

Feature: What does it look like when new curriculum is done well?



Winter issue available in schools in early February.

Digital version at www.teachers.ab.ca > News and Info > ATA Magazine

WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP

SPEAKER SERIES AND SUMMIT

See page 7.

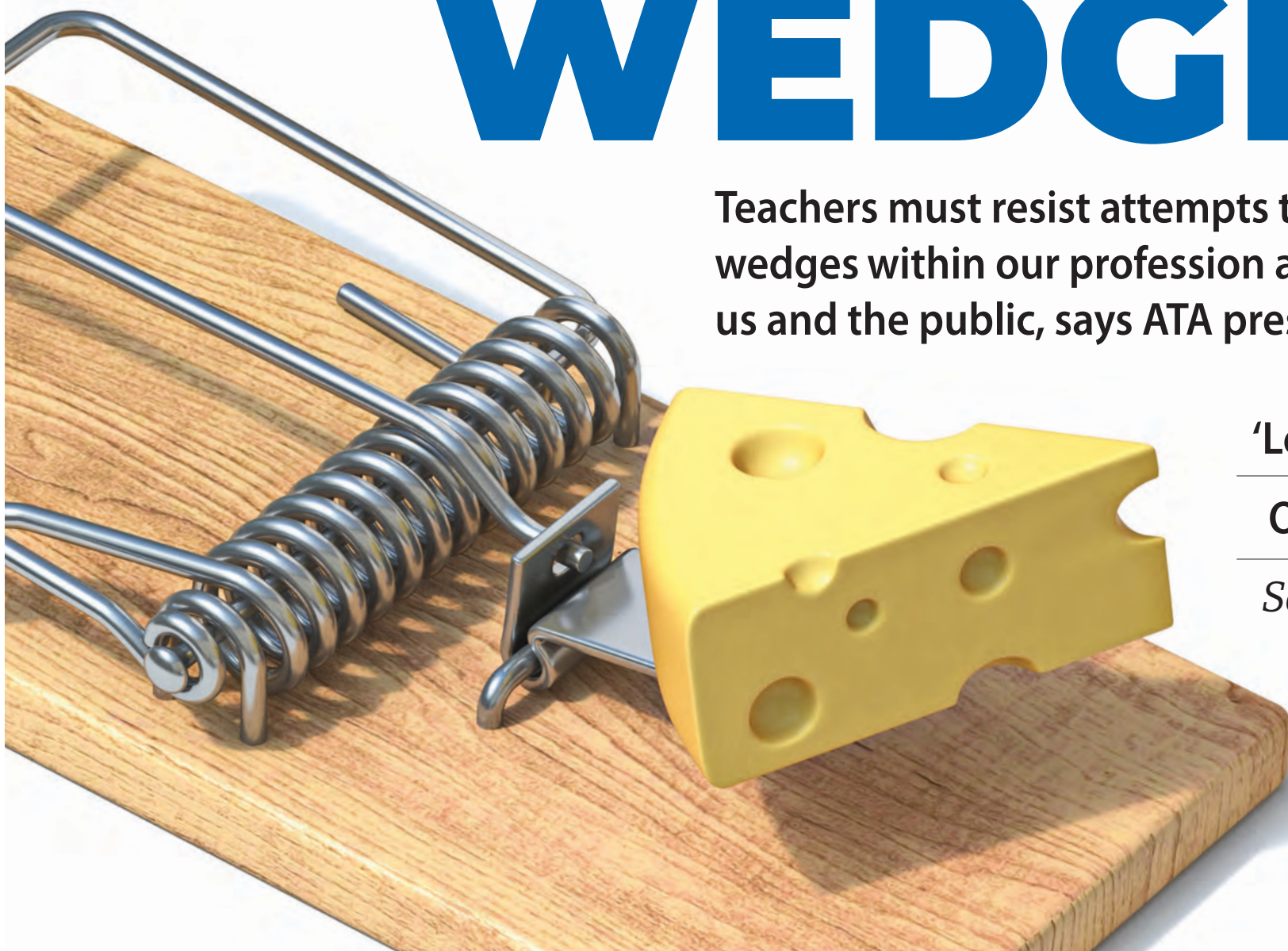
ATA NEWS

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News Publication of The Alberta Teachers' Association

BEWARE OF WEDGES

Teachers must resist attempts to drive wedges within our profession and between us and the public, says ATA president



'Let's focus'

Off Script

See page 5



System at risk

Discipline proposal is an attack on your professionalism and public education.

Read Jonathan Teghtmeyer's editorial on page 2.



Peaceful co-existence

Let's talk about political activism and non-partisanship.

Read Dennis Theobald's Q&A on page 2.



Top priority

ATA discipline panels put students first.

Read Viewpoints on page 3.

STAND FOR EDUCATION

Email your MLA

New online tool makes it simpler to voice concern about attacks on education.

See story on page 4.

Discipline proposal attacks your professionalism



EDITORIAL

Jonathan Teghtmeyer
ATA News Editor-in-Chief

In preparing materials for our recent special edition of the *ATA News*, I had the opportunity to dig deeper into what happened in British Columbia and Ontario when teacher organizations had their professional functions removed. I found the tales remarkably similar and quite interesting.

In British Columbia, in 1987 the Social Credit government, under Premier Bill Vander Zalm, passed two concurrent pieces of legislation, one that established the BC College of Teachers (BCCT) and one that removed principals as members of the bargaining unit within the BC Teachers Federation (BCTF). Teachers were not happy with the legislation and even staged a day of protest against the establishment of the college.

The BCCT did not get off to a good start and failed to gain the respect or confidence of the profession. Ultimately, teachers did not trust it. This improved somewhat over time, but the college often had periods of conflict, challenge and instability. In 2011, the government conducted a review that identified the college as "dysfunctional" and lacking credibility. They then disbanded the college and absorbed all certification and regulation functions into the ministry of education. Where teachers and the BCTF had a more self-governing type role in the BCCT, the

new system significantly diminished the role of teachers.

