



# ATA NEWS

February 4, 2025 | Volume 59, Number 8 | News Publication of The Alberta Teachers' Association

## Meet the Candidates

### ATA 2025 PEC election

**ONLINE VOTING OPENS**  
March 10 @ 8 a.m.

**ONLINE VOTING CLOSES**  
March 13 @ 5 p.m.

**RESULTS ANNOUNCED ONLINE**  
March 14

**RESULTS PUBLISHED IN ATA NEWS**  
March 25

## PRESIDENT (One to be elected)

See bios and statements on [page 2](#).



Donovan Eckstrom



Peter MacKay



Jason Schilling

## VICE-PRESIDENTS (Two to be elected)

See bios and statements on [page 3](#).



Greg Carabine



Allison McCaffrey



Greg Meeker

## DISTRICT REPRESENTATIVES

### CALGARY CITY (Three to be elected)

See bios and statements on [page 4](#).



Cecil Hall



Kevin Kempt



Kent Kinsman



Alicia Taylor

### CALGARY DISTRICT (One to be elected)

See bios and statements on [page 5](#).



Karen Nakaska



Wade Westworth

### EDMONTON DISTRICT (One to be elected)

See bios and statements on [page 5](#).



Carryl Bennett



Janet Westworth

### NORTH WEST (One to be elected)

See bios and statements on [page 6](#).



Laurie Dirs



Rhonda Kelly

### Elected by acclamation

Candidates in the following districts have been acclaimed (see pages 6–8): Central, Central East, Central North, Central South, Edmonton McMurray, South East and South West.



## PRESIDENT (One to be elected)

**WHO CAN VOTE?** Active members and associate members provincewide.

### DONOVAN ECKSTROM



Hello! Thanks for taking your time to read this! I'm tepidly pleased to be running for ATA president and hope to earn your vote.

I began my teaching career like a lot of folks. I spent a year in my dream teaching position, was never given a full-time contract, lost my job from a mandatory transfer, worked in other fields outside of education (Bell Media) and made my way back into the profession! Over the past few years, I've been up in Grande Prairie working from kindergarten to high school and have had zero experience in the ATA.

While that may be setting off alarms for some, I have a feeling more than a few are feeling a sense of excitement for potential fresh ideas

in a Provincial Executive Council (PEC) that is stale. As bargaining went into full swing, the cracks began to show in the PEC. When I asked questions to someone in ATA leadership, I was told to watch videos that had less than five per cent views from total ATA membership. When I asked fellow teachers about potential lowball offers from the government, the overwhelming consensus was that they would take whatever was offered because "it might be the best we will get." These compounding issues led me, reluctantly, to run for ATA president.

My platform is focused on the following:

**1. Messaging** — The metrics the ATA seems to be fine with would get someone fired in Bell Media. YouTube videos with a dozen views are unacceptable. Particularly in this social media landscape, adaptation is crucial to having any success. Try TikTok, try YouTube shorts, try videos that are targeted toward ATA membership. By having fresh ideas, you have members and the public paying far more attention than they do now.

**2. Transparency** — An educated ATA populace is a better populace. Utilizing a myriad of techniques to inform where the ATA is at in bargaining is far better than one chart that people tune out. It also helps give members the knowledge to push back at family dinners when that one uncle/cousin says, "Teachers are paid well! Why are you bellyachin'?"

**3. Accountability** — Some of you have given tens of thousands to the ATA, and it's good to know that money is going to good places. The fact is a lot of us are one fried transmission away from not being able to pay rent. Asking around my division, a lot of my fellow teachers are frustrated. Maybe it's a pay cut for PEC members, maybe it's cutting back on the five-dollar gift cards until we are being properly compensated.

ATA president is a role I would take with mild vexation. I love being in the classroom, but my mild agitation is arguably one of the best reasons to have me as president. I want to get back into the classroom as soon as possible, and come back to one that has had measurable, positive change.

Once again, thanks for reading this. Remember to vote March 10-13!

### PETER MACKAY



I'm Peter MacKay, and I'm running to be the next president of the Alberta Teachers' Association (ATA).

I teach a grade 7/8 class in Grande Prairie, Alberta. This is my 27th year of teaching and over that time I've been a K-12 principal and taught grades 7-12, among other roles.

I currently serve as one of two ATA vice-presidents and I'm chair of the Central Table Bargaining Committee.

I live in Grande Prairie with my wife Stephanie and our dog, Arlo.

I'm running for president because the pace of change in our classrooms and our schools has been considerably faster than what we've seen in our Association. Things have gotten worse for Alberta teachers, especially since

the pandemic, and our old, familiar tactics and methods of advocacy don't seem to be working as well anymore.

To be clear, I'm not advocating for a wholesale change in our approach. Good work has been done and continues to be done. But over these last several years, we've seen the government make fundamental alterations to our pensions without consultation, cynically strip the Association of our disciplinary functions, and proceed with a flawed curriculum implementation process and testing regime despite our clear objections.

Most importantly, this government has eroded financial support for education to the point that Alberta offers the lowest per-student education funding in Canada. They've done this while increasing funding for private education even as conditions deteriorate in our public and separate schools.

It has been some time since the government has listened to teachers. We need to raise our voices, collectively, if we are to be heard. And I believe that teachers, having been battered by inflation, are ready to get loud.

