

JUNE

Recognizing National Indigenous History Month and Pride Month

[See Tale End, page 16.](#)

ATA NEWS

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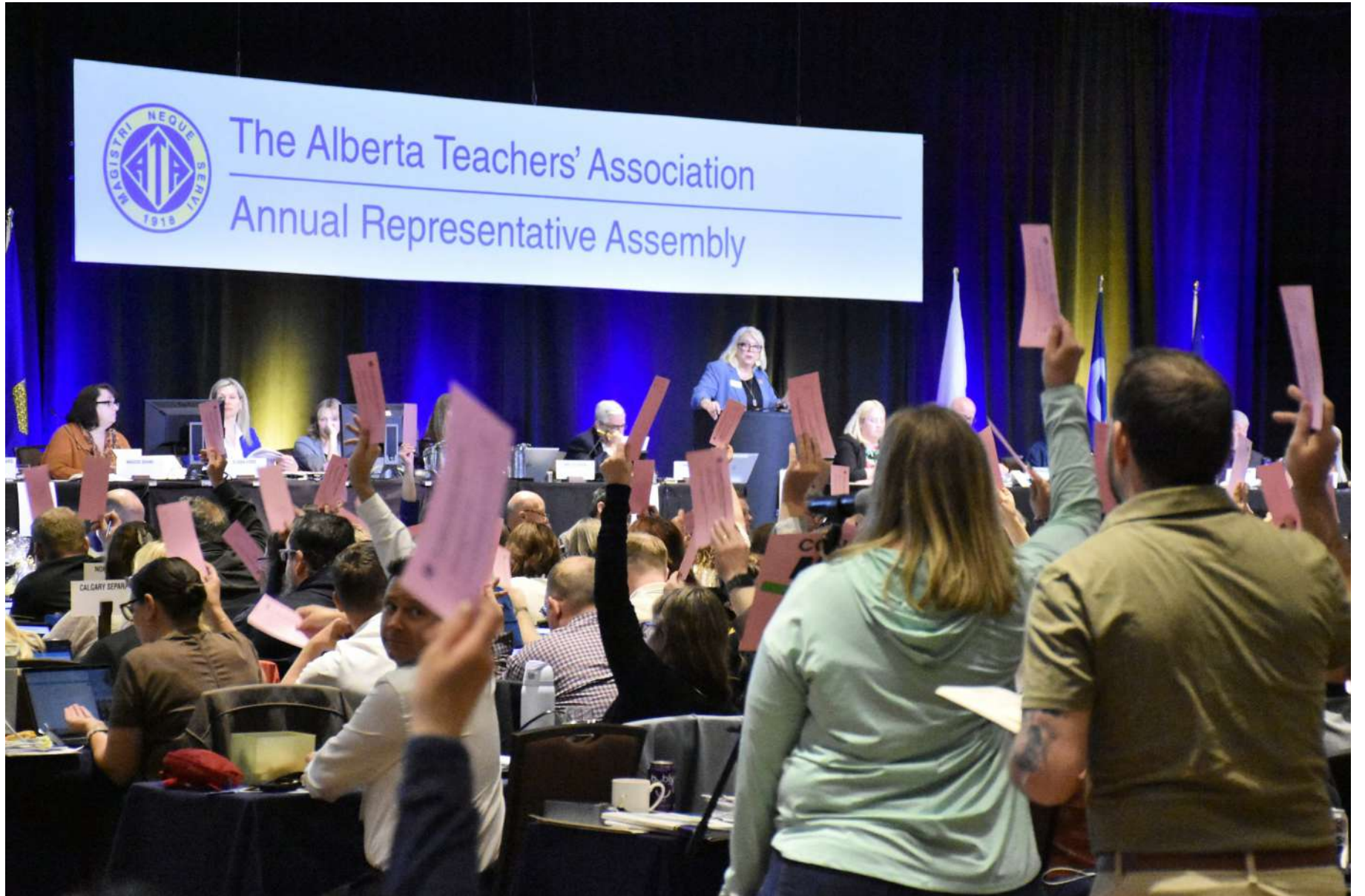
■ News Publication of The Alberta Teachers' Association

ARA
2026



Highlighted resolutions

[See page 9.](#)



LINDSAY YAKIMYSHYN

Democracy was in action as delegates debated and voted on resolutions at the 109th Annual Representative Assembly, held May 16–18 in Calgary.

ARA 2026

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The next chapter

Robert Mazzotta named as incoming executive secretary

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Upbeat! mindset

Shifting from "have to" to "get to"

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What we don't always see

The other side of classroom management

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New pathways, same reality for the next gen of teachers



EDITORIAL
Kristine Wilkinson
ATA News
Editor-in-Chief

The introduction of expedited teacher education programs in Alberta has raised a key question: *what kind of teachers will this system produce?*

It is a fair question. But it is also one that deserves a thoughtful, grounded answer.

The reality is this: Alberta needs teachers given growing enrolment, increasing class sizes and more complexity within classrooms. Expedited programs are one response to these pressures, designed to bring more qualified people into classrooms more quickly. But “more quickly” does not mean “unprepared.”

These new teachers are not entering classrooms without education or relevant experience. Moreover, they still complete coursework and, importantly, a practicum. That hands-on classroom experience has always been one of the most important parts of teacher preparation, no matter the pathway.

For many of us in the profession, our paths were not always straightforward or identical either.

I took an afterdegree route to become a teacher. I completed a three-year bachelor of arts degree and subsequently spent several years working with young people in other settings. Only then did I return to complete a two-year afterdegree in education.

I would like to think I became a good teacher. Not because my path was longer or more traditional, but because of the work I put in, both before and after entering the classroom.

Like many new teachers, I spent years learning content and developing my understanding of how to teach it. I read about classroom management on my own time. I reflected on what worked and what did not. I learned from colleagues. I adjusted, improved and tried again. That is what teachers have always done.

There are some concerns and assumptions that an expedited program will produce weaker teachers. However, the quality of a teacher is not determined merely by the length of their program. It is shaped by their commitment, willingness to learn and ability to connect with students.

And let's be honest, no program, no matter how long or rigorous, fully prepares someone for their first year in the classroom. Learning continues when students arrive. That is where theory meets reality. That is where teachers grow.

New teachers entering through expedited pathways will face the same realities as every new teacher before them. They will walk into classrooms that are busy, complex and often overwhelming. They will have to learn quickly and adapt. And they will have to decide early on whether they are willing to put in the extra work that teaching requires, because teaching has always required extra work.

Those in expedited programs will not be so different from the teachers who came before them. If anything, they will be entering a more difficult environment with increasingly large classes and complex student needs to manage, as well as ongoing system pressures. These make the need for strong mentorship, support and reasonable classroom conditions more important than ever.

This is where the conversation should shift.

Instead of focusing only on how quickly teachers are trained, we should

also be asking how they are supported once they begin. Are they given the time and guidance to improve? Are they entering classrooms where they can realistically succeed? Are we creating conditions that help committed people stay in the profession? Such conditions rely on the appropriate funding of public education. Even the best-prepared teacher will struggle in a system that is stretched too thin. And right now, the system is stretched too thin.

Expedited programs are one piece of a larger picture. They can help address shortages, but they are not a shortcut to solving deeper challenges in education. If the new teachers coming through these programs are committed to the work and dedicated to their students, they can be a great addition to the education system.

They will become part of the next generation of teachers, doing what the profession has always done—supporting our students as best we can and striving to become better every day. But let's not forget, the challenging classroom conditions need to be addressed for any and all teachers to provide the best education for their students. ■

Choosing social media battles—not all posts warrant response



Q & A
Dennis Theobald
ATA Executive
Secretary

Question: I'm frustrated by all the misinformation and downright lies about teachers, education and the ATA that keeps coming through my social media feeds. Why doesn't the Association respond to these posts and set the record straight?

Answer: There's a joke that has been making the rounds for a while: fighting with someone on social media is like wrestling a pig—you'll both get filthy and the pig likes it.*

That captures the practical conundrum faced by individuals and organizations attempting to respond to inaccurate, untruthful social media commentary, particularly when its producers are bad actors who don't care about accuracy, or who are motivated by their own agenda and ideological interests.

In determining whether and how to respond to a misleading social media post, Association communications staff first assess the nature of the post. Not every false claim needs a response, particularly if it has limited reach, is coming from a source with low credibility, is annoying rather than damaging or has little impact

beyond a small, credulous audience. Sometimes, responding can amplify a post unnecessarily.

