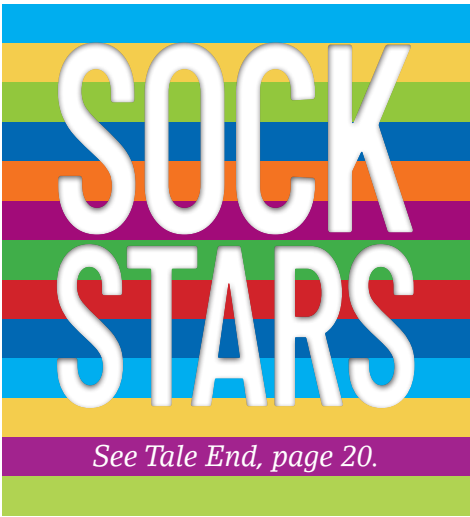




Remote but united
Virtual ARA takes care of business | See pages 4 to 11.



ATA NEWS

June 1, 2021 | Volume 55, Number 14

News Publication of The Alberta Teachers' Association



GOVERNMENT OF ALBERTA

ARA delegates pass motion of non-confidence in Education Minister Adriana LaGrange | Page 5

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Curriculum forum draws calls for continued advocacy.
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Pitfalls and Precautions

Maintain propriety with students at all times.
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Executive Report

Grant enables ATA to advance research into women in leadership.
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Success Stories

Students explore important issues through art.
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Dismissing the non-confidence motion is a huge mistake



EDITORIAL

Jonathan Teghtmeyer
ATA News Editor-in-Chief

"This is not an ideological issue," said one ARA delegate in debate. "While we may debate and disagree on the issues, widely on education policy, some things are too far."

The former UCP constituency president and founding member of the Wild Rose Party said that this government pays "lip service" and engages in "gaslighting" that he, himself, has been subject to from the premier and education minister.

"As a result, they have done the impossible. They've united all of us regardless of ideology, against them."

The vote of non-confidence in the education minister passed with 99 per cent support.

After the vote, ATA president Jason Schilling cautioned the government against dismissing the motion.

"Anyone who thinks that these delegates do not represent their colleagues is deluded," said Schilling.

"They need to take out the earplugs and start listening."

Listening was an important theme brought up numerous times by speakers at ARA debating the resolution. They expressed frustration with trying to engage MLAs and the minister while receiving responses that were unsatisfactory, if they received any response at all.

Schilling's comments, though, were prescient. The minister's press secretary issued a statement Sunday afternoon dismissing the result of the vote.

"It is disappointing that the union continues to play politics with our students' education," wrote press secretary Nicole Sparrow in a statement to media. "While the union advances its own special interests, minister LaGrange's top priority will always be Alberta's students."

By describing the interests of teachers as special interests and characterising this vote as playing politics, the government is continuing its strategy of undermining teachers and brushing off their concerns.

What delegates described throughout the debate was not political at all. They talked about real-world consequences related to numerous government decisions over the past two-and-a-half

years: curriculum, inadequate COVID supports for schools, funding cuts, removal of supports for 2SLGBTQ+ students, staff layoffs and the pension takeover. They talked about how they and their colleagues were left feeling as a result of government decisions, messaging and tactics. They brought forward all of the very real concerns from their colleagues across the province that the government has not been listening to.

Premier Jason Kenney went further in question period the following week, turning the response from dismissive to attacking.

"The government decides who ministers are, not special interest groups and not unions," he said on May 25.

He then went on to share intentionally misleading statements about the ATA.

"Mr. Speaker, the government is accountable to Albertans, not to a union... that spent \$2 million trying to re-elect the NDP in the last election."

Not to dwell on this ridiculously false statement, but the facts need to be stated. The ATA spent \$278,577 on election advertising in the 2019 campaign and the ad campaign was non-partisan, asking Albertans to "put education first" when they voted. If Kenney thinks putting education first

is a message to re-elect the NDP, then what does his government stand for?

Kenney went further on Thursday. "The minister of education was elected by her Red Deer-North constituents. She has the complete confidence of this government."

And he turned the legitimate concerns of teachers, which his government has long been rejecting, into a joke.

"I will point out that former education minister Jeff Johnson achieved a 100 per cent nonconfidence vote from the ATA. My question for our minister is: what is she doing wrong?"

I get why the government might respond in this way. They do not want to show any vulnerability at all, and right now they are very vulnerable — especially when it comes to education.

I hope though that, behind the scenes, this government is using this motion, like the PCs did with the non-confidence motion on Johnson in 2014, as a wake-up call.

To quote the delegate from the beginning of my column: "something is rotten in Alberta."

And to quote Jason Schilling: "If the government wants to dismiss this motion, they do so at their own peril." ■

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

Let's take the summer to assess return-to-school



Q & A

Dennis Theobald
ATA Executive Secretary

Question: With schools returning to in-person instruction after being online for two weeks and with the prospect of an end to pandemic restrictions as we move toward the summer, what have we learned about in-school transmission of COVID-19?

Answer: To answer that I turned to Dr. Lynora Saxinger, infectious diseases physician and associate professor at the University of Alberta. Dr. Saxinger is co-chair of the Scientific Advisory Group for the Alberta COVID-19 Emergency Coordination Centre and she has been generously advising the Association on matters related to managing the pandemic in schools.

She responded that this is a really complex question. Saxinger then pointed us in the direction of recent publications that shed some light on what has been learned about the pandemic in schools, while indicating that we need to be cautious about drawing firm policy conclusions based on a superficial reading of these reports — much is dependent on specific detail and methodologies reflected in each.

Understanding that, I think we can draw some conclusions:

- The cessation of in-person instruction and extra-curricular activities has had negative effects on the social, emotional and educational well-being of students. Preventing transmission of SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, in schools is imperative for safe in-person learning.
- Preventive measures such as masking, physical distancing, hand hygiene and improved ventilation reduce transmission of SARS-CoV-2, together with vaccination, are important elements of a comprehensive approach to promoting school safety.
- As indicated in a recent study out of Utah, for high school students at least, there is evidence that school-based COVID-19 testing should be considered part of a comprehensive prevention strategy to identify SARS-CoV-2 infections in schools and sustain in-person instruction and extracurricular activities.
- Young children are significantly less affected by COVID-19 than adults. There are both fewer cases in children, and fewer children who are severely unwell. The exact reason why there are so few children with confirmed COVID-19 is unknown. Recent evidence from Iceland, Japan and Korea shows that children may also be less likely to become

infected with SARS-CoV-2 following exposure.

- It appears that children under the age of 10 may not play a significant role in spreading SARS-CoV-2. A German study concluded that students this age are three times less likely than the general population to test positive for the virus and their parents are also considerably less likely to be infected than others in the community, indicating that their children are not a source of infection. Generally, young children have not been found to have a significant role in household transmission.

If all this sounds familiar, it is because it aligns with advice that the Association has offered, based on Dr. Saxinger's advice, throughout the pandemic. As vaccination rates increase, it is tempting to conclude that we can quickly remove restrictions and that the lessons reported above will shortly be moot. That would be a mistake.

As Saxinger points out, while there is good news on the vaccines front, with a growing portion of the population having some degree of protection from at least one dose of a vaccine or having been previously infected and recovered, the vaccination rate is hardly uniform across the province and some communities have very low rates of vaccination compliance.

Furthermore, the emergence of variants of concern (VOCs) that may

be communicated at a higher rate, even among those who have been previously infected or who completed only the first round of their vaccination, is a significant problem that will have to be addressed through enhanced testing and rapid response as well as by the promotion of vaccinations to underserved, vulnerable or reticent populations.

As the school year comes to a conclusion, the summer time provides an opportunity to assess our readiness to return to mass in-person school and the time necessary to look at taking steps to make schools safer now and into the future.

COVID-19 was a tragedy for many Albertans. Let's not make it meaningless by failing to learn its lessons. ■

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Parents and teachers need to work together



VIEWPOINTS

Brandi Rai
President, Alberta School Councils' Association

I am, by nature, a person of optimism, planning and care. I instinctively lean toward the silver linings. Challenges are often just opportunities I've yet to reframe. As I reflect on my first year as president of the Alberta School Councils' Association (ASCA), I am drawn by nature to the glimmers of community building, the pinpoints of hope and the waves of compassion I saw this past year.

I have experienced, personally and through this role, that relationships between students and teachers, parents and teachers, and teachers and school communities have been the foundation upon which education has existed and survived through a global pandemic. The value of strong relationships built with great care on integrity, mutual respect and trust is immeasurable.

It is these relationships that I believe we need to continue to nurture and lean into as we navigate our education experiences together — always together.

The draft curriculum being presented to Albertans for piloting and then implementation simply does not meet the needs of our students, nor is it of the quality that our children deserve. ASCA members recently passed policy at our annual general meeting related to the renewal of curriculum. Our members believe that the creation, piloting and implementation of curriculum must have opportunities for meaningful parental and educator engagement that is free from influence from elected officials.

These requirements have not been met with the current draft curriculum. Additionally,

our members want to delay the implementation of any draft curriculum until it has broad support from education professionals, teachers, parents and citizens. School councils have legislated roles and as school communities work with their councils to support students, conversations around the draft curriculum will be happening.

It is important for parents, teachers, administrators, trustees and superintendents to work together to understand the current version of the draft K-6 curriculum. It is imperative that our relationships strengthen and our understanding of each other's needs and perspectives deepen.

This pandemic and the mismanagement of the response to it has depleted many of us in a variety of ways. Sometimes, under great stress, people collapse into themselves and have no energy to do even one more thing, no matter how great an impact that one thing might have. I recognize that we are weary. I recognize that, separate from the pandemic, many Albertans have felt unheard, disrespected and undervalued by some of the provincial policies that have been passed in the last couple of years.