In Ontario, the 1990s brought in a reform-minded, cost-cutting conservative government, as was the case here in Alberta at the time. The Mike Harris PC government struck a royal commission on learning that proposed a number of reforms harmful to the interests of teachers. First among them was an act establishing the Ontario

the 2014 report from the Task Force for Teaching Excellence here in Alberta.

So why is it that these two seemingly disparate reforms, are so often packaged together and implemented at or near the same time?

There are two interconnected answers to that. First, they are often used as tools in conflicts between teachers and governments to split up those who dare stand up to government. It is a

display in our current entanglements over curriculum. The government's view is that teachers should not have input into what is taught — they should merely be told what is to be taught (and even how to teach it), and they should go teach it. Even the style of curriculum is different. Instead of a curriculum that prescribes outcomes of skills, attributes and competencies that students should be capable of, it's structured to provide teachers with a long list of facts that students will be expected to absorb and regurgitate, ideally on a standardized test, so you can evaluate which teachers have been successful at inputting that knowledge.

And now, sadly, we also see it foment in hostile online comments toward teachers, patronizing comments that say teachers should "stop whining" and "do their job." Comments that assert that parents must be the boss and suggest that teachers are brainwashing kids are more and more frequent lately, and they also stem from this ideological, patriarchal view.

This current fight for our profession might not seem like that big of a deal, but this is what we are talking about when we say a loss on this fight will mean a dramatic shift in the culture of schools and of public education.

Scores of international experts on education have discussed how the culture of collaboration, collegiality and professionalism is a hallmark of Alberta's outstanding global reputation in education. Sadly, that is all at risk if we don't protect it now. ■

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

"This current fight for our profession might not seem like that big of a deal, but ... a loss on this fight will mean a dramatic shift in the culture of schools and of public education."

College of Teachers (OCT), removing the professional conduct functions from the Ontario Teachers' Federation (OTF). The next bill went after school boards, attacked collective agreements and provided for noncertificated instructors. Teachers' unions in Ontario protested, which ended in a 10-day provincewide strike. Because principals, as colleagues in the profession, supported their unions, the government ended up passing legislation to remove them from membership.

This bundling of proposals to deprofessionalize teacher organizations while also removing principals from the profession was also recommended in Nova Scotia's 2018 Glaze report and

divide and conquer strategy, where you divide the profession on both the x- and y-axes (split up the functions and split up the membership). These divisions become points of discord among the membership and create internal conflict that the government can then exploit to advance further harmful agendas.

But second, they are part of an ideological view that looks at teachers through a much different lens. This perspective takes the view that teachers are not autonomous professionals. Rather, teachers are subservient workers who need to be controlled, managed and ultimately punished when things go wrong.

This stark view is also very much on

Activism can co-exist with non-partisanship



Q & A

Dennis Theobald
ATA Executive Secretary

Question: ATA president Jason Schilling has been very critical of the premier, minister of education and government in recent weeks as well as calling on teachers to be politically active — how can this be squared with the Association's claim to be non-partisan?

Answer: Being non-partisan does not mean being apolitical and it does not demand silence or acquiescence on the part of the Association or individual members.

This is a distinction that I have commented on in this space on previous occasions but, in light of recent events, it is worth revisiting.

Let's start with false claims being aggressively advanced in social media

by the premier and the minister of education. In the immediate aftermath of their hastily announced decision to remove remaining requirements for masking in schools, both asserted that the Association was seeking to require mask mandates to remain in place indefinitely and that the Association was going to court to seek an injunction to that end. Both assertions are patently untrue and, in making them, these elected leaders needlessly politicized and diminished legitimate concerns shared by many teachers, parents and health experts around the rationale and timing of the decision, particularly given that a mass order of "medical grade" masks was still

in the process of being delivered to the province's schools. Worse still, the tone of their intervention added to the high level of anxiety and emotion in school communities around the issue, creating unnecessary drama for teachers and school leaders to manage.

The response by the Association was an effort to set the record straight for members, parents and public. Unfortunately, to quote Winston Churchill, purportedly one of the premier's political heroes, "A lie gets halfway around the world before the truth has a chance to get its pants on" (and that was before the internet). So the damage had already been done even

as President Schilling was pulling up his drawers, and the original lie continues to persist despite our best efforts and those of responsible media to correct it.

I do not believe that communicating the facts when they contradict the government's line constitutes partisan activity even when it is inconvenient for a political party. In this, I echo the sentiments of a former Progressive Conservative prime minister who, once while giving a stump speech, was egged on by a member of his audience to "Give the Liberals hell Dief!" John Diefenbaker apparently responded "I don't give anyone hell, I just tell the truth and it sounds like hell."

It is important to understand that the Association is not just reactive in political discourse; it does have values that it actively promotes. These values form part of the fundamental identity of the organization and the profession, and derive from its legislated objects as

"... the Association is not just reactive in political discourse; it does have values that it actively promotes."

Q&A: ACTIVISM
continued on page 9



ATA discipline panels put students first



VIEWPOINTS

Richard Rand
Former counsel, ATA professional conduct hearings

Alberta Education Minister Adriana LaGrange is seeking to remove responsibility for the professional discipline of Alberta teachers from the Alberta Teachers' Association. This will likely be branded as an extension to her *Students First Act*. It's hard to argue with the name, as it would be hard to argue with a *Don't be Cruel to Puppies Act*, but, with respect, removing the ATA from any meaningful role in the discipline of Alberta teachers would be an error.

Relative to what I have seen regarding the education minister's motivation to take the professional discipline of teachers away from the ATA, it seems she has a rather vague sense that the current processes, somehow, fail to adequately protect the students in Alberta schools.

As a lawyer, I have had the great privilege of acting as counsel to many ATA Professional Conduct Committee (PCC) hearings and discipline appeal panels over the last 25 years. That role has proven to be an excellent opportunity to observe the fairness and effectiveness of current long-standing practices and the role of the ATA. When it comes to the existing professional discipline practices for Alberta teachers, this is very much a case of "when it ain't broke, don't fix it."

The three interests to be considered by a professional discipline hearing body are the interests of the public — including students, the interests of the profession itself and the interests of the member facing discipline charges. In my 25-year experience, watching the various ATA hearing and appeal panels deal with professional misconduct charges, they invariably treat the interests of students as their first priority.

