



# ATA NEWS

May 11, 2021 | Volume 55, Number 13

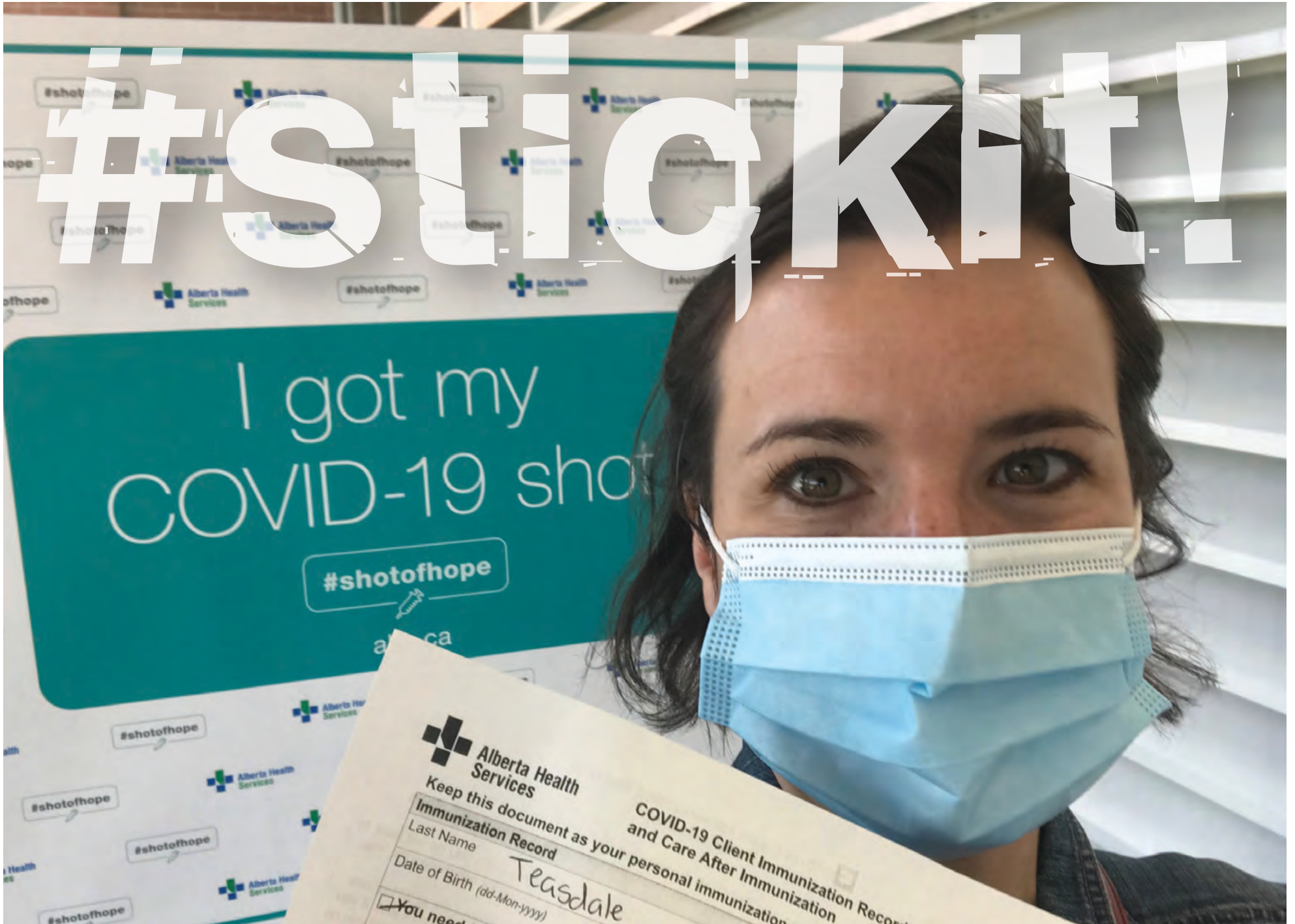
News Publication of The Alberta Teachers' Association

## Off Script

with ATA President Jason Schilling



A message  
of hope  
See page 5.



SUPPLIED

Christine Teasdale, a teacher at St. Mary Catholic School in Beaverlodge, shows off her documentation after receiving her COVID-19 vaccination. The ATA is encouraging teachers to get vaccinated and to post about their experience on social media with the hashtag #stickit.



### Poll position

Data shows that public backlash against the curriculum is very real.

Read Jonathan Tegtmeyer's editorial on page 2.



### COVID update

Restrictions and vaccinations spell relief for teachers but questions remain.

See stories on page 4.



### Hot topic

Curriculum expected to dominate discussion at upcoming Annual Representative Assembly.

See story on page 5.



### Word of caution

MLA-driven curriculum working groups not what they seem.

See story on page 7.

## Public backlash against curriculum is real



### EDITORIAL

Jonathan Teghtmeyer  
ATA News Editor-in-Chief

Facebook lies to you. Not necessarily in the way you think it does — although it probably does that too. I'm referring to how the Facebook algorithm creates an echo chamber around us of a relatively small group of people who commonly feel and think the same way we do.

So, when a big issue emerges, like the recently introduced draft K-6 curriculum, it can be difficult to tell whether the sentiment around it is as widely spread as our news feed would suggest.

This is why the Alberta Teachers' Association uses public opinion polling to assess these opinions more objectively.

The most recent round of polling, conducted by Environics Research in late April, just returned some very interesting information about the draft curriculum.

When asked in an open-ended question what they've heard about the

curriculum, people are most likely to provide responses like: it's not good, the content is inappropriate, teachers are unhappy about it, people dislike it, it doesn't have enough Indigenous content or it's simply racist.

When asked if they feel the draft curriculum is likely to provide students with the skills they need to lead successful lives, using language that echoes the government's own vision for the curriculum, a majority of Albertans say no.

*“ We need to engage people who are new to the conversation. ”*

Thirty-four per cent of Albertans strongly disagree that the curriculum will do that and another 19 per cent disagree somewhat. Only 17 per cent of Albertans agree that the curriculum will achieve the government's stated objective.

Two notes in passing: first, about a third of respondents, on either question, will say they are not sure or that they don't know; second, there would be a lot of people basing their response on perceptions and they may

not have done a ton of looking into it. But perceptions do matter when it comes to government policy and politics.

And the perception is not good. Those who have an opinion on the curriculum are three times more likely to have a negative one than a positive one.

This is driving a more general opinion of the government in a bad direction too. We also asked people if they approve of how the government is handling K-12 education in the province. Here, 60 per

cent of Albertans disapprove, compared to just 34 per cent who approve. Approval is at an all-time low over the 10-plus years we've been asking this question and it's a whopping 10-points lower than just last month.

