



Authentic learning... artificially captured
 Teachers tap into AI to depict joyful moments. *Page 16*



**DIRECT
 FEEDBACK**

**Curriculum consultation
 on tap for conventions.**
See page 4.

ATA NEWS

February 6, 2024 | Volume 58, Number 8

News Publication of The Alberta Teachers' Association

BARGAINING

Central
 Table 2024

Have your say

Teacher bargaining begins with issues survey.
See page 5.



Change requires engagement

Engaging your colleagues in bargaining starts now.

Read Jonathan Teghtmeyer's editorial on page 2.



Alberta Transgender Policy

Planned legislation sparks safety concerns.

See story on page 7.



Off Script

The ATA stands in support of 2SLGBTQ+ people.

See page 9.



Executive Report

Alberta teachers have mixed views on artificial intelligence.

See story on page 11.

Engaging your colleagues in bargaining starts now



EDITORIAL

Jonathan Teghtmeyer
ATA News Editor-in-Chief

The last round of central table bargaining required a divisive set of recommendations from a mediator to conclude an agreement. Those recommendations were approved by a razor slim margin of 51 per cent to 49 per cent.

This may have been an ideal outcome for a mediator, whose recommendations seemed to have provided just enough to get the deal done without overdelivering. Many teachers, however, left feeling dissatisfied and divided.

Negotiations are never easy, and they are rarely satisfying. By their nature, negotiations require compromise. Without at least some compromise, an agreement will never be possible.

The agreement — or in this case, the vote on a mediator's recommendation — is the last step in a complex process. Negotiators need lots of good information from their constituent members to guide them through the process. That information comes in the first step of the process.

Last week, the ATA began that process for the next round of central bargaining

with the release of the bargaining needs survey. It is vitally important that as many members as possible complete this survey.

Not only do the results of the survey help negotiators decide what to put into the opening position for bargaining, they provide information about priorities, strengths of conviction and the conditions that would be necessary to make compromises at the table.

“It is vitally important that as many members as possible complete this [bargaining needs] survey.”

Inevitably, when our negotiators advance and push for a bargaining improvement, their counterparts at the table push back. Take benefits for example. We want to improve the health and wellness benefits available for members, but the employer is concerned about the growing cost of premiums. They might ask questions at the bargaining table to gauge the reaction: “If we agree to improve the level of benefits, will teachers agree to pay part of the premiums?” It is valuable for our negotiators to be able

to say with confidence that members contemplated those questions and provided clear preferences.

To that end, a survey is not necessarily intended to provide a scientifically valid sample representative of the broader teaching population. Rather, it is intended to provide important information that negotiators can use to inform strategic positions in bargaining and it is used as a data source that

negotiators can refer to reinforce the strength of their positions at the table.

We need to have as many teachers as possible complete this survey.

The act of surveying is also important, in and of itself, to bolster our bargaining strength through the broad engagement of members. Getting members thinking, sharing and talking about bargaining issues supports member engagement and solidarity.

I suspect that, as a loyal *ATA News* reader, you do not have to be convinced of the need to complete the survey.

So instead of doing that, I urge you to convince 10 of your colleagues to complete it.

There are a million excuses not to complete the survey:

- I have no time.
- I don't really understand bargaining.
- I'm too busy.
- I didn't know about it.
- I forgot.
- I'm overwhelmed with work.
- I'm tired of surveys.
- I couldn't find the link.
- I just want action.
- I don't like the questions.
- It doesn't matter, nothing will change anyway.
- It takes too long.
- It's not important.
- Did I mention I'm busy?

Prepare yourself to respond to the excuses and help your colleagues realize that these are just excuses. If we want things to change, we need to engage. And engagement starts with this one step that takes only about 20 minutes.

Find the link under collective agreements at the ATA website. You have until March 1 at 4:30 pm to complete the survey. You have until March 1 at 4:00 to convince 10 colleagues to do the same. ■

I welcome your comments. Contact me at jonathan.teghtmeyer@ata.ab.ca

Discipline change unlikely to bring cost savings



Q & A

Dennis Theobald
ATA Executive Secretary

Question: With the Alberta Teachers' Association no longer being responsible for professional conduct, can members expect a reduction in the ATA's budget and member dues?

Answer: This question has been very much top of mind for me since the government passed Bill 15 two years ago. During the transition period between that legislation passing and the end of calendar year 2023, we were required to clear all outstanding investigations and conclude all hearings, so we actually saw a significant *increase* in discipline-related workload and related expenditures. This we were able to substantially complete by the end of December 2023.

So, your question is now very relevant: given that we are no longer investigating and prosecuting allegations of unprofessional conduct, what savings can we expect and what savings can we pass along to members? Certainly, going forward this year, we

will no longer be incurring the expense of running the various professional conduct hearing committees that were formerly part of our normal operations. We will also no longer be incurring some of the costs associated with legal council and external contract staff to conduct investigations and present at hearings. This is not an insubstantial savings: during the period we were active in investigating teacher discipline

“... although we are no longer prosecuting teachers, we have shifted to a new role of representing them in the government's process.”

complaints, annual committee costs alone approached \$200,000. There were, however, additional costs that were even more substantial, although not noted as separate budget lines. These included legal costs, which could be highly variable from year to year depending on the particular cases being pursued, and internal staff costs,

which although not accounted for separately, would have been roughly equivalent to at least five FTE executive staff positions. It was also common for us to engage additional contract, professional and support staff.

So now that we are not performing this function, why wouldn't there be a budget and fee reduction? The most important thing to realize is that although we are no longer prosecuting

teachers, we have shifted to a new role of representing them in the government's process. This requires us to dedicate roughly equivalent staff resources and expend similar amounts on legal fees.

To make matters worse, the investigation and resolution processes employed by the Alberta Teaching

Profession Commissioner (ATPC) are still evolving and are very inefficient. It still remains largely unclear how the ATPC will proceed on hearings and other resolution processes, and we are aware of a dramatic increase in the number of complaints lodged and the number of teachers who are requesting and receiving Association representation.

I am quite concerned that, unless the ATPC makes substantial improvements to the way it is managing its complaint, investigation and disposition processes, we will see continuing increases in our costs. Of course, the ATPC, being part of the government, has deep pockets and, I suspect, cares a whole lot less than I do about managing and containing costs.

The bottom line is that, for the Association, the cost savings resulting from our transition away from prosecuting teachers for unprofessional conduct, have been, at very least, offset and are likely to be exceeded by the increase in costs associated with a large and growing number of potentially complex representations. ■

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



Some thoughts on colour blindness



VIEWPOINTS

Gail-Ann Wilson Mitchell
Executive Staff Officer, Alberta
Teachers' Association

Given that February is Black History Month, there is a vast array of topics to cover addressing racism or the experiences of people of colour. It's tricky to write something that hasn't been said a million times before. As I considered what to write about, my thoughts settled on the phrase "I don't see colour," which always makes me pause.

It's impossible to deny physical characteristics that make us different. As a Black woman, I've had my own experiences with this statement. It resonates with me as a reluctance to confront your connection to racism. I was curious to learn what this phrase meant to others, so I put the following question to a cross-section of teaching colleagues.

What goes through your mind when you hear the phrase, "I don't see colour?"

Here are the responses.

When I hear the phrase "I don't see colour," it evokes a range of thoughts and emotions within me. It's a statement that masks understanding or awareness of the experiences and challenges faced by individuals of diverse racial backgrounds. Simply put, it is a quick "get-out-of-talking-about-racism" card in the game of "socially conscious monopoly."

For many Black and Brown individuals, hearing these words is like nails on a chalkboard. It evokes feelings of disappointment and frustration. The truth is that when white people say, "I don't see colour," many Black and Brown people hear a different message. It often sounds like code for statements such as "thank goodness I don't have to think about race." Unfortunately, this phrase often shuts down conversations about race, implying that "seeing race" is a bad thing and should not be discussed. It becomes a subtle manipulation, requesting an immediate change of topic whenever the subject of race or racism is brought up.

As a pre-service teacher, I have to consider this question in the context of education. Simply put, claiming to be colour blind denies the racial identity of students. It disregards an essential part of who they are and what they experience in society. Pre-service teachers are taught that one of our responsibilities is to prepare students to enter a society that sees race as something to be

embraced and understood, rather than ignored. Even if one were to legitimately claim that they "do not see colour," it is important to recognize that understanding the perspective of seeing the race of their students is necessary to prepare them for the world they will navigate.

– *Olivia Skaley, pre-service teacher*

I don't see age. I don't see disabilities. I don't see gender. I don't see sexuality. I don't see poverty. I don't see colour. Recognize the absurdity? In reality, we all perceive colour. We all form judgments rooted in stereotypes and unconscious biases. Adopting a colourblind stance neglects the profound impact skin colour can have on individuals. By dismissing these experiences, you miss addressing systemic and intersectional inequalities stacked against Black, Indigenous and People of Colour.

