

Procedures and Guidelines

for Educator Exchange Programs



The Alberta
Teachers' Association

Alberta A small blue square with a white dot in the center, representing the Alberta dot logo.

1.0 PROGRAMS OFFERED

1.1 Year-Long Reciprocal Exchanges for Teachers

1.1.1 Calendar Year Exchanges (currently paused)

With the Australian states and territories of Queensland, New South Wales, South Australia and Northern Territory.

1.2 Short-Term In-Person Exchanges for Teachers and School Leaders

Short-term school leader and teacher exchanges are available provincially and internationally. Please consult the Alberta Teachers' Association website at teachers.ab.ca for the most current program offerings.

1.3 Short-Term E-Exchange for Teachers and School Leaders

Please consult the Alberta Teachers' Association website at teachers.ab.ca for the most current program offerings.

2.0 EXCHANGE TIMELINES

2.1 Year-Long Exchanges

2.1.1 Calendar Year Exchanges to Australia

January 1 to December 31 inclusive.

2.1.2 School Year Exchanges to Australia (very rare)

July 31 to June 30 inclusive.

2.2 Short-Term Exchanges

Exchanges are approximately 10 days and typically occur during spring break during the calendar or school year or other vacation times that offset with the host country's school calendar.

2.3 Short-Term E-Exchanges

E-Exchanges are approximately four to six weeks in length.

3.0 APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

3.1 A permanent Professional Alberta Teaching Certificate

3.2 A permanent teaching position

3.3 Approval of the school leader and superintendent (or designate)

Educators approved for an exchange program are expected to have full satisfactory or superior performance with their current employer and to be recommended accordingly. Concurrence by the school leader and superintendent (or designate) should be based on professional development consideration. Both the visiting exchange partner and the Alberta educator will require the support of the school leader and superintendent (or designate), before, during and after the exchange year. The value of this experience must be recognized at the local level.

If there is a new school leader coming to the school, it is the responsibility of the school district and the current school leader to ensure that the incoming school leader is supportive of the exchange and approves the proposed exchange partner.

3.4 Criminal Record Check

Once matched, a current criminal record check is required. You may be able to request the current copy that is kept on your HR files with your school division; a screenshot is acceptable. If not, a new criminal record check will be required, at the expense of the participant.

3.5 Commitment to the exchange

Withdrawing from the program after submission of an application can cause difficulties in the host country or province considering the Alberta applicant. Applicants may not apply for, nor the Employing Authority facilitate, any promotion position or transfer to a position that must be taken up during the exchange period.

3.6 Personal characteristics

Other personal characteristics should be taken into consideration, such as flexibility, adaptability, personal and financial stability, communication skills, health, ability to cooperate with colleagues and other characteristics as deemed appropriate.

3.7 Past recipients

Previous EEP Exchange Participants may apply for a subsequent year-long exchange if (a) five years of service is accrued since the previous Exchange before being eligible to make application for a subsequent year-long Exchange, (b) evidence is provided regarding the professional dissemination of learnings from, and impacts of, the previous Exchange, and (c) Active involvement with exchange promotions can be demonstrated.

3.8 Disclosure of Information

All applicants are required to provide complete and accurate information as requested. Omissions, misstatements, or failure to disclose relevant facts shall be considered misrepresentation and may result in denial of the application, removal from consideration, or other corrective actions deemed appropriate by the organization.

4.0 INTERVIEWS

4.1 Year-Long Exchanges

Must attend an in-person interview or if distance is a factor, a Skype/Zoom interview with the Exchange Liaison.

4.2 Short-Term Exchanges (in-person and e-exchanges)

Must be available for a telephone or Skype/Zoom interview with the Exchange Liaison.

5.0 ORIENTATIONS

5.1 Year-Long Exchanges

Must attend a full-day mandatory orientation on a date to be determined. Release time and substitution costs is to be covered by the Alberta school authority for the Alberta exchange educator and the incoming exchange educator.

5.2 Short-Term Exchanges (in-person and e-exchanges)

Must attend a mandatory orientation on a date to be determined, usually via Skype/Zoom after school.

6.0 EMPLOYMENT (applies to year-long exchanges)

6.1 Salary

Participants will remain in the employment of their own school district and will continue to have their salaries remitted to them while on exchange. They will, therefore, continue to be subject to the normal taxation, superannuation and social service contributions and will retain their rights and privileges as employees of their own educational authorities.

6.2 Benefits

Participants who are enrolled in the Alberta School Employee Benefit Plan (ASEBP) or other extended benefit plans, may continue to receive coverage, depending on their benefit plan regulations.

It is the responsibility of the applicant to understand their extended health benefits while on exchange.

6.3 Professionalism

Educator exchanges are professional obligations. Service in the exchange school/district must be undertaken with the same commitment as service in an Alberta/home country school. Any breach of this professional obligation has serious consequences.

6.4 Casual Sick Leave

In Alberta, the host school board is responsible for substitute educators for the first 20 days of approved leave for personal illness of the visiting exchange educator, and for similar approved and excusable absences. The sponsoring school authority is liable for the substitute educator costs for:

- all additional days of illness of its exchange teacher in excess of 20 days and
- all days of unexcused or unapproved absences of its own educator.

In the foreign destination, casual sick leave will adhere to the casual sick leave policy in the host school

6.5 Professional Leave

In Alberta, at least five (5) days' leave (with the host board covering the cost of substitute educators) should be allocated for professional development experience

of the exchange educator, in addition to participation in all regular professional development activities provided by the host school system. On the Alberta side, one (1) day of allotment is designated to release the incoming exchange educator to attend the orientation conference in Edmonton (date to be determined).

