



ATA NEWS

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Off Script

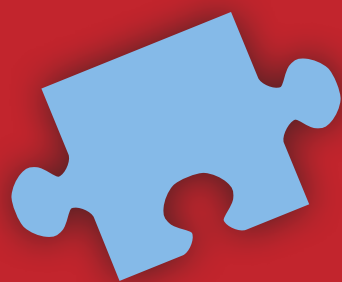
with ATA President Jason Schilling



Have
your
say

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Your future, your choice



BARGAINING

Central Table 2024

Teachers will be voting on the mediator's recommended terms of settlement on May 2 – 5. Read the executive secretary's Q&A on [page 2](#) and the bargaining update on [page 4](#) to learn more.



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How access to meaningful PD serves us all



EDITORIAL

Kristine Wilkinson
ATA News
Editor-in-Chief

Recently, I was fortunate to present at the world-renowned uLead Conference. I spoke on the topic of engagement through communication. As usual, I learned just as much from the group as I taught them, and it was so great to see the engagement and interest in the room full of leaders in our profession.

Effective communication is fundamental to both teaching and leadership. This skill helps teachers and school leaders to better articulate their vision, goals and expectations to staff, students and parents. Improved communication fosters a collaborative environment where everyone works toward common objectives, thereby enhancing the overall school climate. Where else does a teacher or school leader have the time, space and expertise to work on such a valuable skill that would enhance their efficacy?

Teachers and school leaders face many challenges when it comes to professional development (PD). One of the most common challenges I hear is how difficult it can be to find the time for PD. Those working in education have demanding schedules filled with administrative tasks, meetings and responsibilities, all outside of their main duty of teaching. This leaves little room for ongoing learning. Balancing these duties with the need for ongoing PD can be difficult.

“Effective communication is fundamental to both teaching and leadership.”

Budget constraints can also significantly impact the availability and quality of PD opportunities. Schools may struggle to allocate funds for training programs, workshops or conferences, limiting access to valuable learning experiences. Access to meaningful PD varies greatly across the province. Some places have healthy PD accounts, with funds supplied by school divisions. In others, schools

have meager PD budget lines that are challenging for staff to use.

I was fortunate when I worked in schools. My ATA local provided PD funds I could use, and I was able to attend PD that met my needs as a classroom teacher or administrator at least once per year. When I served as an associate instructor here at the ATA, I had additional learning opportunities on such topics as trauma-informed practice, play-based learning and best practices for adult learning.

Over the years, as I visited classrooms as an administrator, I often wondered about the origin of the new ideas and creative approaches I would see in classrooms. Through conversation I learned that — in addition to gathering ideas at PD conferences or events — these teachers and school leaders often did their own research. For example, they would investigate topics and teaching techniques that struck their

curiosity or take a course of interest on their personal time. These teachers and school leaders brought these ideas back to their classrooms and schools to make their classrooms more innovative and engaging for their students. They modelled how innovation is key to educational success.

In Alberta, PD is more than a requirement for teacher and school leaders; it is a vital component of effective teaching and leadership. By enhancing skills, promoting innovation, improving communication and strengthening decision making, PD ensures that teachers are well-equipped to meet the challenges they face. Providing teachers and school leaders across the province with adequate funds and time for meaningful PD serves to strengthen the practice of those individuals. However, it also strengthens our profession and the quality of public education in Alberta.

The profession's commitment to PD matters — to us, to our colleagues, to our students and to the future of public education in Alberta. ■

I welcome your comments. Contact me at kristine.wilkinson@ata.ab.ca.

Mediator's recommendation: Your future, your choice



Q & A

Dennis Theobald
ATA Executive
Secretary

Question: Why did Provincial Executive Council recommend the mediator's proposed terms of settlement to teachers, and what does that mean?

Answer: Based on what I have been seeing on social media, this might be the most contentious question I have ever answered in this space. In doing so, I hope to bring some clarity to a nuanced and complicated question. I don't anticipate winning any friends.

Let's start out by talking about mediation and the nature and purpose of the recommended terms that have emerged out of it. The process that the Association and the Teacher Employers Bargaining Committee (TEBA) initiated when the parties reached an impasse at the bargaining table was formal mediation. Unable to proceed, a senior mediator, Deborah Howes, was brought in to see if they could be brought to some agreement. It's important to note that Howes is entirely independent — she does not take orders from the government.

Also, Howes was engaged in *formal*, not *voluntary*, mediation. That distinction is important because it

is the last procedural step when a union's remaining option is to proceed toward a strike. It also explains why we are in a different place now than the United Nurses of Alberta's (UNA's) members were when they turned down their first proposed settlement, a product of voluntary mediation. When that happened, the UNA and Alberta Health Services still had the opportunity to go to final mediation, which ultimately produced a revised settlement that nurses have now accepted overwhelmingly. Teachers, however, do not have the luxury of taking another kick at the mediation can to see if something better might result. If these final, mediated terms are rejected, the ATA will then proceed to seek authorization from members to conduct a supervised strike vote.

There is a joke about mediators that the most successful ones never leave anyone feeling happy. Deborah Howes is very successful. After listening very carefully to both the Association and TEBA bargainers, and having moved between them, testing where their core interests lie and where there might be room for some flexibility, Howes came back with proposed terms for settlement that were very disappointing and highly problematic for both sides. Although the ATA had pressed hard for substantially larger salary increases and for significant enhancements, including explicit limits on class size and reduced hours

of work, these were not on offer. Many of you are disappointed and angry they are absent. There is a lively discussion going on among teachers about the perceived failings of the proposal, so I won't detail here the concerns that you have shared and I have heard.

