



See page 12.

# LESSONS FROM FAILURE

# ATA NEWS

See inside for the

## 2021 Resolutions Bulletin

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News Publication of The Alberta Teachers' Association

# ELECTION RESULTS

## VICE-PRESIDENT



Greg Carabine



Jenny Regal

### VICE-PRESIDENT

#### Two elected

Greg Carabine	Votes	4,352
Jenny Regal		3,622

Donnella Perkins	Votes	1,132
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### CALGARY CITY

Kathy Hoehn	Votes	1,156
Darren Moroz		1,125
Kevin Kempt		1,096

Richard Bieche	Votes	714
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### CENTRAL SOUTH

Don Brookwell	Votes	180
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James Gascoyne	Votes	135
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### EDMONTON DISTRICT

Paul Froese	Votes	560
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Carryl Bennett	Votes	354
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### EDMONTON MCMURRAY

Carmen Glossop	Votes	1,039
Darrin Bauer		973
Nancy Ball		960

Michelle Prinsonsky	Votes	713
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See page 5 for more election coverage.



### Attitude shift?

Are recent developments a sign the government is changing course?

Read Jonathan Teghtmeyer's editorial on page 2.



### Off Script

Convention speakers reinforce teachers' critical role in society.

See page 4.



### System under strain

Availability of substitute teachers an ongoing challenge.

See story on page 7.



### Women in Leadership

Summit delivers message of hope and encouragement.

See story on page 9.



## Is the government changing course?



### EDITORIAL

Jonathan Teghtmeyer  
ATA News Editor-in-Chief

Is the government setting a new tack when it comes to education in Alberta?

A small number of recent moves might indicate that the UCP's recent popularity issues could be resulting in an attitude shift toward teachers and public education.

I first noticed something strange in the days after Premier Jason Kenney's mishandling of vacationing MLAs. The premier took to Facebook Live in January to start to repair the damage, and he seemed to be falling all over himself to thank teachers for their work and dedication to keeping education operating. It was out of character.

It was clear that the scandal, along with other controversies like bad coal mining policy, had caused significant political damage.

So is it possible that the government has set its eyes on improving the relationship with teachers as a way

to recover? Three more recent actions suggest a strategy that differs from the previous 18 months, which often felt like a constant barrage of bad news.

Exhibit A: the 2021 provincial budget. Final judgment will be withheld until the full details of school funding are released, but if the education minister sticks to her words from budget day, then the budget represents a potential disaster averted. Education Minister Adriana LaGrange is adamant that school boards will not be harmed by a one-time COVID-related enrolment dip and that all school boards will get more money next year than this year.

To be clear, this isn't a celebratory budget, as school boards will still experience unfunded cost pressures related to COVID, curriculum piloting, mental health needs, inflation and enrolment growth, but many of us were bracing for bigger cuts. If those cuts are avoided, then crisis averted.

The next indicator relates to the recently introduced *College of Alberta School Superintendents (CASS) Act*. Again, this is a case of a crisis averted. There was the potential for a number of very problematic policy changes to be included with this bill. Potential threats included changes to the membership of

administrators in the ATA and the loss of the requirement for superintendents to be certificated teachers. These changes were not included, and the bill will now largely entrench the status quo with new roles for CASS.

Instead, the bill emulates many of the practices that are already in place for the teaching profession. The legislated objects for the re-formed CASS have been almost entirely copied from the objects of the ATA as stated in the *Teaching Profession Act*. I look forward to CASS being legally compelled to "co-operate" with the ATA to "advance and promote the cause of education" and to advocate for "financial support for education and other educational matters."

Superintendents are teachers and should be part of a unified teaching profession, but outside of that fundamental objection, the bill respects essentially all of the representations made by the ATA. The bill's structure and wording demonstrate a confidence in the general way that professionalism matters are currently handled by the Association.

The final indicator is the adoption last week of a pilot project for rapid COVID testing in schools that for months president Jason Schilling has been

advocating for. It would have been best to start this earlier, but the announcement is welcome news and results in yet another point eventually adopted from the ATA's recommendations for operating schools during COVID.

It's important for teachers to acknowledge these good, albeit small, successes. If they are indicative of a changing direction for government, then teachers should congratulate themselves. We know teachers have been speaking out for months, and while it has often felt like banging our heads against the wall, we knew the government wouldn't automatically fold.

But this change of direction may suggest that the government is mindful of at least wanting to prevent further aggravation of teachers. If so, then this is what success looks like — it comes from engaging with and listening to teachers and the Association.

Now, if the government wants to really reset the relationship with teachers, it should look hard at better announcements soon on vaccinations for school workers and on curriculum. ■

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

## ATA strives for honesty in budget assessment



### Q & A

Dennis Theobald  
ATA Executive Secretary

**Question:** I couldn't help but notice that the ATA's response to the provincial budget was much more negative than the reaction of other stakeholders, including superintendents, school boards and secretary-treasurers. Why is the Alberta Teachers' Association so critical?

**Answer:** Apparently there was a joke that made the rounds of the CIA's Beirut Station in the late 1980s: "If you think you understand Lebanon, you haven't been properly briefed." Not much of a joke, but a sentiment I share concerning the Alberta provincial budget, at least on budget day.

Budget 2021/22 was at least my 25th over the course of my service with the Association and previously as a senior official in Alberta Education. I can attest to the fact that even with the benefit of experience, deciphering the provincial budget has become an even more onerous task as successive governments have attempted to exert ever greater control over media coverage.

This year, the briefing provided to the Association and other stakeholder groups in advance of the budget release

was limited to a 25-minute, high-level presentation to a strictly limited audience (for the ATA, the president and me) with no supporting documents or details being provided and no opportunity to ask questions. In the quickly receding past, things were considerably different: stakeholder representatives and media members were provided access to a lockup where they could pour over the budget documents and make inquiries of officials who were well versed in the intricacies of government and ministry finance. When these individuals emerged from the lockup, they were better able to speak with some confidence about what Albertans could expect as a result of the budget. No such luck for us.

While unpacking the budget is always a complex undertaking, this year's exercise was made even more challenging by the fact that the government's fiscal year does not align with the school year and that the COVID-19 pandemic will straddle both. The impact of a variety of transitory, ad hoc funding arrangements, including the provision of significant financial support by the federal government, complicates the picture and makes it very difficult to understand exactly what impact the budget will have on schools beginning next September.

