

pop quiz!

Take a moment,  
test your brain.  
[See page 15.](#)



PURE GOLD

If teaching were the Olympics,  
what would you get  
the gold medal in?  
[See Tale End.](#)

# ATA NEWS

August 27, 2024 | Volume 59, Number 1

News Publication of The Alberta Teachers' Association

# Together, we are stronger.



Jason Schilling  
ATA President

Colleagues, this last year was one of the most challenging years for many of us. Public education is in a crisis that I fear will deepen this next year despite the government's recent announcements, which fail to directly address the real issues in education.

Let's face it, the government will say that public education is a priority for them, but if that were the case, we would have lower class sizes, adequately funded classrooms, more schools and a curriculum that ensures our students' futures.

When we consider the issues that plagued our schools last year and how they will persist this school year, the question becomes, "What do we do about it?"

The answer is we continue to advocate, we raise our voices and we fight back.

Public education needs serious and systematic changes if we are going to make a difference in the lives of our

students, our classrooms and each other. The teachers of Alberta, with their dedication and expertise, need to show the public that there is a better way.

It is imperative as a profession that we remain focused squarely on the solutions that move us forward. We will hear all sorts of misinformation about public education over the next few months. We need to correct it when we hear it, but not get distracted by it. Focus on our priorities, our goals, our colleagues, our students and their futures.

Recently, I was fortunate to attend Education International's World Congress, where 120 countries were represented by colleagues who are active in their teacher unions. Listening to and talking with colleagues from across the world, I saw how — though many differences in our circumstances and privilege exist — we share many of the same concerns and the same dedication for teaching and public education.

I was also struck by how each speaker at World Congress brought the element

of hope to the forum. Our global colleagues talked about the power of the union they belonged to, how it gave them hope and a sense of purpose, even in the direst of situations.

It's a lesson for all of us.

Each of us brings unique talents, perspectives and experiences to the table, but it's only when we combine these individual strengths that we become an unstoppable force and a loud and proud voice for public education.

The road ahead will be challenging. There will be obstacles, setbacks and moments of doubt.

But remember, as teachers in this province, you have shown great perseverance in the face of adversity. We are the Alberta Teachers' Association and we will lead the way.

So let us stand together as one profession united, unwavering in our determination, unyielding in our resolve. Let us harness the power of our unity to drive meaningful change for ourselves, our students and future generations of public education in Alberta.

Together, we are stronger. ■



## New year, new challenges

The new school year brings excitement, but also uncertainty.

Read Kristine Wilkinson's editorial on [page 2](#).



## Countering misinformation

Sometimes the best response is no response.

Read the Executive Secretary's Q&A on [page 2](#).



## Testing, testing...

More provincial student assessments announced.

See [page 4](#).



## Budget boost

Additional funding announced, but is it enough?

See [page 4](#).

## It's the most wonderful time...



### EDITORIAL

Kristine Wilkinson  
ATA News Editor-in-Chief

August was always bittersweet for me as a teacher. Summer was over, but a new year was beginning. I loved it when the crisp air of autumn came, and my own kids and I started to gear up for another school year. The Staples ads on TV and school supplies in stores signified the time for change.

This year, however, brings a mix of excitement and uncertainty for teachers as new policies and ongoing challenges are affecting education in Alberta.

In an effort to minimize distractions and enhance learning environments, the Alberta government has implemented a ban on cell phones during school hours. Some students and parents have expressed support, and others, concerns. The practicality of this ban has

been questioned, but a lot of teachers believe it will foster a more focused and productive classroom atmosphere. The government has mandated this change for September; however, they do not require school divisions to have their cell phone policies available until later in the year. Let's hope this misalignment between government mandates and school division policies does not cause issues. It's a hard way to start the year.

Another big issue that remains unresolved as the school year begins is the government's proposed changes to the use of preferred names or gender pronouns in schools and the "opt-in" requirement for parents to sign when human sexuality is taught in school. Schools across the province are grappling with how to best support all students. Once again, the lack of a unified approach has left some students and parents feeling uncertain about what to expect. There have been a lot of media statements on these topics,

but, as the school year begins, nothing is actually in place. What we do know is that teachers are committed to creating spaces where every student feels respected and valued. Full stop.

Along with recent and upcoming policy changes, Alberta schools are facing big challenges that need to be addressed. There will be higher student numbers and fewer staff members. Teachers are starting the year with more students in their classes, fewer educational assistants, a new curriculum to implement and a lack of resources. This makes it nearly impossible for teachers to provide students what they need to thrive. In spite of these challenges, teachers will create a positive and supportive learning environment for their students. Because that is what teachers do. This is what teachers have always done, but it is becoming more and more difficult.

I was in Starbucks the other day and heard a 13-year-old girl talking to her friend about being excited

about returning to school. She said she missed seeing her friends and teachers. Her friend agreed that, ya, it would be nice to see everyone and then began talking about upcoming classes. Remember, their excitement and sense of anticipation is shared by many students who are eager to head back to school, reconnect with their teachers and classmates, and engage in school life.

As Alberta schools navigate new policies and challenges, the focus for teachers remains on providing a safe, inclusive and supportive environment for all students. While the road ahead may be uncertain, the commitment of teachers, parents and students to work together and support one another is a testament to the resilience and strength of the Alberta school community.

Just remember, "It's the most wonderful time of the year." ■

I welcome your comments. Contact me at [kristine.wilkinson@ata.ab.ca](mailto:kristine.wilkinson@ata.ab.ca).

## Never wrestle with a pig



### Q & A

Dennis Theobald  
ATA Executive Secretary

**Question:** I'm sick and tired of hearing in the news and seeing in social media ridiculous attacks on teachers and our profession by politicians and right-wing cranks. Why doesn't the Association shut this down?

**Answer:** Having been personally targeted in some of these attacks, I share your frustration and annoyance with the untrue and even ludicrous claims being made by these peddlers of misinformation.

I think it helps to understand where these claims are coming from. It is commonly observed that "When the United States sneezes, Canada catches a cold." My sense is that what we are seeing in Alberta recently is the influence of America's "culture wars," much of which focus on education and diversity. The contagion seems to be particularly evident in Alberta, but other provinces are experiencing similar outbreaks. The vehicle for transmission is social media, where stories are created, exaggerated, twisted, repeated and ultimately weaponized for political ends.

So when some American schools respond to the threat of school shootings by including buckets of kitty litter in their classroom emergency kits to provide students with a means to relieve themselves during a prolonged lockdown, you will soon hear some local

Alberta politician or corner coffeeshop loudmouth claim that they know for a fact that their uncle's cousin's friend's daughter's school has litter boxes set up in classrooms for kids who identify as cats. They will go on to claim that accommodating "furries" is just one way that "woke" public schools are contributing to the imminent collapse of western civilization. (If you are not sure what a "furry" is, please don't Google it on your employer's computer — Teacher Employment Services has enough business as it is.)

“Teachers ... should take comfort in the fact that ... the vast majority of Albertans support them and want our public schools to flourish.”

Of course, where there is political opportunity and, perhaps, some money to be made, there are those who will take full advantage.

As a result, we have seen the rise of various interest groups purporting to protect students, parents and society from the nefarious schemes of public education. Often, these groups will seize upon, misrepresent and amplify issues that involve public education's efforts to create safe and welcoming spaces for all students, including those who are gender and relationship diverse. They also make wild and unfounded claims about the failure of our schools to provide students quality education, playing on the natural anxieties and hopes that all parents

have about their children's success. Finally, in attacking public education and the profession, these groups hope to advance the private, for-profit, charter and homeschooling alternatives that are so dear to their hearts.

An example of one of these groups, and certainly not the worst, is the Alberta Parents Union headed up by Jeff Park. Park's major claim to fame is that he was fined \$10,500 by Alberta's Election Commission for laundering donations to the so-called "kamikaze" United Conservative Party leadership campaign

of Jeff Callaway. Park is very skilled at making provocative claims to mobilize supporters and extract money from them, all in support of his cause, which he frames as the protection of parents' rights. I won't repeat the madness here, but feel free to visit the Alberta Parents Union website for a taste — try to avoid clicking on the prominent "make a donation" links.

Even more concerning than Mr. Park's shenanigans are incidents where political figures, including MLAs and recently even the premier, remain silent or actively promote falsehoods and inflammatory narratives about public education in the cynical pursuit of short-term political advantage. The "Let Kids

Be Kids Town Hall" organized by the Calgary-Lougheed United Conservative Party Constituency Association is an example.

