

**Substitute Teachers
ARE key team members**



**Substitute Teachers'
Appreciation Week 2021
March 8–12**



ATA NEWS

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ELECTION TIME!

ATA 2021
PEC
election

**Vote online March 8–11
for the positions of
vice-president and
district representative.**

**Viewpoints:
The ATA is
democratic.
Please vote.**
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Special teacher

Black History Month brings memories of an influential figure.

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Embracing discovery mode

Storyteller Ivan Coyote shares message of compassion and growth.

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Conventional success

Virtual conventions provide more learning than usual.

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Women in leadership

ATA committee makes strides in addressing gender inequality.

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Pitfalls and Precautions

Teachers must co-operate when under investigation.

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Teacher's Pet

Lovable critters help teachers cope through isolation and Zoom fatigue.

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Celebrating a special teacher for Black History Month



EDITORIAL

Jonathan Teghtmeyer
ATA News Editor-in-Chief

Whenever February comes and I reflect on Black History Month and the profession of teaching in Alberta, I think of Gwendolyn Hooks, a Black teacher and one-time ATA local president.

Hooks began her teaching career near Breton, Alberta in 1942, which is where I began my teaching career nearly 60 years later.

Breton, I was surprised to learn after I began teaching there, was settled by Black settlers in the early 20th century, one of four communities in Alberta settled by Black people fleeing racism and violence in the United States in the decades following the abolition of slavery.

Through the passage of segregationist measures, which became known as Jim Crow laws, state institutionalized racism disenfranchised Black people and made it difficult for them to own property and to live free, safe lives. Public services were segregated and

Black schools and libraries were often woefully underfunded.

Thousands of Jim Crow refugees fled north looking for a better life, freedom and opportunity in Canada. Like other settlers at the time, they were drawn to Alberta by the incentive of inexpensive land in exchange for a promise to clear, plant, build and live on that land.

They didn't automatically find acceptance and tolerance in Alberta. Hostility from local politicians, including Frank Oliver, and a 1911 order in council attempted to shut the door on these immigrants, deeming them "unsuitable" as future Canadians.

Facing hostility in urban centres, they settled in four communities in rural Alberta: Amber Valley (near Athabasca), Campsie (near Barrhead), Junkins (now Wildwood) and Keystone, which would later be renamed Breton. The isolated nature of the rural areas allowed the Black settlers to live more peacefully under local government, institutions and norms that they established for themselves.

Hooks's parents — her father from Oklahoma and her mother from Kansas — married and settled in Keystone. Hooks moved around Alberta a little growing up, but ultimately ended up

back in Keystone to begin her teaching career.

Racism followed her as well. In a 2003 interview with the Alberta Labour History Institute, Hooks recalled racist incidents and intolerance from her own schooling, her experiences at normal school and then as a teacher in the Breton area.

Hooks was forced to leave Breton after some members of the community opposed her transfer to Breton School from the nearby predominantly Black Funnell School. An incident in the community involving blackface minstrel shows had heightened racial tensions. Hooks went to teach in nearby Warburg. She said the Breton community wanted her back the next year, but she had already settled in Warburg, where she would teach for the next 25 years of her career, returning to Breton just for the final four years.

By the time I started teaching in Breton, none of the Black families that settled Keystone remained, but much of the history would be preserved thanks to Gwen Hooks, who was instrumental in founding the Breton and District Historical Museum in Breton's old two-room schoolhouse. She also wrote and published two books chronicling

this important part of Alberta's history, including *The Keystone Legacy: Recollections of a Black Settler*.

But Hooks is also remembered fondly by her former pupils, some of whom I taught with in Breton, which is how I first learned of her.

Gwen Hooks died in March 2018, but her online tribute wall speaks to the lasting impact she had on the community, through her teaching, through her preservation of Black history and through her community leadership.

"We were very fortunate to have her influence," says one comment. "She made learning so much fun," and "she was a very special lady, role model, that inspired the lives of many, young and old."

And then there is this: "She was my first teacher. I knew only about six words in English when I started school. She made me feel safe and I loved, admired and respected her all her life."

I am grateful to have had the chance to learn about Gwen Hooks and, through her work, to learn about Alberta's Black history and some of the history of Black teachers in Alberta. ■

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

Teachers excluded from critical worker benefit



Q & A

Dennis Theobald
ATA Executive Secretary

Question: Why aren't teachers receiving the payment for front-line workers that was recently announced by the Alberta government and what is the Alberta Teachers' Association going to do about it?

Answer: Let me start by noting that the Alberta government did not consult at all with the Association concerning the possibility of teachers receiving payment under the Alberta Critical Worker Benefit (ACWB) program and, furthermore, that the province's approach to distributing these funds can be charitably described as incoherent. So coming up with a good answer to the first part of the question is going to be a bit challenging.

Let's start with a bit of history. The money being doled out is part of a cost-shared \$4 billion agreement between the federal government and the provinces concluded last May when the country was still in the midst of its first general COVID-19 lockdown. Ottawa would contribute \$3 for every \$1 spent by the provinces, and so the province of Alberta is contributing \$118

million to the \$465 million-dollar cost of the program in this province.

When it was first conceived, the program was intended to provide additional support to low-paid workers (those making less than \$2,500 per month) who were providing essential services but who did not necessarily enjoy basic benefits such as paid sick leave or medical coverage and who often sought employment at multiple work sites. These workers were at high risk of contracting COVID-19 themselves and were potential vectors of infection if forced by their economic circumstances to report to work while ill. In particular, front-line workers in hospitals, long-term care facilities and the food industry were seen to be at the front of the line for this additional support.