Finally, the budget information that was released was missing an essential component — a detailed and specific accounting of the various grants that will be provided to each individual school

district. This information is contained in individual "jurisdiction funding profiles" and in the Funding Manual for School Authorities that sets out what each school board will receive from the province (and remember, school boards are now entirely dependent upon the province for their revenue). School boards will only be able to make basic decisions about staffing, resources and operations when they have that information in hand; that has not yet happened and is not expected to happen before the end of the month.

So in the face of incomplete information, given limited opportunity to review and come to an understanding of the information that was provided, the Association had to be cautious in its early statements to members, the media and the public. We noted with concern an aggregate \$27 million drop in instructional spending from 2020/21 levels and observed that we would withhold further judgment until the details around board funding were released. The devil, we said, was going to be in the details.

But to the question: why only the ATA? Well, the school boards, superintendents and business officials seemed to be fixated on one particular request — that they be "held harmless" against declines in enrolment related to the impact of COVID-19. And the government, at least superficially, appears to have delivered on that request, saying that districts facing a decline in enrolment

will receive the same level of funding that they did in the last budget year, effectively delaying the implementation of a new funding model that calculates funding based on a multi-year weighted moving average figure for jurisdiction enrolment. So school boards got what they wanted! Right?

Well, maybe. The problem is that the math doesn't seem to work. It seems that the government is attempting to simultaneously achieve a variety of separate objectives: to hold operational spending constant across government fiscal years; to maintain funding for jurisdictions with decreased enrolment while increasing total transfers to those experiencing enrolment growth; to continue implementation of long-term objectives, including the implementation of the new funding formula and roll out of new curriculum; and to cover residual COVID-19 costs even as the federal government winds up its funding transfers. It's hard to see how all this can be done simultaneously. We'll have to wait for more information.

The Association is dedicated to being truthful in its comments and to being courageous in speaking that truth to power. Unlike other stakeholder groups, we are not beholden to the provincial government for our funding and can afford to be frank in our statements. Those may sound critical, but they are intended to be honest. Our members expect and deserve nothing less. ■



# Looking back, moving forward

The ATA and the CTF/FCE linked in history



## VIEWPOINTS

Cassandra Hallett  
Canadian Teachers' Federation

A century ago, the ATA was among five provincial teachers' organizations that worked together to create the Canadian Teachers' Federation (CTF/FCE). Driven by the pressing need for a national voice for teachers, these early organizers made their vision a reality in 1920. Since then, the CTF/FCE has grown to 18 member organizations, representing teachers from coast to coast to coast, with the ATA consistently playing a pivotal leadership role. While the issues have changed through the decades, the need for a strong national voice is as important as ever. Let's fast forward to the work of the CTF/FCE today.

Although education is a provincial/territorial matter, issues facing teachers know no boundaries. Regrettably, ill-advised government schemes are shared across provinces, territories and internationally; what goes around in one is likely to come around in others. Through the CTF/FCE, individual teacher organizations are never alone fighting against the undermining of bargaining rights, professionalism, pensions, working conditions or health and safety. At the same time, the CTF/FCE respects and is enriched by the unique ethos, values and history of each member organization.

In the active engagement of their provincial and territorial organizations, teachers across the country determine the way forward for the CTF/FCE, establishing strategic priorities that guide federation lobbying, research and programs. In recent years, these have included the internationally acclaimed [We the Educators](#) (addressing the privatization of public education, in conjunction with the ATA and Education International); the award winning social justice program [Speak Truth](#)

[to Power](#), Canada; our Canadian Heritage-funded campaign addressing the shortage of French first language teachers in minority contexts, [Enseigner, ça me parle](#); and advocacy to raise awareness about the toll the pandemic has been taking on teachers, including a [video](#) seen by tens of thousands across the country.

Does the CTF/FCE work in isolation? Absolutely not. To amplify the teacher voice, the CTF/FCE frequently partners with national and international non-governmental organizations to extend our reach. This outreach builds effective alliances and elevates the importance of the profession in the broader community. Current collaborations include the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada-funded Healthy Professional Workers project with the CTF/FCE as community partner and education advisor; [Youth Resilience in the Digital Age initiative](#), with the Boys and Girls Clubs of Canada; collaboration with the Canadian Labour Congress to secure [improvements to the employment insurance program](#); and [work with the Canadian Federation of Nurses Unions](#) to raise awareness regarding the importance of teachers and education workers being prioritized for COVID-19 vaccination.

On the global stage, the CTF/FCE engages with Education International (EI) as a strong voice for Canadian teachers, and uses its influential seat on the EI executive board to represent CTF/FCE members. CTF/FCE is also a leader in development co-operation through [Project Overseas](#) and multiple partnerships with EI affiliates in the global south. These partnerships work towards increasing the capacity of national teachers' organizations,

supporting gender equity and offering professional learning for undertrained teachers.

On a national scale, the CTF/FCE engages with the federal government on a wide range of issues related to education and the teaching profession. While management of public education is not a federal responsibility, many government decisions that affect teachers and public schools are. With strategic non-partisan government relations and advocacy, the CTF/FCE is a go-to voice in the national debate on topics such as reconciliation, mental health and well-being, employment insurance, anti-racism, child poverty, protection for teachers in the Criminal Code and the role of public education in a healthy democracy.

Let's zero in on the prevailing issue of COVID-19. Last spring, the CTF/FCE proactively researched and responded to the profound impact of the pandemic on public schools, teachers, students, families and communities. Teachers in all parts of the country engaged in record numbers, informing our relentless advocacy for safe, well-considered, well-funded and viable public education decisions during a pandemic, decisions that address the significant equity concerns the pandemic has laid bare. We're pleased that the federal government answered our call for increased support for education in these challenging times, and we'll continue to raise our voice — your voice while also supporting the lobbying efforts of member organizations.

The CTF/FCE is the only national organization in Canada promoting quality, inclusive, publicly funded public education. It is all of us, Canada's public-school teachers and educators, making a difference coast to coast to coast. While the issues evolve, the ideals that sparked the formation of the CTF/FCE stand true today. We look forward to the next 100 years of solidarity with the teachers of Alberta. ■

Cassie Hallett is secretary general of the Canadian Teachers' Federation.

