

THE ALBERTA TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION

ATA Magazine

Take it outside (the norm)

Teaching in an unconventional setting can be a highly rewarding adventure

PAGE 18

DIVERSITY

Teachers turn ideas into action in support of equity and human rights

PAGE 16

TEACHER HACKS

Some ideas for helping students connect with nature

PAGE 55

IN PROFILE

Career shakeup brings double success for Calgary teacher Leonard Cohen

PAGE 46

Retirement about to hit?



We have benefits for your retirement,
designed with you in mind.



Book a call or meeting
MyRetireePlan.ca
1-877-431-4786



The Alberta School Employee Benefit Plan

Feature

TAKE IT OUTSIDE (THE NORM)

Teaching in an unconventional setting can be a highly rewarding adventure

18



ILLUSTRATION BY KIM VANDERHELM

Winter 2024 / Vol. 104 / No.2

Feature

18 Take it outside (the norm)

Outlook

- 4 Letters
- 5 From the President
Mot du président
- 7 Then and Now
- 8 Looking Abroad
- 10 Unsung Hero

Bulletin Board

- 3 Editor's Notebook
Note de la rédactrice
- 12 Wellness
- 14 Technology
- 16 Diversity
- 30 Research Insights
- 46 In Profile

Learning Commons

- 36 From the Bookshelves
- 38 Kid Lit
- 41 In Focus
- 45 Who's Out There

Teacher to Teacher

- 52 In My Humble Opinion
- 55 Teacher Hacks
- 56 Most Memorable Lesson



10

UNsung HERO

The band plays on for teacher Tom Spila.



14

TECHNOLOGY

Tech tools help students who struggle with reading, typing and writing.



32

RESEARCH INSIGHTS

Removing the stop signs at the intersection of gender and educational leadership.

ATA Magazine

WINTER 2024

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Elissa Corsi | elissa.corsi@ata.ab.ca

MANAGING EDITOR

Cory Hare | cory.hare@ata.ab.ca

CREATIVE DIRECTOR

Erin Solano | erin.solano@ata.ab.ca

ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Lindsay Yakimyshyn

ART DIRECTION AND DESIGN

Yuet Chan and Kim vanderHelm

COPY EDITOR

Sandra Bit

SECTION EDITOR

Shelley Svidal

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS

Kim Clement, Jen Janzen

FRENCH EDITORS

David Martin, Régine Toal

ADVERTISING

Trevor Batty Advertising Sales
trevor@tbasales.ca

The *ATA Magazine* is published three times a year and is distributed to more than 35,000 members. Articles, commentary and editorial material represent the views of the authors and do not necessarily reflect ATA policy.

Acceptance of an advertisement does not imply ATA endorsement.

© 2024 by The Alberta Teachers' Association. Unauthorized use or duplication without prior approval is strictly prohibited.

The Alberta Teachers' Association
11010 142 Street Edmonton, AB T5N 2R1
Telephone: 780-447-9400
Toll Free in Alberta: 1-800-232-7208
Website: www.teachers.ab.ca

TABLE OFFICERS

President

Jason Schilling

Vice-President

Greg Carabine

Vice-President

Peter MacKay

Past President

Greg Jeffery

Executive Secretary

Dennis Theobald

Associate Executive Secretaries

Elissa Corsi

Robert Mazzotta

DISTRICT REPRESENTATIVES

Calgary City Allison Scott Davies,

Kevin Kempt, Darren Moroz

Calgary District Karen Nakaska

Central Brenton Baum

Central East Murray Lalonde

Central North Rick Kremp

Central South Brice Unland

Edmonton District Paul Froese

Edmonton McMurray Carmen

Glossop, Greg Meecker, Jay Procktor

North West Rhonda Kelly

South East Heather McCaig

South West Katherine Pritchard

 The Alberta Teachers' Association

 Alberta Magazine
Publishers Association

 ALBERTA
MAG

 The *ATA Magazine* is a member of the Canadian Educational Press Association.

Canadian Publication Mail Agreement No. 40065477
Return undeliverable Canadian addresses to the Alberta Teachers' Association.

ISSN 0380-9102



Contributors



CRYSTAL PUIM pp. 20 and 24



Crystal Puim is an Edmonton-based corporate photographer. A trusted industry partner

with more than 20 years' experience, she elevates brands with a professional, discerning eye. Her company, Crystal Puim Photography, is a staple in Western Canada. www.crystalphotos.ca.



ROBERT CARTER p. 10



Robert Carter is a full-time, professional, award-winning illustrator based in Ontario. He

creates striking, vibrant and textured illustrations and portraits with subjects ranging from the realistic to the surreal.



HEIDI HUGHES | p. 20



Heidi Hughes is a teacher at Hospital School Campuses, which is part of Edmonton Public Schools. She primarily teaches

junior and senior high math and science courses to students who are patients at the Stollery Children's Hospital.



JENNIFER FREDEEN p. 22



Jennifer Fredeen has been a teacher since 2008. She taught in Calgary before moving

on to Elk Island Public Schools. She is very active in her ATA local and enjoys working for and with her colleagues.



ROSS MACDONALD p. 24



Ross MacDonald lives in Edmonton, where he was born and raised. Most of his

25-plus years of teaching experience has taken place in small, northern Alberta towns: Slave Lake, Kinuso, Little Red River Cree Nation (Fox Lake) and Tofield.



SAMIRA ELATIA | p. 32



Dr. Samira Elatia is professor of education and the associate dean of graduate studies at the

bilingual Campus Saint-Jean of the University of Alberta. She specializes in the evaluation of competencies and language assessment. Her research interest focuses on issues of fairness in assessment, especially in bilingual contexts.



MARNIE JAZWICKI p. 46



Marnie Jazwicki has been a commercial photographer in the Calgary

area for more than 30 years. A recent favourite project is "Here to Tell," a photo exhibit of Holocaust survivors initiated by the Canadian Journalism Foundation and displayed at the Glenbow Museum. www.jazhart.com.



ABI HENNEBERRY p. 55



Abi Henneberr teaches kindergarten at Lois E. Hole Elementary

School in St. Albert. Abi is also co-director of publications with the ATA's Global Environmental & Outdoor Education Council and a school rep with St. Albert Local No. 73.



RAY SUCHOW | p. 56



Ray Suchow enjoys writing about the many unique teaching moments occurring in and around his

classroom. These moments have appeared in the *ATA News*, *Leaders & Learners Magazine*, *RTJ's Creative Catechist*, *The Journal of Catholic Education and Alberta's Centennial Anthology*.

The Alberta Teachers' Association respectfully acknowledges that we are located on Treaty 4, 6, 7, 8 and 10 territories—the travelling route, gathering place and meeting grounds for Indigenous Peoples, whose histories, languages, cultures and traditions continue to influence our vibrant community. We are grateful for the traditional Knowledge Keepers and Elders who are still with us today and those who have gone before us. We recognize the land as an act of reconciliation and gratitude to those whose territory we reside on or are visiting.



PHOTO BY RYAN PARKER

Elissa Corsi

Editor-in-Chief, ATA Magazine
RédaCTRICE en chef de l'ATA Magazine

Teacher-student relationships aren't room-specific

AS TEACHERS, WE OFTEN FIND OURSELVES in unexpected situations that challenge our adaptability. I recall a situation when, as a new assistant principal in an elementary school, I found myself teaching amid a year-long whirlwind of building renovations. Several times throughout the year, as construction progressed, the admin team had to find alternative teaching spaces for some of our classrooms. One of the more complicated moves came when we relocated one of our classrooms to the stage in the gymnasium. The windowless space was small and stuffy, and on most days the noise from the gym was intense.

Although there were many challenges, like constant dust and construction noise, we came together as a staff to support each other and managed to forge meaningful connections with each other and with our students, underscoring the timeless truth that relationships lie at the core of effective teaching, transcending the physical boundaries of a traditional classroom.

In this issue of the *ATA Magazine*, our main feature focuses on teaching in unusual places, shining a light on the transformative experiences that can arise from distinctive teaching spaces. From converting unconventional spaces into vibrant learning hubs to leveraging technology to bridging physical distances, teachers exemplify the brilliance that emerges when learning takes place outside of the traditional classroom.

The magazine team hopes that this edition sparks your imagination, inspires your teaching practice and reinforces the impact you have as teachers. Regardless where you teach, it's the relationships you cultivate with your students that will always be the cornerstone of their educational journey.

Thank you for your unwavering dedication to shaping the minds and hearts of Alberta's future generations. And, as always, thank you for reading. 

Relations enseignants-élèves : la salle importe peu

COMME ENSEIGNANTS, NOUS NOUS TROUVONS souvent dans des situations inattendues qui mettent à l'épreuve notre capacité d'adaptation. Je me souviens d'une situation où, en tant que nouvelle directrice adjointe d'une école élémentaire, je me suis retrouvée à enseigner au beau milieu du tourbillon créé par des rénovations au bâtiment qui ont duré toute l'année. L'équipe de direction a dû trouver des espaces temporaires pour certaines classes plusieurs fois durant l'année, au fur et à mesure qu'avancait la construction. Un des déménagements les plus compliqués est survenu lorsque nous avons installé une de nos classes sur la scène du gymnase. Ce petit espace sans fenêtre était mal aéré et la plupart du temps, le gymnase était une source de bruit intense.

Malgré les nombreux défis, notamment la poussière omniprésente et le bruit des travaux, les membres du personnel se sont serrés les coudes et nous avons réussi à tisser des liens solides entre nous ainsi qu'avec nos élèves, ce qui rappelle la vérité intemporelle selon laquelle les relations sont au cœur d'un enseignement efficace – elles transcendent les limites physiques de la salle de classe traditionnelle.

Notre dossier principal dans ce numéro de l'*ATA Magazine* aborde le thème de l'enseignement dans des lieux inhabituels, avec l'objectif de mettre en lumière les expériences transformatrices que peuvent procurer les espaces d'enseignement singuliers. Qu'il s'agisse de convertir des espaces non conventionnels en centres d'apprentissage dynamiques ou de tirer profit de la technologie pour compenser l'éloignement physique, les enseignants fournissent de brillants exemples des possibilités qu'offre l'apprentissage à l'extérieur d'une salle de classe traditionnelle.

L'équipe du magazine espère que ce numéro stimulera votre imagination, donnera un nouvel élan à votre pratique enseignante et confirmera l'influence que vous exercez en tant qu'enseignants. Peu importe où vous enseignez, les relations que vous cultivez avec vos élèves formeront immanquablement la pierre angulaire de leur parcours scolaire.

Merci de vous dévouer sans relâche à façonner le cœur et l'esprit des jeunes qui représentent l'avenir de l'Alberta. Et comme toujours, merci de nous lire. 

Letters



We want your feedback

We'd like to hear from you! Please send us general feedback, your thoughts on items that you particularly liked (or didn't), suggestions for future content, letters to the editor.

We really do want to hear from you. After all, this is your magazine.

Email your feedback to Elissa Corsi, editor-in-chief, elissa.corsi@ata.ab.ca or Cory Hare, managing editor, cory.hare@ata.ab.ca.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR—GUIDELINES

Word limit: 300

Please include

- your first and last name,
- basic information about your teaching assignment (i.e. school, grade, subject).

All letters are subject to editing for length, clarity, punctuation, spelling and grammar.



Congratulations to \$100 winner!

After completing the *ATA Magazine's* reader survey last summer, retired teacher Paula Driscoll was selected in a random draw and is the winner of a \$100 gift card.

Driscoll retired in 2016 after a 40-year teaching career that included stops in High Prairie, Slave Lake, High Level, Kinuso, Fox Creek and Edmonton.

The magazine's reader survey garnered more than 800 responses. This feedback will help shape the publication in the years ahead. Thank you to everyone who contributed their thoughts. 

PHOTO SUPPLIED BY PAULA DIRSCOLL; ISTOCK

CORRECTIONS

In its feature on women in leadership, the fall 2023 issue of the *ATA Magazine* incorrectly stated that Karen Ingalls was the first woman to serve as a co-ordinator for the Alberta Teachers' Association; however, this distinction actually belongs to Mary-Jo Williams.

Williams became a coordinator in 1984, when she was appointed to the position in the Professional Development program area. Ingalls became a coordinator in 1990, in Operations.

The article "Gaining insights, opening doors, creating connection," which appeared in the Research Insights section of the fall 2023 issue of the *ATA Magazine*, neglected to list the following two individuals as article co-authors.

- Roswita Dressler, associate professor, Werklund School of Education, University of Calgary
- Jingzhou Liu, postdoctoral associate/assistant diversity co-ordinator, University of Calgary

The *ATA Magazine* apologizes for these omissions. 



PHOTO BY RYAN PARKER

FROM THE PRESIDENT MOT DU PRÉSIDENT

Jason Schilling

President, ATA
Président de l'ATA

Valuable lessons can come from anywhere

TEACHERS AND SCHOOL LEADERS are life-long learners. We are always looking for the lesson in our experiences and how we can use that lesson in our classrooms.

What we learn often comes from formal professional development opportunities, collaboration, book talks or the many courses we take to improve our practice. However, during my teaching career, I was surprised at how much I learned about my teaching practice from my students.

My students were great sounding boards for learning strategies or new pieces of literature I wanted to try in class. They were always quick to let me know what worked, and were especially quick to express their displeasure if an assignment was too difficult. Over the course of a semester, I learned to refine my lessons, update my teaching units and develop meaningful assessments.

What was most surprising was how much my students taught me about grace, patience and empathy. I can think of many times when a student came to class without an assignment completed or emotionally in a place where they were not ready to learn. It was during these moments that I had to place the task-oriented teacher aside and focus on what I needed to do to make this student feel safe, cared for and heard.

Students today are entering our classrooms with more complex needs that require teachers and school leaders to exercise a set of skills that is more varied than ever before. The beautiful thing about teachers is we know that the lessons we need can come from just about anywhere, and sometimes when we least expect it. I am grateful for every lesson I learned as a teacher, regardless of the source or whether it was painful or beneficial, because each one made me better. 

Toutes les situations peuvent être source de précieuses leçons

LES ENSEIGNANTS ET LES LEADEURS scolaires sont des apprenants à vie. Nous cherchons toujours à tirer des leçons de nos expériences et à comprendre comment ces leçons peuvent nous servir dans la salle de classe.

Nos apprentissages s'effectuent souvent dans le cadre d'activités formelles de perfectionnement professionnel, de démarches collaboratives, d'échanges à propos de nos lectures ou des nombreux cours que nous suivons dans le but d'améliorer notre pratique. J'ai toutefois été surpris de constater, au cours de ma carrière d'enseignant, à quel point mes élèves jouaient un rôle important dans mon apprentissage au sujet de ma propre pratique pédagogique.

En effet, mes élèves étaient une excellente source de rétroaction sur les stratégies d'apprentissage ou les nouvelles œuvres littéraires que je voulais introduire en classe. Ils s'empressaient toujours de me dire ce qui fonctionnait bien et se montraient particulièrement empressés d'exprimer leur mécontentement lorsqu'une tâche était trop difficile. J'apprenais donc, tout au long du semestre, à peaufiner mes leçons, à mettre à jour mes unités d'apprentissage et à créer des évaluations significatives.

Or, le plus surprenant, c'est tout ce que mes élèves m'ont enseigné sur la grâce, la patience et l'empathie. Je me rappelle de nombreuses occasions où un élève s'est présenté en classe sans avoir terminé un travail ou dans un état émotif tel qu'il n'était pas prêt à apprendre. Dans ces moments, j'ai dû mettre de côté mes préoccupations d'enseignant relativement aux tâches à accomplir pour me concentrer sur ce que je devais faire afin que cet élève se sente en sécurité, bien entouré et compris.

