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ATA BUDGET proposes no fee change.

See pages 7 to 10.



Teachers at Forest Green School in Stony Plain found handwritten notes on their windshields at the end of the school day on April 14.

EILEEN HOYLAND, TEACHER, FOREST GREEN SCHOOL

Extra-curricular thoughts



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The importance of hope

New project nurtures
hope to improve
student mental health
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Lift gag order on teacher attendees



EDITORIAL

Jonathan Teghtmeyer
ATA News Editor-in-Chief

Third-party experts and validators are a powerful tool that governments often use to push forward and support policy positions.

When it comes to unpopular decisions around managing the COVID-19 pandemic, the premier and the minister of health will often say they are following the advice of the chief medical officer of health, Deena Hinshaw.

On vaccines, Premier Jason Kenney has routinely said they are following the expert advice, including the national recommendations, to determine who will be vaccinated and when. This is a convenient talking point, even if not completely true. The national recommendations suggest school staff, along with other front-line workers, should be included in stage two vaccinations before the general population under 60 is included in stage three.

On curriculum, government spokespeople have been quick to point to the involvement of 100 teachers in

December 2020 as validators of the draft K–6 outcomes.

But much like the premier's statements on vaccination, this argument doesn't hold much water.

Very little is known about this so-called engagement session because the teachers who participated were required to sign restrictive confidentiality agreements. Notably, the confidentiality agreements do not expire until the end of October, 2021 — a full seven months after the curriculum will have been publicly released.

What happened in the meeting, what feedback was gained and whether it was used to change the draft documents is not at all clear. However, there are some conclusions that can be drawn based on what we do know.

Printed off, the curriculum documents amount to almost 600 pages of 11X17 paper. Assuming that the documents were not shared in advance, which is highly likely given the high degree of confidentiality, there is little chance the teachers could have even read the documents in full during their two-day meeting.

I have to assume that the work was divided up either by subject or grade level. With 11 subject areas and seven grade levels, we are talking now about feedback from only about 10 to 12

teachers in each area. This can hardly be considered representative feedback.

Now let's look at the quality of feedback that could possibly be acquired. An analysis by teacher Lorelee Martin, posted to Facebook, suggests that there are between 1,000 and 1,700 outcomes in each subject area. This is an enormous amount of material to be analysed and discussed over the course of two short days.

Accounting for time for introductions, general overview, reading, analysis and discussion, I would be quite concerned as to how deep of an analysis and discussion would be reasonably possible. Keep in mind that the Grade 5 and 6 material, and anything new introduced since 2018, had never been seen by an active teacher before this.

Nothing is known about the methods used to collect, collate and analyse the feedback and no report has been released about these days. Given the widespread, visceral response we now hear from teachers, I am certain that many of the concerns must have been identified during this review. So were those concerns ignored or dismissed? We just don't know.

Yet, in the meantime, government officials will gladly point to the work of only 100 teachers over just two days reviewing 600 pages of content and

potentially 5,000 learning outcomes as a form of validation for the curriculum.

These teachers participated in this process in good faith, believing their feedback would be valued, not discounted or ignored. Their names were publicly released and the government is pointing to them as validators without providing them the ability to share their experience.

From what I can tell, the consultation and engagement of teachers was not meaningful, it was not genuine and it was not comprehensive.

The government is indignantly telling the public that teachers were involved. Frankly, this is baloney.

We need to be allowed to hear from these curriculum working group members. Given the concern and controversy that has emerged, it is time to remove the gag order.

It makes no sense to keep these teachers beholden to a confidentiality agreement when the documents they were sworn to hold secret have now been publicly released.

If the government is going to point to these 100 teachers as validators of the draft curriculum, then Albertans have a right to hear from them. ■

I welcome your comments. Contact me at jonathan.teghtmeyer@ata.ab.ca.

Curriculum pilot an unwelcome distraction



Q & A

Dennis Theobald
ATA Executive Secretary

Question: With the new draft curriculum being rolled out to schools in September for piloting, do I need to pilot the curriculum if I have serious concerns about it?

Answer: At its April 12 meeting, Provincial Executive Council passed a motion "affirming the professional and moral right and responsibility of teachers to refuse to participate in the voluntary piloting of the new draft K–6 curriculum ... should they believe that curriculum to be structurally and developmentally unsound and potentially damaging to student learning."

To her credit, Education Minister Adriana LaGrange has indicated that she intends that teachers' participation in the pilot should be voluntary. It is expected that those school boards that might decide to participate in the piloting program (and many are opting out entirely) would honour the minister's stated intention and ensure that the decision to participate is left to the discretion of the individual teacher.

Were a school board, however, to issue a lawful order to its teachers to participate in the pilot, then those teachers would be bound by Section 196(2)(a) of the *Education Act*. This states "At any time during the period of time that a teacher is under an obligation to a board to provide instruction or supervision or to carry out duties assigned to the teacher by a principal or the board, the teacher must, at the request of the board, ... participate in curriculum development and field testing of new curriculum...."

A teacher subject to a board directive requiring their participation in a pilot would be encouraged to have an open, professional dialogue with their principal about their options. For example, it may be possible to provide informed feedback on the draft without actually teaching it. In any event, a teacher would still have the right to protest, through proper channels, an order that they believed was contrary to their professional judgment and responsibilities. A teacher in this situation should contact Teacher Employment Services for advice.

To be clear, there are good reasons for school boards and teachers not to participate in this pilot—many teachers who have had an opportunity to review the proposed programs of study have shared with the Association

their deep concern that the draft curriculum is not developmentally appropriate for children aged five to 11. Its design and content do not reflect the current research on elementary student learning, brain development and student engagement. It is poorly structured and fails to create the cognitive framework necessary to facilitate meaningful learning, and the specific content identified is disjointed and decontextualized.

These teachers have concluded that students subject to instruction based on the proposed curriculum, including its mandated subject matter and approaches to teaching it, are likely to experience poor achievement, frustration and disengagement from schooling. As students' success in the early grades is a significant predictor of their success in later grades and, ultimately, of school completion, the alarming conclusion is that this curriculum, if rolled out as planned, may actually harm some students and undermine their learning for years to come. This is why the release and proposed implementation of the draft curriculum, even as a limited pilot, is a matter of grave concern and, for many teachers, resisting its implementation, a moral imperative.