## YOUR VIEWS

### ON TWITTER

Darren Moroz @darrenmoroz

Trust our teachers!!! Our day-to-day assessment is better than any one-hour test administered on one day of the year! STOP WASTING MONEY!!!

Christie @ChristieNold

Friendly reminder: Teachers unions = Teachers. When you say, "I love teachers, I just hate the union" what I hear is "I love teachers who are quietly compliant and are denied the ability to organize."

Allison Jade @allisonjade

Something that isn't being talked about much is the closure of the ADLC (Alberta Distance Learning Centre) by the UCP and the massive gap that will be left without it.

22,000 students are affected.

22,000 students will lose access to high-school education program options.

Alison Palmer @alijanepalmer

I guess a PD day is a good day to have a bit of a breakdown and a good, long cry. Sending so much love to all my teacher friends out there.

### FACEBOOK FEEDBACK

On budget 2021 containing no new money for change in curriculum

Donna Knopper-Singleton

I am not spending another cent in my classroom until we get some proper budget. I am done with taking money out of my salary for resources, toys and books. No other profession in Canada does this. Can you imagine what doctors would say if they had to pay for their own needles and such in a hospital?

Jennifer Black

Unbelievable. Such a important job and yet... Jason Kenney our future is our kids. Kids need to be educated properly. Teachers have a big job daily and deserve to have the resources to get the job done. Times are tough and I get that, but if you can find it in the budget for private schools, you can find it for public.

Thomas Mike

And the money that was used to create the new curriculum went out of province and even out of country...

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 Cory Hare: cory.hare@ata.ab.ca.

### FOR THE RECORD

“

Our seniors have paid a very high price. Will we in Alberta learn from what we have experienced over the last year?

”

– United Nurses Association president Heather Smith speaking at a flower-laying ceremony marking the one-year anniversary of the World Health Organization's pandemic declaration due to COVID-19.





# Budget purports to maintain funding

*Key details yet to come once funding manual and profiles are released*

Jonathan Teghtmeyer  
ATA News Editor-in-Chief

The provincial budget announced Feb. 25 pledges to maintain funds directed to school boards for the 2021/22 school year but has left out the arithmetic that generates the total number. The school jurisdiction funding manual and funding profiles that normally accompany the release on budget day will be released later in March.

The government budget highlights that department of education funding to school jurisdictions for the government's 2021 budget year will remain the same as the 2020 budget year at \$7.53 billion.

"I am proud to uphold our commitment to maintain education funding, especially with the fiscal challenges the province is facing," said Education Minister Adriana LaGrange.

School boards had been concerned that their

funding would be impacted in future years as a result of lower enrolment due to COVID-19. The new three-year averaging process for determining enrolment numbers would have meant that the lower enrolment from this year would decrease funding across the next two school years.

"This school year we did not penalize school boards for the reduced enrolment they experienced during COVID-19, nor will we in the upcoming school year," LaGrange said.

A news release from the Alberta School Boards Association says it is "pleased that school divisions will be held harmless from the impacts of pandemic-related enrolment challenges in Budget 2021," but ATA president Jason Schilling is withholding judgment until the details are released.

"We appreciate that the government is planning to hold school boards harmless for lower enrolment this year as a result of COVID-19, but again the details of this are unclear until school board funding is announced," Schilling said.

"We are concerned that the government may be obscuring the reality of school board funding by conflating government fiscal years with school board fiscal years while delaying the release of the details by over a month."

Schilling said that public education will continue to experience cost pressures as enrolment is expected to grow again, new curriculum will be piloted and COVID will still be impacting classrooms into the fall.

"We're not sure the funding will be there to support these challenges," Schilling said. "The devil will be in the details and we just don't have those yet."

The budget also included \$268 million for 14 new school construction and modernization projects as part of the government's capital budget. On March 10 the government issued a news release announcing that new schools would be built in Calgary, Camrose, Edmonton, Lethbridge, Manning and Red Deer. The announcement also included five modernizations or additions and two school replacement projects. ■



Phase two of Alberta's COVID-19 vaccination program is rolling out with eligibility based largely on age. ISTOCK

## ATA critical of vaccination rollout

Cory Hare  
ATA News Managing Editor

As the province continues its COVID-19 vaccination rollout, the Alberta Teachers' Association is continuing to advocate for teachers and other front-line workers to be given priority.

"Even though government has released their phase two plans, that hasn't stopped us from continuing to ask to make sure that members become a priority," said ATA president Jason Schilling.

Phase two of Alberta's plan began on March 10. It provides access to the AstraZeneca vaccine to Indigenous people born between 1972 and 1986 and other Albertans born between 1957 and 1971.

Also, as of March 15, the Pfizer or Moderna vaccines are available to Indigenous people born in 1971 or earlier and other Albertans born between 1947 and 1956. This rollout also applies to staff and residents of licensed supportive living facilities who were not included in phase one.

Schilling said the government is ignoring the recommendations of the National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI), which recommended several immediate priority groups, including long-term care home residents and staffers, front-line health care workers, seniors, and Indigenous people in rural or remote communities. He also suggested that teachers and other front-line workers should have access to vaccines sooner rather than later.

"This government sent teachers back to packed classrooms without adequate protections and now refuses to prioritize their access to the most important tool to prevent possible infection and spread," Schilling said.

In a statement prepared for the *ATA News*, a spokesperson for Alberta Health stated that eligibility in phase two is based on protecting those at highest risk of severe outcomes.

"We recognize that many, many people would benefit from receiving the vaccine, and we want to offer it to them as soon as possible. Unfortunately, due to the limited vaccine supply that is available in Alberta, we must continue to target individuals who are most at risk of severe outcomes. As new vaccines are approved and supply becomes available to Alberta, people between the ages of 18 and 64 who work in specific workplaces or industries may be included in phase two."

Earlier this month, the Canadian Teachers' Federation initiated a study by research firm Abacus Data. It found that two in three Canadians believe that teachers and education workers should be a top priority for COVID-19 vaccinations, after health care workers and vulnerable people have been vaccinated. Survey respondents rated teachers and education workers as a higher priority than any other profession.

Other professions that ranked highly in the study included child-care workers, firefighters, dentists and dental hygienists, public transit drivers and operators, and essential retail workers. ■



## A lesson from convention

Teaching to me has always been a practice of reflection. Like most teachers, I spend time reflecting on a lesson, my interactions with my students and colleagues, and what I can do differently (or better) the next time. There's always room for improvement, always something new to learn.