De nos jours, les élèves arrivent dans nos salles de classe avec des besoins plus complexes qui exigent des compétences plus variées que jamais de la part des enseignants et leaders scolaires. Ce qui est merveilleux chez les enseignants, c'est que nous savons que toute situation est susceptible de nous enseigner les leçons dont nous avons besoin, parfois au moment où nous nous y attendons le moins. Je suis reconnaissant pour chaque leçon que j'ai apprise en tant qu'enseignant, peu importe sa provenance ou le fait qu'elle ait été douloureuse ou bénéfique, parce que chacune d'elles a fait de moi une meilleure personne. 

ARTA 101

FREE Membership for Active Teachers

Whether your retirement is just around the corner or years away, you can join ARTA 101 for **FREE** and start accessing the advantages of membership today!

APPLY NOW

Scan this QR code and fill out the ARTA 101 application form or visit arta.net/arta-101 to apply online.



ARTA 101 MEMBERSHIP ADVANTAGES



Scholarships

Scholarships for you and your family — two **\$2,500 scholarships** are awarded each year.



Contests

ARTA's year-round contests keep members engaged and in touch with their creative spirits.



Resources

Access to retirement planning, financial wellness, and mental health resources.



Education Advocacy

Add your voice to the **30,000** members who support education in Alberta.



Discount Program

Gain access to discounts from a large variety of businesses and services throughout Alberta, including Broadway Across Canada, Magic Bus, The Canadian Brewhouse, Goodlife Fitness, and many more.



Archival issues of the **ATA Magazine** can be just as relevant now as they were when originally published, or they can remind us how far we've come. You decide.

Check out these items from the May/June 1991 issue of the **ATA Magazine**, which focused on second-language learning.



Second-language learning

33 YEARS AGO

“

“Learning to ‘listen’ to my students ‘talk’ (verbally and nonverbally) has proven to be a major task in second-language teaching. While many of the difficulties in communication are the obvious result of mistakes in words or expressions, effective second-language teaching requires a commitment to the many subtleties of expression—taken-for-granted assumptions, a sensitivity to the needs and world of the student and plenty of understood humour on both sides of the classroom.”

— Gae Mackwood,
“Adventures in ESL”

“

“If cultural differences were mentioned, it was usually done so from the perspective of the hegemonic culture, with the ESL student seen in terms of his or her differences from some magical Anglo-conformist norm. As budding ESL teachers, we were seldom encouraged to understand the pivotal cultural issues. Serious consideration of matters such as intercultural awareness were topics for cross-cultural psychology, not for ESL teacher training, according to the traditionalists. ... That race, culture, language and ethnicity form the context of educational practice for these students is seldom a real consideration, and we all are poorer for it.”

— Agnes Yu, “Reflections on Immigrant Education”



“

“Now that I teach French immersion, it is this, above all, that I want my students to understand. If they can become effective communicators in another language, they will have the key to many doors, but more importantly, to many hearts and minds.”

— Barbara Larochelle,
“The Key to Many Doors”





ILLUSTRATION BY MATEUSZ NAPIERALSKI

Teaching for the planet

Climate change, the right to education and Education International

Lisa Everitt

Executive Staff Officer, ATA

IN 2015, MEMBER STATES of the United Nations set out 17 sustainable development goals (SDGs) intended to eradicate poverty; eliminate inequality; and create economic, social and environmental conditions that provide for a thriving population and planet. The objectives include SDG 4, which stipulates that member states “ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.” The 17 goals and the 169 targets set out within the goals are intended to guide the decision-making processes and actions of member states, with 2030 as the timeline for completion.

The SDGs are an integrated roadmap intended to create a better future for all, and while this article considers the right to education, SDG 13 also applies. SDG 13 demands that member states “take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts.” While the connection between the right to education and mitigation of climate change may appear to be loose, it becomes apparent when the impacts of climate change on schools are considered.

CLIMATE CHANGE

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (2023) writes that “human-caused climate change is already affecting many

weather and climate extremes in every region across the globe” (p. 5) and that “approximately 3.3 to 3.6 billion people live in contexts that are highly vulnerable to climate change” (p. 6). The International Displacement Monitoring Center (2023) reports that in 2022, 31.8 million people were displaced within their own countries due to weather-related reasons such as flooding, storms, drought, wildfire, landslides and extreme temperatures. The internal displacement in 2022 is also reported to be 41 per cent higher than average of the previous decade. When people must leave their homes and communities because of flooding or

other weather-related reasons; the urgent need for safety; or to access clean water, adequate food and community support, schooling will be disrupted.

In addition to disruptions to access to education due to migration out of disaster zones during climate-change events, infrastructure such as schools is placed at risk or is destroyed. The effect of these weather events has “caused widespread adverse impacts and related losses and damages to nature and people that are unequally distributed across systems, regions and sectors” (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change 2023, 6). Not all countries have the same ability to replace

When people must leave their homes and communities because of flooding or other weather-related reasons, along with the urgent need to be safe and have access to clean water, adequate food and community support, schooling will be disrupted.

lost buildings, technology and materials, so education disruption in some countries may impact students and teachers for many years. In addition, as we have seen with events such as Hurricane Katrina, many residents who leave their communities and homes may never return, leading to a permanent change for the city or town as well as the education system. Finally, those areas that are impacted by the temporary or permanent migration may not have supports available for the influx of population. In this regard, work must be done to adapt.

UNESCO (2023), in the highlights of its report “Learning at Risk: The Impact of Climate Displacement on the Right to Education”, noted that the policy response to those impacted by climate events is uneven across the globe. Consequently, UNESCO recommends that governments across the world develop comprehensive policy responses including developing

climate-resilient infrastructure, building strong social nets and fostering community resilience through education. UNESCO also calls for the provision of multiple pathways for accessing educational opportunities, particularly in the wake of a weather event.

WHAT IS THE RESPONSE OF EDUCATION INTERNATIONAL TO CLIMATE CHANGE?

Education International (EI), the global union federation for teachers and education workers, has 338 member organizations and 32 million members across 178 countries and territories. In 2020, the EI board of directors adopted a campaign called Teach for the Planet and set out policy to focus on climate change to support SDG 4. The policy position was adopted in part because EI recognized that “educators are already feeling the escalating impacts of the climate emergency in their personal and professional lives” (Torralba 2022, 2) and that these challenges were growing. The EI policy has five elements:

1. To encourage governments to mandate quality climate education for all
2. To ensure that students leave education climate-literate and equipped with the skills and knowledge needed to tackle climate change, adapt to uncertainties and take part in building a more sustainable future
3. To create quality climate-change curricula that is scientifically based and addresses the ethical, cultural, political, social and economic dimensions of climate change
4. To ensure that teachers are trained and supported to provide quality climate change education
5. To ensure that schools and learning environments are transformed to support quality climate-change education, including building school infrastructure that is climate-resilient

The work of EI in supporting climate change and the continuity of public education has its roots in the union movement going back to 1995, when “Les Lepold of the Labor Institute and Brian Kohler, a labour leader from the Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union of Canada (CEP), coined the term ‘just transition’ at a presentation to the International Joint Commission on Great Lakes Water Quality” (Torralba 2022, 4). For unions, the term “just transition” recognizes that we are linked to the environment within which we live and that unions must “recognize the importance of upholding environmental safeguards alongside of job security and community safety” (Torralba 2022, 4). As the global representative of teachers and educators, EI uses its campaign and policy to support global citizens to create a sustainable, fair and just society going forward into the future. ^{ATA}

References

International Displacement Monitoring Center. 2023. *Global Report on Internal Displacement and Food Security*. <https://www.internal-displacement.org/global-report/grid2023>

Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). 2023. “Summary for Policymakers.” In *Climate Change 2023: Synthesis Report. Contribution of Working Groups I, II and III to the Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change*. Core writing team eds H. Lee and J. Romero. IPCC: Geneva, Switzerland: 1–34. doi: 10.59327/IPCC/AR6-9789291691647.001

Torralba, A. 2022. “Educators on a Heating Planet: Shaping Education Unions’ Vision for a Just Transition.” *Education International*, October 2022. <https://www.ei-ie.org/en/item/26964:educators-on-a-heating-planet-shaping-education-unions-vision-for-a-just-transition>

United Nations Educational, Social and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). 2023. “Education at Risk: The Impact of Climate Displacement on the Right to Education: Highlights.” <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000387844>





Tom Spila: The band plays on

Lindsay Yakimyshyn

Associate Editor, *ATA Magazine*

FOR 44 YEARS, TOM SPILA

watched his students blossom through their involvement in the music programs he taught. Though now retired, his passion for building confidence and community through music has not dimmed.

In the 1970s, Spila began his teaching career as junior and senior high band teacher in Lac La Biche, where he met his wife, Crystal, also a teacher. A few years later, he landed at Camrose Composite High School (CCHS) and went on to teach there for the next 39 years.

Once at CCHS as the band teacher, Spila envisioned creating a more comprehensive music program for the students. Adding to the school's existing opportunities, Spila began offering jazz band, honour band, and beginner and advanced guitar courses. With the encouragement of his principal, Spila also started a choral program, including an extracurricular chamber choir, which—being out of his wheelhouse—represented an opportunity for his own growth in music.

“With respect to developing a music program, I think it is important to have a personal philosophy that will underlie every decision you may make,” Spila says. “If you wish to move forward, you can never be satisfied at the moment. There is always much more to learn.”

Not only did Spila dedicate countless hours to building the school's music program, but he also extended his passion for music education into the community. He founded the Camrose & District Community Band in 1983 and has served as its director for four decades.

“Many musicians stop playing after high school because the opportunity to

continue is not available,” Spila says, reflecting on the founding of the community band. “I wanted to provide that opportunity once again. In February of 1983, 13 adult musicians showed up to rehearsal and we have never looked back.”

With some of the original members still playing, the community band has had as many as 65 members, with ages ranging from 18 to 92.

Over the years, Spila has received many accolades for his contributions to Alberta's music community, including the Alberta Band Association's first Vondis Miller Legacy Award (2004), the Elkhorn Award for Band Director of the Year (2010) and the Alberta Choral Federation's Con Spirito Award (2011). When asked about his greatest achievements, though, his thoughts center on the lives he has touched.

“Music groups can provide a safe and caring place for expression and instill a love of music that can continue for life. Being moved by a piece of music demonstrates sensitivity and openness, qualities that are admirable and can be carried into the world outside the band room.” ^{ATA}

► **Got an idea?** *Unsung Hero* is a space dedicated to honouring ATA members past and present who have had notable achievements, either in the ATA or in their private lives.

If you know of a member whom you feel should be recognized, please contact section editor Lindsay Yakimyshyn at lindsay.yakimyshyn@ata.ab.ca.

Tom Spila

Alberta Government
Centennial Medal, 2005

Governor General of Canada
Queen Elizabeth II Diamond
Jubilee Medal, 2012

Alberta Band Association
Honorary Lifetime
Member Award, 2022

Board member for
the Alberta Band Association
and Choir Alberta

ILLUSTRATION BY ROBERT CARTER



ISTOCK

Championing healthy schools

Wellness role keeps well-being front of mind within a school

Shelley Svidal

Staff Writer, ATA Magazine

EVERY MORNING WHEN SHE DRIVES to school, Sarah Balla listens to Teacher Fan Club, a well-being podcast. She then begins her first class by putting on a calming song and inviting students to relax their bodies and land themselves in the present. After class, she spends her recess meeting with the school's student wellness action team. At staff meetings, she leads a breathing exercise, and once a month she organizes a rainbow lunch that involves a variety of colourful fruits and vegetables.



“Well-being can’t be something that we think of as a nice-to-have.”

—Sarah Balla

To live and breathe well-being is part of the role of a healthy school champion, which involves being the voice for wellness within the school—helping staff and students remember that their overall health is the prerequisite for everything they do.

“Well-being can’t be something that we think of as a nice-to-have,” Balla says.

A healthy school champion for nearly a decade, Balla teaches kindergarten and physical education at St. John XXIII Catholic School in Fort Saskatchewan. Being a healthy school champion involves more than just sharing information, she says. It’s about generating excitement and enthusiasm, providing movement opportunities for students and staff, and encouraging mindfulness. It’s also about giving people the opportunity to try something new.

“It’s important for our students to feel a sense of well-being and for school staff to feel supported in their own personal wellness in order to teach and to learn,” Balla says. “Then teaching and learning can thrive.”

Also known as school wellness champions or health promoters, healthy school champions are instrumental within broader health and wellness efforts, says Brian Torrance, executive director of Ever Active Schools, an Alberta organization that supports healthy school communities.

About half of Alberta’s 2,000 schools have healthy school champions, Torrance estimates. Ever Active Schools works directly with just over 400 schools, providing teacher-friendly resources on physical activity, mental health and overall wellness. The organization also offers professional learning opportunities to help boost the self-efficacy of healthy school champions.

Wellness champions are primarily teachers (and not necessarily physical education teachers), but they can also be school leaders, students or parent volunteers. They can operate at the school level or the school jurisdiction level. Some positions are paid while others are volunteer.

Ideally, Torrance would like all schools to have not only a healthy school champion but also a healthy school team.

“If it falls on one person, it isn’t very sustainable,” he says.

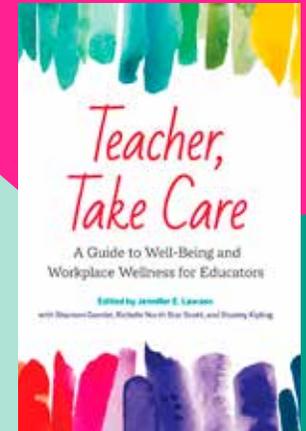
Balla agrees. She’s part of a 23-person team within Elk Island Catholic Schools.

“There’s only so much an individual can do without the backing of a team,” she says.

Balla encourages teachers, school leaders, chaplains, family wellness workers and Indigenous education leads to consider becoming a team member. The prerequisites are a passion for well-being, healthy habits and leadership ability.

“It’s like this delicate balance of having the tools to keep yourself in a good place mentally, physically, spiritually and then having the leadership qualities to generate excitement in your school.” 

RECOMMENDED RESOURCE



Teacher, Take Care: A Guide to Well-Being and Workplace Wellness for Educators

Edited by Jennifer E. Lawson with Shannon Gander, Richelle North Star Scott and Stanley Kipling

Available through the ATA Library

COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL HEALTH

Healthy school champions are part of the Comprehensive School Health framework that emerged in Canada in the 1980s. The internationally recognized framework is dedicated to supporting health and well-being within the school. It consists of the social and physical environment, teaching and learning, healthy school policy, and partnerships and services. Healthy school champions take a lead role in facilitating activities related to all four components.



Tap into tech for literacy and independence

Readily available tools help students who struggle with reading, typing and writing

Danny Maas

Executive Staff Officer, ATA

TECHNOLOGY TOOLS ARE available to support students with a variety of needs. The following three tools, which are readily available to most teachers in Alberta schools, support student literacy and independence.

TEXT TO SPEECH

There are a variety of options available to most Alberta students. For Chromebooks and the Chrome browser, the Read&Write for Chrome toolbar offers features such as text-to-speech, writing and vocabulary supports. It works on any web page containing text along with Google and Microsoft document and presentation software. To learn more, visit academy.texthelp.com.

Text to speech is available on iPad web browsers as a default by selecting the text, then “Speak” from the context menu. For Microsoft Word on Windows devices, the Read Aloud tool offers the same functionality, and the Edge browser has text-to-speech capabilities built in for any website.

SPEECH TO TEXT

Speech-to-text is another common feature available on most classroom technology devices. Google Docs has the “Voice Typing” feature in the Tools menu. Word has the “Dictate” feature, and the dictation (microphone) icon is present on the keyboards of iPads and other iOS devices.