But how do we bring about the change that we need?

- We must empower and energize the leaders in our ATA locals and our schools. The strength of this Association does not reside in Barnett House; it's found in our staffrooms, classrooms and council rooms across the province.
- Every school that I've worked in that had a healthy ATA culture had a bear on staff: the kind of person who knew what ought to be happening in schools and knew what to do and who to call if things went awry. We need those leaders in every school if things are to change.

To make that happen, our Association must become more effective in our communication and more meaningfully present in the working lives of our teachers and the work of our locals.

In short, the measure of success for the next ATA president and the next Provincial Executive Council won't be how many events we attend or how many interviews we give. Our success will be determined by how effectively we help 46,000 teachers find their voice, and that voice is much louder than this government remembers.

You'll find more details about me and what I stand for at <http://www.mackay4atapresident.com> and on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/>.

### JASON SCHILLING



I am often asked if I anticipated the challenges teachers faced over the nearly six years I have been president of the Alberta Teachers' Association (ATA). The answer is simple: no. The government has enacted many detrimental policies that have significantly impacted our profession. These decisions have left teachers, school leaders and substitutes exhausted. Public education is in crisis in Alberta.

I value the ATA and the work it does daily to enhance the teaching profession, even if our efforts are not always visible. Despite challenges, I am proud to say that the ATA has never backed down from a fight. In nearly 1,200 media interviews, I championed teachers and highlighted our values and advocated for changes we need to see in our classrooms.

My goal as your president has always been to improve the capacity of the ATA and further develop it into a resilient organization valued by all its members. I believe that we fight for what we value, and with your continued support, I will remain a strong voice for you, for all our students and for public education.

Our goals are clear. Woven through all the pressures facing education is the shameful lack of funding for our schools. Greater public awareness of the lack of funding around inclusion needs to be a higher focus. We see it every day, so we must continue to engage with partners who also value public education.

The ATA must continue to engage and strengthen our relationship with members as we address classroom conditions and wages, even after this round of bargaining. We must stress greater teacher involvement in curriculum and assessment design as grades 7-9 are developed and implemented. The government's plans to expedite teaching credentials in Alberta is a significant threat we must face as it will undermine our professionalism and the quality of education.

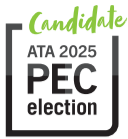
The list of issues is exhausting, I know. However, I believe each issue we face presents an opportunity for us to show our solidarity, determination and commitment to public education.

What do we do? We enhance our relationships with each other, parents and our Association. We must remain strategically focused on our goals and not let others divide and weaken us.

Together, we can shape the future of education in Alberta. Your voice, dedication and engagement matter. Colleagues, let us rise to the occasion, inspire each other, support each other, and work together to create a brighter future for our students and our profession.

With your engagement, we can tackle these challenges head on and achieve our shared goals. There is a lot of fight ahead of us, and I'm ready to lead us through what's next. Stand with me, stand with the ATA and let us make a difference together.

Originally from Lethbridge, I now reside in Edmonton. When not focused on Association work, you can find me running or on a bike. I taught English and drama at Kate Andrews High School in Coaldale for 17 years.



## VICE-PRESIDENT (Two to be elected)

**WHO CAN VOTE?** Active members and associate members provincially.

### GREG CARABINE



Nothing changes until we change and that is why, with the support of my wife, Yoko, and my children, Aiden and Fiona, I have decided to seek re-election as vice-president of the ATA.

Before I began teaching in 2002, I spent almost a decade in the steel industry. From there I moved to a career with Edmonton Catholic, teaching chemistry and physics and coaching football.

Prior to my role as vice-president, I was the district representative for Edmonton McMurray and, before that, president of Edmonton Catholic Teachers Local No. 54. I have dedicated my career to working with the Association, standing up for the best interests of teachers.

I have worked tirelessly on behalf of teachers and students to improve our working conditions and their learning conditions. I continue to be a vocal opponent of the hijacking of our pension, the inadequate and age-inappropriate curriculum, excessive standardized testing and the unrealistic demands on our profession.

In my conversations with teachers, there is a clear feeling that “we can’t keep going like this” and I’ve heard too often, “I’m looking for another job.”

That change must come from us.

No one is coming to save us, no government is going to do the right thing unless we as united and purposeful professionals are willing to find our courage, stand up and say, “No, enough is enough!”

We act, and by acting we save ourselves, our students and public education, which is the greatest of equalizers.

If re-elected, I will continue to work tirelessly on your behalf. Our wages have to catch up and keep up, our classroom conditions have to improve, and we need to bring back some old-fashioned respect for our profession.

[Carabine.ca](http://Carabine.ca)

@GCarabine on X

VP Carabine on FaceBook

@gregcarabine.bsky.social on Bluesky

gregcarabine on Threads

@gregcarabine on Instagram

### ALLISON MCCAFFREY



**We are better together!** I firmly believe in the power of collective action, mutual support and a shared purpose. As a proud Alberta teacher, I know that when we unite as one voice – advocating for smaller class sizes, increased classroom supports and an equitable funding formula – we become an unstoppable force for positive change. We must work together to stop this government from further undermining our profession or the quality of education for Alberta’s children.