Teacher's convention this year provided another great opportunity to learn and reflect. I was fortunate this year to introduce distinguished speakers such as Anna Maria Tremonti, Cassie Campbell-Pascall, Jesse Thistle and Rick Mercer. Each of these speakers were unique in their presentations, yet they still managed to challenge my thinking. One common theme began to emerge from each speaker — their admiration for teachers and the support you are providing students during the pandemic.

Anna Maria Tremonti talked about the power of conversation, something each teacher and school leader knows is the key to creating strong relationships in their schools. She also noted that change is painful and hard for people, but at the same time powerful. This is a lesson well known by anyone working in education this last year.

Cassie Campbell-Pascal reflected that we need to just do our best and be consistent with how we go about our lives, that perfect is simply too high of a bar for anyone to achieve, that our character is built with how we push beyond our comfort zone.

Jesse Thistle moved me to near tears as he spoke of his life and how everyone deserves a second chance. Jesse commented on how we all have the power to choose, and that those consistent choices provide hope and are powerful even if they are the smallest of choices. His honesty in his presentation was a testament to how far one can come when empowered and supported with fellowship.

Finally, Rick Mercer talked about his love for the arts, particularly drama, and his love for writing, something he would not have explored if it weren't for the encouragement of his Grade 3 teacher.

With their words of encouragement, support, admiration and love for teachers, each of these convention speakers emphasized and amplified the significance of teachers' impact on individual lives and on society in general. And that's probably the best lesson I took away from this convention season: during a year of great turmoil, teachers provide hope. ■



# Alberta teachers elect vice-presidents, district representatives

ATA News Staff



Greg Carabine will be the Association's newest vice-president.

The former district representative for Edmonton McMurray joins incumbent vice-president Jenny Regal following the conclusion of online voting for Provincial

Executive Council. Carabine and Regal emerged victorious in a three-person race for vice-president.

It will be Regal's third term as vice-president. She looks forward to uniting teachers around common goals that serve students and communities. Carabine is looking forward to continuing his work advocating

for improved working conditions and much more for teachers.

While Jason Schilling was acclaimed for his second term as president, the election featured races in four districts: Calgary City, Central South, Edmonton District and Edmonton McMurray.

## District representatives

All three incumbents in Calgary City kept their seats: Kathy Hoehn, Kevin Kempt and Darren Moroz. Don Brookwell (Central South) and Paul Froese (Edmonton District) fended off challenges for their district representative seats. In Edmonton McMurray, Nancy Ball and Carmen Glossop were reelected and will be joined by current vice-president Darrin Bauer who opted to run for district representative this term.

The remaining eight district representatives are incumbents who were acclaimed to their positions: Karen Nakaska (Calgary District), Brent Baum (Central), Murray Lalonde (Central East) Paul Froese

(Edmonton District), Peter MacKay (North West), Katherine Pritchard (South West) and Heather McCaig (South East). New to the PEC table is Richard Kremp (Central North).

More than 6,000 active and associate members participated in the online vote in early March. The results were announced March 12. The new council officially takes office July 1.



2021-2023

Provincial Executive Council

## PRESIDENT



Jason Schilling

## VICE-PRESIDENTS



Greg Carabine



Jenny Regal

## DISTRICT REPRESENTATIVES

### CALGARY CITY



Kathy Hoehn



Kevin Kempt



Darren Moroz

### CALGARY DISTRICT



Karen Nakaska

### CENTRAL



Brenton Baum

### CENTRAL EAST



Murray LaLonde

### EDMONTON McMURRAY



Nancy Ball



Darrin Bauer



Carmen Glossop

### EDMONTON DISTRICT



Paul Froese

### CENTRAL NORTH



Richard Kremp

### CENTRAL SOUTH



Don Brookwell

## ABOUT PEC

The Provincial Executive Council (PEC) leads and transacts the business of the Alberta Teachers' Association on behalf of its 40,000-plus members. PEC is made up of the Association's five table officers (the president, two vice-presidents, the past president and the executive secretary), plus 15 district representatives.

The president and vice-presidents are elected by a provincewide vote of Association members. District representatives are elected by members in their geographic district. All elected positions are subject to two-year terms. Terms for elected members will begin July 1, 2021.

### NORTH WEST



Peter MacKay

### SOUTH EAST



Heather McCaig

### SOUTH WEST



Katherine Pritchard



## NOTICES AND EVENTS

### National Film Board has free online resources for teachers

Did you know that the National Film Board of Canada (NFB) offers free online resources for teachers? The collection of free mini-lessons, playlists, interactive productions and apps, and blog posts is available at [www.nfb.ca/education/](http://www.nfb.ca/education/).

In addition, the NFB is now offering a free sneak peek at their CAMPUS education platform until April 1, 2021.

This streaming service features new or socially timely films with suggested age ranges. Activities, questions and topics are designed to help teachers lead discussions with students. Every month is education- curated and thematic playlists are updated. They showcase classroom-ready films, with contextual information written by teachers from across Canada.



Mount Saint Agnes Academy is an Alberta Accredited International School that provides excellence in private education from the Early Learning Program & Kindergarten through Grade 12. As an Alberta Accredited International School, MSA offers an internationally recognized Canadian curriculum, enhanced by the values of the Catholic faith and culture.

MSA is seeking candidates for the following teaching positions for the 2021-22 school year:

#### Mathematics and Science teacher – Middle and High School

This position requires the successful candidate to teach middle and high school Mathematics and Science. The candidate will also be required to teach and prepare students for the Mathematics and Science Provincial Achievement Test (Grades 6 and 9), Mathematics and Science diploma courses and the diploma examinations. The curriculum is part of the Alberta Education Programs of Study for Mathematics and Science.

#### Mathematics and Science specifically Physics – Middle and High School

This position requires the successful candidate to teach middle and high school Mathematics and Science (Physics). The candidate will also be required to teach and prepare students for the Mathematics and Science Provincial Achievement Test (Grades 6 and 9), Mathematics and Science diploma courses and the diploma examinations, including Physics. The curriculum is part of the Alberta Education Programs of Study for Mathematics and Science.