So what can the Association do? The answer is "not much."

President Schilling has called out the premier, minister and other political figures both privately and publicly about their failure to support and defend Alberta's students, teachers and schools in the face of attacks by members of their own party.

The problem is that while responding in each instance might be emotionally satisfying, it would only serve to amplify false messages and distract from the real issues and challenges facing us every single day: continued underfunding, large class sizes, lack of school infrastructure, inadequate support for inclusion, and programming and curriculum desperately in need of improvement.

Teachers, who can't help but be demoralized by the constant attacks on their work and profession, should take comfort in the fact that objective polling reveals that the vast majority of Albertans support them and want our public schools to flourish. They support providing teachers with the tools and resources required to do their critical work with students to build Alberta's future.

Finally, I'll leave you with a useful piece of advice that I myself have taken to heart when dealing with these provocations: "Never wrestle with a pig — you'll both get filthy, and the pig likes it." ■



# Bringing hope and education to students in need

## VIEWPOINTS

Staff writer

Classrooms Without Walls

Since the ATA News article titled “Ukrainian students need teachers” was published on May 31, 2022, a remarkable journey has unfolded. What began as David Falconer’s lone volunteer effort to support internally displaced students in Ukraine has now blossomed into a global initiative known as Classrooms Without Walls (CWW). This organization provides free online schooling to children and youth in Ukraine, Myanmar and Afghanistan.

*Over the past two years, CWW has grown exponentially, touching the lives of tens of thousands of students.*

Over the past two years, CWW has grown exponentially, touching the lives of tens of thousands of students. This progress has been made possible through the unwavering support of preservice teachers from various Canadian and international universities, as well as current and retired teachers from numerous countries.

Incredible things have happened thanks to the efforts of our teacher volunteers. One of CWW’s four programs, known as the Winds of Change Leadership Youth Group, recently finished writing a book over 100 pages long. It is hard to believe this when you consider the contexts in which many of the students still reside! This youth group also has been working on

a podcast and a YouTube channel. Their work is nothing short of remarkable and inspiring.

While we are fortunate to have many volunteer teachers, the need for education and hope in these conflict-affected regions is immense. CWW is always looking for more dedicated teachers to join our mission. Teachers involved in CWW not only share academic knowledge but also give the invaluable gift of hope.

The need for hope is especially urgent given the current crises in these regions. Ukraine is dealing with the Russian invasion; Myanmar is in the midst of a civil war, with millions of students not attending school; and in Afghanistan, the Taliban does not allow girls ages 12 and up to attend school.

Volunteers typically teach for one hour a week and, ideally, they will provide a course consisting of a minimum of seven lessons. This number of lessons is ideal as it provides time for the teachers and students to develop trusting relationships. Topics can range from English as a second language to English language arts, math, social studies, sciences, art, music, health and even physical education. Grade levels range from Grade 1 to Grade 12, and participating teachers can choose the grade and age level they wish to teach. Classes are conducted on Zoom, and teachers always have a host present in the virtual classroom.

The benefits of joining CWW are manifold.

For volunteer teachers, this experience offers an opportunity to fine-tune professional skills, create a lasting impact and contribute to the education of students in some of the most challenging environments. Our

teachers provide these students with opportunities for a better future, an impact that is both profound and enduring.

For our students, the benefits extend beyond academics. The emotional and moral support provided by dedicated teachers, coupled with access to quality education, can make an enormous difference in their lives. It is an unfortunate reality that in many of these countries, such quality education is simply out of reach.

Weekly virtual introductory sessions are held for new volunteers. These sessions, approximately one-hour long, cover the history of CWW, information about our students, times and days teachers are needed, trauma-informed practices and general information about ongoing support.

Teaching with CWW is an incredible journey of making a difference in the lives of students who have faced unimaginable challenges. Together we can provide them with the hope and education they deserve. ■



David Falconer, the Founder of CWW, is a principal at an independent school in Calgary and an associate member of the Alberta Teachers’ Association. For more information, please visit our website at <https://classroomswithoutwalls.ca> or contact David directly at [dfalconer@classroomswithoutwalls.ca](mailto:dfalconer@classroomswithoutwalls.ca).

## YOUR VIEWS

### FACEBOOK FEEDBACK

What are you excited to try in the classroom this year?

**f Lesley Anne King**  
Glimmers of Gratitude... taking a moment at the end of the day to write one thing that was great or one thing to be grateful for.

**f Dani Jaman**  
I’ve been working on the new social studies curriculum for Grade 5 this summer! I’m SO excited to pilot it this year! Ancient Greece, Egypt and Rome bring me so much joy!

**f Michelle Fatica**  
Bandmate Chromatic Tuner app. I am returning to the band room after a significant hiatus and have learned about this great app that will identify the note being played by a particular instrument. I think this is particularly useful for beginner brass players as they learn to play, when one valve/slide position can be multiple notes/partial. Can’t wait to introduce this app to my students.

**f Andrea Perrotta**  
Spreading the word on the importance of viewing behaviours through a self-reg lens vs. a self-control lens. It’s a game changer folks!

Letters to the editor: We welcome letters to the editor. Please limit your submission to 300 words. Only letters bearing a first and last name, address and daytime telephone number will be considered for publication. Teachers are also asked to indicate where and what they teach. All letters are subject to editing for length, clarity, punctuation, spelling and grammar. Email managing editor Lindsay Yakimyshyn: [lindsay.yakimyshyn@ata.ab.ca](mailto:lindsay.yakimyshyn@ata.ab.ca).

### FOR THE RECORD



We also have to focus on ourselves, because at the end of the day, we’re human, too. We have to protect our mind and our body, rather than just go out there and do what the world wants us to do.



– GOAT gymnast Simone Biles following her withdrawal from Tokyo Olympics in 2021



# Government announces funding injection

*School authorities receive funds to address enrolment increase*

Lindsay Yakimyshyn  
ATA News Managing Editor

School's back in — with thousands more students in Alberta's classrooms. Recognizing the pressures caused by increasing enrolment, the Alberta government announced a one-time funding injection for school authorities.

On July 23, Education Minister Demetrios Nicolaides and Premier Danielle Smith announced \$215 million in additional funding to help school authorities support students. Premier Smith said that schools are facing real challenges due to not only historic enrolment growth in the province — particularly in metropolitan areas — but also due to rising operational costs.

"Unfortunately, these challenges often fall on our educators and school authorities who are committed to providing every student with the world-class education that they deserve," Smith said.

Of the \$215 million, \$125 million is earmarked for operational costs, while the remainder is for the construction or redeployment of modular classrooms.

"The additional funding of \$215 million will create 3,750 new student spaces in our fastest growing communities while also helping school authorities put more money into the classroom," said Nicolaides.

The \$125 million allocated for operational costs will be provided over the next three years to school authorities based on the most current enrolment projections. All public, separate, francophone, charter, accredited-funded independent schools and early childhood services operators in Alberta are eligible to receive a share of this funding, with each school authority given discretion to deploy their allotted funds as appropriate. The funding could be spent on more

teachers or other staff in schools, on programming and resources, or on other operational costs.

"School board trustees will work closely with school administration to help determine how those resources should be deployed to best serve the students that they have in front of them," said Alberta School Boards Association President Marilyn Dennis.

Further, with school construction lagging behind student numbers in metropolitan areas, the government also has committed \$90 million to building up to 100 new modular classrooms and relocating up to 50 units this year, hopefully by the end of December. The modular classrooms will be constructed or redistributed in Edmonton and the Calgary metropolitan area, which are seeing the most enrolment growth.

The newly announced funding has been welcomed by school boards, including the Calgary Board of Education (CBE), which is expecting an additional 8,000 students this fall.

"Escalating enrolment means many CBE schools are reaching capacity," said Patricia Bolger, CBE chair, in response to the announcement. "Receiving additional modular classrooms will help address enrolment pressures, particularly in schools that have experienced significant growth in the past few years."

Stakeholders also acknowledged the timeliness of the mid-summer announcement, as it allowed school authorities to better plan for the year ahead. Demetrios said that the government would not typically announce additional funds outside of the budget cycle, but given the increasing enrolment, action needed to be taken.

"Continued growth in the system beyond original projections along with rising cost pressures requires action now so that our school authorities can plan for the upcoming school year," Demetrios said.

Like other stakeholders, the Alberta Teachers' Association (ATA) welcomed the funding



Education Minister Demetrios Nicolaides and Premier Danielle Smith make funding announcement on July 23

announcement, glad to see the addition of modular classrooms to address the crucial need for more learning spaces and funding to provide student support. At the same time, concerns about education funding remain, according to ATA president Jason Schilling.

