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 Boost and brighten your leadership life
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ATA NEWS

March 31, 2026 | Volume 60, Number 11 | News Publication of The Alberta Teachers' Association



HEATHER GRANT

ATA president Jason Schilling spoke to the media following the court's rejection of the ATA's injunction application regarding Bill 2, the Back to School Act. See the story on [page 4](#) and Q&A on [page 2](#).



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Understanding every view matters for teacher advocacy



EDITORIAL

Kristine Wilkinson
 ATA News
 Editor-in-Chief

The Alberta Teachers' Association's recent political engagement seminar offered Alberta teachers a chance to step outside our own ideological comfort zones and listen—really listen—to perspectives that sometimes sit in direct opposition to our own.

The event's keynote speaker, Evan Menzies, who had been deeply involved first with the Wildrose Party and later with the United Conservative Party, delivered a candid look at conservative priorities and the worldview shaping many of the province's current policy directions. Researchers at the seminar also offered insight into separatist thinking, an ideology that continues to influence conversations about

autonomy, identity and Alberta's future.

For some in the room, this was not easy to hear. Values were challenged as we heard about different perspectives on public education held by people who are not in the classroom every day. My teacher perspective says that unless you've worked in a classroom, you really don't know what the job is about. And, yet, there were undeniable insights.

As teachers, we advocate every day—for our students, our schools, our profession and the integrity of public education itself. But advocacy that exists in a vacuum rarely succeeds. Understanding the political motivations, fears, priorities and narratives of those who disagree with us is not an endorsement of their views. It is a strategic necessity.

Hearing points of view from people across the political spectrum, especially those connected to governing parties or influential movements, helps us anticipate the arguments we will

face and navigate them with greater clarity. It gives us language, sometimes even shared language, with which to engage. It allows us to prepare stronger, more persuasive advocacy, rooted not just in what we believe but in an understanding of what others believe, too.

More importantly, it keeps us from dismissing those with whom we disagree. It is easy, especially in polarized times, to paint "the other side" with broad strokes. But hearing others speak about their own experiences—their sense of economic precarity, their distrust of institutions, their stories about government overreach—reminds us that political identities are rarely simple. Even separatist sentiments are rooted in frustrations that need to be understood if they are ever to be effectively countered.

For teachers, this type of political literacy is essential. We are on the front lines of public policy. We see the impacts of funding decisions, curriculum changes and legislative

shifts every day. We are frustrated when we see leaders directly disrespect teachers and public education in the media and on social media. We want to influence education decisions, and to do so we must do more than speak passionately; we must speak strategically.

Understanding all viewpoints strengthens—not weakens—our advocacy. It helps us build stronger coalitions, articulate our concerns more clearly and counter misinformation with empathy rather than defensiveness. Perhaps most importantly, it models the very skills we teach our students: critical thinking, engaged citizenship and the ability to disagree without dismissing or disrespecting others.

The political engagement seminar may not have been comfortable, but growth rarely is. ■

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

It's a no to the Bill 2 injunction—so why keep fighting?



Q & A

Dennis Theobald
 ATA Executive
 Secretary

Question: So, teachers have lost our court case challenging the legislation that sent us back to school. If we didn't have a winning case, what was the point of going to court and why are we still fighting this?

Answer: To clarify, the Association's initial court battle may have failed, but the legal challenge of Bill 2, the *Back to School Act*, continues.

On March 13, Justice Douglas Mah of the Court of King's Bench handed down his decision, supported by written reasons, on the Association's application for an injunction that he had heard a week earlier. For those who are not familiar with the Canadian legal system, this is a remarkably quick turnaround. Justice Mah also recognized that teachers have a keen interest in the case and made a point of writing his reasons "in a way that is accessible to non-legally trained persons."

The "interlocutory" and "prohibitive" injunction the Association was seeking was intended to immediately prevent the application of the *Back to School Act* until the Association's objections to the legislation could be heard and ruled on in full hearing before the court, now scheduled in late September 2026. To obtain the injunction, the Association had to meet three tests, which were originally set out by the Supreme

Court of Canada in its decision in *RJR-Macdonald*.

The first of these goes to whether there is a serious issue to be considered at trial. The Association is contending that the government improperly invoked section 33 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, the infamous "notwithstanding clause," to override teachers' collective freedom of association and freedom of speech, which have been interpreted to include a union's right to organize and engage in strike action. When originally incorporated into the charter as part of the patriation of the Canadian constitution in 1982, section 33 was regarded as a way of asserting the ultimate power of legislatures and parliament to determine the law of the land. But the assumption was that this power would be exercised infrequently and only in the most exceptional circumstances. Recently, the willingness of provincial governments to use the section almost casually has given rise to considerable controversy, and there are now several cases that will be before the Supreme Court in the next few months to determine what, if any, limitations or consequences might be placed on this practice. Justice Mah took the very sensible position that what was good enough for the Supreme Court was good enough for him, so the issues raised by Bill 2's invocation of section 33 were clearly serious issues. Test passed.

Just as a side note, the Association also raised an objection to Bill 2's overriding a section of the constitution involving the authority of the courts to review decisions of tribunals. Justice Mah concluded that this aspect of the

Association's challenge fell short of meeting the higher standard of being clearly and obviously valid (the Latin term is *prima facie*) and so will have to be argued when the case goes to a full hearing.

