



CHANGE FOR CHILDREN

Travel experience delivers challenge and reward
[See story on page 11.](#)

WHO'S WHO

Meet your elected leaders

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ATA NEWS

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News Publication of The Alberta Teachers' Association



PHIL MCRAE-AI IMAGE GENERATED WITH CHAT GPT

The ATA's latest research shows that some Alberta teachers are feeling so stressed and overwhelmed that they are planning to leave the profession.

[See our story on page 5.](#)



A modest proposal

Calgary arena announcement provides clear path to solving classroom overcrowding.

[See Editorial on page 2.](#)



Minister outlines top priorities

A Q&A with Education Minister Demetrios Nicolaides.

[See page 4.](#)



Education is not an expense

Let's shift the narrative and address underfunding.

[See Viewpoints on page 3.](#)



Seasonal comfort

Teachers share suggestions for combating sniffles and chills.

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

A modest proposal to solve classroom crowding



EDITORIAL

Jonathan Teghtmeyer
ATA News Editor-in-Chief

classrooms in Calgary public schools.

Alberta has the lowest per student funding for public education and the largest class sizes in the country. Class sizes have grown steadily since 2008/09 as more and more students have been added to Calgary schools while funding and staff hiring has failed to keep pace.

If current classroom spaces in the two Calgary school divisions were capped at 2008/09 class size levels,

Modern NHL arenas also come with top notch audio-visual technology, including large high-definition Jumbotrons. Don't Alberta's students deserve access to this sort of first-rate instructional technology?

Once the arena is built and students are transferred in, relief will be instant for students and teachers in schools across the city. The solution also doesn't need to involve greater staffing costs. The great sightlines and high-

they need.

This also provides a great opportunity to expand choice in education. Students – and their parents – will be able to choose between a brand new one-of-a-kind educational facility with cutting edge technology or one of the many now reasonably spaced public school classrooms across the city.

It is a revolutionary idea for public education. I look forward to meeting the teacher who is lucky enough to be the pioneer for this groundbreaking learning environment. It was most fitting to me that the funding announcement came on World Teachers' Day. It would be equally fitting that the identity of this lucky teacher be revealed on April 1.

Undoubtedly, their teaching certificate number will one day be raised to the rafters to hang among the greats.

And, at the very least, even if this modest proposal does not produce better educational outcomes for Calgary students, we can hope that the sight of all those young eager Flames fans together might inspire the hockey team to win just a little more often. For the sake of the children. ■

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

Alberta's hockey fans have had little to celebrate this fall.

The Edmonton Oilers started this year as odds on favourite to win the Stanley Cup, but already their head coach and starting goalie have fallen victim to a completely disappointing start.

As I write, the Calgary Flames are just a mere point ahead of their provincial rivals, but at least the prospect of a brand new hockey arena in that city provides a ray of hope for southern Alberta hockey fans.

The Government of Alberta's agreement to provide \$330 million in funding to support a new Calgary hockey arena caught my attention recently, and I must say, I am overjoyed!

A multi-use events centre is exactly what Calgary's children need.

In addition to being a home for millionaires to play hockey on billionaire-owned teams, the facility could double as overflow teaching space to ease the crunch of overcrowded

there would be 22,000 students without a classroom or teacher.

The solution is obvious. We either build 1,400 more classrooms or come up with one centralised location to teach 22,000 students. Why haven't we thought of this sooner?

I can't possibly imagine a better way to spend \$330 million on Alberta's most important infrastructure needs.

end audio-visual tools set up for NHL games will be very useful for learning. Just throw a teacher at centre ice, pop on a follow spot and Bob's your uncle.

This solution means that the median class-size in Calgary would quickly drop to a level that would make students, teachers and parents happy that most children will once again have access to the individualised attention

“ \$330 million in funding to support a new Calgary hockey arena caught my attention recently, and I must say, I am overjoyed! ”

Latest public sector act is nothing to fear



Q & A

Dennis Theobald
ATA Executive Secretary

Question: I saw that the government has introduced Bill 5, the *Public Sector Employers Amendment Act, 2023*. Should we be worrying about this?

Answer: Before the internet, there was short-wave radio. Being the nerd that I am, I had a short-wave radio receiver and used to spend hours, often late at night and in the early hours of the morning, listening to broadcasts from stations transmitting news, music, features and seemingly random digits (coded messages for spies!) from all over the planet.

On the front of that receiver was a knob labeled “GAIN” which was used to adjust its sensitivity to incoming signals. To catch some of the more faint and distant stations, you needed to operate at higher levels of sensitivity, and so you would turn up the gain.

Given the last few years, teachers have become very suspicious of government's intentions and sensitive to potential mischief – we have operated with our gain cranked up

to the max. It is not surprising, then, that the introduction of Bill 5, with its suspiciously anodyne title, would cause some alarm.

When it was introduced, the bill was characterized as addressing transparency and accountability in public sector compensation, particularly focusing on non-unionized public sector employees. Teachers will

as Alberta Health Services, Covenant Health, the Alberta Gaming, Liquor and Cannabis Commission) will be required to formally provide their compensation proposals to the finance minister for approval in advance of bargaining. This is already the case for other public sector entities and, indeed, for the Teacher Employer Bargaining Association.

“ Teachers will be relieved to learn that it does not affect teacher collective bargaining, centrally or at the local level. ”

be relieved to learn that it does not affect teacher collective bargaining, centrally or at the local level. That is because teacher collective agreements are covered by separate legislation, the *Public Education Collective Bargaining Act* that is distinct from the *Public Sector Employers Act*.

In fact, the new bill will tend to make public sector bargaining in other sectors more closely resemble the process governing teacher bargaining in that public sector employers (such

It is important to note that the legislation does not give the minister direct control over the outcome of the collective bargaining, only some capacity to more explicitly co-ordinate the position of employers in the bargaining process. It is suspected that this has been done for years, although informally and surreptitiously.

One promising aspect of the legislation is the provision in Bill 5 to repeal the *Reform of Agencies, Boards and Commissions Compensation Act*

(*RABCCA*), which was initially focused on regulating executive salaries. *RABCCA* has had the effect of placing the Alberta Teachers Retirement Fund (ATRF) at a competitive disadvantage as it effectively placed arbitrary caps on the salaries of senior managers and specialists that were well below market value, making it difficult for ATRF to compete for talent with the private sector and even with public sector entities, including AIMCO, that were largely exempt from its application. The new bill provides a means to fix this problem.

Although the proposed legislation in its current form would not much affect teachers in Alberta, the Association will continue to monitor the bill as it makes its way through the legislature and ensure you are advised of any developments of interest or concern.