#### Applicants must:

- Possess proven organizational, interpersonal and communication skills.
- Hold a degree in the teaching subject(s) being applied for and teacher training certification.
- Meet the teacher certification requirements to teach in an Alberta Accredited International School (for more information: [www.education.alberta.ca](http://www.education.alberta.ca)) and meet the requirements for the Bermuda Teachers' License.
- Have proven effective classroom management and knowledge of best teaching practices, including differentiation.
- Have a commitment to being part of a supportive and faith-filled Catholic school community.
- Have proven abilities in the use of technology in the delivery of instruction.
- Be willing to moderate or coach an extra-curricular or after-school activity.
- Have two years or more classroom teaching experience, but consideration will be given to newer teachers who are highly motivated.
- Experience with the Alberta Programs of Study would be an asset

#### Applicants must provide a resume with the following information:

- Title of the position for which the application is being submitted
- Full name
- Date of birth
- Nationality
- Details of secondary and higher education, including dates
- Full qualifications with dates
- Full details of teaching and any other experience
- Three written professional letters of reference with contact information. One reference should be from a supervisor at the current place of employment.
- The successful candidate will be expected to provide a recent police background check that demonstrates that they may work in an organization involving children.

Please send applications via e-mail to:

**Anna Faria-Machado, Principal Designate**  
 Mount Saint Agnes Academy  
 P.O. Box HM 1004, Hamilton HM DX  
[amachado@msa.bm](mailto:amachado@msa.bm)



Application deadline is Wednesday, March 31, 2021



## DIGITAL NEWS

The ATA News is available in a digital format.

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

<http://bit.ly/ATAeNews>



## Want to Serve on a CTF/FCE Advisory Committee?

Each year, the Association is eligible to submit nominations for the CTF/FCE advisory committees. For 2021/22, opportunities are available on the following advisory committees:

- CTF/FCE Advisory Committee on Diversity and Human Rights
- CTF/FCE Advisory Committee on French as a First Language
- CTF/FCE Advisory Committee on Indigenous Education
- CTF/FCE Advisory Committee on the Status of Women
- CTF/FCE Advisory Committee on the Teaching Profession

All active and associate members of the Alberta Teachers' Association are eligible for the positions. Members must hold the highest level of membership available to them.

**Apply today!**

Application deadline  
 March 31, 2021



All applicants are encouraged to reach out to their district representative(s) to better understand the work that Association committees undertake. If you have any questions, please contact Lindsay Yakimyshyn at [lindsay.yakimyshyn@ata.ab.ca](mailto:lindsay.yakimyshyn@ata.ab.ca), 780-447-9425 or 1-800-232-7208.

Find more details and application information on the ATA website (My ATA > Members Only > Provincial Committees > Serve on a Committee).

COMM-162-11 2021.02

## CALLING ALL MEMBERS

### Apply to serve on an ATA committee!

#### The committees

To assist it in the business of the Association, Provincial Executive Council maintains committees that address topics of concern to teachers and carry out various aspects of the Association's affairs. Each year, a number of practising teachers are selected to serve on Association committees as well as to represent the Association on boards and committees of other organizations and provincial bodies (such as Alberta Education and education faculties).

#### The commitment

Committee members come prepared to speak—from their perspective as a field member—to the forces affecting the respective committee's work.

The term for each of these positions begins July 1, 2021. Standing committee positions are generally three years in length. As a committee member, you would attend the committee's meetings (the number of meetings varies by committee). Travel and incidental costs, as well as release time, are covered to enable committee members to attend meetings.

Check out the list of opportunities and application information on the ATA website (My ATA > Members Only > Provincial Committees > Serve on a Committee).

The deadline for applications is April 15.



All applicants are encouraged to reach out to their district representative(s) to better understand the work that Association committees undertake.

If you have any questions, please contact Lindsay Yakimyshyn at [lindsay.yakimyshyn@ata.ab.ca](mailto:lindsay.yakimyshyn@ata.ab.ca), 780-447-9425 or 1-800-232-7208.

COMM-209 2021.01



# Council reviews policy for ARA

## PEC POINTS

Audrey Dutka  
ATA News Staff

### Highlights of the Provincial Executive Council meeting held Feb. 22–23, 2021, via virtual platform.

1. Approved 211 resolutions arising from the six-year review of policy for presentation to the 2021 Annual Representative Assembly (ARA).
2. Approved 15 Council resolutions and 38 local resolutions for presentation to the 2021 ARA, and approved the assignment of speakers to each resolution.
3. Authorized that \$44,000 of the \$110,000 previously allocated to the Canadian Teachers' Federation (CTF) to support Project Overseas 2020 be used to support professional learning and development programs delivered by CTF partner organizations throughout Africa and the Caribbean in 2021. Further authorized that the balance of \$66,000 of the \$110,000 previously allocated to the CTF to support Project Overseas 2020 be held by the CTF and used as part of the Association's contribution for Project Overseas 2022.
4. Received the report of a hearing committee that found a teacher guilty of one charge of unprofessional conduct for sending an email to numerous school and school division employees that disparaged the work of an individual and was critical of the individual. The hearing committee imposed a penalty of a letter of reprimand and a fine of \$300.
5. Received the report of a hearing committee that found a teacher guilty of four charges of unprofessional conduct for engaging in messaging through social media with a student in which the teacher discussed alcohol, drugs and suicide and shared inappropriate photos and videos. The committee ordered a penalty of a letter of severe reprimand, a fine of \$5,000, a declaration that the teacher is permanently ineligible for membership in the Alberta Teachers' Association and a recommendation to the minister of education to cancel the teacher's teaching certificate.
6. Received the report of a hearing committee that found a teacher guilty of one charge of unprofessional conduct for discussing concerns about a colleague with the assistant superintendent without informing the teacher's colleague first. The hearing committee imposed a penalty of an oral reprimand.
7. Received the report of a hearing committee that found a teacher guilty of four charges of unprofessional conduct for making derogatory comments to students and for informing students about the teacher's suspension from employment after being advised to keep the matter confidential. The hearing committee imposed the penalty of letters of severe reprimand for each charge and fines of \$200 each for charges one, three and four.
8. Received the report of a hearing committee that found a teacher guilty of two charges of unprofessional conduct for posting social media messaging that contained disparaging comments about the teacher's former employing board and its employees and for violating terms of a negotiated Release and Settlement Agreement. The hearing committee imposed the penalty of a letter of severe reprimand to address both charges, fines totalling \$6,000 and an order to remove all posts that are disparaging or impugning towards the teacher's former employer and its employees.
9. Received the report of an appeal committee that quashed the finding and the order of the hearing committee and sent the matter back to the Professional Conduct Committee to be heard by a new committee.
10. Approved the frame of reference for the Living Waters Teacher Welfare Committee.
11. Approved the 2021 School Board Elections Plan.
12. Approved the names of two teachers for nomination to the Canadian Teachers' Federation as potential participants in the National Campaign to Promote the Teaching Profession in a French First-Language setting. ■



The ATA is continuing to advocate for substitute teachers, who have been left vulnerable due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

# System under strain

## Availability of substitute teachers an ongoing challenge for many schools and divisions

Cory Hare  
ATA News Managing Editor

It's 10 p.m. on a Saturday night in the small town of Veteran, in east central Alberta.