Of course, this is Canada and so these best laid plans were subject in implementation to the tender mercies and peculiar sensibilities of the individual provinces. The \$2,500 monthly income ceiling was quickly abandoned and a cross-Canada patchwork of salary top ups and lump-sum payments to different groups of workers in different provinces was initiated. Most provinces put some sort of salary support program for essential workers into place immediately, but not Alberta. Alberta effectively chose to let the funds sit idle for nine months until the ACWB was announced on Feb. 10, 2021.

And despite the delay, the plan (such that it is) still seems to be in

development. Front-line health care workers will automatically receive the one-time payment of \$1,200, but details concerning private sector workers are still to be released.

While about 380,000 deserving Alberta workers — including gas station attendants, social workers, grocery clerks, hospital orderlies and nurses — are ultimately expected to be eligible, other workers whose work exposes them to the public were not among the elect. Among those excluded from receiving ACWB benefits are police and corrections officers, paramedics, lab technicians, take-out delivery drivers, bicycle couriers, liquor and hardware store employees and, of course, teachers. Whether pitting worker against worker was a feature or a bug in the government's design plan, I will leave to the reader to discern.

In responding to teachers being left off the list to receive ACWB benefits, ATA president Jason Schilling recognized that Association members continued to teach remotely and in schools, often in conditions that remain far from ideal or even reasonable. He observed, however, that teachers under contract were protected from the financial impact of COVID and enjoyed the protection of negotiated sick leave and medical benefit policies provided for in collective agreements.

Schilling highlighted in comments to government officials, other education stakeholder groups and to the media

that substitute teachers not on contract are subject to the same risks as other teachers without many of these protections and, like administrative assistants, bus drivers, school caretakers and educational assistants, should be included in the list of those qualifying for the benefit. Like many of those education support workers, substitute teachers were also laid off in spring 2020 when schools closed to students.

Teachers' justifiable irritation with having been excluded from the ACWB reflects not only a sense that their exceptional efforts during the pandemic emergency are being overlooked by government, but also a deep frustration with having had their salary grids frozen for seven of the last eight years and the sense that they have done more than their part to share the economic and fiscal burdens experienced by successive governments.

Ultimately though, teachers would be ill-served by a one-time payment that would be better directed to others in greater need. The place to deal with our larger and longstanding compensation issues is at the bargaining table, where we will be looking to catch up to other Albertans while pushing back against a government that will be seeking salary concessions from employees across the public sector. ■

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

The ATA is democratic. Please vote.



VIEWPOINTS

Jason Schilling
ATA President

Elections matter because democracy matters. Elections allow us to have a say in shaping our representation and allow people to have a voice on issues that are important. Having just witnessed an election in the United States, we can see how elections are important and just how fragile democracy can truly be.

It's important for our institutions to preserve the democratic process of elections and to make sure that they are free and accessible for all. At the recent Calgary City Teachers' Convention, keynote speaker Joel Sartore referenced a quote by Jane Goodall in his presentation, "Without hope, people fall into apathy."

Though this statement was about conserving endangered species, the idea behind the quote sat with me. I believe that, no matter how big or small, all elections are important. To me elections can give hope for change, that if we engage in the democratic processes afforded to us, we can use our vote to make a difference. Every vote does indeed count.

In case you missed it, it's election time for Provincial Executive Council (PEC), which is the body of teacher representatives that governs the ATA. Teachers across the province will once again have the ability to elect the individuals they want to represent them. ATA provincial elections roll around every two years, and each and every teacher who belongs to the ATA has the right to be a candidate.

When a teacher starts their career in an Alberta public school, whether they are right out of university or new to the

province, they become a member of the Alberta Teachers' Association. These new teachers typically attend an induction ceremony arranged by their ATA local, many of which I have had the pleasure to attend. In my comments to new teachers, I encourage them to become involved in their professional organization, as the ATA is stronger as a whole when members are engaged.

“The ATA is stronger as a whole when members are engaged.”

Induction ceremonies are uniform across the province. Whether yours takes place in a hotel banquet room, at a small-town legion or on Zoom, all teachers new to the profession take the same pledge. One of the commitments of the pledge states that the ATA “can achieve its objectives only to the extent that [teachers] participate in its affairs and government through democratic processes.” In the excitement of the moment, the meaning of this part of the pledge might get lost. Essentially it means that, when an election comes around, whether for your ATA local or provincial positions, teachers should be become engaged in the process of electing their leadership.

The ATA has a long and proud history of being a democratic organization. Each and every teacher has the opportunity to hold office and serve their colleagues.

Many teachers give back to the ATA by fulfilling one of the most important roles in the Association – school representative for their local. Teachers also get involved in their locals by contributing to their local teacher welfare committees; professional development committees; diversity, equity and human rights committees; substitute committees; women in leadership committees; or in an executive position such as local president.

On the local level, the possibilities are endless, and these local positions are excellent ways for teachers to engage with their colleagues about issues that they are passionate about.

Provincial Executive Council is made up of the elected representatives of Alberta teachers plus the Association's executive secretary. The five table officers are its executive: president, two vice-presidents, past president and executive secretary, and its other members are the 15 district representatives of the 11 geographic districts. Provincial Executive Council also establishes standing and ad-hoc committees to advise it on a variety of educational matters.

This sounds pretty dry when you read it on the ATA website, but the work of Provincial Executive Council has been anything but boring this last year. It's important that the leadership of our Association be the voice of teachers who are elected by their peers. It gives our Association credibility when advocating for the issues necessary to promote and advance public education in Alberta.

This year teachers are busy, tired and overwhelmed by the demands of teaching during a pandemic. But I encourage each and every one of you to become involved in the democracy of the Association you belong to. Read the platforms, attend an online forum and vote. Like all things pertaining to public education and our ATA, it matters. ■

YOUR VIEWS

FACEBOOK FEEDBACK

What are you missing most about in-person teacher conventions?