And to my fellow nerds, if you've managed to read this far, send me a SWL Reception Report with your address and I might just send you a QSL Card in the mail as a souvenir. ■

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



We can't afford NOT to fund public education



VIEWPOINTS

Jason Schilling
ATA President

Alberta's students deserve the best. Unfortunately, our ability to attract and retain teachers to work in public schools is being eroded.

Dedicated teachers are exiting the province and exiting the profession because of how untenable working conditions have become. With an influx of new students into classrooms in recent years, teachers are facing a workload that feels overwhelming, impossible and unrelenting. Not only are class sizes large, but the unmet needs of the students are tremendous.

The government routinely shares that Alberta has one of the best education systems in the world, and we do. However, while the government takes the credit, teachers and school leaders are doing the work of propping up a system on edge. That work is becoming more and more complex and challenging.

Work intensification and the moral distress of seeing students struggle without getting access to the supports they require are wreaking havoc on the teaching profession.

This school year has seen another very large increase in the number of students across the province. School divisions in Edmonton and Calgary alone are seeing an addition of up to 16,000 new students. Rapid growth in the student population has been going on for years. Sadly, the funding of our schools has not kept up.

The most recent data from Statistics Canada paints a dire picture. Alberta's schools are by far the lowest funded,

per pupil, in the country. As a result, we have a significantly higher ratio of students to teacher than every other province. Public education in Alberta would need an increase of 1.2 billion dollars to bring Alberta just to the Canadian funding average.

“We need to move the narrative away from the idea that public education is an expense that we cannot afford.”

Every student in public schools deserves to have their learning needs met. It is irresponsible and, frankly, quite shocking that Alberta students are dead last in Canada when it comes to funding.

I know that teachers are not alone in this concern. Recent public opinion polling the ATA conducted showed that 72 per cent of Albertans believe class sizes are too big, while 68 per cent of Albertans believe the government is not spending enough to support our public schools.

What does this lack of

funding actually look like on a day-to-day basis in our schools and classrooms? Students crammed into overcrowded classes with the number of students too often creeping up into the high 30s and low 40s. A lack of resources such as textbooks and teacher guides to support newly introduced curriculum. Too many classes without educational assistants and too many students going without the extra support they require to succeed.

It is easy to see how this sustained neglect to adequately support schools is impacting the people who work in those schools. Increasingly, teachers and school leaders are feeling a sense of despair when they cannot meet the needs of their students on a daily basis. This feeling of hopelessness is driving great teachers and school leaders, who want to do their very best for our students, away from the profession. Currently, there are several school jurisdictions across the province with job postings that are going unfilled.

The issues in education are quickly becoming normalized and that's not right. It doesn't need to be this way.

We need to move the narrative away from the idea that public education is an expense that we cannot afford. We cannot keep asking our public education system to do more with less. By underfunding our public schools, we are failing a generation of students who will one day be our province's leaders.

As the legislature returns this fall, it is my hope that our elected officials will look at education as an investment in our students and their futures. We have an amazing resource in Alberta of teachers who are educating the leaders of tomorrow. We can't afford NOT to properly fund public education in Alberta. ■

YOUR VIEWS

Where have all the teachers gone?

Teachers respond to the Q&A from the Oct. 31 issue of the ATA News.

ON INSTAGRAM

marlst8

Because teaching is exhausting.

renee_juliette

Yep. I decided to leave. There are lots going through the education, but there are a lot leaving the profession at the same time.

runnerjen73

Big class sizes, shrinking budgets, excessive expectations, so much take home work, it's exhausting. And with this provincial government, there's not a lot of hope for changes or improvements any time soon.

iamme.ftm

I am a teacher who has chosen not to work due to the fact that the government always wants to turn parents against us instead of parents choosing to stand for us/with us for the kids. It's a headache.

becomingleanne

I taught for several years then stayed home for almost 10 years after having kids. When I came back to teaching I was, and still am, floored by the amount of added expectations put on teachers. It really is unrealistic. The other major difference is the number of children with complex needs. We are expected to be medical workers. I love teaching the children, but the rest of it, the part that requires us to spend another 20 hrs/week or more at school or on school-related work, is soul sucking.

FACEBOOK FEEDBACK

Jessica Berry Lavoie

How can you blame them!?!? We keep enabling parents and families so they aren't accountable for their kids' needs and behaviours, and then wonder why they get burnt out when kids have behaviour issues, or all of a sudden teachers and schools are in charge of meeting physical needs as well?? We all need to give our heads a shake.

Lynann Kroetsch

I agree. I have been out of this for 20 years and my last year was crazy for this very reason. Thank goodness my principal was behind me. The parents involved then moved their kids out of the school and tried about three more schools.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Congratulations on amazing article

Congratulations to Adrienne Peoples-Sprecker for the wonderful article entitled "I left part of my heart in Ghana," published in the ATA News of Oct. 31.

An article of this calibre is likely to encourage experienced Canadian teachers to consider enlisting as volunteers for Project Overseas. Project Overseas is praiseworthy as it enables talented Canadian teachers to share their expertise with colleagues in the developing world.

Leo R. Sam

Retired teacher, Edmonton



FOR THE RECORD

“I never have a chance to have a life.”

– Comment gathered through a recent ATA study of teachers who have left or are considering leaving the profession.

[See story on page 5.](#)

Minister eyes enrolment pressures and curriculum consultation

A Q&A with Education Minister Demetrios Nicolaides

ATA News Staff

Demetrios Nicolaides was sworn in under Danielle Smith's government as minister of education on June 23, 2023. He previously served as the minister of advanced education.

Prior to his election in 2019 as the UCP MLA for Calgary-Bow, he worked at a communication consulting firm and taught courses at business schools.

Nicolaides graduated from Ernest Manning High School in 2000, earned a BA in history and international relations at the University of Calgary. He later completed an MA in conflict studies in Austria and a PhD in political science in Cyprus, focusing on education's role in ethnic conflicts. He also has training in mediation and arbitration.

The ATA News assembled the following questions and answers to help teachers get more acquainted with the minister.



Education Minister Demetrios Nicolaides says his top priorities include building new schools and hiring school staff. SUPPLIED

new funding over three years to hire more EAs, psychologists, speech language pathologists and other staff to support varied learning needs. We are also reviewing PUF funding and providing more funding for early screening to help ensure students receive the supports they need.

Another priority will be to continue with the development of Alberta's new curriculum. As a former political scientist, I am eager to get to work on developing a new social studies curriculum and, similarly, also excited to strengthen English language arts and math, to ensure our students continue to excel in literacy and numeracy. I'm also excited to continue work on physical education and wellness to help equip our students with important life skills, build financial literacy and help them learn important habits about nutrition, exercise and maintaining a healthy lifestyle.

billion this year, including more than \$820 million over three years specifically to address enrolment growth. In addition, the government provides supplemental enrolment growth to support school authorities with significant enrolment growth.