ADAPTED AI IMAGE GENERATED IN ADOBE FIREFLY

This support removes barriers for students who are challenged by typing or writing.

AUDIO OR VIDEO RECORDINGS IN STUDENT FILES

Students with reading or comprehension needs may benefit from hearing embedded audio recordings or viewing embedded videos from their teachers to better understand instructions or feedback. PowerPoint includes the ability to record audio on any file. The free Mote.com extension allows teachers to embed audio recordings on any Google Slide. The free Screencastify extension allows teachers to record audio, video or their screen and copy/paste a link as a text comment anywhere in any document. 

FOR MORE SUPPORT with assistive technologies, connect with the Education Technology Council of the Alberta Teachers' Association (ETCATA) at etc.teachers.ab.ca.

Five X accounts to check out!



FOLLOW ON X



Ditch That Textbook – Matt Miller

@DitchThatTxbk

Teaching with less reliance on the textbook with focus on #edtech and creative teaching.



AI Infused Classroom – Holly Clark

@HollyClarkEdu

I help teachers discover the power of AI to craft memorable and impactful learning experiences.



Dr. Catlin Tucker

@Catlin_Tucker

I ♥ learning! International Trainer. Expertise: #BlendedLearning & #OnlineLearning



Code Breaker Inc.

@codebreakeredu

Breaking code isn't just about programming and AI, it's about disrupting the status quo in education.



ETCATA

@ETCATA

The Education Technology Council of the Alberta Teachers' Association.

Information provided by the Educational Technology Council of the Alberta Teachers' Association.

How to...

BYPASS YOUTUBE ADS



To avoid unwanted ads when sharing a YouTube video with students, insert a hyphen between the T and the U in the YouTube URL.

For example, if the URL for your video is this:

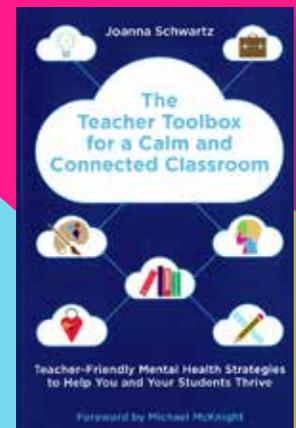
→ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ABCDEFG>

Change it to this:

→ <https://www.yout-ube.com/watch?v=ABCDEFG>

This may not work for all videos, and ads embedded in the video content cannot be removed.

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES



The Teacher Toolbox for a Calm and Connected Classroom: Teacher-Friendly Mental Health Strategies to Help You and Your Students Thrive

Joanna Schwartz

Available through the ATA library



ISTOCK

Ideas into action

Teachers working in support of diversity, equity and human rights

Lindsay Yakimyshyn

Associate Editor, *ATA Magazine*

“I like to think of ideas as potential energy. They’re really wonderful, but nothing will happen until we risk putting them into action.”

– Mae Jemison

TEACHERS ARE FINDING WAYS to engage their school communities on topics related to diversity, equity and human rights, sparking positive conversation—and maybe even change—across the province. Here are just a few of the projects undertaken with the support of the Alberta Teachers’ Association’s Diversity, Equity and Human Rights (DEHR) Grant Program.

Student-led antiracism seminars

QUEEN ELIZABETH SCHOOL,
EDMONTON

Project aim: To address the issue of racism and discrimination in our community and school by organizing student-led antiracism seminars.

The project involved work with the school's Social Justice Committee to develop student-led seminars focused on antiracism and discrimination.

These seminars, which tackled such concepts as privilege and microaggressions, created space for conversations with students to help teachers gain an understanding of the needs of racialized students and lead meaningful learning opportunities for students and staff. In addition to bringing attention to different heritage months (e.g., Hispanic Heritage Month), the committee took feedback from the seminars to positively impact the school culture through special events, such as a Black History Month celebration.

The school's Student Antiracism Committee and staff engaged in additional learning, and plan to continue to hold antiracism seminars and events to celebrate diversity in the school community.

Foothills Rural GSA Network

FOOTHILLS LOCAL NO. 16 DEHR
COMMITTEE

Project aim: To renew and strengthen our Foothills Rural GSA Network after two years of isolation due to the pandemic, and to strive for increased 2SLGBTQIA+ inclusion in the region.

As 2SLGBTQIA+ students experience positive benefits to their health and wellness when we bring them together to affirm, educate and celebrate, this project supported the Foothills Rural GSA Network in its work to

- connect students by virtual and in-person events, such as a virtual games and movie night, and the first Foothills GSA Conference;
- share resources and recommendations and co-create best practices with our network of GSA sponsors;
- strive for increased 2SLGBTQ+ inclusion and work to apply an intersectional framework to all activities;
- engage students, teachers, school leaders and school board trustees in learning more about gender identity and expression.

Edible and medicinal garden through vertical farming

SENATOR PATRICK BURNS
SCHOOL, CALGARY

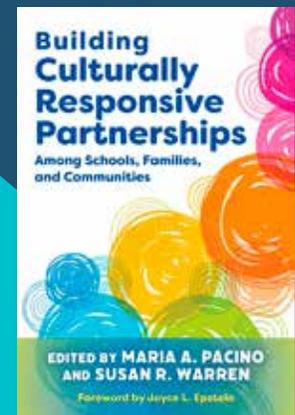
Project aim: To create opportunities for students to explore and connect with Indigenous Albertan and Indigenous Hispanic ways of learning, healing and growing.

With the school being a Spanish bilingual academy, the garden first focused on edible plants native to Latin American countries and Spain, as well as plants native to Alberta. The project allowed students to

- apply scientific research to determine the plants best suited to the project's aim that would also grow well in the garden tower,
- apply humanities-based research to link their plant of choice to its cultural relevance and to actively consider the traditional land use for the plants,
- be actively involved in monitoring the progress of the crops, and
- apply their leadership skills to collectively decide how to use the harvest.

This garden provided ongoing opportunities for learning, caring, problem solving, storytelling, cooking and contemplating worldview perspectives on land availability and agriculture. 

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES



Building Culturally Responsive Partnerships Among Schools, Families, and Communities

Edited by Maria A Pacino and Susan R Warren.

Available through the ATA library

► Want to turn your ideas into actions? Apply for a DEHR grant!

Teachers from all Alberta public, separate and franco-phone schools and ATA locals may apply for grants for up to \$2,000 for DEHR-related projects planned for the upcoming school year. The application deadline is April 30, 2024.

For more information visit, <https://teachers.ab.ca/professional-development/grants-awards-and-scholarships>.



Fort Chip offers unique experience for the adventurous

Due north



Lynne Couturier was terrified when she stepped off the eight-seater Cessna that serves as the main gateway in and out of Fort Chipewyan.

Cory Hare

Managing Editor,
ATA Magazine

Having just earned her education degree, the New Brunswick resident planned to spend a few years gaining experience and then moving to a less remote location closer to home.

“I was very scared. I had never been this far west in my life,” Couturier recalls. “When I saw the little plane ... I was very, very nervous. I didn’t know anybody here.”

Nestled at the western tip of Lake Athabasca, some 220 kilometres north of Fort McMurray, the historic community of about 1,000 is accessible only by air, water or winter

ILLUSTRATION BY KIM VANDERHELM; PHOTOS SUPPLIED BY LYNNECOUTURIER

road (a four to five hour drive on the ice road from Fort McMurray, depending on the weather).

The community's K-12 school, Athabasca Delta, is one of the most northerly schools in the province, and is an integral part of the community. Events like kindergarten graduation and the school Christmas concert are must-attend affairs for the entire community, and teachers and other staff are invited to everything that takes place outside of school.

"Every celebration they have, they invite everybody so you can go and really immerse yourself in the culture that you're not familiar with," Couturier says. "It's kind of cool."

Now in her 10th year of teaching in Fort Chip, Couturier is a fixture as the school's Grade 1 teacher.

She stresses the importance of flexibility. A significant amount of learning is land-based and takes place outside, often in collaboration with local Elders and experts in traditional activities like hunting, trapping and fishing. When teaching in the school, teachers have the opportunity to move away from more colonial practices.

"It's not just, sit in a desk and I'm going to teach you this way," Couturier says. "These kids love to tie [the learning] into their culture or work on the floor rather than sitting in these rows of desks."

The school's connection to the land brings a lot of experiences that just don't happen in urban areas. For example, last year the students dissected a muskrat. Also, students (and staff) are often able to use camps that belong to community members and accompany locals on moose hunting excursions.

When students get a moose while participating in moose

camp, the animal is brought to the school to be processed so everyone can see and learn how all the parts are used. This led to moose stew being featured as the main meal at last year's Christmas concert.

"You're not going to get that experience in a big city school," Couturier says.

NORTHERN LIVING

For a small fly-in community, Fort Chip has a good selection of amenities—a couple small grocery stores, a convenience store and a restaurant—but it's not exactly city living.

"There's nowhere to get all your little stickers ... you can't just go out and get some styrofoam balls to do a science project," Couturier says.

When she arrives for a new school year each August, she brings an extra suitcase full of classroom craft materials.

Like Couturier, many of the teachers working in Fort Chip are away from their families during the school year.

"The school staff become your family up here," Couturier says.

Sometimes staff members gather for fireside chats. There are game nights. One year they had a cross country ski club that met twice a week.

"The northern lights up here are absolutely phenomenal," Couturier says. "I've gone with other teachers down to the lake and just laid on the lake in the middle of winter."

Couturier has put an indefinite hold on her original plan to gain experience and return home.

"I ended up falling in love with the place and the kids and the people," she says. "That's why I keep returning. I really enjoy it up here." ^{ATA}



I ended up falling in love with the place and the kids and the people."

— Lynne Couturier



FEATURED TEACHER

Lynne Couturier

LOCATION

Athabasca Delta Community School, Fort Chipewyan

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

10 years

TIME IN CURRENT SETTING

10 years

EDITOR'S NOTE

It's simple. Teachers teach in classrooms located in schools that are typical school-type buildings in typical towns and cities. At least, that's what immediately comes to mind when we think about teaching, isn't it?

Have you ever pondered the less conventional settings where teaching happens? For example, have you ever wondered what it's like to teach in a school located on a Hutterite colony? How about an outreach school or one located in a hospital? Remote, northern school?

With this feature, we've gone behind the scenes at four unconventional teaching settings to see what life is like.

— Cory Hare

Hospital school

One-room learning with many moving pieces



FEATURED TEACHER

Heidi Hughes

LOCATION

Stollery Children's Hospital School, Edmonton

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

19 years

TIME IN CURRENT SETTING

8 years

What do you teach?

Primarily all math and science courses from grades 7 to 12 at the Stollery. Being in a unique setting such as a hospital, I also have the opportunity to teach elementary, option courses, as well as support humanities courses where needed. I am also the math/science department head for Hospital School Campuses, which is part of Edmonton Public Schools and serves multiple hospital locations.

How many other teachers are there in your setting?

There are four other teachers at the Stollery, but many more teachers, support staff and mental health therapists within the Hospital School Campuses.

What is special/different/unique/interesting about your teaching setting?

On any given day, the staff here are teaching many different subjects all at the same time. This aspect of our work gives our classroom a one-room schoolhouse feel. Our students range from grades 1 to 12 and they all share the same learning environment. This is challenging, but very rewarding—it builds a strong sense of community and belonging.

At the Stollery, no day is the same. We work and learn in a dynamic environment. Students register and join the class at any point in the year, and they are typically all at different points on the curricular spectrum. We meet them where they are at and we pride ourselves in our flexibility. Students transition between classroom and bedside and as teachers, we partner with Alberta Health Services, families and schools all over the province in order to meet student needs.

The difference that education makes in restoring normalcy and hope for a better future is incredible.

— Heidi Hughes

What do you find rewarding about teaching in this environment?

I have always found that one of the most rewarding aspects of working at the Stollery is being able to provide a sense of normalcy for students as they and their families are going through adversity. Some students will be with us for a few months, others will write diploma exams and graduate with Hospital School Campuses.

A student's role is to learn. Adversity can rob a student of this and leave them in a strange limbo. When they have the opportunity to continue learning, it grounds them. The restoration of their academic equilibrium is very therapeutic and integral to their recovery as well as their ability to reintegrate back to their normal lives and community schools.

I love to see students succeed and in this place, I can really see their strength and resilience. Here, I am able to work in a partnership as part of a multidisciplinary team that is centered around the child and their family. The difference that education makes in restoring normalcy and hope for a better future is incredible.





PHOTO BY CRYSTAL PUIIM

HOSPITAL SCHOOLS Where fluctuation is a constant

A hospital school provides educational programming for students actively receiving medical treatment and is supported through a specialized education program agreement with the school authority.

All hospital schools are operated by a school division in collaboration with Alberta Health Services. These schools are subject to the *Education Act* in the same way other schools are.

In Alberta there are 11 schools that operate out of hospitals.

Students transition in and out hospital schools as their needs require, so hospital school enrolment fluctuates throughout the year, and year to year, as does the number of teachers needed.

– Alberta Education

A hospital school provides students with some measure of stability during a time of adversity, says teacher Heidi Hughes.

What are the main challenges?

The Stollery is inherently challenging. There are always a lot of moving pieces here: the diversity of the students and their unique needs, and teaching a multitude of subjects at the same time means that I have to be flexible. I have to be an educator and I have to understand all of the factors that are impacting a student's emotional and academic well-being as they navigate their recovery.

What skills/traits/aptitudes does a teacher need to thrive in this environment?

Flexibility: being able to adapt and adjust on the fly for all of the things that change, such as new students on a daily basis, or bedside teaching when students cannot come to class.

Empathy, but also the ability to stay in the lane of education.

Strong communication skills: with students, parents, medical staff, the mental health transition team, receiving schools (if applicable) that the student is going back to.

Soft skills: being in tune with the sensitivities of situations and what students are going through.

You have to really know the curriculum—vertically and horizontally ... all courses—and maintain academic rigour and pacing in challenging circumstances.

Can you relate a specific situation that illustrates the unique nature of your current teaching assignment?

Four years ago, a student came to the school in the summer of their Grade 9 year. The student had been an honours student before being hospitalized, and achievement had always been a top priority. This was a learner

who desperately wanted to feel normal again and regain what had been taken from them.

Due to their circumstances, the student had to relearn how to speak, walk and write—including how to write with the opposite hand. Sometimes we were only able to do 15 minutes of instruction in a session.

In time, however, the tireless efforts of physical therapists, occupational therapists, psychologists, nursing staff, doctors and teachers paid off and the student made significant gains. This student attended the Stollery School for three years. During that time, they were able to complete many high school courses, some with high honours. Eventually they were able to successfully transition back to a community school. Now they are continuing their education and even volunteering in the community. 



At a colony school...

FEATURED TEACHER

Jennifer Fredeen

LOCATION

Castle School,
Scotford Colony,
Fort Saskatchewan

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

16 years

TIME IN CURRENT SETTING

10 years



respect

What do you teach?

I currently teach all elementary and junior high subjects to my 26 students from grades 1 to 9.

How many other teachers are there in your setting?

I am blessed this year to have another .5 FTE teacher. This is the first time I have ever had the pleasure of having another certificated staff member at my school. Usually, I have a full-time EA and I can count on some extra EA time at some point throughout the year, but it is not always for the entire year.

What is special/different/unique/interesting about your teaching setting?

There are a lot of special things about my school. I teach all the grades in two classrooms. I divide them by division one, and then two and three together. Division 1 is grades 1 to 3, and 4 to 9 are the other group. When teaching, I am not allowed to use any more complicated technology than an overhead projector. No movies, no computers and no internet. It can make things challenging, but you have to think quickly on your feet.

