



The state of the union

Support for unions is on the rise. So, what's happening?

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

All in this together

How to show solidarity with your non-teaching colleagues.

Read the Q&A on [page 2](#).

National Day for Truth and Reconciliation

Check out the ATA's Indigenous education resources.

See [page 4](#).



An impact that lasts

Teachers share their Project Overseas experiences.

See [pages 6-7, 11](#).



KAREN PALASHN IUK

Jessie Smeall, president of ATA Evergreen Local No. 11, organizes more than 1,500 school supply items donated to support teachers and students affected by the Jasper wildfires.

The state of the union



EDITORIAL

Kristine Wilkinson
ATA News Editor-in-Chief

This renewed support is clear across various sectors, including education. Teacher unions in the U.S., such as the American Federation of Teachers (AFT), have been at the forefront of advocating for better pay, smaller class sizes and improved working conditions. Like advocacy work happening across Canada, these efforts are not just about improving the lives of teachers and other school staff, but also about ensuring quality public education for students.

engaged in labour action back to work. This was a surprising move by the Liberal government (who, quite frankly, doesn't have enough social capital with Canadians to cut out union support). This also sparked a lot of controversy, as it has been viewed as a move that undermines union regulations and the right to strike. The Teamsters Canadian Rail Conference (TCRD), which represents nearly ten thousand rail workers, filed a lawsuit challenging this order. The results of the lawsuit will

class sizes and the professional autonomy of teachers. Budget cuts, higher student numbers and an inadequate funding model have only intensified these struggles, making support for the profession more critical than ever.

For teachers, support for the profession is not just a matter of better pay. It is about respect for teachers as professionals and adequate resources for public education. The ATA has been vocal about the need for better funding for schools, more support to address complexity in the classroom and smaller class sizes. These advocacy efforts are about improving teachers' working conditions, yes, but also about ensuring that students receive the best possible education.

As we navigate these complex times, it is essential for teachers to stay informed of and engaged with their Association's activities and stand up for their profession. The support for unions in the U.S. and the ongoing struggles in Canada signal the importance of collective action. By standing together, we can advocate for the resources and respect that both teachers and students deserve. ■

I welcome your comments. Contact me at kristine.wilkinson@ata.ab.ca.

“Support for the profession is not just a matter of better pay. It is about respect for teachers as professionals and adequate resources for public education.”

The support in the U.S. reaches up to the government, with the Democrats vocal in their support for organized labour. We have not seen the same government support in Canada.

Recently the Canadian federal government intervened in a labour dispute involving the Canadian National Railway (CN) and the Canadian Pacific Railway (CP), ordering workers

be telling. Will the laws around union rights be compromised at a time when union support is so high?

This intervention also highlights a broader issue in Canada: the tension between economic imperatives and workers' rights. For teachers in Alberta, this is a familiar story. The Alberta Teachers' Association (ATA) has long been engaged in battles over funding,

The landscape of labour unions in North America has undergone significant changes in recent years. These changes reflect broad societal shifts and economic pressures. Teachers understand these dynamics because they directly affect our profession, our families and the support systems we rely on. Seeing these shifts, over the past few years Alberta teachers have been thinking more and more about what the union function of their professional Association means to them.

In the United States (U.S.), support for labour unions has reached its highest level in decades. Recent polls show that approximately 67 per cent of Americans approve of unions, a sentiment not seen since the 1960s. In a similar vein, in Canada 62 per cent of us believe belonging to a union is a good thing. This resurgence of support is driven by growing awareness of workers' rights and the critical role unions play in advocating for fair wages, safe working conditions and job security.

Show your solidarity — keep it professional



Q & A

Sean Brown
ATA Coordinator,
Teacher Employment
Services

Union of Public Employee (CUPE) officials regarding the potential labour action by their respective members at schools across the province. While the Association is not part of the decision-making process for how and what CUPE has done or will do, we are connected with local and provincial leaders and will offer our support how and where we can.

So, what does this mean for our teachers?

If support or custodial staff in your division take labour action (e.g., picketing, work to rule or strike action), teachers should keep in mind the following:

- Teachers should not be taking on the work of another bargaining unit, including the work of support and custodial staff.

While tasks carried out by non-teaching staff may not be “teacher work,” the line is not as clear as some may think. In particular, the work of educational assistants (EAs) could be considered teachers' work, especially if the work relates to the health and well-being of the students.

If assigned work that would usually be undertaken by EAs or other staff engaged in labour action, teachers should first ask why they are being

assigned the task and what other measures have been considered or attempted before coming to them to complete the work. Teachers should then ask if they are being directed to do the work. If teachers are directed, then the ATA strongly suggests that they follow the lawful order of the division and contact the ATA's Teacher Employment Services (TES) for advice and assistance.

- Teachers are free to show solidarity and support for their CUPE colleagues but must do so in a professional and responsible manner.
- Even if support or custodial staff take labour action, teachers are required and expected to report to work on the same basis as they normally would and to continue with their regular duties and responsibilities. While other workers may be in legal strike position, at the current time, teachers are not.
- During the teachers' unassigned time and their before/after school time, they can, at their personal choice, participate in information pickets that might be held as part of their colleagues' labour action. It is important for members to adhere to their assignable/instructional time responsibilities and not join in any

activity that conflicts with those commitments.

- Subject to any dress code policies in the school division, teachers can wear purple to signal their solidarity with their CUPE colleagues. (CUPE has asked all Albertans to “paint Alberta purple” on specific days to support education support workers being paid fair wages.) If teachers choose to show their support by wearing purple, any discussion of the labour action needs to be carefully managed around students and should be age-appropriate.

Labour action can have a life of its own and is not easy. At the same time, it takes a concerted and sustained effort to make a difference.

The ATA is committed to keeping members as up to date as possible and will be working with other union officials, as well as local presidents of affected areas, to ensure that our members understand what is happening and how they can support their colleagues in a way that continues to uphold their own responsibilities as teaching professionals.

Members with questions or concerns about their roles and responsibilities as teachers during any labour action in their school division should connect with TES at 1-800-232-7208. ■

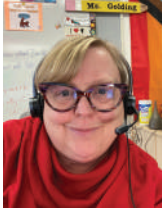
Question: I've heard that EAs and/or custodial staff in certain areas of the province could be taking job action soon. If these staff groups end up striking, can I be asked to cover any of their regular duties?