Moving forward, the provincial government's budget cycle continues, and we are beginning our work for Budget 2024. I want to hear from our education partners on what their priorities are and what challenges they are facing. We share a common goal in wanting to provide the highest-quality education for students, and together I think we can achieve that.

Q What do you think is working well in the public education system and where do you see room for improvements?

A There are so many aspects of our education system that are working well. I have been so impressed with the dedication of our teachers, the passion of superintendents and the breadth of programming options available to students. I recently hosted a delegation of ministers of education from Germany who came to Alberta to learn about our success in PISA rankings, and I viewed their interest as a very objective vote of confidence in our education system.

I think one of the areas where there is room for improvement is in career education. I would like to see us do more to expose our kids to the various career opportunities that exist, whether in aviation, health care, tech, trades, robotics and others. Students should have a strong understanding of what occupations are in demand to help them make informed decisions about their high school electives, dual credit opportunities and future post-secondary studies. I also believe we need to create more opportunities for students to gain more work experience so that they can learn the important workplace and interpersonal skills they will need later in life.

Q Class size and supports for inclusion are among the top concerns for teachers. How do you plan to address these issues?

A Yes, there is no question there are growing concerns, especially as we are dealing with a large increase in population. We are committed to providing more funding to try to address these concerns. In Budget 2023, we increased funding by 5.2 per cent, for a total investment of \$8.8

Q Is there anything else you would like to share with teachers and other readers of the ATA News?

A I would just like to say thank you. I greatly appreciate the hard work, passion and dedication our teachers have. The work that you do helps equip our students with the skills, knowledge and competencies they will need to succeed as adults. As teachers, you do more than just teach the curriculum. You strive to build inquisitive minds, teach our students to think critically and empower them to become powerful adults. The work that you do reminds me of the words of Socrates who declared, "Education is the kindling of a flame, not the filling of a vessel."

"I'm excited to continue to build a strong working relationship with teachers and the ATA."

I am fully committed to listening to and working with our education partners to identify solutions to current challenges. I'm excited to continue to build a strong working relationship with teachers and the ATA. As an example, as we work to develop a new social studies curriculum, I have directed my team to develop a new teacher curriculum consultation group. This group will provide an opportunity for teachers to give their feedback on the K-12 social studies scope and sequence and draft K-6 content.

In early 2024, all teachers, along with interested parents and Albertans, will have a chance to give feedback on key learnings within the K-12 social studies curriculum and view the draft K-6 social studies curriculum. Teachers will again be given an opportunity to provide further feedback during the 2024/25 school year by piloting the draft K-6 social studies curriculum. I look forward to updating you all as the curriculum engagement process continues. ■

Responses have been edited for length and clarity.

Q What do you see as the big priorities and the big challenges in Alberta education over the next few years?

A Over the next few years, one of the biggest challenges will be to accommodate the surge of [population] growth. Premier Smith has asked me to significantly increase the number of schools in our growing communities and I plan to do just that. Budget 2023 also provided \$820 million over the next three years to deal specifically with enrolment growth pressures.

Another significant challenge will be to adequately equip our schools to manage increasingly complex classrooms. Budget 2023 provided \$126 million in



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](mailto:cory.hare@ata.ab.ca).

Workload issues prompting teachers to quit

Exit interviews with departing teachers paint a picture of stress

Karen Gill
ATA News Staff

Work intensification and lack of balance are driving Alberta teachers out of their chosen profession, suggests a recent ATA study.

Conducted in June 2023, the study identified five main reasons why teachers are choosing to leave teaching:

- work intensification
- lack of inclusion supports
- moral distress and compromises
- public discourse and culture wars
- parental conflict

"I left teaching this year after five years," said one study participant. "The workload of teaching, plus overwhelming class sizes and student behaviour, as well as little to no prep time, made my physical and mental health suffer significantly."

Entitled *Exiting the Teaching Profession in Alberta*, the study pinpointed 65 teachers who were either on the verge of leaving the profession or had already left. From this group, researchers conducted exit interviews with a representative sampling of 12 teachers.

The most pressing issue identified in the study was work intensification, largely driven by the size

and complexity of classes. Respondents pointed out that large class sizes and little to no prep time means it's impossible for teachers to meet the needs of all students.

"I empathize with the kids who are struggling, and we don't have the resources," said a rural junior high school teacher with fewer than 10 years of experience. "I don't have the capacity to help them. I am watching them not succeed knowing that it's my job to help them. Those are the kids I care about the most, but..."

More experienced teachers also cited workload as a significant issue.

"Every year workload has increased," said a high school teacher with more than 15 years of experience. "When I started my career, I averaged 48 hours per week. Now I'm in the 60s. I don't have weekends, six to 12 hours grading, Sunday four to six hours, before and after school. I never have a chance to have a life."

Study participants pointed out that they are experiencing a "vicious cycle" in which they are experiencing less of what they love about teaching while also facing increasing challenges. Among these challenges are a rise in administrative demands and difficult interactions with parents.

Respondents acknowledged that there are no easy solutions to the complex challenges that exist within the public education system, but they did offer some thoughts.

"I think a good starting point is classroom caps.

Smaller classes mean everything can get better. We'd have more time to accommodate [needs]. If it's 45 kids in a classroom with no prep, I would have left the profession," said one participant.

"Some respondents foresee the need for drastic changes, such as teacher job actions or immediate reductions in extracurricular activities, to enhance classroom environments and professional working conditions," the report states.

Although the study's sample size is small, the findings align with other ATA surveys and are likely a good indicator of how many teachers feel, said ATA president Jason Schilling.

"Teachers feel they're being attacked from all directions," he said. "Overwhelming class sizes, high workloads, zero down time, negative public discourse and chronic underfunding are forcing teachers to re-evaluate their career paths."

Schilling agreed that reducing class sizes is key to addressing the issues identified by this latest study. If nothing changes, he warned that Alberta could see a teacher shortage, decreases in programming, reduced viability of rural schools and a diminished teaching profession.

"This is a call to action," Schilling said. "The government, school boards, parents, community agencies and the ATA must join forces to flip the system, to create an environment where teachers are valued and supported." ■



Report: Exiting the Teaching Profession in Alberta

Exit interviews with departing teachers determined that there are five main reasons why Alberta teachers are leaving the profession.

