

Revealing

Teachers describe their journeys with mental health.

ATA Magazine

6699

Watch for the spring issue in schools and online at www.teachers.ab.ca.



ARA 2023

Highlighted resolutions
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ATA NEWS

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CORY HARE

ARA 2023

ATA president Jason Schilling peers into the crowd during the Annual Representative Assembly held in Edmonton over the May long weekend.

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Member input welcome

ATA budget process is year-round and democratic.

Read Dennis Theobald's Q&A on [page 2](#).



Charter complex

Alberta has a complicated history with charter schools.

Read Jonathan Teghtmeyer's editorial on [page 2](#).

Teachers' views on charter schools are complex



EDITORIAL

Jonathan Teghtmeyer
ATA News Editor-in-Chief

Two resolutions with differing fates from ARA demonstrate the complexity with which teachers view charter schools.

One resolution, which calls for charter schools to be operated under the authority of existing school boards or else become private schools, was adopted. The other, which called for the ATA to discontinue bargaining for teachers in charter schools, failed.

The message being sent is that there are concerns about how charter schools are operated, but a teacher is a teacher, and the ATA is prepared to support teachers wherever they work — hate the game, not the player, if you will.

The ATA's longest standing policy on charter schools highlights the complexity. Adopted in 1994, it outlines a set of nine characteristics associated with charter schools that the Association opposes. Not every charter school is the same. Some charters tick off more of these nine boxes than others.

From their origins, in many U.S. states charter schools were set up as a direct threat to public education — de facto private schools that would receive full public funding (in addition to large corporate endowments),

while recruiting the top students and relegating the rest to an underfunded, undersupported public system.

The ideology was based on a view that charters would bring greater competition into the so-called government monopoly of public education. But competition is not a model that works well in education. Competition creates winners and losers. How do kids benefit from being losers in a system of competition?

When the charter experiment was brought to Alberta, it faced some opposition on these grounds, and so

“The message being sent is that there are concerns about how charter schools are operated, but a teacher is a teacher, and the ATA is prepared to support teachers wherever they work...”

the system was regulated to address a number of the concerns. Charters were supposed to be incubators of innovation. Each school was required to have a unique specialised program of innovation. If the local school board wanted to offer that program, then the charter would be blocked. If not, then the charter would exist for a limited time to test their innovations, and then those innovations would flow out to the rest of the system. Because they were temporary centres of innovation, they would not receive

long-term infrastructure investments.

Slowly, over time, enforcement of the regulations waned and, ultimately, with the passage of the *Choice in Education Act* and other bits of legislation, the controls were eliminated.

So now we have a wide range of charter schools. Some are very committed to a unique style of education (arts, music or language academies); some serve a specific population with unique needs (Indigenous, inner city or small rural communities). But there is a third group that is problematic.

This third group is charter schools

A recent article from *Press Progress* showed that seven of the top 10 school authorities in terms of family or community socio-economic status (SES) were charter schools. The top six on the list were all charters.

Further analysis by Association staff found that these elite charter schools also had elite-level access to cash. Fees averaged about \$550 more per student and donations averaged about \$350 more per student than public, separate and francophone schools.

Imagine now if your classroom had only students from the wealthiest families, no special needs and an additional \$27,000 a year in funding.

So, yeah, views on charter schools are complex. What teachers ultimately want is an education system that favours the needs of the many over the wants of a privileged few. We think that public funding should support public schools that are accessible, accountable to the broader community and inclusive, not just serve a niche class of people while excluding others.

There are many opportunities available to put the reins back on charter schools. Requiring them to affiliate with a public school board so there is more accountability to the community at large is a great starting point. If the school doesn't like that, then they should take off the disguise and become a private school. ■

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

The ATA's budget process is democratic



Q & A

Dennis Theobald
ATA Executive Secretary

Question: After attending the Annual Representative Assembly (ARA) on the Victoria Day weekend, I have a great idea about a program the Association should offer. How can I get it in front of the assembly next year?

Answer: The first thing to note is that ARA is really intended to be the place where general policy directions are set and the proposed budget approved. When it comes to creating specific programs, it's the place you want to end up at rather than start from.

If your idea involves the expenditure of new money or the re-allocation of already budgeted funds, it is important that it be brought into the budget planning process as early as possible. As the chair of Finance Committee, Jenny Regal, explained in the budget presentation, this gets underway in September with the development of the "program prognosis" that captures

program proposals for the next fiscal year. It is especially important that proposals with budget implications be included in the prognosis.

The prognosis is approved at the October meeting of Council and then drives costing and all budget-related activities going forward. This work culminates in the penultimate budget proposal distributed to locals in February, which then is finalized in the budget booklet presented at and (hopefully) approved by the Annual Representative Assembly.

The best way of having your program proposal included in the prognosis is to raise it directly with your district representative, through a relevant advisory committee of Council or with a staff officer in the relevant program area. They would be pleased to explore your proposal with you to better understand your objectives and how they might be achieved. It is always wise to start by defining the problem you are trying to solve or the outcome you are trying to achieve, and then draw upon the considerable expertise of staff to help identify a helpful programming response.

Generally, the earlier you can start

on this, the better. If you are depending on advancing your proposal by means of a local resolution to ARA, it may be too late to action in the next school year. Local resolutions are received in mid-December, which is already well into the budget planning cycle. Those local resolutions that have budget implications are generally scheduled for debate, but because their passage often will require changes to be made to the budget as submitted to ARA, possibly including a fee increase, they may not gain traction.

If your proposal is outside the prognosis, all is not lost, although the path to realization can be a bit more challenging. Even if an initiative is not specifically authorized and budgeted in advance by ARA, the Association does have the capacity to respond to emerging challenges and unanticipated needs. Staff can action some more modest initiatives within the scope of their current assignments and responsibilities. Provincial Executive Council can find room in generally related, pre-existing program budget lines to cover activities and programs that may not have been included in the annual budget. Council can

also authorize overexpenditures of existing lines or draw down the Special Emergency Fund and Defence and Advocacy Funds to pay for emergent projects that align with the funds' respective mandated purpose.

Again, if you think the Association should be undertaking a project or activity on an emergent basis, the place to start is with a conversation with your district representative, a representative on a relevant committee of Council or with a staff member.

