

RED FOR ED

The look of solidarity.

See Tale End, page 16.

WHO'S WHO

Meet your elected leaders.

Pages 8-9.



ATA NEWS

October 29, 2024 | Volume 59, Number 4

News Publication of The Alberta Teachers' Association



CORY HARE

Workers from across the public sector rally for respect on October 24 at the legislature grounds in Edmonton.



Out with the new

Education funding model being reconsidered.

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



Not an option

Union membership matters.

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



To say the least

Sharing key messages in support of public education.

See *Off Script*, [page 4](#).



Under pressure

The impact of new assessments on teachers and students.

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And the winner is...

World Teachers' Day contest winners announced.

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The flaws of weighted moving average funding



EDITORIAL

Kristine Wilkinson
ATA News Editor-in-Chief

The year was 2020. Adriana LaGrange was Alberta's education minister. A new funding model – the weighted moving average (WMA) – was being introduced “to provide predictable funding to school authorities.” Only time would tell how this would work out.

The WMA funding model for schools brought forward by LaGrange calculates per-student funding using the following formula:

- 20 per cent based on actual enrolment from the previous year,
- 30 per cent based on an estimate for the current year, and
- 50 per cent based on a projection for the upcoming year.

This was a marked a shift from the previous method, which based funding on the number of enrolled students at the end of September. Yes, actually counting students in class and funding the schools for them.

Alberta Education acknowledged that this new system benefited divisions with declining enrolments, often found in rural areas. The result? A funding shortfall for divisions with increasing enrolments. And, as we all know, an unprecedented increase in the student population has become the key issue facing Alberta classrooms. This growth will persist, with the projected population of school-aged children in Alberta almost doubling by 2030.

The Government of Alberta tried to fix the WMA problems by introducing an in-year adjustment known as the Supplemental Enrolment Growth Grant. However, this grant has proven to be insufficient. Divisions with enrolment growth exceeding 5 per cent receive \$3,000 per student over the 5 per cent

threshold, which is significantly less than the base grant and does not cover other essential grants.

To illustrate the shortcomings of the current funding structure, consider a division with 4 per cent annual growth. Starting with 25,000 students in 2023, their enrolments would be

- 2022/23: 25,000 students,
- 2023/24: 26,000 students and
- 2024/25: 27,040 students.

Even if Alberta Education accurately projects 27,040 students for 2024/25, the division's WMA would only fund 26,320 students. This would leave 720 students unfunded, resulting in a shortfall of approximately \$2.28 million in base funding alone. This does not account for additional funding gaps in areas such as transportation, specialized learning supports and school-based operations. Consequently, the division would be unable to hire the 25 to 30 additional teachers needed to support these 720 students.

The ATA has been pointing out the issues with this wholly inadequate funding model since 2020. We have seen how averaging enrolment figures penalizes school divisions with increasing enrolments. This year, the schools with the upper end of enrolment numbers will suffer and, ultimately, so will the students. With the significant enrolment increases we are witnessing in Alberta, it is counterproductive to base funding on past years. Schools need immediate funding to address current enrolment levels, not outdated figures from two years ago.

In recent education announcements, we have heard from Education Minister Demetrios Nicolaides that the ministry is hoping to nail down a new funding formula in time for the 2025 budget. Changes can't come soon enough. Let's hope it is a model that meets the needs of all students in our public education system.

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

Mandatory membership musings



Q & A

Dennis Theobald
ATA Executive Secretary

Question: The United Conservative Party is going to be debating whether to make membership in the Alberta Teachers' Association optional for teachers working in public, Catholic, separate and francophone schools. Where's that coming from and what does it mean for teachers?

Answer: In 1936, the *Teaching Profession Act*, which had been passed the previous year, was amended by William Aberhart's Social Credit government to make active membership in the ATA mandatory for all certificated teachers employed by a public or separate school board (francophone boards did not exist at the time). In the almost 90 years since, mandatory membership has been a defining feature of Alberta's public education system and contributed greatly to the growth of teaching as a profession. In the last few decades, the expansion of private and charter schools, as well as provisions for the election out of membership for certain central office teachers, has contributed to an increase in teachers who do not or cannot hold active membership in the ATA. Still, about 85 percent of certificated teachers working in the province belong to the Association.

At its Annual General Meeting beginning on November 2, United Conservative Party (UCP) delegates will

be considering a resolution proposed by the Innisfail-Sylvan Lake Constituency Association to “Make membership in the Alberta Teachers' Association optional for all teachers employed in public, separate, francophone, charter, and independent schools in Alberta and ensure comparable supports, benefits, and pension opportunities are available for those who opt out.” Not being the sort to allow accuracy to stand in the way of ideology, the proponents of this resolution don't seem to be aware that membership is not a legislated requirement for “independent” and charter school teachers.

The stated rationale for this proposal is that the ATA is “supporting many controversial progressive ideologies that do not represent the values of many teachers who are forced to pay dues in order to maintain employment in this province.” This vague assertion ignores the fact that the Association is democratically governed, with its policy being determined by members who are elected delegates at the Annual Representative Assembly. Furthermore, the Association, in accordance with the Orwellianly named *Restoring Balance in Alberta's Workplaces Act*, spends member dues only on core union functions and professional development. While, consistent with its legislated mandate, the Association does advocate for public education, it does not engage in political or election advertising that supports or opposes an individual party or candidate. Finally, those teachers who have religious objections to joining a union or paying union dues, can choose to have the portion of their ATA fees that would

otherwise be used for union-related activities directed to a charity acceptable to them and to the Association.