Work intensification

Teachers are overwhelmed with their workloads, often feeling the tasks don't directly benefit students and, in terms of student assessments, have become bureaucratic and are of low value but high impact in terms of work intensification.

Lack of inclusion supports

While inclusive classrooms are philosophically and theoretically supported, their execution in practice is seen as challenging and poorly supported across most Alberta schools and school communities.

Moral distress and compromises

Many exiting teachers expressed sorrow and frustration over compromises they feel they have had to make to remain in the profession of teaching in Alberta. This is seen in other Association research as an outcome of growing moral distress.

Public discourse and culture wars

The negative public discourse on teaching and public education has teachers and school leaders feeling besieged.

Parental conflict

Teachers want more school leadership and administrative support, especially support for confrontational relationships with parents and/or communities that don't support teachers.

This study's report is being finalized and will be available on the ATA website at teachers.ab.ca.

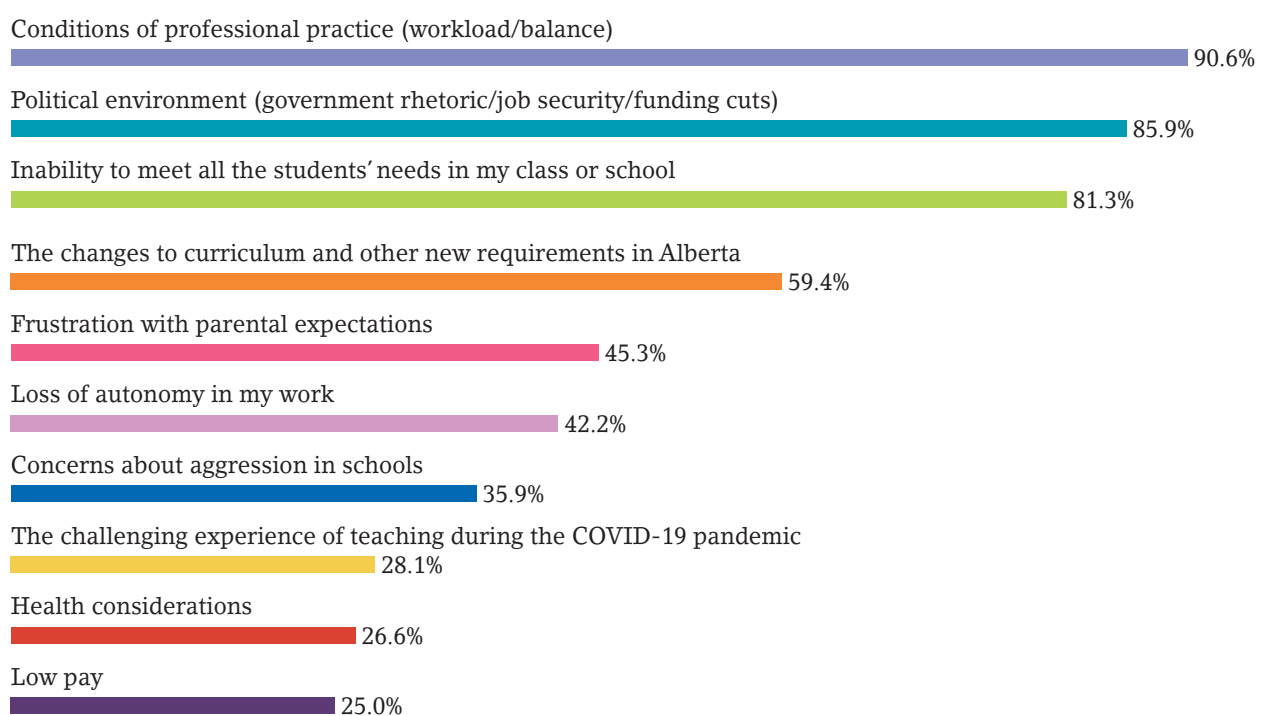
The study surveyed 65 teachers who had previously stated they were on the verge of leaving teaching in Alberta.

Will you be exiting the profession of teaching or leaving the province of Alberta at the end of this school year?

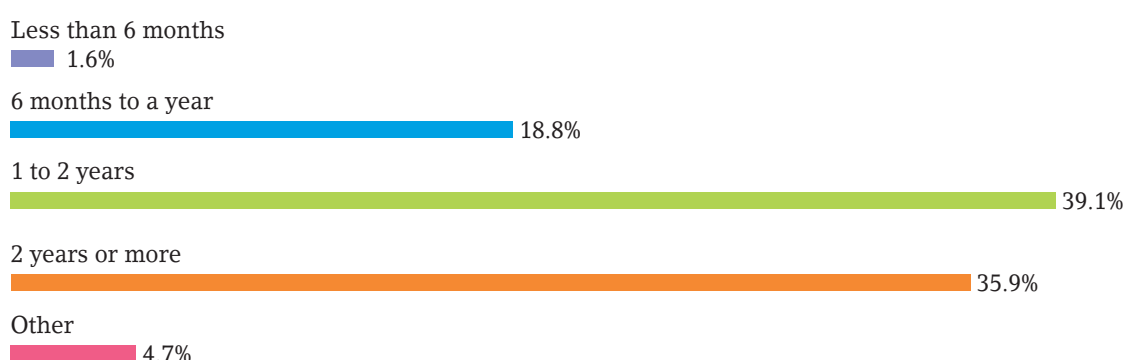


Which of the following are/were drivers for your decision to leave the teaching profession in Alberta?

TOP 10 REASONS



How long have/had you been thinking about leaving either the teaching profession or teaching in Alberta?



ARTA 101

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ARTA Perks Discount Program

Gain access to discounts from a large variety of businesses and services throughout Alberta, including Broadway Across Canada, Magic Bus, The Canadian Brewhouse, Goodlife Fitness, and many more.

Winners announced in My Alberta Teacher Hero contest

ATA News Staff

Three Alberta teachers will be jetting away on vacation after winning the top prizes in the ATA's My Alberta Teacher Hero contest. The contest, which ran in conjunction with World Teachers' Day in October, encouraged teachers, students and the public to submit 60-second videos sharing how they were inspired by an Alberta teacher.

The contest drew 80 submissions. These were entered into a draw for three vouchers valued at \$3,000 each, to be used either for WestJet travel or the Apple Store.

Edmonton teacher Nicole Watts landed one of the prizes after being nominated by a teaching colleague for her commitment to working late at school and her displays of generosity through sharing gift cards with those in need. Watts described her win as a

"wonderful surprise." She's hoping to use her prize to travel to New York, where she hopes to take in some theatrical performances.

Prize winner Bill Gordon, a retired teacher from Elk Island Public Schools, was nominated by a former student who is now a school administrator. Heavily involved in student council activities and special events during his career, Gordon is credited with inspiring many students. He said he

plans to use his prize to travel to Hawaii.