Answer: With over 250,000 public service members in negotiations this year, it is important that the groups work as collaboratively as possible since, in the end, we all want the same thing: respect for the work that we do, working conditions that allow us to provide the best possible service, and wages that catch up and keep up. Each one of these items directly benefits the communities where we live and work. Showing solidarity for labour action is important, especially as teachers might well have to consider that path in the months ahead.

Recently, the Alberta Teachers' Association (ATA) has been meeting with both local and provincial Canadian



Charter schools: a cautionary tale



VIEWPOINTS

Melanie Golding
Teacher

Let's have an honest conversation about charter schools in Alberta.

I am beginning my twentieth year of teaching this year. It feels like a century ago when I was packing up and flying to North Carolina for my first teaching position. I spent nine years working in North Carolina before returning home to Alberta in 2013. Working in the United States gave me a glimpse into the world of charter schools, as well as the state's decimation of the teaching profession bit by bit with legislation written to undermine the public system.

When I first moved to North Carolina, I worked in Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools, a massive district, when the No Child Left Behind campaign was in full swing. To ensure no child was left behind, adequate yearly progress (AYP) was being measured with state exams. Schools who made their AYP were rewarded with bonus money to every staff member, while schools who did not make their AYP were penalized.

“Working in the US gave me a glimpse into the world of charter schools, as well as the state's decimation of the teaching profession...”

First, schools would be warned to improve scores. Then, intervention blocks would be implemented. Then, teachers would be tasked with working longer days (unpaid, of course) to tutor students who were struggling.

It is worth noting that socioeconomic — including high levels of poverty — and language — including immigrant, English-language learner (ELL) populations — were not taken into consideration. It should also be pointed out that no child, whether they were an ELL or had a diagnosed special need, was allowed modifications or supports for testing. And there were no exceptions to writing exams.

All that mattered was that the schools hit their AYP, or else.

If a school failed to meet their AYP for three years, the real sanctions happened. This was when “school of choice” would be implemented.

If your child attended a school that was a school of choice (i.e., one not meeting state targets), you

could move your child to a nearby higher performing school at no cost. Busing would be taken care of. You could still qualify for free and reduced-cost lunch. So, imagine being a parent faced with an opportunity to move your child to a “higher performing” school where they could potentially get more! Why wouldn't you take advantage of that?

When I moved to North Carolina, my school was doing well with the AYP considering its student population. However, there were definite signs of a downward slide. That is when I first heard the story of Shamrock Gardens Elementary.

Shamrock Gardens was smack dab in the middle of the country club area of Charlotte — an older, well-established and very wealthy community. The school had an active parent teacher organization and ranked very high on the state results for AYP. This wealthy part of the city, however, was surrounded by areas that were experiencing high poverty. Immigrant families would move into these areas because of the multi-family housing there and the proximity to work in factories and plants.

When one of the schools from the more depressed areas fell into the school of choice model, these families were able to access the incredible resources of Shamrock Gardens. However, moving students from one school to another does not change the language barriers or the poverty. And it did not take long for the families who lived in the country club area to see this and organize themselves.

They had means, education and political sway. They could build their own charter school. A charter school for just their children. A charter school that could lure away the Shamrock Gardens staff, who were suddenly overwhelmed by the increasing complexities in the classroom. So, these wealthy families created their new school where they could filter out the students and families they felt didn't belong. Their new school still accessed all kinds of public funding, draining every last resource from the public system that it could.

It didn't take long. After about four years, Shamrock Gardens fell into disarray and failed to meet AYP targets. It became a school of choice, which meant those students were moved again within a system that was designed not to address the real issues but, rather, to keep the shell game moving along.

Every time we discuss charter schools, I always think about that school in Charlotte. It is the cautionary tale that every single stakeholder in education in our province needs to know about.

As we look at education in Alberta, we can see the legislation coming down the pipe. The standardized assessments already are being put in place. How long until those assessments are used by the government to rank and score schools and teachers? This will create a system that is sure to buckle and break under the pressure.

How long until our schools become another Shamrock Gardens? ■

Melanie Golding has been teaching for 20 years in both the U.S. and Alberta and is passionate about cats and politics.

YOUR VIEWS

FACEBOOK FEEDBACK

What advice would you share with new teachers? (Even better if it's in haiku form!)

*There will always be
More. Set boundaries and go
Easy on yourself.*

— Lindsay Walker

*Embrace the challenge
Watch for classroom miracles
You DO make a change.*

— Lori Szmul

*Your journey begins
Slow down and take it all in
Be yourself and shine.*

— Naomi Cooper Holmes

*One day at a time.
Chase progress, not perfection,
Tomorrow can wait.*

— Malorie Petersen

*Please do ask for help.
Veterans have been there before
There is no judgment.*

— Erin Krysko

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.

FOR THE RECORD

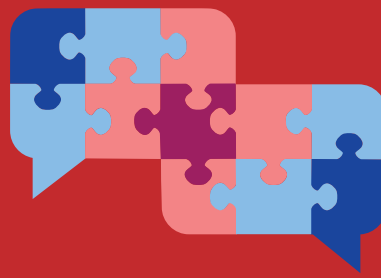
“We are in desperate need of school space in Edmonton Public and I don't think we're alone in the province, but the growth and the demand for public education is huge.”

— Darrel Robertson, superintendent of Edmonton Public Schools (EPS), at Sept. 10 EPS board meeting.



BARGAINING

Central Table 2024



We are ATA.

Central bargaining update

Kim Clement
ATA News staff

The Alberta Teachers' Association's (ATA) Central Table Bargaining Committee (CTBC) engaged in two full days of negotiations with the Teachers' Employer Bargaining Association (TEBA) on Sept. 9 and 10.

While the most pressing concerns – classroom conditions and teacher salaries – are scheduled for discussion in October, the recent meetings focused on areas with a greater likelihood of mutual agreement to build momentum. Some of the key issues on the table included protection from legislative changes, the right to grieve discipline, and the centralized (ATA and TEBA) calculation of salary, allowances and rates of pay increases.

"We've been able to find common ground on several important issues, which is encouraging," said Sean Brown, the ATA's chief negotiator. "But there are still significant challenges ahead, particularly when it comes to addressing the growing complexity of Alberta's classrooms."

While these agreements mark progress, discussions surrounding classroom data collection, particularly regarding class sizes and student complexity, remain a sticking point. Other key issues, such as classroom conditions, also remain contentious.

