

# LEADERSHIP UPDATE

Volume 5

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Number 1

## 47th Annual Western Canadian Educational Administrators' Conference



October 22–25, 2008  
Delta Lodge, Kananaskis

### Changed Format for 2008

Registration will continue to be on Wednesday, October 22, from 5:00 PM until 7:00 PM. Four outstanding keynote speakers will each have a half day on the Thursday and the Friday to share, interact, and discuss current information and new trends with conference delegates. There will not be any breakout sessions. Each day will end at 3:00 PM, giving delegates time for collaboration and collegiality with each other. Entertainment and fellowship, important components of every conference, will be provided on both Thursday and Friday nights.

### Featured Speakers

- Thomas Guskey, "New Views on Grading and Reporting"
- Tom Olsen, "If You Want to Walk on Water, You Have to Get Off the Beach" (Accountable Leadership)
- Kevin Cameron, "Risk Assessment"
- Michael Kerr, "The Workplace Energizer"

For more information, visit [www.wceac.org](http://www.wceac.org).



The road to happiness lies in two simple principles: find what it is that interests you and that you can do well, and when you find it put your whole soul into it—every bit of energy and ambition and natural ability you have.

*John D Rockefeller III*



# Meaningful Professional Growth Plans for Principals

The Alberta Teachers' Association has published an online module to support school administrators in the development of their annual professional growth plans. Principals, as certificated teachers, are required by provincial policy to complete an annual professional growth plan. Until recently there was no standard for school principals, but in March 2008 Alberta Education released the final draft of a document, developed by an advisory committee of education stakeholders, that articulates quality practice for school principals. Association staff have used this document to redesign the ATA professional growth plan online module to incorporate a process for school administrators.

Specific features of the module include the following:

- The provincial working document outlining principal quality practice
- Current research related to each of the seven leadership dimensions
- 20 self-reflection tools specific to Alberta's education context
- Templates and suggestions for PD activities

The professional growth plan module will support experienced school principals in identifying professional growth goals and PD strategies to enhance their leadership. Those new to the principalship can use the process to explore the varied aspects of their new role and the leadership aspects they want to further develop. The module will also be useful in developing mentorship plans to prepare assistant principals for their future role as school principals.

The Association is recommending that all school administrators use this online module to develop a professional growth plan that is meaningful and applicable to the school context. Just like teachers, school administrators have a professional responsibility to continue to grow in their practice and respond to changes in the education system. And, as members of the profession, school administrators have a right to

determine their professional growth needs and the strategies they will use to address those needs.

The professional growth plan module can be found on the ATA website ([www.teachers.ab.ca](http://www.teachers.ab.ca)) under Professional Development.

If you require further information or assistance, contact Jacqueline Skytt, coordinator of Professional Development, at 1-800-232-7208 (toll free in Alberta) or 780-447-9400 (in the Edmonton area).

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## Noncertificated Staff Attending Staff Meetings

**Q** Our school principal invited the librarian and teacher assistants to attend all our staff meetings. Some teachers feel that the discussion topics are confidential and pertain to teachers only. Has the principal the right to make such a decision?



**Q & A**

GORDON THOMAS

**A** It is the principal's responsibility to see that the school operates efficiently and effectively. If the principal believes it necessary or desirable that noncertificated personnel attend staff meetings, then he or she is entitled to invite them. All staff should be treated with courtesy and respect and be made to feel that, as part of the team, they have an important role to play in achieving the mission of the school. However, because teachers are ultimately accountable for a school's educational program, nonteachers should not normally participate in decisions about the educational program and budget. Involvement of all staff, especially where support staff form the majority of the staff, could result in decisions that run contrary to the preference of those responsible for such decisions.

Staff meetings could be divided into two components, one that provides information for all staff and a second component where only certificated staff meet. If the teaching staff objects to the presence of noncertificated personnel during the discussion of professional matters, then these objections should be made known to the principal in accordance with the Code of Professional Conduct.

*Questions for consideration in this column are welcome. Please address them to Dr Gordon Thomas at Barnett House ([gordon.thomas@ata.ab.ca](mailto:gordon.thomas@ata.ab.ca)).*

# Hours of Work—How Is a Teacher’s Time Scheduled?

Scheduling teacher time is a major responsibility of in-school administrators. In many instances, the school jurisdiction provides guidelines to administrators on the process for assigning time. The majority of teachers in Alberta are covered by an hours-of-work article in the collective agreement, which provides additional structure. What should a principal keep in mind?

Hours of instruction includes all teacher-directed student contact time. The Association uses Alberta Education’s *Guide to Education* definition for instruction. While some categories of instructional time are easy to define, others are less clear. Because the guide states “direct student–teacher interaction,” the Association includes time such as homeroom, announcements and homework book time as instructional. Students are required to perform specific tasks during this time, unlike supervision, where students are free to choose their activity (within reason) and the teacher’s role is ensuring safety.