Certainly, they are alive to the

interests of the profession and averse to any misconduct of a teacher that brings the profession into disrepute. They treat members charged with misconduct fairly, sensitive to the presumption of innocence, and ensure that the member gets a fair hearing. But, conclusively, the ATA regards its "public" as Alberta students, and the ATA's discipline panels have had a students-first focus for years.

One can envision that I might become a bit jaded on the subject of teachers generally after spending about 25 years regularly dealing with allegations of professional

face professional misconduct allegations in their careers.

While my experience with the ATA has been more extensive than with professional discipline in other professions across my almost 47 years of practice, I have had engagements in Law Society of Alberta professional conduct cases, as well as discipline cases involving pharmacists, veterinarians, doctors, psychologists, accountants and other professions (even the NHL). I can comfortably say that the current ATA-led practices and procedures overseeing teacher discipline in Alberta represent as good, or better, a system governing professional discipline as any I have encountered in any profession.

I strongly disagree with the minister in her thinly supported conclusions that, in matters of teacher discipline, the interests of

“... current ATA-led practices and procedures overseeing teacher discipline in Alberta represent as good, or better, a system governing professional discipline as any I have encountered in any profession.”

misconduct by teachers, but I am happy to say that my involvement has had the opposite effect. I hold teachers and their profession in higher regard than I ever did. I have seen the commitment to the betterment of their profession of the volunteer teachers who devote so much time and energy to hearing, and fairly adjudicating on, teacher discipline cases. I have seen the teachers called as witnesses to hearings to give evidence regarding their colleagues — teachers who may be reluctant witnesses but who are ready to put professionalism ahead of personal affiliations. I am aware of the more than 45,000 Alberta teachers who will never

Alberta students have not now (or historically) been treated as a first priority, or that the removal of the ATA from the conduct of teacher discipline in exchange for some nebulous new governance of such will be better for the students of Alberta. That sounds about as wise as removing the teachers from any meaningful role in the formulation of student curriculum. ■

Richard Rand is a retired lawyer who practised primarily in the area of family law and professional discipline cases. He has served as a member of the conduct committee and professional responsibility committee of the Law Society of Alberta.

YOUR VIEWS

FACEBOOK FEEDBACK

On the removal of school mask mandates

Lara Hyggen Hall-Jensen

As a teacher I feel completely safe teaching unmasked children. I know everyone's personal experiences are different and I can respect that many have very legitimate fears. I just ask our ATA be mindful that not all teachers are unhappy with the changes, and some of us are extremely happy.

Kristie Krezanoski

Everyone deserves a safe work environment. Students deserve a safe learning environment.

On protests at schools

Mike Saad

It's appalling that we never received an immediate statement of condemnation from the minister of education for the protests we've seen at Alberta schools where parents barged their way in and pounded on teachers' doors. This gross inaction (not to mention her plethora of falsehoods and flat-out lies) just reinforces to the public why Alberta teachers have no confidence in this minister. She needs to resign from cabinet and/or be made to resign.

On the 20 year anniversary of teachers' provincewide strike

Cherra-Lynne Olthof

It was my first year teaching and I was marching alongside my colleagues as one of the 14,000!

Meeya Ahdamz

I was in Grade 10 and thought it was the best three weeks ever. I didn't know then that I'd end up becoming a teacher and also really didn't fully understand the implications or purpose of the strike.

Sue Ngary

We didn't strike for money. It was for working conditions. We were young teachers and many of us had mortgages. We did it anyway. Enough was enough. And those of us in small towns really needed the leadership of the big boards with lots of teachers. Those big boards were out the longest and took the biggest hit. Still proud of them for that. Yes, the general public supported us and so did non-teaching staff at the school.

On the ATA study showing one-third of teachers won't be in an Alberta classroom next year

Katherine Sorenson

I'll be teaching next year. I enjoy my kids and the courses I teach and I'm hopeful we will be reaching the end of the Covid mess by then. So hopeful. But I absolutely think the government has zero respect for us and our profession and I don't judge anyone at all who is cutting their losses and leaving. I'm trying not to focus on that.

FOR THE RECORD

“Every woman's success should be an inspiration to another. We're strongest when we cheer each other on.”

— Serena Williams





Sick leave discussed at central table

ATA News Staff

The ATA's Central Table Bargaining Committee (CTBC) met Feb. 14 with the Teachers' Employer Bargaining Association (TEBA) to continue central table bargaining that has been ongoing since the fall.

In the latest Bargainer's Blog, which is posted on the ATA's website, bargaining committee member Murray Lalonde writes that the tone at the bargaining table continues to be positive. He also notes that this most recent meeting allowed for CTBC members to share the realities that teachers are facing in their classrooms.

Sick leave was a focus of the discussions and the CTBC tabled a number of proposals on this topic.

These positions were authorized by Provincial Executive Council as part of the initial proposal.

"We are releasing updated versions of the initial proposal as specific items are tabled, and I am pleased to share this most recent update with you now," Lalonde writes.

A number of additional meeting dates have been scheduled with TEBA.

"We will certainly make sure to update members, when and where we can, as our conversations continue," Lalonde says.

Members can see addendums to the initial proposal on the Association website, in the Bargaining Update section of the Member's Only area. Teachers are also encouraged to reach out to their local Teacher Welfare Committee member if they have questions. ■

Annual education 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 5,800 completed surveys, ensuring that survey results for each of the respondent groups are statistically representative.