Another consideration is whether the Association needs to reply. There are many teachers and independent voices on social media platforms who are not afraid to reply to an offending post and, by virtue of being independent, their organic responses have considerable credibility. Frankly, in such cases, it is unnecessary and potentially counterproductive for the Association to add its two cents.

Fortunately, we come to this task with several significant advantages. First, what the Association and teachers are advocating for is understood and supported by the public. When we conduct public opinion polling, support for public education and for teachers is consistently strong. This is a source of real political power, and advocacy by and on behalf of teachers has been the impetus for recent government decisions to substantially increase funding for public education and

up for schools and students. So, the efforts made by the Association and individual teachers to communicate through social media are uniquely effective.

As well, social media still depends to a large degree on the traditional, mainstream media to provide its “feedstock.” Over decades, the Association has cultivated good relationships with media by being consistently available, transparent and, above all, truthful. Credible reporting by journalists and reporters telling teachers' stories helps to inform and enlighten discussions that take place in social media.

Finally, the small team of communications professionals employed by the Association has had considerable success in the social media realm, with Association sites attracting over 45,000 Facebook followers and with a reach extending to 40.3 million. On Instagram, we have 31,000 followers and a reach to 1.3 million. We are also actively growing our presence on YouTube, LinkedIn and Bluesky. The recent decision by the Annual Representative Assembly to expand the team by 0.6 FTE will help to ensure that teachers' voice and views continue to be heard on all relevant media and platforms. ■

* *My apologies to pig-aficionados who will point out that pigs are intelligent, sensitive and meticulously clean animals.*

“ For better or worse, social media has become the preferred choice for information and opinion for a substantial majority of people. ”

Of course, this does not equate to surrendering social media spaces to trolls. For better or worse, social media has become the preferred choice for information and opinion for a substantial majority of people. Given this reality, the Association's goal must not be to fight online misinformation, but to proactively build public credibility and trust in these spaces over the long term. This, in turn, can help inoculate public opinion against misinformation being advanced.

to undertake initiatives to address class size, complexity and aggression. Our social media messaging, then, starts from a position of considerable strength.

Furthermore, in Canada, teachers are among the most trusted professionals in society. Public opinion polls consistently place teaching in the top tier of trusted occupations. The Association itself enjoys a high level of public confidence in its efforts to stand



What we don't always see: The other side of classroom management



VIEWPOINTS

Shu Wang
Grade 2 teacher, Calgary

Classroom management is one of the most demanding aspects of teaching. Much of the work teachers do is invisible: unseen planning, constant decision making and deep emotional care. But alongside this hidden effort, I have begun to wonder whether there are also hidden costs, ones that are quietly carried by students.

One afternoon, my daughter came home excited about her upcoming school assembly. She showed me that she had memorized all the songs, proudly recited the land acknowledgement, and even demonstrated the sign language she had been practicing.

Then she shared something else. She told me she wanted to be the emcee of the assembly, but she didn't ask the teacher. The teacher also hadn't asked the class for volunteers.

Later, my daughter shared with me that the role had been given to another student, someone who had struggled earlier in the year but had recently made progress. It was meant to encourage this student. My daughter wasn't upset by this, but I could sense a quiet disappointment. She is in kindergarten. She doesn't yet know how to advocate for herself. Maybe she shouldn't have to.

This moment stayed with me, as a teacher and a parent. It led me to reflect on how we define fairness in our classrooms and how we recognize our students.

“ ... we must ask, are all students feeling seen for who they are? ”

In many classrooms, we put significant effort into supporting students who need help with behaviour, self-regulation or engagement. This is important and necessary work. Yet, I have begun to wonder whether, in doing so, we sometimes overlook the students who consistently meet expectations. These students are often described as “easy,” but being “easy” is not effortless. It is the result of daily self-regulation, practice and guidance, both at school and at home.

At times, these students are also asked, sometimes quietly and indirectly, to support classroom management. They may be encouraged to model expectations, to repeat instructions for peers who are not listening, or to be seated strategically between students who are more likely to experience conflict. While these approaches can be effective in maintaining order, they also place an invisible responsibility on students.

I have also seen a different approach

from a colleague that made me reflect deeply. She had two students who frequently found themselves in conflict. Instead of separating them, she intentionally allowed them to remain in the same group. It was not always easy. There were disagreements and moments of tension, but over time, those students began to learn something important: how to navigate differences, how to walk away and how to manage frustration.

This led me to consider creating more intentional opportunities for students who struggle to learn how to manage conflict themselves, with guidance and support. These are valuable life skills, and the classroom can be a place to learn them safely. This can also create space for our already engaged and self-regulated students to learn, focus and enjoy their school experience without carrying additional, unspoken responsibilities.

Through these reflections, I have come to believe that effective classroom management is not only about strategies but also about the deeper qualities a teacher brings into the classroom, especially care, consistency and modeling.

Sometimes this work is visible: the teacher keeping a student with high needs calm and focused during an assembly. At other times, it is demonstrated through quiet consistency. They organize learning clearly, communicate regularly with families and reflect openly on their practice. Through daily updates, thoughtful planning and transparent communication, they model what it means to be responsible, organized and reflective.

Students notice these things. They learn not only from what we say but from what we do.

If we expect students to be organized, we need to show them what organization looks like. If we expect them to reflect, we need to model reflection. If we expect respect, we need to demonstrate it in how we treat every student, including those who quietly meet expectations every day.

Classroom management is not easy. It is complex, demanding and deeply human work. But rather than relying on what is most manageable in the moment, perhaps we can continue to reflect on how to create fairness in our classrooms.

If we truly believe in supporting all students, then we must ask, are all students feeling seen for who they are? And are we recognizing not only growth, but also consistency?

Because sometimes just being seen is what matters most. ■

Shu Wang is a Grade 2 teacher at Marion Carson School with the Calgary Board of Education. This article is based on her reflections as both a classroom teacher and a parent.

YOUR VIEWS

Annual Representative Assembly (ARA) delegates shared why they attend the ARA.

Waishing Lam
Living out principles of being a social studies teacher in practice

Carryl Bennett
To watch democracy in action!

Jensen Evtuz
It's a really unique democratic environment, and I learn a lot about what's affecting others around the province every single time.

FOR THE RECORD

“
The work of teachers is not only educational—it is foundational to our democracy. Through your work, you help to build a more compassionate, open-minded and empathetic society. Teaching is not only a public service; it is a social good.
”

—Canadian Teachers' Federation president Clint Johnston in his address to the ATA's 2026 Annual Representative Assembly



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.

ATA remains grounded in its purpose

Executive secretary Theobald speaks on ATA’s ability to endure in final ARA address

Lindsay Yakimyshyn
ATA News Staff

In the face of sustained pressure and significant change within Alberta’s education system, the Alberta Teachers’ Association (ATA) has remained resilient while staying grounded in its core purpose, ATA executive secretary Dennis Theobald told delegates at the 2026 Annual Representative Assembly (ARA).

Delivering his final address after eight years in the role—and 25 years on Association staff—Theobald reflected on a tenure marked by political change and legislative reform within the province as well as increasing pressures placed on the teaching profession. He spoke on how the ATA has functioned, adapted and endured amid sustained challenges.

He observed that “resilience is not only about resolve in moments of crisis. It is about whether institutions are built in ways that allow people to act collectively over time without losing purpose, legitimacy or trust.”

Theobald pointed to a series of structural shifts that have reshaped Alberta’s education context, including increased public investment in private and charter schools, changes to the provincial funding model, centralized curriculum development

processes and the removal of the ATA’s long-standing responsibility for the profession’s regulation. Theobald also spoke on the socio-political landscape, describing a period during which government legislation had significant implications for both the Association and the profession.

“All this context matters, not as a catalogue of complaints and injuries, but because it explains the scale of what the Association has been required to do in response,” he said.

Those systemic changes have been compounded, he added, by chronic underfunding and rapid enrolment growth that have placed increasing pressure on teachers in the classroom. Theobald noted that deteriorating teaching and learning conditions contributed to teachers’ provincewide labour action in October 2025, which he linked to early signs of progress in the province “toward addressing class size, complexity and the issue of aggression in schools.”

“This is not the result of political good will or some sudden enlightenment on the part of government,” he said, “but a response to the unrelenting political pressure exerted by teachers through their advocacy and the resolve they demonstrated by a labour action of unparalleled scale.”

