

Feature: Caring professions are appealing and fulfilling for many but there are pitfalls and risks.



Fall issue available in schools in early November.
Digital version at www.teachers.ab.ca



**In with Smith
Now what?**
Page 4.

ATA NEWS

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Myra wants to see you...

at the rally!

ATA staff officer Myra Rybotycki will be serving as ground captain at the Oct. 22 Stand for Education rally and hopes to see you there. See story on page 5.

YUET CHAN



History lesson

Don't take for granted all you have. Others fought hard for it.

Read Shelley Magnusson's editorial on page 2.



Ukrainian students need help

Program seeks teacher volunteers to fill learning gap.

See story on page 9.



Mentors needed

Hundreds of Indigenous youth are seeking a mentor.

See story on page 7.



ATA Magazine wins award

Racism feature recognized at industry gala.

See story on page 9.



They're back and they're excited

Beginning teachers gather for activities and learning.

See Tale End on page 16.

We must not take for granted what we have



EDITORIAL

Shelley Magnusson
ATA News Interim
Editor-in-Chief

Last month I attended a Queen's University course on negotiating skills — a jam-packed week of learning, bargaining simulations and fabulous conversations with people from all over Canada, representatives of both management and union.

One of the coaches during our course was Al Loyst, a loyal member of the Canadian Auto Workers Union (CAW) for more than 45 years. Al shared a lot of what he had seen and participated in as a union guy in the 1970s and 1980s. Those were turbulent times for autoworkers and their union reps. Al shared stories of union reps meeting in the wee hours of the morning to plan their acts of civil disobedience, from chaining themselves to buildings to blocking in managers who were on a

retreat by towing cars to block the exit. He told us about the union leaders who needed bodyguards to protect them from the "security" hired by some of the Big Three automakers.

He didn't tell these stories to glorify what were some pretty horrific times. He told us the stories so we would understand that we all enjoy improved work lives because of the fights of the people who came before us.

That was then and no one bargains like that now. Now most organizations use interest-focused bargaining — a way to work together to achieve common goals. But his stories made me think of our own history. Both through collective bargaining and through our advocacy work, we have made some incredible gains. In the 1930s, the average Alberta teacher had no salary schedule, no collective bargaining and no way to assert their rights. Children of Grade 10 standing were teaching in rural schools. School buildings were poor and cold, supplies meagre, books at a minimum and playground equipment nonexistent.

During the early days of the Alberta Teachers' Association, teachers successfully advocated for legislation that strengthened the profession. In 1936, the *School Act* established a hearing for teachers facing termination that was the beginnings of the modern-day Board of Reference. In 1939, legislation was passed that led to the creation of a teachers' pension plan. By 1942, the Association had achieved collective bargaining rights for all its members, and the Association's foundations were strong and firmly established. The Alberta Teachers' Association was dedicated to teachers' interests and welfare, and to advancing the teaching profession. In 1944, the Association achieved its long-standing goal of seeing all teacher education programs delivered by universities, ending the normal school model and setting the stage for the requirement of a bachelor's degree as a minimum qualification for teaching in Alberta.

While the current economic turbulence and the effects of the pandemic cannot

compare to the hardships faced by teachers in 1920s and 30s, teachers today are facing some very real issues. Class sizes are growing and government funding is not keeping up with the need. Our salaries are not even close to keeping up with inflation. Our classrooms are not only bigger, but they are also becoming more complex each and every year. We face a government that has decided to dismantle our united teaching profession and is looking at increasing funding for private schools, home schooling and charter schools.

As I look around today, I wonder what some of those teachers from the 1930s would tell us. I wonder what some of the early union organizers would tell us. I think they would tell us to stand strong. They would tell us that we have a collective voice, and we have an obligation to use it. They would tell our young teachers not to take for granted the hard-won rights that teachers enjoy today. And they would remind us that, above all else, we must remember that we are masters, not servants. ■

Teacher registry prompts formal privacy complaint



Q & A

Dennis Theobald
ATA Executive
Secretary

Question: I checked the government's registry of teachers and found that my former name is listed and linked to me. This former name is now dead to me and its publication is an intrusion into my private life. What is the Association doing about the registry?

Answer: The most basic question that one can ask about the Alberta Teacher and Teacher Leader Registry is "why"? It's a question that I have yet to get a straight or satisfactory answer to, and it is where I'd like to start my answer to your question.

Many professions have public-facing registries that allow anyone to inquire as to the status of those practising in the profession. It is a simple matter to look up a lawyer or a doctor online to determine whether they are currently members in good standing of their professional regulatory body. So why not do the same for teachers?

Well, there are several fundamental differences that set teaching, as a profession, apart. To begin with, the certification of teachers has always been within the purview of the minister of education, and not an independent professional body. The Association is responsible only for its own members, and ATA membership is separate

and distinct from certification—while all active ATA members must be certificated teachers, not all certificated teachers are required to be ATA members. The Association has policy calling for it to assume responsibility for certification, but this is a direction in which provincial governments have not been willing to go.

The practical implication of this state of affairs is that every teacher working in a public, separate, francophone, charter or accredited private school must, by law, be certificated by the province, and their employer must verify their status upon employment. So, the fact that a person is working in a school or school system as a teacher or certificated school leader means that they are certificated.

For lawyers, doctors and other professionals, there is no such all-encompassing employment arrangement. These professionals may practice individually or in partnership with others; they may be employed or hang out their own shingle; they may move from situation to situation without necessarily having a public body verify their professional standing in each instance. In such circumstances, it makes sense to have a registry accessible to the public. It may well be wise to be able to verify that the persons handling the sale of your house or to whom you turn to treat your aches and pains are licenced and qualified to do so. However, this rationale simply does not apply to teachers, and so there seems to be little need for an intrusive online registry.

Furthermore, the teacher registry goes back to 1954. Why? Because that is as far back as the government has certification records. As a result, the registry includes the names of people who are not currently teaching; those who may have received an interim certificate upon graduation, but who have never taught; and those who have left teaching, retired or are long dead. And for those who have had several legal names over the course of their lives, all of them are listed.

The government will claim that this is necessary to assist in identifying and holding to account teachers who may have engaged in unprofessional conduct in the past. But that is only a tiny fraction of teachers and a problem that could have been dealt with more efficiently using an inquiry-driven model. The registry does note when a teacher's certification has been suspended or cancelled, linking to the hearing report. This was already being undertaken by the Association with respect to cases where the professional conduct process resulted in the suspension or cancellation of membership and is important for maintaining public confidence in teacher regulatory processes. The decision to finally shed light on cases under the government's auspices (such as those involving superintendents or private school teachers) would be welcome.

