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ATA NEWS

February 4, 2025 | Volume 59, Number 8

News Publication of The Alberta Teachers' Association

WITH
HEART

To school support staff,
from teachers

See Tale End,
[page 12](#).



YEAR OF THE SNAKE

CHRISTINE CHEUNG

Students at Highwood School in Calgary ring in the Year of the Snake with a vibrant show that explored the significance of the snake in different countries and cultures.



Time to use your teacher voice

It's not just for when the mic isn't working

See Viewpoints, [page 3](#).



Why go Red for Ed?

Signalling solidarity, unity and urgency

See Editorial, [page 2](#).



Bargaining update

Information embargo implemented

See [page 5](#).

Boots on the ground

Does the school leader belong in the classroom?

See Q&A, [page 2](#).



Stand in your power

ATA to co-host national women's symposium

See [page 4](#).

Why red? How a colour can signal solidarity



EDITORIAL

Kristine Wilkinson
ATA News
Editor-in-Chief

"I don't own any red." "I don't look good in red." "I'm tired of red." We have likely heard — or perhaps even said — these phrases over the years. I certainly had moments when these thoughts crossed my mind, too, many years ago. Fast forward to today, and I truly see the power of the small gesture of wearing red on Fridays and bargaining days. It is a simple but clear way to not only create solidarity and camaraderie among teachers, but also to signal our unity and collective power.

Teachers in Canada wear red as part of the "Red for Ed" campaign, a grassroots movement advocating for better funding of public education, smaller class sizes and equitable salary increases for teachers. The campaign

originated in the United States in 2018 and quickly spread to Canada, where it has been embraced by various teachers' associations, including the Alberta Teachers' Association as an active participant.

In Alberta, teachers have been encouraged to wear red on Fridays and central table bargaining days to show solidarity and to send a strong, visible message to the provincial government about the importance of properly funding public education. The sea of red across Alberta schools is impressive, and it has been great to see the locals wearing their own individually created logos. A number of locals have even purchased red apparel for every one of their teachers.

The Red for Ed campaign has several key goals aimed at improving public education. The main objectives of this advocacy initiative are to

- ensure that public schools receive sufficient financial resources to provide quality education for students;

- improve pay and working conditions for teachers and school staff to help with recruitment and retention;
- ensure adequate professional non-teaching staff are in schools, as having counsellors, family support

“The sea of red across Alberta schools is impressive.”

workers and social workers to support students' overall well-being is best for everyone in education.

These goals are designed to create a more equitable and effective public education system for all students.

But how does red help us meet these goals?

The colour red symbolizes the urgency and critical nature of the issues facing the education system. Bringing awareness to the crisis occurring in our schools is critical, and the Red for Ed campaign is one piece of that puzzle. Teachers should be proud of this advocacy work and know that with every conversation and red shirt, public education is being elevated.

If you haven't yet, I invite you to join the Red for Ed movement. Stand with your colleagues and wear your red proudly! And be sure share your pictures to our Facebook and Instagram pages or with our ATA News team.

Any red will do, but you can find Red for Ed branded apparel and accessories by visiting your local website or the ATA's entripy shop at <https://albertateachersassociation.entripyshops.com>.

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

Our school leaders are teachers — and it's a good thing



Q & A

Dennis Theobald
ATA Executive
Secretary

Question: Our full-time high school principal seems to spend a large part of their day offering individual and small group tutoring in their office to students during regular class time. Is this an appropriate use of their time? Shouldn't a principal be spending time focused on schoolwide duties and responsibilities?

Answer: Thank you for this question, which provides a useful opportunity to review the unique status of school leaders in Alberta and the relationship between the role of the principal and the classroom teacher.

In this province, school leaders in public, Catholic and francophone schools are teachers and active members of the Alberta Teachers' Association. This is not necessarily the case in other provinces, and it contributes to the unique culture and, I'd suggest, the effectiveness of Alberta's schools.

This shared membership and identification with the profession helps to support and reinforce a collegial and collaborative relationship

between teachers and their leaders. It's fair to say, though, that it does make the school leader's role more nuanced and complex.

In the same way that the professional expectations of teachers are set out in the Teaching Quality Standard (TQS), the expectations of school leaders are to be found in the Leadership Quality Standard (LQS). A quick review of both documents demonstrates that they are complementary and the roles

they define are not mutually exclusive.

And that's a good thing, because it is commonplace for designated school leaders to also take on classroom teaching duties. For some school leaders, teaching responsibilities are built into their assignment and contract of employment. For others, it is a practical response to the reality of working with limited staff resources. And for some principals with whom I taught, it is motivated by the school leader's simple love of teaching and a

desire to enhance their awareness and effectiveness by keeping their boots on the ground.