Theobald added that the ATA has endured as a democratic,



LINDSAY YAKIMYSHYN

ATA executive secretary presented the annual report to the Assembly.

member-directed professional organization thanks to sustained effort by teachers who continue to build and govern this institution. Acknowledging the work of elected leaders and staff for their ongoing commitment to members, Theobald further commented on the ATA continuing to fulfill its core mission by responding to increasing demand for member support within a complex environment, as well as expanding professional development opportunities and advancing equity, diversity and inclusion.

Telling delegates he has been honoured to serve as executive secretary, Theobald expressed confidence in the Association’s future amid continued uncertainty, “not because the challenges ahead are small, but because the capacity of this organization to meet them is real and substantial.”

“The Alberta Teachers’ Association has changed, but it has not been diminished,” he said. “It has adapted. It has endured. And it remains grounded in its purpose.” ■

“Solidarity does not mean sameness”

ATA president delivers powerful speech calling for renewed unity

Lindsay Yakimyshyn
ATA News Staff

Solidarity within the teaching profession is about choosing to listen to each other, to stand together and to defend public education to build a better future for the province, even in difficult times. That was the core message of ATA president Jason Schilling’s address at the 2026 Annual Representative Assembly (ARA), held over the May long weekend in Calgary.

Speaking to more than 400 teacher-delegates from across Alberta, Schilling began with a reminder of what grounds teaching: the classroom. He described teachers’ connection to that space and their students, and how the work of teachers—himself included—has carried on despite challenging conditions.

“Not because it was easy, not because the conditions were ideal, but because of what I believe. A belief in honesty, in justice. A belief that I can make a difference.”

Strongest together

Schilling then reflected on the strength and solidarity shown by Alberta teachers over the past year, specifically during an historic provincewide strike that shone a spotlight on strains being placed on the public education system. He thanked Alberta’s teachers and school leaders for their courage, professionalism and commitment to their students, saying that they

proved that the teaching profession will not be silenced.

Schilling also acknowledged parents and community members for their support of teachers, as well as the leadership shown by ATA locals, Provincial Executive Council and ATA staff during the strike.

“This community, this Association, is bigger than any one of us. As an Association we should be proud of our diversity, our strength and our values. When it mattered most, teachers showed up and stood up.”

At the same time, Schilling acknowledged the strain felt across the profession following the labour action. He said that, even with their shared concerns and values, teachers experience different realities and hold different perspectives. Speaking to the tensions this can create, Schilling called upon teachers to find a way to come together.

“Whatever perspective we bring to that moment, whatever complex emotions we carry—anger, frustration, disappointment, pride—it left us with a truth we cannot afford to forget: we are strongest when we act together, and we are weakest if we turn on each other.”

Rather than dismissing differing perspectives and feelings, the president encouraged teachers to use them constructively and pair anger with hope.

“Not the kind of hope where we pretend everything is fine—but the kind teachers practice every day.... The hope that refuses to give up on students and ourselves, even when the system makes it harder than it should be.”



LINDSAY YAKIMYSHYN

ATA president Jason Schilling addressing delegates at the 109th ARA.

201 days later

During his speech, Schilling observed that it had been 201 days since teachers were stripped of their charter rights through the government’s passing of Bill 2, the *Back to School Act*. Remarking on this and other legislation affecting the profession, he called on teachers to consider how to constructively move forward together. This includes, he said, building bridges so all members feel seen and heard and recognizing that solidarity does not mean sameness.

“It means listening, holding space for our members’ diversity while also holding firm to our values to ensure that every member can see themselves in the path forward,” he said.

With three days of debate ahead, Schilling encouraged delegates to

bring forward their voices, ideas and concerns while focusing on members’ shared goals and strengthening Alberta’s teaching profession and its Association.

“What we build here might not be perfect...but it must be united. It must be grounded in the values that brought us into this profession in the first place.”

Schilling closed his address by focusing back on the classroom and reminding delegates of the strength of teachers’ collective power through and beyond ARA.

“Let this assembly be remembered not only for the debates we had or the challenges we faced, but for the choices we collectively made to listen, to stay united, to defend public education and each other,” he said, “And to keep building a future worthy of the students and families we serve.” ■

Familiar face to take on executive secretary role

Mark Milne
ATA News Staff

The Alberta Teachers’ Association (ATA) will see a change in its top administrative leadership this fall, with Robert Mazzotta being named the new executive secretary. Set to officially assume the role in September 2026, Mazzotta will succeed Dennis Theobald, who is retiring from the position.

In taking on this position and having just attended the Annual Representative Assembly, Mazzotta is aware of teachers’ concerns and understands the challenges ahead for the Association.

“I think we really need to reinforce trust, regain the trust of the membership and ensure that we are all unified moving forward,” he said.

Mazzotta brings to the role extensive experience in both school administration and provincial association operations. Before joining the ATA, he spent 17 years with Edmonton Public Schools working as a teacher and school administrator. He later transitioned to the human resources department at the school district’s central office. Mazzotta sees this experience as essential in preparing him for his new role.

“The variety of experiences I’ve had have helped me fine tune my skills for listening, for understanding and for looking at all viable options to move forward,” said Mazzotta. “It’s important to resist immediate knee-jerk reactions. I like to think things out and determine what is actually best for members and for the Association.”

Mazzotta first joined the ATA in 2007. He began as an executive staff officer with Member Services (now called Teacher Employment Membership Support), where he was highly regarded for his extensive knowledge of policy, his bilingualism in French and English, and his effective presentation skills.

In August 2017, Provincial Executive Council named Mazzotta the coordinator for Member Services. Five years later, he took the next step in his career and became Associate Executive Secretary, a role that provided Mazzotta with an entirely new perspective on the work of the Association.

“I think one of the biggest challenges I’ve encountered over the past four years is managing the different perspectives and competing interests,” he said.

Mazzotta’s upcoming transition to executive secretary marks a new chapter, both for him in his nearly two decades of service to the ATA and for the ATA itself. Current Executive



Incoming executive secretary
Robert Mazzotta

Secretary Theobald, who served in the role for eight years, says he’s confident Mazzotta will excel in his new role and offers him one piece of advice.

“Remember always that you are a teacher and why you became a teacher,” said Theobald. “Everything we do is rooted in that ethos and in a deep commitment to serving our members and the greater cause of public education. Keep that in mind, and you will never go far wrong.” ■

Alberta vice-principal earns national honour

Chris Gonsalvez
ATA News Staff

For Edmonton vice-principal Amber Nicholson, leadership begins with a simple but powerful belief: every person deserves to feel seen, heard and valued. This belief and her strong relational approach to leadership led her to receive recognition from the Canadian Association of Principals (CAP) this May as Canada’s vice-principal of the year.

In early May, Nicholson received the CAP award, which honours an educator whose leadership has strengthened school communities, elevated teacher voice and created spaces where students feel they truly belong.

Known for her calm presence during complex moments and unwavering commitment to public education, Nicholson says her leadership approach can be traced back to her own experiences as a student.

Nicholson recalls in particular seeing how her Grade 6 teacher made students who “fell to the background” feel like they belong.

“He gave voice and strength to those who were teased,” she said. Adding that she had felt valued in that classroom, Nicholson remembers thinking to herself, “This is what I want to do for others.”

Another important influence came later in her career when she was working at St. Elizabeth School with principal Dianne Brophy, who pushed Nicholson into becoming an assistant principal.

“She would be outside having races

with students at recess,” Nicholson recalled. “She was always present, believed in students and was an incredible leader.”

Nicholson has been an assistant principal for six years at three different schools with Edmonton Catholic schools. Colleagues describe her as a relational leader with an incredible ability to build trust across diverse and at times divided teams. Even in high pressure situations, Nicholson focuses on what can be controlled to create a positive and productive space.

“There are only so many things you can control, but I can focus on the pieces I can control,” she explained. “I can control how I act, how I encourage others and what steps I take.”

In her role, Nicholson also creates inclusive spaces where students and families feel connected and valued. One of Nicholson’s most meaningful contributions has been supporting a Gathering Circle for Indigenous students and their allies. She says that she wanted these students, often some of the most vulnerable in her school community, to feel a sense of belonging.

The impact has been significant.

“Our students have gone from feeling unseen to boasting about their background and culture,” she said. “It is amazing to see them wearing their regalia and being proud of who they are.”