Even in the absence of legislation requiring membership in a union, the notion that all who benefit from the work of a union should contribute to the union has been well entrenched in Canadian labour law. In a 1946 arbitration decision handed down following a lengthy and bitter strike by Ford autoworkers, Supreme Court of Canada Justice Ivan Rand set out the “Rand Formula,” which does not require a worker to belong to a union but still requires them to pay union dues. In doing so, Rand sought to remove an incentive for employers to undermine union membership and so foster a more peaceful and harmonious labour relations climate. It has been the practice ever since for automatic dues to be either imposed in legislation or negotiated as a provision within collective agreements.

Of course, there are those who oppose this settled state of affairs and, using the rhetoric of “right to work,” seek to undermine union capacity. Typically, this position is advanced by employers who wish to diminish the capacity of organized labour. Only the most gullible of union members would believe that such laws are intended to support them. Further, where they are in place, most notably in the United States, they have been demonstrated to dramatically lower wages, reduce benefits, diminish workers' rights and protections, and erode workplace conditions. These laws are thus referred to by labour organizations as “right to work for less” legislation.

At the moment, the proposal to remove mandatory membership for teachers in the ATA is just one of several bad ideas to be considered at the UCP AGM. The delegates who will be attending the event are hardly representative of Albertans as a whole, and not particularly representative of the membership of the UCP. Still, there is reasonable hope that this proposal will be swiftly binned and, even if it were to be adopted by the party, would not then be implemented by the government.

But if the government were to pass such legislation, it would be crossing a red line with implications for all organized labour and especially for public services. The relative peace and good order that has characterized labour relations in the education sector would be shattered, with a very real impact on students and their families as well as teachers.

For the Association, this would amount to a trip back in time. Before 1936, John Barnett, the first executive secretary of the Alberta Teachers' Alliance, helped to build up the organization by driving his Nash Dart from school to school across the province to sign up teachers individually. He did not hesitate to call out those who declined to join in solidarity with their colleagues as “enemies” of the profession. While not particularly something I would like to spend my remaining years with the Association doing, by November, I should have my winter tires on. ■

Questions for consideration in this column are welcome. Please address them to Dennis Theobald at dennis.theobald@ata.ab.ca.



Supporting women in the teaching profession



VIEWPOINTS

Joan Kabotoff
Past president, International Society of Women Educators (DKG) Alpha Alberta

What was it like to be a female teacher in the early 1900s? Well, you would not have been acknowledged as a professional, and everything you did – because you believed in and pursued education – was on your own.

In this context, 12 brave women from Austin, Texas founded the International Society of Women Educators (DKG) in 1926. Their mandate was to unite women who were in educational roles so that they could be better prepared professionally, be recognized for their work and be able to access scholarships if they wanted to improve their professional preparation. Today, the Society's mission continues to be, "To promote professional and personal growth of women educators and excellence in education."

Now, nearly 100 years since its inception, the Society includes more than 51,000 women educators in 17 countries and is the largest professional women's organization in the world.

The Society's work

To unite educators and to allow them to discuss common concerns and issues, the Society holds conventions and conferences that are accessible in all member countries. The Canadian conference will be held in July 2025 in Brandon, Manitoba.

In Alberta, the Edmonton area hosts three chapters of the Society, while Calgary hosts one. These local chapters work within the communities to support each other, early educators, schools and school children. Professional and personal development are priorities at our monthly meetings; at the same time, with the struggles teachers face in current times, we see the importance of simply socializing and appreciating each other.

The Society is also a philanthropic force on the international scene, giving millions of dollars each year in scholarships, grants and project support. We offer World Fellowship Scholarships to women who have come to Canada and the United States to pursue advanced degrees despite financial and cultural odds. Several winners of the World Fellowship Scholarship attend the University of Alberta and the University of Calgary, with most of these students engaging in graduate work in the field of healthcare.

Nationally, we support Canada's First Artists through the "Art for Aid" and "Sew and Sew" projects. These are programs of "Soaring Circle" (previously known as "I Love First Peoples") that help Indigenous youth succeed through education in communities across Canada.

What membership means

The key benefits and opportunities provided to members through the Society are as follows.

1. Leadership

Every member is considered a leader. How you choose to lead is up to you, but you will find support locally, provincially, nationally and internationally.

2. Travel and networking

Having 17 country members in the Society affords networking across the globe. Members can experience other cultures by applying for and being selected as an international speaker, with travel costs paid by the International Speaker Fund. Conferences and conventions are held locally and internationally, and members can attend or present at any location.

3. Financial assistance

Scholarship opportunities are available at all levels (locally, nationally and internationally). Master degree scholarships of \$6,000 and doctoral degree scholarships of \$10,000 are available. In another vein, emergency funds are available to support members in the event of a natural disaster.

4. Recognition

Members are recognized for their accomplishments and achievements, with doctoral recipients being recognized annually. In addition, the Educators Book Award Committee awards \$2,500 annually to one woman author or joint authors whose book influences educational direction. Each year, a copy of the winning book is donated to the ATA library. This year's winner is *The Teachers: A Year Inside America's Most Vulnerable Profession* by Alexandra Robbins, and it will be in the ATA library shortly.

5. Advocacy

Becoming a member means you are automatically a member of your national forum. Your forum takes on projects and provides professional reports regarding legislation that has implications for teachers, women and children. The Society is a nongovernmental organization member of the United Nations.

6. Publishing

In addition to the many professional journals and bulletins you will receive as a member, the Society offers several opportunities to have your work or articles published. Further, the Fine Arts Gallery displays submissions from members on the Society's international website annually.

Getting involved

Our members are leaders and potential leaders. They bring out the best in others. They are authentic. They are responsive to feedback. They are result-oriented. They are adaptable. They are conceptual thinkers. They are motivated to make a difference.

Members include collegiate members, active teachers, retired teachers and others who have shared their knowledge or who have trained individuals in their job or profession.

That could be you!