From the outset, the Association identified serious issues in the design of the registry and, before the registry even went live, filed a protest with

the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner (OIPC). At the recommendation of the commissioner, who noted that her intervention would be premature, ATA staff met with government officials and were able to obtain some limited but helpful assurances—most importantly, that the government would withhold posting the names of teachers who had filed a request for exemption until the exemption (including requests not to publish "dead names") had been properly considered by ministry officials. The government also made provision for applications and supporting documentation to be submitted using the secure TWINS portal rather than by email.

Still, the fundamental issues around the registry remain, both generally and with respect to its impact on gender minorities and women, who are more likely to have personal information concerning their identity disclosed. In response, the Association has now filed a formal complaint with the OIPC and will be assisting members who wish to do likewise.

We await the outcome of this process. If you are personally affected, please contact the Association's Teacher Employment Services, which will connect you with the ATA information and privacy officer. ■

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



YOUR VIEWS

Alberta teachers: What is your message to the next premier?

ON TWITTER

jason schilling @schill_dawg

Today's the day, new leader and premier. Regardless of who it is, we deserve a leader who will take the concerns of teachers and school leaders seriously. That they will actually sit down and discuss serious solutions to systematic issues, not slap quick fixes on public schools.

FACEBOOK FEEDBACK

Andrew John

Govern like you have a mandate from less than 10% of the people you represent.

Tracey MacNeil

-Ditch the dumpster fire curriculum
-Collaborate with teachers
-Fund schools adequately

ATA statement on UCP leadership election results

The Alberta Teachers' Association issued the following statement in response to the election of Danielle Smith as leader of the United Conservative Party and premier-designate.

Earlier in the year, the Association met with then leadership candidates to discuss our concerns about the erosion of public education in Alberta over the last three years. We expect that the new premier will work with the profession to improve the learning conditions of students and working conditions of teachers, and we would be pleased to offer our expert advice and assistance. The Alberta Teachers' Association will continue to advocate for a strong public education system and long-term, sustainable solutions to systematic issues such as improved funding and supports for students.

On diploma exam weighting

FACEBOOK FEEDBACK

Karen Lumley Kerr

I graduated a loooooong time ago and can still recall the immense anxiety over diploma exams. They should not be weighted so heavily.

Heather Morren

I don't know about optional diploma exams. They are still used to try to tell what level of achievement a student has. However, I think they should certainly be weighted less and provide

different kinds of opportunities for students to show their knowledge instead of just multiple choice and written response. Many very intelligent people struggle with reading, reading comprehension and/or writing but still have the knowledge.

Magnolia Clarke

I don't know why we even have diploma exams.

Jason Renner

Why optional diplomas? I don't know a single teacher in high school teaching sciences that would agree with this.

FOR THE RECORD

“I am incredibly honoured to be your premier and will work hard every day to serve you. Our best days are ahead.”

– Tweet by premier-designate Danielle Smith



Registry is another affront to teachers

VIEWPOINTS



Keith Hadden
Co-ordinator, ATA Teacher
Employment Services

On June 15, 2022, the lieutenant-governor proclaimed several pieces of UCP legislation, including Bill 85, the so-called *Students First Amendment Act*, a section of which revised the *Education Act* and activated the online teacher and teacher-leader registry on Sept. 1, 2022.

The politically correct title of this bill notwithstanding, the bill is an affront to the professionalization of teachers and serves to undermine public confidence in teachers. Teachers welcome accountability for their actions to students, the public and the profession, but elements of this bill, which was proclaimed without any consultation whatsoever with Alberta teachers, are an attempt to deprofessionalize teachers and to create an environment of distrust.

The government has created a disciplinary model that puts the adjudication of teacher conduct and competency in the hands of bureaucrats and created a registry that outs teachers' personal information. These actions reek of vexation toward a profession that this government has held in disdain since its election.

Why be concerned about the registry? The disclosure of personal information, such as birth names and prior names, has no relevance to a question of whether a teacher holds a valid teaching certificate. This registry violates the privacy of teachers who are divorced, transgender, deceased or victims of abuse. It's also an intrusion on relatives of

teachers identified as having had certification issues. All these groups deserve privacy and protection. Women, who comprise the majority of the profession, are particularly targeted, since they more typically change names than other segments of the population.

The government has established a process to request an exemption, which they state will only be offered in rare circumstances. Teachers are rightfully concerned. In response, the Association sought legal advice and requested an investigation by the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner of Alberta.

“The government has also justified the registry's creation through the use of political euphemisms, such as transparency and student safety.”

The government has justified the registry's creation by referring to other professions, such as doctors, lawyers and nurses. A review of these registries reveals limited information and an inability, for

example, to determine historical names or search the status of deceased members.

The government has also justified the registry's creation through the use of political euphemisms, such as transparency and student safety. It's beyond me how *transparency* and *student safety* are enhanced by publishing the status of the teaching certificate of my long-deceased Grade 1 teacher, Mrs. Miller. And it continues to be unsettling to hear of the trauma that some teachers' relatives have reported at receiving a letter from the government advising them of their deceased loved one's inclusion in the registry.

Ultimately, creating the registry is a political ploy appealing to a populist agenda that is served by undermining trust in public education and other public institutions whereby a government can control the message and the medium, resulting in a populace that devalues education and engages in divisive rhetoric rather than democratic discourse. Might it not be more useful to publish a registry of those registered private schools that employ uncertificated teachers rather than provide a database of every version of a teacher's name since 1954?

Teachers who are concerned with the public disclosure of their private information may wish to access the site <https://extranet.education.alberta.ca/twins.public/public> to request an exemption. Part of the exemption process includes writing a letter explaining the reasons for seeking an exemption. The registrar *may* consider removing a teacher or teacher leader's name from the online registry temporarily while an exemption request is being considered.

Ultimately, teachers are concerned about legislation that targets them in an unfair way as well as the motives of the government, which has created protocols that do not achieve the objectives as originally espoused in this legislation. ■

Alberta's next premier vows to repair relationship with ATA

Kim Clement
ATA News Staff

With Danielle Smith as Alberta's premier-designate, many teachers are likely wondering what it means for the public education system.

Smith won the leadership of the governing United Conservative Party on the sixth ballot with 53.8 per cent of votes. Former finance minister Travis Toews came second with 46.2 per cent.

Hints of what to expect may be gleaned from Smith's participation in a public education forum at the ATA's Summer Conference in August. The forum included Smith along with four of the other candidates. One of the first questions asked was how each candidate would improve the provincial government's poor relationship with the Alberta Teachers' Association.

