

The edge of the world

One teacher's Antarctica journey

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2026

Resolutions
Bulletin

See insert.

ATA NEWS

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YEAR of the HORSE



CHRISTINE CHEUNG

Students from Calgary's Highwood School celebrate the Year of the Horse with a dynamic school concert.



Un défi gratifiant :

être enseignante francophone en Alberta

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"Historic investment"

Education budget increase a meaningful step

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A future built on truth, not fear

Every child deserves free public education

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For teachers, by teachers

Teachers' conventions strengthen the profession

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Global unrest reaches into Alberta classrooms



EDITORIAL

Kristine Wilkinson
ATA News
Editor-in-Chief

We have all heard about the air raid drills of the 1950s, when students were instructed to hide under their desks in case of an atomic bomb. Even then, it must have felt like a futile attempt at safety. When I was in Grade 8 learning about the Cold War, I remember being genuinely afraid. At that age, the threat felt immediate and personal, as though a nuclear bomb might truly be part of my future. With today's heightened political unrest, it's hard not to imagine that our students are feeling something similar. And all of it inevitably finds its way into classrooms across Alberta.

For many Alberta students, the world doesn't feel as big anymore.

Their phones, just like ours, buzz constantly with updates: some real, some exaggerated, some misleading and some outright false. Global conflict shows up between math homework reminders and makeup tutorials on TikTok. While credible journalism exists, it competes with other sources that are less reliable.

Teachers in Alberta are seeing the effects. Students arrive at school already carrying anxiety, worried about wars they've encountered online or repeating misinformation that spread overnight through group chats. It's not that they are trying to be dramatic; it's that their digital environment rarely distinguishes between fact and fear.

At the same time, Alberta classrooms include students whose families have fled conflict zones. These learners bring lived experiences that are both heartbreaking and courageous. For them, safety and stability at school are not abstract concepts—they are

essential. Teachers often become a trusted adult who helps students feel grounded, welcomed and connected. That role exists on top of teaching the curriculum; teachers are supporting a wide range of needs in their classrooms.

Political conversations have become part of the daily backdrop, whether in the gym, at Tim Hortons or scrolling before bed. Twenty years ago, politics often felt like something that adults debated quietly. Now it is woven into memes, trends and influencer commentary. Adolescents are encountering strong opinions, half-truths and emotionally charged narratives long before they have the skills to evaluate them.

This is where teachers matter more than ever.

In our classrooms, we help students slow down, ask better questions and figure out what is real. We explore context and credibility. We offer perspective, critical thinking and

reassurance—things an algorithm can't provide. Social studies becomes not just a subject but a lifeline that helps students process a complicated world. And sometimes, the most important thing we offer is stability: a calm adult who can say, "Let's talk about what's going on."

Political unrest may start oceans away, but misinformation, fear and confusion can reach Alberta students instantly. By being present and informed, teachers can help classrooms remain places of safety and clarity—places where students can learn, think and grow, even when the world feels uncertain.

Once again, it becomes clear that teachers are far more than "curriculum deliverers." In uncertain times, they are the steady human connection students need most. ■

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

What is the *Teaching Profession Act* and why does it matter?



Q & A

Dennis Theobald
ATA Executive
Secretary

Question: I've heard ATA leadership refer to the "TPA." What is the TPA and why does it matter to teachers?

Answer: The TPA or *Teaching Profession Act* is a foundational piece of legislation, originally passed in 1935, that recognized teaching as a profession and established the Alberta Teachers' Association (ATA) as the organization responsible for representing certificated teachers in the province.

The TPA functions as the constitution of the ATA, setting out the core objects of the Association. These objects mandate the Association to

- **advance and promote education** by actively supporting the cause of education in the province of Alberta;
- **improve the teaching profession** by promoting quality teacher education, providing professional development, improving professional working conditions (including compensation) and assisting members in the performance of their duties;
- **arouse public interest** by

increasing public knowledge and interest in educational affairs, including the aims and value of public education and the need for adequate financial support for schooling; and

- **cooperate with other organizations** and work with other bodies in Canada and abroad that share similar objectives.

I'll note that when the TPA was originally passed, it also empowered the Association to police the conduct and, later, the competence of members. The Association resolutely performed this function until, in 2020, it was stripped away by then-Education Minister Adriana LaGrange and the United Conservative government of then-Premier Jason Kenney. As a consequence of this unilateral and entirely unjustifiable decision, the regulation of teachers was taken away from the profession and handed over to the Alberta Teaching Profession Commission.

In addition to establishing the objects of the Association, the TPA also sets out mandatory, active membership in the Association for all certificated teachers (including principals and other school leaders) employed by the province's public, separate and francophone school authorities. Only certificated teachers working as superintendents, deputy superintendents or in nonteaching central office roles are exempt from having to maintain active

membership. To use "union" language, this establishes the Association as a "closed shop."

Finally, the TPA sets out the fundamental organizational structure and processes of the Association. For example, it establishes the representative assembly, provincial executive council and, for yours truly, the office of the executive secretary, defining the respective roles and authority of each in the governance and administration of the organization.

Having the Association established by legislation is not unusual; in fact, it's typical of professional organizations in Alberta. It is, however, a mixed blessing because the government, as we saw with respect to the loss of the ATA's professional regulatory function, can act unilaterally to amend the statute.

I also want to make an important historical point here: the establishment of the Association by the TPA was not a gift given to teachers by the government. Instead, it was the product of almost two decades of organizing by teachers across Alberta led by the founders of the Alberta Teachers' Alliance.

The TPA was originally passed by the United Farmers of Alberta (UFA) government in 1935 and amended in 1936 by the new Social Credit government of William Aberhart to add the provision for mandatory membership. Immediately before Aberhart became premier, he had

been the principal of Crescent Heights High School in Calgary, but, along with a number of his colleagues, had been fired from his position by the Calgary Board of Education. Some have been tempted to suggest that the Association was created in a top-down fashion by a teacher turned premier. This is an ahistorical misrepresentation and disrespects the enormous grassroots efforts of teacher leaders, most notably union organizer John Barnett, who drove his Nash Dart on dirt roads between schools all over the province, signing up teachers to join and then maintain their membership in the nascent Alberta Teachers' Alliance, originally organized in 1917. It also ignores the growing depression-era conflicts between employer boards and teachers that had alarmed the province's politicians, leading both the UFA and Social Credit governments to support the passage of legislation that would bring greater stability to the education system.

In understanding the origins and fundamental purpose of the TPA, one should remember that for teachers, the act was and remains, however imperfectly, the product and means of confirming teachers' professionalism and agency. ■

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



Supporting teachers with disabilities benefits the profession



VIEWPOINTS

John Williamson
ATA Teachers With Disabilities Network lead

Supporting teachers with disabilities matters, both for our profession and for public education.

I work with the Teachers With Disabilities (TWD) Network, one of the Alberta Teachers' Association's pilot Diversity Equity Networks. Only about three per cent of members self-identify as teachers with a disability, while many estimate that one in five people has a disability. What explains this discrepancy? While it can be examined through many lenses, one explanation is possible: stigma and stereotypes remain powerful.

Even when teachers view themselves as having a disability, many are not in the habit of disclosing or discussing their diagnoses. In the TWD Network, we regularly hear about fears of material consequences: being ruled out for teaching jobs or promotion, workplace exclusion, or being deemed incapable of duties and assignments that genuinely interest them.