With my years of experience as the local president of Calgary Separate School Local No. 55, I have guided our local through times of challenge and growth. My finance degree and business background bring practical

insights to my over 20 years in education, both in the classroom and as an administrator. In addition to this, my extensive participation on local and provincial committees has prepared me to serve Alberta teachers effectively and with unwavering dedication as vice-president.

I believe that all members deserve access to their elected representatives. Breaking down barriers to ensure accessibility, accountability and transparency is essential. Your Provincial Executive Council exists to serve you, and I will work to ensure it is responsive to the concerns of teachers from across our province.

I am proud to be a member of the best profession in the world and look forward to serving as your vice-president. Our government has indicated that without a fight, they will refuse to better our classroom conditions, increase our pay or show us respect, despite our 46,000-plus membership. We will not accept

this, and I look forward to engaging, supporting and advocating alongside you as we collectively refuse to back down for what is right. Our profession is worth it – we are worth it! **We are better together!**

Visit [www.allisonmccaffrey.ca](http://www.allisonmccaffrey.ca) to learn more.

### GREG MEEKER



My name is Greg Meeker, and I am currently principal at Grandview Heights School and a district representative (DR) for Edmonton McMurray.

My career in public education has spanned 34 years, and I have advocated for teachers every step of the way. I have spent the last five years operating The Pension War Room on “X” (@yomeeks) to educate on and advocate for teachers’ pensions in response to significant attacks. I served on the Alberta Teachers’ Retirement Fund (ATRF) Board and was board chair for 10 years. These experiences have prepared me well to fight on behalf of teachers.

Serving the Association has been the honour of my career. I have served

one term on Provincial Executive Council as a DR. I am now a candidate for the position of vice-president. I have experience serving teachers in other positions as well: the Professional Conduct Committee, the Pension Committee, and as vice-president of Finance for Edmonton Public Teachers Local No. 37.

Recent events have made me more concerned than ever for our shared profession. We need to continue to fight back regarding curriculum, the independence of our pension plan and our classroom conditions.

Teachers deserve an active and responsive Association to stand up for them and create the truly equitable public education system that Albertans deserve. I think that I have the skills and experience necessary to meet this challenge.

Please use one of your two vice-president votes to vote for me. I will faithfully represent the teachers of Alberta on Provincial Executive Council.

Candidate

ATA 2025  
PEC  
election

## Voting instructions to be mailed mid-February

PEC election materials will be sent to all schools employing three or more teachers. The election packages will be addressed to the attention of the school representative(s) and contain one set of voting instructions for each ATA member eligible to vote at each location. School representatives are required to distribute the instructions to each teacher on staff. Voting instructions will be mailed to the homes of associate members, members on a leave of absence and those members at schools employing two or fewer teachers. On the day of the mailing, the voting instructions also will be posted on the ATA website.

Find out more about the 2025 PEC election by visiting the ATA homepage at [www.teachers.ab.ca](http://www.teachers.ab.ca).



## KENT KINSMAN



I served as a district representative for Calgary City, as an executive staff officer with Calgary Public Teachers Local No. 38 and teacher with the Calgary Board of Education. My entire career, I have always been committed to serving and working with the ATA, dedicated to advocating for teachers and improving their working conditions, their pay and benefits, and their day-to-day lives. I have worked with/on practically every committee that exists at both the provincial level and with locals 38 and 55 (Calgary Separate), specialist councils, and far too many conferences to list. Primarily I worked on Teacher Welfare committees and program areas, focused on bargaining efforts and member representations. I worked

with local Teacher Welfare committees, participated in several rounds of negotiations, have obtained the Queen's University Labour Relations Certificate and bargaining training, and negotiated collective agreements as well.

My time working as a staff officer helped build a fulsome understanding of the tremendous volume of expectations that are being assigned to teachers and school leaders, by their districts and the government, with decreasing supports or understanding of the challenges of class complexities, sizes, curricular changes and expectations. Every day I worked with teachers that were burning out, faced with leaves or requiring workplace restrictions/accommodations, helping put barriers in place because their employer and their government did not respect them or support them.

We have lost ground, we have lost influence, we have lost autonomy, we have lost respect; in short, we are on the wrong track, and it is time to take it back. I am looking for your support in lending my voice and experience to this fight, to be your advocate for what we have lost and what we deserve going forward. I will always fight for what is right for the heart and soul of public education: teachers. Thank you for your consideration.

## CALGARY CITY (Three to be elected)

**WHO CAN VOTE?** Active members employed by Calgary School Division or Calgary Roman Catholic Separate School Division, and associate members living in the same area.

## CECIL HALL



I am Cecil Hall, and I teach business studies at Nelson Mandela High School in northeast Calgary. Locally, I am the high school representative on the executive of Calgary Public Teachers Local No. 38 as well as a member of the Finance Committee. Prior to being elected to the executive, I supported Local No. 38 as a school representative. Provincially, I have contributed as a member of the Status of Racialized Teachers Working Group as well as by serving as the communication director for the Career and Technology Education Council. Additionally, I am an Annual Representative Assembly delegate.