TEBA's resistance in such areas of interest makes it even more important for teachers to stand together this year,

said Peter MacKay, chair of the CTBC. "Seeing teachers across Alberta standing united strengthens our position at the table," he added. "We need to continue showing that solidarity as we move forward."

The next round of bargaining is scheduled for Oct. 2–3, 2024, where the CTBC is expected to focus heavily on classroom conditions. The ATA encourages members to stay informed by following bargaining updates and continuing to wear red as a symbol of unity.

For additional details on the ongoing negotiations, members can visit the Collective Bargaining Updates section on teachers.ab.ca.

Off Script

with ATA President Jason Schilling



I welcome your comments.
Contact me at
jason.schilling@ata.ab.ca.

A game of distraction

The start of every school year comes with routines – some new, some old. One thing that has become familiar for me at the start of the school year is the back-to-school news interviews. This year was no different.

One focus for media has been cell phone bans, specifically the discrepancy of implementation dates for the cell phone policy. The ministerial order guiding the use of cell phones and social media in schools came into effect Sept. 1, 2024, yet school boards have until Jan. 1, 2025 to have policies in place that comply with the new standards. This makes no sense. If you work in a school, you know how smoothly bringing in new rules at mid-year goes.

The other topic that has grabbed the media's attention is the opt-in process for instruction on human sexuality. What will this look like and how will the Alberta Teachers' Association (ATA) respond? Having not seen any

legislation on this yet, it's hard to say right now. However, given that parents already receive notification on human sexuality instruction and can opt out of said instruction, it makes me wonder what problem the government is looking to address here. In fact, when a reporter asked me what I had heard from members about this issue, my response was ... not much.

What I have been hearing from members is how their class sizes have grown, how they do not have adequate resources to address their students' needs, how there are no educational assistants, how they are wondering just how they are going to implement literacy and numeracy assessments. In short, they are wondering how they are going to make this school year work. That's what they are wondering about, not a policy decision that is several weeks away. They are too focused on the students in their

classrooms, sitting right in front of them.

Recently, the ATA released its latest ad campaign that drives home the fact that our schools are the least funded in Canada. The chronic underfunding of public education is profound and affects every aspect of our working lives, and we cannot lose focus on that. We cannot get distracted by other issues, even when there are so many things we are dealing with all at once. Remember, that is by design. If they keep us busy with one thing, maybe we won't notice the underfunding. Believe me, we noticed. As teachers, we know this game. Our students try to pull it on us every day and it won't work this time.

This year, despite what the media is gravitating toward, let's keep focused on the key issue affecting public education: the lack of funding for education in Alberta thanks to a government that seems to think our public education deserves the least.

ATA offers resources to support learning about truth and reconciliation



Walking Together

ATA News Staff

On Sept. 30, Canada marks the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation (NDTR)/Orange Shirt Day to honour and remember the children who didn't make it home, and the survivors and intergenerational survivors of residential schools across Canada. The NDTR is a public commemorative date that signals individual and collective remembrance of the tragic impacts of residential schools, and commitment to action within the truth and reconciliation journey. For teachers and school leaders, this day is also an opportunity to both deepen our understanding of the ongoing impacts of residential schools and identify ways to join the truth-telling process in student and teacher learning experiences.

The Alberta Teachers' Association (ATA) has resources available to support members in their journey in learning and teaching about truth

and reconciliation. A selection of publications, workshops and other resources you can access in advance of NDTR/Orange Shirt Day – or any time – is listed below.

ATA library guide

Organized by resources that are best for younger students, older students and teachers, the ATA library guide includes Orange Shirt Day lesson plans, the *Indigenous Peoples Atlas of Canada*, the *Spirit Bear's Guide to Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada Calls to Action* and much more!

ATA PD workshops

Members can request professional learning activities on Indigenous education and truth and reconciliation for their school or local. Relevant ATA workshops include *CVΔ² tapwewin: Dismantling Anti-Indigenous Racism*; *More Than Words: The Significance of Land Acknowledgments on the Journey of Truth and Reconciliation*;

and *Our Shared History, Our Shared Future—A Brief Introduction to Treaties (Une histoire commune, un avenir à partager—initiation aux traités)*. Contact pdworkshops@ata.ab.ca for more information.

ATA publications

From literature recommendations for K–12 (and beyond) to *Stepping Stones* on such topics as residential schools and Elder protocol, publications related to Indigenous education are available on the ATA website. *Strengthening the Heartbeat of Reconciliation* includes sample activities, resources and key considerations for the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation.

Other ATA resources

Treaty-specific land acknowledgments, with the names of regional Indigenous places, communities and nations identified, are available on the ATA website in written and video formats.

READY TO CONTINUE YOUR LEARNING JOURNEY?

Visit the ATA website > Professional development > Indigenous education and Walking Together



or the ATA library's website



Edmonton District byelection called

Mark Milne
ATA News Staff

The Alberta Teachers' Association (ATA) is looking for a strong voice to fill a vacancy on the Provincial Executive Council (PEC). This October, nominations will open for the byelection to select a new district representative for the Edmonton District. This position serves the teachers from the Elk Island Public, Elk Island Catholic, St. Albert Catholic, St. Albert Public and Sturgeon locals.

"The role of district representative is so vital to what we do here," said Jason Schilling, president of the ATA. "It brings the voice of the classroom teacher to the provincial council table. They need to be heard when decisions are being made on the policies and direction of the organization that represents them."

Byelection nominations will be accepted from October 1 to 31 and are open to all active and associate members who work in the Edmonton District geographical region. Associate members who are not employed by any specific school board but live in area covered by the Edmonton District are also eligible

to run. Nomination forms can be found on the ATA website (teachers.ab.ca).

Online voting for the byelection will take place December 9 to 12 and will also be limited to members within the Edmonton District.

The winner of the byelection will be announced on December 13 and will join the other 14 district representatives at the first PEC meeting in the new year. The new representative will hold the seat until June 30, 2025, the end of the current term.

General PEC election on the horizon

This byelection will provide valuable practice for the provincewide general PEC election scheduled to take place in the spring of 2025. Every position on PEC, except for the executive secretary and past president, will be up for grabs.

The Edmonton District byelection and the general PEC election will overlap, so special care is being taken to help members know who and what they are voting for.

"The PEC election is an exciting democratic process," said returning officer Dave Matson. "We don't want to overwhelm our members with



ADOBE STOCK

information overload. It's important for us to ensure that teachers understand there are two separate and distinct election periods that overlap."