Getting back to the question, a principal can certainly offer instruction to small groups of students to supplement and support the work of teachers. Most teachers would welcome the help, and the principal is afforded an opportunity to demonstrate instructional leadership by modeling good practice, engaging

with teachers in problem solving and building trust and rapport with colleagues and students.

Yet, there are some considerations that a school leader must weigh as they contemplate how much teaching they can take on. The principal's leadership role is time consuming and demanding in itself, and no one benefits if excessive time and energy are diverted from strategic leadership responsibilities like staff support and resource management. In smaller schools or

where staffing is limited, teaching may be a pragmatic and necessary option. In larger schools, prioritizing administrative, management and instructional leadership may leave little time for direct teaching.

If you have concerns about how your school is being administered or if your own needs as a teacher are not being met by your school leader, you should start by sharing your concerns in a respectful and honest manner with them — they are your colleague and a fellow professional, and they deserve the courtesy of a conversation.

If you would like some help in framing that talk, the Association can help. A phone call to Teacher Employment Services will put you in touch with a staff officer who has considerable experience in teaching and, in many cases, leadership roles. In addition, the Association offers professional development intended to improve communications and foster positive staff relationships. Information on these can be obtained through the Professional Development program area.

Please feel free to call the Association with any questions or concerns at 1-800-232-7208 (Edmonton office) or 1-800-332-1280 (Calgary office).

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



The Alberta Teachers' Association

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The power of the teacher voice



VIEWPOINTS

Greg Jeffery
ATA Past President

"I'll just use my teacher voice." I will wager that almost all of us have heard (or used) this statement more than once in our teaching careers. As teachers, we take pride in our ability to effectively communicate with others. Being able to fill a space so that others can absorb and internalize what we are saying is a skill that serves us well.

There are two situations that often cause us to use our trademark "teacher voice." The first is when technology fails us, and we must provide our own amplification. I admit that I'm guilty of this one. With more than 30 years of teaching in a band room and in a gymnasium, I learned to make myself heard. The second one occurs when someone is not comfortable using a microphone (which never made any sense to me, but I'm a musician, so mics are just a part of my life).

The question I want to discuss is why does our comfort with our "teacher voice" seem to disappear when we need to advocate for ourselves? Many of us shrink away from speaking to others about conditions in our classrooms or in public education generally. Far too often, we allow others to advance views that we know are misleading at best and blatantly false at worst, without challenge. Why is that?

I believe that most teachers do not want to appear self-serving, so they shy away from advocating for the profession and for public education generally. We need to conquer this reticence because we, collectively, are the ones who can facilitate change. As Margaret Wheatley said, "We have to stop pretending we are individuals that can go it alone." We can no longer close the door to our classrooms and just teach. Our voices are needed for public education to remain the best choice for Alberta students and parents.

How can this happen? How can this advocacy become comfortable for most Alberta teachers? Start small.

Join in the Red for Ed campaign by wearing red on Fridays and bargaining days. Teachers wearing red often gets noticed, and questions about the reason follow. Talk about how our issues are also issues for students. For many, advocating for others is less intimidating than advocating for oneself. Address the bigger picture. It's not hard to address the data that says Alberta has the lowest per-student funding in the country as the system belongs to all Albertans, not just those of us who work on the inside.

Tell stories. A lesson I have learned both at the local and the provincial bargaining table is the power of the story. Government officials and trustees will place more credence on a story than numerical data and so will members of the public that you may be talking to. Challenges around class size or complexity lend themselves to storytelling quite nicely. Ask your school to host an ATA information meeting to feel better informed and more confident in telling your stories. This request can go to your local. Solidarity is also fundamental to success. We are stronger together and there is a degree of comfort when you know you're not alone. Remember that school leaders are also teachers and allies and want the same things you do.

Do not forget the power of the vote. Use your voice and become part of a voting group that is too large to be ignored. Trustee elections will take place this fall, and Provincial Executive Council elections are under way now, with online voting taking place in March. Collective strength will always serve us well as we promote public education together.

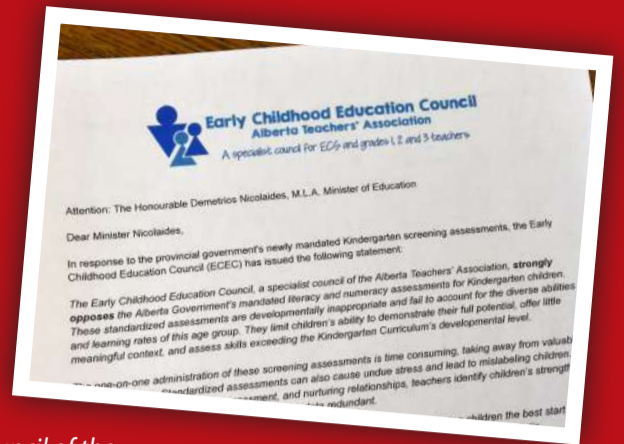
So, you do not need to be the one with the microphone or the loudest voice to be heard. You do, however, need to find your own comfort zone in advocating for yourself, your colleagues and for public education. When more than 40,000 whispers are combined in a united message, the result will be deafening! I challenge you to use your "teacher voice"! ■

FOR THE RECORD

"All along, the province has been the main obstacle, blocking our ability to settle a fair collective agreement.... Decent pay and working conditions for education workers are key to a high-quality education system for our kids, but the province is standing in the way with their wage mandates. We need them to stop."