Approval ratings for the government on education are about as low as they are on handling the COVID-19 pandemic, according to polls done elsewhere.

When I think about these results, I have two observations.

First, I don't see what the government has available as an exit strategy. The premier in particular has invested a lot of political capital into this curriculum fight, making it a key issue from day one when he started running for leader of the now-defunct PC party. But these numbers do not allow him to move forward with this draft. The Association has suggested a pause and an independent review, and I think he would be wise to take that suggestion.

Second, about a third of Albertans don't have an opinion on the draft curriculum. That is why it is incredibly important for us to continue to talk about it. In particular, we need to engage people who are new to the conversation.

According to polls we have conducted in the past, people trust what teachers say — especially ones they know — so we need to make sure that more people know the problems that teachers, as professionals, see in this draft.

We need to talk about it on the phone, over Zoom and across driveways with our family and neighbours, because just doing it on Facebook won't cut it. ■

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

## Teachers can be political while upholding professional obligations



### Q & A

Dennis Theobald  
ATA Executive Secretary

**Question:** I have several questions about how teachers may or may not express their views on the draft curriculum and other government decisions. What is acceptable from a professional and policy perspective? Is it acceptable for our ATA local to order and distribute to teachers and other community members lawn signs about the curriculum or education funding or classroom conditions?

**Answer:** It is perfectly permissible and appropriate for teacher locals to pass out signs that engage curriculum or any other policy issue relating to public education, even if that is “political” in that it refers to a specific position adopted by the government or another political party. What would not be acceptable is for the local to endorse a candidate or political party.

That said, locals undertaking such activities should contact the ATA's associate co-ordinator of communications, Jonathan Teghtmeyer, so that the Association can ensure that the reporting and accounting necessary to comply with provincial legislation

regarding “political advertising” is taken care of.

It is also entirely acceptable for teachers to choose to post signs relating to education or any other political issue, including signs that might endorse a candidate or party, particularly around election time. This is true for municipal, school board, provincial and federal elections. Engagement by individual teachers, even in a partisan fashion, is entirely acceptable and is even encouraged as a professional and civic responsibility.

*“ While teachers have a fiduciary obligation to their employer school board, they are not employed by government and enjoy the same right as any other citizen to engage in public political discourse. ”*

**Question:** How outspoken can our teachers be without crossing the line when it comes to board policy? Some of our teachers are very unhappy with decisions being made by our trustees, particularly about being enlisted to pilot curriculum.

**Answer:** If they are told to pilot the curriculum, a teacher can, and I would argue, should, request that they be informed of this in writing by the superintendent to establish this direction as a “lawful order of the

board.” The teacher could then reply in writing to the superintendent stating their concerns and indicating that they would comply with the order but only under protest.

Teachers may also speak out about their concerns with the curriculum generally while avoiding the direct criticism of the board. They can even say “I have an obligation as an employee not to criticize the decisions of the school board, but I do wish to point out my personal professional concerns regarding the draft provincial

curriculum and the process being used by the government to develop and implement it.”

The same principle applies with respect to other issues touching on provincial education policy. While teachers have a fiduciary obligation to their employer school board, they are not employed by the government and enjoy the same right as any other citizen to engage in public political discourse.

**Question:** Does the Association really need to be picking fights with

the government? How does this help teachers?

**Answer:** In the game of tennis, an “unforced error” is said to occur when a player makes a mistake that is attributed to that player's own failure rather than to the skill or effort of an opponent. While there have always been budgetary and policy tensions between the Association and various governments (including, let's not forget, the New Democratic government under Rachel Notley), teachers' current animosity toward this government's education policy is largely a reaction to several unforced errors, including the termination of the curriculum partnership between the government and the Association, the AIMCo takeover of the management of the teachers' pension plan and the impending imposition of additional red tape affecting the collection of member dues.

In each case, the government's decision was unilateral, made without meaningful consultation, and badly motivated. These were not fights that the Association sought out, but rather, they were forced upon us. A more pragmatic government would realize that teachers are politically diverse and that there are votes to be won among our number. A more imaginative government would realize that this situation might still be salvaged in a way that would serve its interests while benefiting teachers, students and the province as a whole. ■

# Curriculum must authentically value Indigenous Peoples

## VIEWPOINTS



**Melissa Purcell**  
ATA Executive Staff Officer, Indigenous Education

In 2014, the Government of Alberta made a commitment to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada to “rebalancing the education system by including Indigenous ways of knowing in curriculum to advance reconciliation for all Albertans.”

The draft K–6 curriculum recently released by Alberta Education represents an overturning of that commitment. Specifically, the draft curriculum

- fails to authentically include historical and contemporary contributions of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit within Alberta and Canada;
- perpetuates systemic racism through whitewashing of curriculum and any opportunities for learning the histories of the land through Indigenous perspectives and experiences;
- suppresses diverse perspectives of First Nations, Métis and Inuit and respect for holistic learning, being and doing;
- removes cultural authenticity and respect for First Nations, Métis and Inuit experiences and worldviews, and interconnectedness with the land; and
- promotes stereotypes and perpetuates misconceptions that Indigenous Peoples are only part of the past.

During the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) event in Edmonton on March 27, 2014, the Government of Alberta made a commitment to “rebalancing the curriculum and to including First Nations, Métis and Inuit perspectives and experiences.” Many survivors and intergenerational survivors from the Indian residential school system in Canada, as well as students, families, teachers, community and invited guests, were witnesses to this commitment to reconciliation. This commitment includes

- mandatory content for all Alberta students about residential schools and treaties,

- a kindergarten to Grade 12 curriculum development standard and
- support for related professional learning opportunities for teachers.

In 2016, the Alberta Teachers’ Association signed the Joint Commitment to Action (JCTA) with representatives of the Government of Alberta, the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation and other educational organizations within Alberta to ensure that all K–12 teachers receive additional training related to First Nations, Métis, and Inuit histories and cultures. This is a lifelong commitment that requires the collective efforts of all education partners, including the commitment to foster meaningful relationships with Indigenous Elders, Knowledge Keepers and communities to authentically advance reconciliation.

In keeping with this commitment and consistent with its responsibilities to uphold high standards of professional practice, the Association supported recognition of Indigenous peoples’ history, experiences, perspectives and insights in the foundational documents establishing the professional expectations of teachers. Effective Sept. 1, 2019, the Professional Practice Standards set out for teachers, school leaders and superintendents all included competencies to ensure teachers and all educational professionals have knowledge and understanding of Indigenous cultures and ways of knowing, residential schools and their legacy; treaties; and First Nations, Métis and Inuit experiences and perspectives, cultures and contributions in historical and contemporary contexts.