The other winner is Charlene Brown of Wetaskiwin Regional Public Schools. A Grade 5 student nominated her because she is "fun, sporty and loves the students." He described that, after 30 years of teaching students, Mrs. Brown is in "desperate need of a vacation." Brown doesn't know yet where she will travel, but noted that the prize has lifted her spirits and made a real difference. ■



Nicole Watts



Bill Gordon



Charlene Brown

Teachers recognized for excellence

ATA News Staff

Ten Alberta teachers are among the recipients of the 2023 Prime Minister's awards for teaching excellence.

The awards for Canada's top teachers are broken down into three categories: teaching excellence, teaching excellence in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM), and teaching excellence in early childhood. Each category awards a national certificate of excellence, as well as a regional certificate of achievement.

"Every day, teachers go above and beyond as mentors, coaches, counsellors and advocates for the next generation of Canadians," said Prime Minister Justin Trudeau in a government release. "Your dedication

and service to our kids help make Canada the best country in the world."

The award winners were announced as part of World Teachers' Day on Oct. 5. Here is a list of ATA members who received this award for 2023.

Certificate of Achievement for Teacher Excellence

- Jocelyn Encinas — Ralston School, Prairie Rose School Division
- Leanne Jordison — Duclos School, Northern Lights School Division
- Shelley Sinclair — Irma School, Buffalo Trail School Division
- Sarah Steinbach — École H.J. Cody High School, Chinook's Edge School Division
- Aaron Thacker — Dr. Donald Massey School, Edmonton School Division

Certificate of Achievement for Teacher Excellence in STEM

- Melanie Beebe — École Oriole Park Elementary School, Red Deer School Division
- Marion Rex Howard — St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School, Evergreen Catholic Separate School Division
- Kathryn Richards — St. Andrew School, Calgary Roman Catholic Separate School Division
- Chantal Sakowich — Assumption Junior/Senior High School, Lakeland Roman Catholic Separate School Division
- Michael Saretzky — St. Patrick Community School, Red Deer Catholic Separate School Division ■

- The awards were launched in 1994.
- More than 2,100 teachers have been honoured.
- Out of 150 nominations in 2023, 74 teachers received an award.
- 130 volunteers from education communities across Canada make up the selection committee.

Full list of 2023 recipients



Nominate a teacher for the 2024 Prime Minister's Awards for Teacher Excellence



Council targets use of 'notwithstanding clause'

PEC POINTS

Audrey Dutka
ATA News Staff

Highlights of the Provincial Executive Council meeting held Oct. 26–27, 2023, at Barnett House in Edmonton.

1. Adopted the following interim policies and referred them to the 2024 Annual Representative Assembly for confirmation:

a. The Association opposes the use of the "notwithstanding clause," section 33 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, by governments to diminish or disregard the rights of persons in legislation.

b. The Association prioritizes the safety and security of students and so opposes legislation, regulations and policies relating to issues of student gender and relationship diversity that may expose students

to heightened risk of physical, psychological or socioeconomic harm.

c. The Association opposes legislation, regulations or policies requiring teachers to disclose information concerning a student's gender or relationship identity or expression.

d. The Association supports teachers in the exercise of their professional judgment concerning how best to protect the privacy, safety and security of gender- and relationship-diverse students.

2. Confirmed Association support in principle for, and interest in participating in, a consultation event concerning the use of the notwithstanding clause (section 33 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms) by governments to diminish the rights of Canadians and potential remedies.

3. Determined that the bargaining unit for the teachers at Edmonton School Division has met the objectives of bargaining in good faith, has demonstrated the support of its members, and is within the objects

recommended by Association policy and guidelines.

4. Approved in principle and referred to Finance Committee for costing a proposed list of programs on which the Association should focus in 2024/25.

5. Approved the Association's 2023/24 budget for capital expenditures.

6. Authorized a contribution of \$3,000 to the Education International Solidarity Fund to assist trade unionists and teachers affected by the 2023 09 08 earthquake in Morocco.

7. Named Jeff Huculak to the position of Executive Staff Officer, Teacher Employment Services, with duties to commence on Jan. 1, 2024, or at a mutually agreeable time.

8. Authorized the executive secretary to approach the Government of Alberta with the intent of pursuing an agreement for the Association to undertake the work to develop and present Code of Professional Conduct training for its members to fulfil competency requirements within the Teaching Quality Standards, the Leadership Quality Standards and the Superintendent Leadership Quality

Standards, with funding provided by the Government of Alberta.

9. Authorized up to eight members of Council to attend the Parkland Institute Annual Fall Conference, taking place on Nov. 17–19, 2023, in Edmonton.

10. Authorized the Association to enter into a memorandum of understanding with the Government of Alberta, facilitated by the Alberta Teachers' Retirement Fund Board, to implement an alternate surplus management arrangement.

11. Amended the administrative guidelines relating to procedures for known, extended and approved absences of vice-presidents.

12. Received an appeal of a decision of the Hearing Committee of the Professional Conduct Committee.

13. Amended the Standard Constitution for Convention Associations to include the Human Rights Statement.

14. Named field members to serve on the Committee to Review Summer Conference and Calgary Area Field Experiences Committee and named a representative to the Alberta Ukrainian Language Education Consortium. ■

Who's who – Provincial Executive Council members and local presidents 2023/24

TABLE OFFICERS



JASON SCHILLING
ATA President



GREG CARABINE
ATA Vice-President



PETER MacKAY
ATA Vice-President



GREG JEFFERY
ATA Past President

NORTH WEST



RHONDA KELLY
District Rep



FRED KIRBY
Fort Vermilion
Local No. 77



GENEVIEVE PAYEUR
Grande Prairie and
District Catholic Teachers
Local No. 42



JACKIE BASNETT
Greater Peace
Local No. 13



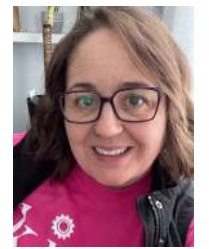
JENNIFER TAYLOR
High Prairie
Local No. 62