Smith said, when she decided to seek the leadership, she immediately reached out to the ATA to gain an understanding of what some of the issues were.

"I know where some of the flash points came and I heard that the process for the curriculum development excluded teachers and then in the end didn't get the buy-in. Quite frankly, if we're going to rely on teachers to implement the curriculum, you have to believe in what you're teaching," Smith said.

She added that the chaos and stress of the last few years of the pandemic may also be partially to blame for the hard feelings.

"I'm hoping that we can rebuild that relationship."

At one point, Smith championed Postmedia columnist David Staples, an outspoken critic of the ATA, as someone from whom she takes education-related advice. Many teachers in the crowd reacted with laughter.



Alberta's premier-designate Danielle Smith, pictured here at the ATA's Summer Conference, has expressed a desire to repair the government's relationship with the ATA.

"Respect is a two-way street," Smith responded. "I'm just trying to be respectful and tell you what I'm hearing."

When asked about her position on school choice, Smith said she has heard from parents who believe if their child's teacher is critical of Alberta's energy industries, or holds particular religious beliefs, and, therefore, they should have the option to send their kids to a school of their choice.

"If you're wondering why there's a pressure for

people to have other [school] choices, it's because the parents are feeling like they're not having their views and their values reflected in the classroom," Smith said.

Smith believes school funding should be distributed more equally, with charter schools receiving more of a boost than they have in the past. She has also come out in favour of more educational assistants and more comprehensive student screening but hasn't clarified any objectives.

Defund public schools?

In 2018, while working as the host of a political commentary radio show, Smith penned a blog post entitled, "Maybe we need to defund public schools." In the post, she stated

"Maybe every independent school needs to be fully funded and we need to phase out every government-run, union-controlled public school more interested in indoctrinating students than teaching them critical-thinking skills."

Off Script

with ATA President Jason Schilling



Attend the rally; add your voice

As of the date that I am writing this issue's Off Script, we still do not know who will be the winner of the UCP leadership race and our next premier. There's been a lot of speculation, guessing, polls, tweets and talk about who will win, should win, could win and just how that will change our landscape – and change things it will.

But this is not new to those of us who have been around for awhile. Every election, every leadership race, every new minister of education causes the education system to change—the big question this time is whether the change will be for the better or will it make matters worse. The optimist in me hopes for the best, but my inner cynic knows that we will still be in a continued fight to protect public education.

No matter who wins the leadership race and how, or if, they shuffle cabinet, we need to remain focused on our students, each other and public education. Our Stand for Education campaign focuses on making public education a key priority for the 2023 election, centering on the concerns we have about curriculum,

class sizes, funding and the complexities of our students' needs. Keeping this focus will become the work of all of us in public education.

It would be easy for our voices, our hopes for the future for education, to become lost in the noise around the changes this election will surely bring. This is why the October 22nd rally to support public education is so important, not only to our profession, but to the overall campaign to make education a top priority in the spring election.

During the same weekend as the rally, both major political parties will be having meetings or conventions—setting *their* priorities for what they want to see in province. We cannot let them write the narrative of what public education should look like. Teachers and school leaders need to use their expertise in creating a comprehensive plan for what education looks like in our province and make that message loud and clear to our political leaders. I hope you attend the rally on October 22 and add your voice.

I welcome your comments. Contact me at jason.schilling@ata.ab.ca.



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.

Momentum builds as rally date approaches

Cory Hare
ATA News Managing Editor

Back in the fall of 1997, when the historic public education rally took place at the Alberta legislature, Myra Rybotycki was a young education student. Attending the rally provided the young student with her first exposure to the Alberta Teachers' Association, and now, 25 years later, Rybotycki is an ATA staff officer and one of dozens of staff who have been busy organizing the upcoming Oct. 22 Stand for Education rally.

"I'm super excited for a new generation of teachers to experience the camaraderie and professional support of their colleagues as we rally around this important issue," Rybotycki said. "For me, reflecting back on a 25-year career, it's a very moving experience to revisit that same sort of energy."



ATA staff officer Myra Rybotycki will be the ground captain at the Oct. 22 rally. She and a team of grounds marshals will be available to provide directions and answer questions.

The event has been a logistical challenge to organize. Rybotycki and an entire team of staff have spent hours lining up transportation, entertainment, food trucks, activities, tents, tables, scarves, signs, water stations and portable toilets.

Visitors to the site will notice a large centre operations tent near the bus drop-off area. This is where they can pick up a rally scarf and sign.

Rybotycki has been recruited to serve as "ground captain." She and a team of 20 grounds marshals will be decked out in bright pink vests so they're easy to spot for those who have questions or need assistance.

"It's trying to ensure that people have a safe, comfortable, enjoyable experience and that we can support our members in practical ways when they're attending the rally," she said.

Momentum building

Locals around the province are organizing their members, and buses, to take part in the event, which is aimed at raising the importance of public education to ensure it's a top issue during the upcoming provincial election.

An RSVP portal has been set up and it's generating considerable traffic.

"There's been significant response from membership and we want to keep the momentum rolling," said ATA president Jason Schilling. "I'm hearing a lot of interest from all parts of the province, so I'm looking forward to a real show of solidarity from teachers and members of the public."

The Alberta School Councils Association (ASCA) is partnering with the ATA in organizing the event. ASCA president Brandi Rai said many parents across the province have Oct. 22 marked on their calendars.

"Parents are very concerned about public education," Rai said, "so many of our members will be coming out and making their voices heard." ■

RSVP TO ATTEND THE RALLY

Please visit www.standforeducation.ca and RSVP so ATA organizers know how many people to expect on Oct. 22. It is very important that people sign up on this site as this will help us determine the appropriate number of buses and food trucks (as well as portable toilets).