— Kelly Salisbury, president of CUPE 4625
(Education Support Workers in Sturgeon Public)

For ED



The Early Childhood Education Council (ECEC)

— a specialist council of the ATA — recently wrote to Minister of Education Demetrios Nicolaides to articulate the council's position on the government's mandated literacy and numeracy assessments for kindergarten. In their letter to the minister, the ECEC outlined concerns about the assessments, including them being developmentally inappropriate and leading to undue stress for students. The ECEC called upon the minister to scrap the government-mandated screening assessments so that teachers can get back to what they do best: build futures by fostering a love of learning.



By participating in #Red4Ed, we make the struggles of our profession visible to the broader public, bringing attention to how our working conditions directly affect the quality of education our students receive. It's a reminder that when we fight for better conditions for educators, we are ultimately fighting for the success and well-being of our students too. Public education needs to be seen as an investment in the future of our province. I wear red in solidarity with all of my colleagues, our students, as well as the generations to come.

— Karen Bjerstedt Loor, Beddington Heights Elementary School in Calgary

Want to share how you or your team is supporting Red for Ed? Email managing editor Lindsay Yakimyshyn at lindsay.yakimyshyn@ata.ab.ca.



ATA to co-host national women's symposium

Lindsay Yakimyshyn
ATA News Managing Editor

The Canadian Teachers' Federation (CTF/FCE) Women's Symposium is heading to Alberta this year, with the Alberta Teachers' Association (ATA) co-hosting for the first time.

Taking place in Banff from May 8-10, the symposium promises to be an empowering experience for women in the teaching profession.



Elissa Corsi,
ATA associate executive secretary

"We're excited to bring this event out west," says Elissa Corsi, ATA associate executive secretary. "The symposium brings together women in education from across the country, creating a national forum to examine the opportunities and the issues women in the profession face."

The symposium, held annually, represents an opportunity for teaching professionals from CTF/FCE's member and associate organizations, as well as partner organizations, to gather to not only hear from experts,

but also to share their experiences. This year, the symposium will feature two keynote speakers — with keynote Lisa Belanger, an expert in human behaviour and systemic change, confirmed — and offer workshops, interactive sessions and presentations centred around the theme "Stand in Your Power."

"Stand in Your Power' is not just about empowering women in educational leadership; it's about owning who you

are as a woman in leadership," says Corsi. "Being a leader is not about a title but is really about what you believe and what you stand for."

Though this theme transcends professions, Corsi adds that "Stand in Your Power" specifically resonates within the teaching profession, as women make up approximately 75 per cent of teachers but are under-represented in leadership roles. She adds that the concept of owning your

power is also timely given where Alberta teachers are in the bargaining process.

"Women in the educational world need to stand in their power," she says.

The symposium is open to all CTF members who identify as women, and Alberta teachers, leaders and aspiring leaders are encouraged to attend.

"Leadership takes different forms and, in many different ways, we are all leaders, perhaps in work that we do or in other aspects of our lives, whether in our families or in our communities," Corsi says. "This event is a unique chance to learn from each other and build connections with women educators and leaders from across Canada." ■



Interested in attending the 2025 women's symposium, co-hosted by the CTF/FCE and ATA?

Details and registration information are available at

<https://www.ctf-fce.ca/events/2025-womens-symposium/>.

Growing into the needs

ATA staff take on new leadership roles

Mark Milne
ATA News Staff

Two new positions at the Alberta Teachers' Association (ATA) signal how the organization is adapting to support members in the everchanging and challenging landscape teachers are now facing.

The freshly created roles of coordinator, Government and associate coordinator, Teacher Employment Services (TES) have been filled by current staff Richard Svoboda and Myra Rybotycki, respectively. Both have worked for the ATA for several years and bring a wealth of knowledge and experience to their new positions.

As the coordinator, Government, Svoboda will oversee the work of the Communications, Research, Language Services, Teacher Exchange, and Regulatory Affairs units. Svoboda's focus right now is to become familiar with the areas he now manages.

"We have to have a global goal for the Government program area. There's a lot of diversity in the different units," he says.