Retired teacher and sometime substitute Jerri Perrin is on the phone with a friend/colleague who has called to see if Perrin can take a job for the following week. Perrin cannot, so she and her friend are brainstorming, trying to figure out who they can recruit.

This may seem like an unusual topic for a weekend social call, but it's become almost routine in Veteran due to COVID and its impact on the supply of substitute teachers and the demand for their services.

"There are times when subs are very hard to come by," Perrin says. "When you're needed, you're needed multiple places."

Throughout the province, anecdotal evidence suggests that the supply of substitute teachers is down and demand is up, at least in some locations, creating a difficult situation for school leaders, teachers and substitutes themselves.

Within Edmonton Public Schools, the demand for substitute teachers (called supply teachers) has been higher than in previous years; however, the reasons for sub jobs has shifted. Rather than seeking substitutes to attend to professional development and personal business, teachers are now seeking relief mainly due to sickness and the need to isolate, said human resources director Trish Kolotyluk.

"It's been a difficult year for everyone, and if we didn't have the people who were willing to do the work of supply teachers, we wouldn't be able to have a teacher in front of kids, and that's our main priority," Kolotyluk said.

Many substitutes are choosing not to work or are limiting the number of schools they attend, due to concerns about contracting or transmitting COVID. The result is that officials within Edmonton Public have devoted a lot of effort to keeping its central roster of substitutes healthy.

Despite these efforts, the division has seen an increase in the number of sub jobs that are going unfilled. The division normally has a fill rate of nearly 100 per cent. This year it's 95.9 per cent.

The supply-demand crunch was particularly challenging in November and December when the number of COVID cases was spiking. The division responded by stepping up its recruitment of December education graduates.

"We've tried to ensure that kids have a teacher in front of them whether it's in person or online and

[substitutes] are really appreciated ... we're so glad that they've decided to come and join our division because we really need them, especially now," Kolotyluk said.

Allison McCaffrey, an administrator at a K-9 school within Calgary Separate, said she's had a relatively trouble-free year, being able to find qualified subs when needed.

"Overall, from my perspective, it's been a positive year. I don't think it's the same for every school," McCaffrey said. "I guess our school has just been lucky that we're either at the forefront or at the tail end of when things go around the area."

One drawback she's witnessed this year has been the requirement for teachers to isolate when COVID cases emerge.

"I feel awfully bad when we have to put a sub in isolation because that potentially takes away their income stream," McCaffrey said.

### ATA advocacy

Income security and access to benefits for substitute teachers is among several concerns that the ATA has been raising with the minister of education for the past year, said president Jason Schilling.

He noted that not many school boards have been willing to make arrangements to ensure substitutes are well looked after.

"Every time we meet with ministry staff we talk about issues with substitute teachers," Schilling said.

Schilling has heard from administrators from throughout the province who are struggling to find the subs they need. For example, one principal had a COVID outbreak that resulted in 10 staff and dozens of students isolating at home. The principal was only able to find four substitutes.

One division that's done things differently is Edmonton Catholic. The division hired dedicated replacement teachers for each school, based on school population. These teachers have been placed on temporary contracts, with access to benefits, and attend school every day just like other staff.

When a member of the regular teaching staff has to leave, a replacement teacher is there to step in. If they aren't needed for substitute duty, they assist with a variety of tasks, including assisting teachers in class.

Although the system has been costly to the division, it's reduced the amount of cohorting and brought stability and predictability to schools, said Edmonton Catholic local president Sandra Haltiner.

"So far it's been a resounding success and something that we really applaud our school division for doing," she said. "It's been an overall great experience. I wish we could have it forever." ■





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# Summit spreads positive message

## Second Women in Leadership Summit declared a success

Kate Toogood  
ATA News Staff

On March 6, the Women in Leadership summit returned for the second year, and despite being virtual, attendees were treated to two keynote speakers whose talks transcended the distance to celebrate the leadership of Alberta's teachers.



Marni Panas

The summit kicked off with a provocative talk by Marni Panas, a diversity and inclusion expert who is known provincially, nationally and internationally for her advocacy for LGBTQ2S+ people. She was recently part of an expert panel that assisted in developing guidelines to support Alberta school boards as they created policies to ensure schools have safe and welcoming environments for LGBTQ students, families and staff.

Panas's talk chronicled her life growing up in Camrose and eventually transitioning in her 40s. In a talk that was both humorous and heartfelt, she described her life as a young student to emphasize the important role teachers play in creating spaces where students can be free to be their whole self, especially if they don't feel safe to do so elsewhere.

"[As a young boy], I never had the words to articulate how I felt," she says. "All I knew was I felt at peace wearing my mom's clothes, or my sister's

clothes. So I didn't know who I was — but I could tell you who I was not."

Research has shown LGTBQ youth are 8.4 times more likely to have attempted suicide, and have a higher prevalence of and potential incidence for depression and other symptoms of poor mental health, including anxiety, low self-esteem, hopelessness and isolation. Isolation and loneliness are feelings that Panas knows well.

"I was born into a Catholic family... where gender roles were clearly defined and I inherently knew that deviating from those roles would be catastrophic for me. So as a child, you get really used to being alone."

Now able to be herself openly, Panas knows what a difference having a teacher she could share her struggles with could have made to her. She urges teachers to pay special attention to these children.

"It takes no energy to be supportive," she added.