"The one thing that government is failing to recognize, beyond growth pressures, is that despite this one-time infusion of money, Alberta is still the least funded education system in Canada," said Schilling.

Schilling hopes that the government will continue its efforts to give students the education they deserve, stating that the ATA will continue to advocate on behalf of Alberta's teachers and students.

"There are systemic issues like class size, classroom composition issues and a lack of resources for our students that need to be addressed by government," Schilling said. "This band-aid approach to funding will not serve our students' best interests." ■

Education budget for 2024/25: **\$9.3 billion**

Funding announced on July 23: **\$215 million**

## Testing the limits

*ATA reacts to Alberta's increased student assessments*

Mark Milne  
ATA News Staff

Starting this fall, students could be subjected to provincial testing up to 32 times before they leave elementary school. The previous total was 10, which translates to an increase of over 200 per cent in tests.

"When so many kids are falling through the cracks, we need to be giving them a safety net instead of measuring how fast they're falling," said Jason Schilling, president of the Alberta Teachers' Association (ATA).

The biggest change to the testing framework lies with the youngest students. Schools will now be required to administer provincially mandated numeracy and literacy tests to students in Grades 1 to 3 up to three times each school year and, for the first time in Alberta, kindergarten students will now be subjected to standardized testing.

In early July, Education Minister Demetrios Nicolaides sent a letter to public, charter and private school authorities throughout Alberta outlining how he believes this new approach will support our youngest learners to succeed.

"Students develop critical foundational knowledge in literacy and numeracy in the early years of education," wrote Nicolaides. "Assessing students in their early years provides essential information to teachers, schools, parents and Alberta Education about potential student learning issues and needs and ensures that students requiring additional supports receive the help they need early in their education."

Schilling says students need more supports, not more tests.

"Teachers don't need a test to identify which students are struggling; they need smaller classes and more supports to get those kids additional help."

Schilling says the time and energy required by

teachers to administer tests takes away from time teachers could actually be helping kids.

"All this is being foisted on the same teachers who are still trying to implement new curriculum across multiple grades and subject areas."

Alberta Education says their enhanced early years assessment framework is based on stakeholder input and expert advice — something Schilling takes issue with.

"While the government claims to have listened to experts, it's clear they did not hear what actual teachers had to say," said Schilling. "Politicians and bureaucrats who have little knowledge and experience of the realities of Alberta's classrooms might think this is a great idea, but teachers, who will end up spending hours administering tests and preparing students for them in September, January and June, do not."

A better approach, says Schilling, is to respect teachers' professional judgment and allow them to determine which students could benefit from an assessment and when, rather than repeatedly testing every student. He said the province needs to stop the distractions and deal with the real issue in public education, which is the gross lack of appropriate funding.

"Alberta spends the least per student on public education in Canada. That's why we have large and growing class sizes, inadequate supports for students with special needs, shortages of aides and substitutes, and good teachers leaving the profession," said Schilling. "Alberta is not going to test its way out of underfunding. It's time our provincial leaders got their priorities straight." ■

The government's news release on testing is available:



ADOBE STOCK

**Nicolaides's letter to the school boards outlined the following framework for testing in the early grades:**

- **Kindergarten:** Starting in January 2025, screening will be required in literacy and numeracy for all students in January of each year.
- **Grades 1 to 3:** Mandatory screening assessments will continue in grades 1 to 3; however, the timing and frequency of these assessments will change. Starting in September 2024, the literacy and numeracy screening for students in grades 1 to 3 will now be completed in September and January, with an additional assessment in June for those students identified in January as requiring additional supports. The administration window to complete all screening assessments in these grades will be extended to three weeks.
- **Grade 3:** Student Learning Assessments will be permanently discontinued and will no longer be available for use.
- **Grades 4 and 5:** Starting in September 2026, screening assessments in literacy and numeracy for students in grades 4 and 5 will be introduced. Further information about this requirement will be shared at a future date.
- **Grade 6:** Provincial achievement tests for students in grade 6 will continue to occur in May and June.



# Summer learning

PHOTOS: KIM CLEMENT

## Teachers gather for the ATA's 76th annual Summer Conference

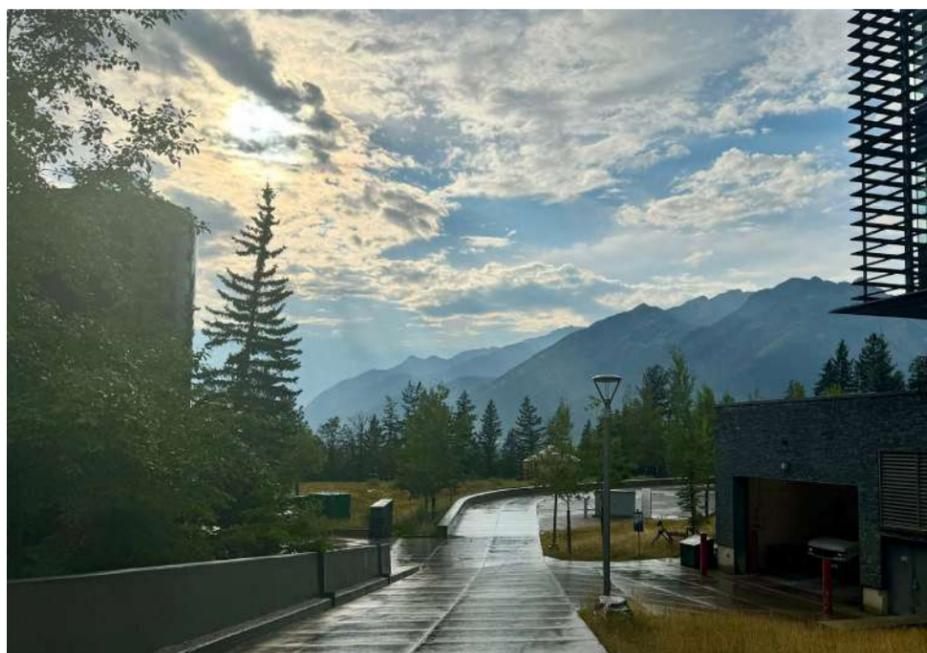
Teacher leaders from across the province gathered in Banff this summer for a week of professional learning. The ATA's annual Summer Conference was held in Banff on August 12–16. During the conference, 341 teacher volunteers attended programs in such areas as bargaining, professional development and local political engagement to help them grow in their local roles.



ATA president Jason Schilling welcomes delegates to Summer Conference. President Schilling addressed the challenges on the horizon for Alberta teachers and the importance of standing united as a profession.



Keynote speaker Dr. Kevin Lamoureux, a renowned faculty member at the University of Winnipeg and an award-winning scholar, addresses delegates at Summer Conference. Dr. Lamoureux spoke passionately about the significance of Truth and Reconciliation in education, emphasizing the need for deeper understanding and inclusion of Indigenous perspectives in the classroom.



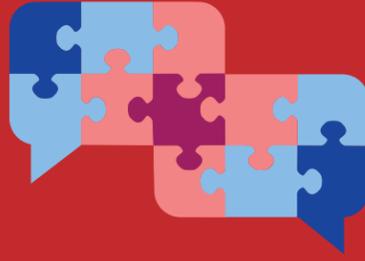
The view from the Banff Centre, where Summer Conference was held.



Summer conference delegates connect with each other.

# BARGAINING

## Central Table 2024



We are ATA.

## Central bargaining update

ATA News Staff

The Alberta Teachers' Association's (ATA) Central Table Bargaining Committee (CTBC) met with the Teachers' Employer Bargaining Association (TEBA) on June 7 to begin central table bargaining.

Having previously exchanged initial proposals on May 16, the two sides presented their detailed proposals at the meeting and provided additional background information. ATA chief negotiator Sean Brown said the meeting was cordial and productive, setting a positive tone for future negotiations. He added that, while the tone was receptive, it is quite likely

that the initial mandate provided to TEBA will not be enough to address the needs of Alberta teachers.

"Even with the proposed significant salary increase, which will help teachers catch up and keep up with Alberta's ever-growing cost of living, the classroom complexity (size and composition) cannot be underscored enough," Brown said. "The improvements teachers seek will allow all Alberta students to live up to their potential, benefiting all Albertans and adding to our collective prosperity."