The second test is whether the Association and teachers would suffer irreparable harm if the injunction was not granted. Here Justice Mah took the position that whatever damage Bill 2 had done to relations between the parties, to the integrity of the bargaining process and to any prospects for immediately improving teaching conditions had already been done by the passage of the bill itself and could not be undone by granting an injunction. Furthermore, Justice Mah did not see how setting the clock back with the potential for putting teachers back out on strike (albeit after a three-week delay offered by the Association) could possibly work. He pointed to the potential legal ambiguity surrounding the status of teachers' employment and concluded that these matters could and should properly be considered and resolved at a full hearing on the merits of the case. On this analysis, the Association failed to meet the second test for granting an injunction.

Finally, Justice Mah had to weigh the balance of conveniences and the impact that granting the injunction would have on the public interest, defined primarily by its potential effect on students and their families. Pointedly noting that it is not his role to say whether, by passing Bill 2, the government was governing "effectively," the issue comes down to a contest between teachers' interests and the precept that "it is better for

students to be in school than not in school. Better for them, better for their families, better for the functioning of our society as a whole." Justice Mah concluded that the latter defines the public interest and that the Association's application failed to show that, on balance, granting the injunction was in the best interest of the public.

While the Association's attempt to obtain injunctive relief failed, the issues raised by teachers remain very alive and will be considered by the court in September. Before that happens, several cases will be heard by the Supreme Court relating to the previous use of the notwithstanding clause by Quebec and Saskatchewan that might change the state of the law. In Canada's democracy, the courts have a critical role in defining the rights of all persons.

By challenging Bill 2, the Association is protecting its members' fundamental rights and freedoms and, by extension, those of all Canadians. Whether or not the challenge is successful remains to be seen; however, we know the case we have is sound, and we know it is a fight worth fighting.

Justice Mah's judgement is clearly written and quite accessible to lay readers. You can find it posted at <https://abteach.cc/court-decision>. ■



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



The Alberta Teachers' Association

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Entering the profession with open eyes—and hope



VIEWPOINTS

Sarah Muir
Preservice teacher

Entering university is always exciting, no matter the program. For me, that program was education. As I prepare to graduate with my bachelor of education in spring 2026, I can look back and reflect on my journey, acknowledging the complexities that live in the profession. When I began the program, I was unaware of the challenges that shape today's classrooms. It did not take long to realize, though, that this profession requires far more than enthusiasm and good intentions.

My calling to the profession was shaped by a high school language arts teacher whose influence extended well beyond the curriculum. While she held high academic expectations, she also placed equal importance on building meaningful relationships with her students. Her ability to create a caring and supportive environment, while recognizing the individuality of each learner, showed me the profound difference a dedicated teacher can make.

Inspired by her example, I hope to enter the profession through a relational lens—building connections with students that foster inclusive, engaging learning environments much like the one she created for me. While that passion brought me to education, my coursework and practicums quickly revealed the broader realities of the profession.

University coursework introduced the theory of education—research, instructional strategies and

carefully constructed scenarios. What they could not fully replicate were the layered dynamics of real classrooms. Through my practicums, I learned that complexity is not an exception to teaching; it is the context in which teaching happens.

Diverse learning needs, behavioural challenges, socio-emotional realities and systemic pressures all intersect in schools. I've now seen how responding to these realities requires constant reflection and adaptability.

Teachers are expected to provide inclusive, responsive instruction for all learners while navigating growing class sizes, limited resources and expanding expectations. Much of this work occurs beyond contracted hours and the cumulative pressure can lead to burnout—not from a lack of passion but from sustained pressure.

Conversations about teacher wellness have become increasingly common, yet the structures surrounding the profession often make protecting that wellness difficult.

As I prepare to enter the profession, I do so with both realism and hope. Teaching rarely unfolds under ideal conditions. It takes place amid competing demands and evolving expectations. Yet I remain motivated by the profound impact teachers can have on students' lives. The classroom is not only a site of academic learning but also of identity formation, belonging and growth.

Parker Palmer writes in *The Courage to Teach*, "We teach who we are." This idea has shaped how I think about entering the profession. Teachers' well-being directly influences the learning environments they create. Students notice the difference between a teacher who is overwhelmed and one who feels supported and grounded. For this reason, teacher

wellness must be treated as essential rather than optional. It is foundational to sustainable teaching practice and positive learning environments.

Following my final practicum, I set a personal intention: to remain attentive to my own well-being while continuing to refine my practice. This means building habits of reflection, seeking mentorship and allowing myself the space to grow gradually rather than perfectly. It also means recognizing that adaptability is not a weakness but a professional strength.

I am entering the teaching profession at a critical moment, aware of the complexities and challenges in today's classrooms. Rather than discouraging me, this reality motivates me to contribute thoughtfully, remain curious and approach each classroom with empathy and kindness. As my high school language arts teacher showed me, even within complex systems teachers still have the power to create spaces where students feel seen, supported and capable.

Teaching is demanding, but it is also deeply meaningful work. I am ready to enter this profession, committed to learning alongside my students and supporting the passion that led me to teaching in the first place. ■

Sarah Muir is completing her bachelor of education degree at the University of Calgary with a specialization in elementary fine arts. She has dedicated her academic work to exploring teacher well-being and sustaining meaningful relationships with students. As an emerging teacher, Sarah hopes to continue her professional learning in ways that honour student diversity and place relationships at the centre of education.