As a candidate for the Provincial Executive Council, I am committed

to representing the incredible teachers of our Calgary City with passion, experience and action. Over the past three years, I've been deeply involved in transformative work, including the historic changes to the way ATA dealt with specialist councils and the launch of the Diversity Equity Network initiative. These accomplishments are just the beginning.

With Calgary's growing population, our classrooms are increasingly diverse, presenting challenges that demand innovative solutions. This is a pivotal moment for our Association. We face big decisions ahead, and we must have full member participation. We need more than engagement; we need mobilization.

I know how to get things done. I face the same challenges we all do daily in the classroom, fought for your needs and delivered results. I am one of you and believe in the power of collective action.

Together, we can build a strong, united association that is focused on the future of our students and our profession.

Vote for action. Vote for progress. Let's lift and pivot to a new future. Vote Cecil.

## KEVIN KEMPT



I am proud to be a teacher. As a classroom teacher, I know the challenges and opportunities we face every day. I experience how teaching and learning conditions change. I understand and empathize with you, my colleagues, as I face these challenges as well.

I am seeking re-election as your district representative (DR) because Calgary City teachers deserve experienced, strong and effective representation. You need knowledgeable representation to advance your concerns at Provincial Executive Council (PEC).

My extensive experience will serve you well as I fulfill the duties of DR. The breadth and depth of my involvement at both the local and

provincial levels of our Association reflects my commitment to you over many years. My record proves I have the skill and ability to represent you.

Your views must be clearly articulated and your interests defended. As an incumbent, I have been able to break down barriers and forge alliances to meet common goals and interests at PEC.

I will continue to represent the diverse concerns and opinions of all teachers. I am dedicated to representing the people to whom I am responsible with integrity and forthrightness. I provide a powerful voice for those who feel they do not have a voice. I am committed to providing strong, effective representation.

As your DR, I promise I will continue to advance your interests as part of open, candid and honest discussion and debate at PEC.

Kevin currently teaches at START Outreach (Discovering Choices). During his 36 years of teaching, he has served Calgary teachers on numerous committees at both the provincial and local levels of the Alberta Teachers' Association, including as vice-president and president of Calgary Public Teachers Local No. 38 and nine terms as DR, Calgary City.

[klkempt@shaw.ca](mailto:klkempt@shaw.ca) 403-826-2884

## ALICIA TAYLOR



I have been a Calgary teacher since 2012. I teach science at Joane Cardinal-Schubert High School, and I have also taught with CBe-learn, the Career and Technology Centre and Queen Elizabeth High School.

My involvement with the ATA began when I became a member of the ATA Science Council executive. I was assistant conference director and progressed to roles with more responsibility, including president and conference director.

Over the past decade, I have supported Calgary teachers through the Teacher Welfare, Professional Development, Women in Leadership, Council of School Representatives and Annual Representative Assembly committees. I have served on the

Calgary Public Teachers' Local No. 38 executive, first as the senior high representative, and now as one of two vice-presidents.

Calgary teachers need a strong voice on Provincial Executive Council. As your district representative (DR), I will ensure that your voice is heard loud and clear.

I will be focusing on three strategies as your DR: advocacy, awareness and accountability.

### ADVOCACY FOR TEACHERS

Calgary teachers need representatives that will fight for better support, resources and recognition for the work we do. I pledge to

- champion fair compensation and benefits,
- support relevant professional development and
- promote access to classroom resources.

### RAISING AWARENESS OF KEY ISSUES

Calgary teachers face many challenges that require collective action. It is crucial to raise awareness and address the issues affecting educators today. When elected, I will

- amplify workload concerns,
- highlight deficits in education funding and
- give voice to marginalized communities.

### COMMITMENT TO ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRANSPARENCY

It is essential for Calgary teachers to have representatives that are accountable to them. As your DR, I will

- have open and frequent communication,
- push for transparent decision making, and
- be accessible.

## CALGARY DISTRICT (One to be elected)

**WHO CAN VOTE?** Active members employed by Canadian Rockies School Division, Christ the Redeemer Catholic Separate School Division, Foothills School Division, Rocky View School Division, and associate members living in the same area.

### KAREN NAKASKA



As teachers, the network of relationships we build in our village is critical to our success, as our workloads and stressors increase continuously.

As your district representative (DR) on Provincial Executive Council, I have carried your issues and concerns to the provincial table, which then gives them voice at the provincial level, whether it is our executive staff advocating on our behalf with government officials, or when our president speaks in support of public education and decries our deteriorating working conditions in media interviews and conversations with the minister of education. These efforts grow our shared village, giving a provincial voice to local realities.

As your DR, I work for you at the provincial level. I advocate for continued quality education as a member of the Curriculum Committee. I ensure every teacher is heard and supported as a member of the Diversity, Equity, and Human Rights Committee. I work on policy which actively shapes our Association as a member of the Resolutions Committee. I advocated for a strong public education system as chair of the Political Engagement Committee. I focused on fiscal responsibility as a member of the Finance Committee. I fostered strong relationships with Indigenous Elders and Knowledge Keepers in the Indigenous Advisory Circle. I employed strategic foresight to support the teaching profession as a member of the Strategic Planning Group. These efforts give foundation to our working lives in our shared village, making us stronger together.

As a proud Alberta teacher and a passionate supporter of public education, it has been a great privilege to serve my colleagues in Calgary District. I ask for your continued trust and to re-elect me not only to listen to and support you, but also to be a tireless champion of our profession, our teachers and our students in our shared provincial village.