During the June 7 meeting, the CTBC also shared with TEBA a presentation on the current status of Alberta teachers. Based on recent Association

research, the presentation included data points on the moral distress of Alberta teachers. This presentation allowed the CTBC to set the table for future discussions.

CTBC chair Peter MacKay observed that, while nothing controversial was discussed on the first day of bargaining, it is clear that there will be challenges in the next school year for members in achieving their goals.

"If our needs exceed TEBA's bargaining mandate—and that is likely—we will be asking teachers to show solidarity and conviction in order to expand that mandate," MacKay said.

MacKay emphasized that the CTBC is fiercely committed to advocating for members, adding that it is important

for teachers to look after their well-being this year given the high potential for labour action.

"Teachers' convictions will likely be tested," MacKay said, "Teachers should be prepared for action."

The next set of bargaining dates are set for September 9–10, and teachers can expect to be asked by their locals to wear red on those days to show their support.

Members will receive bargaining updates after each session throughout the year. Teachers can also access information on central table bargaining, including the ATA's initial proposal, by clicking on Collective Bargaining Updates on the ATA homepage at [teachers.ab.ca](https://teachers.ab.ca).

## Jasper schools set to re-open mid September

Lindsay Yakimyshyn  
ATA News Managing Editor

The first day of school will not be the same this year in Jasper. Due to the wildfire that tore through Jasper National Park and the townsite, Jasper's three schools will not open for classes until mid-September.

On July 22, Jasper National Park was evacuated due to an out-of-control wildfire. Within a few days, one-third of Jasper's structures were destroyed by the fire. Premier Danielle Smith acknowledged the efforts of firefighters for preventing further damage to the town, noting that critical infrastructure, including schools, had remained intact.

"I think there's a lot of real hope, especially since the main infrastructure

in the town is still standing," Smith said after speaking with some evacuated Jasper residents on August 5.

While Jasper's schools received no structural damage, extensive cleaning for smoke, dust and ash was required to ensure that the buildings are safe.

It was announced in mid-August that Jasper's schools were preparing to re-open for classes on September 17. Government and local school division supports are in place to help teachers, students and families returning to Jasper.

Carolyn Lewis, Grande Yellowhead Public School Division superintendent, reported that the division is committed to ensuring that staff and students can return to a safe teaching and learning environment.

"Our students have had such a traumatic experience that to come

back to something that is familiar and ready for them, welcoming for them, is going to be very comforting," she stated to CTV News.

Jessie Smeall, president of ATA Evergreen Local, which includes Jasper, says that she has heard from teachers in the Jasper area who are experiencing a range of emotions. She says some are still excited about the start of the school year, while others have expressed nervousness for themselves and their students.

"It is going to take time for everyone to heal and there will be different ways of doing it. Going back to a sense of normalcy in work will help some, but possibly create stress for others."

Wanting to support her colleagues and their students, Smeall organized a school supply drive for teachers and students affected by the Jasper wildfire.

Smeall says she has been amazed by the response so far.

"I have been very emotional knowing that people from across the province, and beyond, are there to support our teachers and students," Smeall said. "It means so much to myself, our Jasper colleagues and the families that are being supported."

As this school year starts, Smeall wants her colleagues in Jasper to know they are not alone.

"We are here for you if you need us."

**School supplies for teachers and students affected by the Jasper wildfire can still be donated here:**



## ATA to host Margaret Atwood talk on public education

ATA News staff

Canadian author Margaret Atwood will take the stage at the ATA's upcoming public education forum in Calgary.

The ATA, in partnership with Calgary Catholic Local No 55 and Calgary Public Local No 38, is presenting "Margaret Atwood on Democracy, Public Education and the Common Good" on November 12 at Calgary's Southern Jubilee Auditorium.

Best known for her dystopian novel *The Handmaid's Tale*, Atwood has been publishing poetry, fiction, non-fiction and children's books for more than six decades. The forum represents an opportunity for teachers and the public to hear her thoughts on the place of public education in a democratic society.

Tickets went on sale to the public on August 19, with a special pre-sale for ATA members only from August 12–18, and are selling quickly.

*"The fabric of democracy is always fragile everywhere because it depends on the will of the citizens to protect it, and when they become scared, when it becomes dangerous for them to defend it, it can go very quickly."*

—Margaret Atwood

**Don't want to miss it? Find your seats now!**



# ATA district representative passes away

## Colleagues remember Paul Froese for his dedication to teachers

ATA News Staff

The Alberta Teachers' Association (ATA) and public education have lost one of their strongest supporters and dearest friends. On July 15, 2024, District Representative Paul Froese passed away.

Paul served the ATA in an endless number of roles throughout his teaching career, most recently as district representative for Edmonton District. Though his work with the Provincial Executive Council began in 2016, he had been involved with the ATA for decades.

Even before attaining his teaching degree, Paul began his volunteer service to the profession as the president of Concordia College Education Students. In 1993, he began his teaching career, and after obtaining a teaching contract, Paul proceeded to serve in every role at Sturgeon Local No. 27 and was a yearly delegate at the ATA's Annual Representative Assembly. After a few years, Paul decided to throw his hat into the leadership ring and was elected vice-president (2005–2007) and then president (2007–2016) of the Sturgeon local. Sturgeon teachers were well served by Paul as an endless advocate for public education. Teachers knew they could count on Paul to speak up for them in the most articulate and understanding way.

Paul loved to serve his fellow teachers and the profession he was so committed to. No matter what time of day or night, Paul was known for having his phone on, ready to help a colleague, and he often did. If you needed advice or support, you called Paul. His passion for encouraging, mentoring and supporting his colleagues around the province was unmatched. He was a servant to the profession to the end. Paul was married to fellow Council member Carmen Glossop, and our condolences go out to her.

Paul will be deeply missed by his colleagues. Here are few words they have shared.

*Paul's dedication to his students, colleagues and public education was deeply appreciated and admired by everyone he encountered through his work. He loved*

*his work, his family and his ability to make a difference, which he did each and every day. To know Paul was a blessing. He will be deeply missed.*

**Jason Schilling**  
President, Alberta Teachers' Association

*Paul was a passionate advocate for public education. He fiercely loved those close to him, his career, teachers and the profession. Whether he was providing knowledge, advice or counsel, he ensured that the best was delivered to those in need. He was also quick to express his gratitude to those around him for acts of kindness, service and generosity. He will be greatly missed by those who were lucky to interact with him and be touched by his genuine personality.*

**Carryl Bennett**  
President, Greater St Albert Catholic Local No. 23

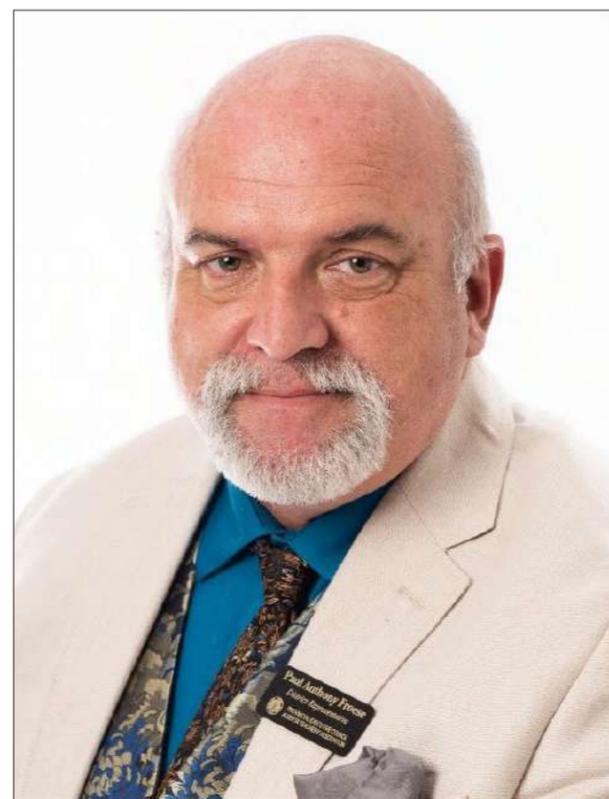
*Paul was a wonderfully fierce human, first and foremost with his faith, always offering prayers for anyone who was struggling or experiencing hardships. Paul was a deeply dedicated district representative, and his support for public Catholic education was unwavering. Literally a phone call away, Paul was always willing to provide you with an answer to any inquiry or concern. Paul earnestly built genuine relationships and will be greatly missed by all those who had the opportunity to have him as a part of their lives. May God grant him eternal rest.*

**Rhonda Borowski**  
President, Elk Island Catholic Teachers Local No. 21

*Paul was a kind and humble person who always put the teachers of his district first and foremost. His knowledge, expertise and dedication inspired all who worked with him; he was never unavailable, and if he didn't know the answer, he would always find it in short order. We will sincerely miss him.*

**Ellen Snaith**  
President, St Albert Public Teachers Local No. 73

*Though Paul is no longer with us, he will forever be held within the collective conscious of Sturgeon teachers.*



YUET CHAN

Paul Froese loved serving his fellow teachers.