YOUR VIEWS

With April Fool's Day landing around publication time, we asked teachers to share the funniest prank of which they were a part.

f Nicole Felicitas
One year, every teacher on staff was scheduled to work their lunch hour and first block after lunch at the local soup kitchen as part of our staff service project. When it was your turn, they would call you on the class phone, let you know they were sending the sub to replace you, and then once the sub arrived, you could head down to the soup kitchen. When my turn came and my phone rang, I pretended that I had won the lottery and "quit." When the sub came, I told my Grade 6 class, "See ya!" and then promptly left for the soup kitchen. My students thought it was all real and started crying after I left. I didn't know about their reaction until I came back to relieve my sub!

f Cat Seven-Twenty
One year, my students brought red food dye to class, waited until I wasn't looking, put the dye in the lid of my disposable cup, and laughed hysterically when I had very uneven and bright red "lipstick" after the next sip I took.

f Sarah J. AF
For a few years, April Fools and Easter coincided. I filled the plastic eggs for egg hunts with broccoli and other veggies instead of treats. My own kids (as toddlers) and my elementary students found it hysterical. The adults (who didn't get to eat their kids' chocolate), much less so.

f Stephanie Jean
I cut up letter e's from brown paper, put them in a tin, go to a few classrooms and ask if anyone wants some brownies. Gets them every time.

f Jessie Lynn
One year my colleague in the phys. ed. department traded with me for the day. He did the music, and I [did] PE and we changed our names to match. The kids said it was the hardest PE class and the most fun in music.

f Chantal Mair
In 2001, my Grade 8s superglued my whiteboard markers to the ledge. I was impressed with their group skills to make it happen!

f Kristy Williams
I spent hours unwrapping tootsie rolls and replacing them with mini carrots. The kids were happy about the carrots, the teachers not so much.

f Roberta Koelmans
I put white glue over the teacher's chalk that dried clear and it wouldn't write.

f Hillaree Dee
The school hallways had been painted and there were industrial fans running to keep the airflow moving. We turned off the fans and told the Grade 7s they weren't working and we needed them to move the air down the hallway. We instructed both classes that they had to run down the length of the hall waving their arms to push the air forward as they ran. Sixty 12 year olds ran down the hall to calls of "Move the air! Move the air!" They actually made quite a wind. What we DIDN'T count on them doing was continuing down the stairs and outside to the playground! So then we had to round them all up from the playground to tell them April Fools!

FOR THE RECORD

“While progress has been made, we recognize that eliminating racism requires sustained effort, accountability and shared responsibility. Today, we recommit to fostering a province where inclusion, dignity and respect are reflected in our communities, our institutions and our daily lives.”

— Associate Minister of Multiculturalism Muhammad Yaseen's statement on the International Day for Elimination of Racial Discrimination, March 21



Public dollars earmarked for private school construction

Heather Grant
ATA News Staff

The Government of Alberta is set to invest \$90 million to add 6,000 new student spaces to the independent school system under Budget 2026. The newly announced Independent School Capital program will contribute up to \$10 million in matching grants to independent school boards over three years.

Minister of Education and Childcare Demetrios Nicolaidis said that priority will be given to schools focused on students with disabilities.

"Independent schools serve many students with complex learning needs, including those with significant disabilities," he said. "Supporting school choice ensures families can select the learning environment that best meets their child's unique needs and gives students the support they need to succeed."

The announcement comes as a response to continuing student population increases across the province. In the 2026/27 school year,

the government expects that student enrolment in private schools will grow by 11.4 per cent.

Abraham Abougouche, president of the Association of Independent School and Colleges in Alberta, welcomed the investment into private school builds.

"This will help alleviate student space pressures systemwide and expand choices for families," Abougouche said.

But the move is drawing criticism from public education advocates. The Alberta Teachers' Association (ATA) says the province helping to finance more student spaces in private schools is a new and concerning issue.

"Funding the expansion of private schools is just another hit on public education, which is already bruised,"

ATA president Jason Schilling said.

Alberta already provides the highest level of public funding to private school students of any province in Canada. Independent students receive 70 per cent of the funding that public students receive. Notably, roughly 93 per cent of Alberta students are enrolled in the public school system.

"Our government has only just promised investments to bring Alberta's operational funding per student to the middle of the pack, up from last place across Canada, where it sat for years," said Schilling. "Increasing the amount spent on private schools, especially when it comes to construction, should never happen."

The new dollars for increasing

independent student spaces comes roughly a year and a half after the province pledged \$8.6 billion over seven years to build more public schools using an accelerated process. According to the government, in the first year of the Schools Now program, nearly 6,000 student spaces were either created or renovated.

The first grant under the Independent School Capital program will go toward the completion of Three Sisters Centre, a 250-student capacity preschool-to-Grade 12 school just outside of Calgary that serves children with disabilities. The school, run by Renfrew Educational Services, is slated to be open in time for the 2027/28 school year. ■



As part of its Schools Now program, the provincial government is also addressing increasing student numbers through new public school construction projects across Alberta, in both urban and rural areas. The program aims to create 200,000 new and updated student spaces by 2031/32.

Find more information on Schools Now and Alberta's active school construction projects at www.alberta.ca/schools-now.



Court rejects ATA injunction on the Back to School Act

Mark Milne
ATA News Staff

The Alberta Teachers' Association (ATA) has been denied an injunction that sought to pause the province's Bill 2, the *Back to School Act* (BSA), while its legal challenge to the bill proceeds.

In early March, lawyers for the Alberta Teachers' Association (ATA) presented their arguments in the Court of King's Bench of Alberta in support of the ATA's injunction case related to Bill 2. The injunction, if successful, would have reverted the ATA's bargaining position back to its status before Bill 2 was passed in late October. On March 13, Justice Douglas Mah issued his ruling, rejecting the injunction application.

While disappointed with the outcome, ATA president Jason Schilling assured the membership that this ruling does not signal the end

of the fight to restore the fundamental freedoms that Bill 2 stripped from Alberta's teachers in the fall.