The Association is perhaps the most fundamentally democratic organization I have ever worked with, and members and representatives have opportunities to be engaged at every step of its policy and formation process. But democracy is by its very nature slow, and it takes time and collaborative effort to bring the spark of an idea through to approval, funding and ultimately implementation. My job is to facilitate the efforts of members, and I am always pleased to help you navigate the process. ■

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



YOUR VIEWS

FACEBOOK FEEDBACK

On the parties' education platforms

Danica Pea

It's all vague and very unhelpful. But Smith also makes it seem like we were *given* a wage increase and didn't fight for it. It wasn't out of charity... it was negotiation and that was the BARE minimum.

FROM INSTAGRAM

On government funding of private schools

Mslmdoyle

We do not only lose the money from the public system ... we lose the advocacy of highly educated wealthy parents who advocate for the higher standard of more opportunity and resources for the use of their children. Look to Finland with the highest success rates in education in the world ... they do not have private systems. Imagine an education system where parents advocate for all schools to have the same resources available that their children currently receive in private institutions.

Cteasd

PUF funding for kindergarten students was cut, and that money was given to private schools. It's a travesty. I quit my job as a kindergarten teacher. It's become much more difficult without supports for children with delays.

On the ATA's call to MLA candidates that they phase in a new curriculum developed with the input of teachers

Mkrasnikoff

As a teacher who has spent over a year learning new curriculum, I hope

that the ATA would not encourage a new government to dispose of what has already been implemented. Years ago, we spent time learning a new curriculum that was meant to be implemented, but the NDP did not put it in place. Now, like it or not, we've invested a lot of time and resources into another new curriculum for math and language arts. To suggest that we should scrap it and start over would place just as little value on teachers' time and professional judgment as it does to not have some teacher representation at the table developing it in the first place.

On the ATA's Annual Representative Assembly

Marygiampadandrea

I'll miss that this year after attending for a decade. Good luck to everyone! I hope you all crush it! Special thanks to you all and especially my @ectlocal54 colleagues

ON TWITTER

On the ATA's Annual Representative Assembly

@StephanieGee9

#ARA2023 has ended and I witnessed so many devoted teachers come together this weekend! Thank you @ATA38 for preparing us (delegates) and thanks for all the amazing snacks provided by the hospitality committee!

@3DrumsofWheat20

Fantastic news for all members that we have been able to pass a budget without requiring a fee increase, especially given our current economic climate. Thank you to the financial committee for their diligent work to find creative solutions to make this possible.

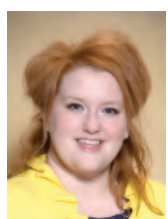
FOR THE RECORD

“ I'm a first-generation immigrant. I've lived through this and it's frustrating. ”

– Goodluck Nwaerandu, an ARA delegate, speaking about being passed over for job opportunities due to racism



Public education is the great equalizer



VIEWPOINTS

Brandy Rai
President, Alberta School Councils' Association

The following is a speech delivered to delegates of the ATA's Annual Representative Assembly on May 20.

Good morning everyone. I deeply appreciate this opportunity to briefly bring greetings to this valued and valuable assembly. You are the reason I'm here today, in more ways than the obvious.

I'm standing here this morning as a chronically disabled, excessively awesomely neurodivergent, fat femme who was raised in the Deep South and in a patriarchal culture that frankly doesn't place a high value on any of these defining traits.

I can sip sweet tea, clutch pearls, pat biscuits and spin a yarn under magnolias with the best of them, but that kindred country charm is worth a hill of beans when you're different. It outright ends when you're marginalized. It becomes a loop of bigotry and misogyny that makes sure that you know that you're less than and frames your world view so that you actively gate-keep others into their less than roles as well. Access to quality public education breaks that cycle.

I'm standing here today as a parent of five beautifully neurodivergent, culturally diverse, queer and racialized babies. I'm here as an education advocate that represents thousands of parents on

school councils across our province. I'm here today because of each of you, because of your worthy profession.

Education really is the great equalizer. Understanding the scope of our world, recognizing we are but a mere speck in a speck in the vast universe and that societies rise and fall, yet our humanity endures — all comes from my experiences within public education as a student. Teachers just like you nurtured my curiosity, helped me actively socialize, knew my worth and instilled in me such a profound respect for education that to this day, I know the truth.

“ Thank you for being agents of connection, keepers of curiosity and caretakers of compassion. You are professionals and you are partners with parents. ”

Education really is the most powerful tool we can use to change the world. I remember each teacher and their impact vividly, and I hope to honour their efforts by the life I live, the spaces I volunteer in and the communities I help build.

It's been a hard few decades in education here in Alberta. These last few years are ones I know we cannot forget. Our babies have been packed into classrooms, supports have been minimal, education has sometimes been a political football used to hopefully score votes, and teachers have been reduced to possible villainy. All for what purpose? Because education is the most powerful tool we can use to change the world. And you are world class educators. You are changing our world.

We are not meant to be keepers of the world we inherit; we are meant to be innovative and expansive. Teachers, you are the light that sparks learning. You are the stewards of humanity and community. It is your work and your dedication that help every student make connections — to themselves, to their peers, to the concepts and to their communities.

I recognize that you're weary and worn. I also see how you still show up, over and over, for your students, for your colleagues, for your communities. Because of you, more people will have opportunities through education. More hearts will flourish, more minds will dig deep to create solutions and more growth will happen.

Thank you for being agents of connection, keepers of curiosity and caretakers of compassion. You are professionals and you are partners with parents.

I appreciate all the work you do in your classrooms, and all the work you will continue to do this weekend. You are important. Your work is important. From every student who has benefited from your dedication and expertise, we say thank you and we hope you have a good weekend participating in this valuable assembly. ■

Award recipient blasts government's curriculum work

Mark Milne
ATA News Staff

The government is continuing to use curriculum as a political battleground and has labeled the Alberta Teachers' Association and anyone else who speaks out as the enemy, said Jacquie Skytt, an ATA curriculum expert and the latest recipient of the organization's honorary membership award.

Skytt made her comments while accepting the award at this year's Annual Representative Assembly.

"Sadly, education policy in Alberta has been co-opted by politics, and it is now the battleground of politicians who will tell lies, attack teachers, and some even bully students to gain the attention of voters," Skytt said.

Skytt joined ATA staff in 1996 as an executive staff officer in the Professional Development program area. She rose to the position of assistant executive secretary before retiring in 2013. Despite her retirement, she remained heavily involved in several projects. Her most recent contribution was analyzing data the ATA gathered from teachers on the new curriculum. Skytt said this was one of the most difficult projects she's ever done.