My students are all siblings or cousins. I have a very close relationship with all of the parents, and I have a great amount of support when I need something done in the school. The colony has built me furniture and fixed things that I thought were headed to the trash. Just last week one of the dads welded a stool back together for me.

I also get to go on field trips around the colony to see some interesting farm activities. At least once a year, I get to carry chickens from one barn to another. Most of my former students have a good laugh, because I most definitely CANNOT carry as many as they can in one hand. I also get to have lunch, on occasion, and have been able to try some very interesting foods. My favourite meal is riced potato dumplings smothered in cream sauce and fresh crushed tomatoes alongside some excellently baked chicken hearts. Not a regular meal in my house at all.

What do you find rewarding about teaching in this environment?

I love teaching at a colony school because I have the unique experience of getting to see a student for their entire learning journey. Sometimes that seems daunting. I feel responsible if something didn't stick. However, I'm also responsible for all the successes they achieve. A double-edged sword. It keeps you on your toes.

The students remember everything you did last year, so you can't recycle too much, or they get bored. They also want certain things to happen every single year, and they don't let you forget it.

I have had the joy of teaching on the colony so long that I'm starting to teach students that I held as babies. I have also had the extreme pleasure of meeting the baby of a student I taught. That might just mean I'm getting old



I took a chance on a posting 12 years ago, and once I got to the colony, I haven't left."

— Jennifer Fredeen

What are the main challenges?

The main challenge is the lack of technology. I attend a lot of really interesting PD, but most new programs are moving almost exclusively to online sources. I cannot access these to teach. I also don't have time to print all of them for my own use. It's very frustrating to be forgotten about and not to have access to the best resources.

I sometimes run into differences of opinion with the colony leaders, but I find an open mind and respect helps to navigate those problems with ease. The Hutterite community has been thriving for more than 400 years. I have the mindset that I'm not going to change that in the time that I'm teaching. I do my best, have thoughtful conversations and explain my point of view. In the end, we always do what is best for the students.

What skills/traits/aptitudes does a teacher need to thrive in this environment?

You need to be your own actor, encyclopedia, principal and all-around magician. Being super organized is also a plus. My multi-binder, colour-coded book systems have been helping me succeed for years. You need to be able to adapt quickly, but also adhere to structure (the kids love structure). You need to be

open minded and caring, but strict, probably stricter than you think you need to be.

I took a chance on a posting 12 years ago, and once I got to the colony, I haven't left. The students are fiercely loyal. You're their teacher, and they're my students. We work together to have a great school.

Can you relate a specific situation that illustrates the unique nature of your current teaching assignment?

We were having some slow flushing incidences for a couple of days, when, after lunch, I was informed that the toilets just wouldn't flush anymore.

So I phoned the plumber, who also happened to be the dad of one of the students. In true Hutterite fashion, they showed up right when I was about to start my afternoon.

I waited about 15 minutes, and then brought the students in anyway. They were plenty delighted with the banging going on in the basement. I was just getting into my stride when the big girls in the back started shouting excitedly that the toilet was backing

up all over the floor. The bathroom is just outside of the classroom door.

The junior high girls sprang into action and contained the flood. Next thing we heard was a very loud and very disgruntled yelling coming from the basement. One of my former students rushed up the stairs to tell me the main pipe had exploded all over the basement. I'm sure you can imagine the smell that followed. We had immediate early outdoor gym class while I called my principal to see what to do.

More former students arrived to help clean up the mess. I believe they emptied three, four-litre bottles of undiluted bleach onto that floor. All of the sports equipment was also similarly bleached.

When my principal arrived, we went inside and were assaulted by the smell of bleach. And with that, school was cancelled for the remainder of the day. The culprit was later found to be a banana peel that had been flushed along with some paper towels. Now we have a talk with all new Grade 1 students about acceptable things you can flush in the toilet. Banana peels are a definite NO. ^{ATA}

SO YOU WANT TO TEACH ON A COLONY?

Teaching at a Hutterite colony school is unique and challenging. The teacher works in a culturally specific community with families and students who are English as a second language (ESL) speakers. The school is a one-room facility located on colony property, and the students range from kindergarten to Grade 10. The teacher must always be aware of the duality of the role: working within the parameters set by Alberta Education while being sensitive to the Hutterian culture. Moreover, although all

the colonies are bound by similar religious beliefs, each colony has established its own identity.

Hutterite colony schools are public schools supported by public school districts. As of 2017, Alberta had approximately 250 certificated teachers teaching at 182 colony schools.

— *A Guide for Teachers New to Hutterian Colony Schools*, Alberta Teachers' Association, 2018



Outreach

Approaching life head-on

FEATURED TEACHER

Ross
MacDonald

LOCATION

North Star
Outreach School,
Tofield

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

25 years

TIME IN CURRENT SETTING

9 years



PHOTO BY CRYSTAL PUIM

North Star Outreach in Tofield is a school within a school in which Ross MacDonald serves more as a facilitator than a traditional classroom teacher.

What do you teach?

All core high school courses and CTS, excluding higher level sciences and math. I also provide some guidance counselling.

How many other teachers are there in your setting?

One teacher and one amazing EA

What is special/different/unique/interesting about your current teaching setting?

North Star Outreach (NSO) is essentially a school within a school. Located in a single classroom within Tofield School, North Star has about a dozen full-time students while also facilitating programming to more than 50 other high school students. At any given time, North Star can be delivering more than 30 high school courses.

I am more of a facilitator than a traditional classroom teacher. My EA and I do one-on-one tutorials or small group work. The course material covers all aspects of the Alberta curriculum and the courses we deliver have the same value as those done at any other Alberta school.

What do you find rewarding about teaching in this environment?

Like every teacher, I truly value our students succeeding and doing their very best. When it comes to outreach students, my idea of success is probably much different than a teacher in a “traditional” classroom. Success with outreach kids can be a student showing up to class once in two months, getting themselves checked into rehab, having a healthy baby, finding affordable and safe housing, getting government ID, getting a stable source of food, applying for and receiving government funding ... those are what we consider highly successful students. Of course, academics are all part of what we do at North Star, but it’s the success in overcoming life’s true challenges that really provides us with a sense of accomplishment.

Every year NSO gives out an award for the most improved student, a small monetary award (co-sponsored by a local church) for someone who has overcome the largest hurdles and truly represents the core values of

ILLUSTRATION BY KIM VANDERHELM

OUTREACH SCHOOLS PROVIDE EDUCATIONAL ALTERNATIVE AND SUPPORTS

An outreach program provides an educational alternative for junior and senior high school students who find that traditional school settings do not meet their needs.

Each outreach program is unique and is designed to meet the individual needs of its students.

—Alberta Education

54/63

school authorities
in Alberta provide
outreach programs

100

outreach
sites operate
in Alberta

9,000

students are enrolled at
outreach schools for the
2023/24 school year

NSO. We have given this award out to a teen mom or a young man who was essentially written off by other educators as a lost cause but who successfully finished high school and spent his spare time working at local senior's centre.

Our last recipient was a student who overcame the trauma of a serious drug addiction and an incredibly dangerous life on the streets. She decided to return to school, heard about North Star and came back to school to successfully complete two and a half years of high school in one year. Many of our students are also the first person in their family to ever receive a high school diploma.

What are the main challenges?

Appreciation for what we do, communication between traditional schools and outreaches, finding champions for the cause. It has always been a struggle to tell our stories and share the value we provide to help seriously at-risk students move forward and succeed.

What skills/traits/aptitudes does a teacher need to thrive in this environment?

It is essential that someone who chooses to go into outreach be a very well-rounded individual with a fair amount of life experience, someone who is passionate about helping our most vulnerable and has a deep understanding of the nuances of the Alberta curriculum. You also need to be multidisciplinary and be willing to reach out to subject specialists when you come across a challenging concept.

Outreach teachers need to know where to get the best resources and how to “streamline” essential outcomes. You need to be open-minded, nonjudgmental and willing to champion all comers. You are, in all reality, their last chance. You must be able to actively listen and know where your boundaries are if something is disclosed to you. You will also be required to defend what you do and promote the good and challenging work outreach teachers do, including possibly standing up in court to defend a student's character.

Can you relate a specific situation that illustrates the unique nature of your current teaching assignment?

One day when I was running the senior high side of Lakeside Outreach School in Slave Lake back in the early 2000s, a young man who was known as a notorious troublemaker and a chronic skipper randomly called the school. I answered. Knowing who it was, I of course challenged him about why he wasn't at school. He answered that he was hunting with his grandfather.

Now, Slave Lake has a very active hunting community. There are numerous First Nation reserves in the surrounding area and hunting is a very big deal to those communities as well as to the Métis. So, knowing this, I cut the boy some slack.

He then said, “Can you please come downstairs? I have something I want to show you.”

I went downstairs and he greeted me with the biggest grin. I had never seen so

You need to be open-minded, nonjudgmental and willing to champion all comers.

You are, in all reality, their last chance.

— Ross MacDonald

much joy in the young man. He called me over to his pickup. He was vibrating in anticipation. He lifted up a blood-soaked tarp and exclaimed, “My first kill, Micky D (my nickname). My first kill!” It was an eight-point mule deer—impressive!

Now, this may seem morbid if not horrific to some—the celebration of killing a wild animal—but to the Métis and First Nation communities, it's an honour for someone to share their first kill with you—an honour. It's like a rite of passage. That's what I consider a true, heartfelt reward. That young man thought enough of me and what our outreach program provided him that he had to show me the outcome of his first successful hunt. 

It's so quiet.



Idyllic isolation

Remote school
offers adventure
and opportunity

Cory Hare
Managing Editor,
ATA Magazine



Those three words are how Brittney Lyon describes what it's like when she steps outside her home in the evening. Sure, she might hear the odd sound—a far-off ATV, a barking dog or water lapping against the nearby lakeshore—but what she mostly hears is profound silence.

This tranquillity is one of the perks of teaching at one of the most isolated schools in Alberta.

"I knew the minute I got my degree that I was not going to work in Edmonton or Calgary or Red Deer," Lyon says. "I did not want a city. It's not my dream in life."

The community of Chipewyan Lake (not to be confused with Fort Chipewyan) lies 110 kilometres straight north of Wabasca, which is itself a remote outpost located 120 kilometres northeast of Slave Lake. Chip, as locals call it, is a two-hour drive on a temperamental gravel road.

A network of casually arranged, unpaved roads mostly skirt the southern shore of Chipewyan Lake. The community of Chipewyan Lake has no services of any kind. There's no grocery store or convenience store. No gas station. No hotel, restaurant, library or community centre. Besides the nine-room school, there's a scattering of houses for the roughly 80 residents, a band office for the Bigstone Cree Nation, a shop for the Municipal District of Opportunity and a water treatment plant. There is also a landing strip that airplanes and helicopters can access in emergencies.

The school has three classrooms, a library, a front office, a principal's office, a staff room, a kitchen and a full-sized gym. Its six staff include the principal/teacher, a second teacher, an educational assistant, a Cree language instructor, a secretary and a cook/custodian.

REMOTE TEACHING

The school's 25 students are split into two groups: K-4 and 5-9. There are also four high school students who use the school to remotely attend Northland School Division's online school.

Lyon is a third-year teacher. She taught for a year in Fort Chipewyan, then switched to Chipewyan Lake because of its year-round road access. At 26, Lyon is also the school's principal.

Lyon teaches the 5-9 cohort. While varied in age, these students also present with a wide range of academic abilities, which Lyon manages through a lot of group work.

"Ready for anything" is Lyon's motto. She says that her teaching assignment calls for a sense of adventure and relentless flexibility. Teachers must be attuned to what the students can handle and be willing to adjust on the fly to avoid pushing students beyond their limits.

"When you push, you lose them," Lyon says. "The relationship means everything to these kids. If you can't

I knew the minute I got my degree that I was not going to work in Edmonton or Calgary..."

— Brittney Lyon

build that relationship, they do not tolerate or respect you and they stop coming."

To Lyon's students, Edmonton is unbelievably huge. Some of them have never travelled beyond the provincial capital, and they love hearing and learning about the broader world.

"It's just a really nice feeling that kids get so excited about the little things," Lyon says.

Among her challenges as a teacher and administrator is accommodating kids with special needs because the school has limited resources and expertise on-site. Services like speech and occupational therapy are delivered virtually. And when she needs a substitute, she relies on noncertificated community members as there are no certificated subs available in the area.

Northland School Division has three pedagogical experts who regularly visit schools to support the teachers. One of those is Crystal Colville. She said that planning is one of the keys to living and teaching in a remote location.

"You really have to plan in advance to make sure that you have whatever you're going to need for the kids or yourself," she said. "You can't just run to the store on a Tuesday night."

Mindset is another key. It helps to be self-reliant with hobbies and interests, as well as willing to be active in the local community.

"That really seems to help our teachers—when they can get involved," Colville said.

FEATURED TEACHER

Brittney Lyon

LOCATION

Chipewyan Lake School, Chipewyan Lake

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

3 years

TIME IN CURRENT SETTING

2 years



Chipewyan Lake School through the seasons



PHOTOS SUPPLIED BY BRITTNEY LYON

The division ensures that its remote teachers are well supported. Colville encourages teachers to “come for the adventure and see what’s there.”

“It’s definitely a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity and definitely worth doing.”

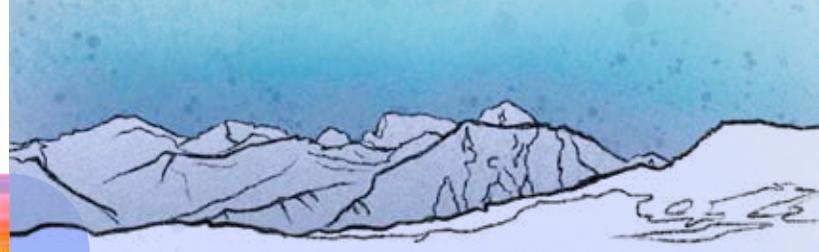
REMOTE LIVING

Within a stone’s throw of the school sit two houses owned by the Northland School Division. One, a split level, is a duplex containing two self-contained suites. Lyon occupies the upper suite while the lower one is reserved for visiting school division officials. Next door is a three-bedroom mobile home that’s occupied by the second teacher. Both houses provide a spectacular view of the nearby lake.

The nearest services are in Wabasca, a two-hour drive when the road is passable, which it isn’t during wet weather. Outings such as grocery runs and medical appointments consume an entire day. Lyon makes it out to Slave Lake or Edmonton about two weekends a month, depending on what she needs for the school or her household.

She’d eventually like to move up to a larger centre with more ready access to medical services, but not a major city. Something like Wabasca or Calling Lake would fit the bill.

“I just really enjoy this life ... the isolation,” Lyon says. “And it’s the kids. I know that every teacher says all the time that it’s the kids, but I probably wouldn’t continue living in the isolation that I do if there weren’t really great kids here. These kids here are truly incredible.” 



RECRUITMENT AN ISSUE FOR REMOTE SCHOOLS



Finding teachers is an ongoing challenge for rural jurisdictions like Northland School Division, which has 1,700 students in 19 schools located throughout the northern half of the province.

“Like other rural school divisions, we struggle with recruitment, so I have to focus on what we offer,” said Krista Veitch, Northland’s associate superintendent of human resources.

The division’s offerings include schools that are located near mountains, lakes and rivers, updated staff housing, small class sizes and two financial assistance programs that help educators advance their careers.

One such program pays for educational assistants to earn their teaching degrees if they return to their home school as a teacher. The other program provides 80 per cent tuition reimbursement to teachers who further their education, such as through a masters or PhD program.

“The teachers who come here tend to stay,” Veitch says, “because of the support they receive and the relationships they form in their communities.”