After getting his teaching degree in 1990 from the University of Calgary, Svoboda began working with the Calgary Catholic School board, holding positions that covered everything from classroom teacher to principal. During this time, Svoboda

attained his master's in administration from Gonzaga University. Svoboda eventually moved to central office with Calgary Catholic, where he held the positions of supervisor of First Nations, Métis and Inuit, director of curriculum for Grades 7 to 12 and, finally, superintendent of Human Resources.

In 2020, he took a short break from the profession and two years later joined the ATA as an investigator/prosecutor for the Teacher Discipline unit. He transitioned into the role of a representing officer in the Regulatory Affairs unit, experience that will serve him well.

"Working in Regulatory Affairs sends you all across the province," said Svoboda. "I think I'll bring that breadth of perspective to the role of coordinator, Government."

In her new role as associate coordinator, TES, Rybotycki will also lean heavily on what she has learned during her tenure at the ATA.

"I've been very lucky to have opportunities to develop my capacities in collective bargaining and labour relations," said Rybotycki. "I also serve as the ATA's pension expert and was recently nominated to represent the ATA on the Alberta Teachers' Retirement Fund board."

Rybotycki graduated with her teaching degree from the University of Alberta in 1987. She spent the next 20 years as a classroom teacher with



Richard Svoboda



Myra Rybotycki

the Lakeland Catholic and Parkland school divisions. In 2018, she joined the ATA in Teacher Welfare, now known as TES. She holds a master's of education in educational leadership from the University of Calgary and an advanced labour relations certificate from Queen's University IRC.

She says, given that we're now experiencing a particularly challenging bargaining environment in the public sector, her immediate focus is to provide support for the TES coordinator and the Central Table Bargaining Committee as they work through the bargaining process. She will support the work of the TES team to ensure their optimal level of service to the membership.

Since the roles Rybotycki and Svoboda will be taking on are new, there's still a lot of room to shape them to the developing needs of the ATA and its membership.

"I plan to capitalize on the strengths of the ATA, foster good relationships and build community," says Svoboda, "Those are the first things. I'm a big relationship guy."

Svoboda will continue to work out of the ATA's Southern Alberta Regional Office in Calgary but believes the challenges leading the Government team will be minimal.

"It's tapping into all those subject-matter experts and getting them to work at their highest level. So, it's more about the people than the place."

Rybotycki also looks forward to taking on a new position, seeing the potential for adaptability and growth.

"I look forward to building the role and growing into the needs that will be expressed. I hope to be a support to teachers in Alberta and continue all of the work that is so vital and so important." ■



STORIES AND PHOTOS WANTED

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



Mediation under way Information embargo now in place

ATA News Staff

The Alberta Teachers' Association's (ATA) Central Table Bargaining Committee (CTBC) and the Teachers' Employer Bargaining Association (TEBA) are now in the mediation phase of negotiations, working toward an agreement that supports Alberta's teachers and the learning conditions in their classrooms.

Information embargo implemented

To support open and productive discussions during mediation, the mediator requested an information embargo, limiting the CTBC's ability to provide updates about developments at the table. While the CTBC expressed concerns about how this embargo could affect its ability to connect with and inform members, it was determined that the embargo was necessary to give the mediation process the best chance of success.

Acknowledging the importance

of this decision, the CTBC agreed to comply with the mediator's request. However, the CTBC also indicated to the mediator and TEBA that it would revisit the embargo conversation at the end of January and March's mediation dates.

The CTBC remains committed to sharing as much information as possible within these constraints.

Stay connected and united

Teachers are encouraged to stay engaged by accessing resources, including the initial proposal and the latest updates, in the Members Only section of the ATA website. Your unity and support remain crucial during this critical phase of bargaining.

While updates may be limited, the CTBC continues to advocate for improved working conditions for teachers and better learning environments for students across Alberta. Your patience and understanding are appreciated as the bargaining team works diligently to achieve a fair and equitable resolution. ■

YOUR VIEWS

Laurie McIntosh

I am trying to use my Instagram page to bring more awareness to the critical problems we are facing in #abed ❤️.

Simona Chalifoux

Drove by Shep [Ross Sheppard High School, a CUPE picket line location] today and did lots of horn honking. As a teacher, I'm being a very loud advocate and educating my family and friends on the integral role that educational assistants play in our classrooms. So many don't know the truth.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Re: Viewpoints: Let's have another look at the shop class (Warren Boyd Ferguson)

Thank you, Warren, for your views supporting the value of practical learning. We are all different and we all learn in different ways; therefore, the educational system should support as many programs as possible. As you mentioned, not all students are university bound, but they still have the ability to be successful in life.

I spent my teaching career in the workshop, and during my final 12 years I worked with nonacademic students. When Foothills Composite High School (FCHS) opened in 1984 there was a Trades and Services Program, later Occupations, that was for students who, by the time they reached Grade 8, had shown that they were not likely to graduate from high school. I was in the wood shop, but there were programs in beauty culture, small engines and food prep. The aim of these programs was to prepare students for work, and provide them with the ability to hold on to a job once employed.