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

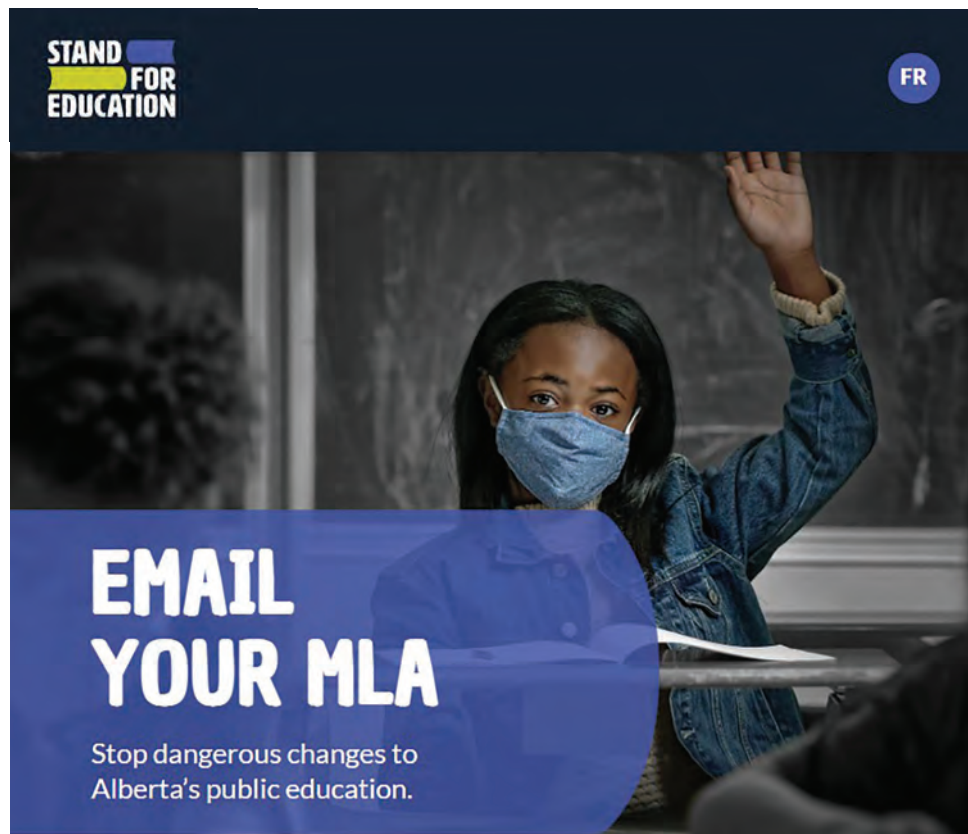


confidential and only aggregate data will be reported. The survey begins in mid-February and will continue until June. Advanis, an Alberta research firm, has been contracted to administer the surveys.

Survey results are used in specific business plan performance measures and will be reported in the ministry's 2021-22 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. ■



CORY HARE

A new web tool created by the ATA enables users to send an email directly to their MLA by providing some basic information.

Email your MLA with new automated tool

ATA News Staff

The ATA has developed a new tool to help teachers, parents and concerned Albertans send emails directly to their MLAs to express concerns about the government's attacks on public education.

The online campaign enables users to choose from various prewritten messages or write their own and enter their contact information. Based on their postal code, the system will automatically send the email to the appropriate MLA.

"We heard that teachers, parents and people across Alberta are fed up with this government, and that they want to take action," said ATA president Jason Schilling. "We hope that providing this tool will make it easier for Albertans to have their voices heard, and show MLAs how important public education is to the people of this province."

The campaign is one of a number of strategies the Association has implemented since the beginning of 2022 in response to the government's Covid response, funding cuts, the draft curriculum, proposed changes to the structure of the ATA as well as other verbal attacks on teachers made by the premier and other MLAs.

The strategies include behind-the-scenes advocacy work with a government relations firm, extensive work with the media to publish articles and editorials, social media content, a television and online advertising

campaign, and myriad member engagement activities. A current online campaign, called Stand for Education, that asks the public to add their name to a petition asking the premier and minister to prioritize public education funding in the 2022 provincial budget, has garnered close to 30,000 signatures from across Alberta.

"Teachers are exhausted. Over the past two years, they have shown up for Alberta's students to help them continue to learn and grow through the pandemic," Schilling said. "But despite how tired they are, they have told us they want to take meaningful action to advocate for themselves to this government. That's how important public education and their students are to them."

Although many teachers have said they've already contacted their MLA, Schilling encourages them to use the tool and keep sending emails, saying that the greater the quantity of emails, the harder it is for MLAs to ignore.

"Advocacy is not easy. It takes time, grit and dogged determination, and although teachers don't have a lot of time, they have shown this province time and time again that they stand up for public education," Schilling said. "They showed up for the 2002 strikes, almost exactly 20 years ago, and their actions made a difference to that budget in 2002."

"If we continue to speak up, we can make change. And it's the Association's job to help teachers advocate, so they can focus on making a difference in the lives of their students." ■

NOTICE

On Nov. 4, 2021, a hearing committee of the Professional Conduct Committee established under the *Teaching Profession Act* found that Tanya Michelle Cairney engaged in unprofessional conduct. The hearing committee ordered that Cairney be ineligible for membership in the Association for a period of one year beginning Nov. 4, 2021.

ADVOCACY TOOL

The MLA email tool is available at
<https://standforeducation.ca/email-your-mla>.

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.

Let's focus on what we value

A Q&A with ATA president Jason Schilling

Cory Hare
ATA News Managing Editor

Much has happened on the Covid front since the *ATA News* was last published.

As anti-restriction demonstrations were unfolding in Ottawa and the Coutts border crossing in southern Alberta, the UCP government announced a plan to end Covid restrictions, including an end to mandatory masking for school children as of Feb. 14.

The Alberta Teachers' Association responded with a statement urging the government to take "a more cautious approach." Subsequent social media speculation about potential legal action led to videos being posted by Premier Jason Kenney and Education Minister Adriana LaGrange that directly attacked the ATA.

In his video, Kenney said teachers view their students as "vectors of viral transmission" and said it was time to let kids be kids. LaGrange said the ATA was contacting their lawyers and will "fight to keep masks on children."

Anti-restriction demonstrations were also reported at various Alberta schools, including an incident during which demonstrators entered a school and were escorted out by police. Subsequently, some students in Calgary and Edmonton staged walkouts and demonstrations *against* the lifting of masking restrictions.

On Feb. 14 the Alberta Federation of Labour (AFL), joined a group of parents of students with disabilities in filing an application for a court injunction to stop the implementation of the order to remove the provincewide mask mandate in Alberta schools.