While I appreciate the intention behind the colour blind approach, it is crucial for society to move beyond expecting individuals to always comprehend motives. Merely acknowledging race remains discomforting for many. Yet, it is essential to affirm that you see me. Acknowledge me so we can get to the business of leveling the playing field.

– *Janice Pinnock, diversity education consultant*

I've heard the phrase "I don't see colour" often in my career. The person sharing this sentiment is using it as a means to reassure that what's about to be said next is not connected to race. I've often associated this with erasure of identity. My race and skin colour tell my story. By stating that you do not see my colour, you are contributing to a system of conforming.

My brownness connects me to my ancestors, it tells the story of resilient hands that planted olive trees in soils that are foreign to me. It tells the story of my mother's resilience, and my grandparents' courage. I acknowledge the systems of oppression that are in place that directly affect me, my children and my students through an inherit bias that is evident in all systemic institutions; however, I'll immerse myself in the joy brought on by my colour and I carry it with pride.

I urge teachers to rethink that notion of not seeing colour, and to work towards understanding what it actually means.

– *Rana Shawar, teacher*

"I don't see colour!" Is a term that I have, specifically, heard on vanishingly few occasions. However, I have had significantly more interactions with its analogs:

- Skin colour isn't something that matters to me.

- I have lots of black friends.
- I have friends across the spectrum of colour.
- I see all people as being equal.
- I treat everyone with kindness.
- I treat everyone the way that I would want to be treated.

My personal impression is that individuals use these phrases to create the impression that their interactions with the world are not fundamentally and frequently guided by bias. Each instance has served to clarify my awareness of the depth, insidiousness and ubiquitousness of bias. These experiences continue to fuel my unwavering commitment to working with young people (the most adaptable of us) to develop their awareness and fundamental human skills.

– *Omari Lewis, teacher*

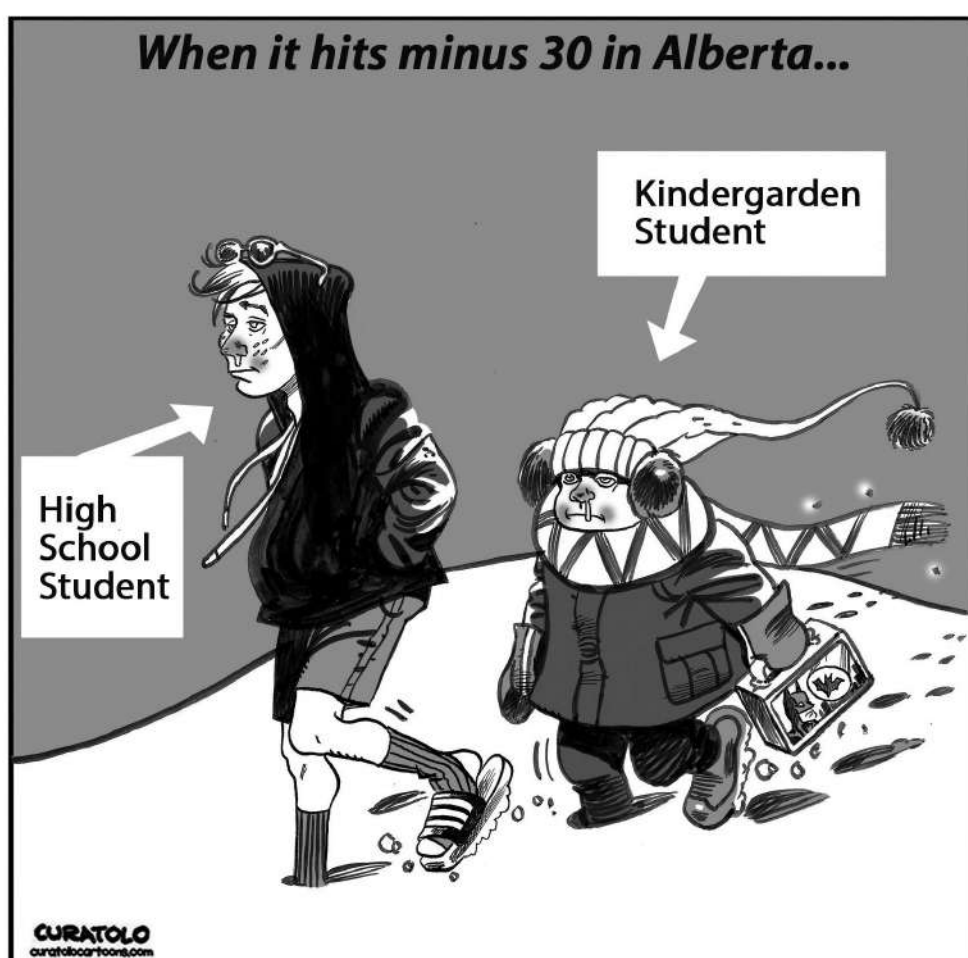
What goes through my mind when I hear the phrase "I don't see colour" is my interior monologue responding with "must be nice." As a person of colour, I am constantly reminded that my narrative, my experiences and my presence in this profession are different from many, and with that comes assumptions ranging from what subjects I teach to who I am and "should be" in the eyes of others as an educator.

I feel like I used to hear this phrase at the beginning of my career when folks would chime in as to how issues should be taken up in social studies. Not so much anymore. I want to believe that folks have regarded this phrase to be tone deaf and immensely unhelpful in advancing the work of anti-racism and reconciliation. It is always encouraging to see responsive change in action where folks are willing to walk something back when they know/learn otherwise.

A memorable experience I've had with the phrase is a session I attended at GETCA a few years ago, when Dr. Farha Shariff shared a quote that still resonates with me to this day: "To see one's race as having no meaning is a privilege afforded only to white people." To me ... the position of colour-blindness is a position of privilege that is only afforded to some, certainly not those oppressed by systems of prejudice, discrimination and racism.

– *Waishing Lam, teacher*

Gail-Ann Wilson Mitchell is a former diversity education consultant who now works in the Professional Development program area of the ATA. She's been involved in the Status of Racialized Teachers Committee and the Diversity, Equity, and Human Rights Committee.



FOR THE RECORD

“The Government of Alberta is playing politics with some of the most vulnerable members of our society: trans and gender diverse youth, attacking them for cheap political points. We will not stand for it. We won't back down to hate.”

– Social media post by
Egale Canada

YOUR VIEWS

ON INSTAGRAM

Comments on ATA's statement on the Alberta Transgender Policy

@dutertrel

Hopefully this doesn't end up like Saskatchewan. Parents have always had all of these rights and teachers and educators are not doing anything different. It's just a way for the government to create an issue where there isn't and further their own agenda.

@itslindsaywhyte

I put all my energy and effort into my classroom and the kids and the lessons. I have nothing left in my tank when I get home to enjoy my own children. If everyone hates us and thinks we are awful, home school. You have a choice.

Voice your curricular views at convention

Alberta Education to gather feedback on social studies curriculum throughout the province

Mark Milne
ATA News Staff

The Alberta Teachers' Association is strongly encouraging teachers to take advantage of an opportunity to directly engage with Alberta Education regarding the development of social studies curriculum.

The ministry is hosting sessions at teachers' conventions across the province to gather direct feedback from teachers on everything from curriculum

development to implementation. A statement provided by the minister of education's office says that education department staff will be attending conventions to conduct in-depth sessions and collect feedback.

"Teachers have an incredibly important role when it comes to curriculum development and implementation," the statement reads.

It's important that teachers take advantage of this important opportunity, said Nancy Luyckfassel, the ATA's Professional Development coordinator.

"It will be the long-awaited chance many teachers have wanted — to engage with the people who are planning the curriculum that they will soon be teaching," Luyckfassel said.

Two sessions are planned for each convention. The first will deal specifically with the K–12 social studies curriculum. Teachers will be able to provide feedback on the key learnings that will be covered. The session will also provide updates on the phased approach to classroom piloting and implementation.

The second session will explore the new.learn.alberta.ca website. Teachers will find sample lesson plans, explore professional learning supports and learn how to use Boards, a teacher planning tool.

While Alberta Education sessions are not new to teachers' conventions, Luyckfassel said these presentations were a welcome addition to this year's slate.

"We want teachers to take advantage of this opportunity and show Alberta Ed that their invitation is both welcome, accepted and followed up on," she said.

These sessions developed in the fall of 2023 from talks with Alberta Education about ways the ministry could further engage with teachers. Luyckfassel said that when sessions at teachers' convention were proposed, Alberta Ed and the various convention associations were on board. She hopes that teachers across the province will voice their perspective and that Alberta Ed will listen.