On top of this, many teachers are focused on ensuring that individual students have an opportunity to enjoy a

return to normalcy after the disruptions brought about by the pandemic. It is apparent that student learning has been differentially affected by transitions to online learning and school closures as well as the stress visited on them over the past year. Given these realities, many teachers are focusing on attending first to their students' emotional, social and mental well-being and to ensuring that those in their charge will have the best opportunity to meet current grade-level learning standards. In this context, a largely unsupported and inadequately resourced curriculum pilot is an unnecessary and unwelcome distraction.

Finally, teachers have legitimate concerns about whether the pilot itself is a useful exercise. A partial pilot of some subjects in some grades will do little to inform, and will even gloss over the challenge of implementing the curriculum simultaneously across multiple grades and subjects, as the government is currently planning to do. Nor are teachers convinced that their feedback will be heard or acted upon. Those who have participated in the limited consultations offered thus far have been subject to gag orders and have observed that their input is not reflected in the draft that was released. The government has not committed

Q&A continued on page 3

How Alberta’s curriculum went bonkers

VIEWPOINTS

Dennis Theobald
ATA Executive Secretary



For a very long time, in Alberta, curriculum development was a slow, careful, iterative process punctuated on occasion by fierce, although bounded, controversies over relatively arcane matters of pedagogy (anyone remember “Whole Language or Phonics?”). And at the end of the day, teachers had the latitude to shut the classroom door and exercise their professional judgment to do what made sense for students (the answer typically given by any elementary teacher to the question above would be “yes”).

To be sure, there were periodic attempts to launch broader and more ambitious curriculum initiatives, beginning, in the most recent iteration, with former minister Dave Hancock’s “Inspiring Education” and continuing through to the curriculum ultimately released in 2018 by former minister David Eggen, but the resulting design tended to fall within well established norms and shared expectations. Contrary to the mythology being spouted by the current government, the curriculum, as reflected in its constituent programs of study, was not partisan (although some might have differences about specific topics) and reflected a consensus that was informed by copious input from classroom teachers and education faculty and that was largely

shared by ministers and governments of various political stripes. So how to account for the spectacular debacle that is the March 2021 *Draft K–6 Curriculum* released by Minister LaGrange? To answer this question, I think we need to return to first principles and consider where this latest draft fits or, rather, does not fit.

The tension that has dominated debates around curriculum in Alberta and internationally over decades has been situated along the progressive/essentialist continuum.

The progressive school emphasizes the importance of preparing students for an uncertain future by cultivating their critical and thinking skills. This is best achieved through problem solving, disciplined inquiry and active participation to foster creativity, recognizing the need to create differentiated opportunities to include students who might have divergent interests, abilities or ways of learning.

In contrast, the essentialist school emphasizes the importance of imparting basic knowledge and skills, with a curricular emphasis on literacy, numeracy, and the “facts” of science, history and geography. The approach to teaching and learning stresses the importance of direct instruction focused on getting “back to the basics” and the work of teachers is to ensure that students all achieve the same mandated competencies, typically through more intensive instruction.

The 2018 proposed curriculum, over a decade in development, deliberately struck a compromise position along the progressive/essentialist continuum. In math, for example, students would be expected to memorize number facts while still exploring alternative approaches to problem solving. And as long as the policy debate took place between these familiar, if caricatured alternatives, teachers were on familiar ground and could still avail themselves of the opportunity to close the classroom door and use the approaches that worked with the students they taught.

What is different about the March 2021 curriculum is that it appears to go well beyond essentialism to perennialism. This approach to curriculum, in its more recent iteration popularized by E.D. Hirsh in *Cultural Literacy* (1987),

values inculcating into students through direct instruction the defining core knowledge of western and classical civilization. In this view, students are passive vessels and their cognitive development, personal interests and experiences are largely irrelevant to learning. Nor is it necessary to provide a scoped and sequenced order to the topics to be served up or some other contextual frame upon which to hang them; once students’ knowledge of the canon reaches a certain critical mass, perennialists assume that a deeper, critical understanding will naturally emerge, at least in those intellectually capable and predisposed to such an epiphany.

The perennialist flavour of the 2021 *Draft K–6 Curriculum* is most in evidence in the proposed, and much mocked, content for social studies. From this perspective, it is important that students eventually learn about Charlemagne and the Holy Roman Empire, so why not at Grade 2? But further analysis reveals that perennialist assumptions, objectives and approaches are shot through all subjects at all elementary

privilege that supports and allows elite students to succeed in this manner of learning, despite the odds. And when the perennialist approach flops, its proponents are quick to blame failing students as being fundamentally incapable and their teachers as being inadequately prepared or diligent in their tutelage. Student failure is to be expected and taken as proof of rigour.

Of course, teachers may assume that this too will pass, hope to close the classroom door and then continue to teach in a manner that makes sense for their students. Bad assumption. Perennialism, in practice, is a full package that includes minutely detailed programs of study that focus on facts to be learned, frequent standardized testing of students, centralized direction of instruction and compulsory use of mandated resources, and ongoing recertification and evaluations for teachers, all in an effort to diminish professional judgment and limit teachers’ capacity to wander away from the core curriculum. I firmly believe that these other measures are just over the horizon.

“... we need to return to first principles and consider where this latest draft fits or, rather, does not fit...”

grades in the draft, and we can expect more to come unless the government dramatically changes course as it develops programs of study for the upper grades. While the perennialist project is necessarily Eurocentric, colonial and Caucasian, embracing as it does a view of the centrality and superiority of western civilization, it is not necessarily right wing. In the United States and in Britain, where it enjoys a following among some on the left of the political spectrum, the attraction of perennialism is that it seeks to ensure that every student has access to the style and quality of education more typically delivered to the children of the elite attending private (or in the British context, “public”) schools. Those who seek to apply the model more generally in an effort to improve mobility across racial and class divides tend, however, to ignore the infrastructure and culture of

As every day brings me closer to becoming one, I have a certain fondness for old dead white guys and their contributions. There is a place for my posse in a well-rounded curriculum, but in a diverse and increasingly global community, it is a place that must be shared. Furthermore, the content of the curriculum must be approached in a developmentally appropriate way that respects the lived experiences and contexts of students arriving at the classroom door in all their wonderful complexity. That balancing and adaptation requires engaged teachers, actively practicing their craft and exercising professional judgment as they make decisions about instruction, student engagement and assessment of learning.