If you are a leading woman educator (retired or active) who wants to be a part of this international society, please visit the Alberta website at <https://sites.google.com/view/dkg-alberta/home> or contact Joan Kabotoff (joan.kabotoff@me.com) or Sherrie MacRae (sherrimacrae@gmail.com). ■

FOR THE RECORD



The Alberta Teachers' Association stands in solidarity with all unionized educational support workers throughout the province.



– ATA president Jason Schilling

YOUR VIEWS

What were some of the most creative Halloween costumes you've seen from staff or students?

f Zan Pinsky

Last year our staff went as different versions of Barbie! It was so much fun!

f Dawnelle Salant

Last year I went as Taylor Swift – The Eras Tour! I changed every period, and the kids loved it!

f Andrea Lowe Davis

I had a student come to school in her pyjamas, slippers and robe with mascara running down her face and a pint of ice cream with a spoon. She was "recently dumped"! Best teacher costume goes to Jennifer's headless Marie Antoinette! She cut out a thrifted wedding dress, put it on a pole attached to a backpack and was literally holding her own head. It was incredible!

f Joely Augustino

We've had 101 Dalmatians. This was my favourite so far. The only male teacher in our school was Cruella and the rest of us were Dalmatians.

f Monika Cupido

We've done a few – we did Pac Man, Jurassic Park and lumberjacks.

@ Suzanne Annable

Our HS staff (small rural town) dressed as sharks with days of the week "necklaces" for Shark Week. We also went as Pac Man and ghosts as well as dominos.

@ Nicole Richard

I had a student dress up as a claw machine, full of stuffed toys!!

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.



To say the least: Sharing key messages



You may have seen the ads for the Association's current advertising campaign titled "The Least" (one even appears in this issue of the news!). The campaign's commercials and corresponding website (www.stoptheexcuses.ca) have been successful in bringing awareness to the fact that our public system in Alberta receives the least amount of funding per student of any jurisdiction in Canada. Teachers probably weren't surprised, to say the least, as we see the ramifications of this lack of funding every day.

Even with the success of "The Least" campaign, our work isn't done. We must continue in our efforts to inform the public about the lack of funding in public education.

Hopefully, you already have signed up to receive campaign updates on the Stop the Excuses website and have shared the information in your personal and social media networks. I know my parents, family and friends have been sent links to the site and have seen our ads frequently on my Instagram account. The information has been eye-opening for them. Remember, it's

not about one person spreading the message to everyone, but maybe you can reach someone.

At the end of October, the legislature began sitting again and MLAs are busy dealing with the work of government. One item on their agenda this fall is the budget for 2025. The work on setting the budget expenditures begins right away and a lot of the budgetary decisions are made before the legislature pauses for their winter break. This means that this fall is an important time for teachers and their allies to engage with MLAs about the fact that Alberta is the least funded education system in the country.

I encourage you to reach out and share the stories of your classrooms with MLAs, whether they are UCP or NDP. Often in my conversations with MLAs from both sides of the aisle, their knowledge of education issues can be thin because it is not their context. Discuss the overcrowded spaces, the lack of resources and the over-testing with them. Share your experience about students' needs not being met, and teachers and administrators burning themselves out trying to make it all

work. We know the power of face-to-face conversations about the issues. When we engage with people one on one, they too become advocates for what we care about.

We want to help our members feel confident in engaging in conversations about public education. Through the provincial ATA, you, your ATA local and school representatives have access to materials produced by Now! Communications to support productive dialogue. These resources, available in the Members' Only section of the ATA website, can help you connect with people so that they know that there is a better way to meet the needs of our students.

Surveys show that most Albertans believe the government is not spending enough on public education. The public is indeed on our side. Equipped with tools from the ATA to engage in these conversations, now you can take the opportunity this fall to really connect with people you know to help send a message to the government: it's time to stop the excuses.

Now is the time. ■

Government disrupts labour action

Mark Milne
ATA News staff

With less than two days to strike action, the Alberta government stepped in to prevent educational support workers with the Edmonton Public School Board (EPSB) from hitting the picket line.

CUPE Local 3550, which represents about 3,200 employees, including educational assistants, library technicians and administrative assistants, had planned to walk off the job over what they describe as unsustainable wages and unsafe working conditions due to overcrowded classrooms. The labour action was set for October 24.

In an October 22 government news release, however, the province announced that no labour action could occur between the EPSB and CUPE 3550 because a disputes inquiry board (DIB) had been established before the labour action began.

"Alberta's government is providing another mediator to the parties in this dispute," said Matt Jones, minister of Jobs, Economy and Trade, "so that there

is a full opportunity for the parties to reach a negotiated settlement before a work disruption occurs."

This move by the government prevents a union from striking and the employer from locking out employees until the inquiry process has concluded, which could take up to 30 days.

The EPSB had requested the government to establish the DIB.

CUPE Local 3550 president Mandy Lamoureux expressed disappointment at the government's move to halt labour action, stating that the union's members have seen little wage growth over the past 12 years. The majority of the union's members earn around \$27,000 to \$30,000 a year, which is well below Edmonton's living wage of \$46,000 a year.

CUPE 3550 were ready to strike over the wage issue. A week earlier, 97 per cent of the membership voted in favour of strike action. It would have been the first-ever strike by the local.

The government's decision to establish the DIB came on the heels of another looming strike that would affect public education in the province's capital city. CUPE Local 474, which represents the EPSB's 900 custodial workers, held

strike votes on October 17 and 20. Their membership also voted 97 per cent in favour of a strike.

In a letter published on CUPE's website, Local 474 president Barry Benoit joined Lamoureux in stating that the provincial wage mandate of 2.75 per cent remains a major roadblock and is nowhere near what their members deserve.