DEBBIE HARRIS
Northern Spirit
Local No. 6



KRISTEL LADEROUTE
Northland
Local No. 69



ASHLEIGH BARSALOU
Trumpeter
Local No. 26

CENTRAL EAST



MURRAY LALONDE
District Rep



STEPHANIE CUMBLETON
Aspen View Local No. 7



ROSS MACDONALD
Battle River Local
No. 32



SARJENKA KURLIWI
Greater St. Paul Local
No. 25



LYNNÉ VINING
Lakeland Catholic
Separate Local No. 30



KELLY MURPHY
Northern Lights
Local No. 15



BRIAN SKINNER
Park Plains East
Local No. 31

CENTRAL NORTH



RICK KREMP
District Rep



JESSIE SMEALL
Evergreen Local
No. 11



RHONDA PARENT REID
Evergreen Catholic
Local No. 44



KATRINA ZACK
Northern Gateway
Local No. 43



SARAH CRESSWELL
Parkland Teachers'
Local No. 10



MICHELLE SAVOIE
Pembina Hills Local
No. 22



KIMBERLEY NAHIRNIAK
Woodland Rivers
Local No. 40

SOUTH EAST



HEATHER McCAIG
District Rep



BRENT MEYER
Grasslands Local
No. 34



MICHAEL JERRED
Medicine Hat
Local No. 1



DEANNA BURZMINSKI
Medicine Hat Catholic
Teachers Local No. 39



MARK BREADNER
Prairie Land Local
No. 36



DANA MARSHALL
Prairie Rose Local
No. 2



MICHAEL ROBERTSON
Three Drums of
Wheat Local No. 20

SOUTH WEST



KATHERINE PRITCHARD
District Rep



JOHN TEMPLIN
Holy Spirit Catholic
Local No. 5



SEAN DUPUIS
Horizon Local No. 4



DEREK RESLER
Lethbridge Public
School Local No. 41



RON GILLESPIE
Livingstone Range
Local No. 14



NATALIE TOWNSHEND
Palliser Local No. 19



STEPHEN GIBBINGS
Westwind Local No. 12

EDMONTON DISTRICT



PAUL FROESE
District Rep



DENEEN ZIELKE
Elk Island
Local No. 28



RHONDA BOROWSKI
Elk Island Catholic
Teachers' Local No. 21



CARRYL BENNETT
Greater St. Albert
Catholic Local
No. 23



ELLEN SNAITH
St. Albert Public
Teachers' Local No. 73



JANET WESTWORTH
Sturgeon Local No. 27

EDMONTON MCMURRAY



GREG MEEKE
District Rep



JAY PROCKTOR
District Rep



CARMEN GLOSSOP
District Rep



RON ZACHARKO
Edmonton Catholic
Teachers Local No. 54



HEATHER QUINN
Edmonton Public
Teachers Local No. 37



SHANNON DUBE
Fort McMurray
Local No. 48

CENTRAL



BRENTON BAUM
District Rep



KIM ST. ANDRE
Black Gold Teachers'
Local No. 8



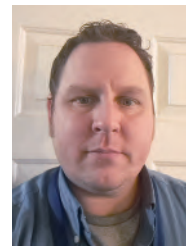
JEAN PORTER
St. Thomas Aquinas
Teachers' Local No. 45



MIKE WHEELER
Timberline Local
No. 9



STÉFANE KREINER
Association des enseignantes
et des enseignants
francophones de l'Alberta



PATRICK GRANGER
Wetaskiwin Local
No. 18

CENTRAL SOUTH



BRICE UNLAND
District Rep



SHEVERYN DESCHAMBAULT
Chinook's Edge Local
No. 17



COREY VAN ZANDBERGEN
Clearview Teachers
Local No. 33



SARA LAMBERT
Red Deer Catholic
Local No. 80



EVELYN CHAN
Red Deer City
Local No. 60



MICHAEL DOLL
Wolf Creek Local
No. 3

CALGARY DISTRICT



KAREN NAKASKA
District Rep



MONICA BULAS
Canadian Rockies
Local No. 59



CHRISTIAN SCHELL
Christ the Redeemer
(formerly Chinook)
Local No. 29



WADE WESTWORTH
Foothills Local No. 16



AMRIT RAI NANNAN
Rocky View
Local No. 35

CALGARY CITY



ALLISON SCOTT DAVIES
District Rep



KEVIN KEMPT
District Rep



DARREN MOROZ
District Rep



STEPHANI CLEMENTS
Calgary Public
Teachers Local No. 38



ALLISON MCCAFFREY
Calgary Separate
School Local No. 55

STUDENT LOCALS

KAYLEE LUONG
University of Alberta ESA, Student Local No 1

CLAIRE GILLIS
University of Calgary ESA, Student Local No 2

JORDAN GALLOWAY
Red Deer Polytechnic EUS, Student Local No 3

TAYLOR CLARK
University of Lethbridge EUS, Student Local No 4

CALLA BOREEN
Medicine Hat College EUS, Student Local No 5

JESSA CLARKSON
Concordia University ESA, Student Local No 6

AKISSI EKRA
Campus Saint-Jean EUS, Student Local No 7

FARAH HAMAD
Northwestern Polytechnic ESA, Student Local No 8

KEISHA GENDRON
Keyano College ESA, Student Local No 9

REGINALD SAN JOSE
Mount Royal University EUS, Student Local No 10

TBA
MacEwan University EUS, Student Local No 11

KATHERINE KENNEDY
Ambrose University ESA, Student Local No 12

BETHANY SNATERSE
The King's University ESA, Student Local No 13

LACEY PRICE
St. Mary's University, Student Local No 14

SPECIAL LOCALS

DEB GEROW
Alberta Retired Teachers' Association
Special Local No. 1

ATA geographic districts and locals

- Calgary City
- Calgary District
- Central
- Central East
- Central North
- Central South
- Edmonton McMurray
- Edmonton District
- North West
- South East
- South West





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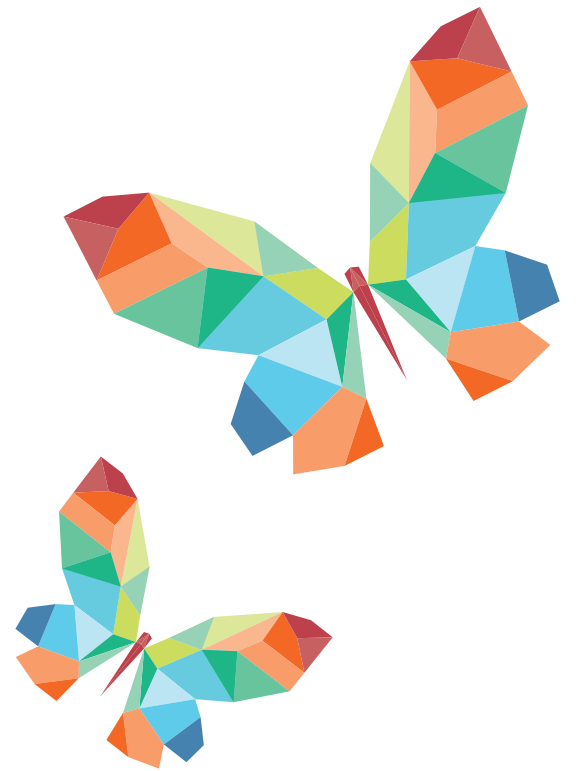
To cultivate learners with knowledge, skills, integrity, and discernment, growing in love for God and service to humanity

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- High levels of organisational and staff management skills;
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- Passionate commitment to Christian Education
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Anna Phan - Senior Consultant (Resolve Consulting Group)



SUPPLIED

Travel experience delivers challenge and reward

Change for Children an opportunity for Alberta teachers to make a difference

SUCCESS STORIES

Barb Wilkinson
Special to the ATA News

Crammed into dugout canoes piled high with boxes of supplies, covered head to toe for protection from the tropical sun, a group of Alberta teachers endures an eight-hour trek on a winding river frequented by birds, turtles and crocodiles into a remote reserve in Nicaragua.