"I hope they'll really see the value, wisdom and experience our teachers have to share and how passionate they are about the curriculum," Luyckfassel said. "Teachers genuinely want the best possible program of study to be used in schools."

She pointed out that nobody understands age-appropriate content better than the people who work with those students.

"The people that know what age-appropriate is for grade one are the people who work with grade ones every day. What better resource could the ministry ask for?"

The new K–6 social studies curriculum will be released in the spring of 2024. ■



FILE
The ATA is encouraging members to participate in Alberta Education's social studies consultation program that will be taking place at teachers' conventions across the province.

Digital diploma exam glitch creates confusion

Sandra Bit
ATA News Staff

Technical problems with a new digital platform being used for diploma exams has prompted ATA president Jason Schilling to call for a pause on piloting the new technology until bugs have been worked out.

On Jan. 10, some Alberta students who were using the Vretta digital platform to write the English language arts diploma exam encountered a question that did not match their exam. Meanwhile, students writing with pen and paper had the correct question. The situation was particularly confusing for students who were using both the digital and the paper versions of the test.

Other problems were also reported: the online question was the same as the exam in November, audio versions were not available, the Vretta built-in spellcheck was not working and some schools had problems uploading the student exams.

Since students do not have a choice to write diploma exams, Schilling feels that a program like Vretta should not be piloted in such a context.

"I would encourage the government to delay the pilot of this platform and test it in the field, rather than using it in a high-stakes situation," Schilling said. "Students should not be penalized for the errors of Alberta Education or for a glitchy digital platform. These exams

are high stakes and worth 30 per cent of their final mark (the written portion 15 per cent). It's important for any programs used ... to be as bug-free as possible."

Alberta Education provided a written statement on behalf of Education Minister Demetrios Nicolaides confirming that the Jan. 10 exam experienced an inconsistency between the digital and paper versions of the English Language Arts 30 diploma exam on one long-answer question. The question on the digital platform was from the November 2023 English 30 diploma exam.

"I have asked my team to explore why this occurred and I am confident we will find the cause of the problem and rectify it," the statement reads. "This regrettable inconsistency does not compromise the validity of the exam, as all students received a valid diploma question. Students, parents, and teachers can be assured that the diploma exams will be assessed fairly and according to current practice standards."

Move to digital

Schilling expressed an overall concern about the government's long-term plan to move all provincial exams on all subjects to an online digital platform. Teachers have expressed reservations about both delivering and marking exams online, he said. An exam delivered entirely online, including all



ISTOCK
The ATA is calling for a pause to digital technology for diploma exams following a glitch involving Alberta Education's new platform.

questions and exam materials, goes against many of the strategies that teachers teach their students to use while working with texts and other materials in class.

"In English, I teach many literacy strategies on how to deconstruct information, highlight the text or write

on the test to make sense of what the question is asking," Schilling explained.

"With an online platform, the student is not able to do that. We equip students with a variety of strategies to be successful, and the Vretta platform does not let our students use those strategies, and that is unfair to students." ■

Teacher input sought through bargaining survey

Kim Clement
ATA News Staff

Alberta teachers are encouraged to share their views about the most important issues they currently face by completing a bargaining needs survey that is now open.

The survey marks the beginning of the negotiation process that will result in new collective agreements for teachers throughout the public education system. Collective agreements for all teachers employed in one of Alberta's 61 public, separate and francophone school divisions will expire at the end of August 2024. All teachers, including administrators and substitute teachers, are strongly encouraged to complete the 2024 Bargaining Needs Survey, said Sean Brown, the ATA's associate coordinator of collective bargaining.

"The survey is one of the key methods that all Alberta teachers can use to provide their input on the creation of the initial bargaining proposal for central bargaining," Brown said.

"As a member-driven organization, the Association relies on the insights of its members to better understand working conditions and identify areas for improvement."

A notable addition to this year's survey is a question about the scope of the initial proposal.

"The more issues the proposal attempts to address, the more

challenging it can be to get the employer to understand what is essential," Brown said.

The Association is therefore exploring the possibility of a proposal that is more focused than the one it took into the last round of central bargaining. A more focused approach could address key areas such as classroom complexity, salary, instructional and assignable time, and benefits, based on feedback received in the survey.

Once the survey period has ended, the data is analyzed to identify the goals and priorities of the membership. If any of the data appears to be inconsistent with expectations, a deeper dive and verification is undertaken to ensure validity.


"The survey informs the creation of the initial proposal, but does not solely direct it," Brown said.

Focus groups

Beyond the survey, teachers will have the opportunity to contribute further by joining focus groups that will unfold after the survey has concluded.

"The purpose of the focus groups is to show teachers what they told the Association and see if, through our analysis, we got it right," Brown said.


This additional layer of participation ensures that the nuances of teacher priorities are accurately captured, he said. More detailed information on focus group participation will be available soon. ■



Take the survey

The Bargaining Needs Survey is accessible now at www.teachers.ab.ca or by scanning the QR code.

The survey will take approximately 20–25 minutes. It will remain open until Friday, March 1 at 4:30 pm.

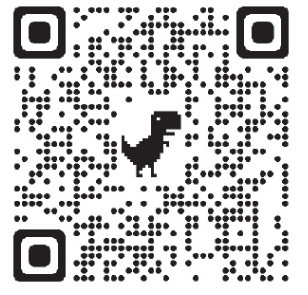



BARGAINING BASICS

To learn about the teacher bargaining process, view the Bargaining Basics video series.

Visit the ATA's YouTube channel at youtube.com/albertateachers and look for the Bargaining Basics playlist.

Or scan this QR code to go directly to the Bargaining Basics playlist.



ATA named a top employer for 2024

ATA News Staff

The Alberta Teachers' Association has been named among Alberta's top-80 employers for 2024.

Alberta's Top Employers competition, coordinated by Canada's Top 100 Employers, evaluates entries based on criteria such as work atmosphere, training and development policies, employee engagement and community involvement.

Dennis Theobald, the Association's executive secretary, says the award recognizes the contribution of staff as much as it does the Association's leadership in creating a supportive workplace that is focused on improving service to members.

"Our staff are driven by a deep commitment to public education and to the teachers of Alberta. Those teachers expect us, as an employer, to treat our staff well, not just to show appreciation for their efforts but to serve as a model for how Alberta's teachers should be treated," Theobald said.

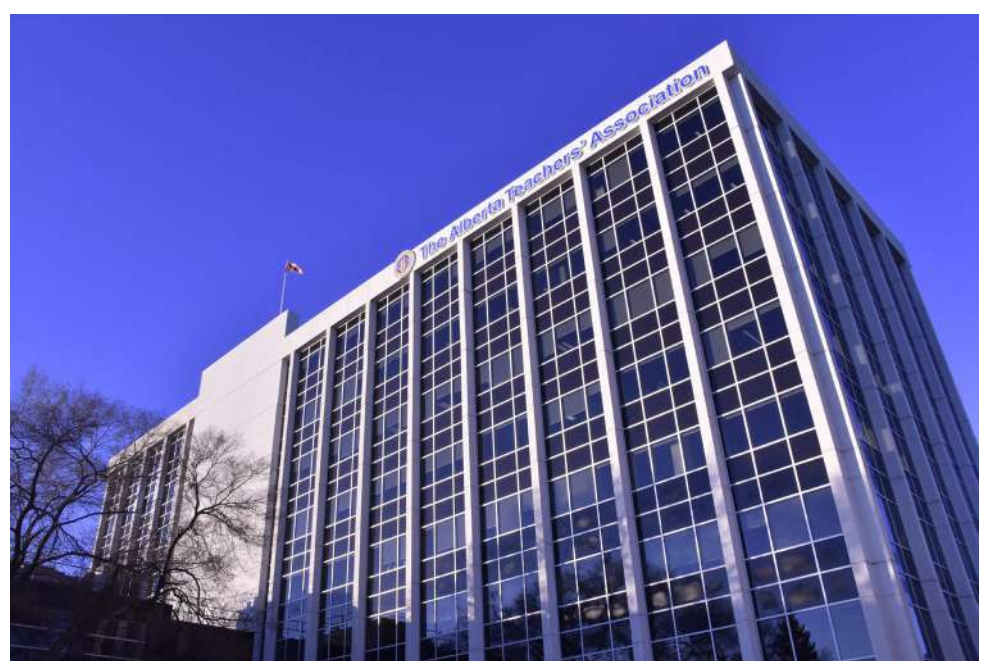
Canada's Top Employers uses a scoring system across eight categories:

1. Workplace
2. Work atmosphere and social
3. Health, financial and family benefits
4. Vacation and time off
5. Employee communications
6. Performance management
7. Training and skills development
8. Community involvement

The program acknowledged the ATA for its generous benefits program, defined-benefit pension plan and internal staff committees that champion a healthy workplace through social events and wellness initiatives.