Neurodivergent communities, especially among people with autism, use a word for the deliberate attempt to present in a social context as neurotypical or nondisabled: "masking." Another phrase we hear often is *imposter syndrome*, the need to pretend to fit effectively into a role one occupies, often very competently, while living with the fear of being found out as not belonging.

Ironically, imposter syndrome can cut both ways. Some teachers express interest in attending TWD meetings

but worry they are not "disabled enough," despite having symptoms that tangibly affect their working lives. To clarify, the TWD Network welcomes everyone, including allies. We are not in the enterprise of triaging needs or creating hierarchies. Every working teacher who identifies with a disability—or who prefers an adjacent term such as their specific diagnosis—adds to the collective effort to better understand and support teachers with disabilities in Alberta's public education system.

Part of the challenge lies in the word itself. *Disability* grew to prominence through clinical practices measuring a perceived lack of "typical" functioning; the Latin prefix *dis-* even implies a lack. People-first language (for example, "a teacher with ADHD") has become an institutional norm to amplify the person rather than the impairment. Terms such as *neurodiverse* and *neurodivergent* describe differences like autism, ADHD and learning disabilities without suggesting they are "lesser."

Many of us in the network understand disability not as a solely internal state but through social- and rights-based models. Individuals may have functional impairments, but society has an obligation to eliminate arbitrary and unconsidered barriers that restrict full participation in public life, including in workplaces. In this sense, *disability* can become a positive term that represents self-advocacy;

activism; and the pursuit of equity, pride and community.

Another aversion surrounding disability is the fear of reliance on other people or on technology. But this overlooks how all humans are interdependent, tool-using beings. Computers, cars, sidewalks and microphones, for example, all help us surpass our natural limits. It tends to be only when support registers as "different" that aversion manifests.

When we declutter these conceptual barriers, the importance of teachers with disabilities becomes clearer. In the short life of the TWD Network, we have met excellent teachers whose greatest barrier is often limited self-confidence. The confident presence of self-advocating teachers who are neurodivergent and/or have physical disabilities helps make educational spaces more accessible for students, parents and colleagues alike. Further, teachers with disabilities provide meaningful role modelling for students who rarely see themselves reflected at the front of the classroom (though, notably, some teachers have struggled to access the very accommodations their students receive).

Anyone who has been taught by a teacher who truly loves their subject knows how contagious that enthusiasm can be. Many neurodivergent teachers can bring particularly intense interests to their teaching, and that depth of engagement can spark students' curiosity. Traits such as hyperfocus can also, at times, be advantageous in helping manage the volume and complexity of the job. While the casual appropriation of diagnostic language ("I'm so OCD today") is unhelpful, it is also true that many

feelings, traits and experiences associated with disability exist on a continuum. As the universal design model suggests, making accessible workplaces with these realities in mind benefits everyone.

On a personal note, though my life may appear pretty ordinary and I carry social privilege, I have five disability diagnoses. Each has made me more vulnerable to institutional barriers, but each has also enriched my teaching practice and my experience of life. Disability runs through our families and communities in ways that are often invisible. It impacts us all, and greater support and recognition of teachers with disabilities are good for our profession.

What changes when teachers no longer feel pressure to mask who they are? We gain colleagues who can participate fully and confidently. We gain professional conversations shaped by a wider range of lived experience. We gain school communities that are truly a place for all. ■

John Williamson has been in the teaching profession for 29 years and holds a doctorate of philosophy, with a focus on inclusive education. He dedicates this article to those working to support the ATA's DENs, especially Andrea, Christina and Tawny.

The Teachers with Disabilities DEN is a provincial network that provides a safe and brave space for teachers with disabilities. For more information on the DEN and its meetings, please email TWD@ata.ab.ca.

FOR THE RECORD

“ Investments in school infrastructure are investments in Alberta's future. ”

— Minister of Infrastructure Martin Long
in a March 2 statement on new school builds



YOUR VIEWS

In honour of Alberta Francophonie Month, we asked teachers to share their favourite French dish.

- f Stephanie Jean**
FRICOT! VIVE L'ACADIE
- f Kevin Heppell**
La crêpe jambon-fromage, une Parisienne classique avec gruyère et emmental. That in one hand and a Berliner döner in the other is bliss.
- f Jennifer Lissa**
So many choices I could never just pick one!!!! Duck confit, pain au chocolat, tourtière, mille feuilles, chèvre/brie/Roquefort/etc. with olive tapenade and baguette, WINE.
- f Marie-Pier Paquin Perreault**
De la vraie poutine du Québec !
- f Caroline Boudreault**
La tourtière du Lac St-Jean
- f Karin Deschamps**
Sucre à la crème!
- f Michelle Dickie**
Pouding chômeur is a favourite!
- f Claudie-Mireille Fortin-Olson**
Snails!!!
- f Genevieve Clarke**
Les pets de sœur!
- f Annie Jacques**
Les crêpes Bretonnes et le boeuf Wellington
- f Melissa Henke-Lambert**
Croissants
- f Annie McKittrick**
Soupe à l'oignon
- f Claudie-Mireille Fortin-Olson**
Pattes de grenouilles !!
- f Dana Brittany**
Poutine! With the actual big cheese, not shredded
- o James Spragins**
Pain au chocolat ou poulet au lait
- o Alyx Urkow**
Tourtière
- o Mitchell Parent**
Pommes aligot
- o Eugénie McCallan**
Une bonne raclette
- o Claire Quinlan Sabo**
Crème brûlée!
- o Shannon Murphy**
Brie cheese
- o Nikayla Morrell**
Simple: baguette, Brie, salami or prosciutto and, optionally, a bit of jam or honey!
- o Kathleen Schell**
Pâté chinois

Education budget increase a meaningful step

Lindsay Yakimyshyn
ATA News Managing Editor

It was a significant day for public education in Alberta, according to Alberta Teachers' Association (ATA) president Jason Schilling.

On February 25, prior to tabling Budget 2026, the Government of Alberta announced that the education budget would be increasing by \$722 million, or more than seven per cent. Touted by the province as a "historic investment" in Alberta's education system, \$10.8 billion—about \$54 million per school day—has been allotted for education operational funding.

"Investing in the next generation of Albertans remains the utmost priority for our government," said Premier Danielle Smith, making the funding announcement. She added that the government would continue to increase education funding over each of the next three years to address the challenges facing Alberta's education system.

Also increasing is the budget line for independent schools and private early childhood services operators. At about 15 per cent, the increase is notable; however, the source of the increase, whether enrolment growth or funding formula changes, remains unclear. Greater clarity is expected when the

Budget 2026 Funding Manual becomes available, likely in early April.

While details on the education budget are forthcoming, Minister of Education and Childcare Demetrios Nicolaides shared that the three priorities for the new education funding are supporting classroom staff, strengthening supports for students who need it most and addressing classroom complexity. In particular, \$355 million is being allocated to address classroom complexity. Further, the budget expects an addition of 1,600 teachers this year.

The ATA acknowledged the significance of the announcement, with Schilling saying that this investment represents a meaningful step toward addressing the challenging learning conditions in Alberta schools.

"The government has announced a historic investment in our classrooms, one that recognizes the urgency of the crisis teachers have been describing for years," said Schilling.

Ensuring promises are kept

The announcement follows historic labour action taken by teachers in fall 2025, which raised issues about teaching and learning conditions.

"[Teachers] told us loud and clear that the status quo was not sustainable and we listened," said Smith.