This is a typical beginning to the Change for Children experience, which teachers describe as among the most challenging and rewarding of their careers.

"I describe the trip as opposites: beautiful and difficult," says Holly Emes, a teacher and counsellor at W.P Wagner High School in Edmonton, one of eight Alberta teachers who participated in the July trip led by the charity Change for Children in partnership with the Alberta Teachers' Association. Change for Children, based in Edmonton, has been working for almost 50 years to improve the quality of life in some of the most remote areas of the world.

The ATA paid for airfare, accommodation, transport and translation, and the teachers raised funds to help bring school supplies and their expertise to the Bosawas Reserve in northern Nicaragua. In the Indigenous territory of the Miskito, this region is home to illiteracy rates that reach 80 per cent.

"The rain forest is stunningly beautiful," says Emes. "It's like travelling back in time. There are thatched-roof huts. Kids are running around in underwear playing in the water. Women are washing clothes and dishes in the river."

The teacher brigade stayed in one village, San Andrés, for eight days, and travelled up and down the river to visit seven communities.

Five places had basic school buildings with solar power and access to a digital-learning system, while the other two had just a thatched roof and bamboo rails for a school, and the teachers had only a piece of paper and a pen.

"The kids were all equally happy," says Tara Ong-Padilla, a Spanish teacher at Springbank Community High School in the Rocky View School district west of Calgary.

"The teachers are doing the best that they can with what they have. They know knowledge is power and they are working to break the cycle of poverty."

The Alberta teachers brought a few supplies with them but bought the bulk in the capital of Managua to save shipping charges. "We put our brains together," says Ong-Padilla, to find items that were reusable and could be used in multiple ways. That included alphabet foam letters, magnifying glasses, and dry erase markers with plastic folios so that worksheets could be used over and over again.

The students were so excited when they saw the supplies and just dove straight in.

"Some had never seen a game before, such as Go Fish or doing patterns with an alphabet game," says Ong-Padilla. "We gave every school a soccer ball and that was a hit."

Despite the vast differences in circumstances, both Alberta teachers found they related to the teachers working in the rain forest.

"We have a common bond. We share the goal to make life better through education," says Ong-Padilla.

"Honestly, it was incredible to learn the general concerns were similar to ours. The issues are the same:

not enough time, can't reach all our kids, struggle to keep up with technology," says Emes. "Trying to provide a quality education, to me, that's what binds us."

This fall, the teachers shared details about their trip with their Alberta students. Emes gave a presentation to her school's Interact Rotary Club, and that group decided afterwards to fundraise for Change for Children.

Indigenous insight

Alberta students were also able to hear from Indigenous Miskito people directly, as a group of three residents of the Bosawas Reserve later visited five of the Alberta schools that had sent a teacher to Nicaragua.

These visits had a big impact on the students. "It gave the sense of someone else's culture and life," says Ong-Padilla.

"It pulls on your heart strings and helps the students see they can make a difference, maybe even if it's just locally. I think it helped pique their curiosity."

Both teachers are also grateful for the opportunity to be part of a brigade to Bosawas.

"It has lots of value, I think it's amazing," says Emes.

"It was a phenomenal experience," says Ong-Padilla. "You bring that experience back, versus just reading about it. I would do it again, for sure." ■



Applications open

Change for Children is now accepting applications for the summer of 2024. Information is available at teachers.ab.ca. The application deadline is Dec. 15.

Seasoned teacher and school leader joins ATA staff

Lindsay Yakimyshyn
ATA News Staff

A new challenge is on the horizon for principal Jeff Huculak, who will be joining the ATA's Teacher Employment Services team at Barnett House starting Jan. 1.

Huculak brings to the ATA a wealth of experience, having taught elementary and junior high and having served in school leadership roles in elementary, junior high and senior high in two school divisions.

"Growing up, I had a lot of great teachers," Huculak said. "One that stands out for me was Mr. Moores, who taught me math at Balwin Junior High School in Edmonton. He was an outstanding teacher, but an even better person. I still remember the time he showed up to one of my hockey games during Minor Hockey Week to watch me play."

Teachers like Mr. Moores (who wound up as an assistant coach with the Edmonton Oilers) inspired Huculak to become a teacher.

Huculak began his teaching career in 1998 with the Edmonton School Division after completing a bachelor of education degree (elementary education) from the University of Alberta. He spent 14 years with



Jeff Huculak, new staff officer

the division as a teacher, curriculum co-ordinator and then assistant principal. During his time with the division, he completed a diploma in secondary mathematics and a master of education degree in educational leadership.

In 2012, Huculak joined Elk Island Public School Division, where he served as both an assistant principal and principal. Rounding out his experience, Huculak also gained new insights into the profession during a secondment to the division's human resources department to assist with staffing.

After being in the profession for 26 years, Huculak is excited to take on the role of executive staff officer at the ATA to advance the interests of Alberta's teachers and students.

"As a strong advocate of public education, I'm looking forward to working with and supporting teachers across the province, ensuring Alberta students receive a high-quality education."

4 MORE THINGS about Jeff

Knowing what you know now, what advice would you give yourself in your first year as a teacher?

Welcome feedback. It's a great way to improve your practice!

What is the greatest life lesson teaching has taught you?


Take risks! Sometimes the greatest lessons we learn are from those that don't work out.

Favourite song to put you in a good mood: Anything by Jim Cuddy or The Tragically Hip.

Favourite cold-weather activity: Hockey



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NOTICES AND EVENTS

The First Page student writing challenge

The First Page is a national writing competition for students in grades 7 to 12 in Canada. Students are invited to write the first page of a novel, imagining how present-day issues and trends have played out 150 years in the future.