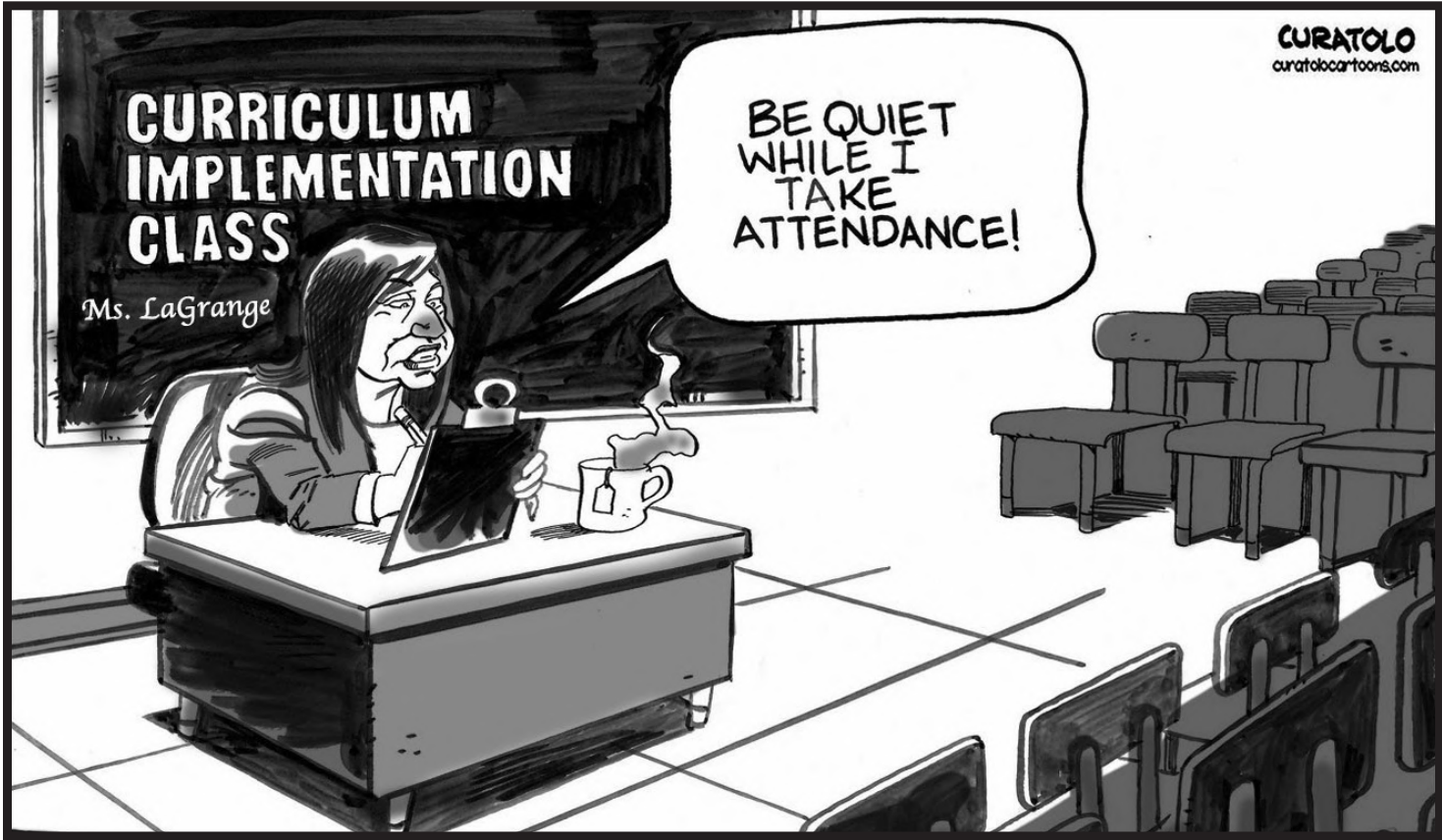
There is scant room for that in this proposed curriculum and that is simply bonkers. ■

Q&A

continued from page 2

to making available in a timely and unredacted manner the feedback that is being provided through their online survey or through other consultation processes.

Of course, there are teachers who, assuming their school board has not opted out of the pilot entirely, and subject to conditions that might be imposed concerning their participation, may want to provide practical and professional feedback about the draft curriculum. Some may want to do so based on students’ experiences in class. Others may choose to review the content of the document and provide feedback on the draft without actually teaching it. Ultimately, that decision too would be based on the teacher’s professional judgement consistent with the best interests of the students, and it should be respected. ■



As a professional, you must mind what you say



PITFALLS & PRECAUTIONS

Chris Gibbon
ATA Secretary to Professional
Conduct Committees

We’ve all heard the saying, “if you can’t say something nice, don’t say anything at all.” Well, with that in mind, there are some things you just don’t say about your colleagues, let alone text or email. After discovering that there would be a reduction in the teaching staff at his school, a continuing contract

teacher texted his colleague, on a temporary contract, and advised her that her teaching position would likely not be renewed for the following school year. The decision to offer another contract or inform a teacher that their contract will not be renewed is the responsibility of the school administration and not a teacher colleague. Further to that, the teacher went on to make very vulgar and derogatory comments about the school administration in texting his colleague. These vulgar comments were grossly inappropriate and failed to maintain the honour and dignity of the profession. To make matters worse, the same teacher went on to make derogatory comments, via text message, about another teacher in his school and question that teacher’s competence. Teachers who have concerns

about another teacher’s competency or reputation have an obligation under the Code of Professional Conduct to speak to that teacher, in confidence, before reporting their concerns to the proper officials. In this case, the teacher’s comments were not valid and besmirched the character of his colleague. Teachers must be sure to follow the code and always report concerns to their colleagues first and do so in a respectful and professional manner. Further, teachers should never make derogatory comments about their colleagues, let alone use social media or electronic mail to further spread them. *Pitfalls and Precautions is a series that aims to educate teachers on professional conduct issues by highlighting situations addressed by the ATA Professional Conduct Committee.*

ATA to explore Indigenous district names

PEC POINTS

Audrey Dutka
ATA News Staff

Highlights of the Provincial Executive Council meeting held April 12–13, 2021, via Zoom, and electronic decision of April 15, 2021