Nicolaides likewise said that the

investment into education responded to teacher concerns, noting that the province heard "the largest expression of teacher voices" during the strike.

"I think our investment today and through Budget 2026 [...] demonstrates that we're listening very carefully, but more importantly we're taking teacher concerns and parent concerns very seriously and acting on those concerns," Nicolaides said. "I do firmly believe it can be a strong demonstration of our intent to listen and respond effectively to the challenges we're seeing."

Schilling spoke on the importance of teachers' advocacy efforts, tying them to the budget increase, and thanking members for standing together and speaking up this past year.

"Your courage, your advocacy and your unwavering commitment to your students during the challenges of this past fall have changed the course of public education in this province."

He added that this funding increase results from not only teacher unity, but also the community's vocal support for public education.

"This investment in Alberta's classrooms belongs to every teacher who shared their story and every Albertan who stood beside them," Schilling said.

While recognizing the significance of the funding increase, Schilling

also emphasized that meaningful change will be measured not by announcements, but by the day-to-day realities in classrooms. For the ATA, the focus now shifts to how the funding makes its way into classrooms and whether it translates into tangible improvements for teachers and students across the province.

"Today, we acknowledge what we have achieved together. Tomorrow, we begin the work of ensuring these promises are kept," Schilling said. ■

Breakdown of Budget 2026 commitments

- Hiring 1,600 teachers by 2026–27
- \$300 million in new classroom complexity funding, in addition to previously announced amounts
- A further \$55 million added to the classroom complexity grant
- A three per cent increase to base instruction funding, as well as transportation and technology grants
- Six per cent increases to program unit funding, moderate language delay, English as an additional language and francisation grants
- Three per cent increases to First Nations, Inuit and Métis; refugee; specialized learning supports; and francophone equivalency grants
- A five per cent increase to plant operations and maintenance funding
- A five per cent reduction to board and system administration funding



CHRIS SCHWARZ/GOVERNMENT OF ALBERTA

The education budget was shared during a press conference on February 25.



LINDSAY YAKIMYSHYN

ATA president Jason Schilling responded to the education budget announcement the day it was released.

Government announces \$143 million for complexity teams

Mark Milne
ATA News Staff

On February 12, the Government of Alberta released the findings of their *Alberta Classroom Insights Survey*, which revealed that thousands of classrooms across the province are struggling with "high complexity." The results prompted a \$143 million emergency investment from the government to deploy specialized support teams into schools.

"During the strike in October, many teachers and parents raised concerns over the issue of complexity in classrooms," said Premier Danielle Smith at the government's media conference. "Minister Nicolaides and I are committed to listening and acting on their concerns."

This is first time in six years that the province has collected a class-by-class breakdown of learning conditions. The study flagged more than 4,000 classrooms as "highly complex," a designation based on a combination of student density, specialized learning needs and chronic behavioural challenges.

Demetrios Nicolaides, minister of Education and Childcare, identified

655 high-priority schools that will be the first to receive help. The centerpiece of the government's response is the creation of 476 classroom complexity teams.

Each team will consist of one teacher and two educational assistants. These teams are designed to provide immediate, in-class relief by assisting with English language-learners, supporting students with special needs and managing disruptive behaviours that have increasingly strained the learning environment.

The complexity teams are part of a broader \$10.8 billion education budget for 2026, which includes a commitment to hire 5,000 new teachers and support staff over the next three years. Of the initial 476 complexity teams, 171 are slated for Calgary and 143 for Edmonton, with the remainder distributed to rural and smaller urban districts.

The Alberta Teachers' Association (ATA) called the funding a "meaningful step," noting that the government's data reflects the findings of their own member surveys. ATA president Jason Schilling credited "teacher unity" for moving the needle on the issue but expressed skepticism regarding the speed of implementation.

"This shift is a direct result of the relentless advocacy by teachers, bolstered by parents and communities who collectively demanded an end to the unsustainable status quo," said Schilling.

While the funding for complexity in K–6 is a welcome first step, Schilling says the classes for Grades 7–12 are also under extreme pressure. "We know from our own research and our pulse survey data that we released in January that some of our largest classrooms are in high school."

Nicolaides noted that while the current focus is on elementary schools to ensure early intervention, the Class Size and Complexity Cabinet Committee will continue to monitor junior and senior high schools to address rising pressures in those higher grades. The premier also emphasized that the government aims to provide the necessary supports to address complexity.

"Our message to teachers and to school administrators is this: We have heard you. We're here for you, and help is on the way," said Smith. "We want you back doing what you do best—teaching, providing leadership and shaping the next generation of young Albertans in one of the world's top ranking school systems."

Schilling says schools need to see the immediate deployment of these complexity teams to the classrooms, as well as concrete, sustainable plans for the future.

"The ATA will closely monitor the deployment of these new resources to ensure they result in real improvements for students and teachers," said Schilling. "And it is now the responsibility of school boards to act swiftly so that new staffing is in place without delay." ■

The list of schools that will be receiving new classroom complexity teams is available at abteach.cc/complexity-school-data.





A future built on truth, not fear

Every child deserves free public education

I was fortunate this year to introduce Tim Caulfield and Carol Off at the Calgary City Teachers' Convention. Their session cut straight to a pervasive problem: misinformation breeds mistruths, and mistruths erode trust. We all see and feel this every day. As teachers, I would argue, we tend to feel it more. When people no longer trust institutions, they stop trusting each other and that's when policy gets driven by fear, and semantics become increasingly important.

Caulfield and Off reminded us that misinformation doesn't just live online. It shapes our daily conversations, election platforms and even government referendums. In education, we see it manifest in false claims about what teachers teach, who belongs in our schools and what public education is meant to be. And right now, the misinformation and mistruths around education and immigration are colliding in ways that should alarm every Albertan.

One of the most dangerous misconceptions gaining traction is that children's access to public education should depend on their immigration status. That idea is not just cruel; it is reckless. The Alberta Teachers' Association has clear policy: regardless of immigration status, children should have access to free public education.

Schools are not border checkpoints. They are places of learning, safety and belonging.

If that principle is abandoned, we could see thousands of children removed from classrooms. Thousands. That is not just a number; it is a generation of young people pushed out of opportunity. These are families and children who came here for a better life—who believed in Canada and in the promise that education opens doors. Denying children access to school because of paperwork does not solve anything. It simply guarantees more poverty, more marginalization and more division. Caulfield and Off argued that this is the aim of misinformation—to keep us divided.

Caulfield and Off challenged us to push back with evidence and courage. Education has always been on the front line of dispelling lies about what happens in classrooms, about who our students are, and about what kind of society we want to be.

Misinformation thrives in silence. We can't be neutral when mistruth harms our profession and our students. We know that learning thrives in light. If referendums are going to shape our future, they must be built on truth, not fear. And the truth is simple: every child in Alberta deserves a teacher, a desk and a chance. ■

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



Substitute teachers recognized during annual appreciation week

ATA News Staff

Each day across Alberta, substitute teachers step into classrooms to keep student learning moving forward. Their contributions are being recognized during the annual Substitute Teachers' Appreciation Week, March 9–13.

Teachers, school leaders, schools, locals and divisions are encouraged to mark the week by writing personalized thank-you notes, highlighting substitute teachers in newsletters or on social media, or recognizing them at staff meetings.

ATA president Jason Schilling said substitute teachers are an essential part of Alberta's public education system.