Katherine Sorenson

Honestly, I loved having it online. No travel, no trouble finding parking, no extra costs. I loved that there are prerecorded sessions that I can go back and rewatch or rewind. I loved that I didn't have to run to my next session hoping there would be an available seat. I thought it was fantastic, and I'll actually be a bit upset about that part going back to normal.

Taylor Bambush

While I miss catching up with colleagues and lunches, I don't miss driving downtown in February and paying for parking. I did enjoy listening and learning while I got puppy cuddles on the couch this year.

Ted Hutchings

Catching up with colleagues from across the province. The in-person element was always one of the best things about convention. And lunch. Convention lunch is always great!

Zan Pinsky

Lunch with friends! We have staggered lunch breaks at school so we never get to eat together. I definitely miss the socializing of convention but loved the ability to watch multiple sessions! I always had to choose which ones to attend at the same time. Now I could attend the live ones and watch the prerecorded ones too!

Christie Lee

Seeing friends from other schools and actually having time to talk to my colleagues.

Teresa Andersson

Definitely didn't miss driving for hours in extreme weather!

Barb Nemeth

Seeing other teachers in person! I teach at a school where I am the only teacher in the building. I do have an EA, but it's just her and me. I really miss seeing and chatting with other ATA friends. Convention allows me time to see colleagues.

Jessica Dubrue

Connecting and socializing with colleagues. And doughnuts.

Jocelyn Tam

I miss running into my colleagues and former colleagues, catching up over coffee or just in the halls. The chance to reconnect in person was always a great thing to look forward to.

Kristel Fisher Laderoute

I missed the people but really enjoyed the online format. No problem getting into sessions I wanted to see, no crazy commute downtown in the morning, no travel on winter roads in minus 35, comfy seating, good snacks...I could go on. I loved it.

FOR THE RECORD

“Be it resolved that no Alberta minister of education henceforth have responsibility for the contents of K–12 curricula, their renewal, revision or change.”

– Kent den Heyer, professor of secondary education, University of Alberta, in an article published entitled “Alberta curriculum: End the failed partisan politics over what kids should learn.” Article available at theconversation.com.



Teachers' conventions a virtual success

Future of annual PD events may be forever altered by online experience

Mark Milne
ATA News Staff

Teachers' convention may never be the same again.

After conventions were forced online due to COVID-19 pandemic restrictions, organizers and attendees who have experienced the new approach have discovered that there are many benefits to holding the sessions online.

Earlier this month the North Central Teachers' Convention Association (NCTCA) made education history in Alberta as it became the first convention to be held entirely online. Mike Wheeler, communications officer with NCTCA, said the event was practically flawless and very well received.

"Teachers had access to more sessions, and no one was travelling in dangerous road conditions" said Wheeler. "That's a huge convenience factor for our rural teachers. People were engaged."

Lisa Fulton and Shae Frisby, co-presidents of the Calgary City Teachers Convention Association (CCTCA), agree. "We thought teachers might not like it because they're sick of being online," said Fulton. "All our school meetings are held online; we've been teaching online from home. I was worried the teachers weren't going to buy in because they are just exhausted ... but that was exactly the opposite of what happened."

Easy access

All three organizers believe the convenience of access to the presentations played a major role in the success of their conventions.

"They're not walking around from room to room. They're not waiting for rooms to open up," said Wheeler. "They

can really jam-pack their convention schedule."

Teachers also liked not having to deal with travel expenses and the inconvenience of on-site parking.

Organizers attributed the online format as the main reason they were able to book bigger names as keynote speakers. Presenters who were once considered too expensive to book due to travel costs suddenly became affordable.

"You're just paying for them to talk," said Frisby, "they don't have to travel. And that's a huge plus ... especially to Alberta ... in February!"

Virtual sessions also provided organizers the opportunity to open sessions up to much larger audiences. Fulton notes that more than 4,000 delegates attended the Jane Goodall session, and that's many more than the convention centre halls could have accommodated.

Make it personal

Feedback from teachers shows that many attendees preferred the online sessions, saying it gave the presentations a personal feel. Frisby said some teachers felt a closer connection to the speakers.

"One person wrote to us and said 'I was in Peter Mansbridge's office. How cool was that!'"

However, Wheeler did hear from some teachers that they missed the in-person sessions.

"There is something to being able to see a speaker live versus over a screen," he said. "You're missing that kinetic energy of being live."

All organizers noted that the virtual setting did not allow for the usual social interaction that is often a huge draw of convention. To compensate, a chat feature with the CCTCA allowed



DARREN MOROZ

Musician Alan Doyle delivers the final keynote address at the Calgary City Teachers' Convention on Feb. 12. Holding conventions virtually has enabled organizers to book more high-profile speakers due to the absence of travel costs.

attendees to connect with fellow conventioners. Wheeler says the NCTCA had a great presence online.

"We got NCTCA2021 trending on Twitter – number five in Canada!"

Leave it to the experts

Both convention associations hired a contractor to assist with the delivery of the sessions. Fulton, Frisby and Wheeler all agree that their groups were out of their leagues when it came to the technical aspects of running such a massive online event.

"As full-time teachers, trying to teach during a pandemic plus put on a virtual convention, it would not have been possible," said Fulton.

"It was all done by someone who

actually understands the technology," added Wheeler.

All agreed that the success of this year's event will definitely have an impact on how conventions are held in the future, although to what extent is unknown. That will lie in the hands of their members and the direction of the ATA's Provincial Executive Council. And all feel that the experience has allowed them to grow.

"Despite the highs and the lows, I'm so glad we got to experience it," said Frisby. "I think this will revolutionize conventions and it's going to make them better."

Wheeler agrees. "We were building the plane while we were flying it. Now that the plane is built, it would be nice to fly it again." ■

Annual education telephone survey underway

ATA News Staff

The Ministry of Education is conducting its annual telephone surveys to collect teachers' and other partners' perceptions of Alberta's K-12 education system.