"I analyzed the survey data and read all the thousands of comments submitted by teachers," Skytt said.

"I was emotionally drained from reading these comments because the teacher respondents poured out their hearts and they were so desperate to improve the draft curriculum for their students."

Skytt said she witnessed a far more collaborative working relationship between Alberta Education and the ATA when she was working with Alberta Education during the 1990 curriculum rewrite. Skytt recalled the deputy minister giving his staff clear instructions that the teachers are the professionals and shouldn't be told how to teach. Skytt noted how the tone and approach have changed.

"Recently, we have seen intrusions by powerful organizations to try to influence how you teach," she said. "As a profession, teachers are masters of their professional practice, and you must resist the efforts of people who want to dictate how to teach your students. This is our turf." ■



Jacquie Skytt accepts congratulations from past president Greg Jeffery after being introduced as a recipient of the ATA's honorary membership award.

CORY HARE

Lawyer Richard Rand accepts ATA's highest award

Kim Clement
ATA News Staff

Nearly three decades of dedication to public education and administering Alberta's teacher discipline process earned lawyer Richard Rand honorary membership in the Alberta Teachers' Association.

Considered the ATA's highest honour, the award recognizes those who have made outstanding contributions to the Association. Rand accepted the award at this year's Annual Representative Assembly in Edmonton on May 20.

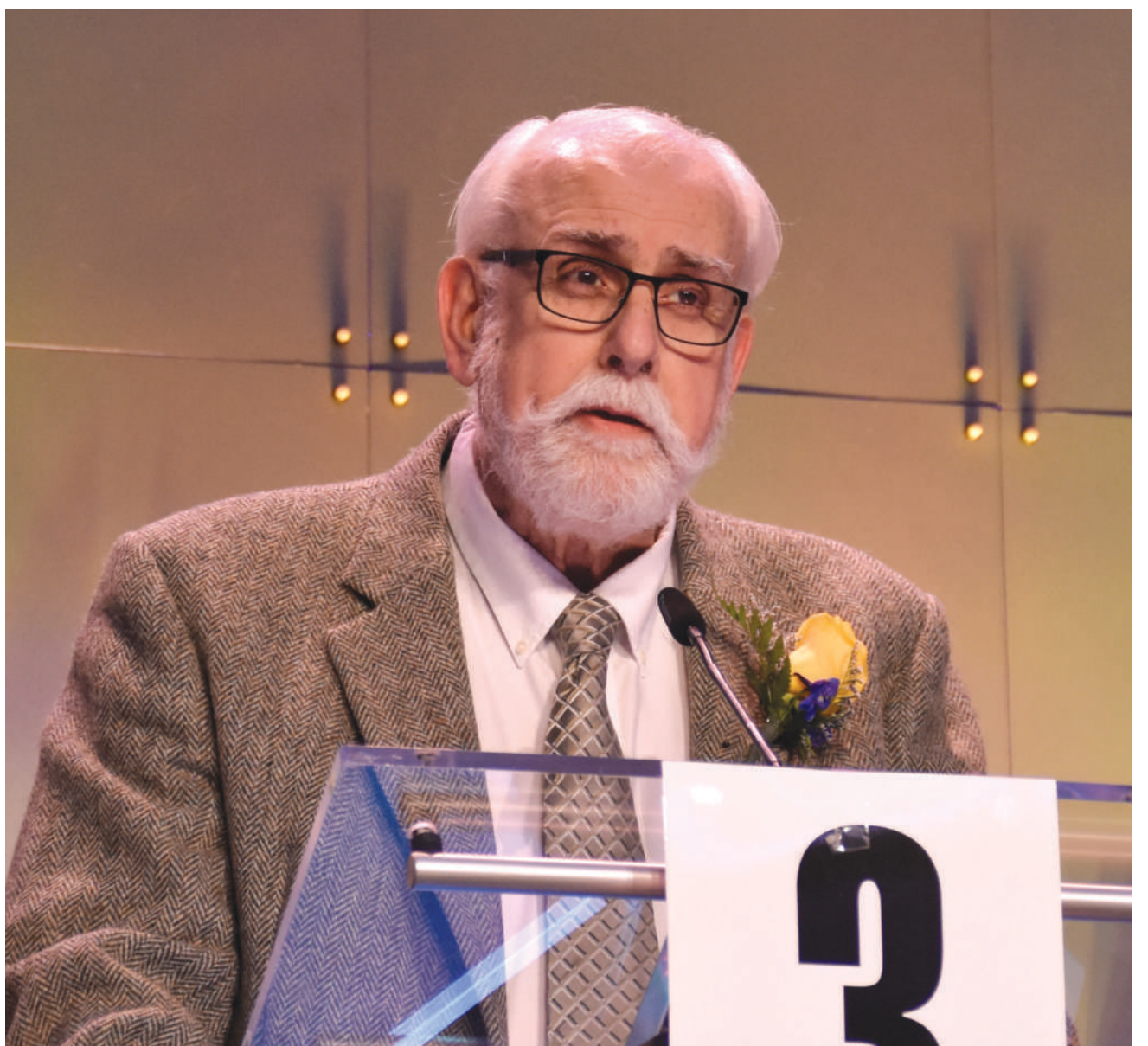
Since 1994, Rand has been actively involved with the ATA, focusing primarily on matters related to the administration of the professional discipline function. His engagement with the Association grew over time, particularly in providing assistance to the professional conduct, professional conduct appeal and complainant appeal committees.

"It amazed me when I saw the work ... and the time that members of this association put into ensuring the regulation of this profession and to ensure its high standards," Rand said in his acceptance speech.

Rand's dedication to the profession was evident most recently when he voiced his concerns about the government's move to strip the Association of its discipline function. His impassioned response, published in prominent newspapers, emphasized the importance of the teaching profession holding onto the discipline function and his unwavering support for teachers.

ATA president Jason Schilling said Rand's guidance and expertise have been invaluable in ensuring fair and just outcomes for members, the profession and the public.

"He will not soon be forgotten by those who have had the pleasure of meeting him," Schilling said. "Richard Rand is a great ally to public education and the Alberta Teachers' Association." ■



Retired lawyer Richard Rand speaks after accepting honorary membership in the ATA in recognition of nearly 30 years of service.