All these things are valid obstacles, and all these things have drained us. Yet there is another thing we need to do, irrespective of our weariness.

From my weary vantage point, I look for the silver lining. I dare to hope, even. I am reminded of all the times that teachers have shown up for families. I am reminded of the opportunities that are created for students when parents work in collaboration with their school

communities. I revel in the joy that students have when talking about their school day — that special lesson from a really cool teacher or that awesome conversation with a peer that lifted them up.

We are making it through a pandemic, within a quality education system, because of those relationships. These resilient relationships have held us up, and they can propel our fatigued selves forward. Parents are partners in education, and it is crucial that we work together with teachers to move this draft curriculum from implementation back to the table for a rewrite. There must be a process by which curriculum is developed, not in isolation from the people who will experience the implementation (teachers, students, parents), but in collaboration with those stakeholders most impacted by new curriculum.

I am not an expert in curriculum; I am a partner with teachers, and I am engaged in our children's education locally and provincially. I, along with many parents on school councils, will stand with teachers as we advocate for a quality, inclusive curriculum that we can be proud of and, most importantly, that our students will benefit from.

Students deserve more than lifted racism, age-inappropriate outcomes and rote memorization. Teachers deserve to have curriculum that honours the integrity of their profession. Albertans deserve an education system that reflects the values of our communities and helps young citizens grow into themselves. We must continue to build relationships that help us as we reject this current version and partner to reiterate our expectations of what new curriculum must be.

Thank you, all teachers, for your dedication, hard work and partnership.

I am a partner in education, and I invite all teachers to stand beside me. ■

YOUR VIEWS

FROM TWITTER
AND FACEBOOK

On the ARA vote of non-confidence in the minister of education

Jonathan Sharek @jsharek

Hey issues managers: 40,000 or so people whom I would not term as "union bosses" just made quite the statement. Teaching and learning is going on in spite of the #UCP fiasco machine.

Jhalsies @JenAnne11

Teacher after teacher is speaking passionately about the breadth and depth of Minister @AdrianaLaGrange incompetence. Urban, rural, minority teachers, her own riding — speaking out for the "safety and dignity" of students and teachers.

Jamie Lee

Apparently 99% of teachers know the definition of "robust."

Susan Richards

The motion should pass unanimously! No debate needed at all.

On ARA

Charlene Daub

Thank you to all delegates for sacrificing your non-work and family time for our Association.

Gloria A @LaYoyalu

My first ARA and listening to these speeches makes me feel even prouder to be an Alberta teacher.

James Slattery @jmshlattery

When you can't applaud ARA speakers in person this will have to do.



Trih @ab_teacher2

In tears listening to delegates speak about funding cuts, attacks to our most vulnerable students, stressed out teachers, and the heartache they feel. #ARA2021

Sara Ashly @saraaaashly

I'm so proud to be a teacher in Alberta right now #ARA2021

ON TWITTER

Dr. Jody Carrington @DrJCarrington

As a mama and an author, there is a group of people who have stolen my heart. These souls do holy work and are some of the most important people. We call them educators. They continue to show up for our babies, and it's time for us to look after them.

FOR THE RECORD



The ATA has a long history of raising public education as an issue in elections, in a non-partisan fashion, in order to ensure that the parties clearly outline their plans for education.

We believe integrity matters, and so we do this with full transparency, in compliance with election law. Jason Kenney, of all people, should be very careful not to accuse the Association of violating election laws.



— ATA president Jason Schilling in a news release following Premier Jason Kenney's statement that the ATA spent \$2 million trying to re-elect the NDP during the last election. A registered third party, the ATA spent \$278,577 on a non-partisan public education campaign.



Persistence, not perfection

Teachers can lead province to a better future, ATA president urges

Cory Hare
ATA News Managing Editor

The past year has been “tough, stressful and relentless,” but there is hope for the future.

That was the message shared by ATA president Jason Schilling during a speech to delegates of the 104th Annual Representative Assembly, which took place virtually over the May long weekend.

While being careful to avoid the clichés that have become cringeworthy during the past year, Schilling acknowledged that challenges related to the COVID-19 pandemic have dominated teachers’ lives.

“It’s stressful and frustrating to think of what this last year has done to our classrooms and way of life. We have mourned the loss of traditions we hold dear, we stayed home, we waved to loved ones through screens and did what was asked of us in the hope that our efforts will make for a better future,” Schilling said.

“As frustrating and stressful as this last year has been, I am continually inspired by the work you do day in and day out for public education in Alberta. Like you, I believe in public education. I believe in teachers and principals. I believe in our students.”

Schilling urged teachers to look ahead because “a return to normal will never happen.”

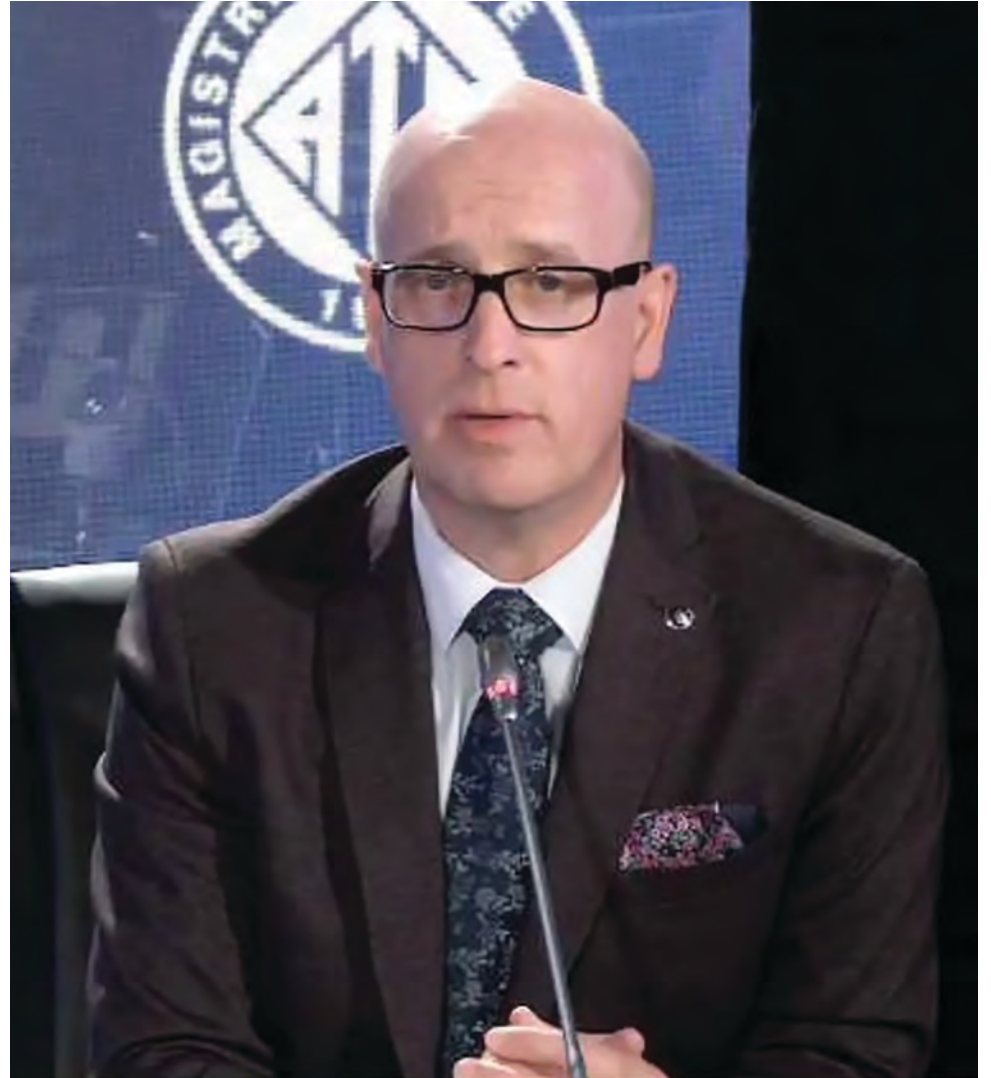
“We can’t go back — only forward. As dedicated teachers, we just did what needed to be done, but for many of us, that dedication has come at a high emotional cost. We need to honour that. We need to recognize the toll that the last 15 months has taken on all of us,” he said.

“But we also need to recognize that we have a chance to reimagine a better, stronger, more inclusive future for our students and public education in this province we love. I believe that teachers and the ATA can lead this opportunity.”

Beyond COVID, Schilling acknowledged the pressure created by a continuous stream of other crises, such as the government’s handling of the teachers’ pension plan and curriculum redesign. Referencing a lesson he learned from broadcaster and comedian Candy Palmater, he urged teachers to let go of a desire to be perfect and to focus instead on being persistent.

“So together we will persist. We will persist in our condemnation of a flawed curriculum. We will persist in our challenge to AIMCo’s right to manage our pension. We will be relentless in our advocacy for our students and for public education,” Schilling said.

“We will come out of this — we will not be broken. We need to reach way down into our last reserve of energy to make it to the end of this year. We will work together to reimagine a better future, for our association, for our kids and for ourselves.” ■



SCREEN CAPTURE/CORY HARE

ATA president Jason Schilling urges teachers to be persistent in their advocacy for improvements to public education during his address to delegates at the Annual Representative Assembly on May 22.

ATA moving forward despite COVID challenges

Kim Clement
ATA News Staff

The COVID-19 pandemic, coupled with the failure of the government to show leadership around the operation of schools has tested both teachers and their Association, said executive secretary Dennis Theobald at the 104th Annual Representative Assembly (ARA) on May 22.