Opened in February, the surveys gather responses from a random sample of teachers, parents, high school students, principals, school board trustees, employers and the general public in the province. There will be more than 6,000 completed surveys, ensuring that survey results for each of the respondent groups are statistically representative.

This year, the department is again piloting online surveys of teachers using the same survey instrument as the telephone survey. In addition, the survey of principals is being administered online only.

As in previous years, the survey is also being offered in French for four

respondent groups: senior high school students, parents, teachers and school board trustees.

The survey responses are completely confidential and only aggregate data will be reported. The survey begins in mid-February and will continue until June. CCI Research has been contracted to administer the surveys.

Survey results are used in specific business plan performance measures and will be reported in the ministry's 2020-21 annual report.

A summary of the information from this survey will be posted on Alberta Education's website. Last year's survey results are available at www.alberta.ca/education-provincial-satisfaction-surveys.aspx.

Questions about the survey can be directed to Jim Peck, senior manager in the Corporate Planning Branch, at 780-422-1963 (dial 310-0000 first for toll-free access in Alberta) or jim.peck@gov.ab.ca. ■



TYLER DIXON

Students from Marshall Springs School in Calgary participate in avalanche skills training during Tyler Dixon's outdoor education class. The activity took place a few days before the polar vortex swept through Alberta.



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.

Know your district; know your candidates

Five important things about the 2021 PEC election

1. Your vote is your voice.

The election of teachers to Provincial Executive Council (PEC) enables Alberta Teachers' Association members to have their say in who will represent them on important issues affecting the teaching profession and public education in Alberta. Your vote helps maintain a strong, relevant and inspired teaching profession.

2. Online voting instructions were mailed on Feb. 16.

Election voting will be conducted online. To ensure that all members are aware of how to vote, the Association is sending to each school in the province (with three or more teachers) a package containing one set of instructions to every teacher at that location.

3. Every teacher can vote in this election – even if there isn't a race in their district.

This year, there is a race for vice-president, so every active and associate member can vote for up to two representatives that they think are best suited for this role.

Additionally, some teachers can also vote for district representatives. If you work in any of the following school divisions, be aware of the candidates in your district.

CALGARY CITY

- Calgary School Division
- Calgary Roman Catholic Separate School Division

CENTRAL SOUTH

- Chinook's Edge School Division
- Clearview School Division
- Red Deer Catholic Separate School Division
- Red Deer School Division
- Wolf Creek School Division

EDMONTON DISTRICT

- Elk Island Catholic Separate School Division
- Elk Island Public School Division
- Greater St. Albert Roman Catholic Separate School Division
- St. Albert School Division
- Sturgeon School Division

EDMONTON MCMURRAY

- Edmonton Catholic Separate School Division
- Edmonton School Division
- Fort McMurray School Division
- Fort McMurray Roman Catholic Separate School Division

4. Candidates have uploaded their campaign videos to the ATA website.

Get to know your candidates by heading to www.teachers.ab.ca and visiting the PEC election section.

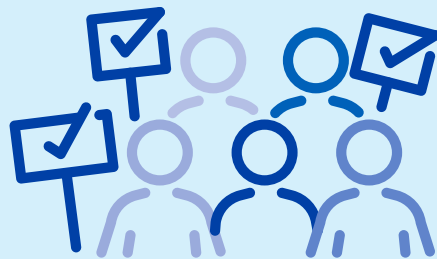
You can read their bios, watch their campaign videos and get links to their websites or social media pages.

5. More election resources are available at www.teachers.ab.ca.

The Association website (www.teachers.ab.ca) contains information on all aspects of the 2021 PEC election and even has a "Promote" section where you can find various shareable graphics and information ready for posting and tweeting. ■

BE READY TO VOTE ONLINE

An online ATA account is a must! If you don't yet have one, go to ATA homepage > My ATA > Online ATA Account. View the demo, set up your account and get ready to vote!



HOW TO VOTE!

STEP 1

LOG IN

Log in to your online ATA account at www.teachers.ab.ca.

STEP 2

GET STARTED

Click anywhere on the VOTE HERE graphic.

STEP 3

CONFIRM ELIGIBILITY

Provide the information requested.

STEP 4

DECLARE ELIGIBILITY

Click the declaration box.


NOTE: The demographic information you confirm when you declare your eligibility will determine the geographic region represented on your ballot. Ensure the information submitted is accurate, as it cannot be changed once submitted.

STEP 5

VOTE


Select your candidate(s) and submit your online ballot.

NOTE: The 2021 PEC Election site is controlled and operated by a third party. Be sure to review the candidates you select before clicking the "Submit Vote" button.



VIEW THE CANDIDATES

Vote online March 8–11 for the positions of vice-president and district representative.



Discovery mode never ends

Storyteller Ivan Coyote shares message of compassion and growth



Jen Janzen
ATA News Staff

No matter your age, if you're still trying to figure who you are, Ivan Coyote has a message for you: it's OK to be in discovery mode.

"I'm 52 years old this summer, and I'm still figuring myself out," Coyote told the youth who asked what they should do when they're not sure where they fit on the gender spectrum. "It's about trusting yourself, and following your own heart, and your own narrative about stuff. We're all moving forwards and becoming ourselves."

The Q&A was part of "Eye, Heart, You," Coyote's online presentation to Alberta teachers and students on Valentine's Day, and followed a series of readings from Coyote's works that explore different kinds of love, from romantic to friendly to familial.

The presentation, which was organized by the Associations' Diversity, Equity, and Human Rights (DEHR)

Committee, was attended by more than 100 individual students, teachers and allies. In the chat, many participants shared that they were tuning in with their partners, their kids or their whole families.