1. Unanimously authorized the Association to express to the minister of education its lack of confidence in the content and design of the Draft K–6 Curriculum, as released on March 29, and the deeply flawed and opaque curriculum consultation and development processes implemented by the government after August 2019 that gave rise to the draft.
2. Unanimously approved for submission to the 2021 Annual Representative Assembly a resolution that the teachers of Alberta express to Education Minister Adriana LaGrange their collective lack of confidence in the content and design of the Draft K–6 Curriculum and the deeply flawed consultation and development processes that gave rise to the draft.
3. Unanimously authorized the Association to call upon the Government of Alberta to place a moratorium on the piloting and implementation of the Draft K–6 Curriculum until such time as the draft has been submitted to an independent, full and open review and rewriting process led by and involving a broad cross-section of certificated Alberta teachers and faculty members from Alberta postsecondary faculties and schools of education and is properly inclusive of francophone, First Nations, Métis and Inuit perspectives; is developmentally, structurally and pedagogically sound; and enjoys the broad support of Albertans.
4. Unanimously approved for submission to the 2021 Annual Representative Assembly a resolution that the Association call upon the Government of Alberta to place a moratorium on the piloting and implementation of the Draft K–6 Curriculum, until such time as the draft has been submitted to an independent, full and open review and rewriting process led by and involving a broad cross-section of certificated Alberta teachers and faculty members from Alberta postsecondary faculties and schools of education and is properly inclusive of francophone, First Nations, Métis and Inuit perspectives; is developmentally, structurally and pedagogically sound; and enjoys the broad support of Albertans.
5. Unanimously authorized the Association to call upon school authorities to refrain from participating in or directing or otherwise exerting pressure upon or inciting the teachers they employ to participate in piloting the draft curriculum.
6. Unanimously approved for submission to the 2021 Annual Representative Assembly a resolution that the teachers of Alberta call upon school authorities to refrain from participating in or directing or otherwise exerting pressure upon or inciting the teachers they employ to participate in piloting the draft curriculum.
7. Unanimously authorized the Association to affirm the professional responsibility and moral right of teachers to refuse to participate in the voluntary piloting of the new draft K–6 curriculum should they believe that curriculum to be structurally and developmentally unsound and potentially damaging to student learning.

8. Unanimously approved for submission to the 2021 Annual Representative Assembly a resolution that the Association affirm the professional responsibility and moral right of teachers to refuse to participate in the voluntary piloting of the new draft K–6 curriculum should they believe that curriculum to be structurally and developmentally unsound and potentially damaging to student learning.
9. Unanimously authorized the Association to affirm and support elements of *The Guiding Framework for the Design and Development of Kindergarten to Grade 12 Provincial Curriculum*, published by Alberta Education in December 2020, and expect that any programs of studies proposed for adoption will meet the minimal criteria set out therein.
10. Unanimously approved for submission to the 2021 Annual Representative Assembly a resolution that the Association affirm and support *The Guiding Framework for the Design and Development of Kindergarten to Grade 12 Provincial Curriculum*, published by Alberta Education in December 2020, and expect that any programs of studies proposed for adoption will meet the criteria set out therein.
11. Unanimously approved for submission to the 2021 Annual Representative Assembly a resolution that the Government of Alberta delegate responsibility for the development, renewal and revision of the K–12 programs of studies to an independent and apolitical provincial curriculum development authority supported by subject-based program managers from Alberta Education and consisting of subject-matter experts from Alberta’s universities, representatives from the Alberta Teachers’ Association, active teachers from the field, and representatives from the Alberta School Councils’ Association, whose recommendations concerning the content, design and implementation of programs of study would be publicly disclosed at the time they are conveyed to the minister of education for potential implementation.
12. Unanimously authorized an overexpenditure of \$5,000 for the purpose of adding two questions concerning the draft curriculum to the Association’s public opinion survey.
13. Unanimously authorized the Association to call upon the minister of education to restore the partnership on curriculum development that was initiated in the 2016 memorandum of agreement between the Government of Alberta and the Association.
14. Unanimously approved for submission to the 2021 Annual Representative Assembly a resolution that calls upon the minister of education to restore the partnership on curriculum development that was initiated in the 2016 memorandum of agreement between the Government of Alberta and the Association.
15. Authorized the Association to incur expenses of up to \$150,000 in order to place advertisements calling for a moratorium on the draft K–6 curriculum.
16. Approved the proposed timeline and appointed members of Council to a selection committee for recruitment of the position of Associate Executive Secretary.
17. Unanimously endorsed the candidacy of Jenny Regal for the position of vice-president of the Canadian Teachers’ Federation.
18. Authorized a financial contribution in the amount

- of \$2,500 to the Education International Solidarity Fund, through the Canadian Teachers’ Federation, to assist in their struggle to defend the values of democracy, rule of law and union rights in Kenya.
19. Amended the 2021/22 proposed budget resulting in a revised net budget position of negative \$39,300.
 20. Authorized a \$1 million transfer from the main operating account to the Special Emergency Fund (SEF) investment, as partial restitution for monies withdrawn from the SEF in 2019.
 21. Amended the administrative guidelines pertaining to the Teacher Education and Certification Committee awards and awarded the Alberta Teachers’ Association Doctoral Fellowships in Education and the Nadene M Thomas Graduate Research Bursary.
 22. Discontinued the Diversity, Equity and Human Rights award program and replaced it with a communications program that showcases outstanding local diversity, equity and human rights work.
 23. Approved for submission to the 2021 Annual Representative Assembly a resolution that the Government of Alberta provide stable funding to institutions that offer teacher preparation programs for bridging programs designed to help internationally educated teachers meet Alberta’s teacher certification requirements.
 24. Approved that the Association create and provide district-specific posters with pictures of elected ATA officials to each school.
 25. Received the report of a hearing committee that found a teacher guilty of five charges of unprofessional conduct. The charges stem from the teacher meeting with an associate superintendent and making critical comments about several colleagues’ professional performance without informing those colleagues first, engaging in conversations that were critical of the professional performance of a principal without informing the principal first, sending an email to colleagues encouraging them to bring forward complaints against a principal without providing the email to the principal, engaging in conversations with people who were not the proper officials that were critical of the professional performance of a principal, without the knowledge of the principal and failing to protest an administrative decision through the proper channels. The hearing committee imposed a penalty of a letter of severe reprimand and a fine of \$500. Failure to pay the fine will result in the suspension of the teacher’s membership in the Association.
 26. Received the report of a hearing committee that found a teacher guilty of two charges of unprofessional conduct for making a derogatory comment to a male student dressed as a female for Halloween and refusing to take responsibility for the derogatory comment. The hearing committee imposed a penalty of two \$2,000 fines and two letters of severe reprimand (incorporated into one letter).
 27. Received the report of a hearing committee that found a teacher guilty of one charge of unprofessional conduct for placing a hot cupcake on a student’s cheek. The hearing committee imposed a penalty of a fine of \$750 and a letter of severe reprimand.
 28. Authorized staff to undertake a process to examine how to rename Edmonton District and Calgary District with Indigenous names. ■

Project nurtures hope to improve mental health

Bev Betkowski
Special to the ATA News

Helping teachers foster hope in their students is the objective of a new project developed by the University of Alberta with help from a grant provided by the Alberta Teachers' Association. Working with teachers from Edmonton's public and Catholic school divisions, researchers in the Faculty of Education and one of its research units, Hope Studies Central, have co-developed hope-focused activities that teachers can blend into existing classroom curriculum.