In recent weeks the ATA has received hundreds of calls from concerned members and members of the public, on both sides of the masking/restrictions issue.

With all these developments as the backdrop, the *ATA News* sat down with ATA president Jason Schilling for an update on the situation from the ATA's perspective.

What do you make of the videos posted by the premier and education minister?

It's important to clarify what we did say. What we did say was not what the premier and the minister said in their videos. They're responsible for their own words because those were not words that were in our statement, nor were they words that I said in any statements afterwards, so that is completely up to them.

Is the ATA taking the government to court?

No. There are no plans to file a lawsuit. That's a fabrication that was made up by the premier.

Is the ATA involved in the AFL's application for a court injunction?

No, we are not.

What kind of feedback is the ATA receiving from members on the issue of Covid, masking, etc.?

It's a mixed reaction from teachers. Some teachers are quite happy to be teaching their students without the use of masks in their classrooms, whereas other



ATA president Jason Schilling shares his thoughts on the lifting of masking restrictions, the current mood of teachers and issues facing the profession.

CORY HARE

teachers are still worried and concerned about that.

We're concerned about the safety level and just how quickly this decision was made, especially with the fact that the Association was not consulted in this decision. We represent people who've been working in classrooms day in and day out throughout the pandemic, and it would have been good for government to acknowledge that and seek the input of the Association about this decision.

Based on what you're hearing, what is your sense of what teachers want?

Teachers want to get back to whatever normal is going to be. We want to be in schools working with our students. Some are super happy that the masks are going to be gone, but some are concerned because they don't want it to be too quick of a decision.

We don't want to go back to square one like we were at the beginning of the pandemic. We want to get out of this roller coaster year that we've had so far, and so if we move too quickly, I don't want to see us revert back.

How concerned are you that the focus on masks and Covid may be taking attention away from other challenges the ATA is facing?

There's concern there because there are a lot of other challenges that are still related to Covid. We're dealing with (disruptions to learning). We know that there's a lot of concerns about student and staff mental health and well-being.

We also need to address the issues that are still remaining around curriculum, around collective bargaining and the potential removal of the

disciplinary function from the Association. There's a lot going on. We can't get distracted by wedges that are out there that are trying to divide us.

In your mind, what is the most significant issue the ATA is currently facing?

There's a lot that we're dealing with all at the same time. One of the things, when I reflect back on the year, is that we see a lot of deprofessionalization of the profession and an undermining of public education as a whole, so the Covid response, the curriculum ... removing the disciplinary function from the Association, plus we have a budget that's coming up at the end of this month that we've not heard much about. I'll be curious to see what kind of funding we have for our schools.

What is your message to teachers right now?

Teachers are working extremely hard in challenging times. They're there day in and day out working with kids through a pandemic, keeping an education system afloat, but we also need to be aware and engaged with the issues that face education and then all work together to try to find resolutions that are better for our profession and better for our students.

We need to do that work together and not let things like what we saw last week around the masking decision distract or divide us, or put wedges between us and the public or between us as teachers. We need to recognize that for what it is, see past it and keep our eye focused on the things that we care about and that we value. ■

Responses have been edited for clarity.

Off Script

with ATA President Jason Schilling

That pandemic cliché is truer now than ever

If you would have told me in March 2020 that we'd still be in the midst of a global pandemic, I would have scoffed at you. Yet here we are. We are quickly closing in on the two-year anniversary.

I was reflecting on where we were at the start of the pandemic. We told each other that we are all in this together, that we need to have patience and kindness with each other as we internalized the dramatic changes that we were experiencing and had little control over. We banged pots for our health-care workers and had parades in the streets for our students. I heard Dr. Robyne Hanley-Dafoe comment that hope is the idea that we aren't walking alone. At the start of the pandemic, as unsettling as it was, there was an element of hope, that we were facing it together.

Flash forward to today in 2022, and that idea of being in this together seems so distant. We have

multiple factors striving to divide us. Topics and issues that never would have been a big deal have become highly polarized and politicized when they didn't have to be. My email inbox is overrun some days with this divisiveness. It's on the news we watch and in our social media timelines.

But here's the thing: though it's now a cliché that none of us really want to hear anymore, we are, in fact, still in this together. Though we are exhausted and frustrated by the intrusions into our personal and professional lives, the fact remains that we need to continue to treat people with grace and kindness. The last few weeks have been especially super tough for all of us. But as Hanley-Dafoe also noted, hope also provides us with the stamina we need to carry the heavy loads we are all bearing, but we need to continue to do it together. ■

CALLING ALL MEMBERS

Apply to serve on an ATA committee!

The committees

To assist it 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.

COMM-209 2022 01

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!

Calling all Teachers (and Educational Staff),

You are invited to the:

Inaugural

AT

Alberta Teachers Gender and Sexuality Alliance

GSA

Meeting!




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Tuesday, March 8th

4:30pm

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Nurturing Resilience with Hopeful Cultures

Speaker series aims to make hope accessible

Mark Milne
ATA News Staff

Helping teachers discover ways to nourish hope is the aim of a new speaker series that kicked off Feb. 10. Nurturing Resilience with Hopeful Cultures of Learning is a four-part series hosted by researcher Dr. Lenora LeMay and former principal Caroline Gosling.

“What I’m imagining at the end of this is that we’ll have as many ways of working with hope as we have participants here today,” LeMay said during the Feb. 10 session.

LeMay and Gosling began the session by asking attendees to reflect back on a time when a situation turned out better than expected. Through these experiences, LeMay and Cassidy pointed out the important role that gratitude plays in hopefulness.

For the second half of the session, participants were asked to bring a photo that, in their opinion, represented hope. Participants gathered in small breakout rooms to discuss the photos on a more intimate level. LeMay and Cassidy provided several questions to help spark meaningful conversation.

Through these discussions, participants discovered their own understanding of what makes up hope.

“We determined that hope is different for everyone and dynamic even for individuals,” said participant Catherine Beaver-Hawman, “and the larger discussion with all of the group participants afterwards was rich and meaningful as well.”