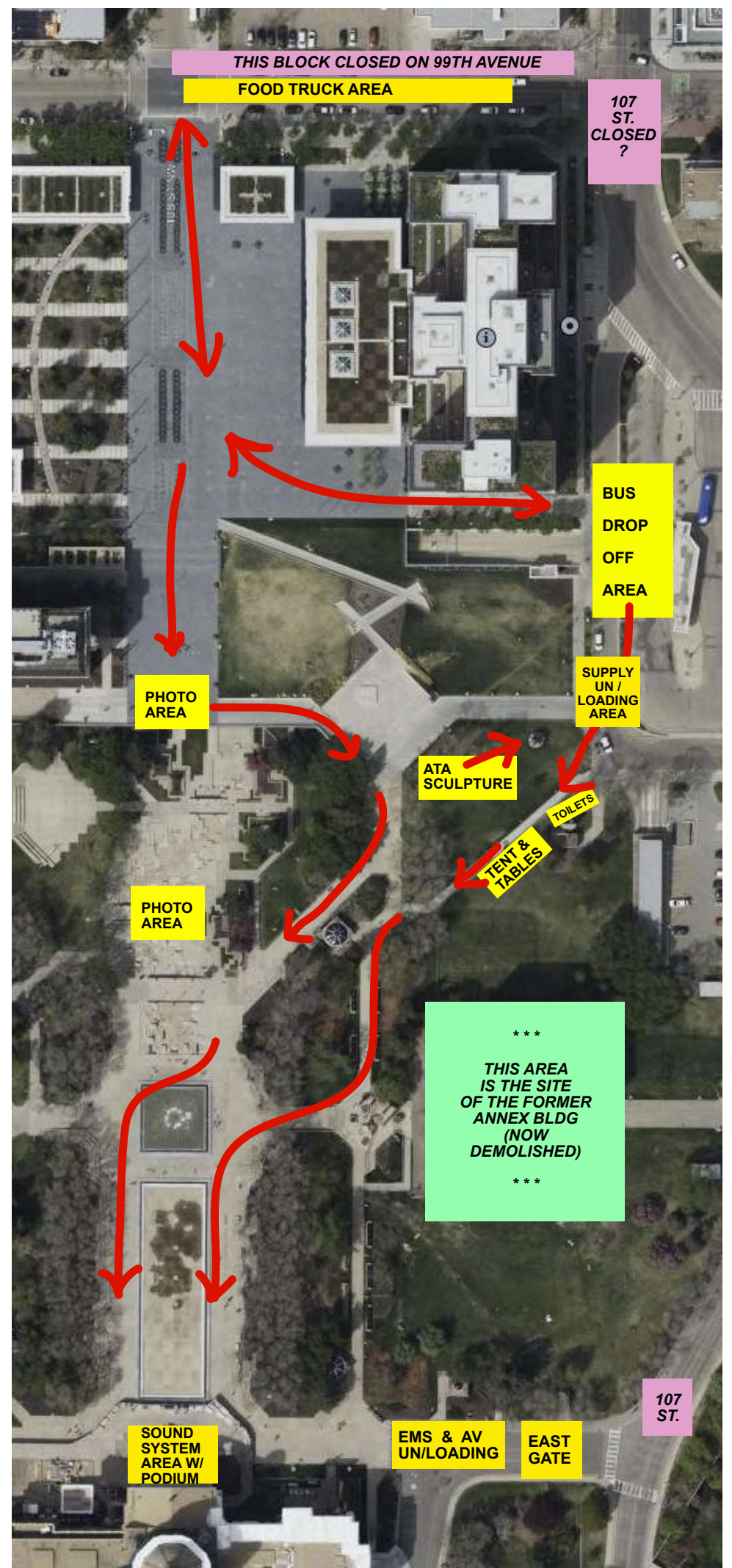
Accessible transportation in the works

Efforts are underway to ensure that accessible transportation is available to and from the rally site.

- The legislature site for the rally is accessible.
- Edmonton Transit System (ETS) operates the Dedicated Accessible Transit Service (DATS).
 - DATS is limited to service within the corporate limits of the City of Edmonton.
 - DATS requires a preregistration and clients must meet eligibility requirements.
 - DATS information can be accessed at [Dedicated Accessible Transit Service \(DATS\) | City of Edmonton](http://Dedicated Accessible Transit Service (DATS) | City of Edmonton).
- The Association is working with ETS to ensure that accessible buses are available on the charter service to and from the rally.
- There will be closed streets near the rally site.
 - Stay tuned for updated maps indicating where street closures may impact the ability to drop off/pick up rally attendees in private vehicles.

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Hundreds of Indigenous youth need a mentor

Cory Hare
ATA News Managing Editor

Hundreds of Indigenous youth in the province need a mentor and an Alberta organization is looking to the education community for help.

The Alberta Mentoring Partnership (AMP) is an umbrella organization that connects would-be mentors with organizations that provide mentoring programs throughout the province. Within these member organizations, at least 600 Indigenous youth are currently awaiting a mentor, said Tanya Tourangeau, AMP's Indigenous engagement lead.

"The programs offered by our partners can help young people achieve success in school, develop job-ready skills and increase self-confidence," Tourangeau said.

Indigenous youth can benefit from mentors who are Indigenous and non-Indigenous, Tourangeau says, so they gain insight and support from a variety of perspectives. This type of support not only helps the youth succeed in life but benefits society as a whole.

"If Indigenous youth were equal in graduating high school, entering post-secondary, gaining employment, it could raise our economy tremendously for all Albertans. Why not work together to better the tomorrow for everyone?" Tourangeau said.

While mentoring a young person used to involve spending one-on-one time with them in person, lessons learned



Hundreds of Indigenous youth in Alberta are awaiting a mentor through various agencies.

SUPPLIED

during Covid have opened up the experience to a variety of approaches that include interacting in person, virtually or even through social media platforms.

"We encourage the mentor and the mentee to really define how they want to set up their mentoring relationship based on their individual needs," Tourangeau said.

Through its website, AMP enables mentors to search for mentoring opportunities that interest them. From there, each agency has their own

volunteer sign-up process that mentors can follow to be matched up with an Indigenous mentee.

AMP partners include dozens of organizations throughout the province, including Boys and Girls clubs, Big Brothers Big Sisters associations and many schools.

"One of our goals is that every school across Alberta becomes a partner and has some form of either informal or formal mentoring program that can provide a great resource to the youth in their community," Tourangeau said.

AMP has launched a new program targeted at youth in foster care. The program will provide funding, support and resources to agencies that want to develop programs specifically to help youth transition from in care to out of care. The program has been conceived through an Indigenous lens, since 70 per cent of youth in care are Indigenous.

"The need for Indigenous mentors is only going to grow," Tourangeau said. "Indigenous youth need support in all areas of strength." ■



Tanya Tourangeau, Indigenous engagement lead

Facts about the Alberta Mentoring Partnership

The Alberta Mentoring Partnership (AMP) is a network of community mentoring agencies, government and youth working together to raise the profile of mentoring in Alberta. We exist to help schools and mentoring agencies meet the needs of the youth they serve.

AMP provides access to mentoring resources, toolkits, training materials and research to help school and agency partners deliver excellent mentorship programming.

AMP is co-led by the Government of Alberta (Children's Services and Education) and Boys & Girls Clubs Big Brothers Big Sisters (BGCBigS) of Edmonton and Area.