But it is important to note that Howes' proposed terms have also pushed TEBA and the government beyond what they would previously have regarded as acceptable or even possible. The provision of salary increases and allowances above the 12 percent government mandate, and the adoption, provincewide, of the Alberta School Employee Benefit Plan (ASEBP) are very hard pills for them to swallow. In particular, the provision that the government, in the face of highly volatile economic and fiscal conditions, will set aside \$405 million in new money above and beyond the budget to improve classroom conditions, and that teachers would play a formal and decisive role in determining how those funds are spent provincially and locally, pushed the government well beyond its comfort zone to the very edge, requiring final approval to be secured at the very highest levels.

So that was the imperfect, disappointing proposal that was presented to your elected representatives on Provincial Executive Council. They had to decide whether to recommend the mediator's proposal

to the membership. Fundamentally, making this decision involved answering a two-part question: "Are these proposed terms the best that are likely to be achieved in the current circumstances through the means available to teachers, and are they at least minimally acceptable?" There are other much simpler questions that might be asked, but in the final analysis, they are irrelevant.

After much deliberation and considerable soul-searching, Council voted to recommend the mediator's proposed terms of settlement to members. This has had the result of advancing the proposals to members to vote on themselves. Had Council taken a different course, the mediator's recommendations would simply have vanished from consideration, and the two parties would be back to where they had stalled prior to mediation.

This gives rise to several issues. While individual Council members may have arrived at their own conclusions for different reasons, it was Council as a body that was charged by the mediator to decide, and it is that collective decision that now binds it. Some have suggested that Council voted the way it did just so that the mediator's proposed terms could be put before the membership, and that it does not actually support them.

Q & A
continued on page 3



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Teachers' Association

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A collaborative spirit: The kind of teacher I want to be



VIEWPOINTS

Farah Hamad
Preservice teacher, University
of Alberta collaborative degree,
Northwestern Polytechnic

As a Gen-Z entering the profession, I recognize the current factors shaping the educational landscape. The increased complexity of teaching tasks and responsibilities, and rapid technology changes (including the emergence of artificial intelligence) are the realities I am stepping into. My practicum experience reinforced for me the importance of a collaborative, team-based space led by mentor-teachers to help teachers new to the profession navigate these realities. I am deeply grateful for the guidance and support of my cooperating teacher. Her timely information, clear expectations and willingness to answer my countless questions have been crucial to my growth. One of the most significant takeaways from my time in the classroom has been the understanding that becoming an effective teacher is a continuous process of evolution. There’s no magical “eureka” moment, no switch that flips to make you a master of the craft instantly. Instead, it’s about embracing the daily opportunities to learn, adapt and refine your approach. Initially, I felt pressure to have all the answers, to execute every lesson flawlessly. This pressure stemmed from my need for constant academic validation as a student, where I often equated success with perfection. However, I quickly

realized that this self-imposed expectation was not only unrealistic but also counterproductive. The support I received from my cooperating teacher didn’t appear as isolated acts of kindness; rather, it was indicative of the prevailing ethos in the school. Teachers openly discussed their challenges, shared their successes and collaboratively solved issues ranging from curriculum implementation to student well-being. This collaborative spirit extended beyond just sharing materials. During prep times, teachers engaged in informal professional development and offered constructive feedback on each other’s lesson ideas. It became clear: you rise or fall to the level of those around you. Being immersed in this environment of continuous learning and shared expertise pushed me to be a better student teacher, to ask more insightful questions and to strive for innovative teaching practices. The ATA itself emphasizes that field experiences create conditions that “recognize and promote teaching as a reflective and collegial practice.” My experience was a living testament to this. My practicum has been more than just a requirement, it has been a crucial period of growth, learning and self-discovery. It has affirmed my passion for education and provided me with the practical experience necessary to approach the threshold of this profession with confidence. As I prepare to embark on my teaching career, I am filled with gratitude for the teachers who welcomed me into their collective and eagerly shared their knowledge and resources. I understand now that my growth as a teacher will be inextricably linked to the strength of the professional relationships I build and the collaborative spirit I embrace.

Standing on the cusp of officially joining the teaching profession, I am energized by the prospect of creating the conditions for rich and powerful learning in my own classroom. I want to be a teacher who knows how to learn and who continues to learn alongside my students and colleagues. I am also filled with a sense of hopeful anticipation. I understand that there will be ongoing demands and expectations, but my practicum has equipped me with a crucial insight: balancing these external pressures with a focus on my own growth as a teaching professional is key to long-term success and fulfillment. Adopting a learning mindset, being open to new ideas and perspectives, will undoubtedly serve me well as I navigate the complexities of this career. My journey through student teaching has reinforced for me the idea that no one starts out with all the answers. Becoming an awesome teacher is not about innate talent but about a commitment to lifelong learning, a willingness to embrace challenges, and a dedication to the growth of both you and your students. This experience has ignited a passion within me to prioritize the learning process over the pursuit of a flawless performance. I am excited to step into my own classroom and continue this incredible journey of becoming. ■

Farah Hamad is a fourth-year bachelor of education student in the Teachers Education North program at the University of Alberta, in collaboration with Northwestern Polytechnic. Her passion for the humanities drives her academic pursuits, as she strives to instill a love of learning in her future students.