Nominations for the 2025 general PEC election open on October 18, 2024, and run to January 14, 2025. Nomination forms for that event can also be found on the ATA website. The new PEC members will take office on July 1, 2025. ■

PEC announces fellowship and scholarship winners

ATA News Staff

Last spring, Provincial Executive Council announced the winners of the 2024 ATA fellowships and scholarships.

Doctoral Fellowship in Education

Each year, the Alberta Teachers' Association (ATA) awards two fellowships, valued at \$15,000 each, to ATA members who have been accepted into or already embarked upon full-time study in a doctoral program in education at a recognized public university in Alberta or Canada (if the program of study is offered in French or is not available in Alberta). The fellowship program is intended to recognize academic excellence and to help defray the financial costs of university study.

Meagan Lundgren

Meagan Lundgren is currently a principal with the Calgary Board of Education. She completed a BA in English (minor in psychology) and a BEd in Secondary English from the University of Calgary in 2005, and received an MEd in Indigenous Education in 2018. Lundgren is currently registered in the educational leadership doctoral program at Western University. Lundgren's proposed area of research is focused on enhancing conflict management training for Alberta's educational leaders and was motivated by a noticeable increase in mental health issues among students and staff. Lundgren hopes to address the growing challenges of dysregulation in schools.

Morgan Schaufele

Morgan Schaufele is an English language arts teacher in Westwind School Division and a first-year PhD student at the Werklund School of Education at the University of Calgary. A graduate of the University of Lethbridge, Schaufele began his teaching career in the UK, before moving back to Alberta. Long interested in the narrative practices at play in educational spaces, Schaufele has published numerous articles in professional and scholarly journals including *Educational Studies* and *English Journal*. Through his research, Schaufele hopes to examine the literacy and narrative practices at play in educational spaces as students and teachers confront the prospect of an uncertain future increasingly characterized by ecological precarity and the climate crisis. He plans to explore how a critical arts-based approach can help foster an ethic of care for shared places and local environments.

Nadene M. Thomas Graduate Research Bursary

The Nadene M. Thomas Graduate Research Bursary in the amount of \$5,000 is offered annually to a member of the ATA who is enrolled in a graduate program in education at a recognized Canadian university. Research must focus on contemporary issues impacting professional practice or public education, and/or innovative approaches to teaching or school leadership.

Landry Forand

Landry Forand has taught for the Rocky View School Division since 2016, and currently works for the

division as a learning specialist. Forand is passionate about learning and is known for his work with Building Thinking Classrooms and assessment practices. He is currently enrolled at St. Francis Xavier University for his master's degree. For his thesis research, Forand is interested in understanding how transitioning to outcome-based assessment can reduce workload, improve assessment confidence, and enhance both student learning and teacher well-being.

Belairdirect Insurance Scholarship

Sponsored by Belairdirect Insurance, this scholarship awards \$2,500 for an approved professional development course or part of an organized program of studies in the field of business education and/or the use of computer technology in education from a recognized Canadian public institution.

Corbett Artym

Corbett Artym, research consultant at Edmonton Public Schools, leverages data for evidence-based decision making to enhance evaluation processes and promote continuous improvement. His primary teaching disciplines are mathematics and computing science. As a school representative, he actively advocates for public education in Alberta. Academically, Artym's research and publications focus on evaluating pre-service teachers' computational thinking and digital game design. He is set to begin a PhD in secondary education at the University of Alberta this fall, where his research will explore practical artificial intelligence applications for educators and administrators, aiming to enhance 21st-century learning and student success. ■

Funds to support lifelong learning

\$15,000
ATA Doctoral
Fellowships in
Education

\$5,000
Nadene M Thomas
Graduate Research
Bursary

\$2,500
Belairdirect
Scholarship



 The Alberta
Teachers' Association

Find out more on our website!
teachers.ab.ca/scholarships
pd@ata.ab.ca · 1-800-232-7208



PD-3-10d_2024-06



For forever | Project Overseas experience makes a lasting impact

This past summer, eight Alberta teachers participated in the Canadian Teachers' Federation's Project Overseas (PO). The participants had the opportunity to travel abroad to co-plan and co-deliver professional development workshops for local teachers, aiming to promote equitable, high-quality, publicly funded education for all. Here are their PO experiences.

SIERRA LEONE

Brings us all together



Team Sierra Leone with the secretary-general of the Sierra Leone Teachers Union, Morris Conteh, and the course director, Salimatu Koroma.



One of the classrooms at Sylvanus Municipal Academy Junior Secondary School in Makeni.

For Project Overseas (PO), teachers from across Canada travel to low- and middle-income countries in Africa and the Caribbean to work with local teachers on topics as varied as numeracy, peace education, unionism, wellness and fine arts. This July, PO found me in Makeni, northern Sierra Leone. This rural community of approximately 80,000 people was my team's home for 17 days, and the people welcomed us with open arms.

Rural Sierra Leone, like many low- and middle-income countries, suffers from a lack of qualified teachers. In many smaller communities, the teachers (especially in primary school) are local adults without formal teacher training. Our project aimed to fill some of the gaps for these teachers because all students need and deserve qualified teachers.

To that end, my team (consisting of me, a teacher from Toronto and another from Ottawa) worked with the local program teachers, known as PDFs, on lesson plans, resource research and creation, classroom management, wellness and rights under the collective agreement. We learned just as much, if not more, from the local teachers, many of whom had survived the Civil War of 1992–2002, either as teachers or students. They showed us how to work under conditions Canadian teachers would consider untenable and unacceptable, create lessons with the bare minimum and teach 60 or more primary students in one class.

Yet, despite these almost insurmountable work conditions, every local teacher was warm and welcoming. We were fed, clothed and celebrated. Participants and PDFs brought us gifts of fresh pineapples, coconuts and groundnuts. Teachers shared their experiences with us and we were reminded that despite the geographical distance between us, teaching is a profession that brings us

all together. Only other teachers understand the challenges and joys of the profession, no matter where they live and work.

Monique Wilson
Aurora Academic Secondary School, Edmonton

UGANDA

Focus on collaboration

This past July, a group of Canadians (including me) spent two weeks working with the Uganda National Teachers' Union (UNATU) through Project Overseas (PO). Together, we co-planned and co-facilitated professional development (PD) workshops for teachers in Uganda on instructional strategies, classroom management, learning modalities and leadership in education. During my PO experience, I had the privilege of working with about 80 passionate educators.