Nicholson says the work reflects her broader belief that every student has gifts and strengths that deserve recognition and opportunity. The Gathering Circle has also strengthened relationships with families.

“We have invited parents to the



Amber Nicholson, CAP vice-principal of the year

circles, and it was nice to see parents join,” she said. “We have seen negative behaviours reduced because the family also belongs.”

Showing strong leadership through building connections with students and families, supporting teachers with transparency and advocating for public education, Nicholson consistently focuses on ensuring people feel heard and respected.

“When people feel seen and heard, great things happen,” she said.

For Nicholson, the national recognition reflects the collective efforts of educators, students and families working together to create stronger school communities grounded in compassion, dignity, belonging and justice. ■

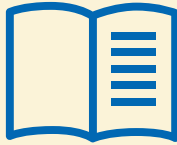
LEADERSHIP

THRIVE5

Bite-sized takeaways to boost and brighten your leadership life

Featuring: Jeff Huculak
ATA executive staff officer

- 1: I am reading...



Find Your Why: A Practical Guide for Discovering Purpose for You and Your Team. As everyone is aware, this past year has been extremely challenging. In my role of supporting teachers and school leaders, clarity of purpose has never been more important. It’s important to remind ourselves why we do the work we do each and everyday.
- 2: I am eating...



brisket. Lots of brisket. I recently had family over and (keeping with my Ukrainian heritage), I may have cooked too much food. As such, I seem to have been eating my share of smoked goodness over the last week.

- 3: I am watching...



The Playbook, an inspiring Netflix sports documentary series where legendary coaches share the lessons and principles that helped them succeed in sports and in life. The series explores the leadership styles, strategies and personal experiences of some of the world’s top coaches. I’ve watched the first episode and am looking forward to watching the other four episodes.
- 4: I have signed up for...



several publications, including ASCD Education Update, Canadian Teacher magazine, Education and Law Journal, Employment and Labour Law Reporter, Leaders and Learners and Harvard Business Review. I also recently subscribed to The Rundown AI.

- 5: I am listening to...



A Bit of Optimism with Simon Sinek, a series of conversations with different individuals who share their own personal stories. The conversations are often insightful and inspirational. ■
- 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.

Honorary membership recipient calls for continued commitment to reconciliation

Mark Milne
ATA News Staff

At this year’s Annual Representative Assembly (ARA), educator and scholar Dr. Dwayne Donald was presented with the Alberta Teachers’ Association’s (ATA) highest honour, honorary membership, recognizing his profound contributions, both provincially and nationally, to Indigenous education and reconciliation.



LINDSAY YAKIMYSHYN
Dwayne Donald received honorary membership at the 2026 ARA.

Donald, a professor in the University of Alberta’s Faculty of Education, holds a Tier 1 Canada Research Chair in Reimagining Teacher Education with Indigenous Wisdom Traditions. In his acceptance speech, Donald expressed deep gratitude to those who have shaped his life and work. A proud graduate of Strathcona High School in Edmonton, Donald paid tribute to those who played a significant role throughout his school years. In particular, he recognized his former football coach, John Belmont, whose mentorship helped guide him throughout his youth. “Back when we were young, our dad was a long-haul trucker and wasn’t home a lot, and so I think our parents were worried we were going to get into trouble,” said Donald. “So we relied a lot on the school to keep us busy. And

sports was the way to do that. And John Belmont was a huge influence on that.” Another key figure in Donald’s life was Larry Booi, his high school social studies teacher and track coach. Booi, who went on to become president of the ATA, was a role model for Donald—someone he wanted to emulate. “For me, it was always him, just the way he was, the way he presented himself,” Donald said. Moving from personal reflections to broader social issues, Donald expressed his concerns about Alberta’s socio-political landscape. “As I see it, we still live in a frontier society. That mentality is still lingering and carrying on in different ways,” said Donald. He observed that we are still experiencing rugged individualism, resource exploitation and a lack of concern for the past or the future, and he praised the ATA for its ongoing commitment to inclusion and equity. “In my view, the Association has been very thoughtful and wanting to make sure that everyone is included in the work that we do and protecting those that are most vulnerable,” said Donald.

Donald also cautioned about the rising tensions following recent court rulings affecting Indigenous peoples, noting how the rhetoric has ramped up and it feels like we’re finding ourselves in a dangerous time. He urged the ATA and educators everywhere to remain steadfast in their role as stewards of social responsibility and reconciliation. “I look forward to standing beside the Association, carrying on with that work, thinking about more than just what’s in it for us in the present moment,” he said. “We have a treaty, and there are people who live amongst us whose ancestors have lived here for thousands of years. That’s part of all of us.” Donald concluded with a call for unity grounded in mutual dependence and respect, saying, “With respect to all our differences, we are unified by the fact that we all depend on the life around us for survival. I hope we can continue to work in that way, support each other in that way, and think about how we could live together, differently, in the years to come.” ■

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Award recipients usually are presented with boutonnieres as a sign of recognition. In Dr. Donald’s case, he was presented with an intricately beaded medallion created by Edmonton teacher Glenda Viney. The design incorporated Donald’s Cree name, Hai Muskwa: presence of the bear. Seven flowers adorn the perimeter of the piece to honour the Seven Sacred Teachings: love, respect, courage, honesty, wisdom, humility and truth. The geometric shapes and feather at the bottom suggest pathway, journey, endurance and purposeful movement across distance, symbolizing how Donald helps people move intellectually and ethically across histories, across relationships and across ways of knowing.



LINDSAY YAKIMYSHYN
ATA vice-president Allison McCaffrey presenting award to Trisha Estabrooks



LINDSAY YAKIMYSHYN
Brandi Rai accepting her award from vice-president Greg Carabine

Public education advocates honoured at 2026 Assembly

Lindsay Yakimyshyn
ATA News Managing Editor

Two advocates for Alberta’s public education system were recognized at the 2026 Annual Representative Assembly (ARA), with Brandi Rai and Trisha Estabrooks receiving the ATA’s Public Education Award for their visible support of public schools.

The award recognizes individuals or groups who have made significant contributions to public education outside the teaching profession.

Estabrooks recognized for leadership and advocacy

Estabrooks, a former CBC journalist and long-time Edmonton Public Schools trustee, was honoured for her years of leadership and advocacy.

Introducing Estabrooks, ATA vice-president Allison McCaffrey described her as a tireless champion for public education who had tackled issues ranging from funding to curriculum.

“Trisha has never hesitated to speak up for all causes in public education—and we know there are many, many, many of them,” McCaffrey said, adding that Estabrooks had consistently advocated for keeping public dollars in public schools.

In accepting the award, Estabrooks emphasized the collective nature of public education. She acknowledged those with whom she had worked in her advocacy efforts, including teachers and other stakeholders. Praising teachers for their vocal and visible support of public education, Estabrooks then pointed to Alberta teachers’ recent labour action as an example of the profession’s strength and resolve.

“You stood up. You showed Albertans the importance and the value of standing up in the face of this government,” she said. “And you inspired kids. You inspired each other. You inspired the public and parents and family in society.”

Estabrooks closed her remarks by reflecting on the significance of the award.

“To receive this recognition and this award from people—from you

all who dream big for others and who believe so strongly in what you do, and in the value of public education—it really, truly means a lot to me,” she said.

Rai honoured for amplifying parent voice

Rai, former president of the Alberta School Councils’ Association, was also recognized for her advocacy efforts, particularly in amplifying the role of parents and families in public education.

ATA vice-president Greg Carabine introduced Rai as a “lifelong learner, advocate and ally” who believes that access to quality public education creates opportunities for all to be the best version of themselves. He added that Rai champions the idea that “every child deserves to live authentically” and to succeed in well-supported classrooms.

In her remarks, Rai spoke about the transformative power of education.

“Education and empowerment change us, individually and collectively,” she said. “Through education, we evolve in how we treat each other and how we find solutions. And this is why education is so important generally—yesterday, today and always.”

Rai also addressed the broader political climate surrounding education, urging continued advocacy and resilience and sharing a message of encouragement for teachers.

“You are professionals, you are powerful, you are prepared and you are predestined to be successful,” she said. “Because an educated, empowered and engaged populace is one that volunteers in community, is compassionate to each other, deconstructs the lies and rhetoric that are actually meant to harm them, and then votes accordingly with their dollar, with their time and with their ballot.”

