



We lub our subs

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2022 Resolutions Bulletin

ATA NEWS

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YUET CHAN

Students at St. Martin Catholic School in Edmonton participate in an assembly on March 10 to show solidarity with Ukraine. See page 5 for coverage of Ukraine and its impact on teachers and students.



'May we have some more?'

Latest provincial budget less than satisfying.

Read Jonathan Teghtmeyer's editorial on page 2.



169 graves located

News from Kapawe'no provides important moment for self-reflection.

See story on page 4.



Viewpoints

Pandemic has inspired some women to pursue their leadership ambitions.

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Off Script

Teachers' conventions inspire again this year.

See story on page 4.

The 'Please Sir, may we have some more' budget



EDITORIAL

Jonathan Teghtmeyer
ATA News Editor-in-Chief

that will likely sit around 1.5 per cent and inflation that the budget pegs at 3.2 per cent.

School boards, like all of us, will experience a significant squeeze when it comes to quickly rising energy and fuel bills. While the government says it is offering an almost five per cent increase to transportation grant rates, this is an area where funding has already been upside down for school boards for years. We all know that gas prices right now are up by closer to 50 per cent than they are by five per cent.

In 2017/18, school boards were spending \$24 million more a year on transportation costs than what they were receiving. In terms of operating and maintaining their buildings and facilities, they were spending \$92 million more than they received. On average, almost \$100 million more a year is spent on transportation and building operations by school boards than what is provided by the province.

Where do you think that money comes from?

Yup! You guessed it. The classroom.

At the same time, school boards are spending an average of \$85 million less on instruction than what they receive each year.

This has been a long-term problem for school boards that has meant a systemic issue for students and teachers.

Even in years when the government has pledged to fully fund enrolment increases, they have failed to apply inflationary increases, or worse, cut other grants in a way that puts the squeeze on school boards. As a result, per pupil inflation-adjusted spending on public education has seen a decline of almost 15 per cent between 2013/14 and next school year.

And when school boards have increasing costs and insufficient revenue, they have few options but to constrain hiring.

Between 2018 and 2021, we lost about 850 teaching positions across the province. Since 2009, the student population has increased by about 22 per cent, while the teaching population has only increased by about 10 per cent.

I would tell you how much class sizes have grown, but the government

stopped tracking that data in 2019. I wonder why.

The best data that we have shows that for every teacher (including administrators and other non-classroom teachers) we now have 17.8 students, whereas in 2009, we had 16 students. Two to three more students per teacher on average actually looks like five to 10 more students in each class at the top end of the scale. I sure don't need to tell you that students are also receiving less in non-teacher support for their learning needs than ever before.

Teachers, parents and supporters of public education cannot be satisfied with this budget just because it finally provides an increase. We are well past due for a budget that actually addresses systemic issues in education underfunding.

It's really unacceptable that students get cuts just because oil is at \$40 a barrel, but it is even worse that they can't get appropriate funding when the price tops \$100. Students deserve better. ■

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

Subs are key members of the teaching profession



Q & A

Dennis Theobald
ATA Executive Secretary

then went back to the principal's office, plans in my hand, to seek collegial advice. Specifically, I asked him "How badly do you want a lawsuit?"

After a brief consultation, the principal suggested an alternative pedagogical approach: "Dodgeball — and if they won't do that, threaten them with laps."

So back to the gym, where the first student soon poked her head out of the changing room, took a look at me and retreated back announcing to her friends "We've got a sub and it's a guy." After some cajoling through the door and a promise that co-operation would spare them having to run laps, most of the girls emerged and my career in education was born.

In the months between April convocation and June, I picked up a series of diverse assignments, one of which involved a hamster that went missing from a Grade 3 special ed class.

My experience is not unusual and, in a sense, that is part of the problem. There is still a perception that substitute teaching is something that teachers do at the outset of their careers in the hope of finding a permanent placement or as a segue into full retirement. While many teachers do follow this path, it is important to recognize that substitute teaching entails special skills, has its own unique demands and requires focused support. There are also teachers whose professional practice takes place entirely in substitute roles. Our

collective experience over the last two years has highlighted the critical role that substitute teachers play in our ability to continue to deliver instruction in the most difficult circumstances.

If you are a substitute teacher, there are many ways the Alberta Teachers' Association can help you.

As a substitute teacher, you become an active member of the Association on your first day of teaching in a school year. Should you require it, your Association provides legal advice relating to your employment, and if you have been treated unfairly, you can ask us for assistance. We can help you decipher the complexities surrounding applying for employment insurance, and we can help you appeal a decision if needed. And you can always call Teacher Employment Services for help with contracts, collective agreements or any other issues that come your way.

As an active member of the ATA, you are eligible to stand for local and provincial elected office or be named as a delegate to attend the Annual Representative Assembly and, in these respective roles, inform the policy and programs that serve you. You also have access to all the Association's many scholarships and fellowships and are eligible to attend teachers' conventions and local professional development opportunities. You may also apply to serve on ATA committees, including the provincial Substitute Teacher's

Committee, which meets three times a year and advises Provincial Executive Council on the concerns and needs of substitute teachers.

Substitute teachers should consider participating as members of their local's substitute teachers' committee, and if your local doesn't have such a committee, you can start one. You also have the opportunity to attend the annual Substitute Teachers' Conference that is held every fall. This is a fantastic learning opportunity with speakers and workshops dedicated to the unique challenges of working as a substitute teacher.

The Association has been working over several rounds of collective bargaining to improve working conditions, benefits and compensation for substitute teachers. We're making progress, although not as quickly as we might like, but staff and elected leaders remain committed to advancing the interests of substitute teachers through negotiations.

In closing, on behalf of all of us at the Association, I would like to thank our substitute teachers for the work they have done and will continue to do to ensure our public education system continues to be one of the best in the world. ■

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

Question: What is the Alberta Teachers' Association doing to support substitute teachers?

Answer: In the spring of 1986 my very first paid teaching gig was as a substitute teacher with Edmonton Public Schools. I got the call out of the blue, sight unseen, to report to Rosslyn Junior High School. Being entirely new to teaching, desperate and broke, I wasn't going to ask too many questions or be fussy about what subjects and grades I was going to be covering. Having pulled on my \$75 suit, purchased from the Army and Navy the previous week, I arrived at the school, was warmly greeted by the principal and then directed by the school secretary to the absent teacher's office ... in the gym.