"We know [Valentine's Day] is a hard time of year for youth and especially non-binary youth," explained Dan Grassick, secretary of DEHR. This talk by Coyote, who has been a popular touring speaker and performer for more than 25 years, was a way to send a gender-inclusive Valentine to 2SLGBTQ+ students, teachers and those who support them.

One of the post-performance questions came from a teacher who wanted help encouraging their colleagues to be more supportive of gender diversity at school. Coyote encouraged the teacher to think about ways the school can be proactive instead of waiting for youth to ask for accommodations.

"Youth often have to advocate for themselves," Coyote said, listing examples such as changing their library

card name or asking to use a gender-neutral bathroom. "Our job as educators is to get ahead of this. Make sure they have a gender-neutral bathroom and a safe place to change for gym or drama." Making these changes, Coyote pointed out, doesn't only benefit students from gender minorities; they benefit everyone.

The key, said Coyote, is to make sure that 2SLGBTQ+ see themselves as important to you and see that they are represented.

"Are they represented in the books in the library? Are the teachers up to speed?"

Regarding pronouns, Coyote urged teachers to practice on their own. Non-binary students shouldn't have to constantly monitor and correct your errors. If it's important to you to respect your students, you need to practice learning how to say their names and how to use their pronouns.

"If you mess up—and you will mess up—apologize and move on. You're the educator; you're the role model. The other kids are looking to you." ■

On Valentine's Day, storyteller and author Ivan Coyote delivered an online presentation centred on different kinds of love.

The Let's Talk Careers Competitions are an exciting opportunity to engage students in career discovery, plus there is a chance to win prizes!



**Let's Talk
Careers!**
Canada's Most
Informed School
and Students
Competition

Fuel participation with competition!

Typically a student will select their career or higher education path based on what they know. With the ChatterHigh platform, students receive a fun, daily, 10 minute, 10 question, quiz that allows them to research and explore thousands of higher education and career options that they may not have been exposed to any other way. And there is \$50,000 in cash prizes to be won for the students and schools who earn the most points!

Presented by:



Competition Dates:
Spring 2021: April 12 to May 21



Visit
letstalkscience.ca/careers
to learn more!

Women in leadership

ATA committee is working diligently to promote and enhance gender equality

ATA News Staff

In 2018 the Diversity, Equity and Human Rights (DEHR) Committee struck a Women in Leadership subcommittee with a mandate to examine the experiences and obstacles affecting women in educational leadership. The subcommittee was the first Association group to administer a needs assessment survey to examine teachers' perception of gender discrimination, barriers to leadership that women face and the supports that the Association could provide to assist women who aspire to leadership positions.

At the 2019 Annual Representative Assembly, delegates accepted a resolution that the Association form a standing committee on women in leadership. The committee's mandate includes reviewing ATA structures and practices to identify opportunities to promote and enhance gender equality and women's participation in all aspects of employment and Association life.

There are three main ways the Women in Leadership Committee accomplishes its mandate: through policy recommendations, the organization of an annual summit and research on the career progression of women in educational leadership.

Local committees

As well as the provincial Women in Leadership Committee, there are now 10 ATA locals with their own women in leadership committees. The development of these local committees is sparking interest in leadership equity issues at a grassroots level.

If your local is interested in forming a women in leadership committee, information about how to get started is available on the ATA's Women in Leadership website: <http://wil.teachers.ab.ca>.

Summit

The Women in Leadership Summit is taking place on March 6. The theme is Resilience in Education: Bouncing Back From Adversity. The one-day event will feature keynote speakers Marni Panas and Sandra Woitas. Participants will also choose between 10 speakers/subjects for three breakout sessions.

International Women's Day

International Women's Day is a global day celebrating the social, economic, cultural and political achievements of women. The day also marks a call to action for accelerating gender parity. Significant activity is witnessed worldwide as groups come together to celebrate women's achievements or rally for women's equality.

Marked annually on March 8, International Women's Day is one of the most important days of the year to

- celebrate women's achievements,
- raise awareness about women's equality,
- lobby for accelerated gender parity and
- fundraise for female-focused charities.

www.internationalwomensday.com

“ Women belong in all places where decisions are being made. It shouldn't be that women are the exception. ”

– Ruth Bader Ginsburg

Topics will include

- Diversity and inclusion
- Advancing Indigenous women
- Financial wellness
- Building trust
- Using hope to build resilience
- Change leadership

Summit series

To lead up to the summit, the committee hosted a speaker series featuring three prominent women.

Right Honourable Kim Campbell
The Importance of Women in Politics

Astrid Kendrick
Compassion Fatigue, Emotional Labour and Educator Burnout: Research Study

Patricia Makokis
A Synergistic Approach to Gender and Race Equality

Videos of the speaker sessions are available for viewing for a limited time at <https://wil.teachers.ab.ca>.

Research efforts

The Women in Leadership Committee has engaged in several research projects dating back to 2019, when it existed as a subcommittee of the Diversity, Equity and Human Rights Committee. At that time the subcommittee conducted an online needs assessment survey of Association members to ascertain their perceptions of gender, career advancement and opportunity.

The resulting report combines the findings of the survey results with information learned in the field of educational leadership literature and leadership literature. The Association offers a presentation derived from this report. Anyone who's interested in hosting this presentation can contact Lisa Everitt at lisa.everitt@ata.ab.ca.

More recently, the Women in Leadership Committee completed a literature review on maternity leave and career progression. This report is in the process of being compiled and will be available late in the 2020/21 school year.

The committee has also applied for a partnership development grant from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council with the aim of conducting a three-year project on the intersection of gender and leadership. The main partners are envisioned to be the ATA, the College of Alberta School Superintendents and the University of Alberta. The project is slated to start in July should the grant be approved.