As part of its commitment to the JCTA and the TRC calls to action, the Association implemented the Walking Together: Education for Reconciliation professional learning project to support Alberta’s teachers and school leaders in

meeting the competency for developing and applying Indigenous foundational knowledge. Resources, workshops and supports continue to be developed to support teachers and school leaders in meeting this competency. More information can be found on the Association’s webpage ([www.teachers.ab.ca](http://www.teachers.ab.ca)) under My ATA > Professional Development > Indigenous Education and Walking Together.

Teachers and schools leaders across the province have been engaging in Indigenous education through ongoing professional development, exploring authentic resources, and establishing and maintaining relationships with local Indigenous Peoples. Teachers and school leaders have been working tirelessly to increase their foundational knowledge to contribute to rebalancing the education system. Albertans must have curriculum that reflects this work.

The Government of Alberta needs to work alongside First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Elders and Knowledge Keepers, communities and organizations, to ensure that the curriculum is rebalanced to authentically include Indigenous ways of knowing, and Indigenous perspectives, experiences and stories in order to advance truth and reconciliation. We need to continue to provide education on the importance of curriculum that accurately reflects Indigenous knowledge systems as a valid way of learning, being and doing. Albertans have a collective responsibility to hold each other accountable for our commitment to reconciliation through education.

Advancing truth and reconciliation requires individual and collective commitment, and is a process rooted in relationship and responsible action. Albertans need a curriculum that accurately and authentically reflects First Nations, Métis, and Inuit perspectives and worldviews *from within Alberta*. A new curriculum must reflect the commitment to reconciliation through education. The Government of Alberta must closely work alongside Indigenous Elders, Knowledge Keepers, communities and organizations throughout the entire curriculum development process. ■

## YOUR VIEWS

### FACEBOOK FEEDBACK

**On the ATA’s two-word response to government’s announcement that teachers can now be vaccinated.**

**Kay Elsa**

Love this!!!! Thanks for all your support

**Scott Carey**

Now it’s time we walk the walk. If you haven’t been vaccinated yet, book your appointment ASAP! Take care of yourselves!

**Chelsey McDonald**

I love this!!! Don’t give credit where credit isn’t due. This should have happened weeks ago. This response (and lack thereof) is perfect!

**David Whan**

That is all the announcement deserves. Excellent statement.

**Jr Roddy**

Jason Schilling, props to you for the concise response to today’s “announcement.” They want teachers to kiss their feet in gratitude. Thank you SO MUCH for giving them the precious little recognition they deserve for this decision!

**On the return to online learning**

**Sue Ngary**

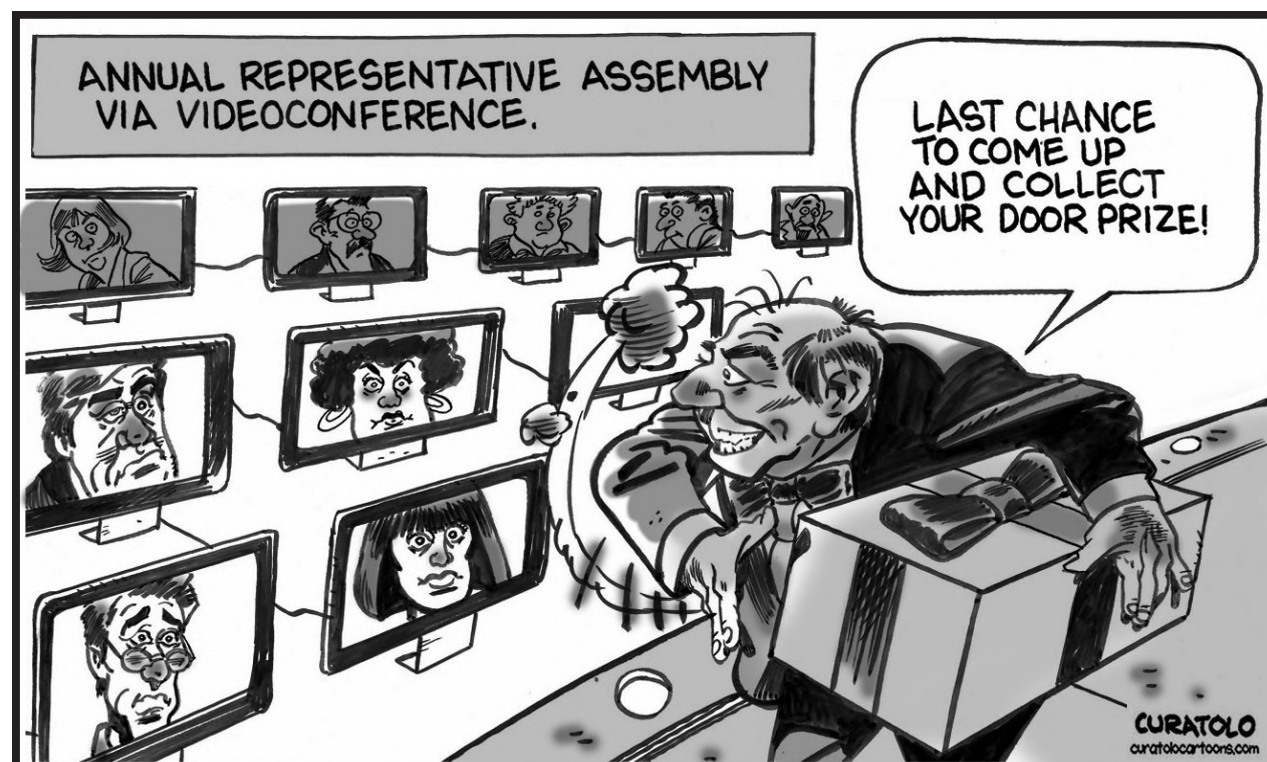
There are teachers for whom working from home is a very poor option: no resources, have to schlep all your stuff from school to the dining room table, young children all over the place while you try to work from the couch, older kids trying to do lessons in the same space as you are trying to work. Teachers should have the choice — with no students in the school, your own key to the building, you can go into your own room and shut the door. No exposure. It should be the teacher’s choice.

### ON TWITTER

**On the return to online learning**

**Jessica Campbell @Jess6ACampbell**

A huge shout out to every K–12 Alberta parent, teacher, administrator and mostly the students for going online today! This is the safe choice regardless of its difficulty. We are made to do hard things, and we have each other!



## FOR THE RECORD

“

When everyone’s working as hard as they are, it’s a bit of a slap in the face.