I discovered there that I was going to be teaching Grade 8 girls' phys-ed. Although I had absolutely no training, experience, competence or natural aptitude for physical education, I was provided with a beautifully detailed set of plans that outlined how I was going to take the girls through classes that involved tumbling and vaulting. I thought about this for a few minutes,



COVID-19 inspires women to leadership



VIEWPOINTS

Julia Smith
Assistant Professor, Simon Fraser University

The most surprising finding of my research with women teachers and school leaders, conducted for the ATA last year, was how many were determined to advance their careers and take on greater leadership opportunities, despite the COVID-19 pandemic.

I led five focus groups and 10 semi-structured interviews with teachers and school leaders on themes around teaching in the context of COVID-19, impacts on unpaid care work at home and the effects on career advancement. Based on my previous research with the Gender and COVID-19 Project, a study that has been documenting the impact of COVID-19 across 12 countries, I assumed that increased workload would combine with COVID-19-related child and elder care burdens to discourage women from taking on leadership roles. I was wrong.

When asked if COVID-19 had affected their career aspirations, half of focus group participants said it had inspired them, with many responding that they felt the new challenges created by the pandemic required a type of leadership that was willing to take on emotional labour and foster positive relationships – abilities that participants felt women teachers were particularly adept at.

“I see now, maybe more than ever, the need for us to really be focusing on relationship and classroom environment, and really taking care of one another,” explained one teacher. “And again, I want to be a part of those conversations. So I feel like I can maybe help in ways that we’re needing moving forward, and I think that is actually where we as women can step up, moving forward, in light of all the challenges that we face in this pandemic.”

A number of participants also noted that the increased online learning opportunities removed barriers they had previously faced to advancing their

leadership credentials. For example, one teacher with a young family shared that, as result of Covid, she has been able to pursue her master’s degree online.

“Things are so available online, and I have a young family, and I have an office set up at home now – it’s a little bit more accessible for me, just because of the way that the world is right now. And it might not have been something that I would have been able to as actively pursue even a year ago.”

Not having to travel to major cities, like Calgary or Edmonton, and being able to learn from home reduced the barriers women teachers faced to pursuing further education themselves.

While this enthusiasm was inspiring, participants also recognized barriers to achieving their ambitions. Child-care burdens due to pandemic-related school and facility interruptions, and reduced time for professional development.

One relatively new teacher described originally having hoped to go into administration or starting her master’s, but with two young children and no consistent child care, she now felt she couldn’t manage it. Teachers also faced judgment when career and care responsibilities conflicted due to pandemic events.

A superintendent noted, “We have a few principals who are women who have young children. Sometimes they can’t be in their school. If their children are isolated, they have to be at home. And they feel like the perception among the rest of their colleagues and even within their school community is that they’re not doing their job.” Others expressed fears that such perceptions would negatively impact their career advancement.

The pandemic also greatly affected teacher and school leaders’ overall well-being, leading to concerns about burnout. The combined increased

workload at home and at school left many exhausted and distressed. One teacher explained, “I think it’s always feeling like we’re letting someone down, and right now it’s either we’re letting students down, or biological children.”

Inability to meet both career and caregiving demands left some feeling powerless.

“I felt really defeated. I felt like I wasn’t doing a good enough job, I felt like a loser. I was at a loss – how was I supposed to help my kids – and I felt like I was losing every day.”

Thankfully, teachers and school leaders had multiple recommendations on how to overcome barriers and support well-being. These included

- continued online collaborations and meetings;
- activities to bring people together and connect in a safe way;
- continued flexibility to allow working from home where and when possible;
- reducing extracurricular activity demands;
- robust in-school mental health support for staff and students;
- a holistic approach to supporting teacher well-being, including paid care leave days, access to counselling and other supports;
- professional development days dedicated to COVID-19 recovery activities, such as mental wellness;
- resources to support women educators in pursuing career development, including support for care responsibilities that might restrict opportunities; and
- ensuring diverse voices in decision making, and developing equity policies to guard against discrimination based on gender, care responsibilities or leave taken due to COVID-19.

Acting on these recommendations can ensure that remarkable women teachers and school leaders are able to step up to leadership roles, to the full extent that they desire, in order to foster a positive and more equitable pandemic recovery. ■

Dr. Julia Smith is an interdisciplinary social scientist trained in policy analysis and political economy, with a focus on gender and health inequities.

YOUR VIEWS

ON TWITTER

Jen @jaymdski

Our Grade 3 morning meeting started with some big thoughts and feelings about the world, so we shared ways we could bring peace to the world and drew some sunflowers (national flower of Ukraine).

Laura Collison @lauracollison

The throne speech today is insulting to teachers and has an emphasis on homeschooling and charter schools. There is no mention of support for public schools. We need a government that values and respects teachers and prioritizes public education.

Dave Martin @d_martin05

Diplomas were implemented in 1974, and look almost identical today. Imagine if your doctor based her judgment about your health using tools not updated since 1974. Maybe it is time #abed leaves these archaic tests on the shelf of history

one tired teacher @orabt_

If parents know what’s best for their kids, not politicians, then why are you STILL pushing the deeply disturbing @Alberta_UCP curriculum? You need to listen to yourself speak more often.

On education funding

Ms. O @MsOTweets77

And yet with all this “funding” I still have one set of textbooks to share with three classes. We hold bake sales to raise playground equipment money. I get a grand total of \$100/yr to buy “necessities” for my class.

On the increase in oil prices

Kelly Aleman @KellyAlemanRD

No time to waste. Teachers would love that revenue to bring down class sizes that benefit ALL Albertans.

FACEBOOK FEEDBACK

Sandra Tedeschi

Has Adrianna LeGrange ever been in the classroom? Does she have an education background? Nevertheless, her knowledge of what kids should and should not learn is debatable. Does she think that teachers want to change parts of the curriculum? Especially after the last two years?