Speaking to more than 450 delegates who attended ARA via Zoom, Theobald said that schools and school authorities were largely left to their own devices to create safe spaces as best they could for students, staff and teachers while community messaging and health measures remained both incoherent and often contradictory.

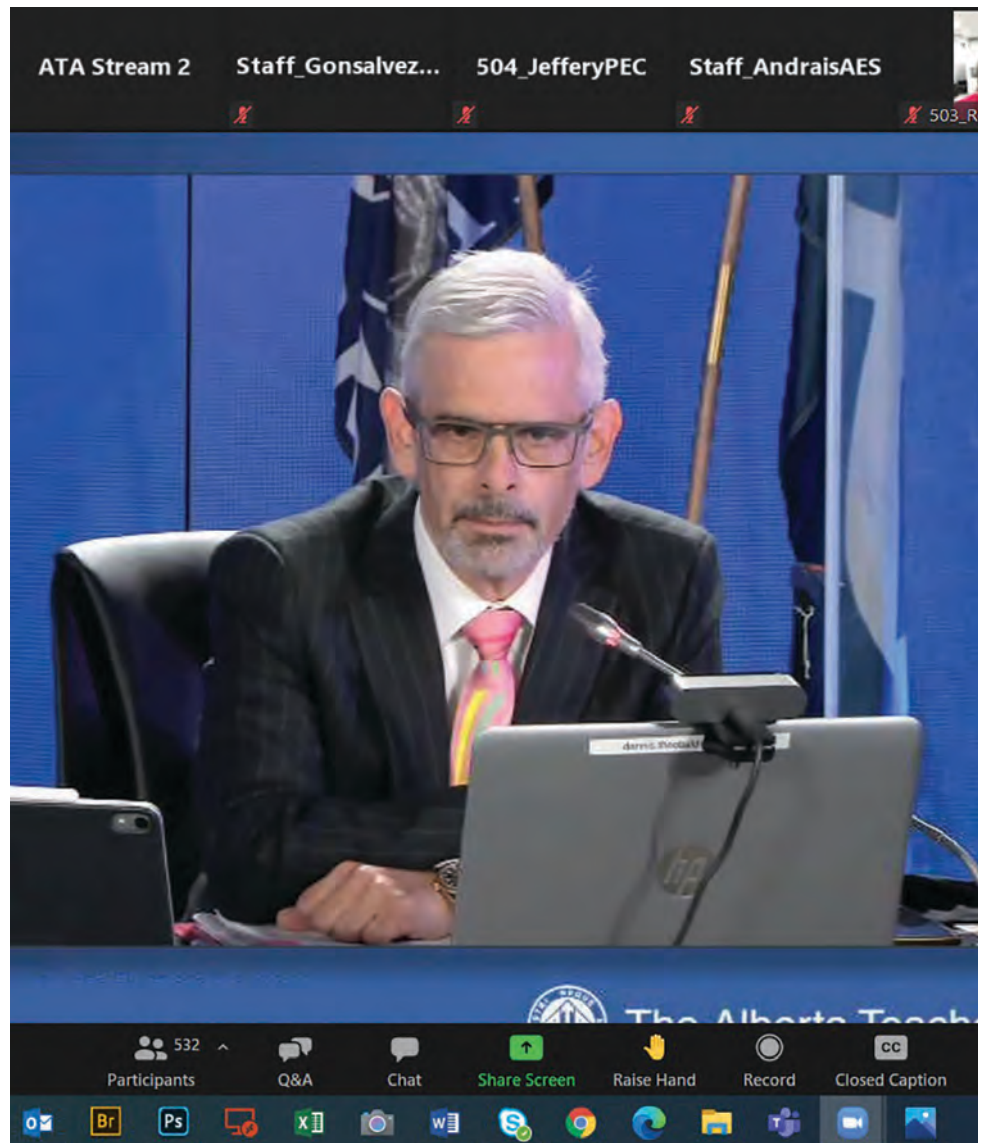
“Even when faced with uncertainty and anxiety, teachers were there for their students. The pandemic didn’t change that. And for 104 years, the ATA has served and advocated for members. The pandemic didn’t change that either,” Theobald said.

While schools and teachers struggled to navigate the muddy waters of teaching through a pandemic, Theobald stressed that the Association was also affected, as staff strived to continue its regulatory, professional and union obligations to members. When schools closed the previous March, so did Barnett House and SARO, with staff dispersed to work from their homes.

“These steps were essential for ensuring that the Association could maintain critical services to its members while ensuring, to the greatest degree possible, the safety of our employees and their families. The Association was determined to model the concern and response that teachers expected of the government and employers,” he said. “Throughout, the guiding principle that informed all of our operational decisions was to sustain the highest quality of service to members while protecting the public health of teachers and the community.”

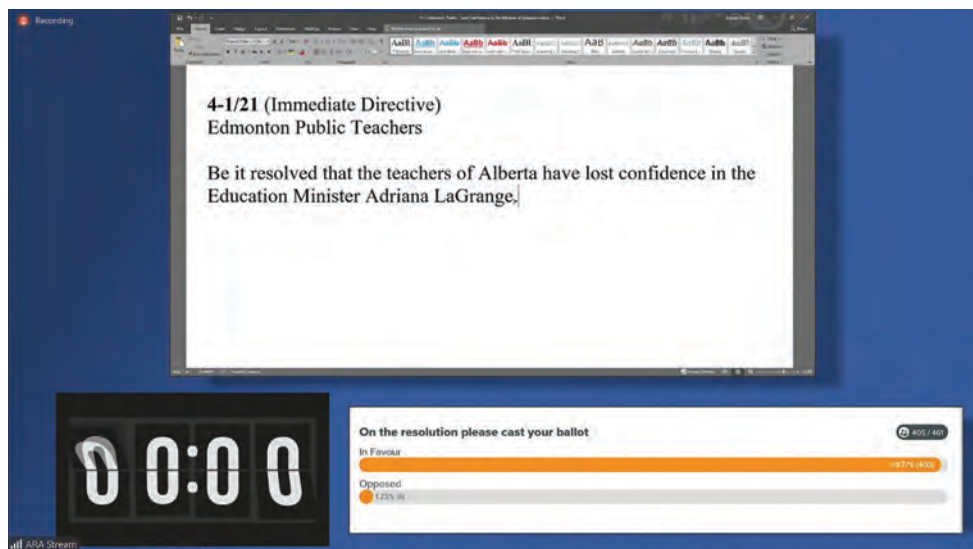
Theobald said that it would have been easy in the last year to simply put the Association’s organizational development projects on hold until some form of normalcy had returned. However, Association leaders chose the more difficult path forward. In 2020, the Association’s Information and Technology Services (ITS) and Human Resources (HR) units underwent major restructuring and the Teacher Welfare and Member Services program areas were amalgamated to form an integrated Teacher Employment Services.

“These changes, and others throughout the organization, were made to enhance efficiency and efficacy while enhancing service to members and honouring their expectation that we would make the best use of membership fees.” ■



SCREEN CAPTURE / CORY HARE

ATA executive secretary Dennis Theobald delivers his annual report to delegates of the 104th Annual Representative Assembly on May 22.



SCREEN CAPTURE / CORY HARE

The virtual voting platform used at ARA 2021 shows that 99 per cent of delegates voted in favour of a motion of non-confidence in Education Minister Adriana LaGrange.

Alberta teachers express non-confidence in education minister

Cory Hare
ATA News Managing Editor

It's official. Alberta teachers have no confidence in Education Minister Adriana LaGrange.

On May 23, delegates of the ATA's Annual Representative Assembly (ARA) voted 99 per cent in favour of a non-confidence motion.

The minister's handling of the COVID-19 pandemic and curriculum renewal dominated the discussion as 25 individuals spoke in favour of the motion during a debate that lasted for more than an hour.

"We are living this catastrophic failure every day," said one delegate. "No one and nothing in public education will be left harmless as long as she continues down her path of destroying public education."

Other concerns raised about LaGrange's tenure included legislation that reduced protections for LGBTQ-plus individuals, the closure of the Alberta Distance Learning Centre, funding cuts in the public sphere while increasing support for charter and private schools, and a general refusal to engage in meaningful consultation with the education profession.

In introducing the motion, Edmonton Public local president Heather Quinn noted that a similar motion during last year's ARA did not proceed due to concerns about potential damage to the relationship between teachers and the minister. She had no such concerns this time.

"What has this minister done in the last year to show that she is interested in maintaining or improving our relationship?" Quinn asked.

"From where I sit, the answer is clear. Regrettably, instead of supporting, protecting and enhancing public education, the minister has in fact led the way in underfunding, diminishing the capacity and unfairly demeaning our public education system and the work of teachers," Quinn said.

Delegate after delegate expressed similar sentiments.

"It's time to wake the sleeping elephant of us as Alberta teachers and to engage in an even further and deeper capacity to show this minister that we are the ATA and that we are not here to take their nonsense any longer," said one delegate.

"I am tired of the hit and run tactics of the minister announcing things

to bomb and sabotage our education system. Our kids deserve better. We deserve better. This province deserves better," said another delegate.

"We have given her time and she has yet to give us the basic respect that we more than deserve," said another.

Likely the most poignant moment during the debate came when one delegate tearfully described the stress and hardship being experienced within her local due to uncertainty related to switching back and forth from in-class to remote teaching, from teachers feeling unsafe in schools, and budget cuts leading to job losses and questions about job security.

"I'm sick and I'm exhausted and I feel broken," she said.

Past-president Greg Jeffery said that he'd planned to vote against the motion out of "grave concerns over the consequences," but he said that listening to teachers' emotion, passion and stories changed his mind.

"We've had vindictive governments in the past that have punished us for this sort of action, and that may happen again, but we will find a way to manage that," he said. "Damn the torpedoes. Full speed ahead."