For more information

Visit AMP's [Indigenous mentoring](#) resource page for tools to start or to support an Indigenous mentoring program.

Anyone interested in volunteering as a mentor or learning more about Indigenous mentoring can contact Tanya Tourangeau at tanya.tourangeau@albertamentors.ca.

Diploma exam decision misses the mark

ATA News Staff

The province's move to reduce the weighting of diploma exams is missing the mark, says ATA president Jason Schilling.

"It's welcome, but backward-facing," he said in response to the government's Sept. 26 announcement that diploma exam weighting would be reduced from 30 to 20 per cent for the 2022-23 school year.

A better strategy to address missed learning opportunities would be to look more closely at classroom conditions, Schilling said. He suggested the government look at smaller class sizes, more supports, additional teachers and educational assistants and making diploma exams optional.

Education Minister Adriana LaGrange told the CBC on Sept. 22 that

the decision came from consultation with school boards "and many other stakeholders."

"We're making this temporary change to place less of a burden on students and improve their mental health," she added.

But, Schilling said, as long as the effects of COVID-19 continue to be felt, any emphasis on exam writing is moot. He noted that he is receiving anecdotal reports of increasing absences due to "respiratory infections" that are widespread in schools and communities.

"Another roller coaster of a year with high student absences and substitute teacher shortages might only put students further behind," he said. "Our priority must be on keeping schools open as healthy, safe places to learn, not on standardized testing."

The government plans to return diploma exam weighting to 30 per cent in 2023-24. ■



ISTOCK

CHANGE

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On December 1, 2022, we'll be launching a new EFAP with Canadian company, Inkblot.

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And while we wait for December to roll around, be sure you aren't waiting to get the help you need. Our current EFAP with Homewood Health will continue to be available until November 30, 2022:

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Volunteer teachers needed to help Ukrainian students

Cory Hare
ATA News Managing Editor

Volunteer teachers are needed to provide virtual lessons to Ukrainian students who are unable to attend school because it's too dangerous or they've been displaced from their homes.

Smart Osvida is a Ukrainian organization that's been providing displaced students with virtual learning opportunities since the war in Ukraine began. The organization has been using volunteer teachers from around the world, including Alberta, to fill its ongoing schedule of webinar presentations.

"Unfortunately, for the last three months, we have seen a considerable reduction in prospective volunteers contacting us. We have also experienced a considerable loss of volunteers," said David Falconer, a principal from Calgary who is the organization's international volunteer program co-ordinator.

The organization normally provides hour-long sessions for five hours each weekday and nine hours on Saturday. Currently it's only able to provide an average of one lesson per day, Falconer said.

"The quality of the lessons being provided by our volunteers is great. Students are taking advantage of

well-planned activities and look forward to meeting our teachers," he said.

The program is most in need of teachers for math, sciences, English, French and phys-ed (all grade levels). It's a benefit if teachers can group teach multiple subjects. Teachers can choose the subject(s) and grade level they teach, as well as how often or long they wish to volunteer. A Ukrainian host facilitates each session.

"Teachers would have the same students for every session. Basically, it would be like having a regular class," Falconer said.

Learning at great risk

While the Ukrainian government has opened schools again, they have warned parents that they can't guarantee their children's safety as most schools do not have bomb shelters, Falconer said. Some schools have asked parents to donate funds to build bomb shelters, but this doesn't seem to be happening. While in school, students are experiencing daily air raid sirens.

"I can't imagine how students and school staff can possibly focus on the learning under these circumstances," Falconer said. "So, children continue to get behind their studies. The level of stress and anxiety is high, so many children and parents are accessing online counseling for support."

The majority of the students using the Smart Osvida program are still in Ukraine. Many are connecting from Russian-occupied territories.

"They are doing this at great risk," Falconer said.

Ukrainian parents describe these online lessons as an island of normalcy, a lifeline to a world where their children can still dream and have hope," Falconer said. "From where they are, they don't want to see this program end." ■



David Falconer, volunteer co-ordinator

How to volunteer

To learn more about the program, contact David Falconer at dffalconer@gmail.com.



CTF/FCE CORNER

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Three education unions share WTD award

Ottawa – On World Teachers' Day (WTD), the education unions in Uganda, Togo and the Gambia were named this year's recipients of the Norm Goble Award.

The successful organizations proposed various activities and events to highlight the teaching profession on World Teachers' Day.

The Uganda National Teachers' Union (UNATU), Togo's Fédération des Syndicats de l'Éducation Nationale (FESEN) and the Gambia Teachers' Union (GTU) stood out among the field of nine applicants for the annual award presented by the Canadian Teachers' Federation (CTF/FCE).

Created in 2014, the Norm Goble Award is offered annually to encourage the international partners of the CTF/FCE to organize activities on WTD. Each recipient will receive \$1,500 to implement their activities. One of the award's criteria is the relevance to the CTF/FCE 2022 World Teachers' Day theme, The Answer Begins with Teachers.

Award recipients activities

The UNATU is holding a symposium with student and teacher leaders, officials from the Ministry of Education and Sports and other stakeholders to address the effects of school closures during the last two years, and to generate ideas to promote a better teaching and learning environment.

"UNATU will take this opportunity to pay tribute to the important role that teachers play in shaping the future," said UNATU general secretary Filbert Baguma.

The FESEN is celebrating and highlighting the work of teachers by holding a series of events to engage various sectors/groups. Among the

activities planned are speeches and debates, a 10K teachers' run, distribution of posters and other materials, community football matches and a family/community picnic.

The GTU is hosting a radio program in all regions of the Gambia to honour teachers and to raise the profile of the profession. The radio program is a live two-hour event and will be organized by the regional executive committees, who will participate with local hosts to take calls from the public.

About the award

The Norm Goble World Teachers' Day Award commemorates Dr. Norman Goble, who served as the CTF/FCE secretary general from 1970 to 1982, and secretary general of the World Confederation of Organizations of the Teaching Profession from 1982 to 1988. The creation of World Teachers' Day was in part due to Goble's contributions to education in Canada and throughout the developing world.

Working with Education International, the CTF/FCE advocated for the creation of World Teachers' Day. In 1994, UNESCO established the day to focus attention on the contributions and achievements of teachers, and to highlight teachers' concerns and priorities regarding education. October 5 was selected as the date to internationally celebrate teachers because, on the same day in 1966, a special intergovernmental conference adopted the UNESCO recommendation concerning the status of teachers. In adopting this recommendation, governments unanimously recognized the importance for society to have competent, qualified and motivated teachers. ■

ATA Magazine wins industry award

Cory Hare
ATA News Managing Editor

An ATA Magazine feature on anti-Black racism won first place for "Best Editorial Package," at a recent awards ceremony held by the Alberta Magazine Publishers Association.