One thing I did to promote the visibility of the workshop program to

all staff was to open the shop, after school hours, to those who would like to try their hand at making something. It was very successful, and there were plenty of staff room discussions among staff who had been in the shop. I always felt I was on equal status with other staff members because they'd had insight into what actually took place in the shop.

Even though I took early retirement 28 years ago to do my own woodworking, I am still active and very involved with school programs. Last Friday I was in the FCHS shop showing two classes a seven-sided box I had made. All the sides are different in length and all the angles are different. Tomorrow, a local junior high school class will be coming to my shop to see what can be done if they wish to pursue woodworking in high school.

As you can tell, I could go on forever, but I think that tells you I really support your viewpoint on the value of shop class.

Richard Ellum, retired teacher

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.

Conventions taking steps to enhance accessibility

Lindsay Yakimyshyn
ATA News Managing Editor

With all active ATA members expected to attend teachers' convention each year, those planning the events are looking at ways to offer supports for members who identify as having a disability.

This past fall, teachers' convention association executives discussed the importance of ensuring that conventions are accessible for all members. The ideas generated at their meeting were subsequently shared at a listening circle for teachers who identify as having a disability,



Danny Maas,
acting associate
coordinator, PD

with feedback provided on the types of support that convention associations might implement to address concerns.

"We have heard about some challenges members who identify as having a disability encounter at conventions," said Danny Maas, acting associate coordinator of the ATA's Professional Development program area. "We want to be responsive to the needs identified."

With this in mind, the ATA developed recommendations for convention associations to take

into consideration when planning their 2025 events. Recommended supports that convention could consider piloting this year included setting up a quiet space; encouraging presenters to use live captioning; and offering printable maps of convention facilities to highlight quiet spaces, accessible spaces and the location of elevators.

Though the recommendations are just that — suggestions rather than policy — convention associations expressed willingness to find new and more effective ways to ensure all teachers can meaningfully participate. Maas said that he saw a spirit of support from all.

"Over the next few years, I think we will see an increase in supports across the province for our members," he added. "For our conventions, it is about taking steps to move forward in that support to ensure that teachers can access and enjoy this opportunity to learn and grow."

While options to increase accessibility are being explored and, in some cases piloted, the supports and accommodations each convention is able to offer this year may be limited by logistical, fiscal or policy restrictions. Looking forward, though, the convention planning teams are open to continuing to hear and learn from members on possible supports or accommodations.

"The credit for the movement forward



ISTOCK

this year belongs to the members, both members of the listening circle who had the courage to share their feedback and the convention boards

who really led the response on what they might be able to do to ensure that this event can be truly accessible," Maas said. ■

Want to find more information on teachers' conventions, including the schedule and venue information for your convention?

Check out details here:

<https://teachers.ab.ca/professional-development/teachers-conventions>





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APPLY FOR A DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS GRANT TODAY

The Alberta Teachers' Association is offering grants of up to \$2,000 to schools for projects that support the Association's vision of a public education system committed to educating all children well in an inclusive setting.

For more information please contact dehr@ata.ab.ca or visit www.teachers.ab.ca.

APPLICATION DEADLINE:
March 30, 2025



The Alberta Teachers' Association

DEHR = DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS

PD-80-386 2024 12



The Alberta Teachers' Association

The Alberta Teachers' Association invites applications for the position of

EXECUTIVE STAFF OFFICER, TEACHER EMPLOYMENT SERVICES (2 positions)

Competition: ESO1/25 & ESO2/25
Initial Placement: Edmonton
Commencement: April 1, 2025 or at a mutually agreeable time

Position Overview

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

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

Qualifications

Key requirements:

- Knowledge of the Association's mission, objects, program areas and how they contribute to improving the profession and the working lives of teachers
- Understanding of the role of TES
- Familiarity with applicable legislation, policy and the *Education Act*
- A valid teaching certificate and a minimum of five years of successful teaching experience in public education
- Proven commitment to public education
- Ability to undertake travel and evening/weekend work

In addition, the following are considered assets:

- Experience in bargaining, labour relations, application of collective agreements and conducting investigations
- Coursework, training and/or experience in human resources and labour relations and knowledge of pension and benefits
- School leadership experience
- Demonstrated proficiency in French written and oral language
- A demonstrated commitment to the Alberta Teachers' Association (or other Canadian teachers' organization)

Key competencies:

- Problem Solving and Decision Making
 - o Analyzes problems systematically, organizes information, identifies key factors, identifies underlying causes, and generates solutions
- Change Agility
 - o Embraces change and adapts effectively in response
- Effective Communication
 - o Regularly seeks feedback to understand other peoples' perspectives and integrates feedback into decisions to improve service to members
- Accountability and Self Awareness
 - o Manages professional relationships by performing work in a timely and effective way that enables departmental success
- Commitment to collaboration
 - o Works effectively both within the program area/unit and across the organization
 - o Contributes to team building and success

The Association is committed to reconciliation and a candidate's knowledge and experience of related issues and/or membership in an Indigenous community is considered an asset.