Closing her remarks, Rai thanked teachers for this honour and for the work they do every single day in classrooms across the province.

Together, the two recipients were celebrated for their contributions to the public conversation about the importance and future of Alberta’s public education system. ■

Delegates unite at 109th ARA following historic year

Kristine Wilkinson
ATA News Editor-in-Chief

More than 400 delegates representing ATA locals from across the province gathered in Calgary over the Victoria Day long weekend for the Alberta Teachers' Association's (ATA) 109th Annual Representative Assembly (ARA). On the heels of an historic and tumultuous year, the three-day assembly established the Association's budget, refined core organizational policy and sent a definitive message to the provincial government: Alberta's teachers stand unified, professional and ready to protect the integrity of public education.

The shadow of the fall 2025 provincewide strike—and the provincial government's unprecedented invocation of the notwithstanding clause to force teachers back to work—loomed large over the weekend. Even after a challenging year, the atmosphere in the assembly floor was one of fierce resolve.

ATA president Jason Schilling set the tone in his opening address, vigorously rejecting government efforts to

create divisions within the teaching profession or to dismiss concerns raised about public education in the province.

"Teachers have shown through our collective action that we are not afraid to stand united and stand up for what we believe in," Schilling told delegates. "We know the public and parents are on our side. They see through the political noise and want what we want: classrooms where students can actually thrive."

With resolve

Delegates in attendance thoughtfully debated and passed several key resolutions aimed at tackling systemic underfunding, protecting teacher safety and navigating the emerging frontiers of classroom technology.

In particular, the assembly passed a series of resolutions that targeted legislative overreach. Delegates condemned attacks on teacher professionalism and brought forward resolutions focused on defending teachers' professional autonomy and their legal and moral obligations to maintain safe, inclusive and welcoming spaces for all students, including vulnerable 2SLGBTQI+ youth. For example, there was unanimous

support for a resolution requesting the ATA make a statement affirming that all students in Alberta have the right to public education, made in reference to students' ability to attend public school in Alberta being limited by their immigration status.

Recognizing that teachers are currently operating in a policy vacuum when it comes to companion artificial intelligence (AI), the assembly debated the risks of using anthropomorphic AI tools in schools. Delegates passed a policy directive urging the development of provincial frameworks to protect student data from corporate mining and ensure that AI interactions are strictly vetted to prevent artificial systems from taking the place of certified human professionals.

With long-term organizational stability and strength in mind, the assembly also focused on preparing for the path ahead, including the next round of bargaining. As part of this work, the assembly approved a staffing increase to manage social media. Debate on this and other resolutions raised the importance of keeping members informed and dispelling disinformation, with an overarching goal to firmly establish

public education as a ballot-box issue ahead of the provincial election and teachers' next round of collective bargaining. Speakers reminded the floor that the government's back-to-work legislative restrictions are set to expire on August 31, 2028, meaning full bargaining and constitutional rights will be restored before the conclusion of the next round.

Throughout the three days, delegates engaged in respectful debate on topics that matter to teachers across the province. They also honoured members who were retiring, whether from teaching or their local roles, demonstrating the strength of collegiality within the profession. Retiring executive secretary Dennis Theobald received a standing ovation from delegates as he adjourned the assembly.

As teacher-delegates headed back to their respective locals and classrooms, the mandate from the 2026 ARA was clear: through authentic, professional and collective advocacy, Alberta's teachers will stand united and continue to apply pressure where it belongs—on securing the resources, safety and respect that the teaching profession, public education and students deserve. ■



PHOTOS: LINDSAY YAKIMSHYN

Budget passes, sets direction for next year

Pedro Carriel
ATA Treasurer and
Chief Financial Officer

Delegates at the Annual Representative Assembly (ARA) concluded a productive weekend of debate by approving a balanced operating budget for 2026/27 to support the Association's priorities in the upcoming fiscal year.

Total planned expenditures for the upcoming fiscal year are expected to increase by five per cent compared to the 2025/26 budget. Teachers' ATA full-time membership fees will remain unchanged at \$1,422 for 2026/27, while the annual fee for associate members will continue at \$213.30.

Approved budget highlights

The 2026/27 budget reflects a series of strategic investments and targeted initiatives intended to support the Association's ongoing work while strengthening services for members.

ARA delegates approved funding to support training for Local Substitute Teacher Committee chairs, arising from a recommendation by the Substitute Teachers Committee.

Delegates also approved continued

funding to support the ATA's ongoing legal challenge to Bill 2, the *Back to School Act*, recognizing the significant implications the legislation carries for teachers' collective bargaining rights and broader constitutional freedoms. Throughout the debate, delegates emphasized the importance of seeing this challenge through to its conclusion and affirmed the ATA's commitment to providing additional financial resources, as required, to sustain the legal effort in the years ahead.

Support for Truth and Reconciliation remains a core and enduring priority for the Association. In recognition of this commitment, delegates approved dedicated funding for Indigenous education development initiatives.

Recognizing the importance of long-term planning and risk management, delegates further endorsed continued investments in strategic information technology services, along with allocations to the Capital Fund and the Special Emergency Fund.

Several delegates also emphasized the importance of strengthening the Association's social media presence, particularly in addressing misinformation and improving public engagement. As a result, funding was approved to expand internal capacity in this area.

The thoughtful discussion and diverse perspectives shared throughout the budget process reflect the strength and democratic character of the ATA. The approved budget positions the ATA to move forward with a clear and responsible fiscal plan while remaining responsive

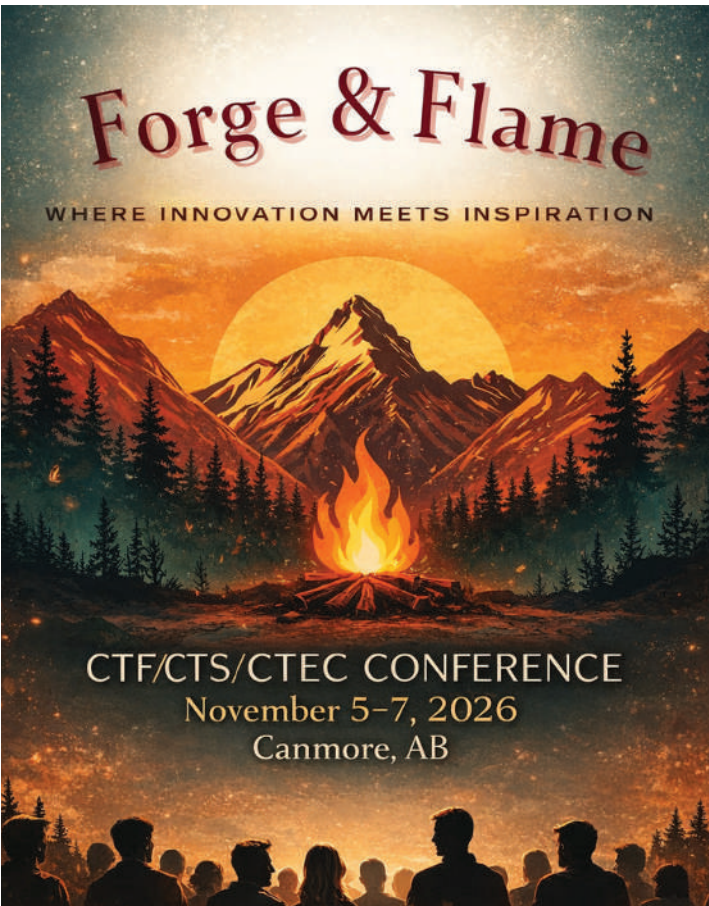
to emerging challenges, evolving member needs and the broader educational landscape in Alberta. Through these investments, the Association will continue working to protect and advance public education and to support members across the province in the year ahead. ■