"We have seen a degradation of service at our public schools due to years of underfunding, but that trend doesn't have to continue," said the letter. "We need more money injected directly into classrooms and facilities, supporting frontline workers who support our students during this round of collective bargaining."

CUPE Alberta president Rory Gill issued a news release criticizing the government's decision to establish a DIB.

"There are no outstanding issues between EPSB and CUPE Local 3550 that could be resolved by a DIB as long as the government's wage mandate remains in place," Gill wrote in the news release. "We see imposing a DIB while maintaining wage directives as

an attempt to bully CUPE members into taking the government's wage mandate."

At the time of printing, CUPE Local 474 had not yet served the employer with a 72-hour notice to strike. ■

DIBs out

Back in September, the province appointed a dispute inquiry board (DIB), which temporarily postponed a strike that was set to take place on Sept. 17 in Fort McMurray. The labour action was to involve 1,065 educational assistants (EAs), librarians, administrative and maintenance staff, and custodians with CUPE. The DIB was set to last 30 days, which paused any further action (strike or lockout) by either party.

A deal offered to the support staff was recently rejected by the union's bargaining committee. At the time of publication, the union members had not voted on the deal. Should CUPE members working at Fort McMurray's Catholic and public schools reject the deal, a new strike notice would likely be issued.

Public sector workers rally at the legislature

Cory Hare
ATA News staff



"Stand up! Fight back!" This was one of many chants that filled the air as thousands of public sector workers and their supporters gathered for the Rally for Respect at the Alberta legislature in Edmonton on Thursday, Oct. 24.

Among those gathered were members of the United Nurses of Alberta, Union of Health-Care Professionals, Alberta Union of Provincial Employees, CUPE Alberta and the Non-Academic Staff Association.

ATA president Jason Schilling was among the many speakers at the rally who called on the government to respect public sector workers by providing sufficient funding for employers to offer fair wages as collective bargaining unfolds throughout the public sector. ■



Rory Gill, president of CUPE Alberta, told public sector supporters, "When we fight, we win."

CORY HARE



ADOBE STOCK

Fall assessments add pressure for teachers and students

Lindsay Yakimyshyn
ATA News managing editor

This fall, schools completed the first round of literacy and numeracy testing for grades 1 to 3. This marks the first time that mandatory provincial assessments have been conducted at the beginning of the school year, and the first-time students in the earliest grades have been subjected to this type of testing.

Now that teachers have administered the fall round of these assessments, early signals and concerns related to the tests are beginning to emerge.

Less time for instruction, connection

The introduction of September assessments in grades 1 to 3 has added significant pressure for both teachers and students. ATA president Jason Schilling has been hearing from teachers across the province about challenges created by the fall assessments.

"This is the time of year teachers start to build relationships with students and help them learn routines," said Schilling. "Testing is taking away from that and from the instructional time that teachers need with their new students."

Some teachers have specifically raised concerns about the new fall testing for grade 1 students. Schilling said that, given that kindergarten is not mandatory in Alberta, students' preparedness for school varies significantly.

"Some Grade 1 students being asked to do these tests can't hold a pencil yet or don't have the endurance to complete the assessments."

Schilling also recounted teachers telling him that some of their young students, unfamiliar with the test format or the language, were unable to complete the assessments. In some cases, students began crying because they felt like they had failed. This does not accurately assess the student's ability, Schilling said, and is not what education should be about.

"You want students coming into elementary to love school and want to be there every day, to be engaged in their learning, and these exams are disengaging kids in a way that is not serving them."

Value versus impact

With more rounds of testing on the horizon, Education Minister Demetrios Nicolaides is stating that the assessments are aimed at creating early interventions for students.

"These assessments serve as a means to tell teachers, staff and parents where a student's literacy and numeracy skills are," Nicolaides said. "This will identify if a student needs a helping hand so they can get the intervention they need at an early age to ensure they build the fundamental skills necessary to succeed in the classroom and life."

A second round of testing for grades 1 to 3 will be conducted in January, and a third assessment for students identified as needing additional support is coming in June. In addition to the testing for grades 1 to 3, screening assessments for kindergarten students are to begin in January 2025, and assessments for grades 4 and 5 will begin in 2026. Under the new structure, elementary students could be tested up to 32 times before leaving elementary school.

Nicolaides remains confident that these assessments will make a positive difference for students across the province. He also stated that the ministry is supporting teachers by extending the window to administer the fall assessments to three weeks and by providing resources to help teachers plan intervention lessons for their students.

Schilling notes, however, that administering additional assessments — from arranging for substitute coverage (where available) to completing data entry — adds yet another pressure point for teachers, who are facing larger and more complex classes and implementing new curriculum.

"We really need to look at the value versus the impact of these tests on both teachers and their students," Schilling said.

Acknowledging that testing has its place in education, Schilling hopes that the education ministry will re-evaluate the mandated provincial assessments and engage in meaningful and ongoing consultations with teachers to ensure that students receive the education they deserve.

"Now that we've gone through the fall sitting, we need to assess what worked, what didn't work, what the value is, what data we are getting out of them, and then how they will be supported down the road." ■

World Teachers' Day contest winners

ATA News Staff

Three Alberta teachers will be jetting away on vacation after winning the top prizes in the ATA's World Teachers' Day video contest.

The contest encouraged teachers, students and the public to submit 60-second videos sharing how they were inspired by an Alberta teacher.

The contest drew close to 100 nomination videos, which were entered into a draw for one of three gift cards valued at \$3,000 each, to be used either for WestJet travel or BestBuy.

Part of the journey

Louise AuYeung, a music teacher at Hillhurst School in Calgary, landed one of the prizes after being nominated by student Evan Cervi.



Louise AuYeung

"I grew from someone who had no idea how to draw a treble clef to my current self where music composition is one of my hobbies and I am currently finishing up an album of music," Cervi said in his video submission.