"Substitute teachers step in when their colleagues are away to provide continuity, professionalism and care to our students," said Schilling. "They are vital to our profession."

The Alberta Teachers' Association (ATA) supports substitute teachers year-round through professional learning and networking opportunities, including the annual

Substitute Teachers' Conference held each fall. Additional supports include online resources, access to teachers' conventions, scholarships, free membership in one specialist council, ATA publications and library services, as well as consultation and professional support.

"Recognizing substitute teachers during this week is important," Schilling added, "but so is ensuring they feel valued and supported throughout the year." ■

Learn more about Substitute Teachers' Appreciation week and the ATA supports and services available to substitute teachers on the ATA website at teachers.ab.ca/teaching-career/substitute-teachers.

DID YOU KNOW?

Active ATA membership for substitute teachers begins on their first day of work in a school year and continues through the end of that school year.

RED for ED!

There's a new way to gear up in support of Alberta teachers and public education. Teachers and supporters can now order mugs, toques, shirts and sweaters with such logos as "#Red4EdAB" and "I support AB teachers."

The collection is available now and will continue to change throughout the year. You can browse the latest apparel and accessories by visiting abteach.cc/ATAStore.



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.



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CALLING ALL MEMBERS

Apply to serve on an ATA committee!

The committees

Each year, a number of practising teachers are selected to serve on Association committees as well as to represent the Association on boards and committees of other organizations and provincial bodies.

The commitment

Committee members attend the committee's meetings, prepared to speak—from their perspective as a field member—to the forces affecting the respective committee's work.

Travel and incidental costs, as well as release time, are covered to enable committee members to attend meetings.

The 2025/26 list of opportunities and application form are available on the ATA website under Advocacy > Volunteer.



The deadline for applications is **April 7.**

The ATA embraces diversity and inclusion and is committed to representing members belonging to equity-seeking groups. Members belonging to equity-seeking groups are encouraged to apply.



All applicants are encouraged to reach out to their district representative(s) to better understand the work that Association committees undertake.

If you have any questions, please contact Lindsay Yakimyshyn at lindsay.yakimyshyn@ata.ab.ca or 1-800-232-7208.

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Un défi gratifiant : être enseignante francophone en Alberta



Pétronille Makuetché
Enseignante

Avant de venir vivre en Alberta, je ne savais pas qu'il y avait des défis considérables du fait francophone. Née au Cameroun et ayant vécu en France, cette problématique ne se posait pas pour moi. Être une enseignante francophone en Alberta, c'est comme faire pousser un baobab dans le sable : il faut de la patience et une foi profonde dans ses racines.

Au quotidien, j'accomplis de petits gestes qui me permettent de contribuer à faire vivre le français en classe et à l'école : parler en français, valoriser les façons de s'exprimer des élèves, présenter des modèles inspirants francophones, diffuser de la musique francophone en fond sonore et célébrer les événements francophones. Ces actions demandent de l'énergie, de la passion et de la créativité. Ma vie en tant qu'enseignante francophone en Alberta est une expérience enrichissante.

Au cours de l'année scolaire, je travaille avec les élèves à travers ces petits gestes, et progressivement, ils reprennent confiance en eux. Ce que je trouve gratifiant, c'est de voir les élèves dont le français est absent à la maison s'approprier leur identité francophone, surtout lorsqu'ils reçoivent chez eux quelqu'un qui parle français. Un élève est venu me voir, tout joyeux et fier : « Madame, on a reçu les amis de mes parents cette fin de semaine. J'ai parlé français avec leur garçon parce qu'il ne comprend pas bien l'anglais ». J'ai ressenti une grande fierté. C'est dans ces moments que je réalise que mes petits gestes vont au-delà de notre communauté scolaire.

Mon travail en tant qu'enseignante en milieu minoritaire, bien qu'enrichissant, présente de nombreux défis : le manque cruel de ressources pédagogiques en français adaptées à notre contexte,

l'insuffisance de structures et de financement pour les activités francophones, et parfois la solitude professionnelle lorsqu'on est le seul membre du personnel francophone dans une école majoritairement anglophone. Je dois souvent encourager les parents à maintenir le français à la maison et les inviter à inscrire leurs enfants aux activités francophones.

Une fois installée en Alberta, j'ai découvert que la francophonie était un enjeu politique et linguistique. Il ne s'agissait pas seulement d'une question de langue, mais surtout d'identité et de droits. L'éducation francophone permet aux jeunes de se reconnaître dans une culture et de comprendre qu'ils font partie intégrante de l'histoire du Canada. Elle leur offre la possibilité d'être bilingue. C'est là que se trouve, pour moi, l'importance même de l'éducation francophone en milieu minoritaire ainsi que la motivation pour y contribuer à travers l'enseignement.

Un élève me disait qu'il n'aime pas parler français. Je lui ai souvent expliqué les avantages d'une éducation en français. Je ne me suis pas découragée. Nous avons travaillé ensemble, et j'ai découvert qu'il appréciait mon cours d'alimentation où nous préparions des pâtisseries françaises en écoutant de la musique francophone. Ses parents ont décidé de visiter la France. Ne parlant pas français, ils comptaient sur leur enfant. Une fois en France, l'élève s'est rendu compte de l'importance de maîtriser la langue du pays. Il est devenu le traducteur de ses parents. À leur retour, il est venu me voir : « Madame, j'ai parlé français pendant tout mon voyage. C'était vraiment bien. Mes parents ne comprenaient pas, et c'est moi qui traduisais ». Il en était fier.

Ce jour-là, j'ai compris que l'éducation francophone venait de semer une graine dans le parcours de cet élève et que, même en milieu majoritairement anglophone, la culture francophone peut résister et permettre de préserver son identité si elle est portée avec patience, fierté et résilience. ■

Fulfilling and challenging What it's like to be a francophone teacher in Alberta

Pétronille Makuetché
Teacher

Prior to settling in Alberta, I was unaware that its francophone community faced considerable challenges. I was born in Cameroon and have lived in France, so I had never encountered this issue. Being a francophone teacher in Alberta is much like growing a baobab tree in the sand: you need patience and deep faith in your roots.

I do little things every day that help to bring French to life in the classroom and at school: I speak French, validate students' ways of expressing themselves, highlight inspiring francophone role models, play French music in the background and celebrate francophone events. These actions require energy, passion and creativity. My life as a francophone teacher in Alberta is a rewarding experience.

Over the course of the school year, I do these small things in working with students, and they gradually regain their self-confidence. What I find gratifying is to see students who don't speak French at home take ownership of their francophone identity, especially when a French-speaking visitor comes to their home. One time, an excited student approached me and proudly announced: "Madame, we had my parents' friends over this weekend. I spoke French with their son because he doesn't understand English very well." I felt very proud. At times like these, I realize that my small gestures have an impact that goes beyond our school community.

My work as a teacher in a minority setting, while fulfilling, presents many challenges: an acute lack of context-appropriate French-language teaching resources, inadequate infrastructure and funding for francophone activities, and at times, the professional

isolation that goes with being the only francophone on staff in a predominantly English-speaking school. I often have to encourage parents to maintain the use of French at home and invite them to register their children for francophone activities.

After settling in Alberta, I discovered that there are political and linguistic issues surrounding the francophone community. It's not just about language—more than that, it's about identity and rights. Francophone education enables young people to connect with a culture and understand that they are an integral part of Canada's history. It gives them the chance to be bilingual. To me, this illustrates the true importance of francophone education in a minority setting and provides the motivation to contribute to the cause through teaching.