Current president Jason Schilling also endorsed the resolution.

"I understand why teachers feel disrespected. I have been disrespected," he said. "To have our concerns about public education so arbitrarily dismissed is a slap in the face to the dedication teachers have shown to their students and schools."

In a subsequent interview with media, he said he'll continue to do his job as normal.

"If the government wants to be vindictive about this motion ... that is on them," Schilling said.

"I can't control government's decisions or how they react to this. All I can control is the fact that I'm still willing to do my job every single day and advocate and find a way forward for public education and teachers in this province. We've indicated that to the minister throughout this last year ... and I just hope maybe at some point the government will start listening to the profession." ■

Resolution 4-1

Be it resolved that the teachers of Alberta have lost confidence in the Education Minister Adriana LaGrange.

ARA delegates call for reversal on curriculum

Cory Hare
ATA News Managing Editor

As anticipated, the Annual Representative Assembly was dominated by discussion and criticism of the government's curriculum development and rollout.

About 450 delegates met virtually over parts of three days over the May long weekend in order to debate the annual budget of the Alberta Teachers' Association, debate policy resolutions and hear speeches from organization leaders.

Apart from a motion of non-confidence in Education Minister Adriana LaGrange, curriculum was the most discussed topic. Delegates passed a total of eight curriculum-related resolutions. These included

- a call for the government to ensure that active classroom teachers have a primary role in the curriculum review process;
- a call for a moratorium on curriculum piloting and implementation;
- an affirmation of teachers' professional responsibility and moral right to refuse to participate in the voluntary curriculum piloting;
- a call for restoration of the agreement that made the ATA a partner in curriculum development;
- a call for the government to delegate curriculum development to an independent, apolitical authority; and
- a call for K-12 curricula to include outcomes related to gender expression, identity and sexual orientation.

"We know the curriculum in its current state is, well, deplorable," said ATA president Jason Schilling during his address to delegates.

"Nothing about this curriculum is right. The way it was developed, the content, the feedback process, the assessments and resources have all been politicized, and this by a government who swore they wanted to depoliticize the curriculum."

Curriculum came up often during discussion of the non-confidence motion, which passed with 99 per cent approval.

"It is 2021 and as a racialized person I have never felt seen in the education system," said one delegate. "I think it will be impossible to fit me and people like me into the new curriculum that this minister thinks is the best curriculum that the government has ever put out."

Other resolutions of note that passed were a call for school boards to encourage limits on times when teachers are available outside of school hours via electronic communication, as well as resolutions urging the government to

- provide stable and adequate funding to help internationally educated teachers meet Alberta's teacher certification requirements,
- direct school authorities to explore other methods of instructing students at home prior to implementing synchronous teaching and learning in classrooms, and
- reverse its decision to discontinue funding for the Online Reference Centre. ■



MARK MILNE

ATA officials manage ARA proceedings from an event production studio in west Edmonton over the May long weekend. It was the second consecutive time that the event was held virtually.

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Budget passes with no fee increase

Annual fee will remain \$1,347

Pedro Carriel
ATA Treasurer and
Chief Financial Officer

Over the May long weekend, delegates participated virtually in the 104th Annual Representative Assembly (ARA) and approved the budget for the 2021/22 fiscal year, resulting in no change to the current fee of \$1,347 per year for a full-time teacher.

The assembly approved funds to support a number of new initiatives. While some programs and services have been discontinued, others have been introduced, resulting in overall budget expenditures increasing by less than one per cent, compared to the 2020/21 budget.

Faced with substantial increases in both the number and complexity

of professional conduct cases, ARA delegates voted in support of increasing the Government staffing complement by one, adding an executive staff position to further support investigations-related work and better enable the Association to meet its legislative responsibilities.

Relatedly, delegates approved to provide compensation for field members serving on the Professional Conduct Committee, Professional Conduct Appeal Committee and Professional Conduct Complainant Appeal Committee who meet and perform professional tasks on holidays or non-operational days.

The approved budget allocates funds that will allow Professional Development staff to receive training in order to better respond to emerging technological needs of members. Furthermore, funding was approved for the development of a mentorship program for Indigenous teachers, which

constitutes an integral part of the Association's larger commitment to reconciliation.

Also, in collaboration with the Association's Indigenous Advisory Circle, work will begin on 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.

In addition, plans were approved for the Association to conduct events that engage members in examining student evaluation and curriculum issues.

In alignment with the Association's shift to automate a number of its processes, in the upcoming year, funds will be directed to help modernize key aspects of Teacher Qualifications Services (TQS), through a digitization

of historical records that increase efficiency and facilitate better service to members.

Also, expenditures were approved to offer an online leadership series of four to five speakers throughout the course of the school year. This series would be targeted at school and central office leaders and would focus on the administrative, legal, legislated and human resources aspects of the role.

Finally, delegates approved funding so that Associate members employed at private or charter schools can attend Summer Conference to enhance their skills to support collective bargaining, alongside their colleagues employed by school divisions.

At the conclusion of a productive long weekend of debate, delegates approved an overall budget with a deficit of \$39,300. The annual fee for associate members will remain unchanged at \$202.05. ■

Curriculum forum draws calls for continued advocacy

Cory Hare
ATA News Managing Editor

Faced with a controversial K-6 curriculum and a government that appears committed to rolling it out despite widespread criticism, it's important to keep up the pressure on elected officials.

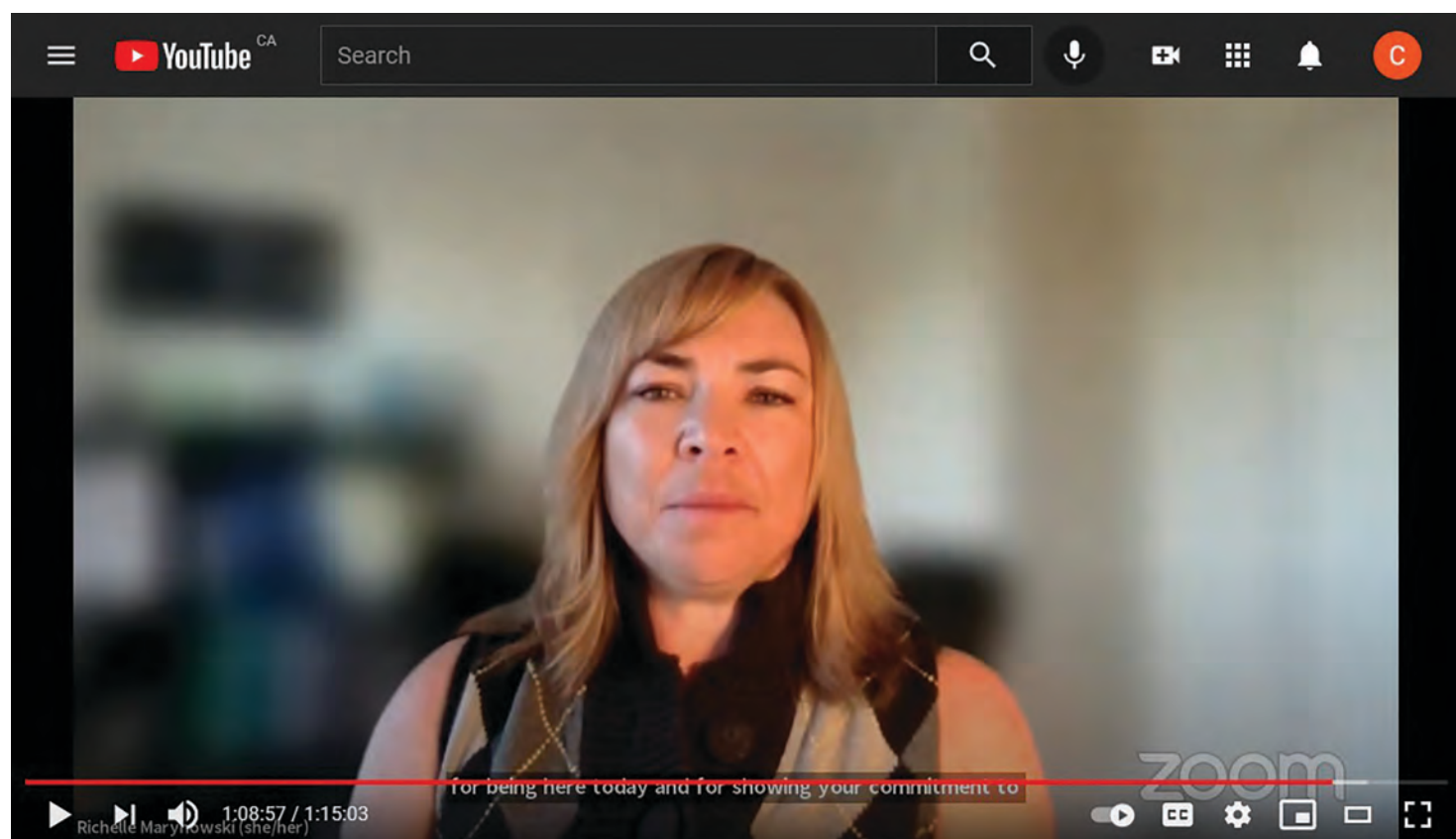
That was one of the takeaway messages expressed during a public forum hosted by the Alberta Teachers' Association via YouTube and Zoom on May 17.

More than 300 people logged into the forum, which featured four panellists: Jason Schilling, ATA president; Mark Swanson, ATA Professional Development co-ordinator; Richelle Marynowski, University of Lethbridge education professor; and Brandi Rai, president of the Alberta School Councils' Association.

Swanson, a former Alberta Education official, explained that the draft curriculum traces its roots back to 2008 and the Inspiring Education initiative spearheaded by then premier Ed Stelmach and then Education Minister Dave Hancock. He noted that this was six premiers and six education ministers ago.