What I love most about being part of PO is its focus on collaboration. Eight teachers — four Canadians and four Ugandans — became co-tutors that led the workshop sessions. Our Ugandan co-tutors teach at the local primary teachers' college and were therefore able to direct our planning in a way that was meaningful for the participating teachers. My co-tutor and I were able to weave together our two experiences to create PD sessions that were new, engaging and relevant. Moreover, our co-tutors can continue this work, even with our Canadian team being back home.

Through this collaboration, I learned so much about the northern Ugandan context and culture, and was able to share Canadian culture through our cultural

exchange nights. We had many discussions about the differences between our two education systems and what strategies we have used to address challenges. We also recognized that there are so many similarities in our educational goals: quality education for students, support for struggling learners, protecting the professionalism of teachers and more. These shared goals supported effective collaboration despite the differences in our teaching contexts.

Collaboration also occurred with the PD session participants, who brought their own expert knowledge as teachers and principals. I also feel fortunate to have collaborated with my Canadian colleagues, who were an amazing and supportive team. By the end of PO, it was clear that everyone involved appreciated this opportunity to work and learn together to continue moving education forward, both in Uganda and in Canada.

Kiara Smyth
Lumen Christi Catholic Education Centre, Edmonton

UGANDA

Part of the growth



Teachers participate in a series of workshops on leadership in education in Uganda.

This summer I returned to Uganda as part of Project Overseas to work with Uganda National Teachers' Union and the Ugandan co-tutors with whom we were paired. The experience reinforced the importance of the collaboration of the Canadian Teachers' Federation and their international partners. Having been to Uganda before, it was incredible to see the educational progress made since my first time there, and to know that many teachers across Canada — including myself — are a small part of this growth.

Based in a remote region of northern Uganda, my team and I were welcomed with open arms. It was wonderful to see familiar faces and so many new ones. As teachers learn best from other teachers, we co-delivered professional development to more than 80 teachers and head teachers from the region. Along with our Ugandan co-tutors, we helped to grow teacher capacity, strengthened collaboration and gender equality, and, most of all, learned from each other.

Many of the remote schools in Uganda have class sizes of more than 100 students per teacher, no electricity or running water, and a lack of resources. Despite these challenges, our Ugandan colleagues show up every day ready to do their best to ensure their students achieve and grow. The teachers that attended our workshops gave up time from their families and classrooms to be with us. They committed to bringing back new ideas to their colleagues and communities.

Some other highlights of our time in Uganda



Co-tutors Kiara and Gracious share a laugh as they prepare to facilitate a workshop session on instructional strategies.



Participants and co-tutors of Project Overseas at Gulu Core Primary Teachers' College, Uganda.



included visiting two local schools, sharing our cultures during Canada and Uganda nights, and attending a community cultural gala.

We spent many hours on dirt roads traveling between our lodging and our teaching site, and we were lovingly embraced by the entire community along the way. While I believe we left an impact on those we met, I know the community there and Project Overseas left a bigger impact on our hearts.

Michelle Dickie
Varsity Acres School, Calgary

GHANA

Forever changed



Canadian PO participants were gifted traditional Ghana National Association of Teachers dresses to wear on the closing ceremony days to show that we are all united.



Participants join in a traditional African drumming and dancing ceremony.

On July 1, I embarked on an adventure to Ghana as part of Project Overseas. I did not know what to expect. I was nervous and excited all at the same time. I witnessed remarkable growth and strengthened connections between our Canadian team and the Ghana co-facilitators and teacher participants right away. This collaboration was an enriching experience, with an environment of mutual learning and support. The dedication and enthusiasm displayed by all participants was truly inspiring, and contributed significantly to the success of the program.

Together, we shared innovative teaching strategies and educational methodologies, enhancing the skills and knowledge of everyone involved. The co-facilitators from Ghana brought invaluable insight and local expertise, which were instrumental in me tailoring my approaches to our topics of classroom management and assessment. The partnership with teachers from Ghana not only enriched my professional capabilities, but also deepened my understanding of Ghana's cultural and educational landscape.

The solidarity, support and commitment from our international partners, the Ghana National Association of Teachers, allowed participants to achieve our goals in lifelong learning and professional development. The shared experiences and challenges strengthened our bond, creating a network of educators who are dedicated to making a positive impact.

I am profoundly grateful to have had the opportunity to work alongside such passionate individuals through PO. The lessons learned and the skills acquired through this collaboration will undoubtedly have a lasting impact on my professional journey. I am so grateful for this experience.

Thank you to everyone who contributed to this incredible journey; your efforts and dedication are deeply appreciated and I am forever changed.

Tara Ong-Padilla
Springbank Community High School, Calgary

GUYANA

Incredible resilience

This summer I had the privilege of traveling to Guyana as part of the Canadian Teachers' Federation's Project Overseas (PO). This was my third time participating in PO, and second as team leader. Initially, I was unsure about accepting this placement because I didn't know much about Guyana. After much consideration, I decided to step outside my comfort zone and accept the challenge. I am so glad that I did. Guyana is an amazing country and PO 2024 was an experience that will stay with me forever.

In early July, our team of four Canadian teachers from Alberta, Ontario and Newfoundland met in Ottawa for orientation and then traveled together to Bartica, a small town on the Essequibo River. We partnered with the Guyana Teachers' Union and the Region 7 ministry of education to deliver two weeks of professional development workshops for over 100 teachers. Many of the participants came from very remote locations in the region and had little-to-no formal educational training. Alongside our Guyanese co-tutors, we were able to deliver training on a variety of meaningful and relevant teaching and learning topics.

Meeting the teachers of Guyana and hearing their stories and struggles, I came to recognize that our similarities far outweigh our differences. The needs and challenges in education are universal; kids are kids no matter what country you are in. The Guyanese teachers are incredibly resilient people with an infectious spirit. This experience strengthened my own teaching, and I learned far more from them than I could ever have anticipated.

While my love of travel initially drew me to PO, I very quickly realized that the project was less about travel and more about personal growth and forming relationships. The days could be long and exhausting, but the weeks were short. At the end of our time together, I didn't want to say goodbye to my team and the incredible people of Guyana.

Julia DeGirolamo
Apostles of Jesus School, Calgary



The Canadian PO team in Guyana with the regional education officer for Region 7.