*We will miss his trademark colloquialisms, extensive knowledge and his passion for public education.*

**Janet Westworth**  
President, Sturgeon Local No. 27

*Paul was a fantastic mentor. He was always available to me, my executive and teachers in our district. He gave so selflessly of his time to support others. I couldn't be successful in my role as local president without his wisdom, kindness and big heart. There is a huge void in my heart, as he was a colleague and a friend who will be missed dearly.*

**Deneen Zielke**  
President, Elk Island Local No. 28

# Former principal joins ATA to pursue passion

Heather Grant  
ATA News Staff

The Alberta Teachers' Association (ATA) gained a new executive staff officer over the summer.



SUPPLIED

New executive staff officer  
Amy Villneff

Amy Villneff joined the ATA's Teacher Employment Services (YES) team at Barnett House this August.

Villneff brings more than 20 years of teaching experience from the Northern Gateway School Division. Teaching is something that comes naturally to Villneff, who has fond memories of helping her sister while they were growing up.

"I would read with her and teach her the alphabet and basic math, and we always played school. I was always the teacher. It's just something that I always thought that I wanted to do."

Villneff says that she has had many standout moments throughout her teaching career, but cannot single one out.

"I think as teachers, these moments are what we live for, what drive us to keep learning, teaching and remaining in the profession," Villneff said, "Each significant interaction, discovery, heart-warming or 'aha!' moment is more kindling in the fire of our passions for teaching and learning."

During her career in the profession, Villneff spent six years as assistant principal and another three years as principal at Onoway's junior/senior high school. As she has moved into each new role, her passion for supporting teachers has grown.

"When I decided to go into administration, the biggest part of that for me was my want to support teachers, to mentor teachers, to help them get really good at the practice of teaching," Villneff said.

Her dedication to teachers will be front and centre in her new role with the ATA.

"The fact that I am now in TES, and will be dealing almost exclusively with teachers, supporting them, answering their questions, helping them feel better about what they're doing, putting them on the right path, or giving the right advice so that they can be better in their job. That's what's exciting for me." ■

## 3 MORE THINGS

### about Amy

**What's the best way to wind down after a long day?**

I love walking my dog.

**If somebody wanted to strike up a conversation with you, what's a good topic?**

It would probably be about dogs, or about being a parent to teenagers, or working with teenagers. For the most part of my career I've worked with adolescents, so I feel I know them fairly well—and I have two of my own.

**Knowing what you know now, what advice would you give to yourself in your first year as a teacher?**

Ask lots of questions. Ask for help. People are more than willing to give it to you. You also have to be able to laugh. You're going to make mistakes. I used to work with an administrator who said, "if you're not laughing, you're crying." Some days, that's true, and it's much, much better to laugh. And try not to take things too hard.



## STORIES AND PHOTOS WANTED

If something newsworthy is going on in your school, district or local, please let us know. We will also consider articles, photos and cartoons. Please email tips and submissions to managing editor Lindsay Yakimyshyn: [lindsay.yakimyshyn@ata.ab.ca](mailto:lindsay.yakimyshyn@ata.ab.ca).



# International Collaboration for Education 2025

Are you ready for something more in your professional life?

Are you looking for a larger, more global view of education?

As a teacher, do you feel you have more to offer and more to learn?

Are you ready for a personal and professional adventure?

## If yes, International Collaboration for Education (ICE) (formerly Project Overseas) might be for you!

### Volunteer for ICE with the Canadian Teachers' Federation (CTF/FCE)

The CTF/FCE is seeking English and French-speaking Canadian teachers at the elementary and secondary levels who are interested in volunteering their time and talents to offer professional development in-service programs in partnership with teacher organizations in developing countries. Each year, over 50 Canadian teachers are chosen to volunteer on CTF/FCE's ICE in countries throughout Africa and the Caribbean. The in-service projects take place in July.

For more information and the application form, please visit [www.teachers.ab.ca/professionaldevelopment/internationalcooperation](http://www.teachers.ab.ca/professionaldevelopment/internationalcooperation)



The Alberta Teachers' Association

TES-MS-97-1 2024 08

# Start the STEM-ester off Strong

Bring the curriculum to life!

[apega.link/educators](http://apega.link/educators)



**Registration is open!**  
**FREE | October 5**  
 Explore the wonders of geoscience and learn what a career in geoscience could be like.



**Registration opens in the fall**  
**Edmonton: April 5 | Calgary: May 24**  
 Design solutions for real-life engineering and geoscience challenges.



**Elementary Science Nights**  
**Request an event!**  
**FREE | Kindergarten to Grade 6**  
 Dive into hands-on activities and demonstrations hosted at local schools.

# Canmore student nabs \$100,000 STEM scholarship

Mark Milne  
ATA News Staff

Canmore student Nami Dwyer is \$100,000 closer to her dream education. She has joined the exclusive club of exceptional students from across Canada who have been awarded the Schulich Leader Scholarship, and is now heading to McGill University, one of the country's most prestigious universities, this fall.

"I couldn't believe it. It was so unreal," said Dwyer, who recently graduated from Our Lady of the Snows Catholic Academy in Canmore. "McGill is very well known for its reputation around academics and research."

For the past 14 years, the Schulich Leader Scholarship has enabled students to pursue their dreams of becoming a national and global leader in the areas of science, technology, engineering and math (STEM). Entrepreneur and philanthropist Seymour Schulich created the scholarship program in 2012 to encourage and support the next generation of technology innovators. This year 100 scholarships were handed out, ranging from \$100,000 to \$120,000.

For Dwyer, this scholarship means she will be able to continue to explore her passion not only for science and technology, but also community leadership.

"Throughout my high school experience, I've had many opportunities to find the intersection between these two topics and truly explore my passions in that area," Dwyer said.



Schulich Leader Scholarship winner  
Nami Dwyer

Dwyer plans to continue her studies in the foundational sciences oriented around biology but hopes to further develop her skills in math, physics and entrepreneurship.

"I'm hoping to explore all those areas and one day find a career that is really the intersecting point for all of those," said Dwyer. "It's fascinating to see how science and technology can really solve global issues."

Teacher Luc Arvisais nominated Dwyer for the scholarship. He said he did so because he saw her potential to do great things for the world, well beyond academics.

"Everything about her being a good candidate comes down to project-based

learning, experiential-based learning, application outreach and real-world authentic activities," said Arvisais. "They're the ones that have developed their brains into problem solvers, innovators and will actually make a difference in the world."

Dwyer's accomplishments include many projects on the international stage. In one instance, her team collaborated with other students from the school division in a synthetic biology project to design a type of bacteria that detects a toxic chemical that is harmful to coral reefs.

"I had the opportunity to attend COP 28 in Dubai through the United Nations Climate Change Conference," said Dwyer. "That was truly a great way to celebrate all of the work I had done and share my work with other students from around the globe."

Dwyer believes her extracurricular STEM projects, as well as community leadership experience, played a big role in landing the scholarship.

She says that throughout her school years, she has been surrounded by incredible teachers who have not only provided her with immense insight and guidance, but also many opportunities for extracurricular activities that build on her talents.

"I truly believe that in these extracurricular activities is where the actual hands-on work in the community is done, which is very valuable in education," she said.

Our Lady of the Snows is no stranger to the Schulich Leader Scholarship, having had six students in the past

eight years land the prestigious award. Arvisais has worked hard to make STEM learning an important focus for the school and is proud of the achievements of his students and the doors that will open for them because of this scholarship.

"It's like winning a gold medal," said Arvisais. "When you win the championship, even though you've been on good teams your entire life, winning the championship is fulfilling and motivates you to go on and do similar things."

As she reflects on her journey so far, Dwyer offered her advice for any other students with a passion for STEM.

"Reach out and find opportunities. Once you take that first step out into the community, there will be so many opportunities to explore your passions and really find out what you love." ■



**SCHULICH LEADER  
SCHOLARSHIP**

<https://schulichleaders.com>

Deadline for nominations:  
January 29, 2025

## Back to the future

*The future of the principalship in Canada ... 10 years ago*

ATA News Staff

The year 2024 marks one decade since pan-Canadian research focused on the experiences and hopes of Canadian school leaders was released.