It's the third consecutive year that the ATA has been named to the list.

"That we have been able to maintain our status as a top employer is a tribute to the quality and consistency of our elected governors as well as supervisors and colleagues throughout the organization," Theobald said. "This recognition will help the Association to continue to attract highly qualified staff in an increasingly competitive labour environment." ■



The Alberta Teachers' Association has been named one of Alberta's top-80 employers.

CORY HARE

LEARN MORE

Detailed information about the top employer competition can be found at www.canadastop100.com/alberta.



We're here to help

We're at Teachers' Conventions every year, but even if you miss us there you can still get answers to your pension questions.

Use MyPension for all your pension needs.



ATRF.com




Make your Teaching Career Move

with a part-time Kinesiology, Sport, and Recreation Graduate Certificate from the University of Alberta

Online Graduate Certificate programs in: Indigenous Sport and Recreation • Adapted Physical Activity • Sport and Recreation Management • Coaching

These certificate programs ladder into a course-based Master of Arts Degree.

Register today for any of these four Graduate Certificates with credit transfer options at uab.ca/KSRDev





PLUG INTO LEARNING CONFERENCE


MARCH 15-16, 2024

- ✓ 27 sessions!
- ✓ Amazing Prizes!
- ✓ Tech SWAG bags!
- ✓ Ed Tech awesome!

Register at bit.ly/plugintolearning



ETC LEARN. CONNECT. CREATE.



ETC.TEACHERS.AB.CA

NOTICES AND EVENTS

Competition enables students to explore virtual reality


A provincewide competition will enable high school students to create a virtual reality app for use in a real-world scenario.

Hack and Seek: Alberta XR Career Quest is a free, competitive event that will be held simultaneously in Lethbridge, Calgary and Edmonton from May 3 to 5. The competition is open to all high school students.

Coding and development experience is not required. The event is geared toward students with an interest in technology and a love of competition.

Applications are being accepted until March 11 at lethbridgecollege.ca/hackandseek.

Selected students will be assigned to a team of three and will have access to training workshops to help prepare for the competition. Teams will present their app to a panel of industry experts who will select a winner.


LIGHTEN YOUR LOAD WITH R4R:

A DATABASE FOR TEACHERS

Explore 1,800 free or low-cost, peer reviewed, curriculum-matched classroom resources.

r4r.ca

A Project Of




The ATA News is available online.

For the latest issue, visit www.teachers.ab.ca/news. Subscribe to receive an email when a new issue is available.

<http://bit.ly/ATAeNews>

Did you know...

- we have meeting and banquet space available at Barnett House for corporate and private functions?
- we host business events, seminars, conventions, training sessions, AGM's, weddings, celebrations of life, Christmas parties and other private functions?
- we provide in-house catering to all types of events?

Please email meetingrooms@ata.ab.ca for more information or to book your event or special occasion.



 The Alberta Teachers' Association

ADVERTISING IN ATANEWS

For advertising information, contact Trevor Battye at Trevor Battye Advertising Sales 1-778-773-9397 trevor@tbasales.ca

Next deadline Thursday, Feb. 8, 2024, 4 p.m. (Publication date Feb. 20, 2024) Advertisers are encouraged to book early – space is limited.

Circulation: 38,000 We accept Visa, Mastercard, cash or cheque.

Transgender policy sparks safety concern

Cory Hare
ATA News Managing Editor

The government's planned transgender policy could stifle teachers' ability to provide safe, welcoming spaces for all students, said ATA president Jason Schilling.

On Jan. 31, Alberta Premier Danielle Smith released a video entitled "Alberta Transgender Policy" in which she outlined the government's 10-point plan to "address a very sensitive issue involving our children and gender identity."

The video included a number of measures that would impact teachers

in schools, such as a requirement for parental notification and consent if a student aged 15 and under chooses to change their chosen name or pronoun within a school setting. For students aged 16 and up who choose to change their chosen name or pronoun, parental notification will be required, but not consent.

"We are concerned about how students may feel forced to suppress their identities and to be afraid of reaching out to teachers as an avenue for support," Schilling said in a statement released shortly after Smith's video went public.

The Alberta Transgender Policy will also require parental notification and

opt-in for each instance a teacher intends to give formal instruction involving gender identity, sexual orientation or human sexuality.

At a subsequent news conference, Smith was asked whether she felt concerned that teachers would avoid lessons related to sex and gender in order to avoid the extra paperwork involved.

"If, as I suspect, there is structured education on structured days, then I don't think it's a hardship for schools to say, 'this is a day that we're going to be discussing issues of sexuality, sexual orientation and gender identity,'" Smith said.

"It shouldn't be onerous. It actually should be fairly straightforward to be keeping parents in the loop on these issues."

Also part of the plan is a requirement that all third-party resource materials or presentations related to gender identity, sexual orientation or human sexuality in

the K-12 school system be pre-approved by the ministry of education to ensure the materials are age-appropriate.

Smith said her government has been monitoring legislation and conversations that have taken place in other jurisdictions, such as Saskatchewan and New Brunswick, and feels like they have struck a balance of ensuring children aren't making life-altering decisions about gender and sexuality before they are mature enough to fully understand the consequences.

"If there is ever an instance where a child feels rejected or at risk of harm, we have a child protection service and we're going to make sure that those kids also have a safe environment to be in," she said.

The UCP is looking to introduce legislation and regulations in the fall.

"I would say that this is the right balance. This is what I believe Albertans expect us to do to make sure that we're protecting kids' choices." ■



SCREEN CAPTURE

Premier Danielle Smith outlines her government's transgender policy in a video that was shared on Jan. 31.

Alberta Transgender Policy

The UCP's transgender policy, as announced by Premier Danielle Smith, has 10 points.

Parental notification

- Parents must be notified and opt in for each instance a teacher intends to give formal instruction on gender identity, sexual orientation or human sexuality.
- Minors 15 and under require parental notification and consent for a school to alter their name or pronouns. Parents must be notified if a 16 or 17 year old changes their chosen name or pronoun in school.

Resource approval

- All third-party resource materials or presentations related to gender identity, sexual orientation or human sexuality in the K-12 school system require pre-approval by the ministry of education.

Gender reassignment

- Top and bottom gender surgeries not permitted for those aged 17 and under.

- Puberty blockers and hormone therapy for the purpose of gender reassignment are not permitted for those aged 15 and under.
- Those aged 16 and 17 will be permitted to commence hormone therapies for the purpose of gender reassignment with parental, physician and psychologist approval.
- Transgender women are not permitted to compete in women's sports leagues.

Availability of expertise and support

- The government is working to attract to the province one or more medical professionals who specialize in transgender surgery.
- The government is working on a private registry of medical professionals who specialize in this field (transgender surgery).
- A pilot project has been created to provide appropriate counselling services to support parents and youth identifying as transgender to work through their unique challenges.

ATA response

The Alberta Teachers' Association released the following statement in response to the Danielle Smith video.

"Our primary concern is the safety and wellness of all students. I am worried about how today's announcement will impact the safety of some of our most vulnerable students. We want all students to know, and especially those students who identify or have family members that identify as gender or relationship diverse, that teachers support you and care for you.

Today's announcement about the policy direction intended by government is broad reaching. We appreciate and respect the partnership and complementary roles of parents and teachers in the lives of students, and we recognize the value of parental support that exists for the vast majority of students. However,

pieces of the policies announced are concerning and have the potential to impact the culture and operation of schools.

We are concerned about the chilling effect placed on classrooms and schools, impacting our ability to provide safe, caring and inclusive spaces for all students. We are concerned about how students may feel forced to suppress their identities and to be afraid of reaching out to teachers as an avenue for support.

Transgender youth are five times more likely to think about suicide and nearly eight times more likely to attempt it than other children. We must be mindful of the vulnerability of these students and their need for safety, security and support.

Teachers must be broadly and meaningfully consulted on these policy positions and their consequences before they are enacted."

—Jason Schilling, ATA president



CORY HARE

ATA president Jason Schilling answers a reporter's question on transgender rights.

Rocky View teachers reach settlement

ATA News Staff

Teachers employed by Rocky View School Division have voted in favour of a mediated memorandum of agreement to settle local bargaining for the 2020-2024 term.

"We're pleased that the negotiation team for Rocky View returned to the table and was willing to improve their position on key issues that were holding up a settlement. This agreement is on par with settlements found in neighbouring school boards

and opens the door for improvements to the working conditions of distributed education teachers," said Amrit Rai Nannan, president of Rocky View Local No. 35.