Who We Are

As a professional organization and the voice of the province's teachers, the Association is dedicated to advancing the cause of education and to building the teaching profession in Alberta. The Association represents all public, separate and francophone school teachers in the province of Alberta.

The provincial Association, its locals and subgroups perform both union and professional functions. As a union, the Association negotiates and monitors collective agreements and represents teachers in matters of employment. Effective January 1, 2023, the Association represents members who may be subject to regulatory processes relating to professional conduct and practice administered by the Alberta Teaching Profession Commission.

In its professional role, the Association promotes and supports the preparation of candidates to the profession, provides ongoing professional development to members, makes representation to the government on matters of education policy, advocates for public education, and works with like-minded organizations provincially, nationally and internationally. To better achieve these ends, the Association actively promotes the representation and participation of member teachers in its governance and the delivery of its programs.

What the ATA Offers

Total compensation for the executive staff officer positions includes a starting salary of \$138,720, pensionable service under the Teachers' Pension Plan of the Alberta Teachers' Retirement Fund Board and employer-paid benefits as stipulated in a collective agreement. The initial location will be in Edmonton but future assignments may be to any present or future Association office. Duties will commence on April 1, 2025 (negotiable).

Applicants should quote position ESO1/25 & ESO2/25 and include two letters from references who are not Association employees or elected officials of its provincial executive. Applications must be received in **one** file by 1600 on Friday, February 21, 2025 and should be addressed to

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

For more information, please see our website at www.teachers.ab.ca.

ATA named a top employer for 2025

ATA News Staff

The Alberta Teachers' Association (ATA) has been named one of Alberta's top 85 employers for 2025.

Alberta's Top Employers competition, coordinated by Canada's Top 100 Employers, evaluates entries based on criteria such as work atmosphere, training and development policies, employee engagement and community involvement.

Dennis Theobald, the ATA's executive secretary, says the award is an endorsement of staff commitment and dedication.

"Our staff are deeply committed to public education and to serving our

members, the teachers of Alberta. Those teachers expect us to treat our staff well and serve as a model for how Alberta's teachers should be treated," Theobald said.

Canada's Top 100 Employers uses a scoring system across eight categories:

1. Workplace
2. Work atmosphere and social
3. Health, financial and family benefits
4. Vacation and time off
5. Employee communications
6. Performance management
7. Training and skills development
8. Community involvement

The program acknowledged the ATA for engaging in paid internships,

formal mentoring and in-house leadership development initiatives.

The competition typically attracts around 1,000 entries each year. It's the fourth consecutive year that the ATA has made the list.

"Many factors have contributed to our ability to maintain our status as a top employer, including the quality and consistency of our elected governors as well as the exemplary leadership of the supervisors and colleagues throughout the organization," Theobald said. "As the labour environment becomes increasingly competitive, this recognition will help the Association continue to attract highly qualified staff." ■

Learn more

Detailed information about the top employer competition can be found at

www.canadastop100.com/alberta.



Annual education telephone survey under way

ATA News Staff

Members are encouraged to participate if contacted to respond to Alberta Education's annual satisfaction survey.

As of Jan. 20, the Ministry of Education is conducting its annual telephone surveys to collect teachers' and other partners' perceptions of Alberta's K-12 education system. The purpose of the survey is to determine satisfaction with

- the overall quality of the education system;
- the education system meeting the needs of students, society and the economy;
- schools providing a safe, caring and inclusive environment for students;
- the preparation of students for lifelong learning, employment and active citizenship;
- the education system having effective working relationships with system partners;
- leadership and continuous improvement of the education system;
- knowledge, skills, abilities and other related attributes of recent high school graduates; and
- facilities and equipment in the education system.

The surveys will gather responses from a random sample of teachers, principals, school board trustees, parents, members of the public, high school students and employers of recent high school graduates. The Alberta Teachers' Association encourages members to participate

if contacted, so that teachers' perspectives are captured.

Responses help the ministry identify areas of strength and areas needing improvement. Some survey results are also used in specific business plan performance measures and will be reported in the ministry's 2024-25 annual report. The survey responses are completely confidential, and only aggregate data will be reported.

The telephone/online surveys are being conducted by contractor Advanis Inc. They are expected to run until May.

Further inquiries can be directed to Alberta Education's Corporate Planning Branch at performance.reporting.education@gov.ab.ca or 780-264-6948 (toll-free in Alberta by first dialing 310 0000). ■



ISTOCK



'Tis the season

When I was teaching, I always looked forward to the learning that happens at teachers' convention. To be honest, I still look forward to convention season.