In 2014, the ATA and the Canadian Association of Principals jointly published *The Future of the Principalship in Canada*, a study that aimed to provide insight into the role of the principal in the context of shifting trends and expectations.

### Who participated?

For the study, 500 principals from across Canada shared their insights on the conditions affecting leadership in Canadian schools.

### What did they say?

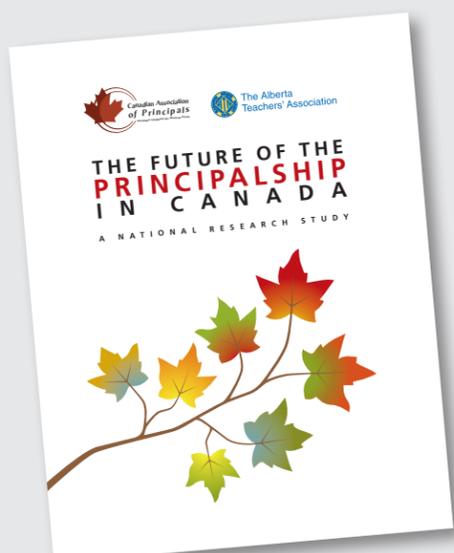
- 90 per cent of principals found their work very fulfilling
- 95 per cent reported growing, unsustainable workload and complexity in their schools

Five ways forward, as shared by Canadian principals:

1. Teach and learn for diversity.
2. Collaborate and build professional capacities in staff.
3. Build family and community relationships.
4. Promote continuous leadership learning.
5. Use technology for creative learning and good citizenship.

While the report signalled the complexities and demands of principalship, it also showed that school leaders were committed to their profession and to their students—and hopeful for the future of education in Canada.

The full 2014 study is available on the ATA website under Professional development > Education research. ■



## Alberta principal receives national award

Heather Grant  
ATA News Staff

An Alberta principal has been recognized as the Canadian Association of Principals (CAP) Distinguished Principal of the Year for 2024. Theresa Antonakis, principal of Archbishop MacDonald High School in Edmonton until her recent retirement, received this honour after dedicating nearly four decades to the teaching profession.

Antonakis began her teaching career in 1985 as a physical education and elementary teacher. After 10 years, she made the jump to administration and took on her first principalship in 2001. Throughout the last two decades, Antonakis took on various roles, including serving as a principal for all grade levels, working as assistant to the director of Educational and Administrative Technology Services, and spending time as manager of inclusive education.

Taking on leadership roles came naturally to Antonakis.

"I think that's part of who I am as a person. I've always welcomed challenges. My whole career has been a learning curve."

When it comes to facing those challenges head on, she says she views them as opportunities and a chance to do what is right.

"There are some non-negotiables as principals," said Antonakis. "We always

have those non-negotiables. Students first and all students can be successful, and they're all welcome."

Antonakis's guiding principle for leadership is clearly rooted in her passion for students.

"I really believe that every student that shows up in our building is ours. Regardless of their background, they are ours. And it's our responsibility as teachers to meet them where they are, and to take them as far as we can."

She did not take this responsibility lightly and credits her dad, who had been a principal with Edmonton Catholic, for encouraging and mentoring her to become the leader she is today.

"He loved the school, and I just grew up with that mentality," Antonakis said.

After following in her dad's footsteps and serving as a school leader for more than 20 years, Antonakis was touched when she found out she was nominated for the CAP Distinguished Principal of the Year award.

"I was really honoured because we don't look for recognition. We just don't look for it. It's just who we are as principals."

Having retired at the end of the 2023/24 school year, Antonakis is still figuring it out what this new chapter in life holds for her.

"My husband and I both retired. He was a principal also in Edmonton Catholic. So, we're just going to see what life is like without bells, and we're just going to enjoy life together." ■



## The Alberta Teachers' Association

The Alberta Teachers' Association invites applications for the positions of

### EXECUTIVE STAFF OFFICER, PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

**Competition: ESO5/24**

**Initial Placement: Edmonton**

**Commencement: November 1, 2024 or at a mutually agreeable time**

**How to apply:**

Applicants should quote position ESO5/24 and include two letters from references who are not Association employees or elected officials of its provincial executive. Applicants must be received in one file by 1600 on Wednesday, September 11, 2024.

**Position Overview**

This position will assist in the work of the professional development program area with duties that may include:

- Responsibilities in the areas of teacher education, curriculum, student evaluation, pedagogy, andragogy; and technology in education
- Working with specialist councils
- Supporting convention associations
- Assisting local professional development chairs
- Training and supervising Association instructors and Association administrator instructors
- Preparing policy and position papers
- Facilitating the establishment and operation of Diversity Equity Networks (DENs)
- Assisting with programs for beginning teachers
- Providing service and support to school leaders
- Assisting in the development and revision of workshops
- Planning and/or assisting with the planning of conferences
- Liaising with universities and other institutions
- Serving as Association resource person in specific areas of expertise

### EXECUTIVE STAFF OFFICER, TEACHER EMPLOYMENT SERVICES (Two positions)

**Competition: ESO6/24 and ESO7/24**

**Initial Placement: Calgary (ESO6/24) and Edmonton (ESO7/24)**

**Commencement: November 1, 2024 or at a mutually agreeable time**

**How to apply:**

Applicants should quote position ESO6/24 (Calgary), ESO7/24 (Edmonton) or both (if applying for both positions) and include two letters from references who are not Association employees or elected officials of its provincial executive. Applicants must be received in one file by 1600 on Wednesday, September 11, 2024.

**Position Overview**

In these roles, the two executive staff officers (one in Calgary, one in Edmonton) will assist in the work of the Teacher Employment Services (TES) program area, supporting both teacher employment and collective bargaining functions. Duties may include the following:

- Being responsible for organizing and providing direct service to members as part of the Teacher Employment Services team, including handling teacher employment field service requests, acting as a representative of the bargaining agent in collective agreement negotiations and providing support to Association subgroups
- Advising members on teacher personnel problems, collective agreement entitlements and legal assistance
- Handling collective agreement grievances and board of reference appeals
- Participating and carrying out presentations and workshops for TES conferences
- Serving as Association resource person in specific areas of expertise
- Carrying out special projects from other areas of Association operation as assigned

The following are considered assets for TES positions:

- Familiarity with applicable legislation, policy and the Education Act
- Experience in bargaining, labour relations, application of collective agreements and conducting investigations
- Coursework, training and/or experience in human resources and labour relations and knowledge of pension and benefits
- School leadership and experience

### Qualifications for all executive staff officer positions

**Key requirements:**

- Knowledge of ATA mission, objects, program areas and how they contribute to improving the profession and the professional lives of teachers.
- A valid teaching certificate and a minimum of five years of successful teaching experience in public education
- Proven commitment to public education
- Ability to undertake travel and evening/ weekend work

In addition, the following are considered assets:

- Demonstrated proficiency in French written and oral language
- A demonstrated commitment to the Alberta Teachers' Association (or other Canadian teachers' organization)

**Additional competencies:**

- Problem Solving and Decision Making
  - Analyzes problems systematically, organize information, identify key factors, identify underlying causes, and generate solutions.
- Change Agility
  - Embraces change and adapts effectively in response.
- Effective Communication
  - Regularly seeks feedback to understand other peoples' perspectives and integrates feedback into decisions and to improve service to members.
- Accountability and Self Awareness
  - Manages professional relationships by performing work in a timely and quality way that enables departmental success.

- Commitment to collaboration
  - Works effectively both within the program area/unit and across the organization.
  - Contributes to team building and success.

The Association is committed to reconciliation and a candidate's knowledge and experience of related issues and/or membership in an Indigenous community is considered an asset. Applications from members of equity-seeking groups are encouraged.

Future staff responsibilities, program area placement and location of work may be subject to change depending upon the emerging needs of the Association.

### What The ATA Offers

Total compensation for executive staff positions include a starting salary of \$138,720, pensionable service under the Teachers' Pension Plan of the Alberta Teachers' Retirement Fund Board and employer-paid benefits as stipulated in a collective agreement. The initial locations are noted above but future assignments may be to any present or future Association office. Individual staff responsibilities, program area placement and location of work may be subject to change depending upon the emerging needs of the Association.