Panas's peppered her talk with group discussions about the barriers to leadership that participants see in education, and how the barriers could be addressed. When she finished, it was clear the audience was not ready for the end.

### Advocate brings positive message



Sandra Woitas

Summit attendees also heard an afternoon keynote by Sandra Woitas, a celebrated educator and advocate for disadvantaged children and families. A former director of the City Centre Education Project with Edmonton Public Schools, she has been given multiple provincial and national awards for her work addressing poverty, bullying and mental health in youth and families.

Woitas's lively talk focused on how teachers (and women in particular) can continue to survive the pandemic by using tried-and-true techniques of leaders. She particularly emphasized the importance of supporting each other while being kind to yourself, focusing on the bigger picture and keeping negativity and hopelessness at bay. Down-to-earth, warm and funny, Woitas provided a boost of positivity for those feeling downtrodden by the pandemic. ■



The full day summit was attended by roughly 225 teachers and administrators from across the province. The summit also included a number breakout sessions on topics such as financial wellness, advancing Indigenous women through education, building trust and using hope to build resilience. The sessions were recorded and will be available to all members through the Women in Leadership website, <https://wil.teachers.ab.ca/>.

# Effective teaching ... virtually

## EXECUTIVE REPORT



Chris Gonsalvez and Danny Maas  
ATA executive staff officers

So, you have moved to online teaching ... what next? How do you connect with your students, deliver meaningful content, establish a classroom atmosphere AND keep your sanity?

For some this transition may seem like an insurmountable task, but the truth is, Alberta teachers have done an outstanding job of this, both throughout the pandemic as well as before they'd even heard the term COVID-19.

The following list, of ideas to try and suggestions to avoid, scratches the surface of what teachers across the province have been doing.

### Thought you should know

- During the 2019/20 school year, with little-to-no formal training, Alberta teachers taught online lessons for more than 35 per cent of the year.
- In the 2020/21 school year, 100 per cent of Alberta teachers were asked to move from being a traditional classroom teacher to being an online teacher.
- The majority of online synchronous instruction in Alberta happens either through Google Meet, Microsoft Teams or Zoom.
- First online class: 1960 – The University of Illinois created an intranet for its students to access course materials and listen to recorded lectures, nine years before the creation of the internet.

## The dos and don'ts of virtual lesson planning

### DO: Make it personal

Personal touch points are invaluable. When students physically attend school, connections happen naturally through class discussions, seating partners, recess and field trips. Develop online connections by

- Welcoming students by name ... every day!
- Setting aside time during the school day for one-on-one conversations with students
- Scheduling "virtual recesses" so students can visit or play a game for 15 minutes

### DON'T: Overwhelm your students or yourself

Set realistic and achievable expectations.

- Tasks may take significantly longer than you had originally planned. Acknowledge that this is OK and that learning is happening.
- Give grace and don't expect perfection (for your students and yourself).
- Use and adapt existing resources whenever you can. There's no need to "reinvent the wheel."
- Include "non-screen" activities students can accomplish on their own time with little guidance.
- Be consistent in organizing and presenting the material for your online lessons.

### DO: Develop online norms and practices

In a traditional classroom setting, teachers create routines and norms for their students, like washroom breaks and lining up for gym. Create online norms around things such as

- A consistent opening activity ... would you rather or what do you think about?
- What to do if you're finished a learning task early.
- When you're allowed to activate and mute your mic.
- When and how group chat will be used.
- Acceptable virtual backgrounds.
- Appropriate dress code.

### DON'T: Ignore your online environment

Students miss the colourful bulletin boards and informative anchor charts of their classroom. Think through your environment when teaching in a digital space.

- What will your camera see? What posters, paintings or decorations are behind you?
- Be aware of what files are open and on your desktop. Consider signing into your web browser as a guest when sharing your screen with students.
- Adequately illuminate your face so students can see your expressions.
- Use a good microphone for clear audio with minimal background noise.
- Join the class as a student from a muted second device (such as a phone). This shows you exactly what the students are seeing.

### DO: Collaborate

Teachers need each other. We ask questions, provide advice, share ideas and laugh when things go awry. Connect with one another to share the burden of planning, borrow new ideas and lament about "the good ol' days."

- Find a community of others who are teaching similar things online. Social media, divisional directories and Association specialist councils are a good starting point.
- Create a Google or Teams classroom just for teachers.
- Find times to gather as a staff.
- Connect with teachers in your local that are teaching in physical schools and brainstorm how their great activities can be adapted for an online environment. ■

### Recommended resource

*Teaching in the Online Classroom: Surviving and Thriving in the New Normal*  
Doug Lemov

Available through the ATA library.

### Videos available

Watch short videos from ATA PD staff:  
<http://atapdwebinars2020.sched.com>.

The ATA has a PD YouTube channel with short video tips: [www.youtube.com/channel/UC5eGPHZlzlP1vXrnFJgEAHA](http://www.youtube.com/channel/UC5eGPHZlzlP1vXrnFJgEAHA).





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*Dr. Paula Kluth is a consultant, author, advocate, and independent scholar who works with teachers and families to provide inclusive opportunities for students with disabilities and to create more responsive and engaging schooling experiences for all learners.*