One memorable convention session focused on poetry for Grade 7 language arts. Though I was not teaching Grade 7 at the time, the information presented was very engaging, so I adapted the lesson for my English 20-1 class. I chuckled a bit to myself as my Grade 11s expressed how the activity was the hardest thing they ever had to do. Little did they know the origins of the assignment. I loved walking away from convention with tools I could apply in my class on Monday.

Along with the sessions, I enjoyed connecting with my colleagues over the two days of convention. It was always great to connect with people I would not usually get to see during the hectic school year, or to reconnect with people I hadn't seen in some time. Early in my career, I attended a session led by an Alberta Teachers' Association (ATA) staff member who happened to be my high school English teacher. I stuck around after the session to say hi to Miss Stanley and to see if she remembered me. Sure enough she did, and the conversation we had, not as teacher and student but as colleagues, is one of my favourite convention memories.

Teachers' conventions hold great possibilities for us as professionals. Thank you to the teachers from across the province who volunteer their time to organize conventions for their colleagues each year.

What is perhaps most remarkable is how they allow teachers to self-direct their professional growth, something the ATA has long protected. In a time of ever-increasing employer-directed professional development, I am grateful Alberta teachers still have this opportunity to take part in learning that best applies to their professional needs. I invite you to make the most of the opportunities to grow and learn as a professional, at and beyond convention.

In addition to presenting sessions at conventions, the ATA offers professional development opportunities throughout the year, including workshops on professional matters such as the new Code of Professional Conduct for Teachers and Teacher Leaders or the impacts of artificial intelligence on education. Be sure you attend some of these workshops, or have these workshops presented at your schools, to stay informed of issues that matter to the profession.

As president, I am fortunate to travel to every teachers' convention. Unfortunately, I do not always get a lot of time to connect with teachers at each stop, as I often need to hit the road to get to another convention. As it is important to stay fueled for the season, however, I do make time to grab a donut from Crooked Creek (IYKYK) when I'm in the neighbourhood.

Have a great convention season everyone. Check out the ATA booth and say hi! ■



Walking Together

The Alberta Teachers' Association

Indigenous Education Initiatives Grant

Locals can receive up to \$2,000 in ATA grant funding to support projects fostering reconciliation and community connections.

Apply by March 30 at teachers.ab.ca/scholarships





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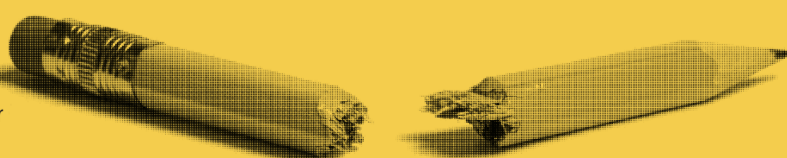
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The Alberta Teachers' Association

PROTECTING YOUR PRIVACY

In 2025, ASEBP will issue T4As electronically to members' My ASEBP accounts for taxable Extended Disability Benefits and Wellness Spending Account claim reimbursements*

Available by February 28, 2025

*According to Canada Revenue Agency guidelines



To request a paper copy

1. Log into my.asebp.ca, click Documents>Tax Documents and check the applicable box.
2. Deadline to request a paper copy for the 2024 tax season is February 9, 2025.

DIGITAL NEWS



The ATA News is available online.

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>

Donations to assist school support workers authorized

PEC POINTS

Audrey Dutka
ATA News Staff

Highlights of the Provincial Executive Council meeting held January 23–24, 2025, at Barnett House, Edmonton