The remainder of the series will take an in-depth look at hope research and other strategies that have been developed over the years to support and inspire hope.

“Our ultimate goal is to make hope visible and accessible,” LeMay said.

The four-part series was designed with the intention that participants would attend all four sessions, as each instalment builds on the previous one. Although the first session has passed, registration for the

remaining three is still open. Newcomers can catch up by viewing the recording of the first session.

The series is being organized by the ATA’s Women in Leadership Committee. After two years of living under pandemic restrictions and intensely stressful working conditions, the time was ripe for this type of series, said committee secretary and ATA staff officer Lisa Everitt.

“We looked at the research that’s been done by the committee and the Association in terms of exhaustion, burnout and members becoming discouraged — these sessions could not have come at a better time,” she said.

Everitt says the first session was very well received and organizers are using gathered feedback to make the next meeting resonate even better with participants. ■

The facilitators

► **Dr. Lenora LeMay** is a former K-6 teacher who left the classroom in 2000 to work with Hope Kids at the Hope Foundation, an applied research centre. Since the Hope Foundation closed in 2012, LeMay has continued exploring how attending to a narrative conception and pedagogy of hope, which was the subject of her doctoral research, encourages lifelong learning, resilience and well-being. She has extensive experience working with K-12 teachers’ professional development.

► **Caroline Gosling** is a retired principal with the Edmonton Public Schools with 35 years experience in the classroom. She holds a masters degree in educational leadership and has worked with Alberta Children Services and Alberta Education. LeMay credits Gosling with playing a significant role in her path to exploring hope in the field of education.

WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP
AN ATA SPEAKER SERIES

Four-Part-Series

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS



Caroline Gosling



Lenora LeMay

Register today

The next three sessions are scheduled for
March 17 | April 28 | May 30

For more information, to register, or access a link to the first session, visit

wil.teachers.ab.ca

A private Facebook page has been created as a virtual sharing circle for the sessions. It will act as a common site for participants to access and share group strategies with other attendees, as well as a source of hope guidance from the facilitators.

Summit encourages women to lead together

This school year has been a busy one for the ATA’s Women in Leadership Committee (WIL). Its speaker series is well underway and plans for their sessions at the upcoming Summer Conference are beginning to take shape. Next on their calendar is the biggest event of their year — Summit 2022.

The full day conference is planned for Saturday, March 5 and will once again be completely virtual. This year’s theme is “WIL Lead Together” and organizers feel it fits perfectly with the environment we currently find ourselves in.

“To thrive as leaders, we need to be able to support each other, uplift each other and help each other out,” said Lisa Everitt, Alberta Teachers’ Association Staff Officer and WIL Committee secretary.

The Women in Leadership Committee was established to provide supports that enable the advancement of women in educational leadership

within school jurisdictions as well as the Association.

This will be the third annual WIL Summit and it kicks off with keynote speaker Julielynn Wong, whose ground-breaking work in the science and technology field has opened the doors of leadership for women in this traditionally male-dominated discipline.

Participants have 10 different sessions to choose from when selecting their three breakout sessions for the day. Topics range from imposter syndrome to racial stereotyping. Speakers will include Association staff officers, fellow teachers and field experts.

The day will wrap up with well-known Canadian comedian Jessica Holmes, who will relate her personal struggle with mental health through her usual comedic lens.

Everitt feels there’s something for everyone in this year’s schedule.

“I hope this provides an oasis for them to think about where they’re at but also to feel rejuvenated coming out of the day,” she said. ■

The summit welcomes both men and women to attend. Breakout sessions are already filling up, so organizers encourage a speedy registration and session selection to ensure you’re able to hear your desired speakers.

For more information or to registration, visit

wil.teachers.ab.ca

Registration is open until
noon on March 4.

International Women’s Day
March 8, 2022

A global day celebrating the social, economic, cultural and political achievements of women. The day also marks a call to action for accelerating women’s equality.

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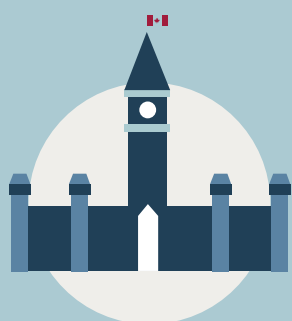


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Code obligations affect conduct during investigations



PITFALLS AND PRECAUTIONS

Chris Gibbon
ATA Secretary to Professional
Conduct Committees

Pitfalls and Precautions is a series that aims to educate teachers on professional conduct issues by highlighting situations addressed by the ATA Professional Conduct Committee.

From time to time, school leaders and central office staff are tasked with conducting investigations of teachers, administrators or support staff in regard to allegations against an individual or an entire school. While teachers have a requirement to co-operate with their administrator, central office staff or third-party investigator that the division has hired, they also have an obligation to their colleague(s) in regard to the Code of Professional Conduct. In order to meet their obligation under the code, teachers need to inform their colleagues of any criticisms first before raising them with the investigator.

In the case of larger, division investigations, teachers are sometimes given advance notice by the school division that they will need to attend the interview and are also reminded of their need to co-operate with the investigator. In most cases, school divisions also remind teachers of their obligation to follow the code.

While teachers want to meet their requirement to co-operate with the employer investigation, they now are required to raise any criticism with their colleague first. As a result, some employers will give teachers the questions in advance so they can speak to those colleagues before the interview. When questions are

not provided in advance, teachers need to remind the investigator of their obligation to the code should the question(s) warrant an answer that may be critical of their colleague and let the investigator know that they will need to speak with their colleague before they respond to the question.

Teachers should be reminded that simply telling a colleague(s) that you are meeting with the principal or division office staff about an investigation is not sufficient. You must let them know what you will be sharing with the investigator first. Teachers who are directed by either their school or division leaders to participate in any investigation are encouraged to contact ATA Teacher Employment Services and consult with a staff officer before the meeting. ■

CODE OF

Professional conduct

Section 13 – The teacher criticizes the professional competence or professional reputation of another teacher only in confidence to proper officials and after the other teacher has been informed of the criticism, subject only to section 24 of the *Teaching Profession Act*.