In the foreign destination, professional leave will adhere to the professional leave policy in the host school

6.6 Personal Leave

Where personal leave is approved by the host system, the actual cost of the substitute educator may be recovered from the sponsoring board, which, in turn, may recover costs from the salary of the educator under the conditions of its collective agreement.

6.7 Strikes

Exchange educators shall not get involved in any strike action.

6.7.1 Alberta Exchange Educators

In the case of a strike in the host district, the exchange educator will continue to be paid by the home district and thus is required to continue employment with the host district.

In the case of a strike in the home district, the exchange educator is deemed as not being directly involved in the strike. The educator will continue to receive a regular salary and shall continue employment with the host district.

6.7.2 Incoming Exchange Educators

In the case of a strike in the Alberta district, the exchange educator will continue to be paid by the home district and thus is required to continue employment with the Alberta district. The Alberta district shall assign the exchange educator duties as deemed appropriate. These duties shall not jeopardize the exchange educator's position in the school.

If a strike is imminent, the exchange educator shall notify the Educator Exchange Programs Educator Liaison of the Alberta Teachers' Association immediately.

The exchange educator shall report to their Alberta superintendent (or designate) for advice on how to proceed.

6.7.3 Recovery Costs

Any invoicing for the cost of replacement educators in host districts must be channeled through participating Ministries of Education (ie, board/ authority). In Alberta, all such issues should be discussed with the Educator Exchange Programs Educator Liaison at the Alberta Teachers' Association.

7.0 PREPARING FOR THE EXCHANGE (applies to year-long exchanges)

7.1 Teaching Assignments

Written job descriptions are to be provided at the time of application. Subsequent changes which may be to the disadvantage of the incoming exchange educator, should be avoided.

7.2 Teaching Buddy

A buddy should be assigned to orient the incoming exchange educator to ensure smooth integration into the Alberta school.

7.3 School Leader Buddy

A school leader should be appointed to assist the incoming exchange educator.

7.4 Arrival at Host School

Exchange educators should check in with their host school at least five (5) days prior to the school opening to become familiar with the school and planning provisions (for year long exchanges).

8.0 EXPENSES (applies to all types of exchanges)

The Government of Alberta and the ATA are pleased to offer a \$1,000 subsidy for Educator Exchange Programs for the first 50 matched participants who travel during the 2024/25, 2025/26 or 2026/27 school years. The subsidy is subject to eligibility and conditions. Please refer to the expense claim form for details, located in the resource section of the EEP website.

9.0 ACCOMMODATION (applies to year-long exchanges)

Educators are obliged to provide adequate housing for their exchange partner. Participants often provide their own homes, but this is optional, as other arrangements can be made. If accommodation is exchanged, the responsibility for mortgage or rent in Alberta and the cost of insurance for the home and its contents must continue to be borne by the Alberta participants.

Exchange accommodation must be complete with furnishings, bedding, appliances and facilities ready for immediate use by the visiting exchange educators and families.

Exchange educators are expected to maintain the home in good order and condition, and make good any damage incurred during their stay.

Accommodation exchanges are personal matters between the exchange educators. The Alberta Teachers' Association will take NO responsibility for any disputes between the parties. Written agreements are strongly recommended.

10.0 VEHICLES / TRANSPORTATION (applies to year-long exchanges)

Vehicle exchanges are not recommended, but may be negotiated privately. It is important, however, that the visiting exchange educator be able to travel easily to and from school or home. Transportation options and costs must be determined and clearly outlined.

Vehicle exchanges are personal matters between exchange teachers. The Alberta Teachers' Association will take no responsibility for any disputes between the parties. Written agreements are strongly recommended.

11.0 HEALTH CARE (applies to all in-person exchanges)

Participants are responsible for life and health care insurance for the duration of the exchange. Alberta Health Care will continue to cover Alberta participants while on exchange, but may require notification that the educator and any accommodating family members will be away. It is recommended that participants look into the benefits provided by their extended health care plan and notify them of the upcoming absence. It is the responsibility of the applicant to understand their extended health benefits while on exchange.

12.0 GUIDELINES IN THE EVENT OF EDUCATOR EXCHANGE BREAKDOWNS (applies to year-long exchanges)

- 12.1 If any exchange breaks down after commencement of the exchange term, the assignment of the exchange partner will be protected for the full exchange period, either by continuation of the original assignment or, if the exchange partner agrees, by relocation to another assignment in the host district.
- 12.2 When an exchange educator, with prior approval and for reasons acceptable to the authorities involved (local and government) returns prematurely, they should receive full benefits of regular employment.
- 12.3 When an exchange participant returns, because of personal reasons, without prior approval of the authorities involved, the employer and the authorities have no obligation to continue employment or benefits.
- 12.4 In cases 12.2 and 12.3, the sending authority will cover full or equivalent costs of a replacement educator for the remainder of the exchange term.
- 12.5 An educator whose exchange assignment is prematurely terminated as a consequence of external factors should have priority for a new exchange in the next program year.
- 12.6 All educators must sign a legally binding agreement of service during the exchange period.
- 12.7 In the event of an exchange breakdown, the Alberta educator must consult with their employers in Alberta and the Educator Exchange Programs Teacher Liaison of the Alberta Teachers' Association. Termination of an exchange without proper approvals can jeopardize continued employment.

13.0 CANCELLATION OF EXCHANGE (applies to all exchanges)

13.1 Participants must accept that a match may be cancelled at the last minute due to unforeseen circumstances. In the event of cancellation, EEP cannot guarantee another exchange placement. Trip cancellation insurance is advisable.

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION AND PROTECTION OF PRIVACY

Information collected as part of the Educator Exchange Programs will be treated with due attention to the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) legislation. The information provides the basis upon which the best possible match may be secured for participants. This information will be treated with respect for confidentiality and shared only with the exchange officials in possible destinations, and with the prospective district, school leader and partner when an exchange is proposed.

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