He added that he felt special and seen during AuYeung's music class.

AuYeung said she plans to use her winnings to take her family on vacation next summer.

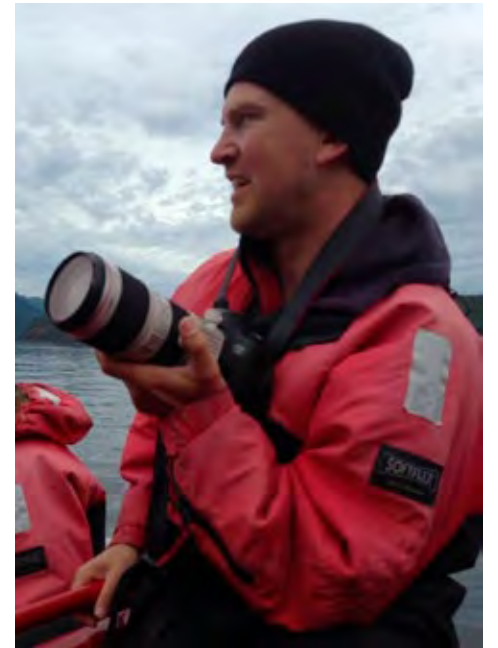
"I am so grateful to have been Evan's teacher for three years and have had the privilege to watch his talent as a music composer blossom," she said. "His music has touched our entire school and I consider myself lucky to have been part of Evan's journey."

Paying it forward

Prize winner Bruce Tyrrell, a communications and technology teacher at Barrhead Composite High School, was nominated by former student Sheldon King, who is now a teacher himself.

"He had a unique ability to bring out the creativity in each of his students, encouraging us to think outside the box and explore our own artistic styles," King said in his video. "Thanks to his guidance, I discovered not only a love for graphic arts but a love for teaching."

Tyrrell said he is planning to take his



Bruce Tyrrell

family somewhere warm as a reward for his son's hard work in university.

"I got quite choked up watching Sheldon's video," he said. "I had teachers that helped me well beyond just the lessons and inspired me to enter the profession. To hear that I've had the same effect on a former student is truly overwhelming."

Act of kindness

The other winner is Jennifer Emilsson, a Grade 1/2 teacher at West Dalhousie School in Calgary.

The nomination came from parent Sabrina Stevenson along with her daughter Mila. Stevenson said Emilsson has taught two of her children, both of whom have benefited from her kindness.



Jennifer Emilsson

Emilsson said she is excited to use her prize for a summer trip to celebrate her daughter's Grade 12 graduation. She said she was touched that a busy parent took the time to submit a video.

"I know how busy families are with school, extracurricular activities and their own jobs — this is truly one of the nicest things anyone has done for me," Emilsson said. "It's the busy moms and dads coordinating everything for their children that deserve to be recognized!" ■

25 more winners

Everyone who submitted a video was entered into a draw for one of 25 prizes of \$100 in the form of a prepaid credit card.

The contest was sponsored by Belairdirect Insurance.



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Online 




Dominica Foundation Teaching Opportunity

International Teaching with the IT for Dominica Foundation

The IT for Dominica Foundation is now accepting applications from talented Alberta educators interested in teaching in the Commonwealth of Dominica in July, 2025. For over 24 years, the IT for Dominica Summer Institute has empowered Dominican teachers by offering innovative information technology (IT) in education courses to support their professional growth.


As an ATA member, this is your chance to share your deep expertise in integrating IT into K-12 classrooms, while immersing yourself in a rich cultural exchange. If you're a flexible, dedicated team player with a passion for making a global impact, this opportunity is for you!

More information may be found at: <http://www.ITforDominica.com>

We look forward to your application by November 18, 2024
<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/ITfDApply2025>

 An ATA International Cooperation Program

COOR-61d-1 2024-10



The Alberta Teachers' Association

wicihtotân

Let's Help Each Other


wicihtotân is an ATA program and network for Indigenous teachers and school leaders to listen and learn together. The program connects participants to offer support, guidance and mentorship with each other.

The Alberta Teachers' Association is seeking First Nations, Métis and Inuit teachers and school leaders to **join wicihtotân** and attend three gatherings throughout the school year:

- December 6**, 1:00 – 3:30 pm, online via Zoom
- March 21**, 1:00 – 3:30 pm, online via Zoom
- May 16**, 10:00 am – 2:00 pm, Edmonton, location TBD

Release time will be provided by the Association.

To Register go to <https://surveys.teachers.ab.ca/s3/w-cihtot-n-Gathering-Registration-2024-2025>



Registration Deadline: November 30, 2024

For More Information
 E-mail: walkingtogether@ata.ab.ca
 Phone: 780-447-9400 (in Edmonton), 1-800-232-7208 (toll free in Alberta)