Applications for all three positions must be received by **1600 on Wednesday, September 11, 2024**, and should be addressed to

Ms Kathryn Dick  
Human Resources Director  
The Alberta Teachers' Association  
11010 142 Street NW  
Edmonton T5N 2R1  
E-mail: hr@ata.ab.ca

# New program supports Alberta's beginning teachers

Terra Kaliszuk  
ATA Executive Staff Officer

Are you a beginning teacher who is new to the profession or new to the province? If so, the Alberta Teachers' Association has a new program available to support you.

The Beginning Teacher Network (BTN) is a virtual professional learning and mentorship program available to beginning teachers who are looking to grow their professional skills and expand their professional network. The program includes virtual sessions, facilitated by experienced teachers,

that focus on topics relevant to beginning teachers.

Originally started as a small-scale pilot program during the 2023/24 school year, the 2024 Annual Representatives Assembly overwhelmingly voted in favour of formalizing BTN funding to directly support beginning teachers as they embark on their career. As a result, this small-scale pilot program has grown in exciting new ways for the 2024/25 school year.

### How does it work?

This program connects beginning teachers with experienced teachers through virtual sessions. These sessions allow participants to explore professional

learning topics, receive professional advice and connect with colleagues about the unique challenges faced by beginning teachers in Alberta.

### Who can participate?

The BTN is open to teachers who are in their first two years of teaching or are new to teaching in Alberta. BTN sessions are available at no cost to participants. As well, you can join the BTN at any time, regardless of when you start teaching. If you are already part of a formal mentorship program, you can still join the BTN.

### How do I participate?

There are two ways for beginning teachers to participate in the BTN:

- **Cohort Groups** – Prefer to attend daytime sessions? You can receive release time (i.e., no cost to your school) to enable you to attend Cohort Group sessions during the school day. Cohort Groups meet four times per school year for 90-minute virtual sessions. Apply to join the kindergarten to Grade 6 Cohort Group or the Grade 7 to 12 Cohort Group.
- **Open Sessions** – Prefer to attend sessions after school? With no need for release time or substitute planning, Open Sessions might suit you. These monthly 60-minute virtual sessions are open to all Alberta beginning teachers. You can choose specific sessions or attend them all (the schedule is available on the ATA website). Cohort Group members can also attend open sessions. ■



ADOBE STOCK

## Join the network now!

Information about the Beginning Teacher Network is available directly from the ATA website at [www.teachers.ab.ca](http://www.teachers.ab.ca) > Teaching Career > Beginning Teachers.



## Behaviour Leaders

### Boot Camp Basics for Educators and Educational Psychologists

Best Western, Okotoks, Alberta, CA Saturday, October 19, 2024

The Back to Basics symposium focuses on proactive, preventative and strategic behaviour classroom management strategies and interventions. Cognitive, emotional and physical strategies will be addressed. Learn to strategically manage student behaviour by setting up inclusive classrooms, developing self regulation strategies and mentoring positive behaviours to create a focused learning environment for students K-9.

More Info here



### Speakers include:

- Darci Fulton
- Les Redick
- Jyoti Roy
- Rebecca Christie
- Georgie Brewin
- Myka Piekenbrock

[www.behaviourleaders.com](http://www.behaviourleaders.com)  
behaviourleaderscanada@gmail.com  
403-707-5553

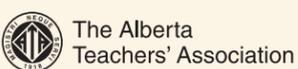
## So what's new with you?

Did you know that the *ATA Magazine* has a section dedicated to sharing information about teachers' extracurricular endeavours and adventures?

Yes, it's true. It's called **Who's Out There?** and we're currently seeking submissions.

The section highlights new projects or accomplishments by Alberta teachers who are also

- authors
- musicians
- visual or performing artists
- podcasters
- athletes
- volunteers
- entrepreneurs



Teachers who wish to make a submission for **Who's Out There?** can email a short summary (75–100 words) to section editor Lindsay Yakimyshyn: [lindsay.yakimyshyn@ata.ab.ca](mailto:lindsay.yakimyshyn@ata.ab.ca).

## ATA Magazine

## ADVERTISING IN ATANEWS

**For advertising information,** contact Trevor Batty at Trevor Batty Advertising Sales  
1-778-773-9397  
[trevor@tbasales.ca](mailto:trevor@tbasales.ca)

**Next deadline**  
Thursday, Sep. 5, 2024, 4 p.m.  
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Advertisers are encouraged to book early – space is limited.

**Circulation:** 38,000  
We accept Visa, Mastercard, cash or cheque.

# IF ALBERTA IS THE RICHEST PROVINCE IN CANADA, THEN WHY ARE WE SPENDING THE LEAST ON EDUCATION?\*

\*We bet you thought the asterisk would lead to some sort of stat that softens this embarrassing statement. Unfortunately, the truth only gets worse. The latest report on "Education Spending in Public Schools in Canada", conducted by the Fraser Institute in 2023, puts into perspective how poorly Alberta stands against the rest of our country. As much as we hate to reference the Fraser Institute, their study shows Alberta spent the least on a per-student basis for public education in all of Canada in 2020/21. To make matters worse, data shows that from 2012 to 2021 provinces like Quebec and BC have rightfully increased spending by 33% and 13%, respectively. Whereas Alberta has had a shameful decrease of 12% in spending over that same time period. When public education does not receive the proper funding, students' needs are not met. Classrooms are overfilled, diverse programs are being cut, and there is less teaching support for students with complex issues. The compounding effects of these issues have seen distraught teachers in our province leave their chosen profession altogether. It's time to right the wrongs. It's time for solutions. Tell your MLA, "Stop the excuses."

[StopTheExcuses.ca](https://StopTheExcuses.ca)



The Alberta  
Teachers' Association

## L'Éducation au Campus Saint-Jean

Le Campus Saint-Jean, campus francophone de l'Université de l'Alberta, offre un environnement bilingue propice à une immersion dans la francophonie. Avec des ressources de calibre international, il propose des programmes transdisciplinaires favorisant la recherche collaborative et l'engagement avec la francophonie à l'échelle nationale et mondiale.

*Campus Saint-Jean, the University of Alberta's francophone campus, offers a bilingual environment conducive to a unique immersion in the French-speaking world. It provides access to resources and expertise of international caliber. Through its transdisciplinary programs, the campus offers unparalleled opportunities for collaborative research and active engagement with the French-speaking world, both in Canada and globally.*

### Études supérieures

- Doctorat en Études transdisciplinaires (*Doctorate in transdisciplinary studies*) - Formule de cours flexible
- Maîtrise en Éducation (*Master in Education*) - 100% en ligne
- Certificat d'études supérieures en administration et leadership scolaire (*Graduate Certificate in Administration and School Leadership*) - 100% en ligne
- Certificat supérieur en sciences de l'éducation (*Graduate Certificate in Education Sciences*) - 100% en ligne



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DE L'ALBERTA

uab.ca/educsj  
csjsup@ualberta.ca



## World Teachers' Day, October 5th

Join us in honouring the difference Alberta's teachers have made!



## Which teacher had the greatest impact on you?

The Alberta Teachers' Association wants to know, which teacher had the greatest impact on you? In celebration of World Teachers' Day on October 5th, let's acknowledge those amazing educators. Share your story and **you could win a cash prize, and your teacher could walk away with a grand prize!** Simply upload a selfie video expressing your thanks to your most inspiring teacher. This is an open contest for Albertans of all ages. Visit [www.teachers.ab.ca](http://www.teachers.ab.ca)



The Alberta Teachers' Association

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## Provincial Executive Council (PEC) sets timelines for the 2025 general PEC election

### PEC POINTS

Audrey Dutka  
ATA News Staff

#### Highlights of the Provincial Executive Council meeting held June 13–14, 2024, Barnett House, Edmonton

1. Set March 14, 2025, as the date for the announcement of the voting results of the 2025 Provincial Executive Council general election. The deadline for nominations for the general election is January 4, 2025, and voting, which will be conducted by electronic vote, will take place March 10–13, 2025.

2. Approved the 2025 School Board Elections Plan, which focuses on a provincial website and a targeted online advertising campaign for local activities, general promotion of school board elections using existing communication channels, candidate recruitment efforts, training for prospective trustee candidates and follow-up work with new trustees.

3. Declared in effect amendments to the General Bylaws, as set out in Electoral Ballots 8 and 11 of 2023 and approved by the 2024 Annual Representative Assembly. Electoral Ballot 8 amended general bylaw 39 to reflect changes in the structure of the secretariat and more explicitly include in general bylaws the existing power of Council to designate an acting executive secretary, given that there are presently two associate executive secretaries. Electoral Ballot 11 amended general bylaw 4 by creating a new subcategory of membership, which will attract and facilitate a higher level of participation for otherwise ineligible members while allowing the Association to charge additional fees to cover associated costs.