Case in point: a student would tell me that he didn't like speaking French. I had often explained to him the advantages of a French-language education and wouldn't let this discourage me. As we worked together, I discovered that he enjoyed my Food Studies class, where we would prepare French pastries while listening to French music. When his parents decided to travel to France, they had to rely on their child, since they did not speak French. Once they arrived in France, the student realized how important it was to be fluent in the local language. He became his parents' interpreter. When they returned, he came to see me and said, "Madame, I spoke French during the entire trip. It went really well. My parents didn't understand, and I translated for them." He was quite proud.

That day, I understood that francophone education had just planted a seed on this student's path and that, even in a predominantly English-speaking environment, francophone culture can endure and francophone identity can be maintained with sufficient patience, pride and resilience. ■

Mars est le Mois de la francophonie en Alberta, une célébration annuelle qui vise à :

- souligner la présence et la diversité des communautés francophones et francophiles;
- promouvoir le français en Alberta;
- mettre en valeur le travail des organismes francophones;
- faire connaître les initiatives communautaires et gouvernementales.

Cet article fait partie du dossier thématique sur l'éducation francophone en Alberta publié dans le numéro d'hiver de l'ATA Magazine. Vous trouverez ce numéro ici.



<https://abteach.cc/ATAMagazineFrancophone>



March is Alberta Francophonie Month, an annual celebration that aims to

- highlight the presence and diversity of francophone and francophile communities,
- promote the French language in Alberta,
- showcase the work of francophone organizations, and
- raise awareness of community and government initiatives.

This article appears in the winter issue of the ATA Magazine as part of a collection of stories on francophone education in Alberta. Find it here.



<https://abteach.cc/ATAMagazineFrancophone>

Video testimonials amplify teachers' voices

Lindsay Yakimyshyn
ATA News Managing Editor

Smaller class sizes. More supports for students. Resources. That's what would help make teaching more manageable, according to members who provided testimonials during teachers' conventions.

At this year's conventions, dozens of teachers recorded video testimonials answering the question, "What do you need in your classroom to make it manageable and why?" Some also shared what they wanted the public to know about the effects of Bill 2, the *Back to School Act*, and the notwithstanding clause on teachers.

With video testimonials shared on the social media pages of the Alberta Teachers' Association, this project aimed to amplify teachers' voices and increase understanding of the state of the teaching profession and public education in Alberta. Excerpts from a selection of testimonials are included below.

What would make classrooms more manageable?

Smaller class sizes

"I have one class of 26 and one class of 38, and the difference there, it's huge. With 26, I feel like I'm able to provide way more to my students on an individual basis."

"With 35 students in my French class, students do not have a chance to practice talking with me, so I can't

make corrections. It is not possible!"

"In kindergarten, it's their first school experience, so allowing each child to come in and feel loved and accepted and excited to be there is really important, and it's hard when you've got 30 five year olds in a classroom."

Supports to address complexity

"I would like to have more targeted supports for my students with additional needs and also to eliminate multilevel classrooms."



Teacher video testimonials voice concerns on class sizes, complexity and the effects of the notwithstanding clause.

"[As a rural teacher], some of the things I'd like to address are the complexities that we face every day. We're losing teachers yet we have kids who have a reading level of kindergarten in Grade 7 and kids who have a reading level of Grade 12 in Grade 7. How do you teach that whole range? We need the help for that. We need the understanding that we're doing our best with the limited supplies we have."

Resources

"I need more resources where I can grab and go, because I have 31 kids in my class and 300 students to teach—I don't have a whole lot of time."

What about Bill 2 and the notwithstanding clause?

Mental health and morale

"The notwithstanding clause affected teachers being stripped of their rights, which really impacted their mental health in being forced back into the classroom."

"The effects of Bill 2 I think have been devastating to, I think, the majority of teachers. Being legislated back has demoralized teachers."

Teachers' rights

"I feel like I've lost all my rights. I had no choice [but to] go back to the classroom. Did I miss my kids? Absolutely. I'm not there for myself; I'm there for the kids. However, the removal of choice for teachers to go back to the classroom was wrong. The lack of negotiation was wrong."

Update on the legal challenge of Bill 2

Under Bill 2, teachers were legislated to return to work on October 29, 2025, after striking for 16 work days. Bill 2 also prohibited teachers from striking for the duration of the agreement, and suspended local bargaining while the agreement is in effect. The bill outlined significant penalties for noncompliance, including fines of up to \$500 per teacher per day and \$500,000 per day for the ATA.

On November 6, the ATA filed an application with the Court of King's Bench seeking to overturn sections of Bill 2 and requested an injunction to halt enforcement of the legislation while the legal challenge proceeds. The matter of the injunction was heard during the first week of March, with a decision expected later in the month. Updates will be shared with members as available.

"The use of the notwithstanding clause was very hard for me. Yes, my rights were injured, but on a philosophical level, there is something that was broken in the cavalier use of the clause and subsequent uses of that clause. I do not know how that damage can be repaired. I hope, I pray that someone is able to." ■








<https://abteach.cc/edtrust>

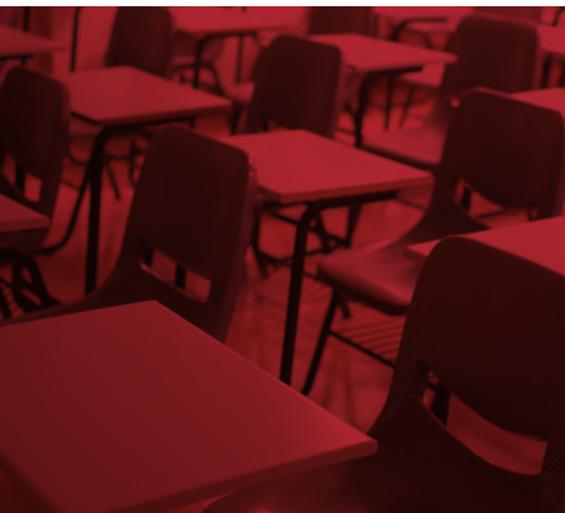
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Application Deadline: May 8, 2026, at 4 PM

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AR-ETR-43-3 2026





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COMM-387-7a 2026

The volunteer power behind Alberta's teachers' conventions

Danny Maas
ATA Coordinator, Professional Development

Teachers' conventions bring together teachers to learn and share, to collaborate and be inspired, and to connect and reflect as professionals on these two guaranteed days of self-determined professional development. Keynote rooms were buzzing, and thousands of conversations unfolded about professional practice, curriculum and the realities of today's classrooms.

What most members don't see is that those two days represent nearly a full year of voluntary leadership and many hundreds of hours of planning and preparation.

Across Alberta, nine teachers' convention associations work year-round to design and deliver these world-class professional development events. Each convention board is made up of between 10 and 40 volunteer teachers representing member locals. Within each board, approximately

eight executive members take on additional leadership and planning responsibilities to ensure the annual event runs smoothly. These responsibilities include leading planning meetings, guiding budgets, designing programs and exhibit spaces, negotiating contracts, facilitating communications, working with audiovisual companies and more. Almost all this volunteer work takes place outside of school hours.

In total, hundreds of volunteers across the province contribute their time and expertise to make the conventions happen. The scale is remarkable.