"We see the government's use of the notwithstanding clause for what it is: a means to silence teachers and sidestep the charter," said Schilling. "This is not normal governance and is an affront to all Albertans."

In making his ruling, Justice Mah was careful to emphasize that his decision should not be interpreted as an endorsement of the government's actions or of the legislation itself. Rather, he said that his role was not to assess whether Bill 2 is fair or good public policy, but to apply the legal test used in Canada to determine whether legislation should be suspended while the case against it proceeds. The graphic below illustrates the three-part test an injunction must meet to be granted.

While Justice Mah agreed that Bill 2 was a serious issue that needs to be addressed, he ruled that the injunction did not pass the remaining two tests.

He found that, although the impact of Bill 2 on teachers was significant, it did not meet the legal threshold needed for suspension of the legislation. Finally, Justice Mah concluded that suspending the BSA could generate uncertainty about labour relations and school operations and, therefore, the balance of convenience favoured keeping the legislation in place.

In his written decision, Justice Mah recognized the impact the passing of Bill 2 had on teachers.

"I can well imagine the incredulity, if not the despair and disrespect, that teachers felt upon the passage of the BSA," Justice Mah wrote. "The exercise of their right to strike, a democratic right guaranteed under Canada's

constitution and their only bargaining chip, was eliminated and a previously rejected collective agreement was rammed down their throats."

The dismissal of the court injunction will not affect the ATA's broader legal challenge to Bill 2. While the BSA will remain in effect, the full hearing into its constitutionality will continue to move forward and is scheduled for the week of September 21.

"Until the full hearing, the Association will continue to hold the government accountable for everything promised to the public education system," said Schilling. "Alberta students and teachers deserve to see progress and refuse to settle for anything less." ■

Read more on the decision in the Members Only section of the ATA website at <https://abteach.cc/BargainingUpdates>.



THE INJUNCTION DECISION

Injunction Application Dismissed

BILL 2

"Not the end of the road"

Justice Mah emphasized that dismissing the injunction is not an endorsement of the government's actions.

Strictly Legal Criteria

The ruling was based on specific legal tests, not personal views or the fairness of the legislation.

Bill 2 remains in effect, and the legislatively imposed settlement continues to regulate teacher employment.

Bill 2 Injunction Ruling: The Legal Path Forward

Serious Issue to be Addressed

✓ Satisfied: The ATA raised significant constitutional questions.

Irreparable Harm

✗ Not Satisfied: The legal threshold for suspending legislation was not met.

Balance of Convenience

✗ Favoured Government: Suspending the law could cause uncertainty in school operations.

THE PATH TO SEPTEMBER 2026

Full Constitutional Hearing

The Court will hear the Association's full challenge during the week of September 21, 2026.

Review of Charter Rights

The hearing will assess if Bill 2 infringes on constitutional protections for collective bargaining, with a specific focus on collective bargaining issues.

The Notwithstanding Clause

The Court acknowledged that the government's use of this clause is a significant issue warranting a full hearing.



STACEY HANNAY

WIL Summit participants took in a keynote on leadership in a VUC'D context and then chose one of six streams for their learning journey.

ATA Women in Leadership Summit explores leading in uncertain times

ATA News Staff

What does leadership look like in a volatile, uncertain, chaotic and divisive (VUC'D) context? This question was the focus of the Alberta Teachers' Association's (ATA) Women in Leadership (WIL) Summit, held March 6-7, 2026, in Edmonton.

During the WIL Summit, keynote speaker Celina Caesar-Chavannes explored what it means to lead with courage in a VUC'D world. Drawing on neuroscience and leadership transformation, she also shared a six-step decision-making framework to help participants navigate their roles as leaders in education.

Held annually, the WIL Summit brings together women leaders from across the province to network and strengthen their leadership capacity. This year, 120 local WIL chairs and other delegates attended the event, which provided opportunities to engage in self-reflective narratives, storytelling, presentations and workshop-style learning—all grounded in equity-focused outcomes.

With 32 breakout sessions offered, participants explored topics such as courage, voice, advocacy and collective leadership; regulations, wellness and sustainability in leadership; and emotional intelligence, creativity and community meaning-making.



STACEY HANNAY

Carmen Glossop, chair of the provincial WIL Committee, with speaker Celina Caesar-Chavannes.

More information on the ATA's WIL programming, including recordings of past webinars and details on the WIL grant program, is available at teachers.ab.ca/advocacy/women-leadership.



LEADERSHIP THRIVE5

Bite-sized takeaways to boost and brighten your leadership life

Featuring: Tanya Thiessen
ATA executive staff officer

1: I am reading...



Tools of Titans: A Comprehensive Guide to High-Performance Tools and Tactics for Success by Tim Ferriss. I love this book because it is a compilation of short self-improvement and inspirational stories similar to *Chicken Soup for the Soul*. I like to just randomly flip to a story and discover what new things I can learn. This book also makes a great gift for someone new to their leadership journey.

2: I am eating...



Prana overnight chia oats. Mornings are busy and anything that is simple and delicious is incredibly helpful. I recommend the blueberry muffin flavour. We know our students need food in the morning to fuel their brains and so do our amazing teachers and school leaders.

3: I am watching...



Prime Minister on CBC Gem. Focused on the story of New Zealand's former Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern, this documentary provides fascinating insights into the plans we make for ourselves while the universe is busy making other plans for us. It is a powerful story of leadership, motherhood and chasing your dreams.

