



# The Alberta Teachers' Association

11010 142 Street NW, Edmonton, Alberta T5N 2R1

T 780-447-9400 or 1-800-232-7208

F 780-455-6481

[www.teachers.ab.ca](http://www.teachers.ab.ca)

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2023 05 17

Danielle Smith, Leader  
United Conservative Party  
203, 2915 21 Street NE  
Calgary AB T2E 7T1

Dear Ms Smith

Thank you for the opportunities that we have had to meet and discuss issues of importance to teachers over the past year. I appreciate how you are willing to listen to those concerns and to understand and respect the valued role we play in our outstanding public education system. I believe that you understand the importance of maintaining confidence in Alberta's teachers and the teaching profession, and that is why I am writing to you today.

Recently, some very concerning comments from one of your party's candidates for MLA have come to light that are very troubling for teachers. The comments by Jennifer Johnson include wild, unsubstantiated allegations about things that are happening in Alberta schools. Put simply, these allegations are deeply offensive and simply untrue.

Far too often lately, people are making up stories about things that are happening in schools as a way to spread fear and distrust. These falsehoods are rooted in ignorance, intolerance and hatred, and serve only to undermine confidence in public education and while stigmatizing LGBTQ2S+ Albertans. These fabrications are part of a broader campaign of misinformation that cannot be tolerated and must be responded to with unequivocal condemnation. Spreading of misinformation like this—or failing to discredit it when it is heard—is not befitting of someone who would hold a position of authority.

**A lie gets halfway around the world before the truth has a chance to get its pants on.**

—*Winston Churchill*

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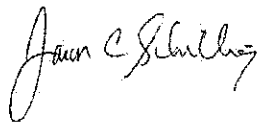
As you know, this is not the first time in this election cycle that a potential candidate has espoused these troubling and misguided beliefs. Frankly, the statement offered last time was lacking, and given the compounding nature of these allegations, I strongly believe that this time a much clearer, direct and unequivocal statement is required.

Sexual and gender diverse persons, teachers and all Albertans deserve an apology. That apology must include a clear, unambiguous retraction that fully acknowledges the falsity of the misleading statements. Furthermore, I believe these accusations must also be denounced in no uncertain terms by yourself as leader of the party and as premier.

If you or any of your candidates would like to discuss further issues affecting public education or the realities of what is happening in our schools, I am more than happy to meet at any time. Dialogue would be very helpful to put to rest any concerns that are rooted in mythology and misinformation.

I hope to hear from you soon on this matter.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jason C Schilling".

Jason C Schilling  
ATA President