterpart typically in the fall. Alberta principals will typically travel during spring break when the other school is in session.

How Much Does It Cost?

Alberta principals are responsible for airfare and travel costs, and they are billeted by their exchange counterpart. EEP will provide program support throughout the exchange process.

Who Is Eligible?

Principals (K–12) must be Canadian citizens, have a permanent teaching certificate and have district approval. Applicants should demonstrate flexibility, adaptability, intercultural skills, and a strong capacity to act as an ambassador for their school authority and the exchange program.

Proven communication skills, resourcefulness, initiative and community involvement are all desirable attributes. Fluency in languages other than English is not required, as the overseas teacher is fluent in English.

Where Can I Go?

Opportunities exist to exchange to Spain (20/21), Germany (20/21) and Iceland (20/21), but please consult the ATA website regularly to stay up to date, or call us directly with your query.

For more information and exchange locations, please contact Carolyn Freed, Exchange Liaison, EEP at Carolyn.Freed@ata.ab.ca or call 780-447-9404.

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 2020. 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 CSL, 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 February 28, 2020. All nominees must be active members of the CSL to be eligible to receive the award. Nominees can join the CSL at any time by going to bit.ly/joincsl. 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 provide his or her school name, school telephone number and e-mail 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 here: https://education.alberta.ca/media/3739621/standardsdoc-lqs-_fa-web-2018-01-17.pdf.

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 CSL 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.



uLead 2020 Call for Proposals

Do you have an Alberta school leadership story to share with colleagues from around the world? You are invited to submit a proposal to offer a presentation at uLead 2020. Visit tinyurl.com/PRESENT-AT-ULEAD20 to submit your proposal by the end of October.

Council for School Leadership

As an Alberta school principal, assistant principal or a central office teacher, 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 go to tinyurl.com/JOIN-CSL and follow the steps to join this school leadership specialist council. It is custom-made for school leaders and aspiring school leaders and for all those to whom the new Leadership Quality Standard will apply (principals; assistant-, associate- and vice-principals; and school jurisdiction leaders including central office teachers such as assistant superintendents, consultants and other certificated teachers).



A Good News Story

Sherry Bennett, Executive Director, Alberta Assessment Consortium

One spring morning, a student who was new to my class the previous September came rushing into the classroom.

“Wow!” she said. “My parents are so glad we moved to this neighbourhood and that we decided to go to this school!”

“That’s nice,” I replied. “What makes you say that today?”

“Well, the results in the newspaper!” she exclaimed.

“Oh,” I mused, thinking that I needed to broaden this conversation a bit. “You’ve had a good year in school? You’ve made new friends? You’re enjoying what you’re learning? You feel confident with how you’re learning?”

All my questions were met by enthusiastic nods and affirmative responses.

“That’s great,” I summarized. “I’m so glad you feel that we have a great school.”

I have pondered that conversation over and over throughout the ensuing years, and it leads to an important question: Why do we need to wait until the newspapers publish the provincial ranking of schools to decide if we have a great school?

The good news is that we don’t!

As leaders, we have an essential role to play in how we handle the annual release of *the* results—both the results that are released in the fall and the ranking published in the spring.

Every year we hear of staff members huddled together to figure out how to “get those scores up.” It’s a compelling desire, but the reality is that getting the scores up is not as easy as it might seem. We need to keep in mind that provincial exams are best used to provide a picture of overall achievement of the system as a whole. The items are designed to produce an appropriate spread of scores, but these tests cannot fully reflect the breadth and depth of learning that has taken place for individual students.

While leaders have a responsibility to make results available, let’s resist the urge to tie the results to our collective identity. Think about your school and jurisdiction mission statements. They likely say something about supporting growth and learning for all students, not just the high achievers.

Rather than focusing on the scores, perhaps a focus on the learning will better serve our students now and into the future. Maybe it’s time we believe what the Ministry of Education declares on its website:

“PATs are only one of many ways to evaluate student learning and are not meant to replace day-to-day teacher observations and classroom assessment. They are sources of information that must be interpreted, used and communicated within the context of regular and continuous assessment by classroom teachers” (www.alberta.ca/provincial-achievement-tests.aspx).

Great Sources of News for School Leaders

Are you searching for interesting articles and ideas about school leadership? Some very timely articles in a range of school leadership publications 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 September issue contains an interesting article about inclusive education: www.esha.org/eshamagazine/.

Principal is an award-winning magazine written specifically for K–8 principals published by the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP). The September/October issue features great articles on using personalized learning to transform schools. Find it at www.nxtbook.com/ygsreprints/NAESP/principal_20190910/.

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 (NASSP) that focuses on school leaders' real needs, offering them practical, hands-on strategies for improving their schools in a constantly evolving educational environment. The September issue features articles on leading learning and building culture and supportive school environments: www.nassp.org/2019/09/01/principal-leadership-september-2019/.

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/.

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.

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The Alberta
Teachers' Association