The Strengths, Hope and Resourcefulness Program for School Mental Health (SHARP-SMH) helps build up students and teachers by bringing the idea of hope into the classroom, said project co-ordinator Chelsea Hobbs.

The project gives teachers "a way to connect with their own hope as a resource to sustain their own mental health," she added. "When you've connected with your own hope, it filters down to the students, and they're able to draw on their own hope and build skills to access it as a resource during challenging times."

Finding hope in a challenging year

As front-line workers, teachers have had a challenging year, and the SHARP-SMH toolkit provides a way they can find hope for themselves and share with their students and students' families, said Rebecca Hudson Breen, assistant professor in the Faculty of Education and one of the project's researchers.

"Working with the teachers, we've seen that for them, having hope at the forefront has given them some ideas for ways to handle some of the challenges of online instruction. They're working hard to be agents of hope for students, and those hopeful ripples spread out to families and the wider community."

Though development of SHARP-SMH began around the time the pandemic started last year, it had been in the works well before the outbreak, said Hobbs.

It was adapted from concepts already being used with people experiencing chronic pain and Parkinson's disease, and teachers who'd already been involved with Hope Studies Central felt it would fit well into classrooms, she said.

"They saw it as a beneficial way to support student stability and to help them combat their challenges."

Having hope builds resilience

Weaving hope into their everyday lessons helps students develop resilience that can sustain them through life, said Hudson Breen. "There's so much evidence that hope can really help with well-being, mental health, academic achievement — it bolsters problem-solving ability and as a life skill, it can help students think about the future in positive ways."

Embracing hope doesn't gloss over challenges, but can make them easier to tackle, she added.

"It's not just about helping people think positively; it's recognizing that challenges and hope can exist at the same time, and that we can nurture the skill to pull out hope when we need it."



A new project developed by the University of Alberta is helping teachers bring the power of hope to their classrooms.

U of A researchers shared their hope theories, and teachers contributed curriculum expertise to collaboratively develop the SHARP-SMH toolkit, which will eventually be supplemented by feedback from students, Hobbs said.

Aimed at grades K–12, the tools are downloadable from the SHARP-SMH website and can be mixed into lesson plans however teachers choose.

"Teachers decide where it fits; it could be hopeful language in a language arts class, or mapping hope in a community in social studies, or using hopeful language in a math lesson if a child is struggling. Then the child has a framework to create space for the fact that they may not know the lesson yet,

but there is hope for learning in the future," said Hobbs.

Teachers who've started working with hope-related curriculum are already seeing a positive impact, she noted.

"One teacher working with a parent is now aware she can be a source of hope for that parent, by spending a minute or two to acknowledge what the family is doing well. She's not sure she'd have done that before. So it's been impactful in a very challenging year."

Note: This article originally appeared in the University of Alberta's news publication Folio. It has been edited for content and length. Published with permission.

FACT

SHARP-SMH development was supported by funding from the Alberta Ministry of Education Research Partnerships Program; a UAlberta–ATA Signature Research Collaboration Grant from the Alberta Teachers' Association in partnership with the U of A Kule Institute for Advanced Study (KIAS) and U of A Faculty of Education; a Kule Dialogue Grant from KIAS; an Alberta Advisory Committee for Educational Studies (AACES) Grant; and a generous donation from Leon and Vonnice Zupan.

Visit the website

Launched in March, the SHARP-SMH website links to a reading lists of books about hope, updates on hope-centred research and other resources. <https://sharp.wp.educ.ualberta.ca>

Teacher resources available through Elections Canada

Rachel Collishaw
Elections Canada
Special to the ATA News

Inquiry-based learning, collaboration, student voice, clear learning goals and curricular relevance: these are the hallmarks of good pedagogy. Depending on their location, teachers have been maintaining these key features during school building shutdowns in the face of COVID-19. We don't know when the next federal election will be, but the civic education team at Elections Canada will continue to support teachers and students through these challenging times.

In 2018, we launched our series of free resources designed primarily for inquiry-based learning, collaboration and student voice. After establishing an advisory circle of educators and pilot testing the resources in classrooms across Canada, we heard again and again that teachers and students appreciated the hands-on classroom learning materials for small group activities. These materials enabled students to engage in meaningful in-person conversations that developed their knowledge and interest in our democracy.

Adapting to the new reality

With the advent of emergency distance learning, we began imagining how we could adapt our hands-on resources in a relevant manner and maintain the integrity of our inquiry-based learning experiences. By April 2020, we published simple adaptations of our resources for distance learning, using some online components such as our videos and fact sheets while leaving the activity boards and card sets aside. Each resource was pared down to meet the needs of at-home learning, while keeping as many elements of critical thinking, student voice and collaboration as possible.

In addition to our adapted resources, teachers continue to use the wealth of classroom-friendly information about Canada's elections that is available on the Elections and Democracy website. Access to reliable information is key to successful inquiry-based learning, especially about political or electoral topics. Teachers need background information for themselves and sources with accessible language for their students to investigate critical questions. Whether classrooms are online, in person or in a blended

learning environment, we are pleased to provide teachers and students with accurate, non-partisan information about our elections and democracy.

Supporting teachers virtually

In September 2020, we launched our suite of blended learning tools that present ways to combine both online and in-person learning strategies. Blended pedagogy is a new type learning framework for many teachers but the goals remain the same. Teachers want to help students collaborate, discuss and inquire online and in person.

While the resources themselves involve classroom-ready activities, their pedagogical strategies can go well beyond one class period. For example, each activity includes a key inquiry question such as How inclusive is our democracy? or Does voting matter? These questions are carefully designed to engage students in exploring the information in the resource and beyond.

While we have not physically attended teacher conferences this year, we now offer virtual PD sessions for groups of teachers across Canada. We have also created a series of professional learning videos that teachers can access anytime.