FOR THE RECORD

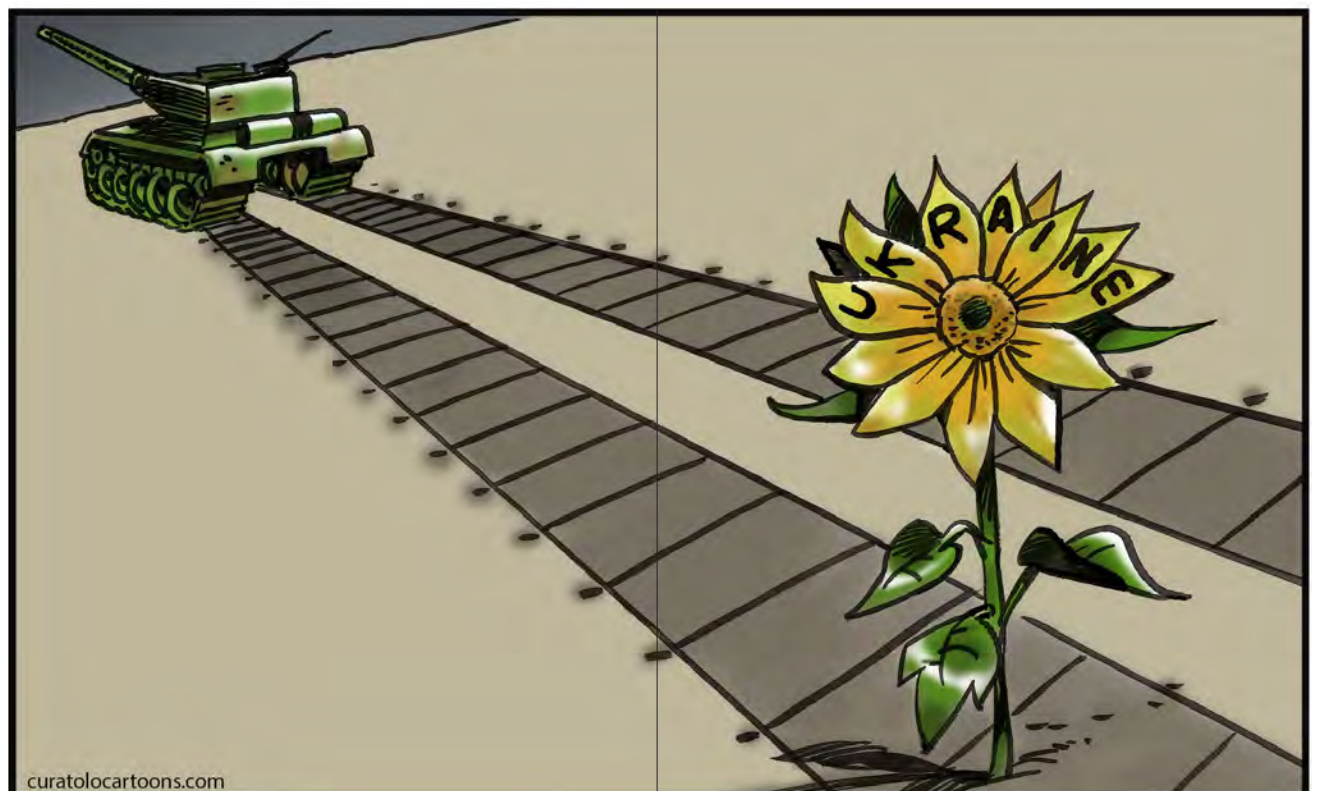
“

Ще не вмерла України
і слава, і воля

Ukraine is not yet dead,
nor its glory and freedom

”

– First line of the Ukrainian national anthem



curatolocartoons.com

Teachers play an important role in truth and reconciliation

A statement from the ATA on the location of 169 graves at Grouard Residential School

The announcement of 169 “potential” unmarked graves at the former Grouard Residential School in northern Alberta is a sobering reminder of the troubling legacy of residential schools in Canada. The proximity of these unmarked graves within our region brings this announcement closer to our homes and serves as a call to learn the truth about residential schools and the legacy of these so-called schools within our own areas.

We want to take time to acknowledge the impact that this news has on all of us and find ways to learn more about the truth of residential schools and share our learnings with others. We know that there will be more announcements and many more graves located through this process of searching; it is an important part of telling and learning about the truth of residential schools.

With each search, location and announcement there is risk of becoming numb to the scale. Each grave and each number in the tally represents a life — a child who mattered — and a family and community that grieved, and continues to grieve. With each

announcement, we must take time to reflect on the lives that were lost and on the impacts of those who suffered, survived and resisted.

As teachers, we have an important role to serve. We need to continue to find ways to increase our understandings of the histories of this land by learning about the truth, and finding ways to continue our learning with, and alongside, students, colleagues, families and communities. Through this ongoing self-reflection, we should reaffirm our commitment to truth and reconciliation and move forward with the utmost care and intention. We must continue to do better for the sake of our students and for the betterment of future generations.

Consider accessing the following resources to support ongoing professional learning and student learning about residential schools:

- ATA Library Guide, Residential Schools: <https://teachers-ab.libguides.com/residentialschools>
- ATA Stepping Stone Resources: www.teachers.ab.ca > My ATA > Professional

[Development > Indigenous Education and Walking Together](#)

- Residential Schools, First Nations Experience
- Residential Schools, Métis Experience
- Residential Schools, Inuit Experience

- National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation: <https://nctr.ca>
- First Nations Child and Family Caring Society, Honouring Memories, Planting Dreams: <https://fncaringsociety.com/honouring-memories-planting-dreams>
- Project of Heart: <https://projectofheart.ca>
- Legacy of Hope Foundation: <https://legacyofhope.ca>

Contact the 24-hour National Indian Residential School Crisis Line for emotional and crisis referral services for former residential school students: 1-866-925-4419. Individuals can also access the Hope for Wellness Help Line at 1-855-242-3310, or connect to the online chat through their website (<https://hopeforwellness.ca/home.html>).

ATA has two words on curriculum: ‘Just stop’

ATA News Staff

The Alberta Teachers’ Association is once again calling on the government to pull the plug on its new curriculum amid recent polling data showing that only three per cent of teachers believe they have the supports and resources they need to successfully implement this curriculum in the fall.