The feature appeared in the fall 2021 issue of the magazine. Alberta teachers Gail-Ann Wilson and Andrew Parker served as guest editors for the feature, which included a variety of first-person stories and information from several teachers.

"Receiving the top award as a collaborator for editorial package is the honour of my professional life to date," Wilson said.

"My gratitude to the ATA Magazine

for providing a platform for Black voices to resonate. It is an honour to share this accomplishment with so many heroes who worked diligently to prepare this extraordinary feature on Black educators in our province."

Parker, who is one of the founders of the Black Teachers Association of Alberta, also expressed his gratitude.

"On behalf of the entire Black Teachers Association of Alberta, we are humbly thankful for this award. Our group has worked very hard as a grassroots collective for two years and this award is a reflection of our collaborations with our allies, family and community. Thank you to everyone in education who has bravely walked alongside us during this very important time in history. Thank you to the ATA and ATA Magazine for giving us this platform to

share our stories with our intersectional and intergenerational family in Alberta.

The award is believed to be the first in the magazine's history.

"A lot of thought and hard work went into producing this feature, and I think this award reflects the great dedication shown by all the contributors as well as our staff," said editor-in-chief Joni Turville. ■

Feature contributors

Gail-Ann Wilson	Guest editor, writer
Andrew Parker	Guest editor, writer
Rosalind Smith	Writer
Jennifer Kelly	Writer
Sarah Adomako-Ansah	Writer
Maxine Hackett	Writer
Kyle Smith	Illustrator
Stefan Legacy	Photographer



The ATA's feature on anti-Black racism has won an award from the Alberta Magazine Publishers Association.



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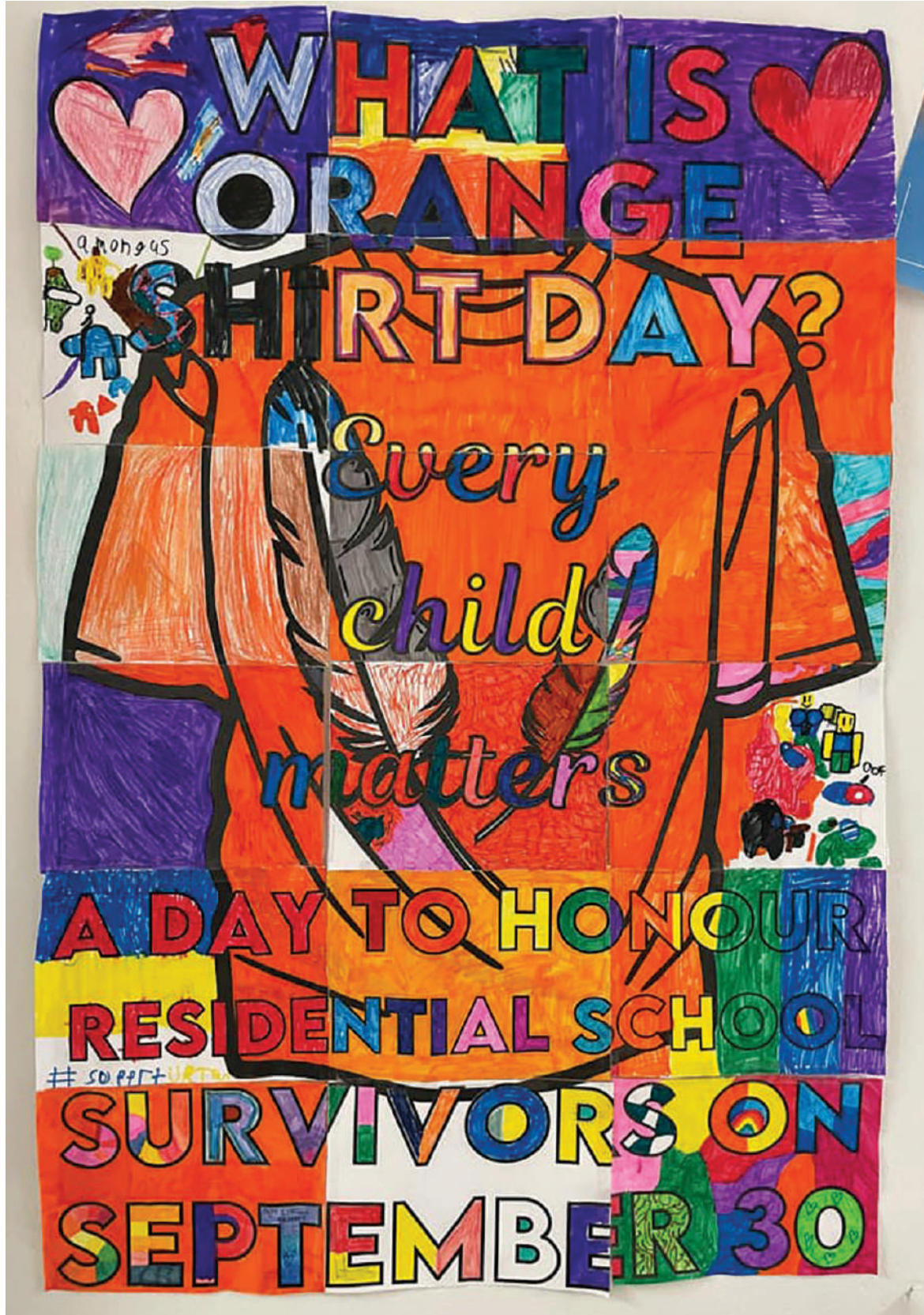
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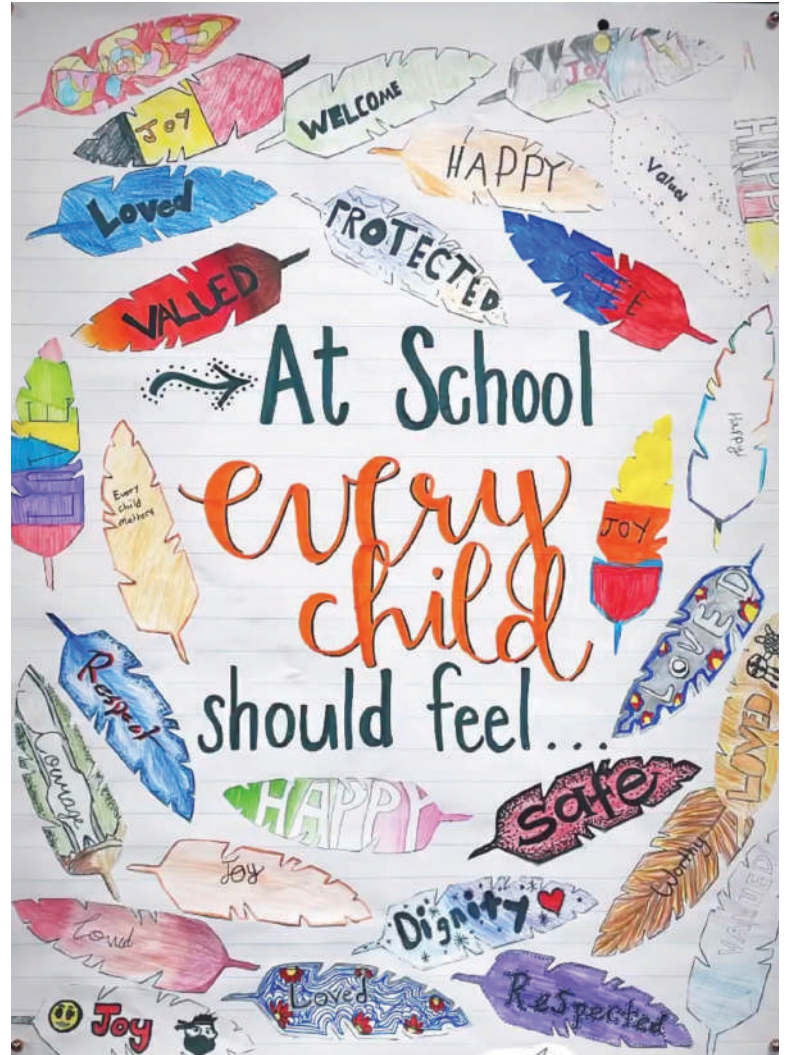
ORANGE SHIRT DAY