The most northerly school in Alberta is Upper Hay River School, located in Meander River, alongside Highway 35, 73 kilometres north of High Level.

— Cory Hare

ILLUSTRATION BY KIM VANDERHELM

NORTHERN STUDENT TEACHER BURSARY

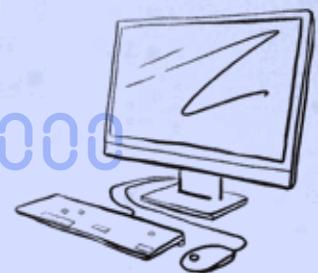
As an incentive to attract teachers to northern locations, the province offers the Northern Student Teacher Bursary, which provides students with \$18,000 over two years in exchange for a commitment to spend three years teaching full-time in northern Alberta.

Details are available at <https://www.alberta.ca/northern-student-teacher-bursary>.

— Government of Alberta



\$18,000





CHRISTIAN ALLIANCE
INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL
宣道國際學校

Teaching opportunities in a Hong Kong Christian School

Current Openings

- Drama Teacher (High School)
- English Language Arts Teacher (High School)
- English Language Learner Specialist
- French Teacher
- Homeroom Teacher (Grade 1 to Grade 6)
- Learning Support Teacher
- Physical Education Teacher
- Religious Studies Teacher
- Science Teacher (High School)
- Science Team Lead

We welcome you to email your application to recruit@caisbv.edu.hk if you would like to get in touch and discuss teaching opportunities.



☎ (852) 3699 3899

✉ recruit@caisbv.edu.hk

📘 CAIS.HK

📷 CAISBV

📍 33 King Lam Street, Lai Chi Kok,
Kowloon, Hong Kong



Scan to see our school
www.caisbv.edu.hk



to *teach* at CAIS

Finding a path forward

Concerted effort needed to avoid mass teacher exodus

Phil McRae

Associate Coordinator, Research, ATA



I substitute in multiple schools across a range of economic communities and the needs of students are high in all.”

- Respondent, ATA pulse survey of teachers and school leaders

TEACHERS ARE THE HEART OF EDUCATION, but their spirit is being tested as never before. Several Alberta Teachers’ Association (ATA) research studies have pointed to a troubling pattern: one in three Alberta teachers regularly contemplates exiting the profession, leaving the province or retiring from teaching. Many Alberta teachers also report that, if given a chance to start anew, they would do something other than becoming a K-12 teacher.

Leaving one’s vocation often comes after long periods of struggle. In fact, our research shows that teachers who exit the profession start planning approximately two years before their departure.

In the wake of this trend, Alberta teachers find themselves at a significant crossroads, a constellation of factors brought about by an increasingly unsustainable and complex K-12 context.

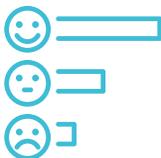
CONTEXT

In an ATA pulse research study conducted in December 2023, a majority of teachers and administrators reported an increase in the complexity and diversity of student needs in the classroom, including higher incidences of social/emotional issues, behavioural challenges, cognitive needs, English as an additional language, socioeconomic factors and linguistic diversity.

Class sizes are reportedly getting larger while supports for students with exceptional needs are decreasing. This is leading to the belief that inclusion, while philosophically supported, is failing due to a lack of dedicated supports, resources and broader societal interventions. Further complicating matters is the rise of aggression in schools.

EXIT INTERVIEWS

To gain deeper insights into the state of the profession, in June 2023 the ATA conducted a series of exit interviews with members who’d decided to leave teaching in Alberta or the profession entirely. The findings generally reveal a shared sentiment of dissatisfaction that spans career stages. The narrative is clear: rather than incremental changes, Alberta teachers are seeking a seismic shift in how the profession is valued and supported.



The Alberta Teachers’ Association has been conducting regular pulse surveys of its members since 2020. The most recent survey involved a random sampling of more than 2,148 teachers and school leaders.

The crux of the issues appears to lie at the intersection of work satisfaction and systemic demands. Our educational system is not just about imparting knowledge; it's about nurturing future Albertans, citizens and societal leaders, and that requires a well-supported and well-funded public education system. This environment has been compromised by an incessant drive for efficiency, a lack of support for inclusive classrooms, larger and more complex classrooms, a narrowing of curricular objectives to literacy and numeracy, and a global education reform movement that often overlooks the human element.

CALL TO ACTION

The current situation is not sustainable. Workforce planning, often an overlooked aspect of education in Alberta for the last decade, has emerged as a pivotal need. Below are the five interconnected actions the ATA is recommending to prevent an exodus of teachers from the profession:

1. Reduce class sizes.
2. Enhance support and resources.
3. Strengthen teacher support systems.
4. Facilitate effective curriculum implementation.
5. Improve communication and respect.

BOLD STEPS

The path forward is one of collaboration and bold steps toward a rejuvenated K-12 landscape. The vision is one of comprehensive support systems, where funding is no longer a hurdle but a bridge to better education. Imagine a world where every teacher feels empowered through their own professional judgment and supported to lead, innovate and inspire. This world is not beyond our reach with a concerted effort from government bodies, school boards and communities to prioritize public education. After all, the vitality of a strong and resilient teaching profession is the bedrock upon which the future of public education in Alberta stands.

The responsibility lies with all of us—teachers, school leaders, system leaders, government, policy makers and community members—to advocate for a system that respects and uplifts those who have dedicated their lives to the noble cause of public education. 

ATA Pulse Survey | December 2023

COMPLEXITY IN THE CLASSROOM



86% of teachers reported an increase in the complexity and diversity of student needs



56% of teachers reported a decrease in support for students with special needs

TOP STUDENT COMPLEXITIES	% OF TEACHERS REPORTED
Social/emotional issues	83
Behavioural challenges	78
Cognitive needs	63

62% of teachers reported larger class sizes compared to last year; of those, 40% reported a class size larger than 30

SNAPSHOT: AGGRESSION IN ALBERTA SCHOOLS

52% of teacher respondents experienced bullying or violence at work between September and November 2023

- Of these
- 95% reported that the aggression occurred in person
 - 60% reported that the aggression was perpetrated by students in their own classroom

STUDENT VS STUDENT

70% of teacher respondents observed students making demeaning or hateful remarks toward classmates over differing views

Of these reported negative remarks

- 69% related to sexual orientation and gender identity
- 62% related to racial discrimination
- 50% related to COVID policies
- 31% related to climate-change science

The new thoroughfare

Removing the stop signs at the intersections of gender and educational leadership

Elissa Corsi

Associate Executive Secretary, ATA

Samira ElAtia

Professor of Education and Associate Dean, Graduate Studies, Campus Saint-Jean, University of Alberta

IF TEACHING IS SUCH A feminized profession, then why are so few women in leadership positions? This is one of the primary questions driving a new study being conducted by the University of Alberta in partnership with the Alberta Teachers' Association, the College of Alberta School Superintendents and the Fédération des conseils scolaires francophones de l'Alberta. Funded by a Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council partnership development grant, this three-year project explores an underrepresented area of research into the experiences of women in educational leadership, family leaves, unpaid labour and career progression (Park, Lee and Budd 2019). Through the lens of intersectionality (Crenshaw 2017), the different facets that make up one singular identity, we hope to better understand the barriers at play as women navigate their teaching careers and move into educational leadership. The project addresses this multidimensional issue through the following research questions:

- What are women's beliefs, both strengths and challenges, in regard to the role of family leaves on entry and progression in educational leadership?
- What are women's beliefs, both strengths and challenges, in regard to the role of unpaid labour on entry and progression in educational leadership?
- How have the new leadership quality standards and leadership certification

complicated the entry into leadership for women?

- How are the intersectionalities of gender reflected in school leadership in Alberta?

So why this research? The underrepresentation of women in educational leadership in Alberta, and across the world, is concerning for two main reasons. First, "[it] convey[s] to pupils a vision of society where it is legitimate that men occupy the most valued positions" (Moreau, Osgood and Halsall 2007). Second, the education system is "an institution through which gendered divisions are reproduced" (Moreau, Osgood and Halsall 2007).

Thus, there is an urgent need to recognize the lack of cultural, racial and gender diversity in leadership as schools "constitute a key site in which democratic citizenship is understood and practised" (Fuller, Hollingworth and An 2019). In democratic societies of the 21st century, it can no longer be argued that women lack the necessary skills or ambition, or that the pool of qualified women does not exist. "The question, therefore, becomes whether organizations in globalized economies recognize the escalating expectations of leaders [particularly women] together with the intensification of educational labour pitted against the demands of managing family/work conflict" (Blackmore 2013). Additionally, when it comes to school leadership, no solid baseline data exists regarding the gender and intersections in these positions. In fact, across the province, no educational stakeholder records data relating to gender or race.

Given the scope of this project, the research was developed in three phases:

1. Establish baseline data and administer an anonymous survey.
2. Conduct small focus group or individual interviews.

3. Work with the data gathered to pinpoint both the challenges and strengths identified by the women and put forward recommendations to remove the barriers at the intersections of gender and educational leadership.

THE FINDINGS

The first phase of the research has been completed and the data set analyzed. Through an online survey, we have gained an overall understanding of educational leadership across the province.

The survey was sent to school and division leaders, through various channels, in both French and English. It included questions on current leadership position, previous teaching and leadership experiences, past and present care-giving responsibilities and demographic information, as well as educational background and credentials.

The online survey was open to all teachers. Women represented 67.6 per cent and men 28.2 per cent of participants, mirroring quite closely the percentage of men and women working across school divisions in Alberta. The survey was completed by 640 educational leaders from all corners of the province, which puts us in the margin of error and allows us to extrapolate valid and reliable information from our data.

Respondents worked predominantly for public school boards, and nearly eight in 10 (76 per cent) were principals or assistant principals. Of these, elementary school principals and assistant principals were the largest group (46 per cent) whereas secondary school (junior high and high school) principals and assistant principals represented 31 per cent of participants. The age of respondents ranged from 41 to 60.

continued on page 34



THE MEMBERSHIP THAT MORE THAN MAKES THE GRADE.

Save money,
get exclusive benefits
and more with AMA.

On top of our trusted roadside assistance that rescues you across North America, an AMA membership saves you off the road too. Get discounts when you shop, earn reward dollars on the gift cards you buy, and enjoy exclusive deals and benefits when you book vacations with AMA Travel. Get all of this and more when you're an AMA member.



Join today

ama.ab.ca | 1-844-989-6381



continued from page 32

The survey revealed three important findings:

THE AGE GAP

First, there is a significant difference in the ages reported of men and women entering into leadership roles. The Mann-Whitney U test was used to compare the age at which men and women obtain leadership positions. The results reveal that

- when awarded the position of department head, women's age scores were significantly higher than those of men;
- when appointed to the position of assistant principal, women's age scores were significantly higher than those of men; and
- when first designated a principal, women's age scores were significantly higher than those of men.

Additionally, as the level of leadership responsibility increased, the gap in age became wider. As we consider the impacts of this data, important issues are starting to emerge, such as the difference in earning power between men and women. If women are entering leadership positions later in life, then their access to leadership allowances and earning capacity is reduced when compared to their male counterparts on a similar career trajectory.

THE MOTHERHOOD PENALTY

Second, we examined if there was any relationship between appointment to a leadership position and variables such as having children, having dependent adults for whom participants are the primary caregiver, having accessed a maternity or parental leave and having accessed a

long-term unpaid personal leave due to caregiving responsibilities.

Data reveals one significant relationship between leadership appointment and those variables. A negative correlation was found between appointment to a leadership position and taking a maternity leave. Teachers who accessed a maternity leave were appointed to leadership positions later in life than those who had not.

Although family leaves and unpaid work can be perceived as barriers to female teachers intending to become principals or superintendents, we recognize that women are not passive agents when it comes to their career path progression, and they work hard at navigating professional ambition and family commitments. However, relying solely on a woman's individual choice and agency to obtain equal opportunities in the workplace and a fair division of labour in the household, as suggested in liberal/mainstream feminism, is not just insufficient; it is contradictory. Systemic barriers and chronic social problems need to be addressed at the systemic level through the lens of system thinking (Mayer and Le Bourdais 2019). In education, this may involve hiring practices, a reimagining of part-time work, remuneration and pension repayments after leaves. These are all issues that we are exploring as they are beginning to emerge from our phase two focus group sessions.

LACK OF DIVERSITY

Finally, among the participants very little diversity was reported. In Alberta, over 25 per cent identify as visible minorities (term used in Statistics Canada reports) and only 4.1 per cent identified as such in our

data set. Because of the lack of diversity in school leadership, students and teachers are not seeing themselves represented.

MOVING FORWARD

As we progress through the research project, we are motivated to recommend positive changes to the policies, both locally at the school division level and provincially so that all women working in education can enter and progress through leadership careers. It is our hope that this project will fill the missing baseline data; take up the gap in research, knowledge and practice to develop much needed policy to better support working women across the intersections of gender; and, finally, create a tool so that educational partners can continue to track and manage data.

To make these changes, it is imperative that women are around the table in the decision-making process. As the late justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg said, "Women belong in all places where decisions are being made. It shouldn't be that women are the exception." 

References

- Blackmore, J. 2013. "A Feminist Critical Perspective on Educational Leadership." *International Journal of Leadership in Education* 16, no 2: 139–154.
- Crenshaw, K. W. 2017. *On Intersectionality: Essential Writings*. New York, NY: The New Press.
- Fuller, E., L. Hollingworth and B. P. An. 2019. "Exploring Intersectionality and the Employment of School Leaders." *Journal of Educational Administration* 57, no 2: 134–151.
- Mayer, M., and C. Le Bourdais. 2019. "Sharing Parental Leave Among Dual-Earner Couples in Canada: Does Reserved Paternity Leave Make a Difference?" *Population Research and Policy Review* 38, no 2: 215–239.
- Moreau, M, P., J. Osgood and A. Halsall. 2007. "Making Sense of the Glass Ceiling in Schools: An Exploration of Women Teachers' Discourses." *Gender and Education* 19, no 2: 237–53.
- Park, T. Y., E. S. Lee and J. W. Budd. 2019. "What Do Unions Do for Mothers? Paid Maternity Leave Use and the Multifaceted Roles of Labor Unions." *Industrial and Labor Relations Review* 72, no 3: 662–692.
- Statistics Canada. 2022. "Visible Minority by Ethnic or Cultural Origin." Statistics Canada website. www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?pid=9810033701 (accessed Nov. 7, 2023).

Systemic barriers and chronic social problems need to be addressed at the systemic level through the lens of system thinking.

—Mayer and Le Bourdais
2019

PLAN OPTIONS TO
SUIT YOUR LIFESTYLE!

Extended Health Care and Dental
plan options, so you can choose
the coverage that is best for you!

Is it time to
sketch out your
vision of
RETIREMENT?

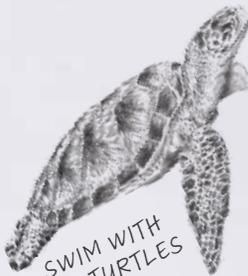
Choose an **ARTA Benefit Plan** to
dream big and worry less – because
your peace of mind matters.



READ THE
TOP 100 BOOKS
OF ALL TIME



RELAX
ON A BEACH



SWIM WITH
SEA TURTLES



WANDER IN THE MOUNTAINS

Visit

artabenefits.net



to learn more and
enrol in the plan that is
best for your lifestyle.

TRIP
CANCELLATION &
INTERRUPTION
INSURANCE

EMERGENCY
TRAVEL INSURANCE
COVERAGE

Does not include
stability clauses or a
termination age!

Check it out!

These resources are now available through the ATA library.