CORY HARE

ARA delegates vote to support teacher-firefighters

Jonathan Teghtmeyer
ATA News Editor-in-Chief

As smoke from numerous wildfires settled on Alberta's capital region over the May long weekend, nearly 500 teacher delegates gathered at the J W Marriott hotel in Edmonton's Ice District to set policy and establish a budget for the Alberta Teachers' Association.

The wildfire context not only surrounded the venue during the ATA's Annual Representative Assembly (ARA) but permeated the assembly hall in the form of numerous points of discussion, including two emergent resolutions aimed at making it easier for teachers who are also volunteer firefighters to access leave in order to help battle Alberta's wildfires. The first resolution (4.1) urged school boards and government to facilitate such leaves, and the second resolution (4.2) proposed that the Association fund related substitute costs.

Gary Smith, a member of Battle River Local No. 32 who is also a lieutenant with the Camrose Fire Department, brought forward the resolutions, which passed with widespread support. Smith said afterward that he was very happy with the show of support from ARA delegates.

"Lots of times people will say 'thank you for your service,' which I love to hear," he said, "but the support that [delegates] showed is a lot greater than just 'thank you for your service.' It is an actionable item that really shows support for what firefighters do."

Smith said that his department is being asked daily if they can spare equipment and personnel to help battle northern wildfires.

"As a volunteer firefighter, it's hard to watch on the news ... and hear about manpower that they're missing and homes being destroyed and people being displaced and not being able to go and help," Smith said.

Two other teacher firefighters, Larry Neville from Chinook's Edge Local No. 17 and Ian McLaren from Wolf Creek Local No. 3, were also in attendance as ARA delegates.

"It's gratifying to know that the people of Alberta support those trying to help others," said Neville.

Artificial intelligence and careers task force

Saturday's debate also featured discussion on two emerging issues facing teachers and the profession.

A block of three resolutions dealt with the impacts of artificial intelligence in schools. The resolutions called for treating student safety and privacy as primary considerations; evaluating AI tools for bias, discrimination and potential harms; and understanding of benefits and concerns including algorithm effects and data collection issues.

"AI has the power to revolutionize the way we teach and learn ... however, with great power comes great responsibility," said a speaker to the resolutions.

"By adopting these resolutions, we can hope to direct and harness the power of AI to enhance our educational experiences while safeguarding the privacy, safety and well-being of our students."

The speaker later revealed, as a demonstration of the tools' power, that her speech was written by an AI chat bot.

Five other resolutions responded to recommendations of the government's recent Career Education Task Force, which issued a report designed to strengthen connections between schools and jobs.

Resolution 3-41 asserted a fundamental belief that the purpose of career, skills and technology education is to provide students with opportunities to broaden learning experiences within a well-rounded program of studies.

Resolutions 3-37 to 3-40 urged the government to reject some of the task force recommendations and take additional actions:

- Require that teachers are still used for the instruction and supervision of CTS, dual-credit and off-campus programming.
- Mandate frequent on-site monitoring of off-campus programs to ensure student safety and adherence to standards of instruction.
- Provide additional funding for CTS and CTF classrooms to ensure class sizes remain small for the purposes of safety and supervision.



CORY HARE

Gary Smith, a teacher and volunteer firefighter from Camrose, speaks to a resolution he proposed to make it easier for individuals like him to access leave in order to help fight Alberta's wildfires.

- Address shortages of skilled trades by increasing funding for postsecondary institutions.

Also, "Certificated teachers need to be the ones responsible for supervising off-campus placements and ensuring that requirements for safety inspection reports are adhered to," said a speaker to the resolutions.

Other points of discussion

Bargaining also figured prominently during ARA. Delegates passed an emergent resolution moved by the Canadian Rockies local calling for a strategy to address the slow pace of local bargaining. They also considered local resolutions calling for the return to full local bargaining on all matters. These resolutions were ultimately defeated as delegates reiterated support for the current bilateral format.

A resolution calling for the Association to undertake a comprehensive study of teacher workload was vigorously debated and passed with a 13 vote margin.

After a long discussion, and despite concerns about the impact of violent media on children, delegates opted to delete a 30-year-old ATA policy calling on the government to pass legislation to prevent children from accessing violent movies, video games and other electronic media.

An emergent resolution from the Edmonton Public local called for charter schools to be operated under the authorities of local school boards or become private schools.

And after a thorough, emotional discussion, the assembly passed a motion calling for the development and communication of policies and procedures to address incidents of harassment and/or assault at Association events.

Local resolutions related to the location of Summer Conference and to online delivery of teachers' conventions were referred for study and reporting to the 2024 assembly.

Delegates also passed a balanced budget that will maintain teachers' current fees. ■

Unite to create a better future, ATA president urges

Cory Hare
ATA News Managing Editor

Despite all the challenges facing them within the public education system, Alberta teachers continue to make a positive difference in the lives of their students.

This was the message delivered by ATA president Jason Schilling during his address to delegates of the Annual Representative Assembly (ARA) in Edmonton on May 20.

"You make a powerful difference in the lives of your students and to each other. You are the best part of someone's day and to me that's just inspiring," Schilling said.

"This is why you are valued, you are needed, you are trusted in your school communities, and the work you do matters."

Schilling noted that ARA was taking place at a very interesting time, just nine days prior to a pivotal provincial election.

He cautioned against getting caught up in the polarization that characterizes modern politics, stressing the need for teachers to remain united and take the lead in advocating for positive change within the public education sector.

"This starts by genuinely listening to each other, seeking to understand and then collaborating with others, such as school boards and parents, on creating answers. We cannot be too quick to jump into actions," he said. "This is one of the many things that keeps me up at night — how polarized we have become as a society and as members in the Association."

Teachers must work together at both the provincial and local levels to deepen collegial connections that were strained during the pandemic, Schilling said, adding that these renewed ties will help members see the importance of belonging and contributing to a strong association. This is particularly important given the forthcoming next round of central bargaining.

Schilling also urged teachers to work on broadening their networks outside of education, to tell their stories, share their celebrations and highlight the needs of their students.

"Public education is fundamental to the success of our communities and province," he said. "We all have a stake in seeing our students flourish and achieve their goals."

Schilling urged teachers to embrace the challenges of a profession that is often met with setbacks but also surrounding success and joy.

"I believe in my heart that we can make education better in this province not only for our students, but also their parents, and for each other," he said.