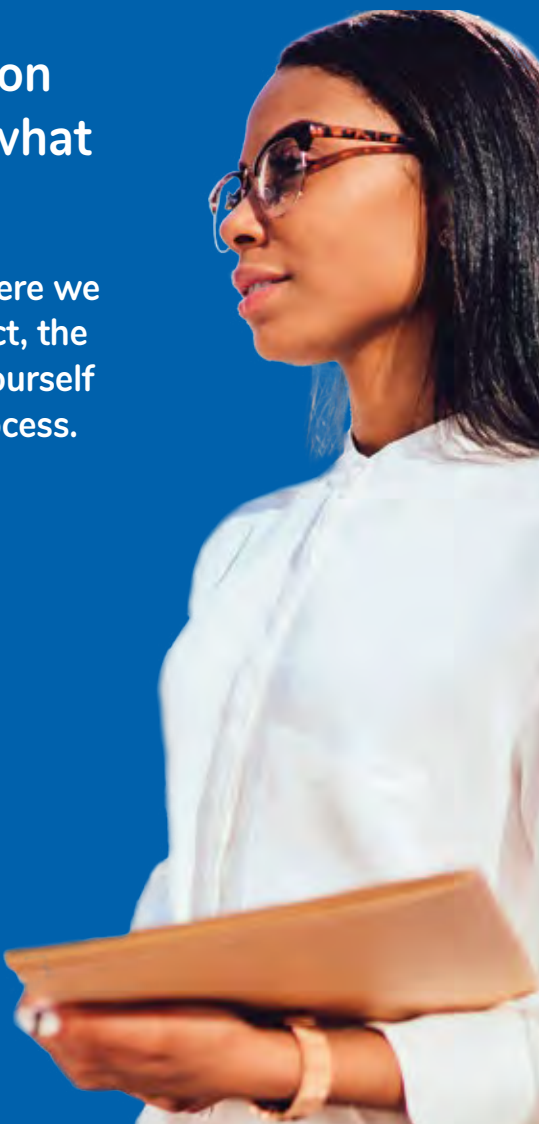

PD-208-2024-09

Alberta Teaching Profession Commission (ATPC) and what does it mean to me?


Join us for an interactive session where we will explore the new Code of Conduct, the role of the ATPC and how to keep yourself out of the professional discipline process.

November 27

3:45pm-5pm via Zoom

Free to all active and associate members.

 The Alberta Teachers' Association



Follow us on Instagram: [abteachers](https://www.instagram.com/abteachers)

Funds to support lifelong learning

\$15,000 ATA Doctoral Fellowships in Education	\$5,000 Nadene M Thomas Graduate Research Bursary	\$2,500 Belairdirect Scholarship
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Find out more on our website!
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PD-3-10d_2024-06



Substitute teachers gathered for networking and professional learning.

PHOTOS: LINDSAY YAKIMYSHYN

Taking on the unknown

Substitute Teachers' Conference keynote shares strategies for resilience

Lindsay Yakimyshyn
ATA News managing editor

Retrain your brain to build resilience. That was one key message substitute teachers heard at this fall's Substitute Teachers' Conference, held Oct. 18–19 in Edmonton.

More than 150 substitute teachers from across the province gathered for the conference, which featured keynote speaker Tara Miller. During her presentations, Miller encouraged delegates to focus on their well-being as they work toward building resilience and creating optimal teaching and learning experiences.

"Resilience is built through resistance, through the challenges we don't want, the unexpected things that come toward

us. That's when we build resilience," Miller said.

Miller emphasized that, in building resilience, resistance is only one part of the equation. Recovery is equally important.

"You need the challenge, but you also need the recovery so that you can come out of that activated state," Miller said. "If you haven't had ample recovery, you don't get more resilience, you get burnout."

Burnout, Miller said, comes when your resources are exceeded to the point that you can't keep going.

With Miller's guidance, delegates engaged in activities focused on restoration and self-regulation. It is Miller's hope that substitute teachers can apply these strategies to create new brain habits that promote health,

well-being and resilience. This is key, she said, given the complex environment in which teachers teach.

"You're working in a dysregulated system ... but you are expected to be the most regulated person in the room at all times."

Miller added that substitute teachers face an even greater challenge than some of their colleagues, as they regularly encounter the unknown. They must quickly assess an unfamiliar context and figure out the best way to work with the new students and colleagues they meet.

ATA president Jason Schilling agrees that substitute teachers face unique challenges in their work.

"They are building relationships on the fly — they have to be resilient, and they have to be quick thinking," he said.

Addressing conference delegates,

Schilling stressed the value of substitute teachers bringing their individual skill sets and perspectives to the classroom.

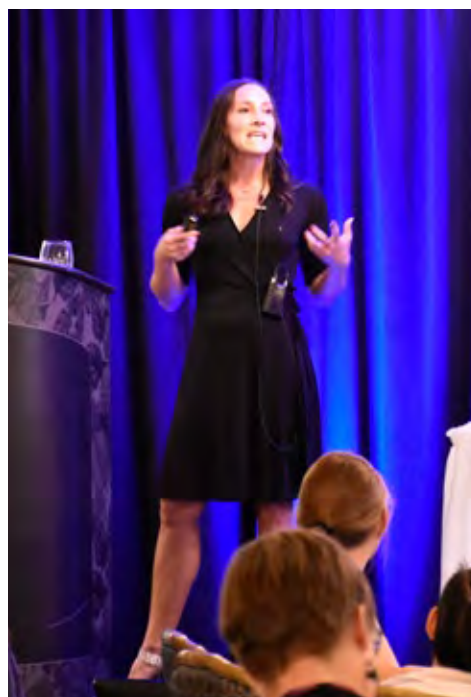
"Every single one of you in this room brings a unique talent, a unique perspective," he said, "When we combine these individual strengths together, we become an unstoppable force and a proud voice for our colleagues, our students and ourselves."

The conference, Schilling commented, supports substitute teachers by offering professional development that is tailored to these colleagues. Schilling added that this conference represents not only an opportunity for substitute teachers to learn and connect, but also an opportunity for the Association to show appreciation for their work.

"You have a voice and your voice matters." ■



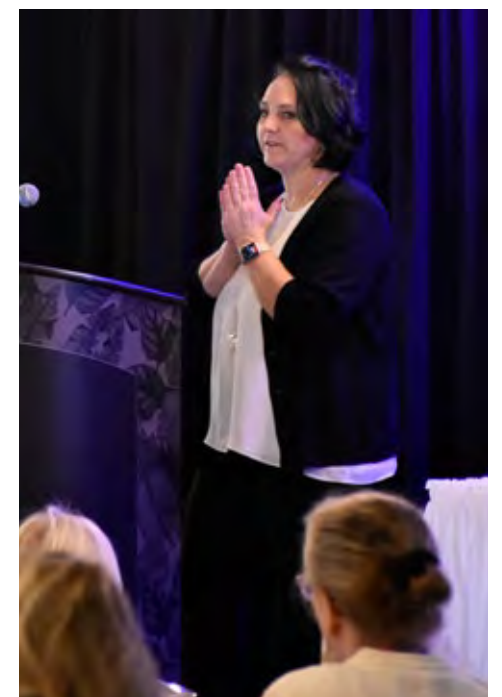
ATA president Schilling speaks on the important role of subs in the profession.