Q & A

continued from page 2

This is incorrect. As I noted above, Council had a very specific question to answer: if Council members individually or collectively believed that teachers could do better through continuing negotiations or, more probably, through strike action, or if they believed that the suggested terms were not even minimally acceptable, then they were obliged to vote down the mediator’s proposal. Council decided otherwise and now, albeit with varying degrees of enthusiasm among its members, it is supporting the proposed terms of settlement and recommending that the teachers accept them. If you think about it, there is no other way it could be. Final mediation is about attempting to find a solution that works for both sides. It is not about defining a new floor from which bargaining can proceed to the advantage of one party or the other. Final mediation can be nothing other than a take-it-or-leave-it proposition. Well, now you as teacher in the field get to share a personal version of your elected representatives’ pain. It will soon be time for each member to ask themselves not, “Is this what I would wish for or deserve to have?” but rather “Is this good enough under the circumstances, and the best that we can practically achieve given the available alternatives?” As this column is going to print, the Association is running processes and producing materials that will help members with that critical question. Please attend one or even more of the member information meetings being held online and in communities throughout the province. Visit the teachers.ab.ca website, both the public and members-only side, for detailed information about the mediator’s proposal and FAQs responding to specific questions that you are asking. Find out the salary implications the recommended terms would have for you by using the online calculator. Finally, cast your vote between May 2 and May 5. This is about your future; it is ultimately your choice to make. ■

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

RED FOR ED

Lamont Elementary School teachers show off their Red for Ed.

Staff wear Red for Ed at Varsity Acres School in Calgary.

Show us your Red for Ed

Want to share how you or your team is supporting public education in Alberta? Let your colleagues know why you wear Red for Ed or how you create moments of engagement or advocacy. Email managing editor Lindsay Yakimyshyn at lindsay.yakimyshyn@ata.ab.ca.

BARGAINING

Central Table 2024



Teachers asked to vote on recommended settlement

Kim Clement
ATA News Staff

Alberta teachers are being urged to vote on a proposed central table settlement following the release of the mediator’s report in the 2024 round of bargaining. The report, which includes all previously agreed-upon items between the Teachers’ Employer Bargaining Association (TEBA) and the Alberta Teachers’ Association (ATA) Central Table Bargaining Committee (CTBC), outlines what the mediator believes to be the most realistic path to a settlement and the best possible outcome.

Central table bargaining began in early 2024, guided by feedback from teachers collected through a provincewide survey. That input helped shape the initial proposal that served as the starting point for negotiations with TEBA. Despite significant efforts at the table, the parties were unable to reach a full agreement on their own and required the assistance of a mediator. The mediator’s recommendations must now be voted on by members in a ratification process.

“This is an important decision that will impact every teacher in the province,” said CTBC chief

negotiator Sean Brown. He added that the ATA has made a range of tools and resources, including the full mediator’s report and several FAQ documents, available online to support informed decision-making.

“We’ve developed materials to help members fully understand the implications of the mediator’s report,”

settlement, the ATA has launched a salary calculation tool on its website. This tool allows teachers to see a personalized estimate of how the proposed changes would affect their pay based on their current grid placement.

A telephone town hall was held on April 3 and member information

With the mediator’s recommendation now in members’ hands, Brown encourages teachers to consider all aspects of the report, noting that it addresses more than just compensation.

“One of the key elements includes \$405 million in funding to begin to address the increasing challenges teachers are facing around class size and classroom complexity,” he said. “This proposed settlement reflects months of hard work and includes improvements that go beyond salary to support better teaching and learning conditions.”

ATA president Jason Schilling echoed Brown’s call for member engagement, urging teachers to take an active role in the process.

“This is your collective agreement. It affects your salary, benefits and working conditions,” Schilling said. “Teachers need to be fully engaged in this process. That means talking with your colleagues, dispelling any misinformation that you see, reading through the available materials and making an informed decision when it’s time to vote.”

Voting on the mediator’s recommended settlement opens on May 2 and closes at 5 p.m. on May 5. The results will be announced on the ATA website on May 6.

“This proposed settlement reflects months of hard work and includes improvements that go beyond salary to support better teaching and learning conditions.”

– CTBC chief negotiator Sean Brown

Brown said. “I strongly encourage everyone to review the documents, attend a member information meeting, and most importantly, cast their vote.”

To help members assess the financial impact of the proposed

meetings (MIMS) have been taking place across the province since April 7. Information on the remaining MIMS is available on the ATA’s website. All eligible ATA members have been called upon to participate in this important process.

VOTING TIMELINE

- Voting opens: Thursday, May 2 at 9 a.m.
- Voting closes: Monday, May 5 at 5 p.m.
- Results announced: Tuesday, May 6 at 9 a.m. on the ATA website

HOW TO VOTE

Locals have been collecting member information in preparation for a new “push” voting system, where ballots are sent directly to members’ personal email addresses. Members are encouraged to vote as soon as they receive their ballot.

If you haven’t received your ballot by noon on May 2 or encounter issues while voting, please contact us at 1-800-796-1368 or votesupport@ata.ab.ca.