"We need to grasp the many opportunities we see before us, and work together to make a positive difference that public education so desperately needs," he said. "We do it together, united in the truest sense of the words, as a profession unified in collegiality, determination and hope." ■



CORY HARE

ATA president Jason Schilling urges teacher unity during a speech to delegates of the Annual Representative Assembly in Edmonton on May 20.

Highlighted resolutions



Resolutions arising from the six-year review of policy

1-131/23

Provincial Executive Council

BE IT RESOLVED that policy 24.2.10.1 be [reaffirmed] deleted.
CARRIED AS AMENDED

24.2.10.1 *The Government of Alberta should pass legislation ensuring that children under the age of 18 do not have access to violent movies, videos, video games and other electronic media.*

Local resolutions

2-1/23

Calgary Public Teachers
Prairie Rose

BE IT RESOLVED that the Association urge school divisions and the College of Alberta School Superintendents to adopt policies that discourage hiring decisions being made on the basis of a teacher's placement on the salary grid.

2-2/23

Prairie Rose

BE IT RESOLVED that the Association call upon school divisions and the College of Alberta School Superintendents to make public a statement of ethical practices and processes in regard to hiring, transfers and promotions.

2-13/23

Edmonton Public Teachers

BE IT RESOLVED that the Association urge school divisions to collect and keep records of the number and types of incidents of violence or harassment perpetrated against staff, to be shared with the associated locals (ATA, CUPE, etc) on a semiannual basis.

2-16/23

Edmonton Public Teachers

BE IT RESOLVED that the Association urge school authorities to provide mandatory and comprehensive training to administrators, school leaders and aspiring school leaders in how to effectively respond to disclosures of harassment, including sexual harassment, and abuse; training should be renewed every three years.

2-20/23

Red Deer Catholic

BE IT RESOLVED that when a memorandum of agreement at the central table is presented to teachers, in addition to any recommendations from the Central Bargaining Committee and Provincial Executive Council there will be a comprehensive statement of the potential impact of all changes, including potential strengths and weaknesses, costs and benefits, and gains and losses.

2-22/23

Red Deer Catholic

BE IT RESOLVED that the Association develop and implement a comprehensive contingency plan to deal with any extended absences (for medical or other approved reasons) of PEC members, making clear to members and locals how the absent PEC member's responsibilities and duties will be met during the period of their absence.

2-23/23

Calgary Public Teachers

BE IT RESOLVED that the Government of Alberta should ensure that all students living in Alberta, regardless of the students', parents' or caregivers' immigration status in Canada, receive a publicly funded education.

2-24/23

Calgary Public Teachers

BE IT RESOLVED that school boards allow the children of residents with uncertain or no immigration status to enrol in public education without fear of recrimination.

2-25/23

Calgary Public Teachers

BE IT RESOLVED that the threshold to remove resolutions from Block 1 (resolutions arising from the six-year review of policy) be two-thirds and from Block 2 (local resolutions and Provincial Executive Council resolutions), a simple majority.

2-28/23

Calgary Public Teachers

BE IT RESOLVED that the Association conduct a provincewide teacher workload study in order to

1. identify duties that are common across school divisions,
2. provide statistics related to the hours of work on a weekly and annual basis for teachers across Alberta (inclusive

- of all duties and professional obligations),
3. identify areas of teacher work that have experienced workload intensification and
4. offer recommendations on how to ease or reverse workload intensification trends.

2-34/23

Red Deer City

BE IT RESOLVED that the Association urge the Government of Alberta to ensure that school authorities in receipt of the Refugee Student Grant spend that money on refugee students.

2-52/23

Rocky View

BE IT RESOLVED that the Association call for the dissolution of the Alberta Teacher Registry and the deletion and destruction of any public-facing information that is contained therein.

2-64/23

Edmonton Catholic Teachers

BE IT RESOLVED that the Association urges the Government of Alberta to respect the collective bargaining process and refrain from using the notwithstanding clause to circumvent this democratic right.

2-68/23

Evergreen

BE IT RESOLVED that boards offer a number of full-time interim contracts to teachers who can provide substitute teaching service.

Provincial Executive Council resolutions

3-2/23

Provincial Executive Council

BE IT RESOLVED that Association representation of a member in proceedings concerning professional conduct and practice administered by the Alberta Teaching Profession Commission be determined on an individual case-by-case basis.

3-3/23

Provincial Executive Council

BE IT RESOLVED that the Association may represent members who are subject to regulatory processes concerning professional conduct and discipline administered by the Alberta Teaching Profession Commission, in accordance with the following provisions:

1. The member requesting representation must have held the highest level of membership at the time the events relevant to a proceeding took place and continued subsequently to maintain the highest level of membership available to them.
2. The nature and degree of representation provided reflects the seriousness of the potential outcomes, the resources required and associated costs to the Association, risk and opportunity for the establishment of precedent, and the reputation and interests of the profession.
3. The purpose of representation is to

ensure that professional conduct and practice proceedings adhere to legislation and regulation, legal standards established for similar administrative proceedings, and requirements of fairness and natural justice.

3-4/23

Provincial Executive Council

BE IT RESOLVED that the provision of representation not constitute an endorsement of a member's conduct or practice.

3-5/23

Provincial Executive Council

BE IT RESOLVED that representation may be provided by the Association to a member who is subject to regulatory processes concerning professional conduct and practice administered by the Alberta Teaching Profession Commission, subject to the following:

1. Representation may consist of assistance provided by executive or professional staff of the Association and/or provided by legal counsel in the direct employ of the Association or by external legal counsel under contract to the Association.
2. Representation is provided at the discretion and under the direction of Associate Coordinator, Regulatory Affairs, in consultation with Association staff assisting the member.
3. Where a member undertakes to retain their own independent counsel, all associated costs are the sole responsibility of the member unless and except where a prior contractual agreement has been entered into between the Association, the member and the independent counsel for the provision of independent legal representation.
4. A member may appeal a decision not to provide representation or to limit the representation provided using a process established for this purpose.

3-6/23

Provincial Executive Council

BE IT RESOLVED that responsibility for upholding high standards of professional conduct and practice of teachers be within the exclusive mandate of the Association as a professional regulatory authority (or entrusted to a professional college, independent of government, governed by teachers appointed by the Association, elected at large with sufficient public representation to ensure transparency and legitimacy).

3-7/23

Provincial Executive Council

BE IT RESOLVED that legislation, regulations, processes, structures and institutions intended to uphold high standards of professional conduct and practice of teachers be established only with the advice and consent of the Association.