Keynote Tara Miller encourages conference delegates to retrain their brains to build resilience.



ATA president Schilling chats with substitute teacher Joyce Verrier, who has been working in education since 1977.



ATA staff officer Michelle Glavine provides a bargaining update.

Who's who – Provincial Executive Council members and local presidents 2024/25

TABLE OFFICERS



JASON SCHILLING
ATA President



GREG CARABINE
ATA Vice-President



PETER MacKAY
ATA Vice-President



GREG JEFFERY
ATA Past President

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District Rep



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Local No. 77



GENEVIEVE PAYEUR
Grande Prairie and
District Catholic Teachers
Local No. 42



JACKIE BASNETT
Greater Peace
Local No. 13



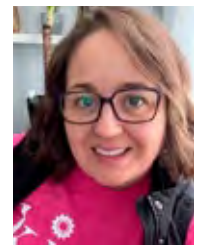
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Northern Spirit
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MCLEOD**
Northland
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Battle River Local
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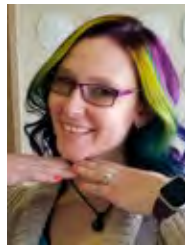


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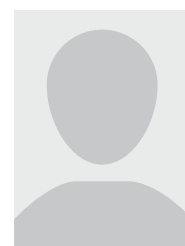
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Palliser Local No. 19



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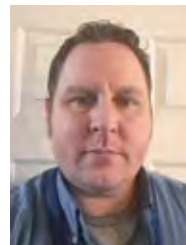
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MIKE WHEELER
Timberline Local
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Association des enseignantes
et des enseignants
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Calgary Public
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BRITTANY ALLEN
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CALLA BOREEN
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Concordia University ESA, Student Local No 6

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Northwestern Polytechnic ESA, Student Local No 8

KEISHA GENDRON
Keyano College ESA, Student Local No 9

AMY CARTWRIGHT
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The Alberta Teachers' Association

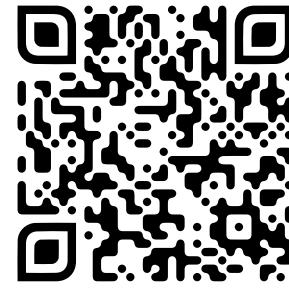
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For the latest issue, visit www.teachers.ab.ca/news. Subscribe to receive an email when a new issue is available. <http://bit.ly/ATAeNews>

A critical eye on A.I.

One teacher's take on Media Literacy Week

Lindsay Yakimyshyn
ATA News managing editor

To mark Media Literacy Week, Grade 5 teacher Aaron Ball taught his students about a quickly evolving area connected to media literacy: artificial intelligence (A.I.).

Media literacy, the ability to access and critically analyze the media messaging that we consume, has

Media Literacy Week is held every fall in Canada to promote digital media literacy. Information and resources are available through Media Smarts — Canada's Centre for Digital Media Literacy at <https://mediasmarts.ca/media-literacy-week>.

Teacher resources on A.I. literacy are available for K-12 through Amii at www.amii.ca/ai-literacy/k-12-teacher-program/

become central to Ball's language arts and social studies lessons. The concept, Ball says, informs their classroom conversations around current events and how messages are framed.

"We look at finding credible sources of information," he says, "and A.I. can really be part of this and help us think about media bias and where information comes from."

Ball felt that Media Literacy Week, held Oct. 21-25 across Canada, was the perfect opportunity to bring A.I. into the conversation.

"I'm pulling in A.I. for Media Literacy Week because kids are starting to ask questions about A.I. and we can start to have discussions about what they think it's for, how they can use it."

Aiming to increase students' awareness of the A.I. that exists all around them, Ball sees value in teaching students early on about A.I.'s applications and its risks. With this in mind, he is teaching lessons that have been created in partnership with the Alberta Machine Intelligence Institute (Amii).



SUPPLIED

Aaron Ball encourages students to apply a critical eye to A.I. for Media Literacy Week.

"There are A.I. tools that students can use without creating a profile or putting in their information," Ball says. "These tools help show students how A.I. works and its limitations."

By introducing A.I. in a curricular context, Ball hopes students will start thinking about how they interact with, create and consume information generated by A.I. — and how they can do so with a more critical eye.

"We can't just accept what A.I. pushes out. We really have to be discerning with the information it gives us."

For Ball, the link between A.I. awareness and media literacy is clear.

"Whether it is a lesson on how we use A.I. or a lesson focused on credible news articles, we are looking at differentiating the fake from the fact, and that is an important skill for our students." ■

We are ATA.

BARGAINING

Central Table 2024

Bargaining update

ATA News staff

The ATA's Central Table Bargaining Committee (CTBC) met with representatives from the Teachers' Employer Bargaining Association (TEBA) on October 2 and 3, 2024. The next bargaining meetings were set for October 28 and 29. Bargaining updates are available in the Members' Only section of the ATA website. Teachers may also sign up for Members' Updates to receive bargaining updates — as well as news releases and Association statements on topics important to

teaching and public education — right to their e-mail inbox.

Teachers are encouraged to show their support for their colleagues in bargaining days and on Fridays. Check out the Tale End (page 16) for more information. ■

Bargaining updates



Subscribe now!