STAY INFORMED

Find key information, including the full mediator’s report, here:



It’s time to ask questions, inform yourself and have your say

Off Script

with ATA President Jason Schilling



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

Recently, I attended a session featuring the former first lady of Iceland, Eliza Reid, at this year’s uLead Conference in Banff. Her story was an interesting one, from growing up just outside of Ottawa to becoming the First Lady of Iceland. What was striking is how she chose to carve her own path. She spoke about how the first lady role was not really defined when she stepped into it. There were no official duties other than supporting her husband. Reid saw this as an opportunity and decided to make something of the role, remembering Michelle Obama’s quip that if the press were going to follow her, she might as well lead them somewhere.

Now you might be wondering where I am going with this. We have many concerns and issues facing public education. What does Iceland’s first lady have to do with those? Well, colleagues, now is the time to

consider your own path forward.

When it comes to the concerns of Alberta teachers, the mediator’s report is front and centre at the moment. Members want to know how it will impact them. This mediator’s report is one of the most complex reports I have seen in my career. There is a lot to unpack, there are a lot of questions and there are high emotions around all of it. How could there not be? We care deeply about it and rightly so.

I’ve read the Facebook posts, answered questions by email and had conversations with many members. The mediator’s report, as it is written, provides an opportunity for us to have respectful conversations as we seek to understand the implications it would have for teachers and our working conditions, including classroom complexity. Your questions are important, and I strongly encourage you to attend the member information

meetings (MIMs), whether in person or online.

What is valuable about MIMs is that they provide an opportunity for you to learn more about how the mediator’s recommendation will affect you in your context. You also may hear questions or points from your colleagues that you hadn’t considered before.

Whether or not you are able to attend a MIM, familiarize yourself and your colleagues with the details of the mediator’s recommendation. Read about the process of how we got here, and learn about the next steps. Review the FAQs and the responses. The website is your go-to for the most up-to-date and accurate information. Share this information with your colleagues.

Above all, vote. This is a decision that you, as teachers, will ultimately make. Seize your moment and have your say.

Compassionate Leadership course to make its debut

Mark Milne
ATA News Staff

This summer, teachers and school leaders will have the opportunity to explore how compassion, kindness and vulnerability can foster a collective wellness and resilience in schools.

The Alberta Teachers’ Association (ATA) is offering an exciting new course aimed at helping leaders awaken compassion at work though the culture, routines, networks and roles within the school community. The Compassionate Leadership course is designed to help participants lead with their heart and foster a positive change in their educational environments.

“As the call for compassionate leadership grows louder, we’re excited to offer all Alberta teachers and leaders the opportunity to take part in this transformative opportunity,” said Lisa Everitt, ATA executive staff officer. “By leading with empathy, courage and wisdom, participants can make a lasting, positive difference in their organizations and communities.”

“The program’s emphasis on strength and self-compassion is grounded in evidence-based research,” said Everitt. “After taking this course, leaders will be equipped with practical tools to integrate compassion into their everyday leadership practices.”

Throughout the course, participants will delve into how to navigate difficult conversations with care, promote inclusivity and enhance relationships within their teams. Through eight comprehensive modules, participants will develop a shared understanding of compassionate leadership principles and their potential to enhance individual and organizational well-being at work. Topics include the science of compassion, overcoming fears associated with compassionate leadership and the benefits of a compassionate approach.

“Leaders will gain insights into the connections between kindness and strength, self-compassion, and the vital



Lisa Everitt, ATA executive staff officer

role vulnerability plays in fostering trust and connection,” said Everitt.

The course draws inspiration from the groundbreaking work of the Center for Compassionate Leadership, whose curriculum integrates modern leadership practices, evidence-based science and contemplative wisdom, and focuses on encouraging environments where compassion can thrive.

“The impact of compassionate leadership extends well beyond theory,” said Everitt. “It has been shown to improve team trust, decision making and overall performance.”

Participants will have the option of taking this course as a standard three-semester-credit graduate course through the University of Alberta’s Faculty of Education. It would be counted as accredited education on the Teacher Qualification Services (TQS) salary grid.

This course is expected to run from Wednesday, July 2 to Friday, July 4. If enrollment is insufficient by June 1, the event will be canceled, and full refunds will be issued.

Please contact lisa.everitt@ata.ab.ca if you have more questions about this exciting learning opportunity. ■



YOUR VIEWS

Members shared what Red for Ed means to them

f Leanne Breadner-Rein
Red for Ed means SOLIDARITY to me – standing together as colleagues FOR our profession!

I wish every Friday would be a “red out,” where ALL teachers showed their passion for the profession, despite our varied thoughts/concerns.

f Kristy Lee
Red for Ed means that I see teachers. We are all managing classroom/school/life situations that non-teachers couldn’t even imagine. And I’m wearing it because non-teachers don’t care about us, so someone has to.

FOR THE RECORD

We are committed to a strong and reactive education system that meets the needs of students, teachers and communities. These proposed changes would respond to the ever-changing education landscape and the feedback we received from Albertans and education partners.

— Demetrios Nicolaides, Minister of Education, on Bill 51, *Education Amendment Act*, tabled on April 8

Opinions expressed on this page represent the views of the individual writers and do not necessarily reflect the position of the Alberta Teachers’ Association.