Have you ever used your ATA library? If not, you should give it a try. Books, DVDs, robots and more delivered right to your doorstep with return postage paid by us. Great teaching resources are waiting for you. Contact us at library@ata.ab.ca.

1. **Radical Listening: Reading and Writing Conferences to Reach All Students**

Active listening is the key to developing rubrics, feedback and guidance for students. In this book, teachers will find useful strategies for developing active listening skills to use in reading and writing conferences.

2. **Oser avec audace**

L'auteur de ce livre explique comment le courage d'être vulnérable transforme notre façon de vivre, d'aimer, d'être un parent et leader.

3. **Finding Your Blinds Spots: 8 Guiding Principles for Overcoming Implicit Bias in Teaching**

We all have biases toward and against certain things. When we are aware of our biases, we can consciously compensate for them. When biases are hidden, even to ourselves, they can have unanticipated impacts on our students. This great book gives teachers the tools to search out and identify their hidden biases so that they can better reach all students in the classroom.

4. **Supporting Adolescents with Autism in Secondary Schools**

The mix of teenage hormones and autism is a daunting challenge for students and their teachers. This book explains the research-based strategies developed by the Center on Secondary Education for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders (CSESA) to support students through the difficult transition in and out of adolescence and high school.

5. **Infusing Self-Advocacy into Physical Education and Health Education**

Self-advocacy is one of the most important skills a student can learn, and this useful book outlines how teachers can help students learn to speak up as well as to know their rights, their responsibilities and how to do research to advocate for their position.

Information provided by ATA librarian Sandra Anderson.



Your colleagues recommend

Sinead Dullaghan

Daring Greatly: How the Courage to Be Vulnerable Transforms the Way We Live, Love, Parent, and Lead by Brené Brown. I would recommend it because it reminds you that it's important to open yourself up to being vulnerable.

Shawna Watt

Is Everyone Really Equal? by Özlem Sensoy and Robin DiAngelo. This book offers an introduction to key concepts in social justice education. It will really challenge your beliefs about privilege, intersectionality and oppression.

6. *Social Emotional Stories: Lessons and Learning from Plants and Animals*

Teachers can use the lessons and activities that accompany the stories to support young students in developing healthy self-esteem and positive character.

7 *Animer des groupes d'entraînement aux habiletés sociales*

Cet ouvrage est un véritable guide pratique avec des conseils relatifs à la mise en place d'un groupe thérapeutique. Il contient des outils pédagogiques « prêts à l'emploi » et adaptables aux âges ou au niveau cognitif des enfants et adolescents.

8. *Struggling with Substance Use: Supporting Students' Social Emotional Learning*

Substance abuse among students rarely happens without co-occurring disorders. Author Deborah Lynch argues that teachers need awareness of the presentation of this abuse in the classroom and evidenced-based strategies for supporting these students in their learning journeys.

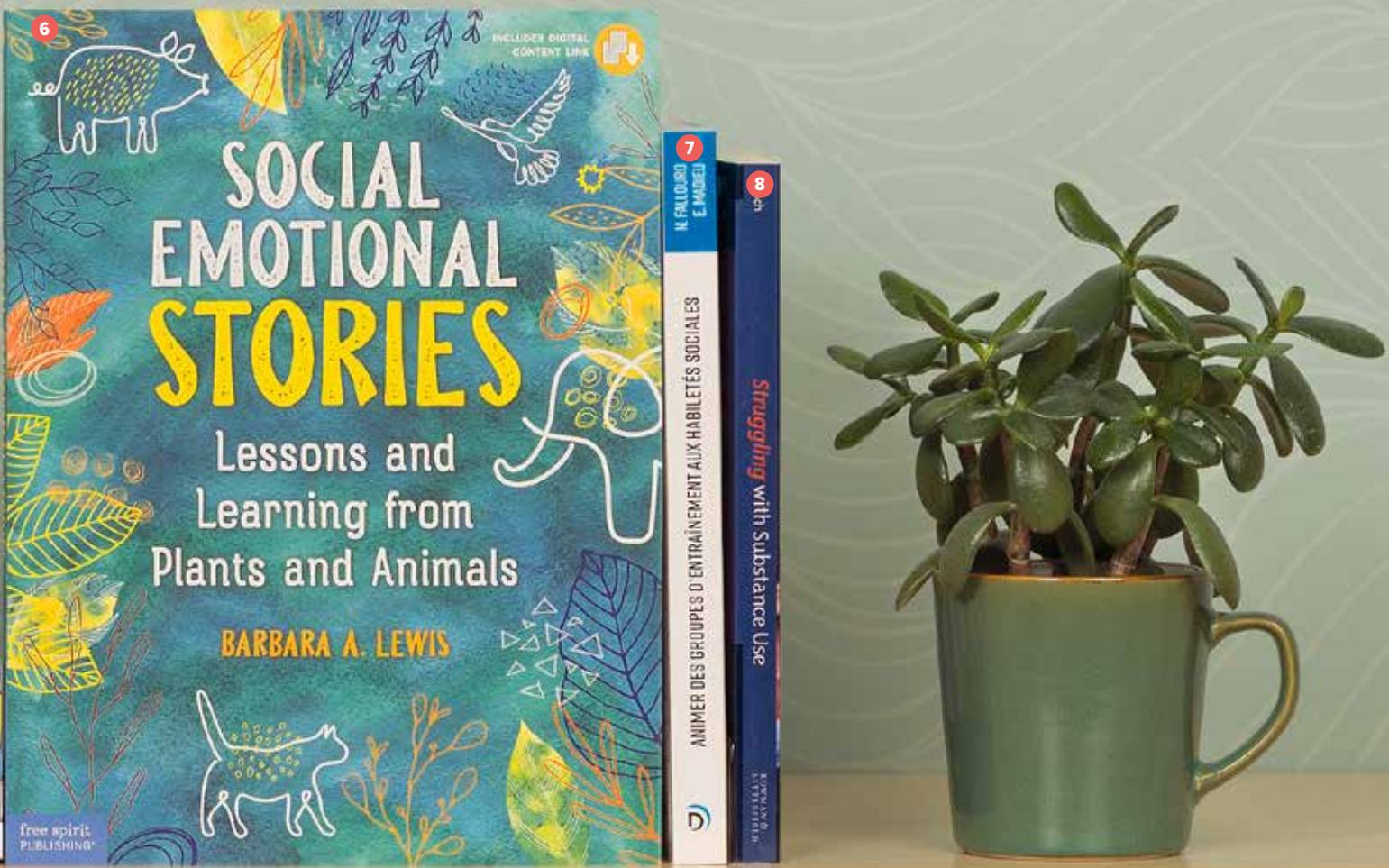


PHOTO BY YUET CHAN

Carmen Fandino

How Not To Be Wrong: The Power of Mathematical Thinking by Jordan Ellenberg. This book is a great read to build understanding of why math touches everything we do.

Katrina Lynn

Where the Crawdads Sing by Delia Owens. So good. Could not put it down. A little mystery, a little love. Set in the 1960s in North Carolina. Gave it a 5/5 star rating.

Melissa McQueen

Delicious Foods by James Hannaham. This novel deals with human trafficking and is told from two perspectives: the son of a woman who has gone missing, and the woman's internal monologue led by the drugs that she is taking. The language is a bit more forceful, but the imagery, voices, mood and themes are very distinct and incredibly engaging. It's my favorite book.

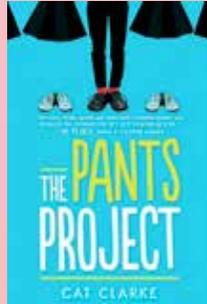
What's your favourite book to use with students in grades 4 to 6?



Number the Stars

Written by Lois Lowry, this is a great book that allows discussions to develop around how we need to help people when they are facing adversity and how to be an upstander.

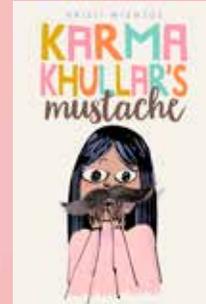
Jennifer Lacourse



The Pants Project

Written by Cat Clarke, this book explores student advocacy and inclusivity.

Karlee Hren



Karma Khullar's Mustache

Written by Kristi Wientge, this book deals with real issues Punjabi girls face in this world.

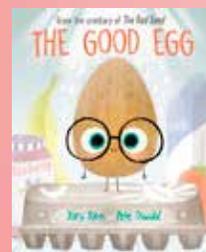
Amrit Rai Nannan



Safe as Houses

This book by Eric Walters is about natural disasters and asks, how do you deal with trauma?

Sarah Cresswell



The Good Egg

Funny and fun, this book by Jory John and Pete Oswald teaches self care and boundary setting.

Jackelyn Urquhart



The Barnabus Project

Compassion and community are key. This book by the Fan brothers also inspires educational technology and STEM projects.

Ashley Floyd

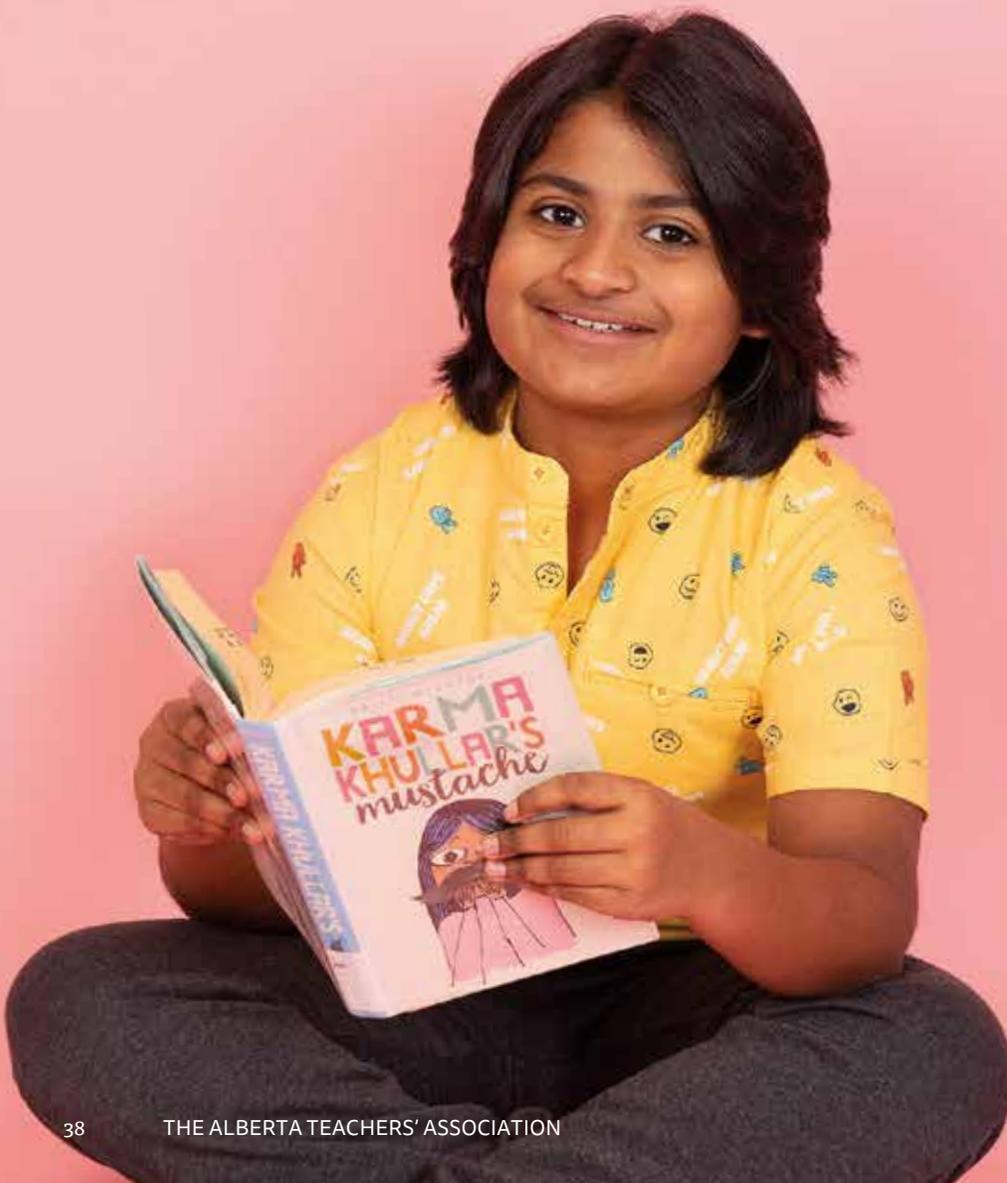


PHOTO BY YUET CHAN

DEAL WITH IT

Help kids deal with conflict!

- ✓ BODY IMAGE
- ✓ FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION
- ✓ CONSENT
- ✓ RACISM
- ✓ WHITE PRIVILEGE
- ✓ HOMOPHOBIA
- ✓ ISLAMOPHOBIA
- ✓ ABLEISM
- ✓ TRANSPHOBIA
- ✓ BIPHOBIA

Available individually | \$24.95
10 Hardcover Book Set | \$249.50



"Interactive format...Great for group discussion."
– Booklist

"...patiently and clearly sets each scene, identifies the issue, offers real-life examples, and provides do's and don'ts to help readers navigate the various scenarios."
– Kirkus Reviews

IN EVERY BOOK:

- For grades 4 and up, ages 9 to 14
- Real-life situations kids face
- Q&A's, quizzes, and advice columns
- All perspectives discussed – victims, bullies, and witnesses
- Diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds, gender identities
- Graphic novel-style illustrations
- Approachable reading level
- Supports critical thinking, challenging biases

Learn more at: www.toughdwi.ca



Published by



Distributed by



We're here to help

We're at Teachers' Conventions each year, but even if you miss us there you can still get answers to your pension questions.

In Person: Watch for our green tablecloth at Teachers' Conventions!

Online Access: Use MyPension for all your pension needs.

Book a Meeting: Arrange a time with a Pension Counsellor.

Message Us: Use our Secure Message Centre for any questions.



[ATRF.ca](https://www.atrf.ca)



A Look at **Food Insecurity**

When you know, you can start to **make change.**

Food insecurity is when a household has inadequate or insecure access to food due to financial constraints.

It's on the rise:

In 2011, **12.3%** of Albertans were experiencing food insecurity. In 2022 that number jumped to **20.3%**.

Some experience it more than others:

21.7% of children (people under the age of 18) lived in food insecure households in Alberta. (2021)

28.9% of Black households living with food insecurity compared to **11.1% of white households.** (2017-2018)

30.7% of Indigenous households in Canada were experiencing food insecurity, twice the amount of white households. (2022)

VitalSigns[®]
Community foundations taking the pulse of Canadian communities.



The 2023 Vital Signs report is out now.

Discover more about local food insecurity with Vital Signs. **Read Now.**



School nutrition programs in Edmonton provided more than **96,000 students** with meals between 2017 and 2020.

Between 2000 and 2020, the **average grocery bill** has **increased by 70%.**



Give. Grow. Transform.

[ECFoundation.org](https://www.ecfoundation.org) · 780.426.0015



Edmonton Vital Signs is an annual checkup conducted by Edmonton Community Foundation, in partnership with Edmonton Social Planning Council, to measure how the community is doing.

Serving members as they look toward retirement

YOU HAVE WORKED HARD AND served the teaching profession well. Now you are considering retirement but have questions.

Do I have enough savings to retire? When do I need to notify my employer of my intent to retire? How can I make the best plan for myself and my family?

Don't worry—whether you are ready to retire or just wondering about your future financial security, the ATA is here for you!

Programs

The Association provides a variety of targeted financial education programs to meet members' needs.