At a meeting held on Sunday, Jan. 28, 76 per cent of teachers in attendance voted to accept the agreement reached with Rocky View by negotiators in mid-January. In November, teachers had turned down a mediator's recommended terms of settlement and voted to authorize the ATA to take a strike vote if negotiators from Rocky View did not return to the table.

"Teachers were feeling very disrespected and felt they had no other options but to move toward job action. This agreement is an important step in the right direction to begin resetting the relationship between the school division and its teachers," Nannan said.

Rocky View School Division also voted last week to ratify the memorandum of agreement, so the agreement is now finalized.

Collective bargaining for teachers in Alberta is a two-phase process where matters of significant cost and broad

impact are negotiated at a central table, followed by local negotiations between individual school divisions and ATA bargaining units on more locally specific matters. Teachers in Rocky View had been working without a finalized collective agreement since September 2020.

The Rocky View School Division employs approximately 1,700 contracted and substitute teachers in public schools in Airdrie, Chestermere, Cochrane, Crossfield, Springbank and surrounding areas. ■



Bringing science field trips into your classroom!

Scientists & Engineers-in-the-Classroom

Register now for:

Grades 1-3 new curriculum

Grades 4-9 existing curriculum

Other topics and special requests

Teacher Professional Development

Introduction to Scientific Methods

- grades K-3, February 7th, Edmonton

Making Math Fun - grades 2-6, February 8th, Edmonton

Living Systems - grades 1-3, March 6th, Edmonton

Full details and registration at www.albertasciencenetwork.ca/programs_workshops

Visit us at Teachers' Conventions

In Calgary - booth #211, in Edmonton - booth #417

Chemistry All Around You

Contact us with your request or to find out more

Book online NOW!

Canadian Registered Charity BN 12907 9315 RR0001

www.AlbertaScienceNetwork.ca

LETHBRIDGE COLLEGE PRESENTS A FIRST-IN-ALBERTA OPPORTUNITY FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

HACK

AND

SEEK

ALBERTA XR CAREER QUEST

MAY 3-5, 2024

Grade 10-12 students will gather in Lethbridge, Calgary and Edmonton to collaborate, learn from virtual reality (VR) experts and unleash their creativity for a chance to win bragging rights and amazing prizes.

SPACE IS LIMITED.

APPLICATIONS CLOSE ON MARCH 11, 2024.

STUDENTS CAN LEARN MORE AND APPLY AT:

lethbridgecollege.ca/hackandseek



Digital Alberta

Off Script

with ATA President Jason Schilling



The ATA stands in support of 2SLGBTQ+ people

Every week, a colleague whose office is down the hall from mine posts a different quote on his window. This week's quote was "never mistake movement for progress." This phrase stuck with me as I was watching the premier's video detailing plans for policy around transgendered youth.

It's a slick looking video. The lighting is great, and the visuals are appealing, as is the music that plays gingerly in the background. It is also a prime example of juxtaposition, as the content of the video is deeply concerning and will have a chilling effect on classrooms and schools, impacting our ability to provide safe, caring and inclusive spaces for all of our students.

Frankly, what we saw in Premier

Smith's video was movement, but it was not progress. It is regressive thinking that clearly violates the charter rights of students and their parents. Every person deserves to be seen for who they really are, and to be safe where they work and learn. Actively preventing this by passing policy or legislation is just plain wrong.

Transgender youth are five times more likely to think about suicide and nearly eight times more likely to attempt it than other children. It's imperative that transgender students feel safe in our schools, and that supports such as counselling are funded and available.

Another troubling change contained in this announcement is a requirement

for schools to implement an opt-in policy for the instruction of human sexuality, gender identity and sexual orientation. This requirement will fundamentally alter how schools operate — we have all experienced what it's like to get students to return forms for things like field trips — which is why we once again highlight the need for teachers to be consulted on policy decisions.

Though I am not certain of the specific details of this policy, I am certain that the ATA stands in support of our 2SLGBTQ+ students and staff. We are here for you and care for you. Remember, it's always darkest before the dawn. Maybe that will be the next quote on my colleague's window. ■

Advocate for education and sport joins PD staff

Kim Clement
ATA News Staff

The ATA's newest staff officer brings a professional passion for physical education and sports to her role in the Professional Development program area.

Joining Barnett House staff on Jan. 25, Stacey Hannay most recently served as the assistant principal of Avalon School in Edmonton.

Hannay's passion for physical education and sport is evident in her involvement with the ATA's Health and Physical Education Council (HPEC). She has contributed significantly to curriculum development in this area, receiving recognition for her work and accomplishments in the field of sports. She said this background will inform her work at the ATA.

"My sporting career has built the needed persistence and commitment to accomplishing not only team/group goals but individual ones," Hannay said. "Sports have taught me the valued lesson of teamwork and collaboration in the accomplishment of a common objective."

Hannay also comes with a wealth of other experience. Her background includes roles as a district consultant and teacher at Kate Chegwin School and École Kenilworth School. Notably, she also worked with the Kitaskinaw Education Authority on the Maskêkosihk Cree Nation and the Sənsisyustən

Education Authority serving the West Bank First Nation in West Kelowna, B.C.

Hannay is a proud Franco-Albertan, and her proficiency in French will help the Association in its ongoing efforts to enhance services for its francophone members and community. A recent doctoral degree from the University

of Alberta highlights her commitment to advancing education in her chosen field. Prior to her doctorate, she earned a master's degree in education from McGill University in Montréal, and degrees in physical education and sports studies and education from the University of Alberta. ■



Stacey Hannay, new PD staff officer

4 MORE THINGS

about Stacey

What are you most excited about for your new role at the ATA?

Understanding a different spoke of the educational wheel, looking to build capacity and sustainability within the profession of teaching and learning through quality professional development

What advice would you give to a first-year teacher?

Pedagogical practices matter in today's tapestry of school culture. It is not always the curricular outcomes that drive engagement, and the hardest work of a best-practice teacher is to stay relevant with lesson planning, delivering and assessment.

What is the greatest life lesson teaching has taught you?

There are many rhizomatic ways to reach an end goal, and while all people are unique, it is through listening to the stories of those around you that you understand that learning styles are equally unique.

Favourite song to put a smile on your face?

The Sound of Sunshine by Michael Franti & Spearhead

Annual education telephone survey underway

ATA News Staff

The Ministry of Education is conducting its annual telephone surveys to collect teachers' and other partners' perceptions of Alberta's K-12 education system.

The surveys opened Jan. 15 and are gathering responses from a random sample of teachers, principals, school board trustees, parents, the public, high school students and employers of recent high school graduates. There will be more than 5,800 completed surveys, ensuring that survey results for each of the respondent groups are statistically representative.

The survey is also being offered in French to five respondent groups:

senior high school students, parents, teachers, principals and school board trustees.

The purpose of the survey is to determine satisfaction with

- the overall quality of the education system;
- the education system meeting the needs of students and supporting our society and the economy;
- schools providing a safe, caring and inclusive environment for students;
- the preparation of students for lifelong learning, employment and active citizenship;
- the education system having effective working relationships with system partners;
- leadership and continuous improvement of the education system;

- knowledge, skills, abilities and other related attributes of recent high school graduates; and
- facilities and equipment in the education system.

The survey responses are completely confidential and only aggregate data will be reported. Advanis Inc. has been contracted to administer the telephone/online surveys beginning Jan. 15, with an expected conclusion in May.

Survey responses help the ministry identify areas of strength and areas needing improvement, while helping to support a more effective and accountable education system. Some survey results are also used in specific business plan performance measures and will be reported in the ministry's

2023/24 annual report. Performance measures from the most recent Alberta Education business plan, which are based on survey results, include

- satisfaction that schools provide a safe, caring and healthy learning environment;
- agreement that students are engaged in their learning at school; and
- satisfaction that students have opportunities to receive a broad program of studies.

For further inquiries or additional information on the surveys, please contact Alberta Education's Corporate Planning Branch at performance.reporting.education@gov.ab.ca or 780-422-1963 (toll-free in Alberta by first dialing 310-0000). ■



STORIES AND PHOTOS WANTED

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 Cory Hare: cory.hare@ata.ab.ca.



Meet your new insurance sweetheart.

ATA members can receive exclusive savings on home and car insurance through our official insurance partner, [belairdirect](https://belairdirect.com).

belairdirect.
car and home insurance

Certain conditions, eligibility requirements, limitations and exclusions apply to all offers. Visit belairdirect.com for more details. Offers may change without notice. We offer car insurance and home insurance in Alberta, Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Newfoundland and Labrador and Prince Edward Island and home insurance only in British Columbia. © 2023, Belair Insurance Company Inc. All rights reserved.