Section 14 – The teacher, when making a report on the professional performance of another teacher, does so in good faith and, prior to submitting the report, provides the teacher with a copy of the report, subject only to section 24 of the *Teaching Profession Act*.

Q&A: ACTIVISM

continued from page 2

set out in the *Teaching Profession Act*. The most overtly “political” of these are “to advance and promote the cause of education in Alberta,” “to improve the teaching profession,” and “to arouse and increase public interest in the importance of education and public knowledge of the aims of education, financial support for education, and other education matters.” In advancing these objects, the Association will sometimes take positions and express opinions that some political candidates or parties object to. This again is not being partisan, but rather, being principled.

The provincial byelection in Fort McMurray–Lac La Biche set to take place on the storied Ides of March highlights how the Association operates in the political sphere while remaining non-partisan. One of the candidates for office happens to be a teacher, Adriana Mancini, who will be running for the second time as an Alberta New Democrat. Other candidates are Brian Jean of the United Conservative Party, Paul Hindman of the Wildrose Independent Party and Marilyn Burns of the Alberta Advantage Party.


Quite independently of her party of choice, Mancini epitomizes the political activism that the Association encourages. In addition to being active in the community and in various roles in the Association, she has put herself forward for elected office, just as other teachers have done for other parties in other constituencies in other elections.

Consistent with Association policy, though, she will not be endorsed or materially supported by the Association, nor will any other candidate. That is the essence of Association non-partisanship. Individual members are free as citizens in a democracy to be as partisan as they want and are encouraged by the Association to actively engage in the byelection, volunteering for or making donations to and, of course, voting for the candidate and party of their choice. ■

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


MARCH 2022

CANADIAN
Agriculture
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MONTH



THE STORY OF FOOD


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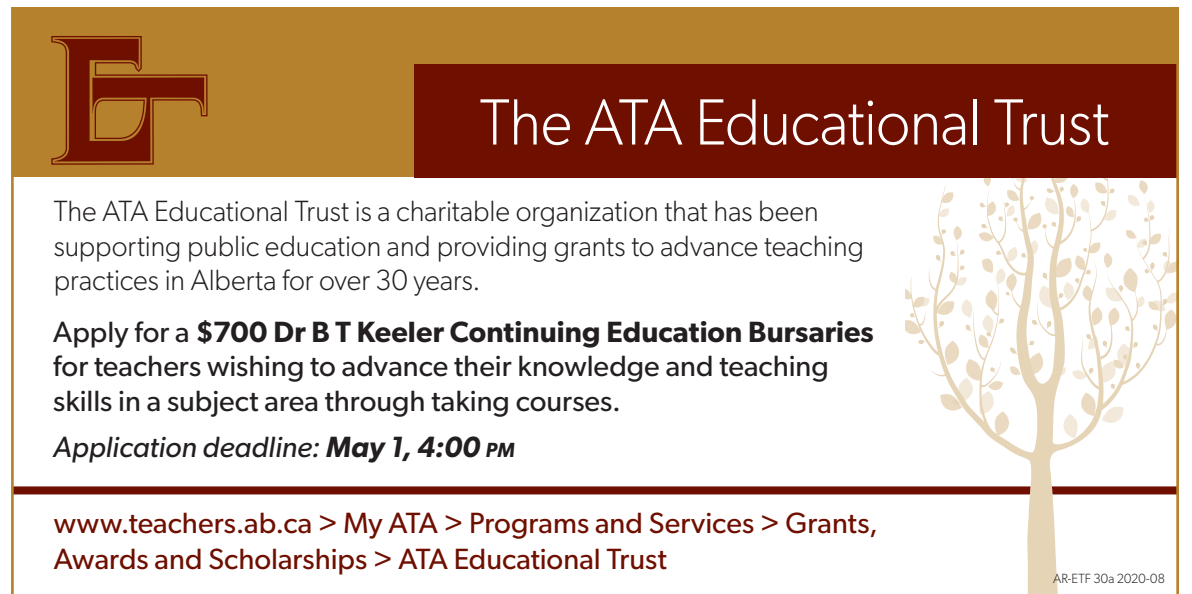
For more information and to apply

- Visit www.teachers.ab.ca > My ATA > Programs and Services > Grants, Awards and Scholarships
- Contact Jessica Grayson, jessica.grayson@ata.ab.ca, 780-447-9499 (Edmonton area) or toll free 1-800-232-7208