4. 4. Authorized the Association to recommend to the Government of Alberta the reappointment of Greg Francis to the board of the Alberta Teachers' Retirement Fund for an additional term.

5. Dissolved the Alberta School Learning Commons Council (ASLC) and rescinded its constitution; authorized that the \$15,000 recovered from the ASLC be used to purchase inclusive book bins for the ATA library and expand the current inclusive text workshop offerings; approved that other possible activities to continue support to members that are listed in the trustee's report be referred to staff for consideration and possible inclusion in future emphases and prognoses; and dismissed the trustee with thanks.

6. Set the timelines for recruitment of three executive staff officer positions and appointed members to each selection committee.

7. Authorized the transfer of \$400,000 cash from the general operating fund to the capital fund prior to the end of the 2023/24 fiscal year.

8. Authorized an overexpenditure of up to \$6,250 to produce new Association convention booth backdrops.

9. Authorized an overexpenditure of \$5,000 in seed money to support the 2025 UNESCO student conference hosted by Ecole Olds High School.

10. Authorized that an overpayment of \$6,000 made to the Canadian Teachers' Federation for the 2025 Project Overseas program be returned to the Association.

11. Amended the Standard Constitution for Convention Associations, and all active convention association constitutions, to include that the assigned district representative and/or assigned staff officer must be in attendance in order for convention associations to have quorum.

12. Amended the administrative guidelines to update the standard provincial convention guest registration fees.

13. Approved amendments to the Standard Local and Sublocal Constitution to remove the clause requiring a two-thirds majority vote of Provincial Executive Council to appoint an official trustee.

14. Approved the draft Association calendar for 2024/25, and provisionally approved the draft Association calendars for 2025/26 and 2026/27, for finalization by staff and posting.

15. Approved field member committee and representation assignments for 2024/25; extended the terms of two field members to the Diversity, Equity and Human Rights Committee; and amended the Council member assignments to two specialist councils.

16. Amended the frame of reference of the Indigenous Education Committee. ■

# Look no further for exclusive group savings

ATA members can receive exclusive home and car insurance savings and enhanced coverages.



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Certain conditions, eligibility requirements, limitations and exclusions apply to all offers. Visit [belairdirect.com](https://belairdirect.com) for more details. Offers may change without notice. We offer car insurance and home insurance in Alberta, Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Newfoundland and Labrador and Prince Edward Island and home insurance only in British Columbia. © 2024, Belair Insurance Company Inc. All rights reserved.

**CALGARY**  
**Public Teachers**  
 ALBERTA TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION LOCAL 38

Applications are invited for the permanent full-time position of

**EXECUTIVE STAFF OFFICER**

**Location: Calgary**

**Commencement: To be negotiated**

*Do you have a passion for teaching and fully believe that public education builds communities? Do you believe in the power of the collective and the importance of a well-supported membership?*

Calgary Public Teachers (ATA Local 38) is seeking an Executive Staff Officer who will excel at supporting members with hands-on support through the following: education; information sessions and presentations; researching and evaluating emerging trends and the needs of members; informing the collective bargaining process; liaising with professional organizations and the offices of other Locals and the ATA; collaborating on the strategic planning process; and contributing to various committees within Calgary Public Teachers.

Reporting to the President, the Executive Staff Officer will work closely with one other Executive Staff Officer, the Local's Executive Committee, as well as the Alberta Teachers' Association.

The Local is seeking applicants with proven commitment to public education; excellent skills in human relations; strong communication and presentation skills; and experience in reading, interpreting and analyzing collective agreements and the collective bargaining process in the educational sector. Applicants will have a minimum of five years of successful teaching experience in public education, a valid Alberta teaching certificate and a bachelor's degree. Holding or working toward the completion of a master's degree, having school and/or board administrative experience, and having knowledge of local or provincial ATA organizational structures, policies and procedures would all be considered as strong assets. Local travel and some evening and weekend work are necessary for this position.

Total compensation for this position includes a starting salary equal to 125% of the level six maximum of the salary schedule in the ATA/Calgary Board of Education Collective Agreement and a comprehensive benefits package. This position is eligible to participate in the Alberta Teachers' Retirement Pension Plan.

Letters of application, supported by a résumé and the names and contact information of at least two references must be received **in one file by 5:00 PM on Friday, September 20th, 2024**, and should be addressed to:

Stephani Clements, President  
 Calgary Public Teachers, Alberta Teachers' Association Local 38  
 #340, 6815 8th Street NE  
 Calgary, Alberta T2E 7H7  
 E-mail: [president@ata38.ab.ca](mailto:president@ata38.ab.ca)

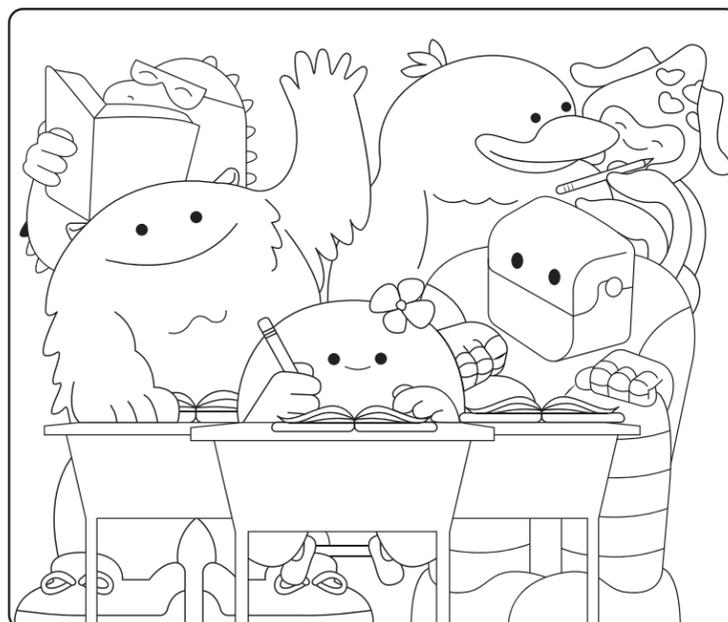
A complete role description may be obtained on the Local 38 website ([Local38.teachers.ab.ca](http://Local38.teachers.ab.ca)). Calgary Public Teachers thanks all applicants for their interest, however only those candidates selected for an interview will be contacted.

**SUPPORT | DEVELOP | ADVOCATE**

**pop quiz!**

**Spot the Difference**

Spot 10 differences between the two pictures.



**DIGITAL NEWS**

**The ATA News is available online.**

For the latest issue, visit [www.teachers.ab.ca/news](http://www.teachers.ab.ca/news).  
 Subscribe to receive an email when a new issue is available.

<http://bit.ly/ATAeNews>



**Substitute Teachers' Conference**

The  
**Joy**  
 of  
**Teaching**

**October 18(eve)–19, 2024**

Register online at <https://bit.ly/2024-STC>

Registration deadline—October 11, 2024



# TALENT

August 27, 2024 | Volume 59, Number 1

## GO FOR THE GOLD

We asked teachers:  
If teaching were the  
Olympics, what would  
you get the gold  
medal in?

*Proudest of my  
ribbon skirts and  
wearing them every  
single day.*

Mary Josephine Small

*I feel like  
I deserve a  
platinum medal  
for patience.*

Lorelei Gertz-Cummins

*The 90 minute  
bladder clench,  
the 5 minute  
photocopy dash,  
and/or the  
2 minute  
coffee gulp...  
all necessities  
for the Teacher  
Triathlon.*

Dwayne Wenaas

*Having the best  
snacks*

*Being a bit extra  
with my Canva slide  
lessons*

*Putting up  
bulletin boards  
(it's basically a Summer  
Olympics sport)*

Dani Jaman

*Most tabs open  
on a laptop!*

Deb Pike

*I would win at  
spirit days!*

Nicole Marie

*Sickening Google  
slide presentations*

Melissa McQueen

*Procrastinating  
on marking!  
Gold medal  
every time!*

Janel Winslow-Sherwin

*Finishing my  
report card  
comments early.  
Sorry not sorry!*

Nazneen Doyle

*Using teenager  
slang and  
making it  
super awkward*

Christy Haggarty

*Unjamming the  
photocopier!*

Ashley Fowler