3-8/23

Provincial Executive Council

BE IT RESOLVED that any costs associated with processes, structures and institutions established by the

approved at ARA 2023

Government of Alberta without the consent of the Association for regulating the professional conduct and practice of teachers be paid for by the Government of Alberta, with no fees, levies or charges being imposed upon teachers for this purpose.

3-9/23

Provincial Executive Council

BE IT RESOLVED that when possible, members use informal and formal processes, including those established by the Association, to address and resolve conflicts with colleagues in a constructive, restorative manner.

3-10/23

Provincial Executive Council

BE IT RESOLVED that teacher members of the Teacher Professional Conduct and Practice Panel be populated from a list consisting of active members nominated by the Association.

3-11/23

Provincial Executive Council

BE IT RESOLVED that effective 2023 01 01, the Association's Code of Professional Conduct be in abeyance until the Association approves an alternative code of conduct for its members.

3-25/23

Provincial Executive Council

BE IT RESOLVED that the Government of Alberta develop pandemic responses for public health emergencies in schools that are consistent with the recommendations from the Government of Canada's Centre for Research on Pandemic Preparedness and Health Emergencies and from Health Canada.

3-26/23

Provincial Executive Council

BE IT RESOLVED that the minimum standard for teaching in an Alberta school be a four-year degree (120 semester-hour credits) from a recognized postsecondary institution, including

- at least 45 semester-hour credits of teacher education and pedagogy courses (including a course that addresses the legal, ethical and professional nature of teaching); and
- within the 45 semester-hour credits, at least 10 weeks of a graduated set of face-to-face field experiences in an Alberta school.

3-27/23

Provincial Executive Council

BE IT RESOLVED that the Association support Bridge to Teacher Certification programs in the following exceptional circumstances:

- There is a dire shortage of teachers with a specific subject specialization.
- Subject experts admitted to the program at a recognized university possess a two-year diploma or journey trade certificate.
- Recognition given to existing credentials does not exceed 30 semester-hour credits.
- Students complete a program with at least 36 semester-hour credits of teacher preparation, including at least 10 weeks of supervised student teaching, associated

planning/methods courses and other profession-related courses qualifying them for letters of authority.

- Strict timelines are imposed on the recipients of letters of authority for completing the remaining requirements for a bachelor of education degree.
- Restrictions are imposed on the teaching assignment of recipients of letters of authority to reflect their subject specialization.

3-28/23

Provincial Executive Council

BE IT RESOLVED that the Association urge the Government of Alberta to establish a ministerial order requiring a commemorative ceremony in all Alberta schools for the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation.

3-29/23

Provincial Executive Council

BE IT RESOLVED that the Association urge school authorities to provide inclusive education and responsiveness training for their elected officials regarding the creation of safe, caring and welcoming environments for all students and staff.

3-30/23

Provincial Executive Council

BE IT RESOLVED that the Association urge the Government of Alberta and school authorities to support the professional judgment of teachers in using approved resources that discuss discrimination and oppression as systemic.

3-34/23

Provincial Executive Council

BE IT RESOLVED that student safety and data privacy should be primary considerations in the use of artificial intelligence tools in the classroom.

3-35/23

Provincial Executive Council

BE IT RESOLVED that artificial intelligence tools used in schools should be evaluated before implementation for ownership of data, bias, discrimination, accuracy and potential for harm.

3-36/23

Provincial Executive Council

BE IT RESOLVED that understanding of artificial intelligence benefits and concerns, including algorithms and data collection/use, should be part of technology use in schools.

3-37/23

Provincial Executive Council

BE IT RESOLVED that the Association urge the Government of Alberta to require that instructing, supervising and/or monitoring of student instruction in the areas of Career and Technology Studies, off-campus programming and dual-credit programming be the exclusive responsibility of fully certificated teachers.

3-38/23

Provincial Executive Council

BE IT RESOLVED that the Association urge the Government of Alberta to mandate frequent on-site monitoring and reporting by certificated teachers

of all off-campus education programs to ensure student safety and adherence to established standards for delivery of instruction in these settings.

3-39/23

Provincial Executive Council

BE IT RESOLVED that the Association urge the Government of Alberta to provide additional, targeted funding for Career and Technology Studies classrooms and Career and Technology Foundations classrooms to ensure class sizes do not exceed maximums required to provide for student safety and adequate teacher supervision.

3-40/23

Provincial Executive Council

BE IT RESOLVED that the Association urge the Government of Alberta to address shortages of skilled tradespeople by funding the expansion of postsecondary institutions' capacity to provide access to programs supporting apprenticeship training and trades certification.

3-41/23

Provincial Executive Council

BE IT RESOLVED that the Association assert as a fundamental belief that the purpose of career, skills and technology courses and programming within the primary education system is to provide students with opportunities to broaden their learning and experiences with a well-rounded program of study.

Emergent resolutions

4-1/23

Battle River

BE IT RESOLVED that the ATA urge the Alberta government and school boards to facilitate the voluntary service with pay and benefits of teachers who are qualified first responders to assist civil authorities in responding to emergencies and natural disasters.

4-2/23

Battle River

BE IT RESOLVED that the Alberta Teachers' Association cover the cost of substitute teachers for teachers who take a leave to fight the Alberta wildfires in May and June 2023 to a maximum of \$50,000 and upon application to the Association.

4-3/23

Canadian Rockies

BE IT RESOLVED that the Association craft a strategy to address both the slow pace of local bargaining and the very limited access to Registered Bargaining Agent (RBA) advice and expertise in defending the existing collective agreement at the local level.

4-4/23

Edmonton Public Teachers

BE IT RESOLVED that the Association urge the Government of Alberta to ensure that all charter schools operate as a regular part of our public education system under the authority of an existing local school board. Those charter schools outside of school board authority would become private schools.

4-5/23

Edmonton Public Teachers

BE IT RESOLVED that the Association commit to fostering a safe, inclusive and welcoming environment for all members through the development, implementation and clear communication of specific policies and procedures to address incidents of harassment and/or assault at Association events and provide common language to all locals and subgroups for inclusion in policy to ensure a consistent approach throughout all levels of Association governance.

Resolutions referred for study and report

2-29/23

Red Deer City

BE IT RESOLVED that Summer Conference locate itself in Alberta at a location where a reasonable cost of participation is feasible.