The independent poll of teachers and the public, conducted by Environics Research, also shows that nine out of 10 teachers and half of Albertans do not feel the draft curriculum will provide students with the skills and knowledge they require for future success.

“Implementing new curriculum in one grade and one subject requires a significant amount of planning, preparation and resource development on behalf of individual teachers. Expecting teachers and schools to implement curriculum in four grades and three subject areas all at once next school year is a recipe for chaos,” said ATA president Jason Schilling.

Education Minister Adriana LaGrange announced March 10 that new K-3 curriculum will be rolled out in the fall for math and English language arts, as well as K-6 curriculum in physical education.

New curriculum for grades 4-6 math and English Language Arts will be implemented in September 2023.

“We promised parents and students an updated curriculum with more emphasis on the literacy and numeracy learning foundations and outcomes students will need for success. We are taking a thoughtful, measured approach and implementing three new subjects in elementary classrooms this fall,” said LaGrange in a news release.

She also said the final curriculum will be available in April so teachers can continue to prepare to implement these subjects in September.

Schilling responded by calling the new curriculum implementation a “desperate move to salvage a critically flawed curriculum.” He said the minister should completely halt implementation of all grades and subjects to save students and teachers from “the inevitable chaos of implementing this damaging curriculum.”

“Enough is enough. The proposed curriculum does not enjoy public support, and the consensus opinion of groups representing parents, teachers, school boards and education faculty is that it cannot be implemented in its current form,” Schilling said. “It has not been appropriately piloted, and teachers do not have what they need to put it in front of students in only six months.”



Convention speakers inspire again this year

One of my favourite parts of teachers’ convention, besides getting to see colleagues, is how speakers can challenge my thinking or provide much-needed inspiration. Though there is still one more convention to go before they are all completed (as of this writing), I wanted to highlight a few of my takeaways from the sessions I’ve attended.

Dr. Toni De Mello talked about the importance of acknowledging diversity every day and how it is good for our classrooms. She also emphasized how students, communities and teachers need to see themselves in our schools and the curriculum. A very timely message given the concerns over the draft K-6 curriculum.

Chris Hadfield explained his philosophy of redefining your goals and celebrating your accomplishments daily, questioning where you are headed next, and setting new challenges for yourselves.

Dr. Robyne Hanley-Dafoe presented many strategies for teachers on how to deal with the pressures during what she called “a season of distress.” One comment she mentioned that stuck with me is that you can’t out-think stress. This

resonated with me a lot as I know we have all been dealing with many stresses over the last few years.

Jann Arden talked about her family, the early parts of her career and mentioned that “good things come from bad things.” Jann talked about how the many hardships she faced opened the door to other opportunities. Her humour and inspiration were welcomed as the world is dealing with many heavy issues in connection to the invasion of Ukraine. Plus, she introduced me to the term “shacket” (a combination shirt and jacket).

Rick Mercer complimented teachers for the work they do with students, especially after he tried to engage a class on Zoom. He learned quickly how hard it is to engage tiny black squares. I’ve had the fortune to talk to Rick before, and each time he details the importance of his high school drama teacher and the impact she had on his career and life. As teachers, we sometimes forget just how much positive influence we have on our students and their futures.

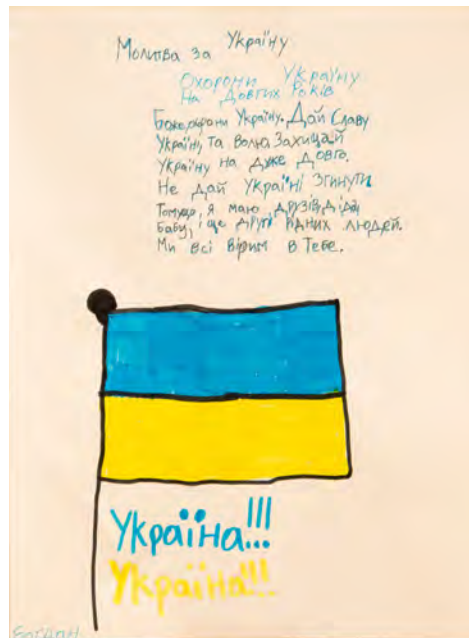
Of course, there are many other speakers at convention who are equally as profound, and this merely scratches the surface of what teachers heard and learned. Convention always provides inspiration, and this year it did not disappoint.



Entertainer Jann Arden reflects on some of her experiences attending school in Springbank as a girl. Arden delivered the closing session of the South Western and Southeastern teachers’ conventions on Feb. 25. Arden said she had a bad attitude as a student but many teachers encouraged her to make the most of her potential.



Grade 3 teacher Khrystyna Marenych helps a student in her class on Thursday, March 10. Marenych and most other staff and students at St. Martin school have family, friends and colleagues in Ukraine and have been keeping a close eye on developments there.



Since the invasion of Ukraine, many students have been making art to show their support and learning Ukrainian songs and poems.

Ukrainian teachers sombre but hopeful

Support from colleagues helping with terror and uncertainties of war

Cory Hare

ATA News Managing Editor

As a Grade 3 teacher in Edmonton, Khrystyna Marenych never expected that conversations about war, death and conflict would be daily occurrences in her classroom, but that's been the case since Feb. 24, when Russia invaded Ukraine, her homeland and that of most of her students.

"Students are asking these questions, we don't have to prompt these conversations, and it's not easy to find answers in a manner that students will understand," Marenych says.

Marenych teaches at St. Martin Catholic School, a K-6 Ukrainian bilingual school where most students and staff members have ties to Ukraine.

"We're constantly checking the news for updates on Ukraine, and checking in with one another to see how we're doing mentally, emotionally," Marenych said.

"People are sharing stories with each other about how their family members are doing and the news updates that they've heard, so the atmosphere is very solemn and serious in school, between the staff, but it's also very hopeful."

The day after the invasion, division

personnel visited the school and held a special prayer. It helped.

"You could feel it in the whole school atmosphere that students and teachers were together and were in spirit with each other," Marenych said.

During the first week of the war, a crisis management team visited each classroom and answered every question that students had.

"The atmosphere in the classroom during those conversations was very solemn as every student asked questions I never thought a child would ever have to ask, about war, about death, about families being separated, about bombing, combat," Marenych said.