1. Renamed Calgary District to South Central Rockies and renamed Edmonton District to Central Prairie Sky.
2. Renamed the Teacher Employment Services program area to Teacher Employment Services and Membership Support, effective September 1, 2025.
3. Named Richard Svoboda to the position of coordinator, Government and named Myra Rybotycki to the position of associate coordinator, Teacher Employment Services.
4. Approved the timeline for recruitment of two executive staff officer positions in Teacher Employment Services and appointed three members of Council to sit on the selection committee.
5. Approved the 2025/26 proposed budget for presentation to locals. The proposed budget maintains the current annual fee payable by a full-time, active member at \$1,422.
6. Approved an adjustment to the Association's kilometrage rate to 69¢, effective January 1, 2025, which represents the midpoint of the Canada Revenue Agency rates for 2025.
7. Approved the name of one recipient for honorary membership in the Association, which is reserved for members and other persons who have given meritorious service to the teaching profession, to the Association or to the advancement of education.
8. Approved two recipients to receive the Public Education Award at the 2025 Annual Representative Assembly (ARA).
9. Approved in principle and referred to the Resolutions Committee for processing three resolutions and 21 proposed amendments to Indigenous Education policy put forward by the Indigenous Education Committee.
10. Approved in principle and referred to the Resolutions Committee for processing a resolution to address the financial restraints preservice teachers face when completing the practicum portion of their preparation programs.
11. Approved four executive resolutions for presentation at the 2025 ARA.
12. Approved, for submission to the 2025 ARA, a resolution proposing amendments to the structure of Association policy related to teacher preparation programs.
13. Authorized, on a pilot basis, the addition of pro/con microphones at the 2025 ARA.
14. Authorized a \$5,000 donation to Fort McMurray CUPE Locals 2559 and 2545, a \$5,000 donation to Edmonton CUPE 3550, and a \$2,000 donation to Sturgeon CUPE 4625, in support of striking school support workers.
15. Authorized a gift in the amount of \$2,000 to help offset the cost of organizing the Edmonton McMurray Rally for Public Education, to be held in Edmonton on February 27, 2025.
16. Amended the Grievance Appeal and Approval Policy.
17. Amended the Administrative Guidelines related to Indigenous cultural protocols for Elders, Knowledge Keepers and Cultural Advisors.
18. Approved the names of nine teachers to the name bank for possible appointment as Indigenous Education Professional Development Facilitators.
19. Approved the names of five teachers to the name bank for possible appointment as Association instructors.
20. Approved in principle the design and implementation of the School Leadership Mentorship program.
21. Amended the Women in Leadership Committee frame of reference and the Benefits, Insurance and Pension Committee frame of reference.
22. Authorized all members of Council who identify as women to attend the Canadian Teachers' Federation 2025 Women's Symposium, taking place May 8–10, 2025, in Banff, Alberta.
23. Approved the purchase of eight tickets to the Parkland Institute Gala Dinner and Silent Auction, taking place on February 27, 2025.
24. Approved dates of key Association-sponsored meetings and Council meetings for the 2027/28 school year.
25. Rescheduled the November 27–28, 2025 meeting of Provincial Executive Council to December 4–5, 2025, and rescheduled the November 26–27, 2026 meeting of Provincial Executive Council to December 3–4, 2026. ■

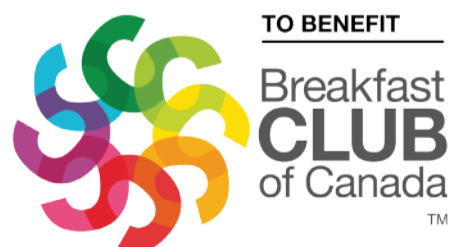
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popquiz! Crossword

ACROSS

- Season that is nearing
- Colour to wear to show support for public ed
- You might have made these for the new year
- Opposite of multiply
- Synonym for phase, juncture
- Popular Valentine's Day treat

DOWN

- Critter who predicts when winter will end
- Random acts of this
- My colleagues ____ awesome
- Teachers' annual PD gathering, held around this time of the year
- When someone will show up (abbr)

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And remember, you can book an appointment with an ATRF Pension Counsellor on our secure *MyPension* portal anytime.

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TALEND

February 4, 2025 | Volume 59, Number 8

Members share Valentine's-themed messages of support for educational workers.

Roses are red, violets are blue,
The schools just aren't the same
without you.

Fight the good fight,
Thanks for all that you do,
We all stand together,
We miss you!

— Brittney Sasseville

SHOWING
HEART

Stronger Together

You are the glue. You bring so much light and
love to our hallways, it's no trouble to tell that
you're missing. You do so much for ALL of us and
go above and beyond what you're required to do
every day. The fight has been long and is
not over yet, but I'm so proud of you
for sticking up for what's right
and not backing down.

— Lori Brown

You're the magic behind the scenes,
Helping kids chase their big-time dreams!
With every task, you bring such cheer,
I'm so grateful to have you here!
Thanks for all the work you do,
Teaching would be tough
without you!

— Jaycee Bourke

Roses are red, violets are blue,
my educational assistant is
amazing and I'm sure yours is
too! From helping with any crazy
request to being someone I can
trust and lean on. I couldn't do
my job without her.

— Katrina Yaworski

Thank you for being there for our most
vulnerable. Often it is loud, messy and chaotic.
You don't always get a thank you, and it's hard for
families to truly see the work you do. But they
get to see the results that a safe, welcoming
and caring adult can have.
So thank you for taking care
of all the babies!

— Kristan Noel Myers

Thank you for helping on the great days
and especially on the rocky days. We wish
there were more of you and we hope you
get the recognition you deserve!

Merci beaucoup!

— Michelle Dickie

We ♥ you!

— Andrea Sieben



All submissions received for this Tale End (including those not published here) were entered into a random draw to win a Red for Ed prize pack. The lucky winner was Jaycee Bourke from Red Deer! Watch the *ATA News* and ATA social media for future contests!