Full-time fee remains at \$1,422

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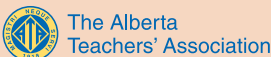
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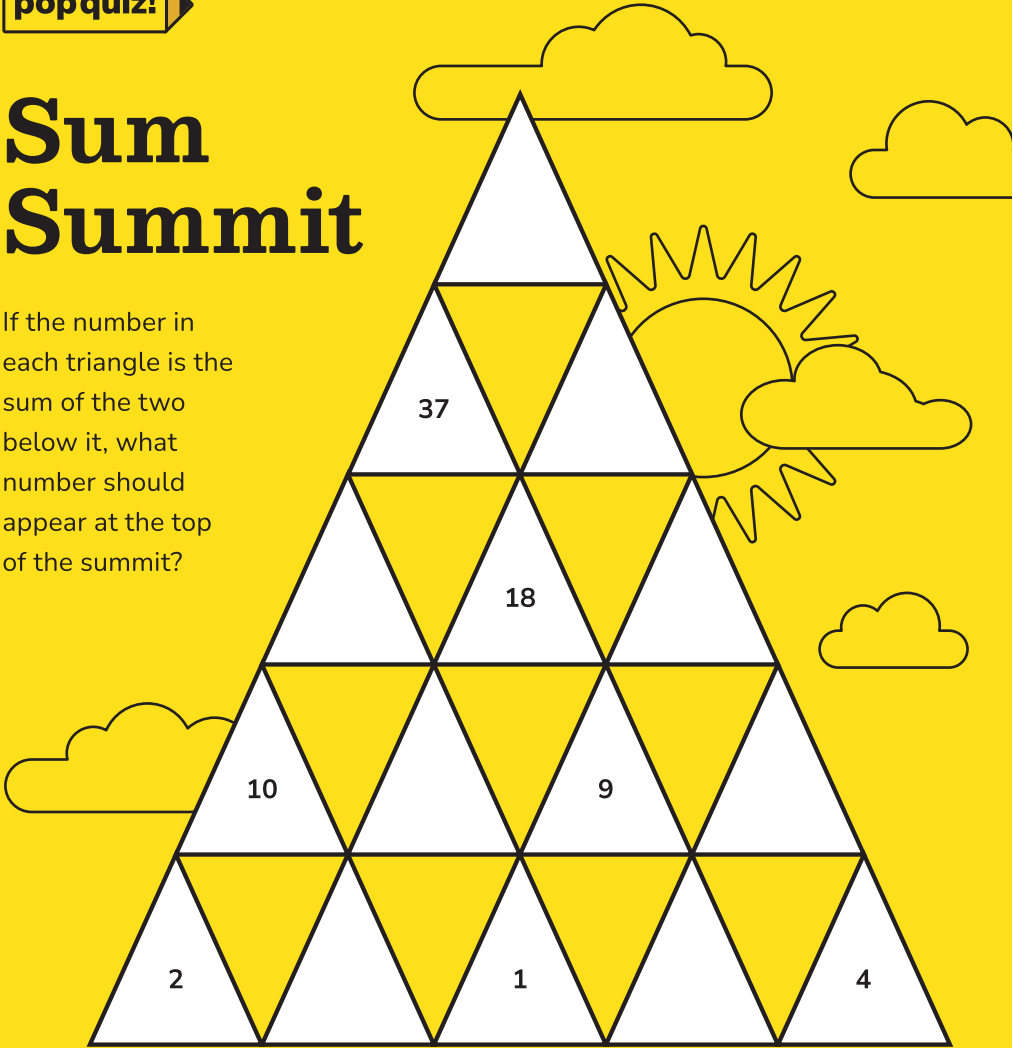


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Sum Summit

If the number in each triangle is the sum of the two below it, what number should appear at the top of the summit?



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Featured resolutions passed at ARA

This is a selection of the resolutions adopted by the 2026 Annual Representative Assembly. See the ATA website for the complete set of approved resolutions.

Resolutions arising from the six-year review of policy

- 1-76/26**
Be it resolved that policy 9.2.3.5 be amended to read—
“The Government of Alberta should
1. support Alberta parents in accessing their section 23 rights under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms,
 2. support parents in accessing opportunities to have their children educated in both official languages, and
 3. ensure that Alberta children have equal opportunities to become fluent in both official languages.”

Local resolutions

- 2-41/26**
Be it resolved that the Association strongly oppose the Government of Alberta’s use of section 33 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms (the notwithstanding clause) to override fundamental rights and freedoms, including teachers’ freedom of expression and association.
- 2-42/26**
Be it resolved that the Association strongly oppose the Government of Alberta’s use of section 33 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms (the notwithstanding clause) to override Charter rights and fundamental freedoms, particularly in legislation affecting the rights, dignity and safety of transgender and gender-diverse youth in Alberta schools.
- 2-50/26**
Be it resolved that the Association urge school authorities to provide all teachers with disabilities, including substitute teachers, the necessary accommodations to ensure equitable access to all open postings, daily

substitute positions and professional opportunities and to ensure that teachers with disabilities are not involuntarily reassigned to alternative roles in lieu of receiving appropriate accommodations.

Provincial Executive Council resolutions

- 3-11/26**
Be it resolved that anthropomorphic artificial intelligence (AI) tools, including AI companions and other AI systems designed specifically to simulate friendship, counselling or intimate relationships, not be deployed or introduced into any Alberta K–12 learning environments or support settings.
- 3-14/26**
Be it resolved that the Association urge the Government of Alberta to enact comprehensive accessibility legislation, developed in consultation with provincial disability organizations and public-sector unions.
- 3-15/26**
Be it resolved that the Association oppose the implementation of Bill 12, *Financial Statutes Amendment Act, 2025 (No. 2)*, and related cuts to the Assured Income for the Severely Handicapped program and the creation of the Alberta Disability Assistance Program.
- 3-18/26**
Be it resolved that the Association, in response to Bill 25, *An Act to Remove Politics and Ideology from Classrooms and Amend the Education Act, 2026*,
1. affirm that Alberta’s public, separate and francophone schools must continue to strive to provide welcoming and respectful learning environments that respect diversity and nurture a sense of belonging and a positive sense of self;
 2. affirm that teachers, exercising their professional judgment and expertise, should ultimately determine how evaluations and interventions can best be used



LINDSAY YAKIMSHYN

- to advance individual student learning;
3. affirm that it is the responsibility of teachers, exercising their professional judgment, to ensure controversial issues are taught in a manner that is pedagogically and intellectually sound and respectful of legitimate diverse perspectives;
 4. affirm that decisions concerning the display of flags and related

- symbols and playing of the national anthem are best made by individual school communities and teachers in the spirit of creating generous, inclusive, respectful and safe learning environments for students and staff; and
5. affirm the expectation that government will consult with the Association to ensure that procedures, platforms and technologies for managing student evaluation are adequately supported and appropriate for diverse school and classroom situations.

Emergent resolutions

- 4-2/26**
Be it resolved the Association release a public statement in response to the announced Alberta Referendum to take place in October 2026 that supports the Association’s position that public education is a universal right to every child in Alberta and that no student should be denied access to education on the basis of immigration status.
- 4-3/26**
Be it resolved that teachers, as individuals, after reviewing any applicable collective agreement provisions, consider their instructional responsibilities and workload before agreeing to provide voluntary services.
- 4-4/26**
Be it resolved the Association condemn the persistent underfunding of public education; the erosion of respect for the professional expertise of teachers; and policies that negatively impact classroom conditions, student and staff well-being, and the welcoming and safe learning environments in classrooms across Alberta. ■



LINDSAY YAKIMSHYN



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Kat Dornian, Graduate



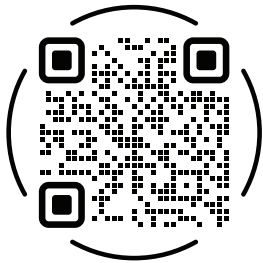
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LEGISLATURE HIGHLIGHTS

Education issues debated

Kim Clement
ATA News Staff

The spring sitting of the legislature ended May 14. Here are highlights of the education-related discussions that took place in question period during the sitting's final two weeks.

Program Unit Funding, May 5

Amanda Chapman (NDP MLA for Calgary-Beddington) criticized the government's handling of Program Unit Funding (PUF), arguing that early intervention is essential for student success and accusing the UCP government of making significant cuts to the program while denying it had done so. She asked why the government had claimed for years that PUF funding had not been cut.

Minister of Education and Childcare Demetrios Nicolaides responded by criticizing the NDP for opposing mandatory literacy and numeracy screening assessments for young students. He said the government had increased PUF funding through budgets 2025 and 2026 and expressed pride in the additional investments being made to support early intervention.

Chapman then argued that the government's reductions to PUF funding had cut the program by more than half and said funding remained tens of millions of dollars below 2019 levels despite population growth and inflation. She asked when funding would return to 2019 levels.