4: I have signed up for...



a weekly newsletter by The Female Quotient (FQ). The newsletter is the embodiment of the FQ community, bringing insights from remarkable women who aren't just climbing the ladder—they're building their own and bringing others along. An easy way to be inspired by women from across the globe who are making news and changing the world.

5: I am listening to...



the *Perfectly Average People Podcast* from a duo out of Calgary. The episodes are the perfect length for a commuter and feature everyday people with extraordinary accomplishments or skills. This is a lighthearted and enjoyable listen, either to or from school.

#RED4ED

#Red4Ed is a visible sign of teachers' unity. Each Friday, you and your colleagues are encouraged to wear red in support of public education and the teaching profession.

Learn more about ongoing advocacy efforts and how you can get involved at <https://teachers.ab.ca/advocacy>.



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.

Get your team geared up for "#Red4Ed" with a wide range of merchandise in the ATA's new online store. Whether you are looking for a single item or planning a large-scale group order for school staff or ATA local, the store is built to accommodate needs of all sizes.

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.

Are you a school leader? Would you like to share your "Thrive 5"? Submit your ideas to managing editor Lindsay Yakimyshyn at Lindsay.yakimyshyn@ata.ab.ca.



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 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.



ISTOCK

Teachers urged to pay close attention to copyright rules

ATA News Staff

You find an image online for your next classroom presentation. Copy, paste, done—no problem, right? But what if you download that same image and post it on your personal blog—does that change things?

Understanding when and how teachers can use copyrighted photos, images and other works is about respecting creators' rights while also protecting yourself, especially as artificial intelligence tools make it easier for copyright holders to identify unauthorized use.

Under Canada's *Copyright Act*, the creator of an original work has the exclusive right to reproduce, publish and distribute that work. Material found online is not automatically free to use unless permission has been granted or a clear exception applies.

In the classroom, teachers benefit from "fair dealing" provisions, which allow limited use of copyrighted material for purposes such as education, research and private study. This means a teacher may display or use an image as part of instruction without seeking permission, provided the use is directly connected to teaching and not shared beyond that context.

For more information on using copyrighted materials, see the full Worth Knowing on this topic at abteach.ca/copyrightwk.

The ATA produces Worth Knowing bulletins on topics that matter to Alberta teachers, from pension questions to assignable time. Find them in the Members Only section of the ATA website at <https://abteach.ca/worthknowing>.





Specialist councils: where teachers connect, create and lead

Like any job, there are many facets to my work as president. Whether I'm meeting with members or ministers (or writing my Off Script for the *ATA News*), no two days are ever the same. In that way, it's a lot like teaching. There's always something new demanding attention.

In this space, I often focus on pressing issues facing public education. But this time, I want to share a different side of the role that reminds me why this profession is so strong and why teachers are so amazing.

Alongside the political work, I serve as Provincial Executive Council liaison for two specialist councils: the Fine Arts Council and the English Language Arts Council. Like all ATA specialist councils, they provide meaningful professional development through workshops, one-day events and conferences, creating spaces where teachers connect, collaborate and grow.

Through this work, I've met colleagues I likely would never have encountered otherwise. I'm continually struck by their dedication and their willingness to volunteer their time in support of the subjects they care deeply about. Many of these teachers go on to take on broader leadership roles, strengthening both the profession and the Association.

These councils have also influenced my own practice. Conversations with English language arts (ELA) teachers

have introduced me to new texts and perspectives that expand learning beyond traditional choices like *To Kill a Mockingbird*, a classic (though problematic) text. Today's students benefit from literature that reflects contemporary voices and experiences. I'm also constantly amazed by just how much my ELA colleagues read while I sometimes struggle to get through an episode of *House Hunters*.

Equally inspiring are my Fine Arts Council colleagues. Their advocacy for creativity in schools is unwavering. During the 2021 K-6 curriculum review, one of the most striking concerns was that the word "creativity" appeared only once. That matters. Education must be more than the recall of facts—it should foster imagination, expression and critical thinking. Yet fine arts curriculum, much of which hasn't seen meaningful updates since Wham! was on the charts, continues to be overlooked.

Our work is complex and demanding. But I often leave specialist council meetings feeling energized. Yes, we talk about challenges in our schools, but we also share ideas and celebrate learning. This year, ATA specialist councils mark their 65th anniversary. If you haven't joined one yet, why not? There are 20 from which to choose, and your first membership is free, so consider joining today. ■



ATA to launch May Day Data Drive on class size and complexity

Kim Clement
ATA News Staff

This spring, the Alberta Teachers' Association will launch a provincewide effort to collect independent data on class size and complexity.

Known as the May Day Data Drive, the initiative will engage locals and school representatives in gathering information directly from teachers about the classes they are currently assigned.

Teachers will be invited to scan a QR code and complete a short survey outlining the size and complexity factors of each of their classes. The process is designed to take only a few

minutes to complete. Participants will also have the option of submitting written comments or short videos describing how class size and complexity affect their work and their students.

QR code cards will be distributed to locals and provided to school representatives, who will write their school identification code on each card before sharing them with teachers.

The initiative will officially launch on April 23, with data collection taking place April 27 to May 1.

The Association is encouraging broad participation from teachers across the province to help ensure that classrooms in every corner of Alberta are represented in the data collected. ■



ISTOCK

DENs = DIVERSITY EQUITY NETWORKS

Members invited to attend virtual DEN meetings

ATA News Staff

Members can now register for upcoming meetings of the ATA's Diversity and Equity Networks (DENs). DENs provide a structure for teachers who identify as members of a diverse group to come together to support each other and organize relevant events and services. They are self-defining and self-organizing and focus on developing programming for members across the province.