GUYANA

Cultural exchange

My interest in Project Overseas (PO) began in my first year of teaching, when the idea of traveling overseas to share my experience and knowledge with others seemed like the perfect combination of collaboration and experiential learning.

At the beginning of my PO journey, I arrived in Ottawa for orientation at the Canadian Teachers' Federation and was struck by the sense of knowledge and collaboration displayed by the participating teachers from across Canada. This is essential to the PO experience, as it is not meant to be a "charity model" of imparting knowledge, but is instead intended to be a cultural exchange between Canadian and, for my experience, Guyanese teachers.

Guyana is located in South America. Due to its proximity to the Caribbean and its status as an English-speaking country, it shares many cultural aspects with the Caribbean. The majority of people in Guyana are of Indian and African descent, with a sizable Amerindian population.

Our PO experience took place in the town of Bartica on the banks of the Essequibo River. From the moment we arrived, the people's warmth and hospitality were palpable, matched only by their abundance of teaching knowledge. The teachers with whom I worked came from all over Region 7 and included people from the Bartica area and Amerindians who had traveled far to join in the experience. Although we came from diverse backgrounds, we found a lot of overlap in our teaching experiences. These commonalities guided our exchange of information throughout the two weeks.

As part of the experience, I led a session called "Leadership in Education," during which we identified the core of what it means to be an educator. The differences in our understanding of classroom leadership, collaboration with colleagues and curriculum comprehension, among other things, led to discussions and learning that will stay with me for the rest of my life.

The PO experience was one of the most engaging travel experiences I have undertaken, and I believe that it enhances the teaching practice of all those who participate in it.

David Arienzale
St Catherine Elementary School, Calgary

BÉNIN

Établir une connexion mondiale

Le perfectionnement professionnel des enseignants canadiens et de leurs collègues béninois a eu lieu en juillet 2024 à Cotonou, Bénin, dans le cadre du Projet outre-mer.

Cet échange, destiné aux enseignants de maternelle et de niveau primaire, a été une occasion de partager des connaissances et des expériences, et de renforcer les liens entre l'Alberta Teachers' Association (ATA), le Syndicat national des enseignants des écoles maternelles du Bénin (SYNAEM) et le Syndicat national de l'enseignement primaire public du Bénin (SNEP).

Au cours de cet échange, plusieurs activités et ateliers ont été organisés. Les enseignants ont participé à des séances de formation sur l'apprentissage interdisciplinaire, afin d'intégrer des différentes matières dans leurs leçons et de favoriser une compréhension globale auprès des élèves.

Les participants ont discuté les principes de l'évaluation formative (au cours de l'enseignement) et de l'évaluation sommative (après l'enseignement), et ils ont partagé leurs expériences sur les diverses méthodes d'évaluation utilisées dans leurs pays respectifs.

La gestion de classe, le leadership et la promotion de la diversité culturelle ont été parmi les sujets essentiels abordés. Les discussions ont porté sur les techniques pour créer un environnement d'apprentissage positif.

PROJECT OVERSEAS
continued on page 11

READY...

SET...

'Tis the season when teachers turn their attention to (among dozens of other things) their professional growth plans. Through the Alberta Teachers' Association (ATA), teachers can access a variety of professional learning opportunities.



TEACHERS' CONVENTIONS

Teachers' conventions enhance professional practice by providing teachers and school leaders with opportunities to share innovative practices, discuss professional issues and meet the learning goals identified in their professional growth plans.

Each of the ATA's nine teachers' conventions is organized by a regional convention board of volunteer teachers who plan world-class PD events filled with expert keynotes and meaningful breakout sessions, many of which are led by fellow colleagues. Members are assigned to conventions based on their employing school authority and ATA local.

North Central Teachers' Convention

Dates: Feb. 6-7
Location: Edmonton Convention Centre, Edmonton
Contact: Carryl Bennett, president, president@nctca.ca
Website: <http://mynctca.com>

Calgary City Teachers' Convention

Dates: Feb. 13-14
Location: Telus Convention Centre, Calgary
Contact: Shae Frisby, president, cctcapresident@gmail.com
Website: www.cctca.com

Endless Skies Teachers' Convention

Dates: Feb. 13-14
Location: Edmonton Convention Centre, Edmonton
Contact: Melissa Petruk, president, estcapresident@gmail.com
Website: <http://estca.teachers.ab.ca>

Central Alberta Teachers' Convention

Dates: Feb. 20-21
Location: Red Deer Polytechnic, Red Deer
Contact: Brenda Lewis, president, teacher.brendalewis@gmail.com
Website: www.mycatca.com

Palliser District Teachers' Convention

Dates: Feb. 20-21
Location: Telus Convention Centre, Calgary
Contact: Jennifer Munton, president, president@pdtca.org
Website: www.pdtca.org

Southeastern Alberta Teachers' Convention

Dates: Feb. 20-21
Location: Medicine Hat College, Medicine Hat
Contact: Cam Bernhard, president, president.seatca@gmail.com
Website: <https://seatca.atapd.ca>

South Western Alberta Teachers' Convention

Dates: Feb. 20-21
Location: University of Lethbridge, Lethbridge
Contact: Alex Funk, president, president@swatca.ca
Website: www.swatca.ca

Greater Edmonton Teachers' Convention

Dates: Feb. 27-28
Location: Edmonton Convention Centre, Edmonton
Contact: Karen Sucie, president, president@getca.com
Website: www.getca.com

Mighty Peace Teachers' Convention

Dates: Mar. 6-7
Locations: Charles Spencer High School, Grande Prairie
St Joseph Catholic High School, Grande Prairie
Contact: Laurie Dirsra, president, mptcpresident@gmail.com
Website: <http://mptca.teachers.ab.ca>



FOR MORE INFORMATION

For more information about teachers' conventions, visit <https://teachers.ab.ca/professional-development/teachers-conventions>.

Any questions about Teachers' Convention? Contact executive staff officer Danny Maas at daniel.maas@ata.ab.ca.

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SPECIALIST COUNCIL OPPORTUNITIES

The ATA has 20 specialist councils that organize annual conferences, workshops, webinars and other opportunities to help teachers and school leaders meet their professional development goals.

The information on this page lists the assigned dates for major specialist council conferences and events for the 2024/25 school year. For an up-to-date list of all specialist council conferences and events, please check out the ATAPD Sched site <https://atapd.sched.com/>.

DID YOU KNOW?