### WADE WESTWORTH



Education in Alberta is at a crossroads. Teachers are being asked to do more with less, and the respect and resources we need to thrive are eroding rapidly. I believe that

- teachers are the experts in education and must reclaim the respect we deserve;
- the trajectory of public education is unsustainable, and we must unite to secure its future; and
- when we stand together in solidarity, we have the collective power to create meaningful change.

As your candidate for district representative of Calgary District, I am committed to being a fierce and vocal advocate who tackles these challenges head on. Together, we can

build a stronger, more sustainable future for teachers, students and public education.

As a dedicated educator with over 25 years of Grade 7–12 classroom experience in various school districts, I have devoted my career to supporting teachers and strengthening our profession. Since 2015, I have served as president of Foothills Local No. 16, where I've been privileged to lead and advocate for my colleagues. Under my leadership, our local was honoured with the provincial Diversity, Equity and Human Rights Award, a testament to our commitment to inclusion and respect for all.

Provincially, I've served on the Political Engagement Committee, bringing my leadership experience to inform strategies that advanced the Association's advocacy efforts. Additionally, my eight years on the Professional Conduct Committee reinforced my commitment to upholding the honour and dignity of our profession.

As both a teacher and parent, I have a deep personal and professional stake in the future of public education. My wife is also a teacher, and my children attend public schools in Calgary District. I understand the challenges we face not only as educators but as families who rely on a strong, effective and sustainable public education system. Let me be your voice as we move forward together.

## EDMONTON DISTRICT (One to be elected)

**WHO CAN VOTE?** Active members employed by Elk Island Catholic Separate School Division, Elk Island Public School Division, Greater St. Albert Roman Catholic Separate School Division, St. Albert School Division, Sturgeon School Division, and associate members living in the same area.

### CARRYL BENNETT



Our profession is filled with both unique challenges and great rewards. To ensure that every teacher's voice is heard, we need a strong, unified provincial ATA that reflects the diverse needs of our community of educators. Recent issues, such as new curricula, provincial bargaining, underfunded support systems and mental health concerns, have added considerable strain on our profession.

My passion and reason for being a teacher centre around the belief that each person has the capacity to make a difference. In the 24 years that I have been a teacher, the people in this profession have shaped so many lives. Their impact reaches far and wide and it has also shaped me into the person that I am. I am honoured to be part of

the community that helps to guide the future of our society, and I feel fortunate to be part of an amazing profession surrounded by creative, thoughtful and innovative colleagues.

My passion for advocating on behalf of ATA members, my adaptability in problem solving, and my unwavering dedication make me a strong candidate for the role of district representative.

The first steps of my journey began in Saskatchewan where I grew up as the oldest of three children. I attended French immersion schools and then headed to Faculté Saint-Jean for university. I have spent my career teaching a wide range of grades (4–12) across diverse educational settings—suburban and rural districts, English and French immersion schools as well as both public and Catholic systems.

Over the past 23 years, I have served in multiple leadership roles at the local, regional and provincial level. Currently, I have been proud to serve as local president of Greater St. Albert Catholic Local No. 23 since 2013, and president of North Central Teachers' Convention Association since 2019.

### JANET WESTWORTH



As a student in Redwater School, I encountered the transformative power of literature and the profound influence of teachers. Inspired, I pursued a career in education, hoping to awaken in my students a similar appreciation for the artistry and meaning found in literature.

As my teaching career began, another passion took root: advocating for public education. In 2001, I joined Elk Island Public, and in 2002, I stood alongside my colleagues as we went on strike, a moment that profoundly shaped my understanding of the vital link between education and democracy. The lessons of that pivotal strike stayed with me when I moved to Sturgeon and compelled me to become actively involved in my local,

first as political engagement officer and eventually as local president – a journey defined by a growing resolve to strengthen our profession.

Throughout my leadership, I have sought to amplify the voices of teachers and safeguard the integrity of our profession. From organizing trustee forums to tackling the difficult issues of working conditions, I have championed strong, collective advocacy. This commitment extends to our allies – like supporting our CUPE members during their ongoing strike – because solidarity matters.

We are in challenging times in education. Every day, teachers in Alberta are forced to sacrifice their well-being to overcome the stark contradiction of working in the wealthiest province with the most underfunded education system in Canada. This is unacceptable and must not continue.

As district representative, I will

- advocate for sustainable working conditions that allow teachers to end each day with energy and dignity;
- champion teachers so they can take pride in their work and receive fair, deserved compensation; and
- empower teachers to stand up and demand the respect and recognition they deserve.

## NORTH WEST (One to be elected)

**WHO CAN VOTE?** Active members employed by Fort Vermilion School Division, Grande Prairie Roman Catholic Separate School Division, Grande Prairie School Division, High Prairie School Division, Holy Family Catholic Separate School Division, Northland School Division, Peace River School Division, Peace Wapiti School Division, and associate members living in the same area.