“What we really need to have is a group of people that are invested in taking a look at the curriculum from all different perspectives.”

Swanson also explained that curriculum development in Alberta has traditionally followed a well-established process: bring a large group of teachers and education professors together under the leadership of top officials from Alberta Education, and follow an organic, iterative process to develop draft curriculum, which is then shared with a wide variety of stakeholder groups.



University of Lethbridge professor Richelle Marynowski shares her thoughts on the government's draft K-6 curriculum during a virtual forum hosted by the ATA.

“[The result] is really solid curriculum,” Swanson said.

Some attendees were interested in knowing more about who actually wrote the curriculum. Swanson said that since the UCP government took over the process, it's deviated from the norm and there are many unknowns.

“We know one thing for sure, teachers weren't invited to participate in the process of writing the curriculum. None of those usual processes were followed,” Swanson said.

“We don't know who actually wrote it. We've asked on several occasions ... The minister is very evasive when that question is posed and one is only left to speculate.”

Marynowski stressed the importance of involving a wide variety of groups in curriculum development, including a variety of curriculum experts, such as those with specific grade-level expertise and those who can see the whole of the curriculum.

“What we really need to have is a group of people that are invested

in taking a look at the curriculum from all different perspectives,” she said. “I think business people are very important ... but their voices should not outweigh those of the teachers.”

‘Keep at it’

Rai explained that the Alberta School Councils Association has a new policy around curriculum and is looking for meaningful engagement that's free from the influence of elected officials and provides adequate time for implementation. She noted that the curriculum content and rollout has created a groundswell of discontent among parents.

“Quite frankly, they're enraged,” she said. “These are their babies and I don't think that they're very appreciative of the lack of engagement prior and the rushed implementation.”

A common question from forum attendees centred around what parents and teachers can do to influence the government to reverse course. Rai suggested more of the same.

“I think we really [need to] keep putting pressure on the MLAs because we were promised accountable leadership. We were promised transparency and that's not been happening,” she said. “I think we [need to be] very clear as parents, that the choices that are made this year and next year when it comes to our children impacts what you do in the future politically.”

Schilling said that teachers have been very active in speaking out, writing letters to elected officials and engaging with their MLAs.

“You're doing all the right things so far,” he said.

“It's a difficult thing to do and it doesn't necessarily always come with quick results ... Keep at it. Keep at it.” ■

See for yourself

The forum is available for viewing on the ATA's YouTube channel: www.youtube.com/albertateachers.

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Ball is in the minister's court

In my opening address at the ATA's Annual Representative Assembly (ARA), I reviewed the Association's central objectives. Two of our core objectives are to advance and promote the cause of public education in Alberta, and improve the teaching profession. Another part of our job is to hold the government and its ministers accountable, especially when their decisions have a direct impact on our profession and public education. We do this regardless of who is in government.

The 450 delegates who attend ARA are classroom teachers who come from every corner of the province. They are appointed through democratic processes at the local level. It is in this forum that we establish the ATA's values and beliefs. During this past ARA, representatives declared loud and clear that they don't have confidence in the education minister's leadership or the government's decisions that could damage public education and our students' future.

It's easy to see why teachers are frustrated. It starts with the rollback on 2SLGBTQ+ rights for students and staff in the *Education Act*, then budget cuts, pensions hijacks, choice in education erosions and Bill 32 labour setbacks.

Adding to the frustration were the bungled handling of the pandemic that resulted in thousands of teachers and students getting caught in a cycle of isolation, the failure of the draft K-6 curriculum, and the inexplicable delay in making school staff a priority for vaccination.

Dismissing our concerns for public education is a blatant act of disrespect to the dedication teachers and principals have shown to their students, schools and communities.

Since I was elected president, I have been fighting consistently to protect and advance the cause of teachers. I worry deeply about the moral distress that teachers in this province face and am troubled by the lack of support from the minister.

I value the opinion of teachers and have always fully supported the direction provided by delegates at ARA. They are representatives of their colleagues, and those who try to dismiss them and the decisions made at ARA are simply deluded in their thinking that the delegates don't represent the concerns of their colleagues. If the minister is interested in repairing the relationship with teachers, the ball is in her court. ■

Advocate of women in science bestowed ATA award

ATA News Staff

Margaret Ann Armour spent her life encouraging females of all ages to explore science. That passion for sparking an interest in science was the reason Armour was posthumously awarded the Public Education Award.

Speaking at the Annual Representative Assembly on May 22, vice-president Jenny Regal said although Armour was most active in the post-secondary world, she was also a tireless advocate for teachers and students.

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.

On one of Armour's visits to her namesake school, Regal says a second-grade child looked up at Armour and said "You sure are lucky to be named after my school."

The ATA's Public Education Award is offered occasionally to an individual or a group that has given outstanding support to public education in Alberta other than through teaching. ■

NOTICE

On Nov. 24, 2020, a hearing committee of the Professional Conduct Committee established under the *Teaching Profession Act* found that Rachele Dandurand engaged in unprofessional conduct. The hearing committee ordered that Dandurand's membership in the Association be cancelled effective Nov. 24, 2020.



Jere Geiger accepts his honorary membership award during ARA on May 22.

CORY HARE

Honorary membership recipients laud public education

Kate Toogood
ATA News Staff

A passion for public education and teaching was the source and inspiration of the hard work, determination and success achieved by the two most recent recipients of honorary membership in the Alberta Teachers' Association.

Jerome (Jere) Geiger and Norman Yanitski each received the ATA's highest honour during the Annual Representative Assembly that took place over the May long weekend.

"Public education is the great equalizer in an unequal world," said Geiger in his acceptance speech. "This is why it must be protected."

Yanitski agreed, saying that even in his role as an administrator he kept his purpose front of mind: put students first.

"Educators have the ability to inspire hope," he said.

Both recipients took a moment to honour their families and ATA colleagues for their support, as well as to acknowledge their fellow teachers.

"Teachers give kids the tools to enter the world and solve its problems," said Geiger. "That's why the public teaching profession must be protected."

Yanitski applauded teachers for their work during the pandemic.

"What a year we have had," he said. "Teachers have shown such dedication to students this year. As educators, you can be proud."

Geiger is a 41-year teaching veteran who spent most of his career in elementary school classrooms in rural

or remote locations across Alberta and Saskatchewan.

Yanitski's education career spans 38 years, and includes 13 years as the superintendent for Black Gold School Division. Both also served teachers through the ATA: Geiger as a local president and district representative and Yanitski as an external committee observer.

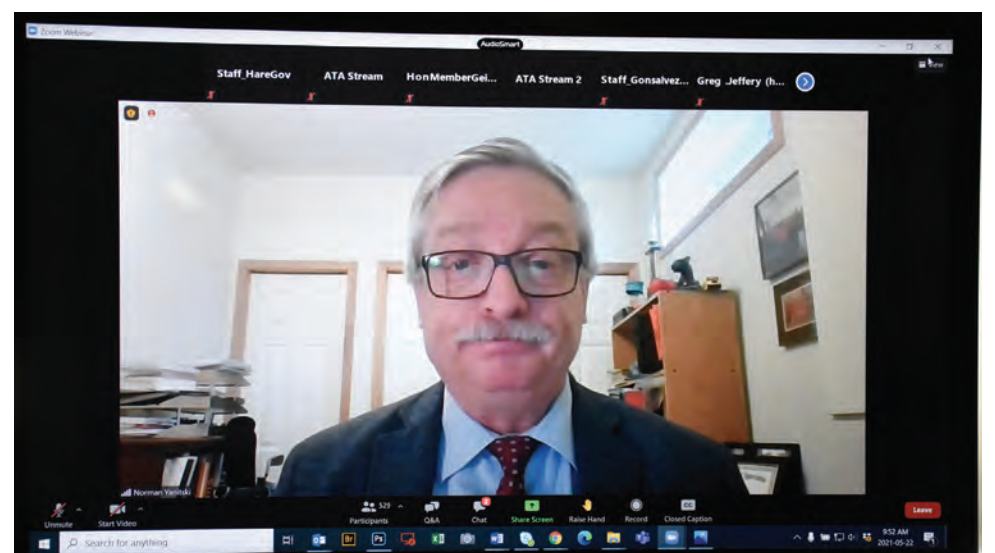
When presenting the award to Geiger, Association president Jason Schilling shared how much he admired Geiger's tenacity when it came to standing up for public education and teachers.

"He is not afraid of asking the tough questions and he is not afraid of doing the work needed to advance public education in Alberta and Canada," Schilling said. "Quite simply, he is fearless."

In his introduction of Yanitski, past-president Greg Jeffrey spoke about Yanitski's dedication to his colleagues everywhere he worked.

"I have known Norm for 30 years and was always impressed by the care he took of others — his staff and his students," Jeffrey said. "He was involved in every aspect of the life of the school in which he was working." ■

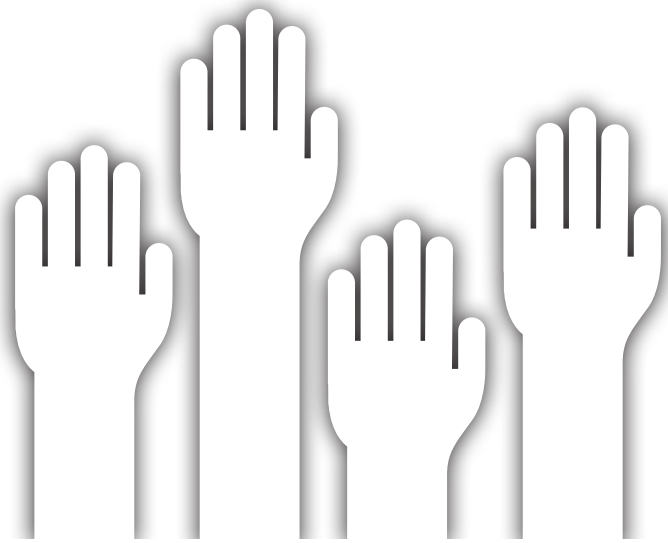
The ATA's honorary membership is presented annually to members of the Association or other persons who have given meritorious service to the teaching profession or to the advancement of public education. Its list of recipients includes former lieutenant-governor Lois Hole, former premier Peter Lougheed and former University of Alberta president Myer Horowitz.