Nicolaides replied that Budget 2026 included a six per cent increase to the PUF program and highlighted additional investments in literacy and reading supports. He again criticized the NDP for voting against both literacy and numeracy screening requirements and Budget 2026.

Chapman said that under the previous NDP government, early intervention funding had been strong, class sizes were smaller, classroom complexity was more manageable and educators were not engaging in job action. She argued that cuts to PUF had worsened classroom complexity and asked whether the minister would like the NDP to take over management of education.

Nicolaides rejected the suggestion and accused the former NDP government of driving Albertans

out of the province, which he said contributed to smaller class sizes at the time. He concluded by stating that the government was making historic investments to address class size, classroom complexity and early intervention.

Bill 25, Members Statement, May 12

Peggy Wright (NDP MLA for Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview) made a statement critical of Bill 25 as another example of the government undermining public education and disrespecting teachers. Drawing on a classroom lesson about the lasting harm caused by hurtful words and actions, she said years of underfunding, cuts and policy decisions have damaged Alberta's education system. Wright argued that Bill 25 fails to address real classroom issues such as class size, complexity, teacher retention and student supports, but instead increases ministerial control and signals a lack of trust in teachers. She concluded by saying that Alberta students and teachers deserve a government that repairs the damage rather than adds to it.

Teacher Recruitment and Retention, May 13

Amanda Chapman (NDP MLA for Calgary-Beddington) argued that the government's proposals to address Alberta's teacher shortage—such as fast-tracking tradespeople into classrooms and allowing final-year education students to teach full-time while completing their degrees—failed to address the real reasons teachers are leaving the profession, including overcrowded classrooms, inadequate support for complex learners and poor working conditions. She contended that retention, not recruitment shortcuts, was the core issue and suggested that many teachers no longer want to work under the current government.

Nicolaides defended the expedited pathways, saying that bringing individuals with industry expertise into classrooms would provide valuable real-world learning opportunities for students. He said the government's 7.2 per cent increase to the education budget and the hiring of 476 classroom complexity teams would help school divisions meet growing demands. He also pointed to an upcoming announcement that would provide additional resources to help divisions hire more teachers. ■

Province announces grant to hire teachers, reduce class size

ATA News Staff

On May 13, the province announced the Class Size Reduction Grant, \$200 million aimed at hiring more than 1,400 kindergarten to Grade 9 teachers for the 2026/27 school year.

Informed by the work of the Class Size and Complexity Committee, the grant will be distributed based on data that was collected from school boards in November 2025. All public, separate and francophone school authorities are set to receive funds under this new grant, with more funding being allocated for schools with more core classes that exceed a "high threshold" for their grade.

"Smaller class sizes make a real difference for students and teachers, especially in the early and middle grades," said Demetrios Nicolaides, Minister of Education and Childcare. "This targeted investment helps ensure classrooms are safer, more manageable and focused on student success."

ATA president Jason Schilling viewed the newly announced grant as a positive first step toward addressing the "damage done by years of chronic underfunding," adding that the announcement validated concerns about class size and complexity raised by teachers during their provincewide strike.

"Every student in Alberta deserves the opportunity to learn in a classroom where they can receive the attention and support they need to thrive," Schilling said. "And every teacher deserves the professional conditions necessary to meet the diverse needs of their students."

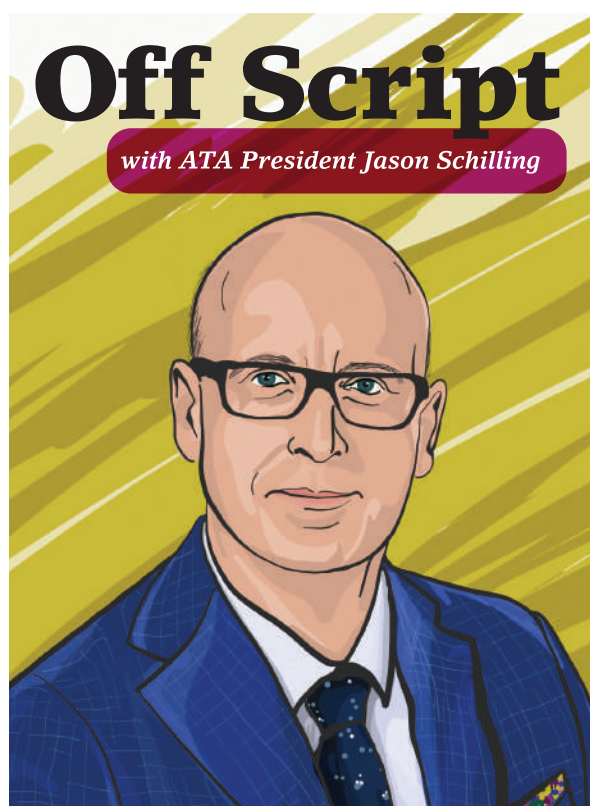
The funding allocations under this grant for 2026/27 are available at <https://abteach.cc/class-size-grant>. ■



CHRIS SCHWARZ/GOVERNMENT OF ALBERTA

Minister of Education and Childcare Demetrios Nicolaides and Premier Danielle Smith announcing the Class Size Reduction Grant.

With election on the horizon, teachers remain a trusted voice



Another Annual Representative Assembly (ARA) has come and gone, and like so many before it, this year's ARA demonstrated the dedication and determination teachers bring to improving public education. My deep thanks to the teachers who volunteered their time to attend and to our staff who helped make the Assembly run so smoothly.

Over the weekend, delegates debated issues ranging from bargaining and the use of the notwithstanding clause to Bill 25 and the growing implications of artificial intelligence in our classrooms. While opinions differed on some motions, one thing remained constant: every debate came from a place of care. Teachers care deeply about this profession, about public education and about our students. That commitment was strong throughout the weekend.

Much of our policy responds to challenges we are already facing, but some of it is designed to prepare us for what lies on the horizon. Resolutions on AI focused on concerns surrounding anthropomorphic AI, deepfakes, and the security of student and teacher data. In many ways, the ATA is at the forefront of this conversation, helping shape policy in an area that few education organizations worldwide have addressed. Unsurprisingly, those discussions generated significant media attention over the weekend.

The provincial election in 2028 was also part of many conversations at ARA. While no formal resolutions were passed, delegates made it clear that teachers and the Association must continue keeping public attention focused on the realities facing students and classrooms. Though the election seems far away, the work starts now. It means speaking with current MLAs seeking re-election, connecting with prospective candidates and engaging with them on their support for public education.

As I told the Assembly, our strike was never merely symbolic. It produced real results. It shifted public opinion, influenced political decisions and reasserted the importance of teacher voice in this province. Since then, government officials, including the premier and minister of education, have publicly acknowledged that changes were made because teachers and Albertans demanded them.

As Alberta moves toward the next provincial election, we cannot allow that momentum to fade. Some elected officials may hope Albertans forget the strike and the government's use of the notwithstanding clause to end it. We cannot and will not forget. Teachers have credibility, expertise and the trust of the public. Combined with our values and our determination, that makes us a powerful voice for the future of public education. ■



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From “have to” to “get to”

SUCCESS STORY

Yvette Jean-Jacques
Grade 5 Teacher, Calgary Catholic School District

At Light of Christ School, an elementary and junior high school in northeast Calgary, something powerful is happening. You can feel it the moment you walk through the doors. While not a new program or initiative in the traditional sense, there’s a clear shift in language and mindset that is reshaping how students and staff experience each day.

It’s all about a simple reframe, moving from “I have to” to “I get to.”

This idea, inspired by Dr. Matthew Arau’s book *Upbeat! Mindset, Mindfulness, and Leadership in Music Education and Beyond*, started as professional curiosity and has grown into a shared way of being in our school community.

Building the foundation

Our journey toward the “upbeat” mindset began with a staffwide book study of Arau’s book. As educators, we gathered in our professional learning communities (PLCs) not just to read, but to reflect. We asked ourselves honest questions: What does this mindset look like in practice? How do we model it authentically for students? How do we move beyond surface-level positivity to something deeper and more meaningful?

These conversations became a cornerstone of our professional culture. They shifted how we were speaking to our students, to one

another and even to ourselves. Increasingly, teachers are saying, “I get to support this learner,” or “I get to try a new approach.” Such small shifts in language carry profound meaning. They remind us of the joy and privilege of teaching.

This work is not about ignoring challenges or forcing positivity. We recognize that both teaching and learning can be complex and demanding. Instead, it is about choice.