A recent survey of Alberta teachers has found that about half have used artificial intelligence recently.

ISTOCK

Alberta teachers have mixed views on AI



EXECUTIVE REPORT

Phil McRae
Associate Coordinator, Research

One in two Alberta teachers have explored the use of artificial intelligence (AI) tools in their professional or personal lives within the past six months. This is one of the findings of a recent, and highly representative, ATA research study from December 2023 that surveyed 2,148 members (1,934 teachers and 214 school leaders).

A common thread that emerges from this December 2023 survey is teachers' call for increased professional involvement in AI policy and practice in K–12 education. It is a plea for a deeper understanding of this force, and a dire need for explicit policy guidance on its use as an emerging technology in education systems. These Alberta teachers, who stand on the front lines of our future, are keenly aware of the potential that AI has to reshape our profession and are expressing a genuine desire to navigate this transformation thoughtfully.

This powerful new tool (or in some cases AI collaborator) comes with an even greater responsibility, and Alberta's teachers are grappling with a host of concerns about AI's impact on education. The survey paints a nuanced picture: one-third of respondents believe AI advancements will enhance teaching and learning, another third view this future with skepticism and the final third remains uncertain. It's clear that the debate is just beginning, and Alberta's teaching profession is eager to engage in meaningful conversations about the role of AI in their classrooms.

Erosion of trust

Interestingly, there is a positive correlation between the frequency of using AI tools and a positive outlook on AI's role in education. Those who have integrated AI into their teaching methods are more likely to see the benefits it can bring to Alberta's K–12 education system. However, concerns are still widespread despite this positivity, with 80 to 90 per cent of respondents worrying about AI's potential negative effects.

Among these concerns is the fear that AI could erode trust in the teaching profession by leaving important moral decisions to machines – moral passivity. Teachers are also worried about the possibility of cognitive atrophy in students, such as reduced memory and critical thinking skills, which may fundamentally alter their abilities to become active and engaged citizens.

Additionally, there's a growing apprehension about the impact of AI on equity, with 59 per cent of respondents fearing that uneven access to AI tools could exacerbate educational disparities among students – an issue in a world where inequities continue to grow, and the Matthew effect takes hold (rich get richer and the poor get poorer).

Surprisingly, 40 per cent of teachers are not worried about AI replacing their jobs. This sentiment likely arises from their deep understanding of the complex, highly relational aspects of teaching and learning that cannot be easily replicated by machines. Nonetheless, a substantial six in 10 of Alberta educators do not believe their schools are adequately prepared to harness AI technologies effectively for the benefit of both students and teachers.

Innovative approaches

Despite these concerns, Alberta's teachers are not shying away from the integration of AI in public education. They are using AI as a tool to enhance student learning, ease administrative burdens and foster a critical understanding of AI among their students. Their innovative approaches showcase the transformative potential of AI in education. By incorporating AI, teachers are creating more interactive and engaged learning experiences while also preparing students for a future where AI is an integral part of everyday life.

Alberta's teachers and school leaders are true pioneers in the AI education frontier, and their journey is filled with challenges and opportunities. As they continue to grapple with ethical considerations, curriculum development and questions surrounding equity, it's

clear that their dedication to providing the best possible education for our children and youth remains unwavering.

The future of education in Alberta is being shaped by the dynamic synergy between human teachers and artificial intelligence, and the journey has only just begun. It will be our job to ensure that every child continues to have a teacher to help them flourish into the future, and that the highly relational spaces of teaching and learning remain predominantly human. ■

DIFFERING VIEWS

Teachers' outlook on the future impact of AI on education and learning

POSITIVE (somewhat or very)	29.4%
NEGATIVE (somewhat or very)	37.2%
NEITHER positive nor negative	14.5%
NOT SURE	18.9%

Emerging themes on AI raised by teacher survey respondents

Ethical considerations and curriculum development: Teachers question the ethical implications of using AI in planning and preparing assignments, and whether future curriculum should assume students' regular access to AI, similar to how current curriculum considers access to calculators.

Impact on students' skills and learning: Concerns are that AI might impede students from learning proper writing skills, with a specific focus on how it could replace students' original voices in their writing, a key curricular outcome. Teachers worry about the potential decline in students' problem solving, critical thinking and creativity due to AI usage.

Control and access to AI: Teachers express the need for control over student access to AI in the classroom, highlighting that a one-size-fits-all approach by districts is not sufficient. There's a sense that education is not keeping pace with AI advancements, forcing teachers into roles as cheating detectors rather than instructional leaders.

Training and exposure to AI: Many teachers feel behind in understanding and effectively using AI in their practice. They highlight a lack of exposure and training, suggesting the need for more professional development in this area.

Equity and accessibility concerns: There's a worry about the disparity among families in terms of access to technology like computers and Internet services, leading to concerns

about certain students being left behind.

Impact on student-teacher interaction and relationships: Questions arise about how AI usage might affect the interaction between students, staff, families and the overall journey of student learning. Concerns also include the potential erosion of positive relationships between students and adults.

Creativity and originality: Teachers fear that reliance on AI could diminish genuine creativity and the ability of students to engage in original thinking and problem solving. This in a world where disinformation and misinformation is a defined and clear global risk in the near future.

Plagiarism and academic integrity: The increased difficulty in identifying AI-generated work versus student-generated work, and the potential for increased cheating on assignments are significant concerns.

Teacher work intensification and professional judgment: Worries about AI becoming just another trend in K–12 education that increases teacher workload without long-term benefits. There are also concerns about AI's impact on teachers' professional autonomy and judgment, with AI systems being trusted over human professional wisdom.

Policy and regulation: Questions about the lack of clear policies and discussions at the schoolboard level regarding AI's integration into education.

International CHILDREN'S FESTIVAL of the ARTS

MAY 30 - JUNE 2, 2024
St. Albert, AB

Use presale access code **SCHOOLICF24** to purchase tickets.


COLOUR YOUR WORLD!

For over four decades, the International Children's Festival of the Arts has transported kids to other worlds and provided them with countless awe-inspiring and mind-growing experiences. The festival has nurtured, inspired and ignited creative expression for hundreds of thousands of young, global citizens and worked diligently to promote a higher degree of cultural understanding.

Children will tap into the power of imaginative thinking as they sing and dance to world music, interact with roving artists, listen to the stories of others and create their own masterpieces with the help of a variety of hands-on activities. The festival will bring opportunities to laugh and learn while creating lasting memories that draw families, friends and communities together.

SCHOOL & GROUP tickets on sale NOW!

FEATURE PERFORMANCES



St. Albert Children's Theatre Presents
POLKADOTS: THE COOL KIDS MUSICAL JV (JR. VERSION)



LIGHTWIRE THEATRE PRESENTS
DINO-LIGHT



KOO KOO



Experiential Theater Company presents:
GRIMMZ FAIRY TALES



Brú Theatre Presents
THE LIBRAVIAN



THE BIGHETT & BIGHETT PUPPET SHOW

STUDENT PRICING

Thursday and Friday:
Use presale access code **SCHOOLICF24** to purchase tickets.
Groups of 10 or more will automatically get a **25% discount!**

Feature Performances from \$13.69
Paid Activities from \$6.02

Book your Children's Festival experience for your class online at tickets.stalbert.ca.

Tickets are available on a **first-come, first-served basis!**

Need Help Planning Your Day?
Contact our School Liaison at **587-920-9851** or childrensfestival@stalbert.ca



Apply now



for an Alberta Teachers' Association Fellowship or Scholarship

Applications are now being accepted for the following:

- ATA Doctoral Fellowships in Education**
 - Two awards of \$15,000
 - For members entering or in first year of a doctoral program in education
- Nadene M Thomas Graduate Research Bursary**
 - One award of \$5,000
 - For a member enrolled in a graduate program in education
 - A research focus on teacher health issues and/or teachers' working conditions
- John Mazurek Memorial—Morgex Insurance Scholarship**
 - One award of \$2,500
 - For members who pursue relevant professional development