Each DEN holds regular online meetings to allow colleagues from across the province to connect with each other. Meetings will be held virtually from 4:30–6:00 p.m. on the noted dates, and members must register to receive the meeting link.

The **ATA Teachers with Disabilities (TWD) DEN** is a provincial network that provides a safe and brave space for teachers with disabilities.

Upcoming meetings

Wednesday, April 1, 2026
Wednesday, May 6, 2026
Wednesday, June 3, 2026

The **Alberta Teachers' Association Gender and Sexuality Alliance (ATA GSA) DEN** exists to create a safe, welcoming and empowering space for 2SLGBTQIA+ teachers and their allies across Alberta.

Upcoming meetings

Tuesday, April 7, 2026
Wednesday, May 20, 2026
Thursday, June 11, 2026

The **Together We RISE: Racialized Teachers' Circle** is rooted in a powerful vision: to build a community of connection, strength and empowerment for racialized educators.

Upcoming meetings

Thursday, April 16, 2026
Thursday, May 21, 2026
Thursday, June 25, 2026 ■

Learn more and find registration information at <https://abteach.cc/atadens>.



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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. Here is a summary of the education-related discussions that took place in question period during the week of March 9.

Teacher Recruitment and Retention, March 12

In a Members' Statement, Amanda Chapman, (NDP MLA for Calgary-Beddington), highlighted concerns about teacher recruitment and retention in Alberta, pointing to repeated shortfalls in meeting provincial teacher hiring targets. She said the government missed its target of hiring 1,045 teachers last year by nearly half and noted that targets have also been missed in several previous years.

Chapman linked recruitment challenges to working conditions and funding, stating that "it's this minister and this government who set the stage for the working conditions and funding for those teachers."

She also questioned the appeal of the profession under current conditions, asking, "Who wants to be a teacher in Alberta right now? Not many people, it seems." Chapman said many new teachers are leaving the profession and noted that Alberta is losing teachers to other Canadian provinces.

She concluded by expressing support for educators, saying, "On this side of the House, we support teachers."

Education Funding, March 9

Brandon Lundy (UCP MLA for Leduc-Beaumont) raised concerns about overcrowded schools driven by rapid population growth and federal immigration and asked what the government is doing to build more schools and support students.

Nicolaides said Budget 2026 includes 40 new school projects, bringing the total to 161 active projects, including new schools in Beaumont and Leduc. He also pointed to investments to address classroom complexity, including a classroom complexity grant, \$143 million for 476 complexity teams and \$355 million in new funding.

In a follow-up question, Lundy asked Nicolaides to compare the government's education investments with those made by the previous NDP government.

Nicolaides responded that the current government had approved 77 school projects compared to 48 under the NDP and said Budget 2026 education spending is about 30 per cent higher than the operating budget under the NDP.

Labour Relations with Teachers, March 10

Amanda Chapman, MLA for Calgary-Beddington, said teachers feel disrespected and demoralized after the government's use of the notwithstanding clause during labour action. She cited survey results showing only 2 per cent of teachers feel hopeful about classroom conditions and asked

what the minister would say to burnt-out teachers.

Nicolaides responded that after three weeks of job action with no resolution, the government intervened to ensure students returned to classrooms, stating that students' best interests had to guide the decision.

In follow-up comments, Chapman raised concerns about burnout in the teaching profession, overcrowded classrooms and funding shortages, noting that many teachers plan to retire early or leave the profession. She asked how the government would meet its teacher hiring targets after failing to do so the previous year.

Nicolaides said Alberta has a strong education system with high student performance. He pointed to a 7 per cent increase in operating funding and an \$8.6 billion school construction initiative as evidence of the government's investment.

In a final question, Chapman asked whether the government would take responsibility for worsening conditions in the education system and the potential loss of teachers.

Nicolaides rejected the claim that the system is in chaos, saying Alberta graduates about 2,000 education students annually, certifies about 800 teachers from other provinces, offers the highest take-home pay for teachers in western Canada, and has deployed 476 classroom complexity teams to help address workload challenges.

School Construction in Calgary, March 12

Gurinder Brar (NDP MLA Calgary-North East) raised concerns about rising education property taxes during a cost-of-living crisis, noting the provincial education property tax is increasing by more than 20 per cent and asking why the government is raising taxes on Calgarians.

Minister of Finance Nate Horner responded that the province is returning to a policy where 33 per cent of education operating costs are funded through education property taxes, explaining the change in tax rates for residential and commercial properties.

In a follow-up comment, Brar said residents in his constituency face overcrowded classrooms and still lack new schools despite paying higher education taxes. He asked how the government could justify the increase while communities remain without schools.

Nicolaides replied that multiple school projects are under way in the area, listing several schools planned or under construction in Cornerstone, Redstone, Livingston and north Calgary.

In a final question, Brar asked whether those schools actually exist "on the ground," saying communities in his area still need at least eight new schools.

Nicolaides responded that school construction takes time for planning and design, invited Brar to attend future openings, and said the current government prioritized schools in the riding while the previous NDP government had not. ■



Calgary Catholic celebrates 40 years of Danceworks program

Submitted by Calgary
Catholic School District

This school year, the Danceworks program at the Calgary Catholic School District (CCSD) celebrated 40 years of inspiring creativity and performance. Open to CCSD students of all grades and skill levels, this annual celebration of movement gives students the opportunity to share their talents with classmates, family and friends. Proudly sponsored by the Calgary Catholic Junior High School Athletic Council, this year's showcase featured 69 high-energy performances across seven host high schools. Beyond

the performance, dance supports the health and wellness of body, mind and spirit, making every step meaningful.