"We're trying to keep it together for the kids and explain it as best we can, but these conversations are happening every day."

The situation has been similar at A. L. Horton Elementary School in Vegreville, which is home to a Ukrainian bilingual program that includes about a quarter of the students. Some of the students and staff have family members in Ukraine.

"As staff, we try to be an ear for them and just kind of check in regularly. They look so tired," said principal Keri Busenius. "It's certainly very muted around here."

Support for Ukrainian staff and students at both schools has come

from a variety of sources throughout the province and in many forms, such as posters, fundraising campaigns, requests from non-Ukrainian teachers for Ukrainian songs and prayers that they can introduce to their students, and days of solidarity featuring blue and yellow, the colours of the Ukrainian flag.

"We've had such outpouring of support. It makes us feel so honoured and so supported," Marenych said. "We could not imagine that we could get such love that we've been feeling lately."

Hope remains strong

While the atmosphere in her school has been sombre, it's also been tinged with hope, Marenych said.

This is a reflection of Ukrainians' strong faith in God and their fellow Ukrainians who are fighting to defend their country. It's also a direct reflection of the tone that's coming from contacts who are in Ukraine.

"When I speak with my family members, the tone of their voice is full of hope that this will be over and people will be safe," says Marenych, whose family is in the Lviv region of western Ukraine.

"So people [in Ukraine] are not losing hope and that drives us here in Canada to be hopeful and to pray about a better future." ■

Social studies the epicentre for discussions about conflict

Kim Clement

ATA News Staff

The crisis in Ukraine can be a difficult topic to cover in class, yet it's only natural that it would come up, particularly in social studies. So how can a social studies teacher approach the subject of war and violence while protecting the mental health of their students?

"Social studies teachers try to walk the fine line of protecting the mental health of our students while also exposing them to what is really happening in the world," said Jennifer Williams, president of the ATA's Social Studies specialist council.

For any teacher who might be unsure of how to start the conversation, Williams suggests to first be mindful that some students may be easily triggered by topics involving violence,

so it is important to provide them with a warning before delving into a discussion.

"Many teachers I talked to also said that they will show clips from mainstream news sources, as these are images that students may also encounter online or at home, and then provide time for students to ask questions and comment — allowing the classroom to be the space for students to understand these troubling events," she said.

Williams added that students need to have good media literacy skills to help them verify sources of information, particularly with social media misinformation becoming so prevalent.

"Fifteen years ago, media literacy was something I saw as a good idea, but today it is essential. I start every semester with students going through the media literacy tools from CIVIX," she said.

CIVIX is a national non-profit

organization that offers a program on media literacy.

"When we are discussing current events, if the student shares information that I am not sure of, I will say 'That's interesting' and then encourage them to use their phone to find the source of that information — and they know they will need to have a reputable news source to share."

If teachers model good media literacy in the classroom, students will start doing it themselves when they are looking for information on world events online, Williams says.

Despite the difficulty of addressing these topics, Williams noted that many teachers feel that students shouldn't be sheltered from distressing world events.

"They need to know what other people around the world are experiencing so they can evaluate what their role is in our various communities." ■

How to talk to students about Ukraine

Some tips for teachers

What are some concerns that students may have about the situation in Ukraine?

Students might be concerned if they have family members in the region. This situation can impact the whole family, and the student may be feeling their parents' stress and worry. Reassure students that the world is supporting the Ukraine in this crisis. Younger students may be worried that the war will come here, and that they won't be safe. Assuring them that they are safe and loved in your classroom and with their family is always important.

How can teachers address student fears?

World events like what we are seeing in Ukraine can have an emotional impact on our students. They are exposed to images and news reports every day, which can create fear. Addressing the fear in the classroom may be a way of lessening it and helping students deal with the reality of a war in another part of the world. Make sure your classroom is a safe space where, if a student needs to talk about the Ukraine, there is an opportunity to do so. Letting students know that they are safe here in our country is one thing we can talk about. Also, giving students a sense of power to help with the situation is also important. For example, fundraising for the conflict is one way students can feel that they are helping out.

What are some signs that students are being adversely affected?

We all experience stress in our lives from time to time. We see this in our students with their uncertainty around change or when they experience difficult social situations. The Ukraine conflict has highlighted that our students can be affected by many situations outside their normal environment. Some signs of this can be uncommon outbursts, crying, quietness and aggression. Children love consistency and having that in your classroom will help your students cope better.

How can teachers engage in healthy discussion on this topic?

The teacher should start with what the students need to know and want to know about the situation and how this message is going to help them understand their feelings. Teachers can inspire students to feel hopeful through thoughtful and honest discussions about what is being done to support the people of Ukraine.

What should teachers do if they sense a student is struggling?

I think it is the same things we would do if any of our students were struggling with fear: create a sense of safety without dismissing their fears. Let them know that while there is fear, it is natural and that teachers can help them. ■

- Information provided by Pattie Quinn, president of the ATA's Council of School Counsellors

NOTICES AND EVENTS

An invitation to Edmonton area educators

Are you looking for ways to get involved in efforts to improve education at the school, district and provincial levels; to maintain your current knowledge of local, national and international educational trends, issues and initiatives; to improve your own practice; and to advance your own career?

The University of Alberta Chapter #144 of Phi Delta Kappa International (PDK) is recruiting new members and extends an invitation to Edmonton-area practicing and retired teachers and leaders from schools, school districts, the department of education and post-secondary institutions (including faculty members, as well as graduate and undergraduate students).

In addition to promoting programs and activities at the chapter level, PDK arranges international conferences, provides travel opportunities for members to study other education systems and publishes a professional journal, *Kappan*, four times a year. Chapter meetings are traditionally held five times a year on critical and timely educational issues. These typically include dinner, a presentation from expert educators and a follow-up discussion.

Further information on the chapter's recent activities and current membership is available on Facebook at https://www.facebook.com/pdkinternationalUofA/?ref=page_internal.