Norman Yanitski expresses his gratitude after receiving an honorary membership in the Alberta Teachers' Association.

CORY HARE

Highlighted resolutions



ARA 2021 104th Annual Representative Assembly

This is a selection of the 253 resolutions adopted at the 2021 Annual Representative Assembly.

Resolutions arising from the six-year review of policy

1-27/21
Provincial Executive Council
BE IT RESOLVED that long-term policy 19.2.3.1 be amended to read—
“All matters affecting the quality of education are subject to collective bargaining.”

1-58/21
Provincial Executive Council
BE IT RESOLVED that long-term policy 19.2.9.3 be amended to read—
“The Government of Alberta should focus on decreasing class sizes and addressing the complex class compositions that are apparent in classrooms across school authorities.”

1-65/21
Provincial Executive Council
BE IT RESOLVED that long-term policy 19.2.9.10 be amended to read—
“The Government of Alberta should provide funding to
1. enable the following student-teacher ratios: Early Childhood Education, 15:1; Grades 1-3, 17:1; Grades 4-6, 23:1; Grades 7-9, 25:1; and Grades 10-12, 27:1; and
2. enable improvements to class composition.”

1-103/21
Provincial Executive Council
BE IT RESOLVED that long-term policy 19.2.14.2 be amended by substitution to read—
“Every school should have an on-site, designated principal at all times.”

1-159/21
Provincial Executive Council
BE IT RESOLVED that long-term policy 19.3.8.4 be amended to read—
“Collective agreements negotiated by the Association should establish a supplementary employment benefit program that entitles teachers who take maternity or adoption leave to a minimum of 16 weeks of the leave at 100 per cent of their salary and ensures that such leaves are recognized as service for the purposes of seniority and salary increments.”

1-185/21
Provincial Executive Council
BE IT RESOLVED that long-term policy 19.3.12.1 be amended to read—
“Collective agreements negotiated by the Association should specify that teachers whose responsibilities are described in the Leadership Quality Standard are entitled to an allowance.”

1-190/21
Provincial Executive Council
BE IT RESOLVED that long-term policy 19.3.13.1 be amended to read—
“Collective agreements negotiated by the Association should establish that the salary of a part-time teacher is calculated based on the proportional work of a full-time teacher using the formula $PT\ AT/FT\ AT \times Salary$, where PT AT is the number of actual assignable hours allocated to the part-time teacher, FT AT is the number of assignable hours typically allocated to full-time teachers in the school and Salary is the teacher’s location on the salary grid, taking into account years of experience and years of education.”

Local resolutions

2-1/21
Edmonton Public Teachers
BE IT RESOLVED that all administrators of funds held in trust for the benefit of Alberta teachers post an annual statement of all investments.

2-2/21
Edmonton Public Teachers
BE IT RESOLVED that the Association create a Status of Racialized Teachers Working Group under the purview of the Diversity, Equity and Human Rights Committee.

2-3/21
Edmonton Public Teachers
BE IT RESOLVED that the Association offer antiracism programs and supports for use by its members.

2-4/21
Edmonton Public Teachers
BE IT RESOLVED that the Association offer antiracism education, training and professional development opportunities for its employees.

2-6/21
Edmonton Public Teachers
BE IT RESOLVED that the Association urge the Government of Alberta to require all school authorities to equip each site with at least one automated external defibrillator and provide additional funding for school authorities to meet this requirement, along with necessary maintenance, repair and replacement costs.

2-8/21
Edmonton Public Teachers
Pembina Hills
BE IT RESOLVED that the Association urge the Government of Alberta to reinstate full funding to the Alberta Distance Learning Centre.

2-9/21
Calgary Public Teachers
BE IT RESOLVED that the Association create a virtual meeting for local substitute chairs.

2-17/21
Rocky View
BE IT RESOLVED that the Association urge the Government of Alberta to provide cross-ministerial resources and programming for all students with complex needs and/or who demonstrate learning challenges in online learning environments.

2-18/21
Rocky View
BE IT RESOLVED that the Association urge the Government of Alberta and Government of Canada to provide equitable access to the technology and high-speed internet access required for students to learn in online environments.

2-24/21
Edmonton Catholic Teachers
BE IT RESOLVED that the Association urge the Government of Alberta to provide targeted funding for off-campus education programs.

2-25/21
Edmonton Catholic Teachers
BE IT RESOLVED that the Association urge all school authorities to include only nondiscriminatory language in their employment contracts so that gender, sexual orientation and race do not become barriers to employment for any certificated teacher.

2-33/21
Parkland Teachers’
BE IT RESOLVED that the Association urge the Government of Alberta to consult with the Association when developing plans to respond to major and widespread disruptions of school calendars or operations.

2-34/21
Parkland Teachers’
BE IT RESOLVED that the Association urge the Government of Alberta to provide adequate, additional, emergent funding to implement plans developed to respond to major and widespread disruptions of school calendars or operations.

2-35/21
Parkland Teachers’
BE IT RESOLVED that the Association urge the Government of Alberta to increase funding to programs which provide early intervention and ongoing support for students with high needs to support inclusive education.

2-36/21
Parkland Teachers’
BE IT RESOLVED that the Association urge the Government of Alberta to respect the subject-area knowledge and pedagogical expertise of Alberta’s active classroom teachers and ensure that they have, through their profession, a primary role in the curriculum review process.

2-37/21
Red Deer City
BE IT RESOLVED that the ATA Doctoral Fellowships in Education are revised to remove the requirement that the university where the doctoral program is being pursued is campus based.

Resolutions approved at ARA 2021

Provincial Executive Council resolutions

3-2/21

Provincial Executive Council

BE IT RESOLVED that optimal teaching and learning conditions include reasonable limits on class size and complexity.

3-3/21

Provincial Executive Council

BE IT RESOLVED that school and system leaders be members of the bargaining unit.

3-4/21

Provincial Executive Council

BE IT RESOLVED that the Association urge the Government of Alberta to replace the English Language Arts Authorized Novels and Nonfiction Annotated List with a guide to text selection which reflects diversity, promotes equity and honours teachers' professional autonomy.

3-6/21

Provincial Executive Council

BE IT RESOLVED that the Association urge locals to have a designated position on their local council for a school leader.

3-7/21

Provincial Executive Council

BE IT RESOLVED that the Association urge school authorities to incorporate into their occupational health and safety workplace violence policies or administrative procedures a robust prevention section that includes a student regulation support and outcomes plan and staff safety plan.

3-8/21

Provincial Executive Council

BE IT RESOLVED that the Association urge school authorities to incorporate into their occupational health and safety workplace violence policies or administrative procedures training for all staff in de-escalation techniques, addressing aggression and the reporting of these incidents.

3-9/21

Provincial Executive Council

BE IT RESOLVED that the Association urge the College of Alberta School Superintendents to collaborate with the Association to adopt specific language to address antiracism and antioppression for inclusion in division policies and administrative procedures beyond diversity and inclusion policies.

3-10/21

Provincial Executive Council

BE IT RESOLVED that the Association urge the Government of Alberta to provide targeted funding to school authorities for programs and staff dedicated to providing wellness supports for students.

3-11/21

Provincial Executive Council

BE IT RESOLVED that the Association urge school authorities to establish and support divisionwide wellness committees that serve the needs of all staff.

3-12/21

Provincial Executive Council

BE IT RESOLVED that the Association provide funds to establish a mentorship program for Indigenous teachers. [Cost: \$40,000]

3-13/21

Provincial Executive Council

BE IT RESOLVED that the Association provide funds to develop a publication on Indian residential schools in Alberta. [Cost: \$17,000]

3-16/21

Provincial Executive Council

BE IT RESOLVED that the teachers of Alberta express to The Honourable Adriana LaGrange, Minister of Education, their collective lack of confidence in the content and design of the *Draft K-6 Curriculum* as released by the minister on 2021 03 29 and the deeply flawed curriculum consultation and development processes implemented by government after August 2019 that gave rise to the *Draft K-6 Curriculum*.

3-17/21

Provincial Executive Council

BE IT RESOLVED that the Association call upon the Government of Alberta to place a moratorium on the piloting and implementation of the *Draft K-6 Curriculum* as released by the minister of education on 2021 03 29 until such time as the draft has been submitted to an independent, full and open review and rewriting process led by and meaningfully 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.

3-18/21

Provincial Executive Council

BE IT RESOLVED that the teachers of Alberta call upon school authorities to refrain from participating in or directing or otherwise exerting pressure upon or incenting the teachers they employ to participate in piloting the *Draft K-6 Curriculum* as released by the minister of education on 2021 03 29.

3-19/21

Provincial Executive Council

BE IT RESOLVED 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* as released by the Government of Alberta in March 2021 should they believe that curriculum to be structurally and developmentally unsound and potentially damaging to student learning.

3-21/21

Provincial Executive Council

BE IT RESOLVED that the Government of Alberta delegate responsibility for the development, renewal and revision of the kindergarten to Grade 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. All curricula need to use the 2016 guiding framework as a basis for development.

3-22/21

Provincial Executive Council

BE IT RESOLVED that the Association 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.