”

– Dr. Gabriel Fabreau, an internist at the Peter Lougheed Centre in Calgary, commenting on anti-lockdown protests on CBC’s *The Current* on Wednesday, May 5.

# COVID questions and concerns remain

## A Q&A with ATA president Jason Schilling

ATA News Staff

### 1. How much are you hearing from teachers on the COVID front?

I hear from teachers daily on their experiences with COVID. Teachers and school administrators have reached out to me on several different media platforms. I receive messages through emails, texts, phone calls, tweets, Facebook and Instagram. I also receive messages and updates about what is happening across the province from members of Provincial Executive Council and local presidents about what teachers are experiencing while teaching during a pandemic. Lastly, the ATA's pulse surveys have provided a wealth of feedback that I am grateful for. I have been hearing from a lot of school leaders as well about the amount of contact tracing they are doing in their schools.

### 2. What kind of reaction are you hearing to the vaccination news and the move to online learning?

Teachers were relieved to hear the news that they would finally be a priority for vaccinations but noted they were disappointed that the news did not come earlier. And I agree completely. Making teachers and other school staff a priority should have come several weeks sooner. The government has made it a priority to keep schools open during the pandemic so it would make sense to make the people working in schools a priority as well. Many teachers were eager to book their appointments. Timing here is important as well. By getting vaccinated now, teachers should be receiving their second shot before the start of the new school year.

There are mixed emotions and reactions to the news of K-6 moving online until after the May long weekend. Teachers want to be working in school with their students — that's the ideal situation; however, with the rise in cases in our communities and schools,

they were also worried. Shifting online is not easy and comes with its own unique challenges and stresses. The teachers I have been hearing from wished they were given a transition day to prepare their students and themselves. Substitute teachers were also disappointed and frustrated when their sub days were cancelled. We also heard from many teachers throughout the province who are working in situations that were exempt from moving online such as teachers working in Hutterite and Mennonite schools, along with teachers who are working with disabled students. Teachers were justifiably questioning why the words of the premier to work from home seemed to not apply to them.

### 3. What specific concerns remain for the ATA related to COVID?

There are many, and honestly some days it feels overwhelming. We have concerns about the supports that teachers, school administrators and students need to keep schools open. We cannot let our guard slip when it comes to increasing the safety from the people working and learning in schools. The ATA has been stressing the importance to the government to work on their "robust" plan especially in the areas of our province that have seen many COVID cases in their schools. We also need to keep the schools that have not seen many cases as safe as possible so that they can stay that way.

There are also many concerns about the mental health of teachers and students who have seen high instances of stress and anxiety this last year. The ATA will continue to advocate for concrete solutions and supports for mental health. This will be a major issue for the remainder of the school year and into the next one. Finally, another focus for the ATA and teachers is how students have struggled with their learning this year. We will need to focus on how to best support our students this year and



next. This will take more than just the ATA as this issue is one that requires many groups, such as parents, working together to address concerns. However, I firmly believe teachers are leaders in this area as they are experts when it comes to working with their students and knowing how to best address their academic needs.

### 4. What is the ATA doing on teachers' behalf to address these concerns?

The ATA continues to advocate for the needs of teachers and students both on a provincial and local level. There are many people working hard to bring resolutions to the concerns and issues we see in schools. Some issues are easy to address while others are more complicated and require more time. We are dealing with a myriad of issues that we have never had to deal with before and frankly, we are also dealing with a government and some school boards that do not want to collaborate on solving those concerns. That makes it more challenging and adds to the frustrations of teachers and school administrators. Teachers and administrators are always encouraged to call the ATA for assistance. The

ATA has also been working with other groups and associations to find ways we can work together on concerns we have in common around issues such as curriculum.

### 5. What actions by government, school boards or others is the ATA calling for?

The ATA is calling on the government to engage and to not only truly listen to the concerns we have on a variety of issues, but to listen to the reasonable and attainable solutions we have on those concerns. A good example of this is the moratorium we have called for on the new curriculum. Not only has the ATA has asked for a stop to the process, but we have offered a solution to work collaboratively on a new curriculum that would best serve our students.

The ATA would call on our other education stakeholders to engage in conversations that are collaborative and respectful as well. We are not the only group who worries about public education in our province and our students. There are many ways we can work together. It's just a matter of finding that path forward. ■

## Restrictions and vaccinations spell relief for teachers

ATA News Staff

With teachers and other education workers now eligible for COVID-19 vaccinations and K-12 learning having moved online, the ATA is expressing relief on behalf of Alberta teachers.

Following the government's May 3 announcement that education workers would be a priority when phase three of vaccinations begin, the ATA issued a news release containing a two-word statement from president Jason Schilling. "About time."

A few days later, on May 5, Premier Jason Kenney announced that vaccinations would be available to all Albertans older than 12, starting on May 10.

On the school front, Kenney announced on May 4 that K-12 learning would move online beginning May 7 and extend until May 25.

In a released statement, Schilling said teachers appreciate aggressive action to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 but have mixed emotions about moving online.

"Teachers have a heavy heart and mixed emotions to see learning move



Samantha Leggett, a teacher at Ecole Pine Grove Middle School in Edson, receives her COVID-19 vaccination.

online for the next two weeks. We would always prefer to be in schools working with students, but today's decision is a prudent move to regain control over the spread of COVID in Alberta," Schilling said.

He added that the ATA looks forward

to working with government and other stakeholders on ways to provide further support to schools when in-person learning resumes on May 25.

"Serious efforts to contain the pandemic in Alberta communities will be essential to ensuring that students,

teachers and staff can be together again safely," he said.

It was a further relief that teachers and school staff will have an opportunity to receive their first dose of vaccine before in-person learning resumes, he said.

Schilling said that school boards must now do their part to reduce the risk of spread by allowing all teachers who are able to work from home, to work from home.

"The government has stated that working from home remains mandatory unless the employer requires the employee's physical presence to operate effectively," he said. "We expect school boards to respect this clear direction."

In the latter part of April and into early May, Alberta was experiencing the highest per-capita rate of COVID-19 infection in Canada and the United States, with new cases exceeding 2,200 per day and active cases numbering more than 24,000. These numbers are the highest since the pandemic began, exceeding the previous peak experienced in December.

As of May 6, nearly 1.7 million doses of vaccine had been administered in Alberta. The province is scheduled to receive more than 2.4 million doses of vaccine by July 4. ■



## Feeling hopeless? Talk about it.

Leadership is multifaceted, with many nuances. With every success there are failures.