A third research study is in the works: *COVID-19 Caregiving and Careers of Alberta Teachers and School Leaders: A Qualitative Study—Research Project*. The committee is in the process of establishing focus groups and interviews to find out more about how COVID-19 and caregiving are impacting female teachers and school leaders. In addition to focus groups being held at this year's Women in Leadership Summit, two other focus groups will be held on March 8 and 10. The March 8 session will be specifically for female school leaders, and the March 10 session will be specifically for racialized teachers who are female. If you are interested in participating in either focus group session, please contact lisa.everitt@ata.ab.ca.



Black History Month

February is Black History Month, when people in Canada are invited to participate in festivities and events that honour the legacy of Black Canadians and their communities. The 2021 theme for Black History Month is "The Future is Now."

The following resources and information are available through the Alberta Teachers' Association and other sources.

- ATA library antiracism libguide – <https://teachers-ab.libguides.com/antiracism>
- DEHR antiracism and antioppression speaker series (recorded webinars and upcoming sessions) – <https://atapdwebinars2020.sched.com/overview/type/Antiracism>
- Black History Month in Canada: timeline and education guide – <http://education.historicacanada.ca>
- CBC multimedia series: Being Black In Canada – http://bit.ly/CBC_Being_Black_In_Canada
- Canadian Heritage: Noteworthy historical figures – http://bit.ly/Noteworthy_Historical_Figures
- Today's Parent: 16 great Black History Month books for kids – http://bit.ly/16_Great_Books

Recommended books

- *How to Be an Antiracist* by Ibram X. Kendi
- *Anti-Racist Ally* by Sophie Williams
- *We Want to Do More Than Survive* by Bettina L. Love

NOTICES AND EVENTS

Writing competition open

The Diverse Minds book writing competition invites high school teachers and students to reflect on values of inclusion, diversity, understanding and acceptance of everyone's individualities. This writing competition is open to all high school students (grades 10 to 12) in Edmonton and area.

The winning book will be professionally published in hard copy and colour and distributed to the elementary schools and public libraries in Edmonton. There are also significant cash prizes.

The deadline for submissions is April 9.

Further information is available at www.bnaibrith.ca/diverse-minds-edmonton.



WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP

AN ATA SUMMIT

March 6, 2021

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS



Marni Panas



Sandra Woitas

We asked teachers to send in pictures of their pets along with an explanation of how the animal helps them in their profession.



JASPER



Jasper is a COVID dog. I got him just before quarantine in March. He helped me go throughout that time. He helps me to relax after work.

*Veronique Gagnon
Grade 2, Ecole du Nouveau-Monde, Calgary*

REMI

Remi loves to cuddle and has a bouncy, sweet, loving personality. She is the best cure for stress and the Sunday Scaries.

*Erin Kadis
Grade 2, David Thomas King School, Edmonton*



TEACHER'S PET

Animals light up teachers' lives and help them through isolation



CHESTER

Chester can sense stress from the moment I park in the garage. If I have had a bad day, he will wait on the couch like he is inviting me to cuddle up and relax.

Chester helps me focus on the moment and reminds me to find the fun in everything. During at-home learning, he became Monsieur Chester and helped teach music, and was an example of how to complete assignments. The students loved any lesson that included him.

*Crystal Brophy
K-6 music, École Broxton Park School, Spruce Grove*





Rambo's capacity to form affectionate relationships with others and his easygoing disposition makes him the best pet. Contrary to his name, Rambo is the sweetest, gentlest assistant. He has helped me stay connected to my students during online learning. He encourages the students to participate and to try their best.

*Alexandra Gravel
Grades 1 and 2 French immersion,
École Campbelltown, Sherwood Park*

My name is Gus. I'm a 30-year-old male Congo African Grey parrot. Mommy talks about me all the time when teaching her Grade 7s! It worked out really well that she was teaching "Interactions and Ecosystems" (whatever that means) because I got to be an example in her lessons about food webs, adaptations and human interactions! Sometimes when she is focusing too hard, I ask her "are you okay?" I also make kissing noises so she knows I love her. I am very good at keeping Mommy active during quarantine because I like to run around growling like a dog and chew on things I shouldn't.

*Ilana Manning
Grade 7 math and science,
Dr. Martha Cohen School, Calgary*



My cats Milo and Millie always like to stand on my laptop at home when I'm trying to work.

*Jessica Sellin
Humanities, physical education,
JV girls volleyball coach,
Camrose Composite High School, Camrose*



RAMBO



GUS



MILO



MERA



RASCAL GEORGE



SIF

I have 11 pets on my acreage: five cats, three goats, one dog, one rabbit and one guinea pig. All my animals are special as they all are unique in their own ways. They help me with my pursuit of my education degree by allowing me to stop and enjoy the small moments. I can clear my head by spending time with my animals and come back to lesson planning with a clear head. They are the balance that this demanding career requires.

*Justine Wilton
Preservice teacher/practicum student,
Southview School, Medicine Hat*

When I'm not teaching, I foster cats and kittens for the Barrhead Animal Rescue Society (BARS), where I have helped rescue more than 100 cats and kittens. Rascal is what we call a "foster fail," or a foster who never leaves.

Rascal was my teacher assistant when we were teaching our students online at the end of last year. He was with me for every Google Meet with my students. He even helped me teach students about the needs of animals for a science video we posted on our Google Classroom. Rascal is always by my side, no matter if I'm writing lesson plans or talking to my students. He's an amazing emotional support for me.

*Toni Liber
Substitute teacher,
Pembina Hills School Division*

I have two chocolate labs named Sif and Odin. My pets are special to me because they give me the best "light ups" when I get home from work. No matter how my day was, my dogs greet me with love and excitement.

My dogs help me in my profession by reminding me how important the light up is. I try my best every day to give my kids a great light up to help them feel welcome and cared for in our classroom.