Each video includes an overview of one of our resources, tips for engaging students and our own stories from the classroom. We are dedicated to supporting teachers virtually and to continuing to engage students in conversations about elections and democracy.

Despite the pandemic, our team has been busy releasing new tools to better support teachers. I am especially proud of our robust curriculum connections tool. Using a simple search tool, teachers can now look up resources by province and course name based on their specific needs. We know that engaging future voters is about informing and inspiring students, not just in social studies or citizenship class but across the curriculum. Teachers will find that our resources have connections to language arts, mathematics and information technology courses throughout the secondary years.

For information

Resources and tools for learning, teaching and engaging about federal elections and democracy are available at <https://electionsanddemocracy.ca/>.

Resources to support students *wherever* learning happens

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Par les diététistes des Producteurs laitiers du Canada



The Alberta Teachers' Association

2021 / 22

PROPOSED BUDGET

The budget proposed by Provincial Executive Council (PEC) is just a step away from becoming the approved budget for the 2021/22 fiscal year. The final (and very important) step in this process is membership approval. On the Victoria Day long weekend, local delegates to the 104th Annual Representative Assembly (ARA) will convene virtually to consider, among other matters, the approval of the proposed budget.

This is the first ARA where the budget will be presented incorporating the Teacher Employment Services program area, which was the result of merging former Member Services and Teacher Welfare. While a budget is often viewed primarily as a financial document, the budget of the Alberta Teachers' Association is also a reflection of the Association's activities, programs and priorities for the upcoming year. During budget deliberations, PEC makes critical choices, balancing financial considerations and member feedback, before then presenting the proposed budget at ARA to delegates. At ARA, delegates, in addition to assessing the financial implications, will also examine the merit of the proposed programs and consider their value to members, to education and to the Association.

Based on feedback from locals demonstrating broad support for the programs and services included in the draft budget, Council is recommending no change to the current annual fee of \$1,347 for the 2021/2022 fiscal year. The following pages provide highlights of new programs and completed or discontinued programs within the proposed 2021/22 budget.



ISTOCK

Sample of proposed 2021/22 new initiatives

EdTechTeam Summits – Professional Development

Throughout the past year it has become increasingly clear that many of our members need support with implementing the best pedagogy when it comes to digital tools for teaching. Postpandemic, the Association and subgroups are likely to continue to make greater use of digital approaches to enhance professional development and support member engagement. Attending conferences such as this and having Association staff regularly learning about implementing such technologies into classrooms will allow them to be more responsive to emerging needs in the field.

Designation of associate co-ordinator – Professional Development:

The proposed 2021/2022 budget includes funds to designate a current executive staff officer as an associate coordinator. The role of the professional development coordinator has become sufficiently complex to warrant the designation of an understudy and assistant in the form of an associate coordinator. The work of this program area has increased significantly, as it has taken on responsibilities that go beyond developing and delivering professional development to members, and now also includes enhanced support for subgroups and analysis and response to government curriculum, inclusion and policy initiatives. This addition is also prudent risk management and a component of succession planning for Association staff leaders.

Mentorship program for Indigenous teachers – Professional Development:

This program will constitute an integral part of the Association’s larger commitment to reconciliation. This holistic mentoring program will provide a community of support for self-identified Indigenous teachers, leadership supports and experiences related to Indigenous education, and increased awareness of engagement opportunities to become more active in Association subgroups, specialist councils, convention boards and programs, including Association Instructor Corps and Indigenous Education PD Facilitator Corps.

Curriculum engagement – Professional Development:

Certainly, all matters related to curriculum have gained significant attention since it was released in March 2021. Through this budget initiative, the Association aims to conduct events that engage members in examining student evaluation and curriculum issues. Through such activities, strategic advice can be obtained from the field with respect to how best the Association can support members in these critical areas. This work will be particularly important in 2021/22 as piloting and subsequent implementation begin. Teachers will require both effective advocacy and effective support to respond to this challenge.

Understanding residential schools in Alberta – Professional Development:

In collaboration with the Association’s Indigenous Advisory Circle, this work will result in a publication on residential schools in Alberta to support teachers with implementation of the Indigenous-focused competencies in the Teaching Quality Standard and Leadership Quality Standard, and in alignment with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada’s Calls to Action. This resource will provide increased understanding of residential schools in Alberta through historical knowledge and lived experiences shared through many Elders and Knowledge Keepers in the Association’s Indigenous Advisory Circle.

Teacher Qualification Services (TQS) – Professional Development:

The Association continues to hold over 45,000 member records on microfiche. Through this project, these will be digitized to better align with the overall modernization of TQS (Teacher Qualifications Services) processes. It will be important to maintain access to these older records in digital form to reduce dependency on a technology that is becoming increasingly unreliable, to align with best practices and to allow for more efficient support of members’ evaluation requests. Furthermore, digitization of records will support increased efficiency and in the longer term reduce costs and personnel requirements as well as support the implementation of a self-service web portal that will enhance service to members and prospective members.

Leadership essentials for leaders – Teacher Employment Services:

Through this initiative, the Association aims to offer an online leadership series of four to five speakers throughout the course of the school year. The intended audience of this series would be school and central office leaders and would focus on the administrative, legal, legislated and human resources aspects of the role. Therefore, in addition to the two-day workshop for school leaders who are new to their position, this new speaker series will engage school and system leaders in ongoing professional development offered by their professional association.

Addition of one executive staff officer/investigations – Government:

The number of investigations requested of the ATA and the complexity of these is growing year over year, while the staffing complement to oversee these has remained relatively constant. From Sept. to Dec. 2020, over 50 complaints were received, each requiring an investigation that tends to range from a few weeks to a number of months. Therefore, projections are that approximately 160–170 investigations arising from complaints received will take place during the year, with an estimated 45 hearings. As such, this addition of staff will enable the Association to meet its legislatively and professionally required responsibilities.

The proposed budget for the activities described above is \$378,400.

Completed/discontinued initiatives

Work will be completed in the current fiscal year to develop a program of awareness with respect to the Association’s discipline and mediation services. Therefore, the budget line entitled Member Education, within the Teacher Employment Services program area, will not form part of the proposed budget for 2021/22.

The budget allocated for this activity in 2020/21 was \$5,000.

Proposed annual fee for 2020/21

Provincial Executive Council is proposing no increase to the Association member fee, maintaining it at \$1,347.