Preretirement workshops deliver specific information for members who are considering retirement in a foreseeable timeline and are conducted in partnership

with such organizations as the Alberta Teachers' Retirement Fund (ATRF), Alberta School Employee Benefit Plan/ Blue Cross/Sun Life and Capital Estate Planning.

Pension and retirement programs are available throughout the year (check the ATA website for upcoming session dates):

- Understanding Your Pension—Pension Education for Early Service Teachers
- Retirement Planning for Women
- Personal and Family Financial Wellness+ with Capital Planning and MNP Debt
- Financial Wellness Q&As with Capital Planning

These financial education programs investigate various aspects of retiring, including building a financial plan, the Alberta Teachers' Pension Plan, wills and estates, benefits, and lifestyle planning for a successful and rewarding retirement.

Online

Check out the ATA website for FAQs, resources and links to tools to support you as you consider the next phase of your life. Scan the QR code or visit <https://teachers.ab.ca/pay-and-benefits/pension-and-retirement-information-teachers>.

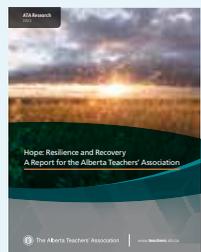


Phone or email

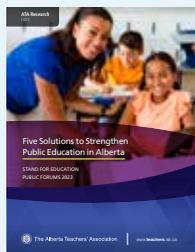
ATA staff are available to answer your questions about retirement. This may mean providing you with advice or directing you to the ATRF or Alberta Retired Teachers' Association for additional information. Contact us at TES@ata.ab.ca or 1-800-232-7208. 

What's happening in ATA research?

RECENT RESEARCH PUBLICATIONS



Hope: Resilience and Recovery
A Report for the Alberta Teachers' Association



Five Solutions to Strengthen Public Education in Alberta:
Stand for Education Public Forums 2023



EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH AWARD

Valued at \$5,000, the Educational Research Award recognizes a faculty of education member or sessional lecturer at an Alberta university or university college who has undertaken high-quality research on classroom teaching and learning.

Apply by May 15! Full eligibility details and the application form are available here: <https://teachers.ab.ca/professional-development/grants-awards-and-scholarships>.





Services aux membres qui envisagent la retraite

VOUS AVEZ TRAVAILLÉ FORT ET bien servi la profession enseignante. À présent, vous songez à la retraite, mais vous vous posez des questions.

Ai-je suffisamment d'économies pour prendre ma retraite? Quand dois-je avertir mon employeur que je compte prendre ma retraite? Comment mettre au point le meilleur plan pour moi et ma famille?

Ne vous inquiétez pas : que votre retraite soit imminente ou que vous réfléchissiez simplement à votre future sécurité financière, l'ATA est là pour vous aider!

Programmes

L'ATA offre différents programmes d'éducation financière ciblés afin de répondre aux besoins des membres.

Les ateliers de préparation à la retraite proposent des renseignements particulièrement pertinents pour les membres qui envisagent de prendre leur retraite dans un avenir prévisible. Ils sont

offerts en partenariat avec des organisations telles que l'Alberta Teachers' Retirement Fund (ATRF), l'Alberta School Employee Benefit Plan/Croix Bleue/Sun Life et Capital Estate Planning.

Des programmes portant sur les pensions et la retraite sont offerts tout au long de l'année (consultez le site de l'ATA pour connaître la date des séances prévues) :

- *Understanding Your Pension—Pension Education for Early Service Teachers*
- *Retirement Planning for Women*
- *Personal and Family Financial Wellness+* (en partenariat avec Capital Planning et MNP Debt)
- *Financial Wellness Q&As* (en partenariat avec Capital Planning)

Ces programmes d'éducation financière traitent de différents aspects de la retraite, dont l'élaboration d'un plan financier, le régime de retraite des enseignants de l'Alberta, le droit successoral, les avantages sociaux et la planification du style de vie en vue d'une retraite enrichissante et réussie.

En ligne

Consultez le site de l'ATA pour obtenir la réponse aux questions les plus courantes, ainsi que des ressources et des liens pour alimenter votre réflexion concernant la prochaine étape de votre vie. Balayez le code QR ou rendez-vous à l'adresse <https://teachers.ab.ca/pay-and-benefits/pension-and-retirement-information-teachers>.

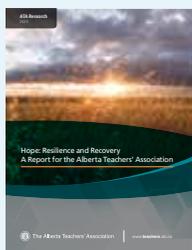


Au téléphone ou par courriel

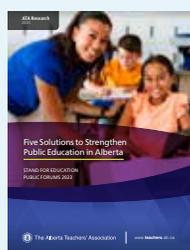
Le personnel de l'ATA se tient prêt à répondre à vos questions au sujet de la retraite. Nous pouvons notamment vous offrir des conseils ou vous rediriger vers l'ATRF ou l'Alberta Retired Teachers' Association pour obtenir plus de renseignements. Écrivez-nous à l'adresse TES@ata.ab.ca ou composez le 1-800-232-7208. 

Quoi de neuf en matière de recherche à l'ATA?

RÉCENTES PUBLICATIONS DE RECHERCHE



Hope: Resilience and Recovery
A Report for the
Alberta Teachers'
Association



Five Solutions to Strengthen Public Education in Alberta:
Stand for Education
Public Forums 2023



BOURSE POUR LA RECHERCHE EN ÉDUCATION

D'une valeur de 5000 \$, l'*Educational Research Award* vise à reconnaître un membre du corps professoral ou un chargé de cours d'une université ou d'un collège universitaire de l'Alberta qui a mené des recherches de haut calibre sur l'enseignement et l'apprentissage en classe.

Présentez votre demande d'ici le 15 mai!

Consultez la page suivante pour connaître tous les critères d'admissibilité et pour obtenir le formulaire de demande : <https://teachers.ab.ca/professional-development/grants-awards-and-scholarships>.






 University of
Lethbridge

EXPERIENCE THE ULETHBRIDGE MASTER OF EDUCATION

**Major: General | Theme: Literacies & Numeracies (new!)
 Major: Educational Leadership**

- ▶ Reinvigorate your practice while you continue to teach
- ▶ Create educational change you're passionate about
- ▶ Build on your classroom experiences and leadership skills

Learn more: go.uleth.ca/master-of-education



"The MEd curriculum — both formal and informal, helped me be resilient, to rise and to make a difference for others. My ULeithbridge experience transformed a culture of learning into a way of being. I hope other teachers navigate their learning and make it meaningful by preserving their identity and connection to culture."
 – **linaatsii'swaawaakaasaakii (Pretty Spider Woman), Taylor Little Mustache (BA/BEEd '19, MEd '23)**



**Great things are
 happening in
 Alberta's public schools!**




The Alberta Teachers' Association



SINCE 1874
Alberta Beef

CONNECT WITH YOUR LOCAL RANCHERS

Bring your students back to their roots by joining the Running with the Ranchers program with Alberta Beef Producers. Students in grades one to six follow along with the activities of an actual beef operation throughout the year and have one-on-one time with your local rancher.

Focus on developing critical, creative and geographical thinking while making connections to where your food comes from.

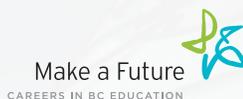
For more information and to register your class contact us today:

Tel: (403) 451-1172 Email: taylorl@albertabeef.org

Is the Beauty of BC Calling?

Make a Future is your source for the latest full-time teaching opportunities in British Columbia. Discover an adventure-filled lifestyle, work-life balance, and learner-focused, flexible curriculum.

Our public, First Nations and independent schools are hiring teachers like you! The good news is that teachers certified in other provinces may teach in BC without completing additional studies or exams. Start your career journey today and discover exciting opportunities awaiting you.



makeafuture.ca/teach-bc

Creative colleagues

Teachers have their own extracurricular activities. Some volunteer. Some write books. Others produce podcasts, create art or make music. Here are some endeavours undertaken by your colleagues “out there.”

VOLUNTEERING

Regional Recreation Corporation of Wood Buffalo and Ihkapaskwa Indigenous Wellness Collective

When not in the classroom, teacher Chelsi Ryan serves as a director for the Regional Recreation Corporation of Wood Buffalo, Canada’s largest recreational complex and a space committed to inspiring area residents to gather, play and connect. In addition, she is a board member of the Ihkapaskwa Indigenous Wellness Collective, an organization in Wood Buffalo composed of Indigenous birth workers who bridge the gap between westernized health services and the reclamation of cultural traditions related to childbirth and family relations.

CHELSI RYAN

Beacon Hill School, Fort McMurray

Peace Country Cowboys

Dusty Sage, a high school physical education specialist, actively volunteers in her community. Her 21 years of teaching and coaching experience in the public school system has afforded her opportunities to give back in a unique and dynamic way, including as the first female president of a senior men’s football program, the Peace Country Cowboys, in the Alberta Football League. Sage was also selected as one of the coaches for the U16 Girls Alberta volleyball team that attended the North American Indigenous Games in Halifax in July 2023.

DUSTY SAGE

Charles Spencer High School, Grande Prairie

- **What’s new with you?** If you’d like to make a submission for publication in *Who’s Out There?*, email a summary (50–75 words) to section editor Lindsay Yakimyshyn at lindsay.yakimyshyn@ata.ab.ca.

PODCAST



Donair Talk

Follow Scott Onuczko, Reuben Mahaffy, Pam Arnason and Brad Langdale, four high school teachers from Parkland ATA Local 10, who travel the greater Edmonton area seeking out

the region’s best donairs, all while talking about whatever is on their minds. The podcast’s mix of light-hearted humour, touching moments and food reviews will have you laughing all the way to your local donair place. Donair Talk: where we eat, and talk about, donairs.

SCOTT ONUCZKO, REUBEN MAHAFFY,
PAM ARNASON AND BRAD LANGDALE

Spruce Grove Composite High School, Spruce Grove
@DonairTalk on X (formerly Twitter)

BUSINESS



Teacher planners

Teacher colleagues and best friends Katie Kosteriva and Megan Davey run a local business that specializes in teacher planners. With more than 20 years of combined teaching experience from kindergarten to Grade 12, they created a planning tool with many unique pages for personal reminders, goal setting, curriculum overview and student checklists, as well as vertical timed and blocked layouts. They now offer a range of products, including the newest offering: crewnecks and t-shirts. Take a look at the website for more information.

KATIE KOSTERIVA AND MEGAN DAVEY

Mother Margaret Mary Catholic High School, Edmonton
twoplannerbabes.com | Instagram @twoplannerbabes





One purpose, two paths

Career shakeup brings double success
for Calgary teacher Leonard Cohen

Cory Hare

Managing Editor, *ATA Magazine*

LEONARD COHEN KNEW something was off.

He was in his late 30s and feeling like an awkward fit in the business world. It had been several years since he'd earned his MBA from McGill, but he was still drifting from contract to contract, a period of instability that included stints as a marketing consultant for a software company and strategic planner for a non-profit. Except for the relatively rare occasions he spent training clients, none of it felt right.

A single, spur-of-the-moment act started the chain of events that changed Cohen's life. One morning at his Montreal home, after he and his wife had gotten their children to school and daycare, Cohen hunkered down in the guest bedroom that served as his office and did what seemed natural to a tech-inclined person in 2007—he turned to social media.

Cohen's Facebook post to friends and family went something like: I'm at a transition point in my career and I'm not sure what I should be doing. Based on what you know about me, what do you think I should pursue?

The post drew a couple dozen responses. Interestingly, they were evenly split between just two options: rabbi and teacher.

"I guess people saw in me certain abilities that I might not have seen clearly myself," Cohen recalls. "It wasn't evident to me then, by any chance, that I'd be able to do both careers."

But that's exactly what Cohen is now doing—he's both a rabbi and a school teacher.

STEP ONE: BECOME A RABBI

Throughout his adulthood, Cohen had worked part-time with a variety of Jewish congregations in Montreal, helping lead prayer services and teaching bar- and bat-mitzvah students. This experience enabled him to land a clergy job (not a rabbi, but similar) that brought him to Calgary in 2010.

Four years later, a new congregation started up and brought Cohen on as their spiritual leader. He was in this role when he learned about a remote learning opportunity that would enable him to become ordained as a rabbi. He completed this in 2016 and became the official rabbi for the Kehilat Shalom congregation.

STEP TWO: BECOME A TEACHER

Teaching in various private and spiritual settings had been a fixture of Cohen's adult years. Even during his time in the business world, his favourite moments were those spent training clients. Those experiences motivated him to pursue his education degree while maintaining his role as a rabbi. His congregation supported his schooling and even helped pay for his tuition.



In 2021, at the age of 52, Cohen completed his education degree from the University of Calgary. Since then, he's been teaching for the Calgary Board of Education while maintaining his rabbinical duties.

"I daresay that it has been mutually beneficial because a lot of the things that I learn in here—education—apply very well within the congregation," Cohen says.

STEP THREE: LEAD A DOUBLE LIFE

Now that he's credentialed and employed as both a rabbi and a teacher, Cohen juggles a weekly schedule that is full and varied, yet also regimented. He teaches music half-time at William Reid, a K-4 school. This translates to a half day on Mondays and full days on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

During the days he's not teaching, and many evenings, Cohen does a variety of planning and co-ordination for the synagogue. He does pastoral counselling, either by phone or in person, teaches online classes and does some private tutoring.

His Fridays are largely taken up by preparing for the next day's sabbath, which is a day of celebration and relaxation both at the synagogue and at home. For Cohen, Saturday involves officiating a nearly three-hour service followed by a luncheon, then some reading, learning and relaxing.

Sundays vary. Cohen is sometimes called to officiate or lead a communal activity, and in the evening he teaches an online Jewish class.

Also in the weekly mix are two services at seniors' homes.

"Because it's two very different rhythms ... it doesn't feel like an overload," Cohen says. "The change of rhythm from going from one place to the next makes it feel quite manageable."

HE'S THEIR MAN

As a rabbi and a teacher, Cohen is known and loved for his warmth, kindness and genuine efforts to foster an inclusive atmosphere, but he's also known for traits he shares with another Leonard Cohen from Montreal.

During the regular weekly services at Kehilat Shalom, most of the prayers are sung, with Cohen leading the way.

"We're happy to have all the singing because it moves the service along and it's just joyful," said congregation member Leslie Levant.

Cohen also sings and plays guitar while officiating services at seniors' homes, and he performs well enough that his appearances attract non-residents from nearby neighbourhoods, Levant said.

continued on page 50



Boost your capacity to teach students with invisible challenges.

Nearly 20% of students have **Learning Disabilities or ADHD**, or both. Effective teaching strategies for these learners, can benefit all of your students!

Call to have your questions answered.

Subscribe to our monthly newsletter for the latest in LD and ADHD news, and PD. Use the Contact Us form.



403-630-1616

LDADHDnetwork.ca



PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

For You and Your Staff

The Faculty of Education has a variety of programs - online, in-person and blended - to enhance leadership, knowledge, and skills that support robust learning communities.

- Master of Education in Educational Studies
- Graduate Certificate in School Leadership
- Graduate Certificate in Educational Studies
 - Contemporary Literacy Education K-9
 - Early Childhood Education
 - Education Futures
 - Indigenous Education
 - Mathematics Education
 - Science Education
 - Teaching Students with Complex Communication Needs
 - Technology in Education
 - Trauma-Sensitive Practice



For information, visit uab.ca/prolearn

CHAMPION OF INCLUSION

“We like the fact that he **participates** in the wider **community** and we like that he is a champion of **inclusion**. It’s very moving, very touching.”

—Leslie Levant, member of Kehilat Shalom congregation

continued from page 48

The situation is similar at William Reid, where Cohen’s abilities have earned him a reputation among staff and students.

“It’s nice to be in his class listening to him singing,” said principal Christine Stiles.