*Tracey MacNeil
Grade 3
École Percy Pegler School, Okotoks*



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New OH&S rules affect teachers



EXECUTIVE REPORT

Konni deGoeij
ATA Associate Co-ordinator
Administrator Assistance

New occupational health and safety (OHS) laws came into effect on June 1, 2018, with the first significant updates in more than 40 years. The purposes of the new laws are the promotion and maintenance of the following:

- the highest degree of physical, psychological and social well-being of workers;
- the prevention of work site incidents, injuries, illnesses and diseases;
- the protection of workers from factors and conditions adverse to their health and safety; and
- ensuring that all workers have three basic rights: the right to know, the right to participate and the right to refuse dangerous work.

The following Q&A explores the aspects of the changes that most affect teachers.



What are the changes to the Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) Act that I should be aware of as a teacher?



For teachers, one of the most significant changes to the act was the addition of psychological and social well-being of workers. This encompasses part 27 of the Occupational Health and Safety Code, which identifies violence and harassment as workplace hazards, where a “hazard” means a situation, condition or thing that may be dangerous to health and safety.

Employers are required to help prevent workplace harassment and violence and address incidents when they do occur. The new rules define workplace harassment and violence in all forms. They also require employers to

- investigate incidents of violence and harassment and take corrective action,
- develop separate violence and harassment prevention plans,
- review plans every three years, and
- advise workers of treatment options if harmed by violence or harassment.

Workers are entitled to wages and benefits while attending treatment programs.



What are the changes to the requirements for OHS health and safety committees (HSC) and their representatives?



One of the main changes is a move to employer-based committees rather than site-based. For example, under the new rules, each school division will have a single committee rather than a committee at each school.

The committee’s purpose is to address health and safety concerns in the workplace. The role of the committee and representatives is to advise and assist, not assume managerial responsibilities. The committee must have at least four members, with at least half representing the workers. Worker representatives are selected by the workers for a term of not less than one year, unless prescribed by a union agreement. The employer representatives are assigned by the employer. Each committee must have two co-chairs — a worker co-chair chosen by worker members and an employer co-chair chosen by employer members.

A HSC manual has been developed and suggests that the HSC representatives do have a role to play and should be available and in dialogue with workers.

Attributes of an effective HSC member/HSC representative:

- Always be ready to listen to the concerns of other workers.
- Be sure you use safe work practices yourself, and follow all safety rules.
- Ensure that all unsafe equipment and conditions identified are addressed appropriately.
- Do not give up on any concern that is unresolved.
- Do not become involved in matters that are not health and safety concerns.
- Do not exceed your authority.
- Do not interfere with equipment controls.
- Get help in situations you don’t understand.



What are the hazard reporting requirements under the OHS Act?



The purpose of the hazard assessment is to identify and evaluate those conditions that could lead to employees getting hurt or becoming ill. The typical question to ask is “What could go wrong?” A hazard assessment takes into account the hazards specific to the work task being done. It also takes into account the potential for hazards at the work site to affect the employee performing the task.

Employers must prepare a report that provides the results of the hazard assessment and specifies the methods that will be used to control or eliminate the hazards. The code also requires employers to eliminate hazards whenever it is reasonably practicable to do so. If elimination is not reasonably practicable, hazards must be controlled first by using engineering controls, then administrative controls, and as a last option, by using personal protective equipment.



How can a worker refuse dangerous work under the OHS Act?



The changes to the *Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) Act* require the promotion and maintenance of the highest degree of physical, psychological and social well-being of workers. Further, in part four of the revised act, a worker has the right to refuse work if, on reasonable grounds, the worker believes a dangerous condition exists at the work site or the work constitutes a danger to health and safety.

If such is the case, the worker must promptly report a refusal and the reasons to the employer, supervisor or designate, and the employer must, when safe to do so, investigate and where identified remedy the dangerous condition. As part of this investigation, the hazard assessments conducted to identify and evaluate those conditions that could lead to employees getting hurt or becoming ill would be reviewed. The employer may assign another worker to the work, but that worker must first be advised

- that the work was refused and the reason for it,
- of the reason why the employer believes the work and/or conditions are not dangerous, and
- that they have a right to refuse the work themselves.

You will appreciate that the application of this section of the *OHS Act* is complex and nuanced. If you have questions or concerns, please call the Association offices in Edmonton (1-800-232-7208) or Calgary (1-800-332-1280) for advice. My colleagues in Teacher Employment Services will be pleased to assist. ■

Teachers under investigation must co-operate



PITFALLS AND PRECAUTIONS

Tim Jeffares
ATA Associate Co-ordinator
Discipline

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.

When the executive secretary receives a complaint relating to the alleged unprofessional conduct of a teacher who is an active member of the Alberta Teachers’ Association, within 30 days the complaint is referred to an investigating officer in order to commence an investigation. The role and powers of the investigating officer are outlined in section 26 of the *Teaching Profession Act*.

Occasionally, the investigating officer encounters resistance during the investigative process. Teachers and witnesses sometimes have questions about the role and “powers” of the investigator. Typically, these questions are easily navigated by the investigating officer and the investigation continues, smoothly, to fruition.

The act clearly outlines every member’s responsibilities as they pertain to an active investigation. Section 26(4) states, “If a member does not co-operate with an investigator, the investigator may make a complaint to the executive secretary, and the failure or refusal to co-operate may be found by a hearing committee to constitute unprofessional conduct.”

Recently a member was charged with two different offences. One of the charges had to do with the investigated member not co-operating with the investigating officer. The investigated member pled not guilty to the charges and, over the course of the hearing, mitigating circumstances were entered into evidence that had to be considered by the committee. The committee also heard from one witness who

testified that the investigated member told them that they “had dropped the ball” with respect to participating in the investigation. After deliberating, the committee determined that the member had not co-operated with the investigating officer during the normal course of the investigation.