Over the last few weeks, I have attended several ATA events. There has been an obvious recurring theme at each ... COVID. This year has been tough, stressful and relentless. It seems like there is just one crisis after another, and it feels exhausting mostly because it is exhausting. We are all suffering from COVID fatigue as it has altered dramatically our professional and personal lives. This is not the way we expected to be teaching, working or living.

Another theme that came up at these events surprised me at first, but really stuck with me. Several teachers asked questions about hope. How do we remain hopeful after so many months of living in crisis? It's a great question ... timely and profound. Though I am fairly pragmatic by nature, I found myself reflecting a lot on the idea of hope.

Asking how one can remain hopeful in uncertain times gives us the opportunity to learn from crises while also allowing ourselves to examine what we value

and believe in. I wrote about hope in my master's project. In my final paper was a reflection on hope by Margaret Wheatley. According to Wheatley, hope "is the essence of being human" and "we as humans can get through anything as long as we're together...we are consoled and strengthened by being together." In reading more about hope, I came across Amie Filkow's excellent article from New Trail magazine where she notes that "hope is rooted in connection, that we take hope for granted, or even dismiss it" but that is exactly when we should be talking about it.

What does it mean to have hope? This is a complex question to pose in our complex world, and I don't have all the answers. But I do know that when feeling hopeless, I do exactly what Wheatley and Filkow suggest: I reach out and talk about it because that's exactly what we need to be doing. It's through our connections with each other that we remain hopeful. We learn this from our experiences in school — our students, our friends and families give us hope and that's why we keep fighting for what we believe in. ■

## Honorary membership recipients share love of teaching in rural Alberta

ATA News Staff

Despite their different backgrounds, Jerome (Jere) Geiger and Norman Yanitski have something in common: a love and appreciation for teaching in rural Alberta. They are also the latest recipients of Alberta Teachers' Association honorary memberships, the ATA's highest honour.

Geiger spent his 41 year career teaching in rural or remote locations across Alberta and Saskatchewan. Although most of that time was spent teaching grades 5 and 6, Geiger is proud to have taught courses in all elementary grades, including serving as a teaching principal.

Yanitski's education career spans 38 years, and includes 13 years as the superintendent for Black Gold School Division, and received the Inspiring Success Award of Distinction from the Black Gold board of trustees. He was also named one of the top 50 Not-For-Profit CEOs in Alberta by *Alberta Venture Magazine* for his role as superintendent.

In addition to going over and beyond to ensure students' success, both recipients are staunch supporters of public education. Geiger says he believes public education is the cornerstone of every society, and that "it has been, and must continue to be, the great equalizer of opportunity in this country." A tireless advocate for teachers, Geiger spent 10 years as a local president, first with the Wetaskiwin County Local and then Wetaskiwin Local No. 18 and 22 years on the ATA's



Jere Geiger, former PEC member



Norman Yanitski, former superintendent

Provincial Executive Council, serving as the district representative for the Central West geographic region (now Centre).

Yanitski is also no stranger to the Association, having served as a committee external observer and author for a number of articles for the *ATA News*. In "Why I Love the Teaching Profession" (*ATA Magazine* Summer 2019), he reflected on his career in education and credits his decision to become a teacher to his grandfather, who taught in rural Alberta. According to Yanitski, his grandfather showed him that, "as educators, more so than most professions, we have the ability to inspire hope and to ignite possibilities for the future."

The ATA's honorary membership is presented annually to individuals who have exhibited an exceptional commitment to public education in Alberta. Its list of recipients includes former lieutenant-governor Lois Hole, former premier Peter Lougheed and former University of Alberta president Myer Horowitz. ■



ATA past president Greg Jeffery chairs the proceedings during ARA 2020, which was held via Zoom. The annual event will take place via videoconference again in 2021.

## Curriculum to be the hot topic at ARA

Kate Toogood  
ATA News Staff

The Annual Representative Assembly (ARA) returns to Zoom on the May long weekend, and this year's event will feature another hot topic that starts with "C": curriculum.

From May 22 to 24, approximately 450 teacher representatives from 61 locals will come together to debate Association policy and its budget for the upcoming fiscal year. Included in the proceedings will be debates on Provincial Executive Council (PEC) resolutions, many of which are related to the new draft K-12 curriculum.

"The response to the government's draft curriculum was swift and strong, particularly from teachers, so it is no surprise that curriculum is leading on the agenda," said ATA president Jason Schilling. "I'm expecting to have a lot of great debate around curriculum and how we as a profession should move forward to respond."

Included on the ARA agenda are resolutions regarding curriculum content, consultation, the development process and partnership.

"The Association has worked with

successive governments and ministers of various political orientations over many decades, and while we have had differences of opinion, we have usually been able to find common ground on some issues," Schilling said. "The unceremonious termination of this relationship by the current government is harmful for public education, because it means they are not listening to teachers. So we need to discuss how to move forward and what can be done to repair this partnership."

Since the early 1990s, ARA has taken place in a hotel/convention centre over the May long weekend, alternating each year between Calgary and Edmonton, but in 2020 it took place in August in an online format due to the global pandemic. Following this successful implementation, the 2021 program will remain a virtual event while reverting to the May long weekend.

"We were very pleased with how members embraced the new format, proving just how engaged teachers are in the governance of the profession," Schilling said. "It was definitely a challenge to organize, but the ability for staff to pivot and for members to be flexible is a testimony to how important ARA is to everyone at the Association." ■

## Margaret Ann Armour to receive Public Education Award

ATA News Staff

The ATA's Public Education Award will be posthumously presented to Margaret Ann Armour at the Annual Representative Assembly held over Zoom on the May long weekend.

This award is offered occasionally to an individual or a group that has given outstanding support to public education in Alberta other than through teaching.

Born in 1939 in Scotland, Armour completed her PhD in organic chemistry at the University of Alberta and was passionate about sparking an interest in science in school-age girls. In 1982, she led a committee to study how to

get women and girls more involved in science. The committee turned into WISEST (Women in Scholarship, Engineering, Science and Technology), which is still active today at the U of A. Armour also advocated to educators, parents and employers the importance of encouraging women to consider careers in science and engineering.

Armour died in 2019, but her legacy lives on at the University of Alberta, where she developed 13 initiatives, including Project Catalyst, which aimed to increase the representation of women in faculty positions, and in every student who walks through the doors of Dr. Margaret Ann Armour School, located in southwest Edmonton. ■

# NOTICE AND EVENTS

## Re-Imagining Education in a Post-COVID World: Challenges and Opportunities

The University of Alberta chapter of Phi Delta Kappa International welcomes Dr. Paul Tarc presenting his perspective on the challenges and opportunities for classroom education in a post-COVID world.