Transition time is not instructional time. In most secondary schools and many junior high schools, students change rooms frequently, and this transition time is usually built into the timetable (for example, two minutes between the end of period 1 and the beginning of period 2). Where transitions are not built into the schedule, principals can allow for approximately two minutes of

transition time between classes where there is no natural break like recess or lunch. Transition time in these cases is deducted from the instructional time. If the students do not move to a different room but merely change subjects, then transition time is normally not allotted. This is no different from the transition from one learning activity to another in the same subject area. In most elementary schools, the only transition time required is when the students move to and from classes such as music and physical education.

The remaining time during the day is when the teacher is able to work on other required duties, such as marking, lesson preparation and paperwork. If the collective agreement includes a definition for assignable time, so-called preparation periods count in the total assigned time for the week. Assigned time also includes meetings and supervision of students. Because preparation periods during the day don’t provide enough time for teachers to do all their planning and so on, administrators should be cautious in assigning additional duties during this time. Teachers who feel they are being assigned excessive duties during preparation periods often take the lead in pressing for changes at the bargaining table.

How do part-time teachers fit in the picture? In agreements with an hours-of-work clause, the language in the agreement is usually clear. If there is no

hours-of-work clause, it is reasonable to assign all duties in the same proportion as the teacher’s FTE. It is difficult to assign partial preparation time, so a straightforward approach is to calculate part-time teachers’ FTE based on their instructional time as a proportion of a full-time teacher’s instructional time. For example, if a part-time teacher instructs for 800 minutes and a full-time teacher instructs for 1,440 minutes, the FTE is 0.56. The preparation time takes care of itself, and the principal doesn’t need to worry about how to assign fractional preparation periods to the teacher. Supervision, homeroom and other duties should also be in proportion to the teacher’s FTE.

However, the entire process to date overlooks one very important factor. All current hours-of-work clauses refer to “teachers not in receipt of an allowance,” thereby exempting all administrators from the clause. Little research has been done on the workload of in-school administrators, though we know that it, too, is increasing both in quantity and in complexity. The next four years of labour peace will be an excellent opportunity to research administrator workload and develop action plans for addressing it in the next rounds of bargaining.

If you have any questions about hours of work, please contact Teacher Welfare staff at 780-447-9400 (in Edmonton) or 1-800-232-7208 (toll free in Alberta).

# Leadership Essentials for Administrators Conference 2008

Featuring keynote speakers Todd Whitaker and Carol Boothroyd

Administrators within the first two years of their appointment or administrators new to Alberta are invited to attend the 2008 Leadership Essentials for Administrators Conference November 24 and 25 at the Westin Hotel in Edmonton. Space is limited; apply early. A grant-in-aid will offset costs for participants.



The Leadership Essentials for Administrators Conference is a key component of the Association's program of services for school-based administrators. The goals of the conference are to provide ongoing knowledge and skill development to beginning administrators; to continue to assist new administrators; to provide awareness around roles, responsibilities, and professional and legal obligations; and to promote ATA services and supports to new administrators.

For more information and a registration form, visit the ATA website ([www.teachers.ab.ca](http://www.teachers.ab.ca)) and click on Resources for School-Based Administrators, or call Konni deGoeij or Mark Yurick at 1-800-232-7208 (toll free in Alberta) or 780-447-9400 (in Edmonton).

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## ATA Professional Development Services

### Do you know about these ATA services?

**No-cost Specialist Council Membership** As a benefit of membership in the Association, every active member can select one specialist council membership at no cost. Specialist council memberships are in effect for one school year and expire August 31. Currently, 22 specialist councils serve the full range of teaching specialties and functions. Please visit the ATA website at [www.teachers.ab.ca](http://www.teachers.ab.ca) to activate or renew your specialist council membership.

**Council on School Administration (CSA)** The CSA is the specialist council committed to improving administrative practices in education, offering PD and networking opportunities such as conferences, workshops and regional meetings. The CSA is a provincewide advocate for school administrators and is charged with the task of articulating and addressing administrator needs through committee representation, publications and awards. For more information about the CSA, contact Garnet Goertzen, president at [president.csa@teacher.ab.ca](mailto:president.csa@teacher.ab.ca)

**ATA Workshops** The Association offers 44 workshops to support school-based professional development and school-improvement initiatives. All workshops use the principles of adult learning and incorporate a range of facilitation strategies to encourage conversation and reflection. The workshops are delivered by a corps of practising teachers and school administrators, who will customize a workshop to meet the needs of your school staff. The booking fee is only \$200 for a workshop offered at your school site. For more information about ATA workshops, look for the workshop poster in your school or visit [www.teachers.ab.ca](http://www.teachers.ab.ca).