This past year, more than 2,200 sessions were offered to the more than 40,000 members who attended across the province. These include internationally recognized keynote speakers as well as a significant number of sessions delivered by fellow ATA members who are classroom teachers, specialists and school leaders sharing their practice with colleagues. Sessions are offered at many conventions by ATA specialist councils, local professional development (PD)

committee members, ATA Association instructors and administrator instructors, Indigenous Education PD facilitators and ATA staff.

Most teachers are surprised to hear that the cost for hosting such a two-day event works out to around \$100 per member, with convention boards demonstrating exceptional financial stewardship. Teachers' conventions are a powerful example of professional autonomy in action and demonstrate what is possible when teachers lead their own learning.

The strength of the Association's teachers' convention model lies in this volunteer foundation. Teachers' conventions are not outsourced. They are not imposed. They are built by teachers who understand the realities of the classrooms and who are committed to supporting their fellow colleagues across the province.

To every teacher who serves on a convention board, whether as a volunteer, a committee member or an executive member: thank you. Your leadership ensures that for two days each February and March, Alberta's teachers gather not just to

attend sessions, but to strengthen their professional community. And long before the doors open and long after they close, your work sustains one of the most respected professional development models in the country. ■

FUN FACT

ATA president Jason Schilling attends almost every convention every year! He also presents each year at conventions to share information and gather important feedback from members.



CHRIS GONSALVEZ



During GETCA, keynote speakers addressed topics such as inclusive classrooms, resilience, artificial intelligence, mental health and honing in on areas for professional growth and learning. School turnaround expert Hamish Brewer (pictured above) engaged participants as he spoke on key areas for teachers to grow in their career journey, including developing practices and processes that align with successful student outcomes.



PHOTOS: LINDSAY YAKIMYSHYN

Teachers' convention season winds down

Lindsay Yakimyshyn
ATA News Managing Editor

Throughout February and into the first week of March, teachers across Alberta took part in their teachers' convention. Here are highlights from the Greater Edmonton Teachers' Convention (GETCA), held February 26–27 in Edmonton.

Sessions focused on a wide variety of topics—from adaptive teaching to assessment to traditional Indigenous games and much more—allowing teachers to choose their own professional adventure and bring relevant knowledge, strategies and lessons back to their classrooms.

"This is always a chance to become a learner again and find new ways to engage kids who maybe need a different approach," shared Allie, a Grade 4 teacher. "You learn something, some takeaways from the speakers but also from the colleagues you sit next to." ■



The professional development at teachers' convention takes various forms. Interactive sessions on such topics as playful poetry, jazz band improvisation, Monet-inspired painting, Indian and Southeast Asian cuisine, and pH coffee filter art and science promoted accessible and innovative approaches to teaching.

STAY IN-THE-KNOW

Information on teachers' conventions is available year-round at abteach.cc/teachers-conventions.

Inclusion of Students with Intellectual Disabilities - Positive Behavioural Interventions and Supports

A workshop with **Dr. Virginia Walker**

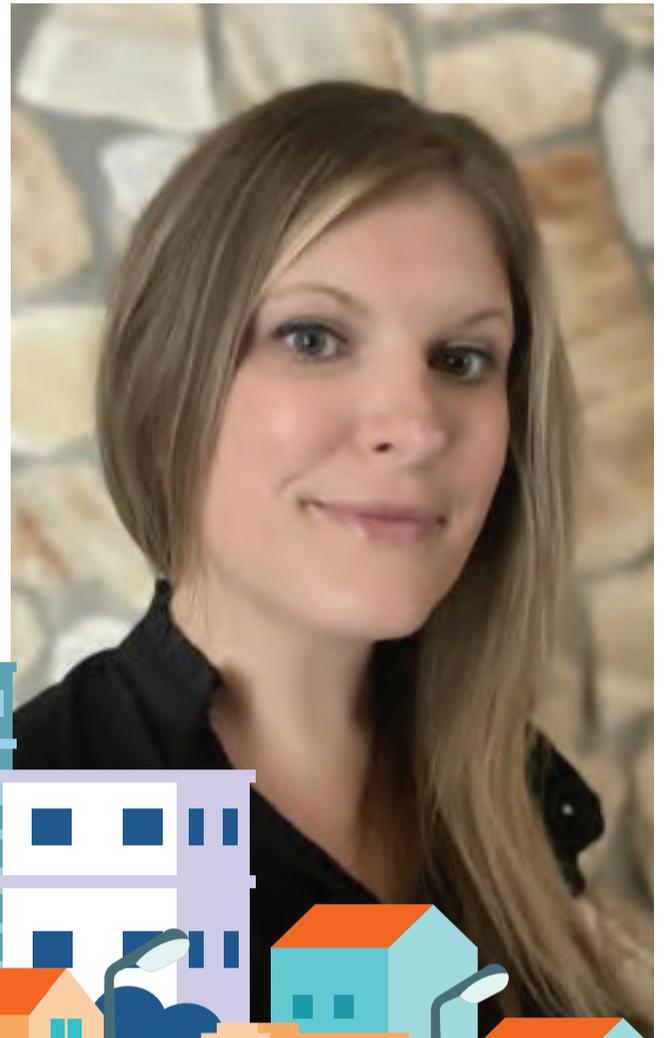
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\$210 | Group pricing available

Join us for a workshop on inclusive education.

Learn practical strategies for implementing Positive Behavioural Interventions and Supports (PBIS) to promote the meaningful participation of students with intellectual disabilities in inclusive classrooms.

Inclusion Alberta

To learn more and to register, visit inclusionalberta.org



The Alberta Teachers' Association

The Alberta Teachers' Association invites applications for the position of

EXECUTIVE SECRETARY AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER (CEO)

Competition: ESO3/26

Location: Edmonton

Commencement: June 1, 2026 (or on a mutually agreeable date)

Position Overview

The Executive Secretary and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Alberta Teachers' Association (ATA) is the organization's senior executive leader, as established under the Teaching Profession Act and ATA bylaws. Reporting to Provincial Executive Council (PEC), the Executive Secretary and CEO is accountable for advancing the ATA's legislated mandate and for providing strategic, operational and organizational leadership in support of ATA members.

Working in close partnership with elected leadership, the Executive Secretary and CEO leads the implementation of PEC-approved strategic priorities and ensures the effective stewardship of the ATA's people, resources, programs and reputation. The role provides strategic direction, inclusive leadership and operational oversight across the ATA, ensuring alignment with the objects set out in the Teaching Profession Act and the direction established by PEC and the Annual Representative Assembly (ARA).

The Executive Secretary and CEO provides prominent external leadership, representing the ATA to its members, government, education partners and the public. This includes cultivating trusted relationships across the education sector, participating in public policy discussions and supporting advocacy on behalf of the teaching profession. Internally, the role is responsible for fostering a strong organizational culture; ensuring effective management systems; and promoting a respectful, inclusive and high-performing workplace.

This position offers a unique opportunity to lead a highly respected member-driven organization at a critical time for public education in Alberta. Candidates who bring strategic insight; strong relationship-building skills; and the reputation, commitment and energy needed to lead in a complex and highly visible environment are encouraged to explore this opportunity.