### LAURIE DIRSA



With over 20 years of teaching experience throughout the province, I would like to announce my candidacy for district representative (DR) of the North West. I am concerned with the apathy that I see regarding the Association. We need to be a strong voice to face the tough issues educators are facing. If we work together, we can do hard things. My ATA experience includes being a school representative, Teacher Welfare committee chair, Bargaining chair, member of convention boards, secretary, treasurer and the Mighty Peace Teachers' Convention Association president. I am willing to work hard for the North West district and will stand loud and proud for you!

As your DR, I will serve as the crucial link between the ATA and teachers within our district. This means advocating for you, keeping you informed, and ensuring that your concerns and priorities are represented at the provincial level. Here are the core responsibilities I will focus on if you entrust me with your support:

I will prioritize listening to and communicating the views, concerns and needs of teachers across the North West district. Through regular check-ins, town hall meetings or direct communication, I will be your voice within the ATA, ensuring that your perspective is heard and your concerns are brought to the provincial leadership table.

The challenges teachers face in Alberta are evolving, but together we can build a stronger, more unified voice for our profession. As your DR, I will be committed to advocating for your needs, representing your concerns, and ensuring that our profession continues to thrive in the North West district and beyond.

I ask for your support as we work to bring the voices of teachers in the North West district to the ATA provincial table. Together, we can make a real difference for Alberta's educators.

### RHONDA KELLY



My name is Rhonda Kelly. I am pleased to seek re-election as your North West district representative (DR). Our government spends the least amount of money on public education in Canada. I would like to continue advocating for the important work our colleagues do in the classroom and stand up for public education in our province.

Over the past two years, I've had the privilege of serving as your DR for northwestern Alberta. Prior to this, I served six years as the local president for Grande Prairie Catholic rural and urban schools. I have held various roles on our local and provincial ATA committees, including Diversity, Equity and Human Rights; Benefits, Insurance and Pension;

provincial Political Engagement; and Teacher Welfare, and eight years as treasurer of the Council for Inclusive Education. These experiences have equipped me with a deep understanding of the issues facing our education system and a strong commitment to addressing them.

I currently teach math and science in junior high grades seven and eight. Throughout my career, I have taught various elementary grades, including kindergarten. My educational background includes a bachelor of education from the University of Alberta Teachers' Education North program and a bachelor of commerce degree. I am also currently pursuing my master of education degree.

As a proud Alberta teacher, I share your love for the beauty of our northern communities. I understand the challenges you face and the dedication you bring to your work every day. I hear your concerns, and I am committed to bringing those concerns to the attention of our provincial Association.

It would be an honour to continue to be your strong voice and advocate for our concerns in the North West. I ask for your support in the upcoming election.



## Elected by acclamation

### CENTRAL

**WHOM DOES BRENTON REPRESENT?** Active members employed by Black Gold School Division, CS Centre-Est, CS Centre-Nord, CS Nord-Ouest, CS du Sud, St. Thomas Aquinas Roman Catholic Separate School Division, Wetaskiwin School Division or Wild Rose School Division, and associate members living in the same area.

### BRENTON BAUM



"Respect professionalism" is a clear assertion all teachers can use to strengthen our profession and the public image of teachers in Alberta. Collectively, teachers cannot bow to the trend to relinquish our professional status to a voice that tells us how to perform our professional role or attempts to take it away. As professionals, we must ensure our voice and our expertise are acknowledged as the authority in education.

I believe in teachers being empowered to thrive in their chosen profession and to continue to advocate for the best possible learning experiences for all students in their classrooms. I understand the challenges of our profession and, as such, will champion teacher voices and advocate for

teachers as the experts of education, advocate for policies that attract and retain the excellent educators to our classrooms, and work to ensure every student has access to quality education, including adequate resources, equitable funding and excellent learning environments.

I am committed to serving as your district representative because I believe teachers deserve a strong voice and improved working conditions to allow their students' needs to be met.

Brenton is from Drayton Valley where his classroom experience extends from elementary to high school, teaching sciences, math, physical education and communication technology. Prior to serving on Provincial Executive Council (PEC), Brenton served as Timberline Local No. 9's local president for 18 years and was active with the Teacher Welfare, Professional Development, Annual Representative Assembly and Teacher Board Advisory committees. Brenton also served provincially on the Professional Conduct Committee, Professional Conduct Appeal Committee and Teacher Qualifications Committee. As a member of Council, Brenton is serving on numerous provincial committees as well as acting as the PEC liaison for the Social Studies Council and North Central Teachers' Convention Association.

### CENTRAL EAST

**WHOM DOES MURRAY REPRESENT?** Active members employed by Aspen View School Division, Battle River School Division, Buffalo Trail School Division, East Central Alberta Catholic Separate School Division, Lakeland Roman Catholic Separate School Division, Northern Lights School Division, St. Paul School Division, and associate members living in the same area.

### MURRAY LALONDE



I am in my 24th year of teaching and 6th year as the district representative for Central East Alberta. My three children are now all adults, having graduated from my K-12 school, H. A. Kostash in Smoky Lake, where I have taught every grade level and almost every subject. I am truly honoured to hold the trust of Central East teachers to serve as their provincial ATA voice. With the opposing view of the current government, the immediate future of public education is promising to be even more contentious. I will not back down on fighting for proper funding of public education, working conditions and an increase in salary.