3-23/21

Provincial Executive Council

BE IT RESOLVED that the Government of Alberta provide stable and adequate funding, to be determined after consultation with teacher preparation programs, to institutions that offer teacher preparation programs for bridging programs designed to help internationally educated teachers meet Alberta's teacher certification requirements.

3-24/21

Provincial Executive Council

BE IT RESOLVED that the Association urge the Government of Alberta to ensure that kindergarten to Grade 12 curricula include specific age-appropriate learning outcomes that address concepts related to gender expression, gender identity, sexual orientation, LGBTQ2S+ perspectives and historical events, including Alberta legal cases such as *Vriend v Alberta* and *Klippert v The Queen*.

3-25/21

Provincial Executive Council

BE IT RESOLVED that the Association urge the Government of Alberta to direct school authorities to explore other methods of instructing students at home prior to implementing synchronous teaching and learning in classrooms.

3-26/21

Provincial Executive Council

BE IT RESOLVED that school authorities encourage and respect individually determined limits on times when teachers, including those with leadership designations, are available outside school hours via means such as e-mail, text and telephone.

3-27/21

Provincial Executive Council

BE IT RESOLVED that the Government of Alberta reverse its decision to discontinue funding for the Online Reference Centre.

Assembly resolutions

4-1/21

Aspen View, Black Gold Teachers', Calgary Public Teachers, Edmonton Catholic Teachers, Edmonton Public Teachers, Elk Island, Elk Island Catholic Teachers, Evergreen, Foothills, Fort McMurray, Fort Vermilion, Greater St. Paul, Livingstone Range, Medicine Hat, Medicine Hat Catholic Teachers, Northern Gateway, Northern Lights, Northern Spirit, Parkland, Pembina Hills, Prairie Rose, Red Deer Catholic, Red Deer City, Rocky View, St. Albert Public Teachers, St. Thomas Aquinas Teachers', Sturgeon, Wolf Creek, Woodland Rivers

BE IT RESOLVED that the teachers of Alberta have lost confidence in the Education Minister, Adriana LaGrange.

4-2/21

Foothills
Rocky View

BE IT RESOLVED that the Association provide compensation for field members serving on the Professional Conduct Committee, Professional Conduct Appeal Committee and Professional Conduct Complainant Appeal Committee who meet and perform professional tasks on holidays or nonoperational days at the daily rate of at least 1/200 of the teacher's annual salary.



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– Marilyn Nunn,
YPI Lead Teacher

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PITFALLS & PRECAUTIONS

Chris Gibbon
ATA Secretary to Professional
Conduct Committees

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.

Parents and guardians entrust their children to the care of teachers every school day. In most cases, parents are assured that positive and nurturing relationships are developed both in the classroom and during school sanctioned extra-curricular activities and field trips. Unfortunately, there are a few bad apples that abuse the teacher–student relationship and do not treat their pupils with dignity and respect or are not considerate of their circumstances.

A high school teacher crossed that trusted line when she engaged in inappropriate relationships with two of her students. In regard to the first student, the teacher discussed her desire to get stoned with him when he turned 18. Further, she used social media to communicate frequently with the student and

engaged in a variety of inappropriate discussions related to drugs, alcohol and suicide.

In regard to the second student, the teacher sent multiple partially nude pictures of herself and received pictures of the student performing an act of self gratification. Horrifically, she engaged in conversation with the student while he was performing the solo act. This teacher also went so far as to allow the student to control, via an app on his cellphone, a sexual gratification device that she owned.

These perverted actions and abusive relationships with these students grossly violated the teacher–student relationship as well as the trust that both the parents and society placed in her as a teacher. As a result of her actions, the teacher was declared permanently ineligible for membership in the Alberta Teachers' Association. A recommendation was also made to the minister of education to cancel her teaching certificate. The Association communicated the cancellation of the teaching certificate to the Canadian Teachers' Federation as well.

Teachers have a responsibility to treat all of their students with respect and dignity and be considerate of their circumstances. Through her abhorrent and repugnant actions, this teacher failed to do so. Further, teachers are to act in a way that maintains the honour and dignity of the profession. This teacher's loathsome and detestable actions failed to do so and brought dishonour and disrepute to the teaching profession. ■

Council preps for ARA

PEC POINTS

Audrey Dutka
ATA News Staff

Highlights of the Provincial Executive Council meeting held May 6 and 7, 2021, via Zoom

- Approved resolutions for submission to the 2021 Annual Representative Assembly that urge ...
 - (1) the Government of Alberta to ensure that all K–12 health and wellness curricula include specific age-appropriate learning outcomes that address concepts related to gender expression, gender identity and sexual orientation;
 - (2) the Government of Alberta to direct school authorities to explore other methods of instructing students at home prior to implementing synchronous teaching and learning in classrooms;
 - (3) school authorities to encourage and respect individually determined limits on times when teachers, including those with leadership designations, are available via means such as email, text and telephone outside school hours; and
 - (4) Alberta Education to reverse the decision to discontinue funding for the Online Reference Centre.
- Authorized the Association to send a letter to the minister of education opposing the closure of the Online Reference Centre.
- Approved that the class size numbers cited in policy be internally consistent and be changed to align with the numbers provided in the amended resolution 1-56/21.
- Authorized a financial contribution in the amount of \$2,500 to the Education International Solidarity Fund, through the CTF/FCE, to help teachers and education workers in Myanmar.
- Approved Council committee and representation assignments for 2021/22.
- Received the report of a hearing committee that found a teacher guilty of four charges of unprofessional conduct for kicking a bench where a student was sitting, causing the bench to be damaged; for advising another teacher to seek out and surround themselves with positive influences, which could

imply there were teachers on staff who were not positive influences; for demonstrating a kids' game and carelessly causing a utensil to be propelled at or in the direction of a group of teachers; and for using profanity in the presence of school staff members. The hearing committee imposed a penalty of a letter of reprimand to encompass all four charges and a fine of \$400 specific to charge one.

7. Received the report of a hearing committee that found a teacher guilty of seven charges of unprofessional conduct for inviting two students to view a room in the teacher's rental property for the purpose of possibly renting it to one of them, thereby taking advantage of a professional position to profit from the sale of goods or services to pupils in the teacher's charge; for discussing and encouraging drug use with students; for providing marijuana to a Grade 12 student in the presence of a minor student; for accusing another member of staff of providing drugs to a student; for harassing and intimidating a student; for harassing and intimidating staff members; and for contributing by words and actions to an unwelcoming school environment for some students and staff members.

Between the seven charges, the hearing committee imposed two letters of reprimand, five letters of severe reprimand and four fines totalling \$6,000.

8. Received the report of a hearing committee that found a teacher guilty of one charge of unprofessional conduct for falsifying benefit claims. The hearing committee imposed a penalty of a letter of reprimand and a fine of \$500.

9. In accordance with section 31(2) of the *Teaching Profession Act*, approved an extension to the 120-day hearing time period for three outstanding cases of alleged unprofessional conduct.

10. Approved the proposed timeline and appointed members of Council to a selection committee for recruitment of the position of executive staff officer, Teacher Employment Services–Collective Bargaining (Barnett House).

11. Appointed members of Council to serve on the Interpretation Committee under the Executive Staff Association collective agreement.

12. Approved the draft Association calendar for 2021/22 and provisionally approved for finalization by staff the draft Association calendars for 2022/23 and 2023/24. ■

Federal income supports available

ATA Teacher Employment Services

The Government of Canada continues to offer programs to address the effects of the ongoing global COVID-19 pandemic. The government's response to these turbulent times is reflected in its Employment Insurance (EI) program. Since Sept. 27, 2020, these changes support teachers who remain unable to work and meet eligibility. *These programs are scheduled to be in effect until Sept. 25, 2021*, and it is unknown if these programs will be extended past this date.

Contact Teacher Employment Services for individual assistance at 1-800-232-2708.

Hours required for eligibility

The hours required to qualify for EI regular and special benefits have been reduced. Access to EI benefits is normally based on the number of insurable hours worked in the year prior to application (the qualifying period). The government recognizes that the pandemic has prevented many Canadians from accumulating the 600 insurable hours that are normally required. To qualify for EI benefits more easily, claims for regular benefits now require 300 insurable hours and claims for special benefits (sickness, maternity/parental, compassionate care or family caregiver) require 480 insurable hours.

Minimum benefit rate change

Since Sept. 27, 2020, and in place until Sept. 25, 2021, new EI claimants will receive a minimum benefit rate of \$400 per week (or \$240 per week for those on extended parental), if this rate is higher than what they normally would have received. In addition, other temporary measures are 120 hours of work required to qualify and at least 50 weeks of regular benefits available.

Canada Recovery Benefit (CRB)

The Canada Recovery Benefit (CRB) provides income support to employed and self-employed individuals who are directly affected by COVID-19 and are not entitled to regular EI benefits. The CRB is administered by the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA).

The CRB pays \$1,000 (\$900 after withholding taxes) for a two-week period. If the situation continues past two weeks, the claimant is required to apply again for a total of 19 eligibility periods (38 weeks) between Sept. 27, 2020 and Sept. 25, 2021.

Canada Recovery Sickness Benefit (CRSB)

Substitute teachers who are unable to work due to illness or self-isolation for COVID-19 may be eligible for the Canada Recovery Sickness Benefit (CRSB). Eligible recipients may apply to any open period for up to a total of four weeks. The CRSB can provide income support to substitute teachers who have no paid sick leave or to contract teachers who have exhausted their paid sick leave and are unable to work due to illness or requirement to self-isolate for COVID-19. An underlying health condition putting the teacher at greater risk due to COVID-19 would also be eligible.

The CRSB pays \$500 (\$450 after withholding taxes) for a one-week period. If the condition lasts longer than one week, the claimant is required to apply again for a total of four weeks between Sept. 27, 2020 and Sept. 25, 2021.