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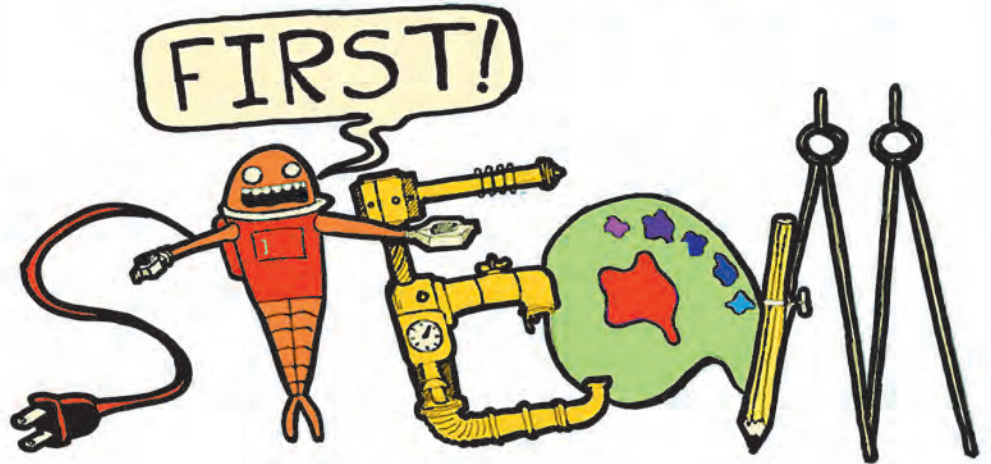


DIGITAL NEWS

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REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS CONFERENCE REGISTRATION AND ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT

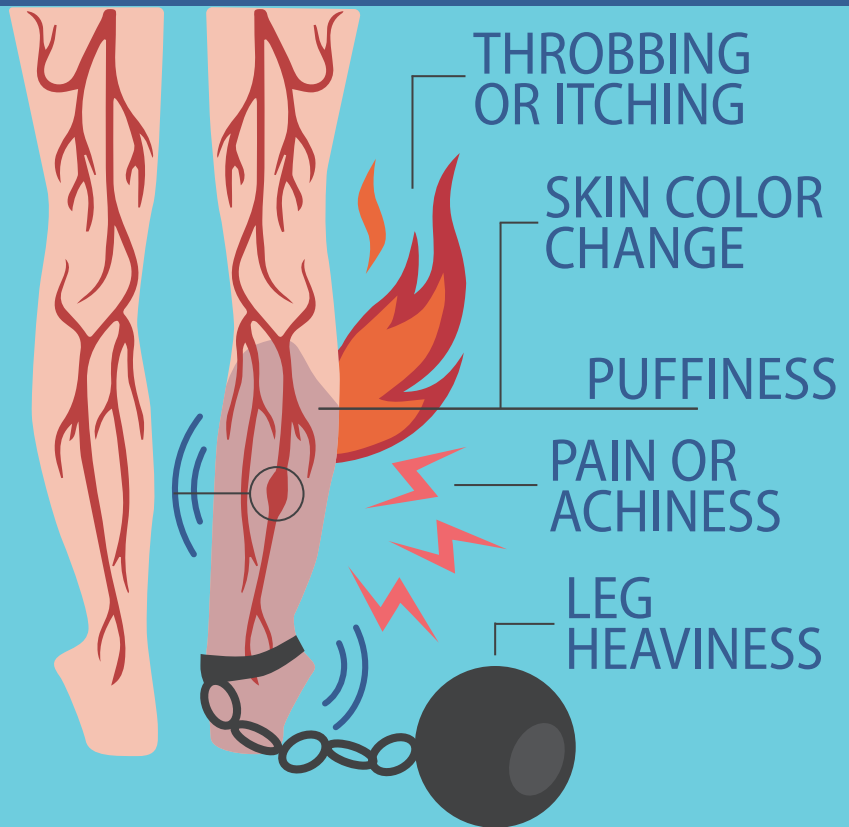


The ATA's Science and Fine Arts Councils are seeking registration and administrative support for their upcoming conference in Banff on October 20-22, 2022.

Proposals from interested individuals and firms will be accepted until April 22, 2022.

L.EAD.ME/STEAM-RFP

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APPLICATION DEADLINE: April 30, 2022



The Alberta Teachers' Association

Marginal increases won't repair damage

Jonathan Teghtmeyer
ATA News Editor-in-Chief

The 2022 provincial budget pledges to provide an increase to education funding in the next school year, but ATA president Jason Schilling says it will be insufficient to provide meaningful repairs to teaching and learning conditions damaged by cuts over recent years. Students deserved more from this budget, said Schilling.

"This budget is proof that when government revenue is low, kids get cuts — but when the province is experiencing economic growth, kids continue to be left behind," he said.

Finance Minister Travis Toews delivered just the second balanced budget in the last decade in Alberta, buoyed by oil prices projected to average \$70 U.S. per barrel.

The education budget offers a 1.7 per cent increase in operational funding, which includes a 1 per cent increase in the base and facility maintenance grant

rates as well as a 4.6 per cent increase in transportation grant rates to manage the effects of increasing gas prices.

The government also says that the budget includes increases to address enrolment growth, as calculated through the three-year weighted moving average. The government has not provided projections for enrolment growth for 2022/23. In 2020/21, student enrolment in public education dropped by about 12,000 students, largely driven by parent choices around the pandemic. About two-thirds of those students returned this school year.

Cost pressures mount

Schilling says estimates of 3.2 per cent for inflation and 1.4 per cent for population growth represent cost pressures that significantly exceed the 1.7 per cent funding increase, and that means the 2022/23 school year will still come with funding constraints, program cuts, service reductions and/or increases in class sizes.

"Obviously, teachers will be relieved to finally see an increase in funding in this budget, after three years of cuts and underfunding," Schilling said. "But I regret that the pain of recent years will not be over."

Schilling said that inflation pressures are real for school boards and have been driving the systematic erosion of learning conditions. Association analysis shows that school boards have needed to pull an average of \$97 million per year from instruction funding into non-instructional costs like transportation and facility operations.

The funding imbalance has resulted in a situation over many years where

student population has been growing, but teacher hiring has struggled to keep up. Furthermore, cuts in the last three years have also led to a reduction of approximately 850 teaching positions since 2018/19.