## CENTRAL NORTH

**WHOM DOES RICHARD REPRESENT?** Active members employed by Evergreen Catholic Separate School Division, Grande Yellowhead Public School Division, Living Waters Catholic Separate School Division, Northern Gateway School Division, Parkland School Division, Pembina Hills School Division, and associate members living in the same area.

### RICHARD KREMP



## CENTRAL SOUTH

**WHOM DOES BRICE REPRESENT?** Active members employed by Chinook's Edge School Division, Clearview School Division, Red Deer Catholic Separate School Division, Red Deer School Division, Wolf Creek School Division, and associate members living in the same area.

### BRICE UNLAND



Brice is a high school social studies and computer science teacher in Red Deer. When he's not driving to Edmonton for ATA related work or in a meeting, he moonlights as a father and husband.

Nineteen years into teaching and the direction of public education couldn't be clearer. Indeed, this is the primary reason I ran for district representative in 2022. To stem the erosion of public education, we must address critical funding shortages, prioritize teacher retention and advocate for policies that ensure equitable access to quality learning opportunities for all students.

My first term on Provincial Executive Council saw a concentration

on making improvements in the Association to be more responsive to members. In this regard, several changes have or are in the process of being made that will lead to a more focused professional organization. For example, the Annual Representative Assembly will now be laser focused on education-related issues, rather than worldly and societal issues. And a committee on internal communications between the Association and locals/members has made several recommendations to improve the core tenet of communication. Internally, much is being done to align our work in the interest of and direction set by our membership.

Externally, the push to have a more aggressive and unapologetic Association continues. We see some of the fruits of our labour in our central table bargaining opening proposal. That said, we have much more work to do on this front.

Colleagues, the road ahead continues to be a difficult one. Your tenacity and dedication to the good of public education provides the foundation from which we base our offensive. Remain steadfast; it's always darkest before the dawn.

Let me finish by thanking you for the trust you've placed in me and your support as I step into my second term.

## EDMONTON MCMURRAY

**WHOM DO CARMEN, CHANDRA AND JAY REPRESENT?** Active members employed by Edmonton Catholic Separate School Division, Edmonton School Division, Fort McMurray School Division or Fort McMurray Roman Catholic Separate School Division, and associate members living in the same area.

### CARMEN GLOSSOP



I'd like to extend a heartfelt THANK YOU to all the teachers in Edmonton and Fort McMurray for the opportunity to serve as your district representative for these past three terms. Standing up, defending and fighting for our profession are extremely important to me. It's the very reason why I became actively involved with our Association for over 16 years. It was important then and especially now.

I would also like to THANK YOU for your love, understanding and support over these past months as I am learning to live without my loving husband, Paul Froese. I used to think I was a strong woman, but now I know, without a doubt, that I am an incredibly strong one. There is still a lot of fight left in me.

I made my dream career come true 21 years ago when I became a teacher. I taught in rural Alberta (St. Paul/Two Hills) for the first half of my career and the rest has been with Edmonton Public. I've taught in all four divisions and have considerable experience with students from culturally diverse backgrounds and with students with exceptionalities. I currently teach children who are medically fragile and with special needs. I love it!

Our profession is under attack and there are a lot of issues that need our attention. Together, we will address them and together we will make a difference. There is great power in solidarity. Thank you again. Hugs!

### CHANDRA HILDEBRAND



I have been an English teacher with Edmonton Public Schools for 17 years and have been enthusiastically involved in the work of Edmonton Public Teachers Local No. 37 for a decade, serving on the local's executive and a wide variety of committees, most recently being elected to the Teacher Welfare committee. I've also been proud to serve in numerous positions on the executive of the English Language Arts Council throughout my career, and I am currently serving as past president.

I love the classroom and the work I do with students every day. Over my career, however, I have experienced the constant erosion of our working conditions, professional autonomy and respect. Meanwhile, class sizes,

class complexity, developmentally inappropriate testing and curriculum, and demands on teachers have continued to surge. This government has attacked students, our pensions, public education and public sector unions. All the while, funding for our students has been slashed and our wages have stagnated.

I don't want to simply lament these changes, I want to fight for what teachers, students and our communities deserve. I passionately believe in the power and necessity of public education and am done with being relegated to last place.

As a district representative for Edmonton McMurray, I want to connect with and listen to the experiences of as many members as possible, and be your voice at the provincial table, to help ensure that decisions reflect and respond to the lived realities of teachers in classrooms. I aspire to find ways to engage and empower my fellow members, and to build networks with community members and other unions to fight together, in solidarity, for the common good. I'm excited to learn, and will strive to use whatever tools I have to support teachers and fight for the strong, well-funded system that we deserve.

*Edmonton McMurray continued on page 8.*

*Are you ready for it?*

**To vote, you will need to have access to your online ATA account.**

Don't have an account yet, or not sure of your password? Go to [teachers.ab.ca/pay-and-benefits/ata-account](https://teachers.ab.ca/pay-and-benefits/ata-account) to make sure you are ready to vote!

EDMONTON MCMURRAY continued

JAY PROCKTOR



It has been my honour to serve as your district representative (DR) since 2023. I am working to **improve** classroom conditions, **protect** public education and **defend** our dignity in our profession by transforming the relationship between teachers and the ATA. We will do this by channelling the **anger** and frustration we feel about the deterioration of our working conditions and the attacks on public education across Alberta; becoming more **active** and engaged in our collective futures by building up the confidence, determination and conviction of our members to take action; and by building **allies** across our communities.