Many helping hands and caring hearts made Danceworks possible for the CCSD's students, from committee members to teacher-choreographers and volunteers. In particular, principal Shannon Griffin has made a significant contribution this work, with many years of dedicated leadership as committee chair. Her commitment has helped ensure that CCSD students can experience the joy of movement and has made a lasting impact.

Information on the program is available at www.cssd.ab.ca/junior-danceworks. ■



CCSD students showed off their dancing skills as part of the Danceworks program.

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Federal amendment protects library mailings and access to learning

Lindsay Yakimyshyn
ATA News Managing Editor

A last-minute amendment to federal budget legislation has safeguarded key mailing protections for Canadians who are blind or print disabled and libraries—an important victory for teachers and students.

Earlier versions of Bill C-15, the *Budget Implementation Act, 2025*, had threatened to remove the library book rate, which guarantees reduced postage rates for library materials, including interlibrary loans. The act also included a clause to repeal the free literature for the blind service in the *Canada Post Corporations Act*.

Librarians warned that eliminating protections related to library shipping rates would impede Canadians' ability to access vital materials. Assurances from Canada Post that removing the legislated requirement would not endanger the program were met with skepticism. When it comes to education, such a change could have made sharing teaching resources and specialized materials across the province prohibitively expensive and created unequal access for teachers.

ATA librarian Sandra Anderson spoke on the importance of protecting the library book rate.

"This rate allows libraries across the country to maintain an interlibrary loan system. Some small rural libraries don't have collections of their own. Everything on their shelves is borrowed from another larger

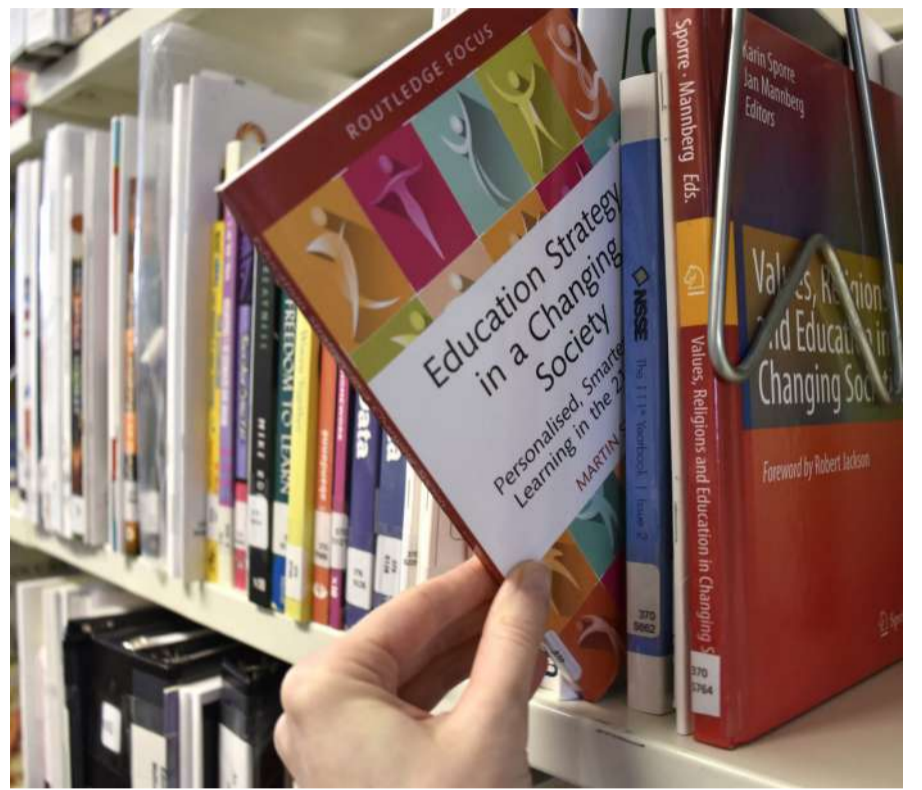
library," said Anderson. "So, losing this rate would effectively close many libraries in smaller communities, which would be devastating."

"This change would have saved Canada Post 1 per cent of its budget but removed access for teachers and other library users across the country," she added. "Without it, classrooms outside of urban communities could lose access to learning materials from the ATA and other libraries that support teaching and student learning."

On February 23, the House of Commons Finance Committee adopted an amendment to Bill C-15 requiring Canada Post to provide both free mailing for materials for people who are blind and reduced postage for library materials.

"This is a huge victory," Anderson said. "We were working to keep the legislative requirement for the program. It was fantastic to learn that when MPs realized the effect on libraries, not only did they remove the proposed change, but they also strengthened the existing legislation to add more protection for libraries in the *Canada Post Act*."

The amendment represents the culmination of coordinated advocacy. Wanting to ensure equitable access to library materials, the Alberta Teachers' Association joined libraries, accessibility organizations and education networks to push back against the proposed cuts. National groups including the Canadian Urban Libraries Council,



LINDSAY YAKIMYSHYN

The ATA library mails books, maker kits and other materials to members across the province.

Canadian Association of Research Libraries, the National Network for Equitable Library Service and the Centre for Equitable Library Access alongside accessibility partners such as the CNIB lent their voices to the effort.

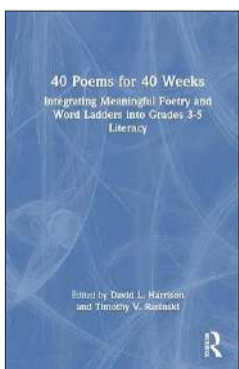
"A tiny line in a big budget bill was going to have a huge real-world impact," Anderson said. "This amendment proves that engagement and advocacy work in politics. It has

been rewarding to see that politicians understand how essential libraries are in promoting equitable access to knowledge."