Compassionate Leadership


July 2 – 4, 2025
Barnett House





For more information about taking the Compassionate Leadership course as a three-semester-credit graduate course, contact José (Joe) da Costa (Professor of Educational Leadership, University of Alberta) at jose.da.costa@ualberta.ca.

Find information on the Center for Compassionate Leadership here:



GOT THE INSIDE SCOOP?
We want to hear about it!

Whether it's a teacher success story, a school community achievement or a unique ATA local event, we want to hear about it. Send us your story ideas! E-mail Managing Editor Lindsay Yakimyshyn your ideas at lindsay.yakimyshyn@ata.ab.ca.



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OCTOBER 18**
CALGARY, AB

7:30PM AT MACEWAN HALL

TICKETS AVAILABLE AT [SHOWCLIX.COM](https://www.showclix.com)

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**2025
gotcha!**
PHOTO CONTEST



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

**Cash prizes
available!**



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

GOTCHA! Contest rules

1. Photos taken by active, associate and student ATA members of education or school-related activities are eligible. (Hint: photos depicting action are best.)
2. Entries must be submitted by the member who took the photos.
3. Photos taken between Sept. 1, 2024 and May 15, 2025, are eligible.
4. Please email photos to lindsay.yakimyshyn@ata.ab.ca. Entries must be received by 5 p.m. on May 15, 2025.
5. Each entry must be accompanied by a description of the activity; the names (if possible) of the people in the photo; the date when the photo was taken; and the photographer's name, school and contact information.
6. Cash prizes will be awarded to entrants whose photos place in the top three, as follows. First place: \$200; second place: \$100 and third place: \$50
7. Each winner, as well as those receiving honourable mention, will receive a certificate of merit.
8. Up to 20 additional entries may be selected for an award of honourable mention.
9. Each entrant may submit up to five photos but no entrant can win more than one top-three prize.
10. A panel of individuals with photography, publishing and teaching experience will judge the entries. The decision of the judges is final.
11. Winning photographs will be published in the ATA News.
12. Photos submitted for the contest may be published in the ATA News, the ATA Magazine or other Association publications.
13. Please read carefully. Failure to comply with any of these rules may result in disqualification.

Get snapping and good luck!

COMM-65-12025 01

Teacher-leaders explore transformative leadership practices at uLead

Kristine Wilkinson
ATA News Editor-in-Chief

More than 1,000 school leaders from around the world gathered in Banff from April 6–8 for uLead 2025, a premier education leadership conference presented by the Alberta Teachers’ Association’s Council for School Leadership (CSL). This year’s theme focused on empowering educators through transformative leadership, exploring innovative

practices that elevate teaching and learning in today’s ever-evolving educational landscape. Throughout the conference, attendees engaged in a variety of sessions and workshops designed to foster meaningful conversations around effective leadership models. From curriculum development to mental health initiatives, participants explored practical strategies that support student success and foster inclusive school communities. “This is an unparalleled opportunity

for teachers and school leaders to connect, share ideas and inspire one another in their roles,” said Chris Gonsalvez, ATA executive staff officer. One of the conference’s highlights was keynote speaker Judi Newman, an expert in applied neuroscience. Her unique approach — combining what we know from psychology, education and neuroscience — provided insights into brain research and how it applies to everyday skills taught in schools. Her real-life examples and engaging topic made

for an informative and entertaining session. In addition to keynote presentations by esteemed educational leaders, uLead 2025 offered a preconference event with networking activities designed to cultivate deeper connections among education professionals. Held annually, uLead is recognized as a cornerstone professional learning event for teacher-leaders. Watch for more information on uLead 2026 in the fall on the ATA and CSL websites. ■



Delegates had the opportunity to connect with other teacher-leaders during uLead, including at a preconference event. KRISTINE WILKINSON



uLead delegates from Australia were also able to take a tour of Alberta schools, including Drumheller Valley Secondary School (shown here). SUPPLIED

Make a difference at the ballot box, says CTF

Teachers urged to vote in federal election

ATA News Staff

With the federal election fast approaching, the Canadian Teachers’ Federation (CTF/FCE) is urging teachers to make their voices heard at the ballot box. The CTF/FCE says that the teachers and education workers it represents through teachers’ organizations across Canada can make a difference by voting for candidates who will prioritize Canada’s children and youth. “Together, we form a group of 370,000 voters that can seriously impact the outcome of the upcoming election and ensure a government that supports children, youth and their families as well as teachers and educators across the country,” said CTF/FCE President Heidi Yetman. A non-profit organization and national alliance of provincial and territorial member organizations and associate organizations, the CTF/FCE advocates for policies that will directly impact the future of Canada’s students. Rather than endorsing a specific



CTF/FCE President Heidi Yetman SUPPLIED

political party, the CTF/FCE instead works with all parties to advance policies that benefit teachers, students and the public education system. It is

calling upon teachers to help shape public policy by supporting leaders committed to strengthening public education and addressing critical social issues. “We are asking our members and the public to vote for a government that’s going to eliminate child poverty by keeping the National School Food Program and the Canada Child Benefit; address mental health crises with significant investment in the form of a Canada mental health transfer; and strengthen our societies and economies to fight climate change with retraining, retrofitting and investments in new technologies,” Yetman said. To support voters, the CTF has compiled a range of election resources, including public opinion polling on education, educational tools, and shareable social media content designed to engage and inform. These resources aim to ensure teachers — and all voters — are equipped with the knowledge they need to make informed choices on election day. For more information and to access

election-related resources, including tools teachers can use in the classroom to teach about the federal election and democracy, visit the CTF website. ■



Cast your vote in the federal election:

April 18 – 21: Advance-polling days

April 22: Deadline to vote in advance at an Elections Canada office, or to apply to vote by mail

April 28: Election day

Complete information on your voting options is available on the Elections Canada website, www.elections.ca.