During the last round of bargaining, I stood against the Mediator's

Recommendation because it did not include classroom conditions and moved us backward instead of forward. Classroom conditions are now being bargained for because WE demanded it.

As your DR, I am currently the chair of the Curriculum Committee, and serving on the Resolutions Committee, Canadian Teachers' Federation Committee, Inclusive Education Council and Greater Edmonton Teachers' Convention Association. I have taught in diverse classrooms across Edmonton (K, 1, 2, online and outreach).

I believe in visiting schools to listen to the concerns and voices of teachers and having constructive conversations about how we better advocate for the classrooms we, and our students, deserve. Clearly, the status quo isn't working and it's time for us to do things differently. In asking for your support, I am at the same time asking for your increased participation in advocating alongside me as the transformative work we have begun can only be accomplished with sustained pressure from the members.

SOUTH EAST

**WHOM DOES HEATHER REPRESENT?** Active members employed by Golden Hills School Division, Grasslands Public Schools, Medicine Hat Roman Catholic Separate School Division, Medicine Hat School Division, Prairie Land School Division, Prairie Rose School Division, and associate members living in the same area.

HEATHER McCAIG



It is an incredible privilege to officially represent the dedicated, hardworking teachers of the South East for the next two years. I deeply appreciate the value of relationships and the essential need for teacher support. I remain committed to working closely with local presidents and their executives, as well as providing individual teacher support. I visit schools as often as I can and am devoted to continuing this important work.

Advocating for education and supporting teachers has always been my passion. My journey with the ATA began during my university years, and now, with nearly 30 years of service at both local and provincial levels – as well as participation on numerous committees – I have gained a broad

provincial perspective on the challenges our locals and the broader education system face. This wealth of experience enhances my ability to serve you effectively.

I strongly believe in holding the government accountable for its actions – or lack thereof – on key issues. Teachers must be recognized as the experts in education. As professionals who shape the lives of children, we also have a responsibility to help parents and communities better understand and appreciate the work we do.

At the provincial table, it is crucial to have representatives who approach issues thoughtfully, who avoid reactive decision making, and who are prepared to take meaningful action that benefits teachers. I am proud to be willing to fight for teachers and be a strong advocate who listens attentively, acts assertively when necessary and always strives to meet the needs of our profession.

As a teacher in southeastern Alberta, I am honored to serve as your district representative. I will continue to support our locals and represent your voice at the Provincial Executive Council. Together, we can ensure a stronger future for teachers and education.

SOUTH WEST

**WHOM DOES KATHERINE REPRESENT?** Active members employed by Holy Spirit Roman Catholic Separate School Division, Horizon School Division, Lethbridge School Division, Livingstone Range School Division, Palliser School Division, Westwind School Division, and associate members living in the same area.

KATHERINE PRITCHARD



Public education is the backbone of Alberta society. We accept students from around the world into our schools. We teach every student, no matter what their background, we nurture them, we help them find their passions, and we turn out contributing members of society. Public education is worth fighting for, and I promise to continue that fight.

Government policies that don't account for contextual needs, social media vitriol and active campaigns to undermine public education and the professionalism of our teachers are taking a toll. The new curriculum needs to be fixed, and we must advocate to depoliticize the process. Excessive assessment and reporting of data in elementary is time consuming

with little useful information gained. Our elementary teachers have better things to do, like getting to know their students, establishing routines and actually teaching!

ATA priorities must include advocating for a salary increase, reductions to class sizes and support for complexity. We need to continue to engage our members as we fight for better working conditions whilst maintaining our status as the authoritative voice of the profession.

It is an honour to represent the teachers of the South West and I look forward to continuing to be your voice on Provincial Executive Council (PEC). Besides my work with locals and on provincial committees, I am the PEC liaison to the South Western Alberta Teachers' Convention Association, to the University of Lethbridge Teacher Education Advisory Committee and the Lethbridge Area Field Experiences Committee, and to the Mathematics Council and Le Conseil français. Prior to running for district representative, I served for eight years as local president and five years as treasurer of Palliser Local No. 19. I have taught with Palliser for 27 years, and currently teach high school mathematics, physics and French at Noble Central School.

**Candidate Forums**  
ATA 2025 PEC election

The ATA is hosting forums so you can meet the candidates in contested districts, hear them speak and have the chance to ask some questions. You can also hear from the president and vice-president candidates.

Please register online to attend the forum(s), which are open to members only.

Additional information and registration links are available at [teachers.ab.ca/pec-election](https://teachers.ab.ca/pec-election) under Election Forums.

Can't attend live? These forums will also be recorded and posted on the Members' Only site.

**President and vice-president forums**  
Monday, March 3, 2025 at 6:30 p.m.

**Calgary District forum**  
Thursday, February 27, 2025 at 6:30 p.m.

**North West District forum**  
Tuesday, March 4, 2025 at 6:30 p.m.

**Edmonton District forum**  
Wednesday, March 5, 2025 at 6:30 p.m.

**Calgary City forum**  
Thursday, March 6, 2025 at 6:30 p.m.