Deadline: February 28, 2024

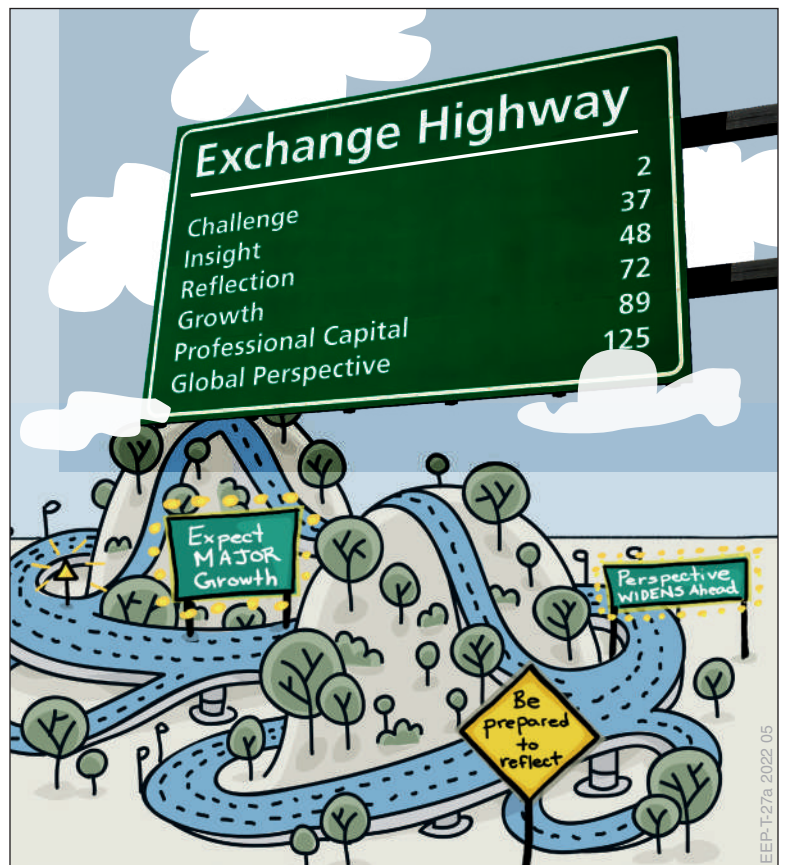
To be considered, applications must be received at Barnett House by 5:00 PM on February 28, 2024.

Contact

Tracee McFeeters
Administrative Officer
Scholarship Subcommittee
Alberta Teachers' Association

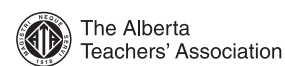
Phone 780-447-9470 or 1-800-232-7208
E-mail tracee.mcfeeters@ata.ab.ca
Online www.teachers.ab.ca/professional-development/grants-awards-and-scholarships

www.teachers.ab.ca



Virtual and in-person short-term exchanges for teachers and school leaders.

Visit teachers.ab.ca, search "teacher exchange" for applications and details.



2024 Celebrate

SUBSTITUTE TEACHERS' APPRECIATION WEEK



www.teachers.ab.ca





The Alberta Teachers' Association

The Alberta Teachers' Association invites applications for the position of
COORDINATOR, TEACHER EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

Competition: ESO1/24 Location: Edmonton

Position Overview

This position directs, supervises and facilitates the work of 25 staff members in the Teacher Employment Services (TES) program area in both Barnett House and the Southern Alberta Regional Office. The TES program area assists teachers, individually and collectively, in matters related to their work, primarily by providing advice on employment related matters, representing members in interactions with employers, supporting central table and individual local collective processes, and, subsequently, enforcing the terms of collective agreements to the benefit of members. The program area also provides policy advice and engages in activities and programs to inform teachers of employment matters. As a senior leader, the coordinator is responsible for actively supervising, managing and leading staff; coordinating resources; administering budgets; and working with other program areas in support of the Association's mission, objects and operational strategies.

Qualifications

Key requirements:

- Knowledge of ATA mission, objects, program area roles and responsibilities
- Commitment to prioritizing and advancing the broader strategic and operational goals of the Association in an evolving political, economic and governance environment
- Ability to lead program area budgeting and financial planning
- Experience supervising and managing staff
- Familiarity with applicable legislation, regulations and policy, including the *Education Act*
- Experience in bargaining, labour relations, application of collective agreements and conducting investigations are assets
- Facility in the French language is an asset
- School leadership experience is an asset

Additional competencies:

- Problem solving and decision making
 - The ability to analyze problems systematically, organize information, identify key factors, identify underlying causes and generate solutions
- Change agility
 - The ability to embrace change and adapt effectively in response
 - Committed to continuing the evolution of the program area within the Association
- Effective communication
 - Regularly seeks feedback to understand other peoples' perspectives and integrates feedback into new behaviours and decisions and advances the objectives of the organization
- 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
- Vision and direction setting
 - Ability to embrace ambiguity, nuance and complexity

- Supporting people and results
 - Commitment to managing with integrity and with an ongoing commitment to improving service to members
 - Ability to mobilize and manage resources to deliver on the priorities of the Association, improve outcomes and add value
 - Manage performance, provide constructive and respectful feedback to encourage and enable performance excellence

In addition, the following are required:

- 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

A demonstrated commitment to the Alberta Teachers' Association and/or its subgroups (or other Canadian teachers' organizations), coursework in employee and labour relations, experience in and/or knowledge of pensions and benefits are considered assets. The Association is committed to reconciliation, and a candidate's knowledge and experience of related issues and/or membership in an Indigenous community are assets. Applications from members of equity-seeking groups are encouraged.

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 subgroups perform both union and professional functions. As a union, the Association negotiates and monitors collective agreements and represents teachers in matters of employment. Effective January 1, 2023, the Association has begun representing 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 \$164,118, 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 Edmonton, but future assignments may be to any present or future Association office. Duties will commence on May 1, 2024 (negotiable).

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

Applicants should quote position ESO1/24 and include two letters from references who are not Association employees or elected officials of its provincial executive. Applications must be received in **one file by 4 p.m. on Wednesday, February 21, 2024**, and should be addressed to

For more information, please see our website at www.teachers.ab.ca.

OP-HR-471 2024 01

Council prepares diversity resolutions

PEC POINTS

Audrey Dutka
ATA News Staff

Highlights of the Provincial Executive Council meeting held January 18–19, 2024, at Barnett House, Edmonton.

1. Approved the 2024/25 proposed budget for presentation to locals.
2. Approved, for presentation to the 2024 Annual Representative Assembly, a resolution setting the annual fee payable by a full-time, active member at \$1,437, effective Sept. 1.
3. Approved, for presentation to the 2024 Annual Representative Assembly, a resolution setting the annual fee payable by an associate member at \$215.55, effective Sept. 1.
4. Authorized a \$1.5 million transfer of operating cash within the 2023/24 fiscal year to a one-year GIC short-term investment and to debt repayment.
5. Approved the name of one recipient for honorary membership in the Association, which is reserved for members and other persons who have given meritorious service to the teaching profession, to the Association or to the advancement of education.
6. Authorized a contribution of \$1,500 to the Education International Solidarity Fund to support Palestinian teacher colleagues and students in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank.
7. Approved that members of Provincial Executive Council be provided with the opportunity to review and approve their photographic images prior to the publication of such images in ATA print or digital materials.
8. Approved that the recently published and distributed district representative and table officer posters be replaced with posters depicting all members of Council and featuring new photographs that have been viewed and approved by each member of Provincial Executive Council, with a target distribution date of April.
9. Authorized staff, in consultation with the Indigenous Advisory Circle, to prepare guidelines to assist convention associations to appropriately host invited Elders at conventions.
10. Approved that each convention board be assigned an Indigenous Education PD facilitator to work with and advise the convention board in a nonvoting role.
11. Approved in principle and referred the following to the Resolutions Committee for preparation of resolutions for the 2024 Annual Representative Assembly:
 - a) That the Association host a symposium in the 2024/25 school year, to develop an understanding of barriers and opportunities in accessing Indigenous Elders and Knowledge Keepers for events and projects within the Association and Alberta schools and provide recommendations to the Association, its subgroups and members;
 - b) That the Association urge school authorities to ensure teachers are permitted to use, and be addressed by, their chosen name and pronouns that align with their lived gender experience on/in all official capacities and school records, and within the everyday business of the school;
 - c) That the Association urge school authorities to ensure that all students are permitted to use, and will be addressed by, their chosen name and pronouns that align with their lived gender experience on/in all official capacities and school records, and within the everyday business of the school;
 - d) That the Association urge the Government of Alberta and school authorities to support the professional judgment of teachers when facilitating GSA activities; and
 - e) That the Association establish two seminars annually for local DEHR chairs.
12. Approved the following as interim policy and referred to the 2024 Annual Representative Assembly for confirmation:

"Be it resolved that the Association support diversity, equity

PEC POINTS

continued on page 15

Start Your Overseas Teaching Adventure!

Discover a World of Opportunity: Teach abroad and embark on an extraordinary educational journey that combines the thrill of exploration, the joy of teaching, and the opportunity to immerse yourself in a vibrant new culture!



The International School OF MACAO | 澳門國際學校

Kindergarten to Grade 12
www.tis.edu.mo



Discover an incredible opportunity to grow both personally and professionally as a teacher! Experience the blend of the Alberta curriculum and the globally recognized IB framework for an exceptional education journey at TIS. Join us and immerse yourself in the rich local culture, explore new horizons and create unforgettable memories. Embrace the opportunity: apply now and embark on a rewarding career with us.