FREE K DAYS TICKETS FOR STUDENTS!

KDAYS is pleased to provide opening day tickets to Edmonton's students! We invite teachers and school administration to apply on behalf of their schools using the QR Code here:



OPENING DAY: FRIDAY, JULY 18, 2025

Curriculum change continues at unrelenting pace



EXECUTIVE REPORT

Terra Kaliszuk
ATA Executive Staff Officer

When it comes to curriculum change, there is no end in sight.

Four years ago, on March 29, 2021, Alberta Education released a draft kindergarten to Grade 6 (K–6) curriculum package that was the subject of widespread criticism. Since September 2022, the ministry has implemented new K–6 curriculum in six subject areas. This school year, the ministry is also piloting a seventh subject in classrooms across Alberta — K–6 social studies — and has started work on junior high curriculum development.

With junior high curriculum development and engagement processes under way, Alberta Education recently announced its intention to release draft 7–9 mathematics and social studies, 7–10 physical educational and wellness (PEW) and career and life management (CALM) curriculum, with optional piloting scheduled for the 2025–26 school year. The ministry is also aiming to begin curriculum development engagements this September on 7–9 English language arts and literature (ELAL), French immersion language arts and literature, French first language and literature, and science curriculum, as well as Grade 10 social studies.

The pace of curriculum change in Alberta has been unrelenting. The demands placed on teachers are being compounded as well by the implementation of literacy and numeracy screening assessments, the shift to a digital provincial assessment platform and an inconsistent approach to curriculum development, engagement and implementation.

Curriculum development and engagement

As the ministry’s curriculum development and engagement strategy has evolved, there has been a slow shift toward including more teacher consultation. In fall 2023, the ministry struck three separate groups to consult on the K–6 social studies curriculum draft, and one of these groups was a teacher curriculum consultation group (TCCG). This school year, when the ministry announced the commencement of junior high curriculum development work, TCCGs were struck for each subject currently under development. Unlike the social studies TCCG, this year the Association was invited to nominate one member for each TCCG. The Association has been invited to consult on draft curriculum content shared with all TCCGs.

These TCCGs are consultative in nature. Rather than having a seat at the curriculum-writing table, teachers who are TCCG members are provided draft curriculum content and submit feedback on the drafts.

Although the ministry included other engagement opportunities since 2021, such as feedback surveys, virtual engagement sessions and teachers’ convention curriculum engagements in 2024, teachers continue to lack confidence in the curriculum, in part, due to lack of direct involvement in curriculum writing. Teachers are dissatisfied with the degree to which their feedback is used to inform curriculum development and revision. For example, teacher concerns regarding the new mathematics curriculum continue to go unresolved. Teachers have also expressed concern that a plan to address the outdated fine arts curriculum has not yet been announced.

Piloting and implementation

Another shift evident over time is the ministry’s evolving approach to curriculum piloting and implementation. April 2022 saw the release of new K–6 ELAL, mathematics, and PEW curriculum that were piloted by a small cross-section of Alberta’s students and teachers. Only five months later, the K–6 PEW and K–3 ELAL and mathematics curriculum were implemented in Alberta classrooms, resulting in an outcry of concern and dissatisfaction from elementary teachers. Since this time, there has been a shift toward optional implementation years and piloting processes that allow more time for curriculum to be test run in more classrooms.

Although these developments represent a significant shift from the ministry’s original intentions to implement all K–6 curriculum at once (which were walked back by former education minister Adriana LaGrange in December 2021), teachers continue to be overwhelmed by a demanding piloting and implementation schedule that is far from curriculum implementation best practice.

With the pilot of K–6 social studies curriculum currently under way across the province, the ministry has plans to release a revised draft this spring with K–3 implementation and 4–6 optional implementation scheduled for September 2025. It remains to be seen whether feedback from piloting teachers will be addressed in this revised draft, but the Association will continue to advocate for teachers’ voices to be heard.

On the horizon

Although the ministry has not announced whether TCCGs will be struck for next year’s anticipated curriculum development work, teachers interested in becoming involved should stay tuned for ministry announcements in the coming months. ■

More information on curriculum implementation is available online:

Alberta Education Curriculum Implementation Hub

Alberta Education K-6 Curriculum Implementation and Support Timeline

ATA website's Curriculum page

Some of the ATA Library’s newest reads:

Bad at Math?
Dismantling Harmful Beliefs that Hinder Equitable Mathematics Education
by Lidia Gonzalez

It's Never Just About the Behaviour: A Holistic Approach to Classroom Behaviour Management
by Claire English

Engaging the Brain: 20 Unforgettable Strategies for Growing Dendrites and Accelerating Learning
by Marcia Tate

Habits of Resilient Educators: Strategies for Thriving During Times of Anxiety, Doubt, and Constant Change
by Lindsay Prendergast

Literacies before Technologies: Making Digital Tools Matter for Middle Grades Learners
by Troy Hicks

WANT TO BORROW THESE?
(HINT: IT'S FREE FOR ATA MEMBERS!)