Support for curriculum

For her part, Education Minister Adriana LaGrange touted \$191 million in funding over the next three years to support curriculum implementation in the news release accompanying Budget 2022.

"Implementation of the draft K-6 curriculum will be supported by a significant investment in resources and teacher training. The new curriculum will better prepare our youth for the jobs of to-morrow," said LaGrange.

Schilling responded by saying curriculum implementation should not proceed, but if forced, teachers would need the resources and supports before implementation, not during it.

The budget also provides targeted funding of \$30 million in 2022-23 to support students experiencing academic challenges and create school environments supporting student well-being and mental health; \$13 million for ventilation improvements; and \$47 million in capital funding to expand charter schools and the collegiate model.

As part of Budget 2022, the government announced funding for 15 new school capital projects. Complete details of how funding will be allocated to school boards is not yet known. The funding manual and school jurisdiction funding allocations are set to be released at the end of March. The Association will provide further analysis at that time. ■



Looking ahead to mediation

ATA News Staff

Following another round of bargaining, the Central Table Bargaining Committee (CTBC) is preparing to approach Provincial Executive Council to authorize a request for a mediator.

During the three-day session from March 7 – 9 and on March 14, Peter MacKay, chair of CTBC and district representative for North West, said CTBC advocated very strongly on financial proposals surrounding leaves, class size and complexity, and salary. Although TEBA expressed their genuine appreciation for teachers, the two sides were not able to come to an agreement.

"While we have made some headway on non-monetary items, we've done all we can without a mediator's help," says MacKay.

"This is not an escalation, but rather a normal part of the process."

If Council approves the request, CTBC will host meetings in early April to provide an update and opportunity to ask questions about next steps. Members will receive more details via members' updates and the ATA website.

Members can see more information and view all the proposals through the latest Bargainer's Blog. They are encouraged to reach out to their Teacher Welfare Committee member with questions. ■

Per pupil, inflation adjusted funding increases

Real per-pupil expenditures on public education (2013\$)

2013/14	\$10,830
2014/15	\$10,398
2015/16	\$10,332
2016/17	\$10,453
2017/18	\$10,254
2018/19	\$10,371
2019/20	\$9,760
2020/21	\$9,595
2021/22	\$9,699 Forecast
2022/23	\$9,285 Budget

Council readies for in-person annual assembly

PEC POINTS

Audrey Dutka
ATA News Staff

Highlights of the Provincial Executive Council meeting held Feb. 28–March 1, 2022, via virtual platform.

1. Approved 20 new Council resolutions, 32 local resolutions and 170 resolutions from the six-year review of policy for presentation to the 2022 ARA.

2. Approved in principle and referred to the Resolutions Committee for processing for the 2022 ARA a resolution that the Government of Alberta resume the practice of collecting and sharing data on teacher workforce trends, including projections for demand and the identification of subject-area gaps.

3. Received advice from Steering Committee indicating that planning is proceeding on the assumption that ARA 2022 will take place as an in-person event in Calgary, with contingency for a transition to an online version should circumstances warrant.

4. Approved the Foundational Framework for Long-Term Direction, which is a framework to guide the Association's strategic actions over the long term.

5. Authorized that all eligible Council members may attend the CTF/FCE 2022 Women's Symposium, taking place in Halifax on May 15–17.

6. Received the report of a hearing committee that found a teacher guilty of one charge of unprofessional conduct for allowing the use of a school council debit card assigned to the teacher to withdraw more than \$30,000 for non-school advisory council or parent advisory council

purposes. The committee imposed the penalty of a declaration that the teacher is permanently ineligible for membership in the Alberta Teachers' Association effective immediately and a recommendation to the minister of education to cancel the teacher's teaching certificate.

7. Received the report of a hearing committee that found a teacher guilty of two charges of unprofessional conduct for working as a substitute teacher in Ontario while under contract in Alberta and receiving sick leave pay from the teacher's Alberta school district, and for going on vacation for a period longer than approved by the teacher's school district and misrepresenting the time the teacher was on vacation to the teacher's employer. The committee imposed the penalty of a suspension of membership at the Alberta Teachers' Association and the recommendation to the minister of education to suspend certification for a period of not less than one month.

Reinstatement of Association membership and recommendation to the minister for reinstatement of certification would be conditional on the provision of a letter from a practising psychologist indicating belief that the teacher is aware of the seriousness of the actions that led to these charges and has undergone treatment that makes it unlikely the teacher will repeat the behaviour that led to the charges. A fine of \$1,000 was also issued.

8. Received the report of a hearing committee that found a teacher guilty of two charges of unprofessional conduct for addressing students using vulgar and disrespectful language and making physical contact with and yelling at a student in anger in the presence of other students. The committee ordered

a penalty to cover both charges of a letter of reprimand and a \$200 fine.

9. Received the report of a hearing committee that found a teacher guilty of 11 charges of unprofessional conduct for divulging information about a student to another parent via email, for divulging information about a conflict with one student's parent to another parent via email, and on nine counts for submitting reports that were critical of colleagues without first providing copies of the reports to the colleagues. The committee imposed the penalty of a single letter of reprimand encompassing all charges and a single \$500 fine for all charges.

10. Received the report of a hearing committee that found a teacher guilty of three charges of unprofessional conduct for 1) either providing the teacher's child with the answers to multiple-choice questions and/or submitting work on the child's behalf for a course taken through the Alberta Distance Learning Centre; for 2) either writing assignments for the teacher's child and/or engaging in such editing or assistance that the assignments were no longer the child's work; and 3) for inappropriately using the teacher's access to a super user account with the Alberta Distance Learning Centre.

The committee imposed the penalty of a fine of \$500 and a letter of severe reprimand for charge one, a fine of \$250 and a letter of reprimand for charge two, and a fine of \$500 and a letter of severe reprimand for charge three.

11. Received the report of a hearing committee that found a teacher guilty of one charge of unprofessional conduct for calling a student or students names and/or yelling at students in a manner that failed to treat the students with dignity and respect and failed to be

considerate of their circumstances. The committee imposed a penalty of a letter of reprimand and a \$200 fine.