"As the Head of School, I am dedicated to fostering an enriching environment where teachers and staff empower students to explore a world of endless possibilities. Together, we support their individual growth, paving the way for remarkable achievements."

Lorne Schmidt, TIS Head of School



"Everyone went out of their way to make us feel welcome, ensuring that me and my family settled in quickly and comfortably. From the tireless efforts of the HR team to the personal gesture of our Secondary Principal driving us around the city, this level of support reflects the warmth and hospitality that defines TIS. I am proud to be part of such a welcoming community."

Ryan Connolly, TIS High School Vice-Principal

Be a part of our successful and expanding overseas schools!



Scan to see available positions or check school websites for vacancies and application details.



Canadian International School OF PHNOM PENH
Nursery to Grade 12
www.cisp.edu.kh



Canadian International School of Guangzhou
Kindergarten to Grade 12
www.cisgz.com



The Alberta Teachers' Association

The Alberta Teachers' Association invites applications for the position of

EXECUTIVE STAFF OFFICER, TEACHER EMPLOYMENT SERVICES/REGULATORY AFFAIRS AND MEMBERSHIP SUPPORT

Competition: ESO2/24 Location: Edmonton

Position Overview

This position will assist in the work of the Teacher Employment Services (TES) and Regulatory Affairs and Membership Support (RAMS) program areas, potentially supporting both teacher employment, collective bargaining and representation functions as directed by the executive secretary. Duties may include providing the following service to members:

- Handling teacher employment field service requests, acting as a representative of the bargaining agent in collective agreement negotiations, providing support to Association subgroups and acting as Association representative for members who are under investigation by the Alberta Teaching Profession Commission (ATPC)
- Providing advice relating to personnel problems, collective agreement entitlements and legal assistance
- Handling collective agreement grievances and Board of Reference appeals
- Participating in and undertaking presentations and workshops for TES conferences
- Representing members at all stages of the ATPC's processes, including preliminary inquiries, investigations and hearings
- Conducting further investigations as a part of the representation role as required
- Assisting with certification issues that stem from the ATPC's processes
- Serving as Association resource person in specific areas of policy and practices
- Carrying out special projects within the program area and extending across other areas of Association operation

Qualifications

Key requirements:

- Knowledge of ATA mission, objects, program areas and how they contribute to improving the profession and the working lives of teachers
- Understanding of the role of TES and RAMS
- Familiarity with applicable legislation, policy and the *Education Act*
- Experience in bargaining, labour relations, application of collective agreements and conducting investigations are assets
- Coursework in human resources and labour relations and knowledge of pension and benefits are assets
- Demonstrated facility in the French language is an asset
- School leadership experience is an asset
- Human resources training and experience are assets

Additional competencies:

- Problem solving and decision making
 - The ability to analyze problems systematically, organize information, identify key factors, identify underlying causes and generate solutions
- Change agility
 - The ability to embrace change and adapt effectively in response
- Effective communication
 - Regularly seeks feedback to understand other peoples' perspectives and integrates feedback into decisions and 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

In addition, the following are required:

- 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

A demonstrated commitment to the profession; service with the Alberta Teachers' Association, its subgroups or other Canadian teachers' organizations; coursework in employee and labour relations; and experience in and/or knowledge of pensions and benefits are considered assets. The Association is committed to reconciliation and a candidate's knowledge of and experience with related issues and/or membership in an Indigenous community are assets. Applications from members of equity-seeking groups are encouraged.

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 subgroups perform both union and professional functions. As a union, the Association negotiates and monitors collective agreements and represents teachers in matters of employment. Effective January 1, 2023, the Association has begun representing members who may be subject to regulatory processes relating to professional conduct and practice administered by the ATPC.

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 \$138,720, 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 Edmonton, but future assignments may be to any present or future Association office. Duties will commence on May 1, 2024 (negotiable).

Applicants should quote position ESO2/24 and include two letters from references who are not Association employees or elected officials of its provincial executive. Applications must be received in **one** file by **4 p.m. on Wednesday, February 21, 2024**, and should be addressed to

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

For more information, please see our website at www.teachers.ab.ca.

OP-HR-47e-2024.01

PEC POINTS

continued from page 13

and inclusion (DEI) initiatives and programming at Alberta postsecondary institutions and call upon the Government of Alberta to refrain from penalizing financially, or by other means, those Alberta postsecondary institutions that choose to implement DEI policy and/or maintain DEI offices."

13. Approved, for presentation to the 2024 Annual Representative Assembly, three executive resolutions to update Association policy as follows:

- a) That school authorities recall teachers displaced due to emergency situations only when there is work for teachers to do, the work can be done safely and the work can be done in compliance with public health orders and recommendations and government declarations. Reasonable notice must be provided as per employment standards legislation;
- b) That policy 19.2.10.15 be amended to read— School authorities should ensure that multigrade classrooms taught by one teacher contain no more than two consecutive grades or two distinct courses unless the classroom consists of students with exceptional learning needs or is located in a Hutterite school; and
- c) That the Association urge school authorities to work with the Alberta Library to gain provincewide licenses to high-quality online resources for all Alberta classrooms.

14. Approved that the reports on resolutions 2-44/23, 2-58/23 and 2-69/23 requiring report to the 2024 Annual Representative Assembly be published in the *Resolutions Bulletin*.

15. Established an Ad Hoc Committee on Coordinating Communications to Members.

16. Received the report of a Professional Conduct Appeal Committee, which upheld the decisions of a Professional Conduct Committee, with the exception of a reduced fine for one of the guilty charges from \$6,000 to \$3,000.

17. Approved proposed timelines and appointed Council members to two selection committees for the recruitment of the positions of Coordinator, Teacher Employment Services, and Executive Staff Officer, Teacher Employment Services/Regulatory Affairs and Membership Support.

18. Approved the names of three teachers for inclusion in the approved name bank for possible appointment as Indigenous Education PD facilitators.

19. Adjusted the Association kilometrage rate to 67 cents, effective Jan. 1, 2024, representing the midpoint of the Canada Revenue Agency rates for 2024.

20. Amended the Administrative Guidelines related to cellular telephone allowances and equipment allowances.

21. Approved that the Association provide menstruation products in all public restrooms at Barnett House.

22. Authorized up to three Council members to attend the Alberta Rural Education Symposium, taking place March 3–5, 2024 at Enoch, Alberta.

23. Authorized all members of Council who identify as women to attend the Canadian Teachers' Federation 2024 Women's Symposium, taking place June 2–4, 2024 at Fredericton, New Brunswick.

24. Approved the purchase of a table for eight at the 17th Annual Parkland Institute Gala Dinner and Silent Auction, taking place Feb. 29, 2024 at Edmonton, Alberta.

25. Amended the local rebate model for delegates attending Summer Conference and amended the subsistence for local delegates travelling over 500 kilometres one way to and from Summer Conference.

26. Amended the Summer Conference courses and seminars to run on a two-year cycle and reduced the Summer Conference program by one full day.

27. Approved dates of key Association-sponsored meetings and Council meetings for the 2026/27 school year.

28. Amended the Resolutions Committee frame of reference. ■

NOTICE

On Dec. 16, 2021, a hearing committee of the Professional Conduct Committee established under the *Teaching Profession Act* found that David Gordon Stawn engaged in unprofessional conduct. On Nov. 17, 2023, the finding of the hearing committee was upheld by the Professional Conduct Appeal Committee. Consequently, Stawn is ineligible for membership in the Association for a period of three years, effective Nov. 17, 2023.

TALENT

February 6, 2024 | Volume 58, Number 8

Authentic learning moments... artificially captured

THE ASSIGNMENT:

Use artificial intelligence to create an image depicting a moment of joy you experienced as a teacher.



I used Bing to search for "Happy construction teacher with students." Thumbs up to bandsaw safety!
– Dennis Pratt, Kate Chegwin School, Edmonton



I used AI Perfect Assistant to take this picture. Happy students, happy teachers.
– Huma Kashif, Roland Michener Secondary School, Slave Lake



Working with a student who wrote their first sentence independently. I love that the kiddo can work with two pencils at the same time.
– Annemarie Simpson, St. Catherine School, Edmonton



The prompt I used was "loose parts natural items in play with young students."
– Adrienne Peoples-Sprecker, École Plamondon School, Plamondon



Students enjoying victory from an escape room challenge. We do a lot of escape rooms in my class and they're always so excited to actually escape.
– Cherra-Lynne Olthof, Westglen School, Didsbury



Grade 2 Science. Making homemade ice cream in a bag.
– Amber Lyons, Vera M. Welsh School, Lac La Biche