Qualifications

The successful candidate will bring the following qualifications and experience:

- Extensive senior leadership experience in public education, a professional association or a comparably complex member-based organization
- A proven track record of leading in politically complex, multipartner environments, with the ability to navigate competing interests while advancing organizational priorities
- Demonstrated commitment to the ATA and its mission, or to another Canadian teachers' organization, along with a strong understanding of the public education context in Alberta
- Strong experience in operational and financial leadership within a not-for-profit or public sector environment, including budgeting, resource allocation and organizational accountability
- Well-developed ability to analyze data and information, identify risks and opportunities, and respond effectively to emerging issues affecting the ATA and its members
- Demonstrated success in developing and sustaining collaborative partnerships, including productive relationships with government, education partners and key stakeholders
- Strong capabilities in people leadership and change management, with a commitment to equity, inclusion and respect for the diversity of the teaching profession
- A university degree, preferably at the master's level or higher, from a recognized institution, or an equivalent combination of education and senior leadership experience

The following are additional considerations:

- Strong preference for candidates who have a teaching certificate.
- Travel and evening and weekend work may be required.
- The ability to work in the French language is considered an asset.
- School leadership experience is considered an asset.

What This Position Offers

The successful candidate will be employed under a personal services contract, which includes an attractive compensation and benefits package. The initial location will be in Edmonton, but future assignments may be at any current or future ATA office. Duties will commence on June 1, 2026, or on a mutually agreeable date.

Applicants should quote position ESO3/26 and include the names, phone numbers and e-mail addresses of at least two references who are not ATA employees or elected officials of its provincial executive. Applications must be received by 4:00 pm on April 3, 2026, and should be addressed to

Ms Kathryn Dick
Human Resources Director
The Alberta Teachers' Association
11010 142 Street NW, Edmonton T5N 2R1
E-mail: careers@ata.ab.ca

As an employer, the ATA aims to reflect and respond to the diversity of our membership, our staff and the public. To help us better serve our members across the province, applicants who speak more than one language or offer diversity in other areas are encouraged to identify these assets in their employment application.

For more information, please visit www.teachers.ab.ca



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LEGISLATURE HIGHLIGHTS

Education issues debated

Kim Clement
ATA News Staff

The spring sitting of the legislature began on February 24 and is scheduled to run until May 14, with constituency weeks occurring in both March and April. Here is a summary of the education-related discussions that took place in question period during the week of February 24.

Education Funding, February 26

Tara Sawyer (UCP MLA for Olds–Didsbury–Three Hills) raised concerns about Alberta’s rapid student population growth—over 80,000 new students in three years—and asked Minister of Education and Childcare Demetrios Nicolaides how Budget 2026 addresses the pressure on classrooms. In response, Nicolaides highlighted a seven per cent increase in operating expenses (\$722 million), enough to hire over 1,600 teachers and hundreds of educational assistants. Sawyer followed up with a question on classroom complexity, and Nicolaides noted that \$355 million is budgeted specifically to target that issue. He also pointed to a 63 per cent increase to the literacy and numeracy support grant. Sawyer’s final question related to broader investments. In his response, Nicolaides characterized the budget as a historic record, citing praise from the Alberta Teachers’ Association’s president on the budgeted amount and contrasting the investment with NDP-era education spending.

School Class Size and Complexity, February 26

Amanda Chapman (NDP MLA for Calgary-Beddington) opened by challenging the use of class size averages, arguing they mask significant inequality across Alberta’s classrooms. Nicolaides defended the government’s data collection as the most comprehensive in the province’s history, noting it informed the deployment of classroom complexity teams. Chapman followed up by citing two schools in her riding where class sizes of 30–31 were the norm and some reached as high as 49, asking whether Nicolaides considered that acceptable. Nicolaides responded with provincial statistics, noting an average of 25 students per classroom, with fewer than one per cent of classrooms exceeding 40 students. He acknowledged that more work remains. In her final question, Chapman pointed to two specific schools in her riding where complexity rates are extremely high, but which would receive no additional resources from the new complexity teams. Nicolaides responded by contrasting the government’s record with that of the NDP. He stated that 171 complexity teams would go to the Calgary metro area and 143 to the Edmonton region, framing this work as a significant improvement over what he characterized as zero NDP action on the issue. ■

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!

Email Managing Editor Lindsay Yakimyshyn your ideas at lindsay.yakimyshyn@ata.ab.ca.



COOR-209-2025-03



Walking Together



Indigenous Education Initiatives Grant

Locals can receive up to \$2,000 in ATA grant funding to support projects fostering reconciliation and community connections.

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****Please note these are full-time positions commencing August 2026***

ABOUT US

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.

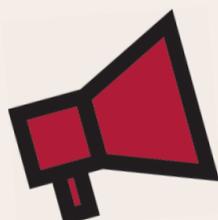
REQUIREMENTS

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

- Have a B.Ed with a Major in the subject you are applying for.
- Counselors must have a Master's Degree in Counseling & at least 2 years' work experience.
- Hold an Alberta Interim or Permanent Professional Certification.
- 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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We thank all applicants for your interest in these positions, however only those selected for an interview will be contacted.





The Alberta Teachers' Association

The Alberta Teachers' Association invites applications for the position of

EXECUTIVE STAFF OFFICER, PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (INDIGENOUS EDUCATION)

Competition: ESO2/26

Initial Placement: Calgary

Commencement: August 1, 2026, or at a mutually agreeable date

Position Overview

This position will assist in the work of the Professional Development program area with duties that may include:

- Responsibilities in the areas of teacher education, curriculum, student evaluation, pedagogy, andragogy and technology in education
- Training and supervising Association instructors, Association administrator instructors and Indigenous education professional development facilitators
- Forming and maintaining relationships with Elders, Knowledge Keepers, and members of Indigenous and Métis communities
- Working with specialist councils
- Supporting convention associations
- Assisting local professional development chairs
- Preparing policy and position papers
- Facilitating the establishment and operation of diversity equity networks (DENs)
- Assisting with programs for beginning teachers
- Providing service and support to school leaders
- Assisting in the development and revision of workshops
- Planning and/or assisting with the planning of conferences
- Liaising with Alberta Education
- Liaising with universities and other institutions
- Providing support and services related to the Association's various Indigenous education programs

Qualifications

Key requirements:

- Knowledge of ATA mission, objects, program areas and how they contribute to improving the profession and the professional lives of teachers
- Knowledge and experience of and/or membership in an Indigenous community and understanding of reconciliation in the context of public education and the teaching profession
- Understanding of the role of the Professional Development program area
- A valid teaching certificate and a minimum of five years of successful teaching experience in public education
- Proven commitment to public education
- Ability to undertake travel and evening/ weekend work

In addition, the following are considered assets:

- Demonstrated proficiency in French written and oral language
- A demonstrated commitment to the Alberta Teachers' Association (or other Canadian teachers' organization)

Additional competencies:

- Problem Solving and Decision Making
 - Analyzes problems systematically, organizes information, identifies key factors, identifies underlying causes and generates solutions
- Change Agility
 - Embraces change and adapts effectively in response
- Effective Communication
 - Regularly seeks feedback to understand other people's perspectives and integrates feedback into decisions to improve service to members
- Accountability and Self-Awareness
 - Manages professional relationships by performing work in a timely and quality way that enables departmental success
- Commitment to Collaboration
 - Works effectively both within the program area/unit and across the organization
 - Contributes to team building and success

The Association is committed to reconciliation, and a candidate's knowledge and experience of related issues and/or membership in an Indigenous community is considered an asset. Applications from members of equity-seeking groups are encouraged.

This position will be in the Professional Development program area. Individual staff responsibilities, program area placement and location of work may be subject to change depending upon the emerging needs of the Association.