A medical certificate is required to qualify for the benefit. Note that teachers cannot claim the CRSB and receive other paid sick leave for the same benefit period. Substitute teachers must have missed a minimum of 60 per cent of their scheduled work during the week claimed.

Canada Recovery Caregiver Benefit

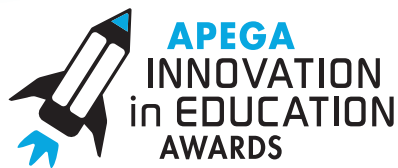
This taxable benefit, effective for one year from Sept. 27, 2020, provides \$500 per week for up to 38 weeks per household to eligible Canadians. Only one member of the household can apply.

Many Canadians have been unable to work due to the closure of schools, day cares and day program facilities to prevent the spread of COVID-19. This benefit would apply to these individuals.

Refer to the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) website under the Canada Recovery Caregiving Benefit for eligibility requirements. ■

APEGA tailors events and programs throughout the year to students in Grades 1 through 12—the engineers and geoscientists of tomorrow.

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\$5,000

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Coming in October 2021

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For more information, visit apega.ca/educators-students
Questions? Email us at outreach@apega.ca.

ATA secures grant to study women in leadership



EXECUTIVE REPORT

Elissa Corsi
ATA Executive Staff Officer,
Government

If the teaching profession in Alberta is highly feminized, why are there so few women at the top? This is the question that a new research project aims to answer.

Thanks to a \$200,000 grant from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, the project will unfold over the next three years as a partnership between the Alberta Teachers' Association, the University of Alberta and the College of Alberta School Superintendents.

The percentage of women in leadership roles, as defined by Alberta Education's quality standards for both school leaders and superintendents, declines as the level of leadership increases. The same phenomenon is present at the Alberta Teachers' Association, where a woman has never held the top staff position of executive secretary. Yet the Alberta Teachers' Retirement Fund reported that, in 2017, 76 per cent of the teaching population was female.

Despite this discrepancy, there has been little formal study in this area. Research at the intersection of gender highlights various factors that come into play for women in leadership: family life, caretaking, socio-cultural roles and perceptions, and economics. All these elements have been further emphasized by the current COVID-19 pandemic, several studies show, including those conducted by Promundo and the United Nations.

This research partnership aims to delve into understanding the intersections of gender in educational leadership by reaching out to school divisions (public, Catholic, charter, etc.) in French and in English, to share the experiences of women in the teaching profession.

The partnership will address priorities identified by a 2019 ATA survey on the perceptions and roles of women in K-12 education. Initial findings revealed concerns among teachers about gender discrimination. The participants recognized numerous barriers to leadership for women, including the impact of family leaves on women's progression into leadership positions.

Building on these initial results, the primary focus of this research partnership will be to investigate the effect of family leaves and caretaking roles on the careers of female educators, an area with virtually no substantial research. To address this, a comprehensive mixed method research into the lived experiences of women in educational leadership in Alberta will aim to

- establish baseline data regarding the participation of women and the intersections of gender in educational leadership;
- investigate the current lived experiences of women in educational leadership and determine the effects of leaves (family and others), intersectionality and caregiving responsibilities on women's leadership experiences;
- co-create, with our partners, policies and administrative procedures that will remove the barriers to career progression for women in educational leadership in Alberta; and
- develop a data-acquisition model that will guide decision making and allow stakeholders to continue to document the gains of women in leadership in Alberta.

This research will provide the foundation for a follow-up study investigating the pan-Canadian environment of women in educational leadership. Ultimately, we seek to bring women to the policymaking process, as the late justice Ruth Baden Ginsburg said, "Women belong in all places where decisions are being made. It shouldn't be that women are the exception." ■



This art installation by students from Centre High Campus in Edmonton was inspired by the REDress Project by artist Jaime Black. YUET CHAN

Students explore important issues through art

SUCCESS STORIES

ATA News Staff

An art club discussion at an Edmonton high school created such a spark of interest that the result was a successful art installation.

The discussion, which took place at Centre High Campus, was about the REDress Project by artist Jaime Black. Focused on the issue of missing or murdered Indigenous women across Canada, the project displays red dresses hanging in public spaces.

In honour of Black's work, student members of the Centre High art club decided to do their own version entitled *yōtin ahcahk* (Cree for Wind Spirit). They made clear body casts of themselves or their loved ones, using plastic wrap and tape, "to give an ethereal or spirit-like effect, further adding to the narrative of the clothes left behind in Jaime Black's original work," said teacher Stephanie Sakkab.

Each student piece included a cultural-style headdress, such as a Filipino wrap, Guatemalan bufanda or Somali and Syrian-style hijab, as well as a handmade version of the respective country's national flower. The pieces are hung on birch trees with fishing wire to create an impression of floating

on the wind, and are accompanied by an artist's statement explaining their inspiration and personal connections.

The aim of the installation is to express empathy based on the artists' individual experiences and instill a deeper understanding of this land and its history.

"This art installation creates a way to talk about important issues — the more we talk about them, the more awareness there is, the sooner they can be addressed," Sakkab said.

The project title came from Dene elder Dr. Margorie Hodgson, who shared her experiences with students, whose work is purposefully arranged in a circle.

"In Indigenous culture, the circle represents equality and inclusion. No one alone inside, nor outside; having no beginning nor end. All are included in the spirit of unity," explained cultural liaison Joanne Ladouceur. ■

CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

Success Stories is an ongoing feature that enables teachers to share their successes with their colleagues. To submit an idea or an article about a new program or approach that you've instituted, please contact managing editor Cory Hare at cory.hare@ata.ab.ca.



Teacher Stephanie Sakkab makes an adjustment to one of the pieces that was part of a student art project called *yōtin ahcahk*, which is Cree for Wind Spirit. YUET CHAN

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Date limite : 15 juin 2021 à 23h59



Beginning Teachers Conference 2021

September 24–25, 2021

CALL FOR PROPOSALS

An opportunity to share knowledge and expertise on curriculum and pedagogy in K–12 classrooms

Submit your proposal online at <http://bit.ly/BTCPresent>.
Note: Presenters must be a member of an ATA specialist council.

Deadline to submit is
Monday, June 14, 2021.

For more information contact
chris.gonsalvez@ata.ab.ca.

Confirmation of session times and other conference details, for those selected to present, will be sent out by the end of June.

PD-34-02 2021-05



STORIES AND PHOTOS WANTED

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



Exploring Alberta's Wildlife: CLASSROOM KIT

The Alberta Professional Outfitters Society (APOS) is proud to offer a classroom wildlife education kit. It is designed for Grades 3 and 4 and aligns with Alberta Education curriculum goals. The package explores wildlife identification and the role that sustainable use plays in conservation. Along with easy-to-follow lesson plans, an APOS member can be available to assist in the classroom at no charge. These kits are available to Alberta teachers at no cost.

To request a classroom kit, please email info@apos.ab.ca with your name, contact information, address, and school. If you are interested in kits for Grades 5 or 6, please email info@apos.ab.ca as these kits are currently being developed and we can put you on a waiting list.

For more information visit www.apos.ab.ca/Community/WildlifeEducation
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Half of all lifetime cases of mental illness begin by age 14, although the roots may begin earlier.
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TALENT

June 1, 2021 | Volume 55, Number 14

Jackelyn Urquhart @jurquhart15 · 8m
"Real change, enduring change, happens one step at a time." - #RGB
Today, I take another step forward and raise my voice in dissent against those who have failed to support fully funded public education in Alberta.
#sockstar
#fashionARA #ara2021 @OhThatMrWheeler



Delegates of the 104th edition of the Annual Representative Assembly took to Twitter to enter and vote on their favourite "sock stars."

The day one winner was Jackelyn Urquhart of Fresh Start Westmount in Edmonton.
The day two winner was Cheryl Trachimowich of Svend Hansen School in Edmonton.

The annual ARA tradition is organized by Mike Wheeler, president of Timberline Local No. 9.

Mike Wheeler @OhThatMrWheeler · 11m
Congrats to @teachermowich for being today's #SockStar.
You join the ranks with other sock fashionistas like @jurquhart15
Thank you to everyone that had participated in #SockStar #FashionARA #ara2021



SOCK STARS

tired "in the classroom and online" AB teacher @NicoleGat... · 24m
This year my socks are going nowhere... #fashionARA #sockstar #ARA2021



Mike Wheeler @OhThatMrWheeler · 22h
Are people always surprised that you are #hangry?
They no longer need to be informed by your tweets... they can now just read your feet
Who will be this years #Sockstar? #fashionara #ara2021



Mme Michelle @VA_MmeMichelle · 7m
Had a hard time deciding how to start day 2. Decided to take it back to the 80's when pandas roamed the streets of Calgary with their boom boxes.
#SockStar #fashionARA #ARA2021



Katherine Pritchard @Kath_Pritchard · 1h
My Alberta has dinosaurs #curriculum #fashionARA #sockstar #ara2021



Mike Wheeler @OhThatMrWheeler · 12h
#ARA2021 is just over half a sol away.
Who will be the 2021 #SockStar?
These socks may say worst gift ever but they don't say worst prize ever!
#FashionARA



X-Stuart Shigehiro @sshigehiro · 48m
I just can't decide which ones to wear. I don't want them to melt on my feet.
#FashionARA #sockstar #ARA2021 #ATAARA2021



Reuben Mahaffy @reubenmahaffy · 2m
@OhThatMrWheeler I am pleased to be shirking my household responsibilities this weekend to attend #ara2021 #fashionARA #sockstar



Jennie Bee @jenniebeerotten · 51m
#ARA2021 #FashionARA flaming Fluevogs