Bill C-15 will now return to the House of Commons for the report stage and third reading. Further debate and amendments are possible; however, stakeholders do not anticipate changes that would affect these critical protections for teachers, students and communities. ■

CHECK ME OUT!

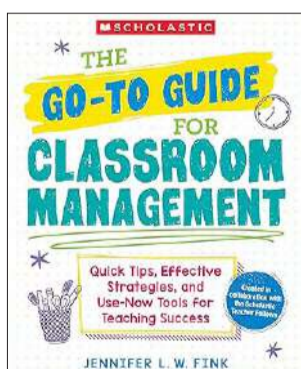
Some of the ATA Library's newest reads:



40 Poems for 40 weeks: Integrating Meaningful Poetry and Word Ladders into Grades 3-5 Literacy by David L. Harrison and Timothy V. Rasinski



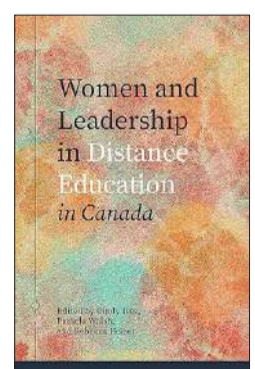
Construire le sens de la qualité éducative en petite enfance sous la direction de Nathalie Bigras et Lise Lemay



The Go-To Guide for Classroom Management: Quick Tips, Effective Strategies, and Use-Now Tools for Teaching Success by Jennifer L. W. Fink



Science 5-11: A Guide for Teachers by Kendra McMahon, Alan Howe, Chris Collier, Sarah Earle and Dan Davies



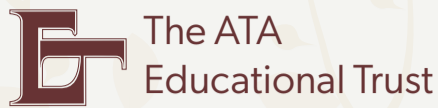
Women and Leadership in Distance Education in Canada edited by Cindy Ives, Pamela Walsh and Rebecca Heiser

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If something newsworthy is going on in your school, district or local, please let us know. We will also consider articles, photos and cartoons. Please email tips and submissions to managing editor Lindsay Yakimyshyn: lindsay.yakimyshyn@ata.ab.ca.

COMM 307-74_2026

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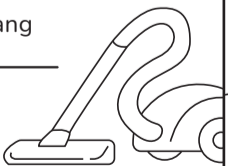



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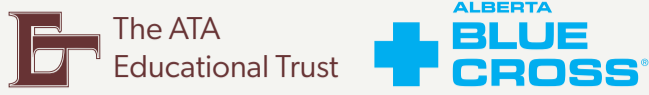
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Email your ideas to Managing Editor
Lindsay Yakimyshyn at
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COOR-209 2025-03

2026 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, 2025 and May 15, 2026, are eligible.
4. Please email photos to newsandmag@ata.ab.ca. Entries must be received by 5 p.m. on May 15, 2026.
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. Up to 10 additional entries may be selected for an honourable mention.
7. 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
8. Each entrant may submit up to five photos but no entrant can win more than one top-three prize.
9. A panel of individuals with photography, publishing and teaching experience will judge the entries. The decision of the judges is final.
10. Winning photographs will be published in the ATA News.
11. Photos submitted for the contest may be published in the ATA News, the ATA Magazine or other Association publications.
12. Please read carefully. Failure to comply with any of these rules may result in disqualification.

➤ *Get snapping and good luck!* ➤

COMM-65-1 2026 01

TALENT

March 31, 2026 | Volume 60, Number 11



SPRING IT ON : WAYS TO BRING NATURE INTO LEARNING

While some may typically think of the *physical education* and *environmental and outdoor education* curricula as having the closest ties to learning in the outdoors, our core subjects present many opportunities to weave nature into students' learning experiences.

- In *language arts*, sitting with nature can function as an inspirational writing prompt. Taking students outside and allowing them to sit in an

outdoor space creates opportunity for students to observe their environment and imbue their writing with imagery.

- *Scientific investigations* are sometimes best conducted in the outdoors! When students apply scientific observation and data collection skills in natural environments, they are witnessing science unfold in front of their eyes.
- The beauty of *mathematics* comes to life in our

natural environments. Allowing students to see relationships between mathematical concepts and natural phenomena creates a sense of connectedness to real-world contexts.

- *Social studies* presents unique opportunities to learn from the outdoors to enhance students' sense of environmental and social responsibility and develop understanding of our evolving relationship with the land. ■

Check out these nature-inspired projects shared by teachers:



◀ Dawnelle Salant: *I found this beautiful Bohemian waxwing posing perfectly on the side of the road in Water Valley. We were looking for owls, but this beauty stole the show! I so appreciate wildlife that sticks around for the perfect shot!*

Joanna Ruth: *I took a class last night to refresh my knowledge of linocut printmaking so I'd know how to teach it to my high school students. It's been a few years, ahem, decades since doing one in high school myself, so I got inspired by the blackbirds singing in the springtime in England when my husband and I lived there for a few years.* ▶



Find teacher resources related to nature and outdoor education.



ATA Library web guides on such topics as forest school and biodiversity: teachers-ab.libguides.com



ATA PD workshop on First Nations, Métis and Inuit Traditional Games: abteach.cc/pdworkshop



ATA Global Environmental and Outdoor Education Council: www.geoec.org/resources.html



Nature Alberta: naturealberta.ca/teacher-resources/

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