In a recent article in Comparative Education, Tarc asks readers to “consider the online environment and the shutdown of face-to-face (f2f) classrooms as a condition that represents a new vantage for thinking, and particularly so for re-imagining and perhaps

re-visioning f2f pedagogies... to better understand educational ideals, those we hold to and those we have yet to fully develop.”

Tarc is an associate professor in the faculty of education at Western University.

The online presentation will take place on Thursday, May 20 from 7:00 to 8:30 p.m.

To register, send an email to [Aah4@ualberta.ca](mailto:Aah4@ualberta.ca).



## 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>

## Every child wants to learn.



Do you need more **STRATEGIES** to help the 1 IN 5 students with **LEARNING & ATTENTION ISSUES** succeed?

### Inside Learning Disabilities for Educators

### Inside ADHD for Educators

- \* 10-module online courses for educators
- \* Built on current brain-based research & evidence-based practices
- \* Accessible from anywhere at any time
- \* New sessions begin Spring, Summer, Fall & Winter



**FOOTHILLS ACADEMY SOCIETY**  
Professional Development Services

[www.foothillsacademy.org](http://www.foothillsacademy.org)  
A Leader in Learning Disabilities since 1979

“I’ve been teaching for 30 years and I’ve never seen a project work so effectively that **empowers youth** to gain **skills for their future**, and at the same time promotes empathy and caring.”

– Marilyn Nunn,  
YPI Lead Teacher

Inspire your Social Studies/Humanities 9 students with YPI’s **free**, hands-on civic engagement project. Learn how: [goypi.org/enrol-my-school](http://goypi.org/enrol-my-school)



# QUE FAIT LA

## Fédération Canadienne DES ENSEIGNANTES ET DES ENSEIGNANTS ?

## POUR NOUS APPUYER



## LE SAVIEZ-VOUS ?

### La Fédération Canadienne des Enseignantes et des Enseignants...

- a joué un rôle clé dans les revendications ayant mené à un octroi de 2 milliards de dollars en soutien aux provinces et aux territoires par l’entremise du Fonds pour une rentrée scolaire sécuritaire;
- a réussi à faire valoir auprès du gouvernement fédéral la nécessité de réduire le nombre d’heures requises pour toucher des prestations d’assurance-emploi (120 heures);
- défend les causes de l’égalité des sexes et de l’autonomisation des filles et des femmes au Canada et à l’étranger;
- est le seul organisme national du Canada qui se consacre à la promotion d’une éducation publique inclusive de qualité, financée par l’État;
- mène des recherches importantes sur des questions touchant l’éducation publique;
- permet, depuis 1964, aux enseignants de l’Alberta de collaborer avec des collègues dans des pays en développement dans le cadre du Projet outre-mer (PO) de la CTF/FCE afin d’améliorer l’enseignement et l’apprentissage et de promouvoir une éducation financée par l’État universelle, équitable et de qualité.



The Alberta Teachers' Association



The Labour Relations Board has ruled that a memo issued to teachers by Sturgeon School Division represented unfair labour practice.

## Sturgeon division engaged in bad faith bargaining – labour board

ATA News Staff

The Sturgeon School Division engaged in unfair labour practices when it deliberately and wilfully breached the collective agreement while engaged in local collective bargaining with teachers.

This April 21 decision from Alberta's Labour Relations Board (LRB) stems from a November 2019 complaint made by the Alberta Teachers' Association after the school board issued a memo restricting Morinville teachers from accessing personal leave.

Issuing the memo violated section 147(2)(b) of the Labour Relations Code, which prohibits employers from altering pay rates or terms of employment while bargaining is underway, stated LRB vice-chair William Johnson in his written decision.

"In this case, there is a deliberate and willful decision by the employer to breach the collective agreement during the (freeze)," Johnson wrote. "Intentionally flouting the parties' previous bargaining efforts by proceeding on the very terms expressly rejected by the other party during bargaining cannot be anything but bargaining in bad faith."

Teachers assigned to Morinville and Four Winds public schools were directed in an October 31, 2019 memo that they would not be allowed to access their two days of personal leave during

one week that December while the Four Winds School was being relocated from Morinville to a new site. Prior to this, the board had unsuccessfully attempted to negotiate an exception to the collective agreement for this period, and then, according to Johnson, "deliberately conducted itself in accordance with terms it knew the union did not agree with" by issuing the memo.

"This is an important win for Sturgeon teachers and the Association. We had a particularly bad round of bargaining in Sturgeon this year, and this distrustful behaviour rocked the relationship between teachers and the board to the core," said Sean Brown, ATA associate co-ordinator of collective bargaining.

"Teachers now feel vindicated to know the angst and frustration they were feeling actually stemmed from unfair and ultimately illegal actions by their employer," Brown said.

"Sturgeon teachers deserved to be treated better. It is essential now for the board to work on repairing relationships with their teachers after this tumultuous round of bargaining."

The April 21, 2021 decision can be viewed on the Alberta Labour Relations Board website.

Sturgeon School Division employs approximately 312 full- and part-time teachers in public schools serving the communities and surrounding areas of Bon Accord, Camilla, Gibbons, Guthrie, Morinville, Namao, Redwater and the rural St. Albert area. ■

# MLA curriculum groups prompt ATA warning

ATA News Staff

The Alberta Teachers' Association is advising caution after learning that some government MLAs have sent personal invitations to some teachers to participate in "curriculum working groups." The invitations were sent in reaction to considerable public outcry over the recently released draft K-6 curriculum. Parents and other constituents who have contacted MLAs to voice their opposition to the curriculum have also received invitations to participate in the working groups.

In a copy of an invitation sent by the constituency assistant on behalf of Tracy Allard, MLA for Grande Prairie, Allard explains that the virtual sessions are a response to messages from constituents and are meant to supplement consultations that the government has already undertaken.

ATA president Jason Schilling says the working groups, despite their name, do not reflect the teacher working groups that were previously facilitated by Alberta Education department staff.

"The term 'teacher working groups' was originally used to describe the very genuine and considered process undertaken by Alberta Education department staff to write and review what became the 2018 draft curriculum,"

Schilling said. "A working group is much more involved and robust than mere consultation."

The historical working groups involved strategic and planned selection of participants (with input from the ATA), who worked collectively over hundreds of hours and who were compensated with an honorarium. But perhaps most notable is that the sessions were conducted with education department staff and not politicians.

"This kept the work free from political interference," Schilling said. "What was proposed by these MLAs is exactly the opposite."

Schilling said the Association is concerned about the potential use of nondisclosure agreements, about how the information will be collected and shared, and about how the existence of these groups will be represented to the public. Thus, he is advising teachers to approach these invitations with considerable caution.