Active ATA members can choose a no-cost membership in the specialist council of their choice. To choose yours, visit <https://scms.teachers.ab.ca/Pages/default.aspx>.

The ATA Educational Trust offers \$500 grants to members to help offset the costs of attending specialist council conferences. Apply by 4 p.m. on Sept. 30 at <https://teachers.ab.ca/application-form-ATA-Specialist-Council-Conference-Grant>.

Additional Languages and Intercultural Council

Date: Oct. 26, 2024, 9 – 11 am
Location: Virtual
Theme: Strategies to promote oral language; task-based language teaching; mindfulness strategies; language portraits and language playlists
Website: <https://alic.teachers.ab.ca/Pages/Home.aspx>

Career and Technology Education Council

Date: Nov. 14–16, 2024
Location: Canmore Hotel and Conference Centre, Canmore
Theme: Ignite — Passion, Skill, Drive
Website: <https://reg.unityeventsolutions.com/se/2024CTECCONF/ATT>

Council for Inclusive Education

Events TBA

Council for School Leadership

Date: Apr. 5, 2025 (preconference), April 6–8, 2025 (conference)
Location: Banff
Theme: uLead 2025 — The Summit of Educational Leadership
Website: <https://reg.unityeventsolutions.com/se/UILEAD2025/ATT>

Council of School Counsellors

Events TBA

Early Childhood Education Council

Date: April 24–26, 2025
Location: Fantasyland Hotel, Edmonton
Theme: TBA
Website: www.ecec-ata.com

Educational Technology Council

No events scheduled for 2024/25 at this time.

English as a Second Language Council

Date: May 9–11, 2025
Location: The Malcolm Hotel, Canmore
Theme: On the Move
Website: www.eslcata.com

English Language Arts Council

No events scheduled for 2024/25 at this time.
SAVE THE DATE for ELAC's next conference, which will be held Apr. 24–25, 2026, in Banff.

Fine Arts Council

Date: Sept. 13, 2024 (evening)
Location: Rapid Fire Theatre, Edmonton
Theme: Back to School Improv Night at Rapid Fire Theatre
Website: www.fineartsata.ca/events
Date: Thursday October 10, 2024 (evening)
Location: Yorath House, Edmonton
Theme: Drum Circle Social: Wine and Cheese Evening
Website: www.fineartsata.ca/events

SAVE THE DATE for FAC's next conference, which will be held Oct. 18, 2025, in Edmonton.

Global, Environmental and Outdoor Education Council

Date: Nov. 1–2, 2024
Location: Stoney Nakoda Resort and Casino/Canadian Rockies Outdoor Learning Centre
Theme: Camp GEOEC
Website: <https://reg.unityeventsolutions.com/se/CAMPGEOEC/ATT>

Health and Physical Education Council

No events scheduled for 2024/25 at this time.

Indigenous Education Council

Date: Nov. 1–2, 2024
Location: Medicine Hat College, Medicine Hat
Theme: Soaring with Knowledge — Illuminate the Journey
Website: <https://reg.unityeventsolutions.com/se/2024IECCONF/ATT>

Le Conseil français

No events scheduled at this time.

Math Council

Theme: A Year of Creative Math
Details: www.mathteachers.ab.ca
Date: Oct. 25, 2024
Location: Medicine Hat
Date: Jan. 31, 2025
Location: Calgary
Date: Mar. 14, 2025
Location: Edmonton
Date: Apr. 2025
Location: Red Deer
Date: May 2025
Location: Fort McMurray

Middle Years Council

Date: Apr. 10(eve)–12, 2025
Location: Banff Park Lodge, Banff
Theme: Relentless
Details: www.ata-myc.com

Outreach Education Council

Date: Nov. 14–16, 2024
Location: Coast Nisku Inn and Conference Centre, Nisku
Theme: Outside the Box
Website: <http://www.outreachcouncil.ca/fall-2024-conference.html>

Religious and Moral Education Council

Date: Oct. 18–19, 2024
Location: Banff Centre, Banff
Theme: Braiding Together: Dialogue Towards Truth and Reconciliation
Website: <https://reg.unityeventsolutions.com/se/2024RMECCONF/ATT>

Science Council

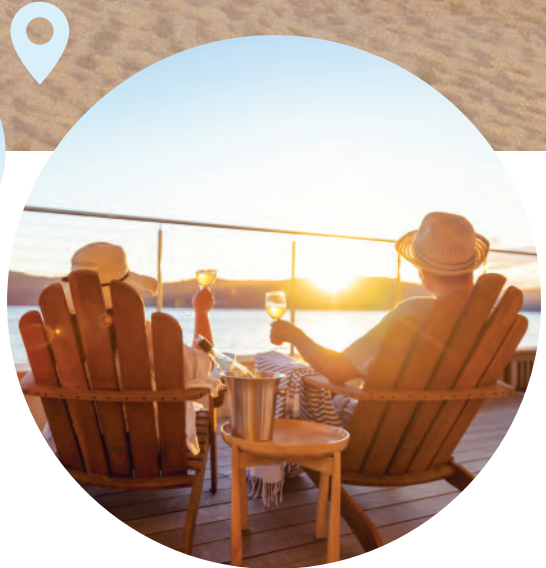
Date: Nov. 8–9, 2024
Location: Coast Canmore Hotel and Conference Centre, Canmore
Theme: Two-Eyed Seeing: Looking at Science Through Western and Indigenous Perspectives
Website: <https://reg.unityeventsolutions.com/se/2024SCCONF/ATT>

Social Studies Council

Date: Oct. 17–19, 2024
Location: Coast Canmore Hotel and Conference Centre, Canmore
Theme: Magnifying the Mysteries of Canada's History
Website: <https://reg.unityeventsolutions.com/se/2024SCCONF/ATT>

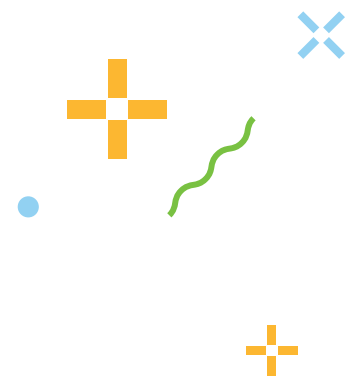


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AMA Travel and Princess Cruises have teamed up to offer our hard-working teachers the chance to win a **FREE** cruise to the Mexican Riviera or Caribbean*.

Enter this ATA member-exclusive contest between **September 9 and October 31** for your chance to relax on a seven-day cruise.