2-44/23

Red Deer City

Be it resolved that the Association urge school boards to gain blanket licence to use Alberta-made film and media within our classrooms.

2-58/23

Parkland Teachers'

BE IT RESOLVED that conventions and specialist councils should offer online sessions for teachers who are living in remote northern locations and travel is cost prohibitive.

2-69/23

Evergreen

BE IT RESOLVED that convention associations add a hybrid model of delivery.

Resolutions on which action has been taken

2-42/23

Red Deer City

BE IT RESOLVED that all elections on specialist councils must be facilitated and governed by the ATA executive staff who is appointed to that specialist council.

2-46/23

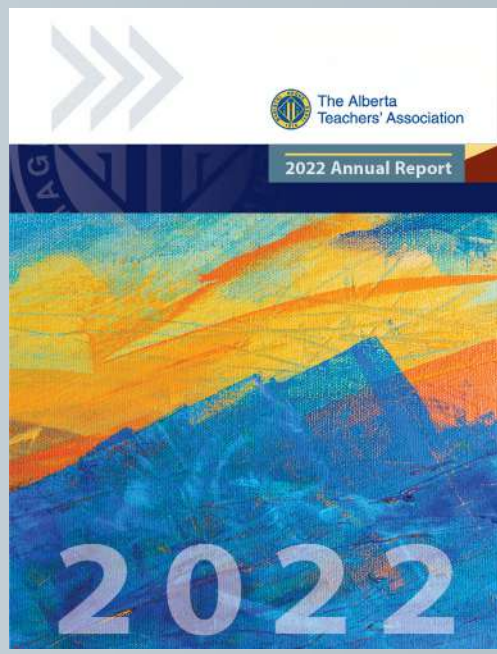
Rocky View

BE IT RESOLVED that the Association research and report to PEC the breakdown of the executive staff officers working from both BH and SARO and how it compares with the teacher population in the service areas for BH and SARO, what the average wait times for return calls is for BH versus SARO and what potential cost savings could be realized if executive staff officers serving southern locals were closer (less mileage, travel time, hotel stays, etcetera). ■

NOTICES AND EVENTS

2022 Annual Report
of the Alberta
Teachers' Association

Now available
online!



Provincial group seeks key women educators

Founded in the early 1900s, the Delta Kappa Gamma International Society for Key Women Educators (DKG), promotes professional and personal growth of women educators and excellence in education. With more than 51,000 key women educators in 17 countries, this international honour society is the largest professional women's organization in the world. The society is a philanthropic force on the international scene, giving millions of dollars each year in scholarships, grants and project support. We offer world fellowship scholarships to women who have come to Canada and the United States to pursue advanced degrees

despite financial and cultural odds. Nationally, we support Canada's First Artists through the "Art for Aid" Project. This is a program of the "I Love First Peoples" registered charity <https://www.artforaid.ca/>. Locally, each of our four Alberta chapters works hard within their communities of Edmonton, Sherwood Park and Calgary to support each other, early educators, schools and school children.

If you are a leading woman educator (retired or active) wanting to be a part of this international society, please contact Sheila MacKay (smackay1@telus.net) or Sherrie MacRae (sherrimacrae@gmail.com).



Grow your potential

Learn the skills to be a principal or superintendent

University of Calgary Continuing Education offers two online programs for Alberta certified teachers or education professionals who want to work in the Alberta education system:

- **School Leadership Quality Standard Program**, for aspiring school principals
- **Superintendent Leadership Quality Standard Program**, for aspiring superintendents

Earn your Leadership Quality Standard Certification with us today.

Register for these online courses at conted.ucalgary.ca/abed



conted.ucalgary.ca

SUMMER INSTITUTE in Teaching Foundational Indigenous Knowledge

The Summer Institute at the University of Alberta supports your growth as a more effective teacher by deepening your understanding of First Nation, Métis and Inuit ways of being, knowing and doing. All courses are in person and on campus.

JULY 3 - 21, 2023

EDU 561 Curriculum, Pedagogy, and Foundational Indigenous Knowledge and Knowing with Dr. Dwayne Donald (morning)

EDU 563 Supporting the Health and Wellbeing of Indigenous Students with Dr. Melissa Tremblay (afternoon)

JULY 24 - 28, 2023

EDU 562 Indigenous Land Teachings: Transitioning Towards Common Ground in Education with Dr. Sharla Mskokii Peltier (full day)

JULY 31 - AUGUST 4, 2023

EDU 560 Bringing Life to Literacy Experiences: Honoring Indigenous Foundational Ways of Knowing, Being, and Doing in Literacy Learning with Dr. Trudy Cardinal (full day)

Tuition: \$1,400/course plus non-instructional fees. Applicants must submit a letter of intent to pluadmin@ualberta.ca by June 15, 2023.

Details at uab.ca/prolearn.



We have your back.

Have you received notice of a complaint from the Alberta Teaching Profession Commission?

Help is available to Association members but timelines are tight.

Please contact us immediately!

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The Alberta Teachers' Association



DIGITAL NEWS

The ATA News is available online.

For the latest issue, visit www.teachers.ab.ca/news.
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<http://bit.ly/ATAeNews>

Challenges ahead: executive secretary reflects on ATA's priorities

Kim Clement
ATA News Staff

One of the ATA's top priorities as it prepares for a new operational year is to strengthen its strategic and operational capabilities to counter ongoing threats to the teaching profession and public education.

This was one of the key themes of executive secretary Dennis Theobald's yearly report delivered to delegates of the Annual Representative Assembly held in Edmonton over the May long weekend.

"Although attempts to undermine public education date back to the mid-1990s, it was in 2022 that we witnessed the culmination of a long-standing campaign against public education, teachers, the profession as a whole and our association," Theobald said.

"Make no doubt about it, we have not seen the end of this campaign — it is relentless and international in scope. And it must be resisted at every turn."

Reflecting on the past year, Theobald said that one of the key developments was the provincial government's exclusion of teachers from crucial discussions on curriculum development and professional regulation. Furthermore, the government expanded support for charter and private schools while neglecting public education funding, leading to its further erosion due to inflation and enrollment growth.

The most significant development the Association faced in 2022 was the enactment of Bill 15, which stripped the ATA's regulatory functions, which were established in the 1930s. Despite this, the Association fulfilled its obligations, concluding ongoing hearings, investigating cases and assisting in the transition of cases to the newly created office of the Alberta Teaching Profession Commissioner, Theobald said.