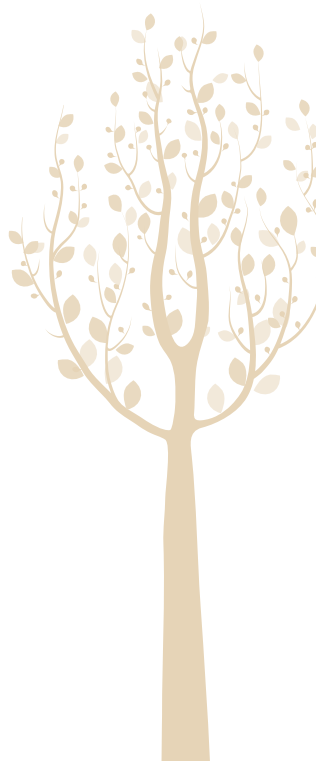


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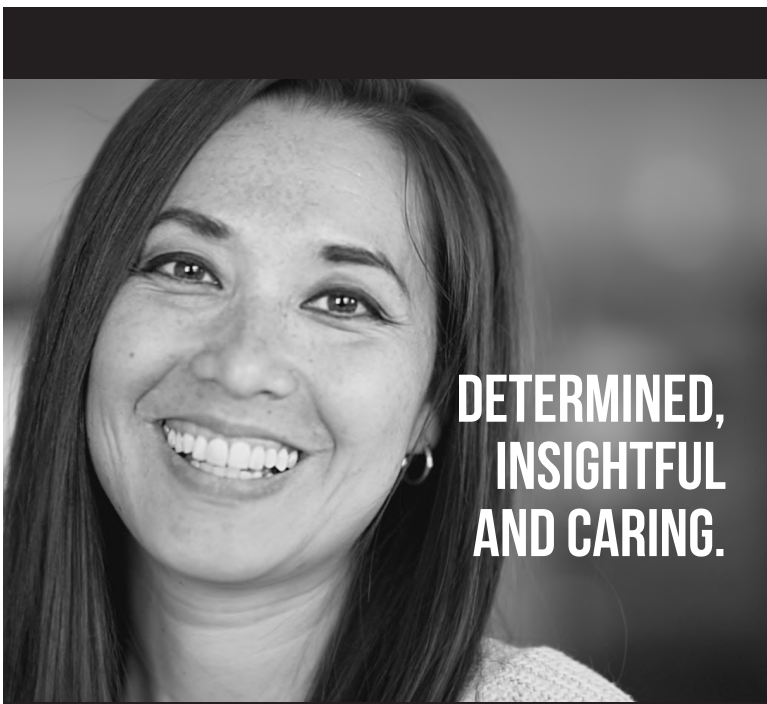


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The Alberta Teachers' Association

# 2021 gotcha! PHOTO CONTEST

Cash prizes available!



The ATA News invites you to get your camera out and start shooting those award-winning photographs.



**1st place: \$200 2nd place: \$100 3rd place: \$50**

### GOTCHA! Contest rules

- 1 Photos taken by active and associate ATA members of education- or school-related activities are eligible. (Hint: photos depicting action are best.)
- 2 Entries must be submitted by the member who took the photos.
- 3 Photos taken between Sept. 1, 2020, and May 15, 2021, are eligible.
- 4 Please email photos to [cory.hare@ata.ab.ca](mailto:cory.hare@ata.ab.ca). Entries must be received by 5 p.m. on May 15, 2021.
- 5 Each entry must be accompanied by a description of the activity; the names (if possible) of the people in the photo; the date when the photo was taken; and the photographer's name, school and contact information.
- 6 Cash prizes will be awarded to entrants whose photos place in the top three, as follows. First place: \$200; second place: \$100 and third place: \$50
- 7 Each winner will also receive a certificate of merit, as will those receiving honourable mention.
- 8 Up to 20 additional entries may be selected for an award of honourable mention.
- 9 Each entrant may submit up to five photos but no entrant can win more than one top-three prize.
- 10 A panel of individuals with photography, publishing and teaching experience will judge the entries. The decision of the judges is final.
- 11 Winning photographs will be published in the ATA News.
- 12 Photos submitted for the contest may be published in the ATA News, the ATA Magazine or other Association publications.
- 13 Please read carefully. Failure to comply with any of these rules may result in disqualification.

Get snapping and good luck!

COMM-65.1 2021.03

## ADVERTISING IN ATA NEWS

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# TECHNOON FAILS

Tell us about a Zoom fail you experienced.



🗣️ I have a very inquisitive corgi. On days when I work from home she insists on attending my meet and giving her input. Sooooo, the students love this and as soon as they see I'm in my house instead of work they start calling her. Incidentally I also have co-workers who do the same!!!

**Lori Karoly Szmul**

🗣️ My husband loves to stick his face in front of the camera and look at my meeting participants like he's confused and doesn't understand what the internet is.

**Odessa Nguyen**

🗣️ I was sitting in a barstool height chair swinging my legs while reading with a kid. One of my feet hit the power button on my computer and shut it down.

**Jill Pidcock**

# FAILURE IS LEARNING

## MOOT POINTS

**Kirsten Clark**  
Special to the *ATA News*

When I was young, I remember a teacher posed a question to the class during journal time: what would I do if I knew I could not fail? As a kid who always had plenty to write about, opinions to share and ideas to explore, I was shocked to find this question difficult to grapple with.

Looking back, I understand the driving force behind questions like that one. They're designed to get kids to dream big, to imagine the biggest and best possible life for themselves. But in that frame, and the frame so many of us look through, failure is seen negatively, as something to avoid at all costs.

What would I do if I knew I could not fail? It's not something that was ever discussed, but was an undercurrent that ran throughout my education. And while it was never outwardly stated — no one actually ever told me failure was bad — it

just was. And I took that to heart.

Yet as I've gotten older and more comfortable in my skin, comfortable in my sense of self-worth in that it's not defined by outer achievements or grades, I've found the opposite to be true: failure is good. Failure is moving forward. Failure is trying things. Failure is experimenting. Failure is creating. Failure is learning. And failure is having fun. But this understanding of failure isn't always easy to get to.

A few years ago, when I was teaching English 10-1, I created an abstract painting project where students were asked to read a story by Edgar Allan Poe then symbolically link elements like theme and tone to colours. The next day, they used paint rollers, paper towels and spray bottles to add paint to their canvases, strip it away in certain areas, add layers and create texture. But that type of project isn't always easy to control, and there's an unstated requirement to embrace ambiguity in the creative process.

Do you know which students spent the class laughing and chatting and enjoying the process? Those who, in my grade book, sat in the middle or near the bottom

in terms of their average. And do you know who struggled the most to enjoy the process of creating art? The top three students in the class.

I watched them — kids who normally modelled equanimity — crack just a little. And I hope those small cracks are where the lighter side of failure started to seep in for them. My students who'd experienced failure in the past had already learned that it's OK to fail, and, in this instance, that had real benefits.

There's a good lesson here for us as educators: letting ourselves fail will allow us to learn and grow. So let's change the narrative and ask a new question: What would I do if I knew there were lessons to be learned from failure? ■

*Kirsten Clark teaches in the human services department at Grande Prairie Regional College. She's an associate member of the ATA.*

*Moot Points is your chance to write about a funny incident, a lesson learned or a poignant experience related to teaching. Please email articles to managing editor Cory Hare: [cory.hare@ata.ab.ca](mailto:cory.hare@ata.ab.ca).*