NOTICES AND EVENTS

Pan-Canadian Survey

In collaboration with the ATA, the Canadian Teachers' Federation (CTF/FCE) recently launched Parachute, a largescale, multi-year, pan-Canadian educator survey series that aims to monitor changes in the teaching profession and Canadian public education. Your participation directs advocacy work across the country and ensures that support lands where it's needed most.

The fall survey is available at www.ctf-fce.ca/take-action/parachute/. Contribute your voice to the survey, which closes on November 15.

Ensuring education support lands where its needed most.

Parachute.

Pan-Canadian Educator Survey Series

East Side Dance Festival

The East Side Dance Festival (ESDF) Society invites all dance teachers and enthusiasts across Alberta to join us for two days of keynote presentations, workshops and lectures curated to energize your teaching practices. This professional development opportunity will provide exciting resources to help you elevate your dance classes and engage in authentic, socially conscious and culturally responsive pedagogy. We aim to build strong relationships between dance educators, community partners and students through meaningful connections and shared experiences. We are all part of Alberta's inclusive and dynamic arts community and have so much to share with and learn from each other. We hope you will come and join us!

The ESDF Dance Teacher Conference will be held at the Decidedly Jazz Danceworks Centre in Calgary on January 23-24, 2025 (9 a.m.-4:45 p.m. each day). For more information and to register, go to <https://east-sidedancefestival.ca/getinvolved>

Professional development subsidies may be available through your ATA local. Check out your local's website to learn more.



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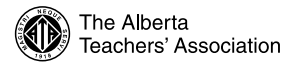
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If something newsworthy is going on in your school, district or local, please let us know. We will also consider articles, photos and cartoons. Please email tips and submissions to managing editor Lindsay Yakimyshyn: lindsay.yakimyshyn@ata.ab.ca.



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Andrés Ruzo: Hunt for Sleeping Giants
MON JANUARY 27, 2025 | 10:15 a.m.

Curriculum connections: Impact of Natural Events, Harsh Environments, Earth Science

Jack Singer Concert Hall at Arts Commons

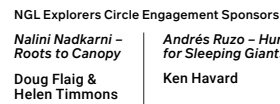
Doug Smith: Wild Wolves of Yellowstone
MON APRIL 28, 2025 | 10:15 a.m.

Curriculum connections: Environmental Impact of species reintroduction

Kakani Katija: Designed by Nature
MON MAY 26, 2025 | 10:15 a.m.

Curriculum connections: Biomimicry, Harsh Environments, Biological Adaptations, Ecosystems

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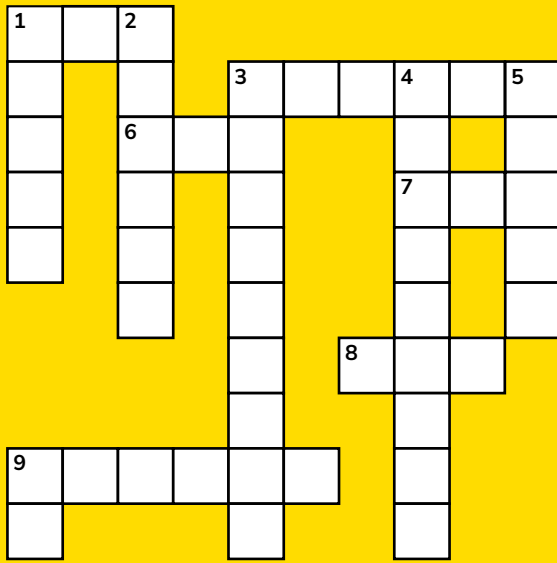
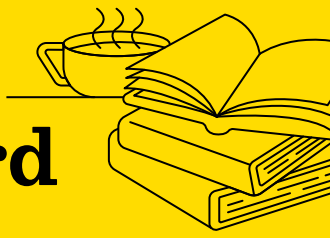
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popquiz!

Crossword




ACROSS

- 1 ATA elected officials (abbr)
- 3 The plans we make
- 6 Just so you know (abbr)
- 7 Generally not to be worn in school
- 8 _____for one
- 9 Season gone too soon

DOWN

- 1 Power_____ presentation
- 2 Morning fuel
- 3 Houses of books
- 4 Provincial president
- 5 Students should take good ones
- 9 Follows "do, re, mi, fa"



ATA-CHANGE FOR CHILDREN
2025 Teacher Exchange
Guatemala | July, 2025

Applications are now being accepted

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The goal of the exchange is to improve the quality of education available to marginalized Maya indigenous students in two different communities in the western highlands of Guatemala. Before travelling, Alberta and Guatemalan teachers will connect virtually to identify priorities and plan activities.


Once in Guatemala, you will work one-on-one with teachers in the classrooms to build capacity for differentiated instruction and engaging teaching strategies that improve student learning outcomes. You will have the opportunity to learn about challenges and approaches to teaching in remote indigenous communities and the critical role of education in development.

Travel and living expenses are covered by the ATA.
Spanish language ability is an asset but not a requirement.

To apply, visit teachers.ab.ca


For more information, email Lorena@changeforchildren.org

▶ **Application Deadline: January 15, 2025**
Selection will occur in January, 2025



An ATA International Cooperation Program


COOR-61-18a 2024-10



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 The Alberta Teachers' Association

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Feature

WE ARE HERE!

Standing strong for gender inclusion

Unsung Hero

Michael Koehler: Teacher, builder, creator

Wellness

Forest schools foster resilience and confidence

Diversity

Responding to parent questions about diversity and inclusion

Kid Lit

Teacher-recommended seasonal books to get your students engaged

In Profile

Principal Jillian Marino on the moments that matter

Research Insights

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October 29, 2024 | Volume 59, Number 4



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