	2020/21 approved fee	2021/22 proposed fee
Total Fee	\$1,347.00	\$1,347.00
Funding for programs for which the local rebate does not apply	\$174.00	\$177.00
Net fee to distribute	\$1,173.00	\$1,170.00
Local rebate at 20%	\$234.60	\$234.00
Balance of net fee (80%)	\$938.40	\$936.00

Budget by program area

There are two parts to the Association’s budget. The first part includes programs funded by the portion of the fee that is subject to a local rebate. In other words, for each dollar of the membership fee that is applied to this part of the budget, 20 per cent is rebated to local associations to fund their operations. Generally, this is referred to as the rebatable section of the budget. The remaining portion of the fee is used to help fund activities and/or programs not subject to the local rebate. This section is often referred to as the non-rebatable section of the budget.

Part 1: Budget subject to local rebate

The table below compares program area expenditures for the 2020/21 approved budget and the 2021/22 proposed budget. It also provides a general description of the mandate of each program area.

Note: Discipline related committees and staff have been transferred from Teacher Employment Services (former Member Services) to the Government program area.

Program area	Mandate	2020/21 approved budget	2021/22 proposed budget
Teacher Employment Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none">To improve the economic well-being of teachers through work in collective bargaining, pension and insuranceTo effect increases in the funding for educationTo provide services to individual members on employment issues, professional relations and matters requiring legal assistanceTo provide general service to and consultation with locals, sublocals and staff as requestedTo enhance awareness of the Association’s services	\$9,331,100	\$8,564,800
Professional Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none">To provide for the improvement of teaching practice through specialist councils, conventions, curriculum work, current issues, local leadership development, assistance to local PD committees, field service and representation to other subgroupsTo prepare a corps of instructors and facilitatorsTo improve the preservice education of teachers and liaise with other agencies in these fields and extended field experiences	\$5,380,000	\$5,511,400
Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none">To govern the Association and provide for its obligations beyond Alberta’s bordersTo liaise with other organizations within AlbertaTo maintain communications internally with the membership and externally with the publicTo improve conditions for education through the political involvement of membersTo conduct investigations into possible unprofessional conduct.	\$ 9,126,400	\$10,126,800
Building	<ul style="list-style-type: none">To provide and maintain physical facilities for Association offices in Edmonton and Calgary	\$3,389,600	\$3,268,000
Operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">To provide and maintain physical facilities for Association offices in Edmonton and Calgary	\$5,630,500	\$ 5,674,300
Nondepartmental commitments	<ul style="list-style-type: none">To provide for items that are not directly a part of any other department and for items affecting all or most other departments but which cannot be reasonably provided for within the department	\$2,021,300	\$2,073,800
Food Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none">To provide a catering service for participants at various meetings and other functions held at Barnett HouseTo operate a cafeteria service for staff, tenants and the public	\$850,700	\$801,600
Information and Technology Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none">To maintain and safeguard the Association’s information technology systems and equipment and to develop and maintain electronic capabilities and processes required by other program areas	\$2,264,400	\$2,125,600

Part 2: Budget not subject to local rebate

Member fees required to fund the second part of the budget are not subject to the local rebate, and 100 per cent of these fees are available to fund provincial Association programs. The table below compares expenditures and allocations for the 2020/21 approved budget and the 2021/22 proposed budget and provides a brief description of the nature of the expenditures.

Expenditure and allocation	Description	2018/19 approved budget	2019/20 proposed budget
Canadian Teachers' Federation	Provides support for the Canadian Teachers' Federation based on a per capita fee.	\$1,044,500	\$1,050,000
Capital fund	Provides an annual allocation to the fund, which is used to purchase any capital assets and to fund capital projects.	\$850,000	\$1,117,500
Special emergency fund	Provides an annual allocation to the fund, which is used to fund emergent actions as approved by Provincial Executive Council.	\$333,000	\$333,000
Technology services project development	Provides annual funding for projects related to membership application services; online services; unified communications; strategic technology management; and reporting, workflow and form services.	\$700,000	\$700,000
Specialist council membership grants	Provides the annual operating grants to the Association's 21 specialist councils.	\$870,000	\$870,000
Accountability action plan	Provides funding to support international partnerships focused on advancing system reform, as well as collaboration with subgroups and like-minded teachers' organizations that advance the profession's views.	\$105,000	\$105,000
Mortgage	Provides for principal and interest payments on the mortgages in place for construction and renovations that were completed.	\$2,200,000	\$2,275,000
Public relations campaign	Provides funding for a multidimensional public relations campaign to highlight the work of the Association and teachers to increase public awareness about the importance of public education and the need for appropriate funding for education.	\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000



NOTICES AND EVENTS

Annual science fair goes virtual

The 2021 version of the Canada-Wide Science Fair is set to take place virtually from May 19 to 21. Billed as a virtual field trip, the program features direct access to the “project zone,” the event’s main attraction, where students can view projects submitted by more than 400 finalists selected at regional STEM fairs across Canada. STEM Expo,

the country’s largest youth STEM outreach and promotional event, also returns with 50 virtual exhibits from leading STEM-related organizations. Students can also watch CWSF-TV with three hours of original STEM-related content each day, including interviews with Canadian Space Agency astronaut Dr. Robert Thirsk, Dr. Mona Nemer, Canada’s Chief

Science Advisor and short videos from STEM partners across the country. In early May, Youth Science Canada will hold a series of three webinars to offer registered teachers and parents an opportunity to learn more about the science fair. Register your class or child today at youthscience.ca.



The Alberta Teachers’ Association

The Alberta Teachers’ Association invites applications for the position of

ASSOCIATE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY (DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER)

Competition: ESO2/21
Location: Edmonton
Commencement: July 1, 2021 or to be negotiated

Under the general direction of the Executive Secretary (who serves as the Association’s chief executive officer), the Associate Executive Secretary assists in providing strategic and operational leadership related to the general management of the affairs and programs of the Association. Some of the duties include:

- planning and coordinating the business of the Association;
- overseeing and directing various Association initiatives, events and activities;
- examining trends;
- attending and participating in meetings of Provincial Executive Council, Table Officers and other committees as assigned and being responsible for Association representation;
- having general responsibility for matters related to the status of the teaching profession, political and legislative affairs, public relations and internal and external governance;
- acting as coordinator, Operations, and overseeing and facilitating the work of Human Resources, Information Technology Services, Document Production, Teacher Qualifications Service and Central Records/Archives; and
- acting on behalf of management in negotiations procedures with professional and support staff.