Head to the ATA Library's webpage to find these books — and so much more!
library.teachers.ab.ca



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EEP-T-27a 2024 12


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PD-80-61-1 2024-12



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La FCE : un soutien essentiel pour l'éducation francophone en Alberta

Geneviève Blais
Coordnatrice associée de l'ATA,
Emploi et bienêtre, SARO

Josianne Beaumont
FCE Agente de programme,
Programme pour la francophonie

Les enseignants francophones de l'Alberta bénéficient grandement du soutien de la Fédération canadienne des enseignantes et enseignants (FCE). L'un des principaux avantages de la FCE est sa capacité à fournir des ressources francophones et un soutien que l'Alberta seule ne pourrait pas offrir facilement.

Afin d'identifier les besoins du terrain, la FCE a mis sur pied, il y a plusieurs décennies, deux groupes consultatifs. Le premier est le Comité consultatif du français langue première, dont les membres sont nommés par le Conseil d'administration. Le second est le Réseau des agentes et des agents de liaison francophones, qui comprend une personne représentant l'éducation de langue française dans sa juridiction, nommée par le syndicat local.

En tant que voix nationale de l'éducation publique, la FCE plaide pour le financement fédéral afin de soutenir des programmes et des initiatives qui améliorent la profession enseignante au Canada. La FCE est également un point de convergence pour des ressources de haute qualité en français, telles que la collection *Portraits de l'éducation*. Cette série de fascicules offre des conseils pratiques pour l'insertion professionnelle des enseignants récemment immigrés au Canada. Créée par des chercheurs universitaires et des experts en éducation, cette série aborde des sujets comme le travail avec les parents, l'approche interculturelle et le mentorat. La collection *Portraits de l'éducation* est disponible sur le site Web de la FCE à l'adresse publications.ctf-fce.ca/fr/collections/francophone-education/portraits-de-leducation.

La FCE a aussi dirigé le développement de la Pédagogie à l'école de langue française (PELF). Cette ressource en ligne, développée en collaboration avec des enseignants et des chercheurs, répond aux besoins pédagogiques spécifiques des écoles de langue française en contexte minoritaire. Le site Web offre des ressources pratiques, notamment des capsules vidéo filmées dans des salles de classe à travers le Canada. Ces vidéos illustrent comment aborder des défis tels que l'épanouissement de l'identité francophone, le respect de la diversité linguistique et le sentiment d'appartenance aux communautés francophones.

De plus, la FCE plaide pour répondre à la pénurie d'enseignants dans les écoles de langue française au Canada. Soulignons la campagne Enseigner, ça me parle, menée de 2019 à 2023. Son objectif était de valoriser la profession enseignante dans les écoles de langue française, de susciter la fierté des enseignants afin de favoriser leur maintien en poste et d'encourager les jeunes à envisager l'enseignement comme un choix de carrière.

Au printemps 2024, la FCE a obtenu un financement du gouvernement fédéral pour créer un programme pilote de mentorat destiné aux enseignants francophones récemment immigrés œuvrant dans les écoles de langue française en contexte minoritaire en Alberta. Ce programme vise à offrir le soutien nécessaire à ces enseignants et à leurs collègues pour assurer une insertion professionnelle réussie et les encourager à poursuivre dans la profession, malgré des défis d'intégration au système éducatif albertain.

L'adhésion de l'ATA à la FCE est essentielle pour soutenir les enseignants francophones en Alberta. Grâce à l'accès aux ressources nationales, au financement fédéral et à un vaste réseau d'éducateurs, la FCE aide à garantir que ces enseignants disposent des outils et du soutien nécessaire pour surmonter les défis de l'enseignement dans les écoles de langue française en contexte minoritaire et qu'ils contribuent à un système éducatif francophone durable en Alberta. ■

Découvrez des ressources pédagogiques au www.pelf.ca.





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**Please note these are full-time positions commencing August 2025*

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The Canadian International School is a K-12 private school with over 900 students and over 150 professional and support staff. We are fully accredited by Alberta Education, at Tier 4 Level, to teach the Alberta Program of Studies and thus, our high school students graduate with an Alberta High School Diploma. Although our student population is made up of over 70 different nationalities, most of our teaching staff is from Canada.

Abu Dhabi is a growing, fast paced capital city with a vast array of travel, cultural, and social opportunities. There are no employment taxes and travel possibilities are numerous and relatively inexpensive. Abu Dhabi boasts a unique mixture of Western and Middle Eastern cultures providing a truly international experience.

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Teacher applicants must meet the following minimum criteria to be considered:

- Have a B.Ed with a Major/Minor in the subject you are applying for
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- New graduates are welcome to apply!
- All applicants must be prepared to work collaboratively with other teachers and support staff as a member of a professional learning community.
- Have strong, positive interpersonal skills.
- Be willing to contribute to the school's extracurricular program.
- Be independent, open-minded, and willing to meet the challenges and, take advantage of the opportunities that teaching in a foreign country presents.

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TO APPLY

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hr@cisabudhabi.com

We thank all applicants for your interest in these positions, however only those selected for an interview will be contacted.