After rendering the guilty verdict, the committee wrote in its reasons for its decision, “It is the responsibility of a teacher under section 26(4) of the *Teaching Profession Act* to participate in the investigation process.” The hearing committee reinforced its decision with a penalty consisting of a letter of severe reprimand, a fine of \$1,000 and the condition that failure to pay the fine by a set date would result in the suspension of the member’s membership in the Association until the fine was paid.

This decision and penalty are firm reminders to members that co-operation with the investigating officer during an investigation is an expectation of the profession. Any attempts to thwart the normal course of an investigation could result in a finding of unprofessional conduct. ■



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Want to Serve on a CTF/FCE Advisory Committee?

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

APPLY TODAY!
Application deadline
March 31, 2021

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

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

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

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

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This is a 35-hour-per-week position in Edmonton and offers a competitive salary with health and retirement benefits.

Find out more about this opportunity by visiting www.pialberta.org.

Competition closes 4 pm on March 4, 2021.



Public Interest Alberta

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APPEL DE CANDIDATURES POSTE D'ASSOCIÉ/E À LA PRATIQUE DE L'ENSEIGNEMENT

La Faculté Saint-Jean sollicite des candidatures au poste d'Associé/e à la pratique de l'enseignement pour l'année universitaire 2021-2022 avec la possibilité de renouvellement pour l'année universitaire 2022-2023. L'Associé/e à la pratique de l'enseignement est en **prêt de service de son conseil scolaire** et reçoit le salaire et les bénéfices prévus par sa convention collective. Le candidat ou la candidate devra être prêt/e à entrer dans ses nouvelles fonctions le 20 août 2021.

Les responsabilités principales de l'Associé/e à la pratique de l'enseignement sont les suivantes:

- superviser les stagiaires;
- enseigner des cours liés à la pratique de l'enseignement;
- assumer des tâches administratives liées à l'organisation et à l'évaluation des stages,
- assumer la tâche d'agent/e de liaison avec divers organismes du milieu éducatif.

Les critères de sélection sont les suivants:

- avoir enseigné pendant cinq ans dans les écoles francophones ou d'immersion en Alberta;
- avoir une expérience de travail avec des stagiaires;
- démontrer un intérêt pour la formation des enseignants;
- faire preuve d'une grande capacité de leadership en milieu scolaire;
- être en mesure de travailler de manière constructive et positive avec les autres;
- s'être impliqué/e au sein de divers organismes tels que l'ATA, le ministère de l'Éducation ou son conseil scolaire.
- Pouvoir communiquer efficacement en français et en anglais

Le programme de formation des enseignants à la Faculté Saint-Jean est fondé sur le développement de compétences liées aux exigences ministérielles de la province de l'Alberta. Tout individu qui soumet sa candidature pour ce poste devrait se familiariser avec la Norme de qualité de l'enseignement en Alberta (2018).

Envoyez par courriel à rh.csj@ualberta.ca avec comme sujet POSTE D'ASSOCIÉ/E À LA PRATIQUE DE L'ENSEIGNEMENT les trois éléments suivants:

- une lettre de présentation incluant une explication de votre vision du rôle d'associé/e et une description de ce que vous aimeriez accomplir dans le cadre de ce rôle;
- votre curriculum vitae (en français seulement);
- trois (3) références.

Les candidatures seront acceptées jusqu'au 31 mars 2021 à 16h30.

Toutes les candidatures seront considérées avec attention. Cependant, nous ne communiquerons qu'avec les personnes dont la candidature sera retenue. Prière de ne pas téléphoner.

L'Université de l'Alberta encourage les candidatures de toute personne qualifiée; cependant, la priorité sera accordée aux citoyen(ne)s canadien(ne)s et aux résident(e)s permanent(e)s. L'Université de l'Alberta s'engage à embaucher de manière équitable une main-d'œuvre diversifiée et inclusive. Nous accueillons les demandes de toutes les personnes qualifiées. Nous encourageons les femmes; les membres des Premières nations, Métis et Inuits; les membres des groupes minoritaires visibles; les personnes handicapées; les personnes ayant une orientation sexuelle ou une identité et une expression sexospécifique et tous ceux qui peuvent contribuer à la diversification des idées à l'université à postuler.



The Alberta Teachers' Association

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TALENT

February 23, 2021 | Volume 55, Number 9

These are challenging times, so we took to our Facebook page and asked teachers: Tell us something good that has happened! They did.



I have had so many administrators tell my learning supports team how much they appreciate them. It feels good to hear them be appreciated!

Brenda Lee



Tell us something good!

One of my students named his cat after my cat. My cat's name is Mister Meowsworth. He named his cat Tilly Meowsworth.

Larkin RJ



One of the Grade 6 students that I teach French to stood up and declared:

"Mrs. Zapach, you are the nicest teacher in the whole school!"

Jennifer Jones Zapach



One of my parents made me this amazing birthday cake!!

Laurie Jean



I am teaching Grade 4 online this year, and entered my class in the Meaning of Home contest, which is created by Habitat for Humanity. Students wrote free-verse poems based on what home means to them, and we raised \$280 toward a local Habitat build! It was neat to see how our writing can give back to our community!

Lauren Victoria Wark

I've had the pleasure of watching a first time EA grow. Through some feedback and suggestions he has become a great EA in a short period of time and during a year like no other. The students really like him and respect him. He's been an amazing addition to the classroom.

Jaime Rochelle



This was from some of my Science 9s.

Magz Veinot

Substitute Teachers ARE key team members

Substitute Teachers' Appreciation Week 2021 March 8-12

Substitute teachers are necessary and valuable and an important part of school staffs.

Substitute teachers are full and active members of the Alberta Teachers' Association.

The 2020 and 2021 school years have presented unique challenges for your substitute teaching colleagues. Plan now to organize safe ways to recognize the contributions of substitute teachers.

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 The Alberta Teachers' Association

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