Application deadline:
March 1, 2022

The Alberta Teachers' Association

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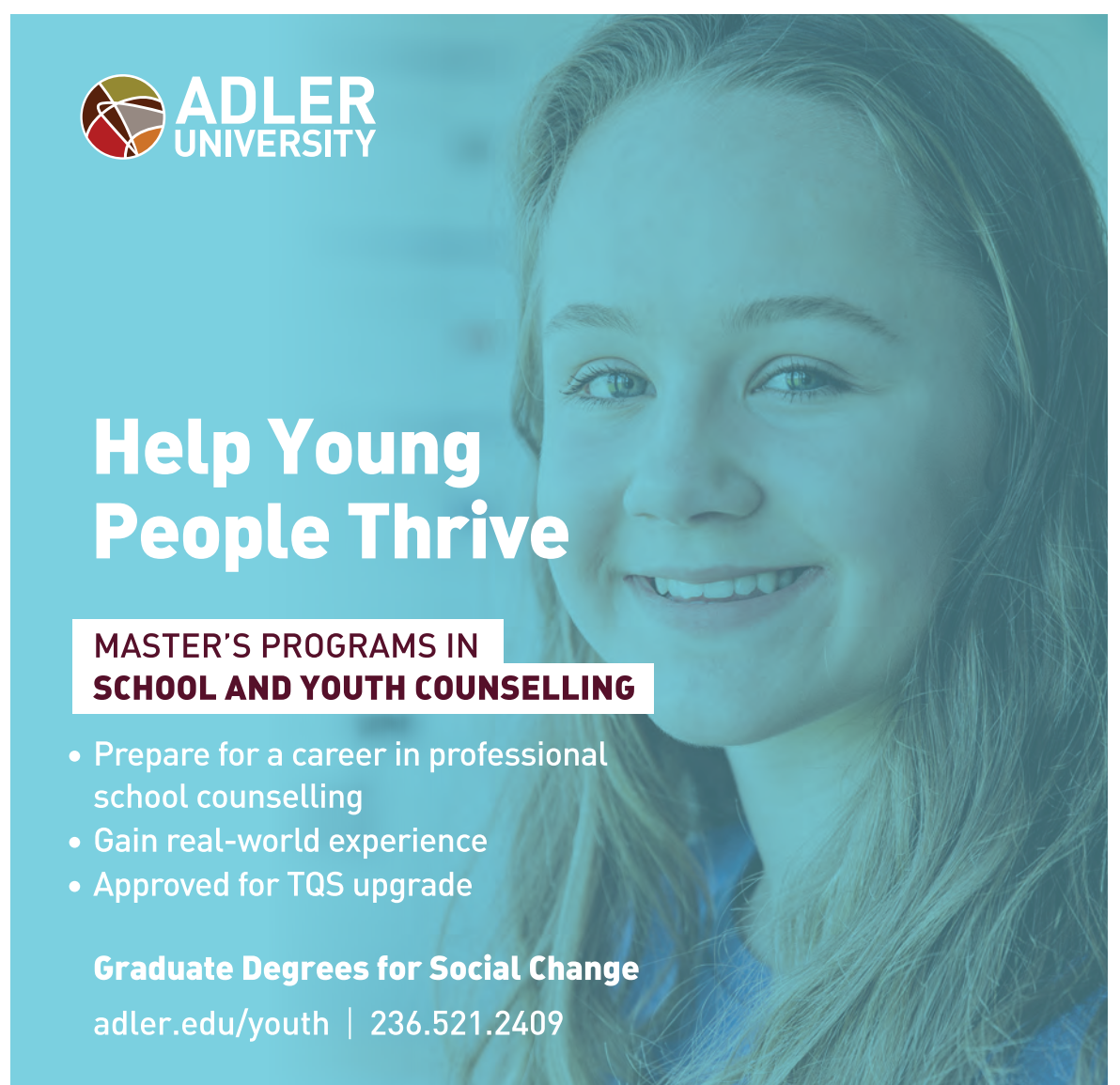
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TALENT

February 22, 2022 | Volume 56, Number 9

CELEBRATING FAMILIES WHO TEACH

LESSON CLANS

Since teaching runs in many families, and since Family Day just took place, the *ATA News* has compiled these stories about teaching families and what it means to be part of one.



Foundation of education instills pride

Lynn Karasiuk James
Special to the *ATA News*

My family's journey in education exceeds 110 years of service. My paternal great-grandfather, Peter Karasiuk, petitioned the Department of Education in Saskatchewan to form the Kaminka School District in 1906. He became the first chairman of the board. He hired his son, my grandfather, Frank Karasiuk, to teach near Wakaw, Saskatchewan, in Todzke School.

My grandfather paid for my grandmother to attend "normal school," which was teachers' college at the time. Her first teaching position was at Peterson School. By the time the Depression hit Saskatchewan, there was no money for many rural one-room schools. My grandparents built and owned grocery stores from 1929 until their retirement.

On my mother's side of the family there are many teachers. Her sisters, my aunts Rosillia

and Sharon, taught. I have countless maternal first cousins once removed who have taught throughout Saskatchewan.

In my generation, the teachers are fewer, as two of my cousins teach and me. As my children aren't teachers, maybe a future grandchild will become a teacher and continue the legacy of education instilled in my heritage.

I have spent 33 years in the classroom. Retirement is on my mind. Though a career in teaching wasn't my initial plan, I do admire the perseverance and dedication to the career so many of my family members have. I cannot even begin to imagine what my grandparents experienced as teachers in the 1920s, much as I would imagine that they would not believe the complexity of teaching in this century. I am grateful for the foundation of education they laid and am proud to have followed in their footsteps.

Lynn Karasiuk James is the acting vice-principal and learning support facilitator at Christ the King School in Leduc.

Teaching and learning are in my DNA

Nicole Lakusta
Special to the *ATA News*

My mother, Angéline, is a retired teacher. After attending normal school in Winnipeg in 1950, she had an interesting teaching career that spanned 18 years in a few different provinces. This started with a two-year posting at a one-room country school in the municipality of Morris, north of Winnipeg. My mother taught about a dozen children in five different grades and lived next door in a trustee's house. The school was heated by a wood stove and had no indoor plumbing, only an outhouse.

Over the years, she had stops in Portage La Prairie, Flin Flon, Dryden, Ont., Kenora, Ont. and Lethbridge, where I was born.

After she retired from teaching, my mother was involved in the creation of a French immersion program in the Lethbridge Catholic Separate School Division. I was also influenced by two other teachers in my mom's family – my aunt in British Columbia and my uncle (who is also an Oblate father) in Manitoba.

I regularly speak with my mom about the vast amount of technological changes that have occurred in the classroom. She is amazed at how

the world doesn't seem "huge" to students of today. With one swipe of a finger, a student could be speaking with another student or expert in another country or another classroom.

The teaching DNA won't stop with me, as my daughter is now in her third year of teaching.

Growing up in a teaching family has given me a perspective that learning is a lifelong pursuit. It is not a race but one of constant new experiences, reflections and interesting relationships. It is about the students, families and colleagues in my school and district, as well as provincially and internationally. Learning is accessible to everyone, and we are all at different points of our understanding in our curriculum, our thoughts and who we are as persons.

It has given me an insight that patience, persistence and resilience are important aspects of both my professional and personal life to work on and to talk about with my students and colleagues. It is also a great opportunity for me to speak with my mom, a retired teacher, about the nuances of teaching in 2022 and to support my daughter, who is in her third year of teaching, and living through a pandemic.

Nicole Lakusta is the STEAM facilitator at Parkland School Division, Stony Plain.

Substitute teachers ARE key team members



Substitute Teachers' Appreciation Week 2022

March 14–18



The Alberta Teachers' Association

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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