Candidates must demonstrate:

- extensive experience in providing leadership in public education with excellent strategic, financial, operational and people management skills;
- ability to foster effective working relationships and collaborative partnerships with both internal and external stakeholders;
- superior interpersonal, communication and collaboration skills;
- effective consultative and negotiation skills;
- strong organizational skills and attention to detail; and
- awareness of and ability to apply and administer relevant Alberta legislation, regulations and policies as well as Association Bylaws and administrative procedures.

In addition, the following are required:

- a valid teaching certificate and a minimum of five years of successful teaching experience in public education;
- ability to undertake travel and evening/weekend work;
- demonstrated prolonged commitment to the Alberta Teachers’ Association (or another Canadian teachers’ organization) will be considered an asset; and
- ability to work in the French language is also considered an asset.

Total compensation for this position includes a competitive salary, 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 July 1, 2021 (negotiable).

Applicants should quote position ESO2/21 and include the names, phone numbers and e-mail addresses of at least two referees who are not Association employees or elected officials of its provincial executive. Applications must be received by 4 p.m. on Friday, May 7, 2021 and should be addressed to

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

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

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—**Ayesha Clough** PUBLISHER, RED BARN BOOKS | AUTHOR OF *HOWDY, I’M JOHN WARE*

“I am an Inuk writer who does not write about the happily ever after because that has yet to occur for Inuit Canadians. The Alberta book community has allowed my voice to not only be spoken in print but to be heard and has given me a sense of home.”
—**Norma Dunning**, AUTHOR OF *ANNIE MUKTUK AND OTHER STORIES* AND *TAINNA*

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Substances, Technology, Porn
May 27, 9am-4pm CT

Self-Injury Behaviour in Youth
Issues and Strategies
June 1-2, 9 am-4 pm CT

Eating Disorders
From Image to Illness
June 17, 9am-4pm CT

Critical Incident Group Debriefing
July 6, 9am-4pm CT

Anxiety in Children and Youth
Practical Intervention Strategies
July 7, 9 am-4 pm CT

Autism
Strategies for Self-Regulation, Learning, and Challenging Behaviours
July 14-15, 9 am-4 pm CT

Gender and Sexual Diversity in Youth
July 21-22, 9 am-4 pm CT

Play Therapy
Tools for Helping Children and Youth
July 28-29, 9 am-4 pm CT

Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder
Strategies for Supporting
August 12-13, 9 am-4 pm CT

Harm Reduction
A Framework for Change, Choice, and Control
Aug 19, 9am-4pm CT




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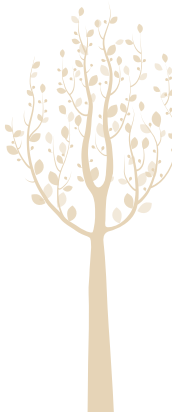
The ATA Educational Trust

The ATA Educational Trust is a charitable organization that has been supporting public education and providing grants to advance teaching practices in Alberta for over 30 years.

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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. 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!



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'Mom's the word

In recognition of upcoming
Mother's Day, we asked,
"Tell us about a funny time that
a student called you 'mom.'"

I teach eighth grade. One of my students came from the Philippines earlier in the year and was learning how to speak English. At the end of the day when I said goodbye to the kids, this student yelled, "Bye, mom!", which I assumed was accidental.

But day after day, he continued to call me mom. Finally, I asked him why.

And he said it was because I looked after them and cared about them, just like his mom did at home. He said, in his limited English, that he had a home mom and a school mom, and that it made him feel taken care of.

I've never been more proud to be a teacher than I was in that moment.

And now my entire homeroom calls me mom.

Lisa Tangen

Grade 12 social studies during remote teaching, I had one 17-year-old boy say "have a good day momma" at the end of every Google Meet class. When I finally asked him why, he said it was because I always say they are all my kids. Still warms my heart that every group I teach becomes a family.

Tara Lee Whittaker

Not quite mom: One of my kinder students last year one time looked at me, opened his mouth, then paused. He smiled and said "I almost called you grandad!" I was 24 at the time.

Kiara Biasini

I'm a female elementary teacher and I was once called "dad" when I taught Grade 1 a few years ago. The look on their face after realizing what they had said was priceless, and the whole class burst into laughter!

Lori James

Every time a Div 1 student has said "Mom can I have a hug?" I have been thrown up on. Every time. Three times.

Loralee Martin

I had a Grade 1 student slip and call me mom. We both laughed, then she said, "well, if you married my dad, I would call you mom." Again we chuckled. Then in a moment of seriousness she said, "I could introduce you to my dad you know. I think you two would get along."

Stacey Sharp

I teach Grade 4 and one year a student slipped and called me grandma. Six years later it was still a running joke between us, and she surprised me with a gift and Happy Mother's Day Grandma greeting card. Then when she graduated Grade 12 last year, I repaid the gesture with a gift and Happy Graduation Granddaughter card. It most definitely was a special bond, and I still enjoy our visits!

Kristin Presley

As an elementary teacher in my 40s, I was used to being called mom and thought it was quite sweet. When a young boy called me grandpa I was not so amused.

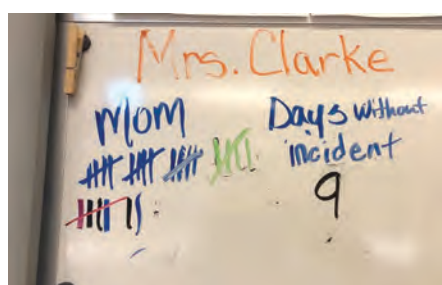
Linda Kayser Flanagan

I accidentally got called "mom" a few weeks ago. I'm a male high school math teacher.

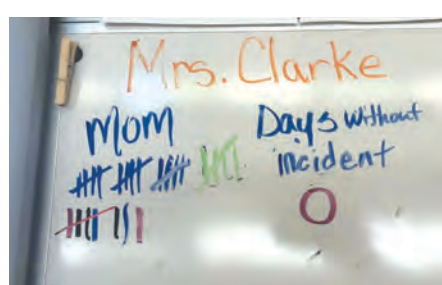
Jeff Scott

Years ago, I had a junior high student slip up and call me mom, only to decide it was perfectly fitting. From then on, the group officially named me "Momma S" because they recognized me as their "mom" at school. I so loved this special title!

Sarah J.



This is a regular event in my class. We have a running tally.



Oh no ... reset the count today... lol.

Kimberley Clarke



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