EVENTS AND NOTICES

Pan-Canadian survey on attrition

In partnership with the ATA, the Canadian Teachers' Federation (CTF/FCE) will be releasing the next edition of PARACHUTE, their ground-breaking, pan-Canadian survey series.

This latest edition is focused on the causes and contexts of attrition in the profession.

From April 23 to May 14, contribute your voice and take the survey for your chance to win one of six weekly prizes.

For more information on the survey and results from their Fall 2024 edition, please visit the CTF/FCE's website at www.ctf-fce.ca/take-action/parachute/.

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The Alberta Teachers' Association



Literary Names

Solve the clues and find a hidden message using the circled letters.

1. The pig in *Charlotte's Web*

2. He penned a story about a boy shipwrecked with four wild animals: Yann _____

3. *Tales of a Fourth Grade Nothing* author: _____ Blume

4. Tolkien protagonist who finds himself in a fellowship of a ring

5. Sherlock's sidekick

6. *Back on the Rez: Finding the Way Home* author

7. *A Wrinkle in Time* protagonist

8. Creator of Scrooge

HIDDEN MESSAGE:

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

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Theory and Practice in Educational Leadership



Dr. Scott Morrison



Gary Strother



Valerie McDougall

EDLD 551 taught by Scott Morrison:
Theory and Practice in Educational Leadership I

- Tu/Th 5:00 PM – 8:00 PM
- May 8, 13, 15, 20, 22, 27, 29, June 3, 5, 10, 12, 17

EDLD 552 taught by Gary Strother with Val McDougall:
Theory and Practice in Educational Leadership II

- Mon/Wed 5:00 PM – 8:00 PM June 18, 23, 25, 30
- Mon/Wed 9:00 AM – 12:00 PM July 2, 9, 14, 16, 21, 23
- Wed 9:00 AM – 4:00 PM on July 7

St. Mary's University Faculty of Education is offering two 3-credit online courses for aspiring **school administrators and teacher leaders**. Structured on a sequential knowledge and skill development model, the two courses include theory and practice in the development of the **nine competencies** as outlined in the **Leadership Quality Standard**. Alberta Education has approved these two courses for Principal accreditation.

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- The only Catholic University in the province accredited to offer these courses.
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- Study in the comfort of your home.

For more information please contact: admissions@stmu.ca
Register: <https://stmu.ca/programs/catholic-educators-program/>
Registration deadline is April 30



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TALEND

April 15, 2025 | Volume 59, Number 12



INSIDE INSIGHT

Ray Suchow
Special to the ATA News

Over my teaching career, I was fortunate to have received several interesting nicknames from students, with each one reflecting something unique about the time, place, student and school where it happened.

Some students had trouble with the hard “k” in my name and found it easier to call me “Mr. S.” than “Mr. Suchow,” which was fine by me. Then there were the two students — 12 years apart and in different towns — who found my classroom collection of Star Trek posters especially inspiring and proceeded to call me “Admiral.” That was definitely an honour!

However, out of all the nicknames

over the years, perhaps the best was bestowed upon me during the pandemic, when 10 students and I began a highly modified semester and tried to figure out how to get through a three-hour-long class of English 10-2 each morning. I mentioned that since we’d be together for a longer time each day, they could call me Mr. S., but they could not call me “Dude,” as a student had tried to do the year before. “You have to be respectful,” I said, recounting the story, “So it has to be Mr. Dude.” That broke the ice, we all laughed, and the course began.

Six weeks later, one student — who had had a hard life, was usually quiet and was struggling — raised his hand and asked, “Mr. Dude, can you help me with this?” As the other students whispered, “It’s Mr. S.,” he waved them away and looked at me with earnest eyes. He was clearly not being defiant and honestly needed help, the first time he’d asked in all that time. We worked together on his question and the lesson continued.

Something struck me about him using that name and trying to reach out, so we had a chat about “Mr. Dude”

at the end of the class. I told him that since he had said the name respectfully, it could be his — and only his — special name for me. No one else in the whole school could say it. He paused for a moment, then quietly said, “Thanks, Mr. Dude,” and left.

Over the next few weeks, I saw something change in him. He began to smile more, ask more questions and start to show the first confidence any of his teachers had seen. And he began to use “Mr. Dude” not just in class, but now in the hallways, accompanied by enthusiastic waves — “Hi, Mr. Dude!” While the other students were bewildered at first, soon enough they figured out it was working for him and let him be.

“Mr. Dude” became part of our unique relationship, and over the next three years the student’s confidence continued to grow. He began to write about his younger years living in a very rough neighbourhood, and toward the end of Grade 11 he received second place in a national writing competition. He also proudly gifted me with an exquisite, hand-carved work of art (that had taken him many hours of

labour) as his Grade 12 year ended.

Reflecting on this student and the enduring power of the connections we make, I’ve realized that each of those nicknames was a gift. For those students, it gave them an anchor, a trust, and helped them to take the next steps forward to stay in school and succeed. For me, it was an affirmation, that one of the truest and most important powers of a teacher is the ability to build relationships that can enrich all our lives — not just in the moment, but for years to come. ■

Ray Suchow is a retired teacher who taught computer science and religious studies. He now enjoys travelling, writing, subbing and completing home renovations.

Inside Insight is your chance to write about a memorable moment, a lesson learned or a poignant experience related to teaching. Please submit articles to managing editor Lindsay Yakimyshyn at lindsay.yakimyshyn@ata.ab.ca.