Teachers and students around the province recognized Orange Shirt Day in remembrance of the experiences of former residential school students. Residential school survivor Phyllis Webstad of Williams Lake, B.C., began the campaign. When she was six, Webstad had her special orange shirt taken away on her first day at residential school.



Ellerslie Campus, Edmonton

KARLEE HREN



St. Thomas Aquinas Middle School, Red Deer

JANELLE MELENCHUK



McKee School, Edmonton

CARRIE FLEMING



Holy Trinity Academy, Okotoks



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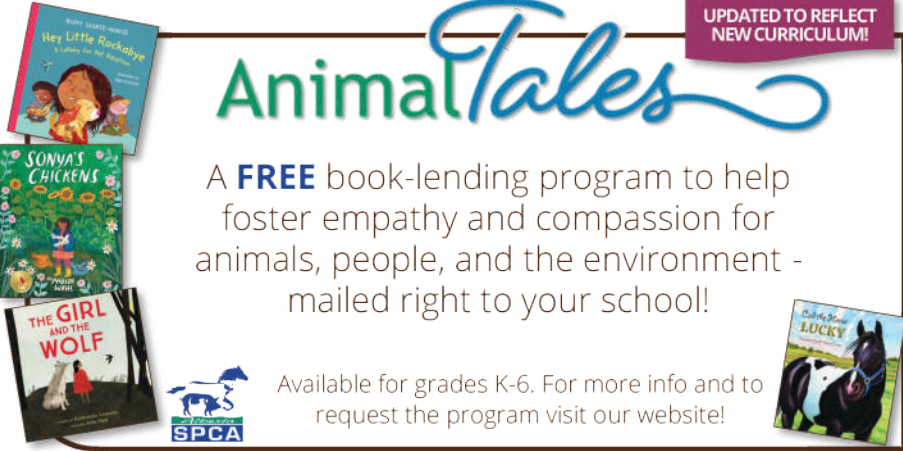
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Be careful what you say



PITFALLS & PRECAUTIONS

Chris Gibbon
ATA Secretary to Professional
Conduct Committees

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

As a young, new teacher in the late 1980s, I had two wise colleagues remind me to watch what I say in the classroom as it could, and would, make its way back to the dinner table that night. Fast forward 35 years later and that is still true. With many students having a cellphone, and some using them for nefarious purposes, teachers must be more careful than ever.

In the last two years, there have been multiple cases where teachers have been found guilty by the professional conduct committee for inappropriate language or comments they have made in the classroom. In some cases, it has been a frustrated “shut up” to a very boisterous class of students while in other cases it has gone as far as a “shut the f#&* up.” In either case, teachers must take the high road and be mindful of their obligation not only to the code, but more importantly, to setting a positive example for young students.

Code of Professional Conduct

- Section 4 The teacher treats pupils with dignity and respect and is considerate of their circumstances.
- Section 18 The teacher acts in a manner which maintains the honour and dignity of the profession.

In yet another case, a teacher used sexual innuendo when describing how to drive a vehicle. In doing so, the teacher failed to treat the student(s) with respect and dignity. Furthermore, in making the inappropriate comments, the teacher also failed to maintain the honour and dignity of the profession.

In addition to being found guilty of unprofessional conduct, these teachers also received a letter of reprimand or severe reprimand and, in some cases, received a fine of up to \$500. Failure to pay these fines within a period of 90 days would result in suspension of membership until the fine is paid.

Teaching is a profession that keeps you on your toes through the entire day and, in many cases, there is truly little time for a break. While these long and strenuous days can be tiring and stressful, you must always remember to keep what you say in check and set a positive example for your students.

Teachers who have any questions regarding the Code of Professional Conduct are encouraged to forward their questions to staff in Teacher Employment Services. ■

Stage set for next Council election

PEC POINTS

Audrey Dutka
ATA News Staff

Association administrative guidelines provide for the attendance of observers at selected portions of Council meetings. Association members who are interested in observing selected portions of Council meetings at their own expense are advised to contact their district representative.

Highlights of the Provincial Executive Council meeting held Aug. 29, 2022, via virtual platform.

1. Established the Professional Conduct and Practice Review General Panel (of the Alberta Teachers' Association) for the period from Sept. 1 to Dec. 31, 2022, and appointed its chair, vice-chair and members.
2. Amended Council committee and representation assignments for 2022/23.

Highlights of the Provincial Executive Council meeting held Sept. 12, 2022, at Banff.

1. Named three members of Council to serve on a staff selection committee for the position of Co-ordinator, Professional Development, selected the proposed timeline for recruitment of the position and restricted the competition to current members of executive staff.