We may not control everything that happens in a day, but we can influence how we respond. When a student says, “I get to learn something new today,” or a teacher reflects, “I get to make a difference,” the language signals something deeper. It reflects a mindset rooted in growth, resilience and hope.

Sustaining the shift

To ensure this mindset shift is not a passing initiative, we have intentionally built structures that sustain and celebrate it.

First, the consistency in leadership has been a defining strength of this journey. Our principal, Mrs. MacMullin, plays a central role in keeping this work visible and meaningful. Second, a dedicated Upbeat Committee leads ongoing initiatives and keeps the work visible across the school.

Morning announcements now feature student voices sharing what they “get to” do each day, setting a tone of gratitude and possibility. Student-created visuals, displayed prominently throughout the school, reflect not just understanding but ownership of the mindset. The school counsellor, Mr. Crossley, gave a conducting and piano performance



Drawing by Angel Paduit, Grade 5 student, inspired by the “Upbeat” mindset

to demonstrate to students how they can identify, explore, manage and regulate their thoughts, feelings and behaviours to develop a healthy and positive state of mind. Finally, the weekly staff bulletin includes UPBEAT News, a space to celebrate successes, recognize effort and highlight moments of positivity among staff.

Individually, these practices are simple. Together, they create a culture where encouragement is intentional and shared.

In December 2025, the school was fortunate to welcome Dr. Arau to see his work in practice. His visit was both affirming and energizing. Seeing the Upbeat philosophy reflected in our classrooms and hallways reinforced something important: this work is not theoretical. It is practical, relational and deeply human. It lives in the language we use, the relationships we build and the choices we make each day.

Looking ahead

Light of Christ is now one of 10 schools in the Calgary Catholic School District recognized as an “Upbeat School.” For us, this designation is not about a label, but about a shared commitment: cultivating optimism, resilience and intentional positivity across all aspects of school life.

The Upbeat journey at Light of Christ continues to evolve. What began as a shared reading experience has become a shared identity that shapes how we teach, lead and connect. As we move forward, our commitment remains clear: to nurture a school culture where each student and staff member feels a sense of possibility in their day not because they *must* be there, but because they *get* to be.

In our school community, we are working to foster a space where you do not simply go through the motions of education but, instead, embrace the privilege of it. ■

PEC appoints next ATA executive secretary

PEC POINTS

Audrey Dutka
ATA News Staff

Highlights of the Provincial Executive Council meeting held May 7–8, 2026, at Barnett House, Edmonton

1. Appointed Robert T. Mazzotta to be the next executive secretary and chief executive officer of the Alberta Teachers’ Association, commencing 2026 09 01.

2. Authorized any local to pay off the remaining balance of the special levy on behalf of its members as of September 2026.

3. Approved for submission to the 2026 Annual Representative Assembly (ARA) three resolutions that

(1) oppose the deprofessionalization of teaching through the government’s expedited pathways program;

(2) urge the Government of Alberta, in conjunction with school boards and in consultation with the Association, to provide support to school leaders responsible for supervising and supporting teachers who have taken alternative pathways to certification; and

(3) in response to Bill 25, *An Act to Remove Politics and Ideology from Classrooms and Amend the Education Act, 2026*, affirm that:

- Alberta’s public, separate and francophone schools must continue to strive to provide welcoming and respectful learning environments that respect diversity and nurture a sense of belonging and a positive sense of self;
 - teachers, exercising their professional judgment and expertise, should ultimately determine how evaluations and interventions can best be used to advance individual student learning;
 - it is the responsibility of teachers, exercising their professional judgment, to ensure controversial issues are taught in a manner that is pedagogically and intellectually sound and respectful of legitimate diverse perspectives;
 - decisions concerning the display of flags and related symbols and playing of the national anthem are best made by individual school communities and teachers in the spirit of creating generous, inclusive, respectful and safe learning environments for students and staff; and
 - the expectation that government will consult with the Association to ensure that procedures, platforms and technologies for managing student evaluation are adequately supported and appropriate for diverse school and classroom situations.
4. Scheduled resolution 3-11/26 for debate at the 2026 ARA. The resolution

opposes the use of anthropomorphic AI tools—such as AI companions or systems simulating friendship, counselling or intimate relationships—in Alberta K–12 educational and student support settings.

5. Approved funding to support the ATA Complexity Network online provincial engagement sessions.

6. Referred a letter received from l’Association des enseignantes et des enseignants francophones de l’Alberta regarding financial inequities related to mandatory participation in teachers’ conventions to staff for study and report to the October 2026 meeting of Council.

7. Approved the recipients of the 2026 Alberta Teachers’ Association Doctoral Fellowships in Education and approved the recipient of the 2026 Nadene M. Thomas Graduate Research Bursary.

8. Amended the administrative guidelines to extend eligibility for the ATA Doctoral Fellowship in Education to members entering or enrolled in any year of full-time study in doctoral programs in education offered by defined “recognized public universities” in Canada.

9. Amended the administrative guidelines concerning the Belairdirect Award for Learning and Leadership and the Nadene M. Thomas Graduate Research Bursary to specify how “recognized public universities in Canada” will be interpreted when determining eligibility for the awards.

10. Amended the Teacher Education and Certification Committee frame of reference to define the size of the scholarship subcommittee and to authorize the subcommittee to determine award recipients and alternates.
11. Amended the administrative guidelines and CTF Committee frame of reference to address the CTF’s international cooperation name change from “Project Overseas” to “Teaching Together.”
12. Approved the Association’s nominees to the Canadian Teachers’ Federation Advisory Committee on the Teaching Profession, Advisory Committee on the Status of Women, Advisory Committee on Diversity and Human Rights, Advisory Committee on Indigenous Education and Advisory Committee on French as a First Language.
13. Amended the administrative guidelines pertaining to the grant available to candidates for campaign-related activities when running for election to Provincial Executive Council.
14. Added an external Provincial Executive Council election review to the 2026/27 program prognoses.
15. Approved Council committee and representation assignments for 2026/27.
16. Approved the draft Association calendar for 2026/27 and provisionally approved for finalization by staff the draft Association calendars for 2027/28 and 2028/29. ■

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A two-day workshop focusing on principals’ roles and duties as outlined in the *Education Act*, the TGSE Policy and the *Leadership Quality Standard*.

August 17-18, 2026
Calgary

REGISTRATION IS NOW OPEN!

Active members—**Free**
Nonmembers—**\$600** plus GST

For event information visit
<https://abteach.cc/SummerTGSE>

For more information or to register, contact **Ellen Anthony** in Teacher Employment Membership Support at **780-447-9473** (in Edmonton), **1-800-232-7208** (toll free) or ellen.anthony@ata.ab.ca.



Scan QR code
to register



The Alberta
Teachers' Association

TES-MS-85-6 2026 05

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JUNE

A time to recognize
National Indigenous
History Month and
Pride Month

Find resources to support you in your classroom or in your own learning journey.

National Indigenous History Month

ATA RESOURCES



Materials that cover a range of topics, from relevant literature recommendations to Indigenous education research to guidance on Indigenous cultural protocols

<https://abteach.cc/ATA-indigneous-ed>

Pride Month

ATA RESOURCES



Materials related to creating safe spaces and supporting all families, as well as addressing the experiences of sexual- and gender-diverse teachers in Alberta

<https://abteach.cc/dehr>



Order safe spaces items here:
<https://abteach.cc/safespaces>



ATA LIBRARY GUIDES



National Indigenous Peoples Day (June 21) includes information on National Indigenous Peoples Day and National Indigenous History Month as well as on Indigenous Canadians who have made their mark on the nation's history.

<https://teachers-ab.libguides.com/indigenouspeoplesday>



Indigenous Education Resources for Students includes sections on such topics as Indigenous games, medicinal plants and their uses, treaties and traditional knowledge.

<https://teachers-ab.libguides.com/ier4students>



ATA Gender and Sexuality Alliance Diversity and Equity Network exists to create a safe, welcoming and empowering space for 2SLGBTQIA+ teachers and their allies across Alberta.

<https://abteach.cc/atadens>

ATA LIBRARY GUIDES



Sexual and Gender Diverse People includes a variety of resources and sections on such topics as 2SLGBTQIA+ history, allyship and pronouns.

<https://teachers-ab.libguides.com/lgbtq>



Want to deepen your learning? Book an ATA PD workshop today!

<https://abteach.cc/pdworkshop>