"We would normally encourage teachers to meet with their MLAs and discuss their concerns. In fact, if teachers want to have one-on-one meetings, we fully encourage it. But these working groups are too problematic, and we are concerned that any input would be used to legitimize a predetermined outcome or, at worst, used against other teachers in the profession." ■

## Education professors share research-based curriculum analysis

A group representing Alberta's faculties of education have published an analysis of the curriculum on a website, and are encouraging other academic experts to do the same. The analysis and call for other contributors to provide research-supported analysis and assessment has been published to a publicly available website.

The new website is spearheaded by Dr. Carla Peck, Dr. Sarah Elaine Eaton and Dr. Angela Grace. It aims to provide scholarly examination and critique from diverse, non-partisan sources across the province.

The website can be found at <https://alberta-curriculum-analysis.ca/>.



Online learning can be pretty gruff

Fallyn Dunkle, a Grade 5 student at H.A. Kostash School in Smoky Lake, attends an online class from the back seat of a pickup truck under the watchful eye of her pet goat, Hunchy.

# ATA Magazine short-listed for industry awards

ATA News Staff

The *ATA Magazine* is in the running for six awards by the Alberta Magazine Publishers Association (AMPA).

AMPA recently announced the finalists for its annual Alberta Magazine Awards and the *ATA Magazine* was listed in six categories: best cover, best print editorial package, best feature design, best illustration, best profile and best photograph (landscape, still life and architecture).

"Since we redesigned the magazine in late 2018, we've been getting great feedback from readers," said editor-in-chief Joni Turville. "These award nominations are another sign that we're producing a quality publication in our effort to share research and promising practice with teachers,



as well as engage with them in a meaningful way."

The winners will be announced at a virtual awards gala on June 3. ■



## The Alberta Teachers' Association

The Alberta Teachers' Association invites applications for the position of

### EXECUTIVE STAFF OFFICER, TEACHER EMPLOYMENT SERVICES— COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

**Competition: ESO3/21**

**Location: Edmonton**

**Commencement: August 1, 2021 or to be negotiated**

This position will assist in the work of the Teacher Employment Services—Collective Bargaining (TES—CB) program area with duties that may include being responsible for the organization and execution of field service in Teacher Employment Services; advising individual members on collective agreement entitlements; acting as a representative of the bargaining agent in collective agreement negotiations; handling collective agreement grievances; acting on committees and participating in the organization and conduct of TES—CB area conferences; serving as Association resource person in specific areas of expertise (eg, provincial or jurisdictional education finance, employee benefits, pensions, employment insurance or equity issues); and working on special or continuing assignments in other areas of Association operation. General information regarding the Teacher Employment Services program area and the services it provides is available in the Programs and Services section of the ATA website.

Candidates must demonstrate

- effective communication skills;
- strong organizational skills and attention to detail
- superior leadership and collaboration skills;
- ability to foster effective working relationships with both internal and external stakeholders;
- experience in bargaining and labour relations;
- experience with the application of collective agreements; and
- appreciation of the strategic context of collective bargaining.

In addition, the following are required

- a valid teaching certificate and a minimum of five years of successful teaching experience in public education;
- proven commitment to public education;
- ability to undertake travel and evening/weekend work.

The ability to work in the French language, a demonstrated commitment to the Alberta Teachers' Association (or other Canadian teachers' organization), course work in labour relations, experience in and/or knowledge of pensions and benefits are considered assets. The Association is committed to reconciliation and a candidate's knowledge and experience of related issues and/or membership in an Indigenous community is considered an asset.

Total compensation for this position includes a starting salary of \$136,000, 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 August 1, 2021 (negotiable).

Applicants should quote position ESO3/21 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 **Wednesday, May 26, 2021**, and should be addressed to a

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

For more information, please see our website at [www.teachers.ab.ca](http://www.teachers.ab.ca).

OP-HR-479/2021-04

**We want to hear from you**

We recently emailed you the 2021 ATRF Plan Member Survey, to learn about your experience with us so we can serve you even better.

Our survey closes on May 26 - don't miss out on this opportunity to let us know how we're doing.

We appreciate your time and feedback.

Visit:  
[ATRF.com](http://ATRF.com)

# 19000

**speech-language assistants are helping Albertans communicate.**

---

**Get the skills to provide support.**

Speech Language Pathologist Assistant Diploma

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

**SLIP US A TIP!**

We want to hear about news in your school, district or local.  
Please email managing editor Cory Hare at [cory.hare@ata.ab.ca](mailto:cory.hare@ata.ab.ca).

# BRINGING ART TO THE CLASSROOM.

## ALBERTA FOUNDATION FOR THE ARTS TRAVELLING EXHIBITION PROGRAM REGION 3 | TREX SOUTHWEST

EXHIBITION BOOKINGS OPEN MAY 2021!  
JOIN OUR MAILING LIST!

Email: [trex@albertasocietyofartists.com](mailto:trex@albertasocietyofartists.com)

[albertasocietyofartists.com/trex-southwest/](http://albertasocietyofartists.com/trex-southwest/)



# ARE YOU READY FOR RETIREMENT?

**A financially sustainable benefits plan, by retirees, for retirees.**

Visit the **ARTA Channel** on YouTube to discover how ARTA can ease you into the elite state of retirement.



Alberta retired teachers/spouses who have contributed to the ATRF for five or more years are eligible to become ARTA members at ANY AGE and take part in the Retiree Benefits Plan, which includes;



**COMPREHENSIVE COVERAGE** which includes prescription drugs, paramedical services, vision care, hearing aids, private duty nursing, private or semi-private hospital rooms, medical aids and appliances, and home care



**EMERGENCY TRAVEL INSURANCE** coverage for sudden and unforeseen medical travel expenses when you leave your province of residence. ARTA travel coverage is unique and does not include pre-existing conditions or stability clauses



**TRIP CANCELLATION AND INTERRUPTION INSURANCE** with \$10,000 per covered person per trip coverage plan options



**THREE STAND-ALONE DENTAL CARE OPTIONS** with preventative, minor or major services coverage available



**ANCILLARY PROGRAMS** which include the Boom discount program, ARTA Cares program which provides support to you and your family, scholarships for family members, social connectedness programs, and much more.

Visit [arta.net](http://arta.net) for more information or call **1-855-212-2400** and speak to someone in our member services team about becoming a member.