Cohen’s willingness and ability to perform have helped him to forge a special connection with students, particularly the older boys, who can sometimes be difficult to reach, Stiles said.

“Watching him with some of our older boys, it’s a lovely relationship,” Stiles said. “He makes music seem cool and very accessible to them because he’s singing in front of them.”

COMMON DENOMINATOR

The Calgary Board of Education has an administrative regulation that prohibits teachers from disclosing their religious affiliation within the school setting, so there’s a definite line between Cohen’s role as a rabbi and his role as teacher. However, Stiles believes that his spiritual grounding and ease with storytelling add richness to his teaching.

“That background and perspective absolutely make him an excellent music teacher,” she said, “because he’s got such a unique perspective.”

For Cohen, both his careers are about connecting with people. As a rabbi, he’s focused on getting to know his congregants well and supporting them in their individual journeys while also helping them come together as a close-knit, inspired community. As a teacher, Cohen says his philosophy is driven by an adage that came to him via his mentor: “It’s not what you teach, it’s who you teach.”

“I want to love and appreciate and enjoy these students as people,” Cohen says. “I love those moments when a classroom gels together and gets energized collectively around a particular activity, lesson or project. It does the heart good.”

Reflecting on the two paths that emerged from his long-ago social media post, Cohen feels that he made a good choice ... twice.

“I can’t imagine a situation where I’m not doing teaching or officiating,” Cohen says. “They feel very right to me.” 

IN CONCERT WITH

Leonard Cohen

You were born in Montreal at a time when Leonard Cohen was already famous. How did your name come about?

I’m named after two great-grandfathers named Layzer, whose names in English approximate Leonard. It’s customary in Judaism to name a child in memory of someone. The two died long before my birth; most of their families perished in the Holocaust.

When Leonard Cohen the singer-songwriter died, you performed some of his material at a memorial. What is your favourite Leonard Cohen song to perform?

I’ve enjoyed performing *Famous Blue Raincoat*, the words of which are a letter from a broken-hearted man to his friend. There’s a neat coincidence in singing the song’s final lyrics, “Sincerely, L. Cohen.”

What is your favourite song to perform overall?

Kol Nidre is chanted in synagogue at the outset of Yom Kippur, when Jews gather to pray for forgiveness. It is sung without instrumental accompaniment, while the audience typically sways or chants along as the prayer builds to a great crescendo. It provides for a powerful moment.

Do you have any down time in a typical week? What do you do with it?

I make sure to schedule down time each week. Hanging out and talking with my family is a delight. Cooking is a pleasant way to focus away from worries. I also like doing fitness activities for my mental and physical health.

What do you miss most about Montreal?

Food, family, friends. I would have added a fourth F—Français—but teaching French immersion provides wonderful continued exposure to the latter.

- ▶ **Got an idea?** In Profile features an interesting teacher in each issue of the *ATA Magazine*. If you know of a teacher who would be a good profile subject, please contact managing editor Cory Hare at cory.hare@ata.ab.ca.



FLIGHT ACADEMY

PD DAY CAMPS

FEB 29 & MAR 01

MAR 25-28

APRIL 26

SCAN ME




\$60 PER DAY/ CHILD



EXPLORING ALBERTA'S WILDLIFE



CLASSROOM WILDLIFE EDUCATION KIT

This kit is designed for Grades 3 & 4 and aligns with Alberta Education Curriculum goals. Kids will explore wildlife identification and the role that sustainable use plays in conservation. Teachers are supported with easy-to-follow lesson plans.

#100, 3802-49 Ave
Stony Plain, AB T7Z 2J7
P: 780-414-0249
E: grants@apos.ab.ca
IG: @ComeHuntAlberta



To request your kit fill this form or for more information contact Tara at grants@apos.ab.ca




You are not alone— call us first.

A call to **Teacher Employment Services** can give you the advice and assistance you need.

Our service is 100% confidential, and we're here to help.

EDMONTON OFFICE
780-447-9400
1-800-232-7208

CALGARY OFFICE
403-265-2672
1-800-332-1280



The Alberta Teachers' Association

COMM 2019-765 2025 01

Food in the classroom

How do you use food in your non-food classes?

Heather Wright

I recently used food colouring in a science demonstration showing the difference between additive and subtractive colour mixing processes (light versus pigments/dyes) for Grade 8 science light and optics. Could definitely do the same thing with icing instead of water.

Bobbi-Jo Douglas

Used to do: potluck dinners that were multicultural and focused on the foods my students eat at home. Brought exposure in a beautiful way.

Now: at outreach, we feed our students daily—it's what we do!

Nadine Armbruster

In high school religious studies, the first week of Lent, I made a simple pretzel dough with all my students. We talked about fasting and eating simple doughs ... and we did a pretzel prayer before we ate together and engaged in almsgiving by making two pretzels each and giving one to someone special in the school.

Jennifer Lacourse

I like to keep a variety of foods on hand to help kids regulate. Our school has a breakfast program, so I am lucky to have fruit and some baked goods on hand every morning to help ensure my students have something in their bellies when they start the school day. Other things I keep on hand are gum, fruit chews and fruit leather.

Heather Laturnas

Cheese tasting when reading *Who Moved My Cheese?*, which is about trying new things and embracing change.

Natalie Townshend

To feed hungry teenagers so they can think! (I have a snack basket with fruit and granola bars). Giving them food is taking care of such a basic need—once you address that, many other things fall into place.

Sarah Creswell

Food to create community—snacks and treats always available.

Carolyn Pawelko

M&Ms and Skittles to do a half-life lab.

Sana Waseem

I'd like to start (using food) for my chemistry unit. I used to do things like building structures, but so much food got wasted, so now I want to try stuff the kids could actually eat afterward.

► See more at facebook.com/ABteachers.

Make your Teaching Career Move

with a part-time Kinesiology, Sport, and Recreation Graduate Certificate from the University of Alberta

Online Graduate Certificate programs in:
Indigenous Sport and Recreation • Adapted Physical Activity •
Sport and Recreation Management • Coaching

These certificate programs ladder into a course-based Master of Arts Degree.

Register today for any of these four Graduate Certificates with credit transfer options at uab.ca/KSRDev



MORE INFORMATION & REGISTRATION
www.jackhirose.com

LIVE IN-PERSON
& LIVE
STREAMING
CONFERENCE

Participate in
**3 FULL DAY
WORKSHOPS**



THE EDMONTON EDUCATOR'S Workshop Series

Peg Dawson, Ed.D., NCSP
Caroline Buzanko, Ph.D., R. Psych
and Eboni Webb, Psy.D., HSP

EDMONTON, ALBERTA
May 6 - 8, 2024

WORKING WITH STUCK KIDS & ADDRESSING THE ROOT CAUSES OF ANXIETY IN CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS

Presented by
Gordon Neufeld, Ph.D.

CALGARY, ALBERTA
May 9 - 10, 2024

Live Stream
Available



Got a project idea that creates **INCLUSIVE** learning communities and promotes the principles of **DIVERSITY, EQUITY** and **HUMAN RIGHTS**?

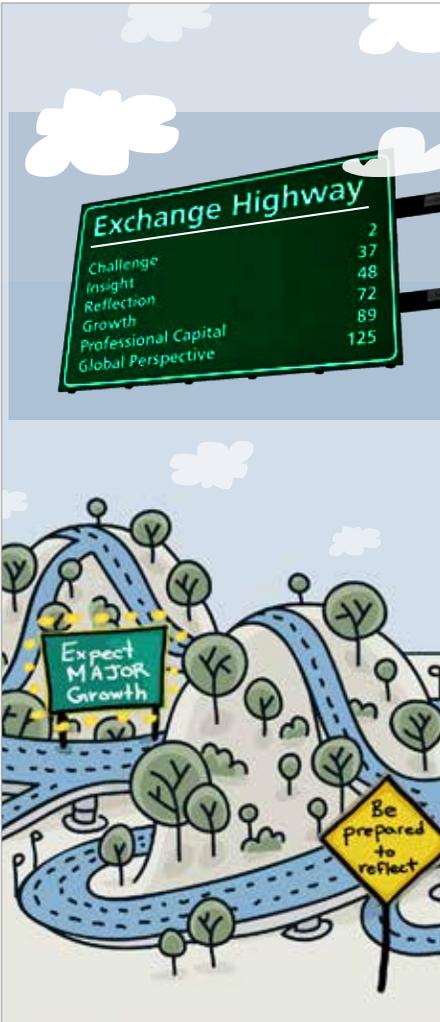
Apply for a DEHR grant today!
Deadline is April 30.



The Alberta Teachers' Association

DEHR =
DIVERSITY, EQUITY
AND HUMAN RIGHTS

COMM-107d 2023.12



Virtual and in-person short-term exchanges for teachers and school leaders.

Visit teachers.ab.ca, search “teacher exchange” for applications and details.



EEP-T27a-1 2023 12

ARTS AND HERITAGE ST. ALBERT

Educational Field Trips

For more information:



Explore our gallery, museum and historic sites all in one day

Engage with programming virtually, in-school or on-site

Experience our unique Indigenous programming

Professional development opportunities for educators are also available.

Book today for the 2023-24 school year.

Call 780-459-1163 or email registration@artsandheritage.ca.



ARTSANDHERITAGE.CA



Foothills Brass
QUINTET

Bring live music to your school!
Let us Educate, Entertain and Amaze your students

- Concerts for all grades and ages.
- Classroom and residency activities for elementary and middle schools
- Intensive workshops for beginning to advanced band students
- Evening concerts with your band or choir
- Expand and advance your music programs at all levels

Elementary to Middle School concert program:
The Building Blocks of Music
Curriculum through favourite songs, classics and movie themes

Secondary School concert programs:
Fast paced and entertaining!
Handel to the Blues, Duke Ellington to John Williams,
for music students or general audience

www.foothillsbrass.ca - trumpet@foothillsbrass.ca - 403-240-0269



ISTOCK

Authentic connection

Knowing the land means getting your feet dirty

Abi Henneberry

Kindergarten, Lois E. Hole Elementary School, St. Albert

I DO A CONNECTING EXERCISE

with my class early in the year that sets the tone for our approach to understanding our human connections to the land. First, we feel the soles of our shoes with our hands and discover how desensitized our feet are due to the thickness of the bottom of the shoe. Next, we remove our shoes and feel the soles of our feet with our hands. Of course, we note the increased sensitivity with only a sock as a barrier to touch. We discuss the difference with and without shoes.

Then we take the exercise outside! We add a walk to the plan, so the kids can

feel the difference between walking with and without footwear. After experiencing the heightened awareness with an uncovered foot, we discuss the fact that First Peoples who occupied the very land upon which we walk had no footwear like ours to protect themselves from the elements. We talk about what may have comprised Indigenous peoples' footwear, such as moccasins made from animal skin, and how its protective qualities still gave them more opportunity to feel their surroundings than our thicker synthetics give us now.

I ask them the question, "Who do you think experiences the land more authentically—us in our modern attire, or those who wear traditional footwear? Who is really closer to, and thereby knows, the land better?" ^{ATA}

“Who do you think experiences the land more authentically—us in our modern attire, or those who wear traditional footwear?”

► **Got an Idea?** Teacher Hacks is a place for colleagues to share their awesome ideas. If you have a hack that you'd like to share with your colleagues, please email a summary and photos to managing editor Cory Hare at cory.hare@ata.ab.ca.

They sunk my battleship

When tradition takes a back seat to technology

Ray Suchow

Computer science and religious studies,
Christ The King High School, Leduc



ILLUSTRATION BY ERIN SOLANO

THE CHALLENGE

Letting go when a lesson takes an unexpected turn.

ON A WARM SPRING day in the early 2000s, I had a computer studies lesson on spreadsheets that was going very well. My students had carefully keyboarded their vocabulary terms, attached matching graphics and we'd discussed our progress. The class had then viewed an animated spreadsheet featuring the terms and concepts they'd just learned, while racing to be the first to guess each feature.

Now, all that remained was to give them one more example before we created our first spreadsheet together. It was time to bring out the Final Analogy—the one gem that I always saved to link student understanding with what we'd begun. Even if a student had never seen or used a spreadsheet before, this always worked to spark their understanding and welcome them to the wonderful world of spreadsheets.

Thus, I shared my best example, then waited for the light bulbs to come on. They would rejoice as they realized that the theory we'd just worked on matched a game they already

“... I shared my best example, then waited for the light bulbs to come on.”

knew and loved very much.

But why was my class suddenly so quiet?

With a slow raise of her hand, and an absolutely earnest, innocent face, little Kyrra asked: “Mr. Suchow, what’s Battleship?”

I was stunned. How could they not have played that classic game? It’s a staple of childhood. Everyone’s played it! What was I to do? The lesson hung in the balance as I grasped for a new way to communicate the similarity between the easy-to-use co-ordinate system found in spreadsheets to the same simple (and fun) system used in the great game of Battleship.

Mercifully, another young voice came to the rescue.

“Mr. Suchow, I just found a Battleship website!”

And in that moment, I was forced to let go of any thoughts I had of saving the lesson with the analogy that had always worked before. As one, the whole class looked at the student’s monitor, lit up and declared, “Oh, that Battleship!”

They all found the website and proceeded to have all the fun and learning I’d hoped for ... just not in the way I’d planned. ^{ATA}

► Got an idea?

Maybe you created a lesson that totally flopped or was truly inspiring. Whatever your story, please summarize it in 300 words or less and email it to managing editor Cory Hare at cory.hare@ata.ab.ca.

Our classroom always gets a standing ovation!



ACP SIGNATURE SERIES
PRESENTING SPONSOR



See National Geographic's leading experts in wildlife, climate and cultures live in Calgary. Each presentation includes a lively Q&A.

Sandesh Kadur: Wild Cats Revealed

MON JANUARY 29, 2024

Lindsay Zanno: T. rex Rises

MON MARCH 11, 2024

Kiliii Yüyan: Life on Thin Ice

MON/TUE MAY 27 & 28, 2024*

SPECIAL PRESENTATION




NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC
FILM CONCERT:
Secrets of the Whales

APRIL 22, 2024

With live narration by JANN ARDEN

Arts Commons, Jack Singer Concert Hall



* All shows start at 10:15 a.m. Engagements of Kiliii Yüyan: *Life on Thin Ice* on May 28 start at 10:00 a.m. and 12:45 p.m.

BOOK YOUR CLASS TODAY! 403-294-7414 or artscommons.ca/ngl-ed



belairdirect.



Committed to Teachers in Alberta



Morgex Insurance will rebrand as belairdirect to support Alberta teachers for generations to come

We have exciting news to share: Morgex Insurance is becoming one with belairdirect in a transformative rebranding. Guided by the same core values and a deeply rooted desire to help, we are joining to offer our partners and their members best-in-class insurance products and services.

Later this year, Morgex Insurance will move forward as belairdirect, while keeping all the ingredients and history that make this brand so well-respected. Building on our own seven decades of innovative work across Canada and as one of the top insurers in the country, this next chapter together will be strengthened by our shared commitment to the people we serve and the communities we call home.

By combining our strengths, we aim to offer even greater value to you, our customers, ensuring that insurance is one less thing for you and your family to worry about.

Our promise to you is simple: we will continue to provide an unparalleled customer experience through the familiar voices and faces you've come to know from our devoted teams. belairdirect will show our partners and customers that you can count on us to deliver a simplified customer experience, and second-to-none claims service through our best-in-class capabilities.

We'd like to take this opportunity to **express our gratitude** and say **thank you** to our loyal partners and customers for your steadfast trust and support as we embark on this new chapter together. We look forward to serving you even better as belairdirect for generations to come.

Together, we can help better. Together, we are belairdirect.

John Thompson

Deputy Senior Vice President

belairdirect