Highlights of the Provincial Executive Council meeting held Sept. 22–23, 2022, at Barnett House, Edmonton.

1. Authorized that candidates in the 2023 Council elections may submit paper or electronic nomination

packages and may submit their nomination packages up to and including nomination day at 5 p.m.

2. Approved that, following the conclusion of the nomination period, candidates shall be advised of their status regarding the election.
3. Approved that, following the conclusion of the voting period, delegates in contested elections shall be contacted regarding the election results.
4. Approved that candidates choosing to produce an election video may submit the video to the Association with the content of their choosing.
5. Approved a statement of Association program emphases for 2022/23.
6. Authorized disbursement of the 2022/23 proposed budget for international co-operation for 12 international goals, including Project Overseas, Teachers' Action for Gender Equality, Tools for Schools Africa Foundation and Canadian Women for Women in Afghanistan.
7. Approved a \$2,000 donation to MediaSmarts in support of Media Literacy Week, taking place Oct. 24–28, 2022.
8. Purchased a table of eight for the Friends of Medicare Fundraising Gala, taking place on Sept. 28, 2022, with costs charged to Non-Core/Category 1 funding.
9. Approved the names of five teachers for inclusion in the name bank from which Association instructors are selected.
10. In accordance with 31(2) of the *Teaching Profession Act*, approved an extension to the 120-day hearing time period for three outstanding cases of alleged unprofessional conduct.
11. Received the report of a hearing committee that found a teacher guilty of one charge of unprofessional conduct for using an oxyacetylene torch, which was marked out of order, in the presence of students. The hearing committee imposed a penalty of a letter of severe reprimand and a \$2,000 fine.
12. Received the report of a hearing committee that found a teacher guilty of two charges of unprofessional

conduct for engaging in inappropriate action toward a student by sitting on the student's knee and for using profane language when addressing students. The hearing committee ordered a penalty of a single letter of reprimand for both charges.

13. Received the report of a hearing committee that found a teacher guilty of one charge of unprofessional conduct for engaging in a physical altercation with a Grade 9 student in the presence of other students. The hearing committee ordered a penalty of a letter of severe reprimand and a fine of \$500.

14. Received the report of a hearing committee that found a teacher guilty of one charge of unprofessional conduct for making contentious social media posts regarding the wearing of masks in school. The committee ordered a letter of reprimand and a fine of \$250.

15. Amended the administrative guidelines to add the Franco-Albertan flag to the list of flags displayed by the Association at Barnett House and the Southern Alberta Regional Office.

16. Amended the Teacher Welfare Committee Model Frame of Reference to align with changes made to local constitutions.

17. Approved, as the position of Council, recommendations on the six-year review of policy (as amended) and authorized that locals be informed accordingly.

18. Approved, for submission to the 2023 Annual Representative Assembly, the proposed Disposition of Immediate Directives.

19. Approved the position paper on school-community relations for posting to the Association's legacy website.

20. Named field members to field experiences committees; amended administrative guidelines pertaining to appointment processes to field experiences committees; named field members to the Curriculum Committee and Substitute Teachers Committee; and transferred one field member from the Professional Conduct Appeal Committee to the Professional Conduct Committee. ■

Check your pay stub

The last central table agreement, which applies to teachers employed by Alberta's public, catholic and francophone boards, included a pay raise of 1.75 per cent, effective Sept. 1. Be sure to check your pay records to ensure your pay reflects this increase.

For information about your local's collective agreement, visit www.teachers.ab.ca > Pay and benefits > Collective agreements.

If you have questions, contact the Association's Teacher Employment Services program area at 780-447-9400 (Edmonton area) or toll free at 1-800-232-7208.



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The Alberta Teachers' Association

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For more information and to apply

- Visit <https://legacy.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

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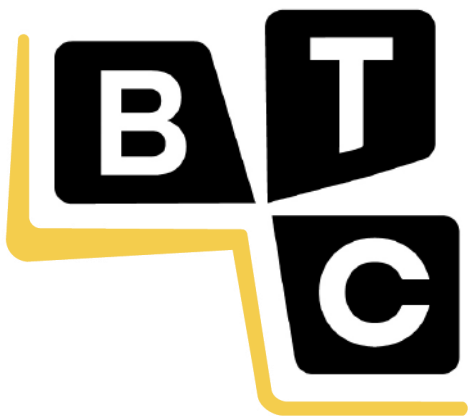
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TALENTEND

October 11, 2022 | Volume 57, Number 3

BEGINNING TEACHERS CONFERENCE



PHOTOS: NANCY LUYCKFASSEL

Beginning teachers roar back into action

For the first time since 2019, the ATA's Beginning Teachers' Conference took place in person in Edmonton on Sept. 23 and 24. Open to teachers in their first two years of teaching in Alberta, the event included a variety of sessions focused on curricular content, pedagogy and what it means to be a member of the teaching profession.



What has been the most memorable part of being a teacher for you so far this year?

"So far it's the connections with my kids and especially to the staff as well, just being invited into the school and being supported within the walls."

McKenna O'Shea
St. Martin Catholic School
Vegreville



"Getting to interact with the kids again, being able to see them in the classroom and having conversations and connections."

Veronica Evangelista
St. Gregory the Great Catholic School
Blackfalds



"We did a classroom STEM project and my class seemed to have a bit of difficulty getting along, and as soon as we got into this group work where there was a fun objective involved, kids that I've been struggling with all year so far were suddenly collaborating and talking and planning and having this amazing, amazing experience. It blew me away. It was awesome."

Dan Huard
C. Ian McLaren School
Black Diamond

À date, quel est le meilleur souvenir que vous avez?



Le meilleur souvenir que j'ai, c'est lorsque j'ai enseigné ma première leçon en Études sociales 9 qui parlait de l'immigration et on a travaillé sur un projet où il fallait créer comme un dépliant pour informer les nouveaux immigrants qui viennent au Canada. Et j'étais impressionné par la qualité du travail que les élèves ont présenté.

My fondest memory is when I taught my first lesson in Grade 9 social studies on the topic of immigration, and we worked on a project to create a brochure intended to provide information to new immigrants arriving in Canada. And I was impressed by the quality of the work the students submitted.

Armand Fonga Kamtchoum
Lindsay Thurber Comprehensive High School
Red Deer



"Probably the most memorable thing was meeting my students for the first time. I told them that they were my first class and they felt so special. It's exciting to grow with them, because I feel that I am a lifelong learner."

Nadia Haydar
Calgary Islamic School
Calgary



"Definitely my students, and staff. They're amazing and I can't say enough about them."

Rachel Sorley
Ernest Manning High School
Calgary