**LOOKING AHEAD TO NEW ADVENTURES!**





The Alberta Teachers' Association

# THE HOMEWORK CONTEST

◆ 2021 ◆

**WE'RE PROUD TO BE IN YOUR CORNER.**

**REQUEST A HOME OR AUTO QUOTE FOR YOUR CHANCE TO WIN:**



**CALL 1-888-732-6751 OR VISIT WWW.MORGEX.COM**



**can we talk?**

Plus, as part of our Commitment to Teachers in Alberta, Morgex will make a donation of \$20 for every home or auto insurance quote to the "Can We Talk" campaign hosted in partnership by the ATA and the Canadian Mental Health Association-Alberta Chapter.\*\*

**Proudly Supporting Teachers for the Last 35 Years**

Morgex Insurance is a tradename of and a division of Johnson Inc. ("Johnson"), a licensed insurance intermediary. Home and car policies are primarily underwritten, and claims handled, by Unifund Assurance Company ("Unifund"). Described coverage and benefits applicable only to policies underwritten by Unifund. Car insurance not available in BC, SK or MB. Home and car insurance not available in NU. Johnson and Unifund share common ownership. \*AIR MILES® Reward Miles awarded only on regular home and car insurance policies underwritten by UAC. At the time the premium is paid, one (1) Mile is awarded for each \$20 in premium (including taxes). Miles are not available in SK or MB. \*\*Up to total \$20,000 (CAD) donation. Promotion open April 1, 2021 - June 30, 2021 ("Promotion Period") to legal residents of Alberta who are current ATA members ("Eligible Persons"). Eligible Persons must call Johnson during the Promotion Period and obtain a home or auto quote. Limit of one (1) donation per person and household. Offer subject to change. †NO PURCHASE NECESSARY. Open February 1, 2021 to May 31, 2021 to legal residents of Canada (excluding Quebec and Nunavut) who at the time of entry and prize fulfillment: (1) have reached the age of majority in their jurisdiction of residence and (2) are a member of the Alberta Teachers' Association with whom Johnson Inc. has an insurance agreement. Five (5) prizes available consisting of \$5,000 CAD. Odds of winning depend on the number of eligible entries received. Math skill test required. Rules: [www.morgex.com/homework](http://www.morgex.com/homework)

# REDUCE ENERGY COSTS FOR YOUR SCHOOL WITH SOLAR POWER.

Submit an expression of interest today. [mccac.ca](http://mccac.ca)



The approval and allocation of qualified funds will occur on a first-come, first-served basis based on program application approval dates. In the event over subscription occurs, applicants will be placed into the first-come, first-served funding wait-list.



## YOU TEACH TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE. SO DO WE.

Our fully online Post-Graduate Certificate in Special Education is coming in the fall of 2021. This post-graduate certificate is the first step in our Specialized Applied Graduate Experience (SAGE) program.

For more information, please visit [coursesforteachers.ca/ab](http://coursesforteachers.ca/ab) or follow us @queenscte on social media.

 [coursesforteachers.ca/ab](http://coursesforteachers.ca/ab)

► Would you like to teach for us? To apply, visit our website.



## PURPOSEFUL, CONCERNED AND RESPONSIVE.

They are the Educators and part of the FACE OF EDUCATION, and we believe in them.



The Alberta Teachers' Association

ADVERTISING IN  
**ATANEWS**

For advertising information, contact Trevor Batty at Trevor Batty Advertising Sales 1-778-773-9397 [trevor@tbasales.ca](mailto:trevor@tbasales.ca)

**Next deadline**  
Thursday, May 19, 2021, 4 p.m.  
(Publication date June 1, 2021 )  
Advertisers are encouraged to book early – space is limited.

**Circulation:** 38,000  
We accept Visa, Mastercard, cash or cheque.

# TALENT

May 11, 2021 | Volume 55, Number 13

## Hats On! FOR MENTAL HEALTH

Teachers (and others) donned hats on May 5 for Hats On For Mental Health day. The annual event aims to raise awareness of the importance of good mental health and remove the stigma associated with mental illnesses.



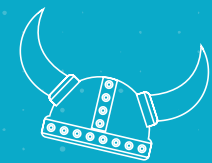
As this marks day three of virtual learning for @albertateachers and my Grade 8 kiddos, checking in with our mental health is more important than ever!  
Caterina Lazor, St. Theresa Catholic School, Sherwood Park



Heidi O'Neill, Iron Ridge Intermediate Campus, Blackfalds



The leadership team at Brookwood School in Spruce Grove: Karen Stride-Goudie (left) and Rosanne McIntyre



#WatsontheWabbit would like to remind everyone to wear their hat for #HatsOnForMentalHealth day.  
Caitlin Campbell, Cooper's Crossing School, Airdrie

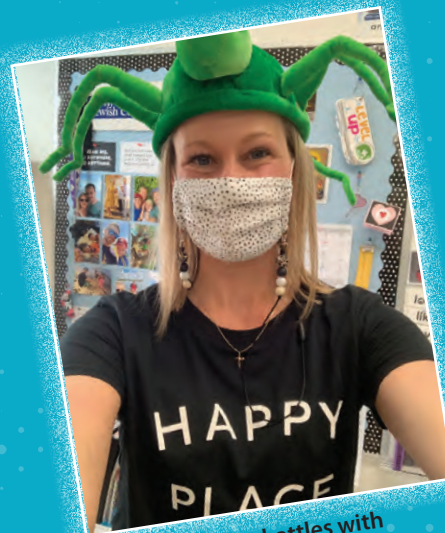
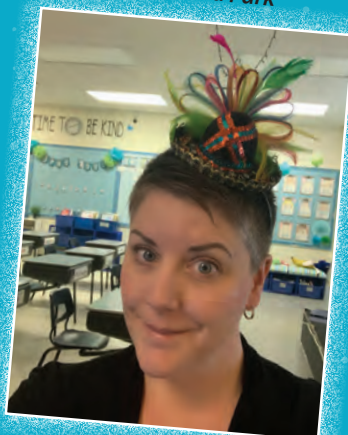


Especially now, check in on those around you, be kind, listen to their stories or hold space for the ones unspoken. Be gentle and compassionate. Each of us are doing the best we can with what we have in that moment.  
Bonnie-Lynne Boehm, St. John XXIII Catholic School, Fort Saskatchewan



Proud to support Hats On for Mental Health! I've had my struggles and am not afraid to admit it. I'm trying to be stronger than the labels trying to hold me back.

Jill Stetsko, Holy Spirit Catholic School, Sherwood Park



I've had my own battles with mental health and am always here for anyone who is struggling.  
Joclyn Beliveau, St. Nicholas Catholic School, Sherwood Park



Now more than ever our students need this reminder. It is OK not to be OK. Normalize mental health issues and if you need to talk, reach out to someone you trust.

Marty McKeever, Paul Kane High School, St. Albert



Johnny Dulku, Westwood High School, Fort McMurray