*Airfare and port taxes included. Travel in 2024 or 2025, blackout dates apply.



Scan here to enter today.





PROJECT OVERSEAS

continued from page 7

et inclusif, où la participation active des élèves est encouragée. Les participants ont échangé des stratégies concrètes pour reconnaître les différences et promouvoir le respect au sein de la classe.

Chaque participant est reparti avec de nouvelles perspectives. Les enseignants béninois ont découvert de nouvelles approches pédagogiques, tandis que leurs collègues canadiens ont partagé leurs méthodes innovantes et leurs expériences, notamment sur la gestion des comportements en salle de classe.

L'intégration de ces enseignements dans les pratiques pédagogiques améliorera la qualité de l'enseignement. En sensibilisant les élèves aux différences et en favorisant l'inclusion, nous contribuerons à leur développement personnel et à la promotion de la diversité culturelle.

Nous remercions chaleureusement les enseignants béninois membres du SYNAEM et du SNEP pour leur accueil généreux, ainsi que l'ATA pour cette expérience enrichissante.

Roger Kambere-Paluku
École Père-Lacombe, Edmonton

GRENADA

Supporting pedagogical development

This summer, I led a team of Canadian educators that participated in Project Overseas in St. George's, Grenada. While the two-week workshop was a success, with more than 100 local teachers participating in various programs, it almost didn't happen!

On July 1, Hurricane Beryl passed over the northern part of the island and decimated the island of Carriacou. The Grenada Union of Teachers (GUT) was able to organize support for members impacted by Beryl, while still providing quality professional development activities.

Summer institutes such as these are important in supporting pedagogical development, as many new teachers in developing countries are hired without the benefit of teacher education programs. Imagine graduating from high school in the spring and starting your career as a teacher in the fall!

When teacher organizations like the Alberta Teachers' Association and the Canadian Teachers' Federation make it a priority to collaborate with other



Team Grenada attempts to create a "curling rink" for local teachers.

teacher organizations like the GUT, we are able to support our colleagues in providing quality public education.

Stephani Clements
Calgary Public Teachers Local No. 38 local president, Calgary

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

TES-MS-97-12024 08

pop quiz!

Word Scramble

Unscramble these seasonal words.

 saelve _____	 hanstk _____
 tuamun _____	 satreew _____
 sarcowecr _____	 knuppim _____
 lalf _____	 lilych _____
 loewsnurf _____	 _____

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 February 6, 2025 (Lloydminster)
 April 23, 2025 (Edmonton)
 May 15, 2025 (Rocky Mountain House)
 June 5, 2025 (Fort McMurray)
 June 11, 2025 (Calgary)

REQUEST YOUR FIELD TRIP

SENIOR HIGH

ENERGY & CLIMATE YOUTH LEADERSHIP SUMMIT

Inspire the next generation of energy and climate leaders with Generate 2025: an all-expenses-paid, four-day, student leadership summit in Calgary, Alberta.

FOR MORE INFO AND TO APPLY

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LDADHDnetwork.ca



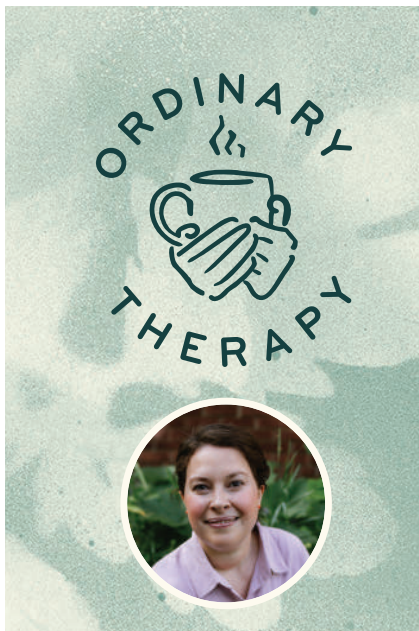
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The Alberta Teachers' Association

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Doug Smith: Wild Wolves of Yellowstone

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Davey, Jane, Jordan & Nyssa Moore

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Artists, programs, and dates subject to change.

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For advertising information, contact Trevor Battyie at Trevor Battyie Advertising Sales 1-778-773-9397 trevor@tbasales.ca

Next deadline Thursday, Sep. 26, 2024, 4 p.m. (Publication date Oct. 8, 2024) Advertisers are encouraged to book early - space is limited.

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

TALENT

September 17, 2024 | Volume 59, Number 2

GETTING ON-BOARD!

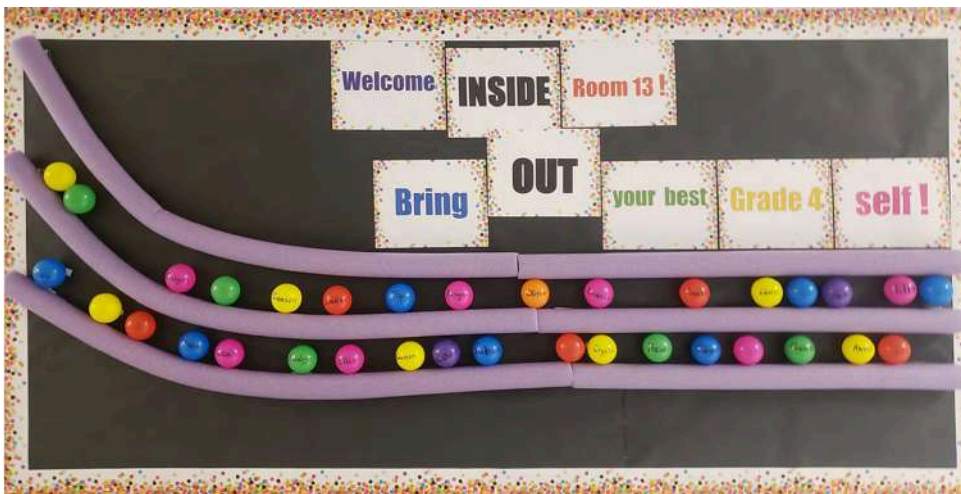
We asked teachers to share their most groovy, neat-o or funky bulletin boards. Here are just a few of your colleagues' creative works.



Jennifer Taylor



To go along with the aviation theme at our school! – Alicia Mudge



Inside Out 2: We are making some core memories this year! — Cherlyn Forth



Angela Fenton



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



The Alberta Teachers' Association

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