12. Received the report of a hearing committee that found a teacher guilty of one charge of unprofessional conduct for resigning from the teacher's teaching position with less than 24 hours' notice, thus failing to fulfill the contractual obligations to the teacher's employer. The committee ordered a penalty of a letter of reprimand and a fine of \$300.

13. Received the report of a hearing committee that found a teacher guilty of one charge of unprofessional conduct for posting an item on social media that reflected badly on other educators. The hearing committee imposed a penalty of a letter of reprimand and a fine of \$250.

14. Received the report of a hearing committee that found a teacher guilty of four charges of unprofessional conduct for tickling a student, for making comments to four students about their choice of clothing and providing the teacher's personal views on their clothing, for using improper channels to protest the actions and decisions of school leadership personnel, and for intentionally intimidating a student during a conversation. The committee ordered a penalty of a \$500 fine and a letter of reprimand for charge one, and letters of reprimand for charges two through four.

15. Received an appeal on a decision of a hearing committee.

16. Adopted the terms of reference for the Status of Racialized Teachers Working Group.

17. Approved the names of 18 teachers for addition to the Association Instructor name bank. The bank is used as a source of appointments to the Association Instructors corps as the need arises. ■

2022 gotcha! PHOTO CONTEST

Cash prizes available!



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

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

GOTCHA! Contest rules

- 1 Photos taken by active and associate ATA members of education- or school-related activities are eligible. (Hint: photos depicting action are best.)
- 2 Entries must be submitted by the member who took the photos.
- 3 Photos taken between Sept. 1, 2021, and May 15, 2022, are eligible.
- 4 Please email photos to cory.hare@ata.ab.ca. Entries must be received by 5 p.m. on May 16, 2022.
- 5 Each entry must be accompanied by a description of the activity; the names (if possible) of the people in the photo; the date when the photo was taken; and the photographer's name, school and contact information.
- 6 Cash prizes will be awarded to entrants whose photos place in the top three, as follows. First place: \$200; second place: \$100 and third place: \$50
- 7 Each winner will also receive a certificate of merit, as will those receiving honourable mention.
- 8 Up to 20 additional entries may be selected for an award of honourable mention.
- 9 Each entrant may submit up to five photos but no entrant can win more than one top-three prize.
- 10 A panel of individuals with photography, publishing and teaching experience will judge the entries. The decision of the judges is final.
- 11 Winning photographs will be published in the ATA News.
- 12 Photos submitted for the contest may be published in the ATA News, the ATA Magazine or other Association publications.
- 13 Please read carefully. Failure to comply with any of these rules may result in disqualification.

Get snapping and good luck!

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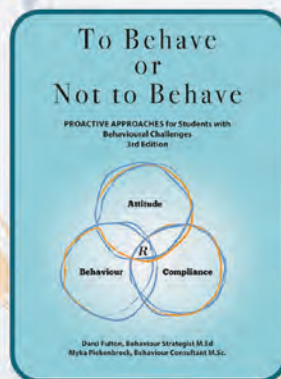
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Darci Fulton M.Ed. & Myka Piekenbrock M.Sc.



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CALLING ALL MEMBERS

Apply to serve on an ATA committee!

The committees

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

The commitment

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

The term for each of these positions begins July 1, 2022. Standing committee positions are generally three years in length. Travel and incidental costs, as well as release time, are covered to enable committee members to attend meetings.

Check out the list of opportunities and application information on the ATA website.

The deadline for applications is April 13.

The ATA embraces diversity and inclusion and is committed to representing members belonging to equity-seeking groups. Members belonging to equity-seeking groups are encouraged to apply.



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.

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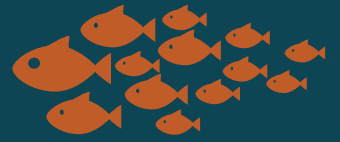


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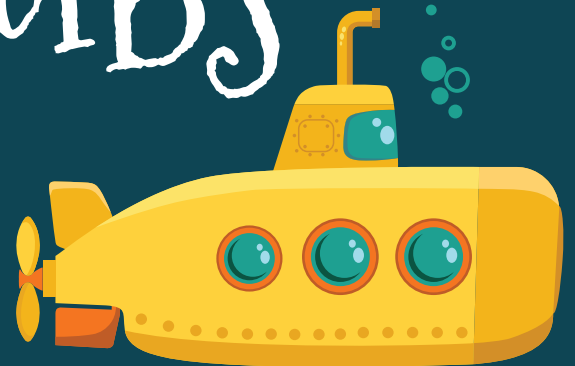
TALENT

March 15, 2022 | Volume 56, Number 10



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without our
sub-sub-subs

Substitute Teachers' Appreciation Week runs from March 14-18



I so appreciate the enthusiasm of many younger subs, and the wisdom (and enthusiasm too) of the older ones coming in. Notes acknowledging things in the classroom are helpful and meaningful for me. Thank you for all you do to support classroom teachers.

*Kristina Veronica
Calgary*

Substitute teachers are such a vital part of our school! Thank you for always being ready to rise to a challenge and for supporting our students. These past two years have been a time of lost income and uncertainty for many of our hardworking substitute teachers, and I appreciate that they still happily answer the call to come in at a minute's notice. You are appreciated and valued!

*Laura Katherine
École St. Joseph School,
Whitcourt*

Thank you to all the teachers-on-call! You show up each day with a smile on your face, you get to know the kids, you roll with everything thrown at you in a day and do it cheerfully. You are so appreciated!!

*Tess O'Shaughnessy
McKernan School,
Edmonton*

Our substitute teachers are the only way schools have managed to get through the past couple of years. Your flexibility and willingness to come into our classrooms has been greatly appreciated. I'm sorry so many of you lost income due to isolating, getting sick and school closures. Again, you are most appreciated. Thank you for all you do.

*Brenda Kelly
Sheldon Coates Elementary
School, Grande Cache*

The last two years have made me appreciate substitute teachers more than ever. Thank you for being an integral part of our profession!

*Stacia Dolynchuk
Monsignor Fee Otterson,
Edmonton*

Thank you all supply teachers! We couldn't get by without you!

*Carla Gust
Westminster Junior High,
Edmonton*

I don't know how we would have made it through the last two years without you. Thank you!

*Natalie Darwent Lynem
Annie Gale School, Calgary*