The Association also assumed a role of representing members affected by the government's new teacher discipline process.



CORY HARE

ATA executive secretary Dennis Theobald addresses delegates at the Annual Representative Assembly in Edmonton on May 20.

"Colleagues, we are a very different organization today than we were a year ago, and frankly, we are still finding our way forward," Theobald said.

He added that the ATA is in the process of defining a new identity and role in the face of continuing political, economic, social and environmental changes, some of which have been brought into sharp relief over the course of this spring's election campaign.

"What will happen after that? I have no idea," Theobald said. "But I am confident that, with your support and guidance and with the resources that you will commit to our use, your association will be prepared to respond and defend the interests of teachers, of students and of public education." ■

Fees to remain unchanged as budget passes

Pedro Carriel
ATA Treasurer and Chief Financial Officer

Teachers' ATA membership fees will remain unchanged for the 2023-24 school year after delegates approved the proposed budget at the Annual Representative Assembly (ARA) over the May long weekend in Edmonton. The result is no change to the current fee of \$1,347 per year for a full-time teacher.

Total planned expenditures in the upcoming fiscal year are largely unchanged, decreasing slightly by one per cent compared to the 2022/2023 budget.

Approved budget highlights

In looking to apply some of the learnings from operating virtually for a couple of years, budget 2023-24 introduced a 10 per cent reduction to the overall budgets of a number of committees across program areas, including Provincial Executive Council. Also, discipline related committee budgets were adjusted or deleted in response to the shifting role of the Association within the province's new discipline model for teachers and teacher leaders.

Within the Teacher Employment Services program area, the approved budget allows for increased expenses for both the Substitute Teachers' Conference, in order to accommodate a higher number of registrants, and the Healthy Interactions program. Furthermore, within Professional Development, funds have been allocated to increase the number of Indigenous Education PD facilitators from 18 to 25.

Next, responding to members' requests for an

additional Beginning Teachers' Conference, the approved budget allows for annual events to be held in both Edmonton and Calgary. Also, given the expansion in need, the Professional Development Area Conference (PDAC) budget line will increase. The assembly also approved funding for specialist council carousels, which provide professional development opportunities to student locals and preservice teachers.

Delegates over the long weekend also supported an increase to the member awareness budget line within the Government program area to explore gaps in service and support for various niche populations of the membership, such as Indigenous, francophone and racialized teachers and administrators, and those who are internationally educated.

Finally, in line with the Association's long-term strategy to increasingly adopt modern cloud-based technology that improves productivity and streamlines service to members, funds were allocated for the rollout of the Association's new Human Resources Information System along with important targeted information technology investments.

At the conclusion of a productive long weekend of debate, delegates approved an overall budget with a small surplus of \$54,500. The annual fee for associate members will remain unchanged at \$202.05.

After the approval of the budget, the Assembly approved a study of teacher workload. The timing, scope and cost of this study have yet to be determined. It is anticipated that some expenses relating to this activity will be incurred in the next fiscal year, but these will be covered under existing budget lines or, potentially, through a call on the Special Emergency Fund. ■



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**It was great seeing you at the 2023 ATA Conventions.
Stay tuned for the announcement of our 15 lucky E-Bike winners!**

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LOOKING FOR A GOOD READ?

Check out *OPERETTA ON THE PRAIRIE*, a novel by ex-Albertan Peter Verney.

It's set in the early 1960s and is about the trials and tribulations of a young British schoolteacher trying to stage Gilbert and Sullivan's *The Mikado* in a tiny southern Alberta town.

The book's available—and priced very reasonably—from Amazon and elsewhere

For more, see www.peterverney.com



Become a Professional Development Facilitator!

PD facilitators assist ATA professional development staff with the delivery of programs and services to local PD committees.

The Alberta Teachers' Association is seeking outstanding classroom teachers representing all grade levels and subject areas. The three-year appointments for these assignments will begin September, 2023.

The application process has three parts:

1. Provide a letter of interest.
2. Download and complete the [application form](#) from the ATA website.
3. Provide a resumé.

Successful candidates are expected to attend training sessions throughout the year and the Fall and Spring Professional Development Conferences. The ATA covers release time and associated expenses to complete the work and provides an honorarium.

As a courtesy, please advise your superintendent and principal that you will be applying. All applicants must be active or associate members of the ATA and hold an Alberta teaching certificate.

APPLICATION DEADLINE IS JUNE 30, 2023.



The Alberta Teachers' Association

PD-290 2023 05

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Dialogue Towards Truth & Reconciliation
October 13 - 14, 2023
At the Banff Centre

Friday Pre-Conference interactive sessions
Register at: braidingtogether.ca

Starting at **\$375**
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Come join us as we engage in dialogue in response to the calls to action of the TRC.

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The Alberta Teachers' Association

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TALENT

May 30, 2023 | Volume 57, Number 14

The ATA's 106th Annual Representative Assembly took place in Edmonton over the May long weekend. More than 450 delegates spent more than two days discussing issues such as the ATA's budget for 2023-24 and new policy resolutions.

FIRST TIMERS



(L-R) Susan André, Glenda Garrido Tovar, James Kriese and Maria Doerr of Edmonton Catholic Local No. 54 were all attending their first ARA.



COUPLES WEEKEND

ARA was a family event for married couples Landry and Abbey Forand (left), and Mikkel Nannan and Amrit Rai Nannan. Both couples are from Rocky View Local No. 35.



UP TO SHENANIGANS

Delegates from Calgary Public Local No. 38 take a break from ARA shenanigans to show off their custom T-shirts.



PUTTING OUT FIRES

(L-R) Gary Smith of Battle River Local No. 32, Ian McLaren of Wolf Creek Local No. 3 and Larry Neville of Chinook's Edge Local No. 17, are all volunteer firefighters in their communities who were also ARA delegates.

IN RESPONSE



Goodluck Nwaerandu, a delegate from Calgary Public Teachers Local No. 38, listens to the answer to a question he posed during ARA debate.

ALL IN FAVOUR?



IMAGES OF

ARA

Delegates vote on a resolution.

PHOTOS BY CORY HARE



PIPING UP

Ross MacDonald, a delegate from Battle River Local No. 32, pipes in the members of the head table to begin ARA 2023.

POSITIVE MESSAGING



A delegate from Edmonton Catholic Local No. 54 shows off a sweatshirt produced by a teacher-owned business called Two Planner Babes.