Who We Are

As a professional organization and the voice of the province's teachers, the Association is dedicated to advancing the cause of education and to building the teaching profession in Alberta. The Association represents all public, separate and francophone school teachers in the province of Alberta.

The provincial Association, its locals and its subgroups perform both union and professional functions. As a union, the Association negotiates and monitors collective agreements and represents teachers in matters of employment. The Association also represents members who may be subject to regulatory processes relating to professional conduct and practice administered by the Alberta Teaching Profession Commission.

In its professional role, the Association promotes and supports the preparation of candidates to the profession, provides ongoing professional development to members, makes representation to the government on matters of education policy, advocates for public education, and works with like-minded organizations provincially, nationally and internationally. To better achieve these ends, the Association actively promotes the representation and participation of member teachers in its governance and the delivery of its programs.

What This Position Offers

Total compensation for this position includes a starting salary of \$147,168, pensionable service under the Teachers' Pension Plan of the Alberta Teachers' Retirement Fund Board and employer-paid benefits as stipulated in a collective agreement. The initial location will be in Calgary, but future assignments may be to any present or future Association office. Duties will commence on August 1, 2026 (negotiable).

Applicants should quote position ESO2/26 and include names, phone numbers and e-mail addresses of at least two references who are not Association employees or elected officials of its provincial executive. Applications must be received in one file by 4:00 PM on Wednesday, April 15, 2026, and should be addressed to

Ms Kathryn Dick
Human Resources Director
The Alberta Teachers' Association
11010 142 Street NW, Edmonton, AB T5N 2R1

E-mail: careers@ata.ab.ca For more information, please see our website at www.teachers.ab.ca.

Council authorizes May Day Data Drive

PEC POINTS

Audrey Dutka
ATA News Staff

Highlights of the Provincial Executive Council meeting held February 23–24, 2026, at Barnett House

1. Approved 145 resolutions arising from the six-year review of policy for presentation to the 2026 Annual Representative Assembly (ARA).
2. Considered 103 local resolutions for presentation to the 2026 ARA. Council approved recommendations of concurrence, amendment and concurrence, nonconcurrence, referral for study and report, policy exists or action taken. Council further approved the assignment of speakers to each resolution.
3. Approved one specialist council resolution for presentation to the 2026 ARA.
4. Considered seven Council resolutions for submission to the 2026 ARA.
5. Approved the following additional Council resolutions for submission to the 2026 ARA—three resolutions on anthropomorphic artificial intelligence, one resolution to urge the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada, to reduce administrative and financial barriers related to teacher mobility, and one resolution to urge the Government of Alberta to extend public health coverage to include in-vitro fertilization and related fertility treatments.
6. Approved one Council resolution for submission to the 2026 Emergent Representative Assembly.
7. Appointed members to serve on the Committee on the Review of Central Table Bargaining 2020 and 2024.
8. Authorized staff to develop and recommend to Council a plan to create an online focus group of 6 to 10 teachers in their first seven years of practice who meet annually, including in 2025/26, to share their experiences as new teachers.
9. Authorized staff to develop and recommend to Council a plan to create, amplify and promote social media posts that challenge and/or fact-check incorrect information about education and/or champion the many facets of public education.
10. Authorized staff to collect through the May Day Data Drive quantitative and qualitative data that share the stories of the challenges for teachers working in large and complex classrooms.
11. Approved the timelines and appointed members to the selection committee to recruit for the position of executive staff officer, Professional Development, and approved the location of the vacancy as the Southern Alberta Regional Office.
12. Approved the timelines and appointed members to the selection committee to recruit for the position of executive secretary/chief executive officer.
13. Approved the schedule for the 2028/29 Provincial Executive Council meetings.
14. Amended the Administrative Guidelines to establish a process for reporting to members on votes on motions in Provincial Executive Council.
15. Approved amendments to the template for Teacher Welfare Committee Frames of Reference for Charter and Private School bargaining units. ■



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Teachers' Association

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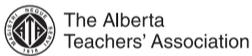
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All applicants are encouraged to reach out to their district representative(s) to better understand the work of Association representatives.

If you have any questions, please contact Lindsay Yakimyshyn at lindsey.yakimyshyn@ata.ab.ca, 780-447-9425 or 1-800-232-7208.

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LESSONS FROM THE EDGE OF THE WORLD

SUPPLIED

INSIDE INSIGHT

Court Rustemeyer
Special to the *ATA News*

What does the most remote place on Earth teach a teacher?

I had the opportunity to find out this past year while travelling to Antarctica as part of the National Geographic Grosvenor Teacher Fellowship. Like many people, I imagined the continent would feel dramatic and intense with wind sweeping across ice, towering glaciers, constant movement. What surprised me most, however, was the quiet.

Standing on the deck of our ship, surrounded by a landscape shaped long before any of us arrived, I felt something settle. The glaciers did not move quickly. Icebergs drifted without urgency. Penguins carried on with their routines, unconcerned with who was watching. Nothing felt rushed. Nothing performative.

It was a striking contrast to a regular week in a school.

Back home in Alberta, my days are full of bells, supervision, emails, planning and the steady responsibility of caring for students' growth. Even in outdoor education, where slowing down is part of the philosophy, there is structure and intention. We think ahead. We prepare. We manage risk. We support outcomes.

In Antarctica, there was no next bell. No immediate outcome. Just space.

One morning, I found myself watching a single iceberg drift slowly past our ship. It was not dramatic or particularly large. It was simply there, shaped over years of pressure and weather long before I ever noticed it. I could not stop thinking about how similar that felt to real growth.

As teachers, we speak often about progress and improvement. We measure it, document it and celebrate it. But the most meaningful growth in our students—resilience, confidence, curiosity—is often layered quietly beneath the surface. It takes time. Pressure. Patience.

I found myself thinking about students who do not always show immediate results. The ones who are building strength slowly. The ones who need space more than speed.

Antarctica did not introduce me

to patience. As an outdoor education teacher, I already believe deeply in giving students time on the trail, around a fire or during reflection. Nature rarely responds to urgency. It moves according to its own rhythms.

What Antarctica did was reinforce that belief in a powerful way.

There was no sense that something had to happen next. The landscape existed on its own timeline, shaped by forces far larger than any one season. It reminded me that not everything meaningful needs to move quickly, in nature or in a classroom.

It also reminded me of the value of staying a learner.

In that vast environment, I was not leading a group or facilitating an experience. I was observing. Curious. Paying attention. In our profession, we are often the ones expected to provide answers and direction. Antarctica quietly reminded me how important it is to remain curious alongside our students.

Since returning home, the shifts have been subtle but real. I pause longer before stepping in. I allow silence to sit. I am more comfortable letting uncertainty unfold rather than resolving it immediately.

The most remote place on Earth did not hand me a new strategy. It offered perspective about time, about

scale and about the quiet strength of steady growth.

So, what does the edge of the world teach a teacher?

It reminded me that not everything meaningful is urgent, and that the deepest growth is often invisible in the moment. It called me to slow down enough to notice what is already taking shape and to trust that growth is happening, even when I can't see it yet. It reinforced that staying curious, especially in a profession where we're expected to have answers, may be one of the most powerful forms of leadership we model for our students. ■

Court Rustemeyer is an outdoor education teacher in Calgary, Alberta, with over a decade of experience working with students in Grades 7–9. He is passionate about experiential learning, mentorship and helping students grow through meaningful time in nature.

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.