The 2024 challenge will be open for submissions starting in February 2024. How will the world leaders of today impact the world of tomorrow? Who will be the biggest name in pop culture in the

future? How will climate change impact the protagonist's life?

The story could be from any literary genre, from mystery or thriller to literary fiction, from adventure or romance to satire or science fiction.

Entries should include a title and can be 300 to 400 words in length. The contest is open to all Canadian residents who are full-time students enrolled in grades 7 to 12. Entries will be judged in two age categories: grades 7 to 9 and grades 10 to 12.

The winner of each category will receive a one-year subscription to OwlCrate, which delivers monthly boxes of books and literary-related items. The school library of each winner will also receive a donation of 50 books.

Online entry forms will be available at cbc.ca. Visit Curio.ca for discussion questions and writing tips from Canadian writers. Email your questions to cbcbooks@cbc.ca.



wicihtotân Let's Help Each Other

Are you interested in connecting with Indigenous teachers and school leaders from across the province, sharing your learnings and experiences, and belonging to a circle of support?

The Alberta Teachers' Association is seeking First Nations, Métis and Inuit teachers and school leaders to **join wicihtotân** and attend three gatherings throughout the school year:

December 8, 1:00 – 3:30 pm, online via Zoom

March 15, 1:00 – 3:30 pm, online via Zoom

May 25, 10:00 am – 2:00 pm, Edmonton, location TBD

To Register go to <https://surveys.teachers.ab.ca/s3/wicihtotân-Gathering-Registration-2023-24>.

Registration Deadline: November 30, 2023

For More Information

E-mail: walkingtogether@ata.ab.ca
Phone: 780-447-9400 (in Edmonton),
1-800-232-7208 (toll free in Alberta)

PD-208-2023-11



Applications are now being accepted

ATA-CHANGE FOR CHILDREN 2024 Teaching Tour

Nicaragua | July 20 to August 3, 2024

Spend two weeks in Nicaragua assisting with the professional development of fellow teachers in the areas of technology education, inclusion, climate change education, planning and quality assessment.

Collaboration on action plans and incentive strategies to promote school attendance and achievement are other components of this teaching tour, with the overall goal being to enhance the quality of education offered to the marginalized Miskito indigenous population of Nicaragua's BOSAWAS Biosphere Reserve.

Travel and living expenses are covered by the ATA. Some pre-departure supply and in-country meal costs outside of BOSAWAS will be the responsibility of the participants.

To apply, visit teachers.ab.ca

For more information, email Lorena@changeforchildren.org

► **Application Deadline: December 15, 2023**

COOR-61-18a 2023-10



SEEKING FURRY SUBMISSIONS!

The ATA News is seeking entries for Teacher's Pet, which profiles teachers' furry, feathered or even scaled friends.

If you have a cuddly companion that you'd like to share with your colleagues, please send us a picture, along with the following required information:

- Your name, grade, school and the subject(s) you teach
- Your pet's name and breed

Also, please answer these two questions:

- 1) What makes your pet special?
- 2) How does your pet help you in your profession?

A selection of entries will be published in an upcoming issue of the *ATA News*.

Please email your submissions to cory.hare@ata.ab.ca.

DEADLINE: DEC. 12



DIGITAL NEWS

The ATA News is available in a digital format.

For the latest issue, visit www.teachers.ab.ca/news.
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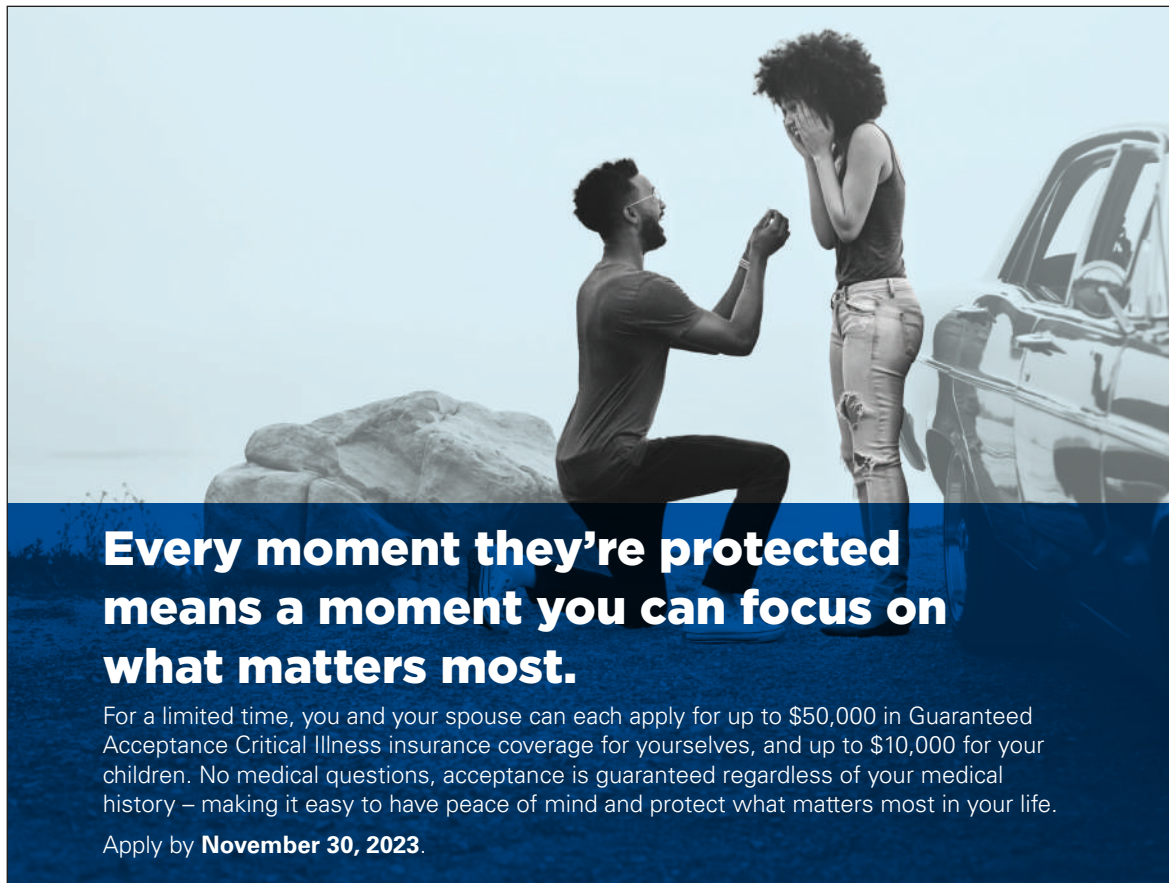


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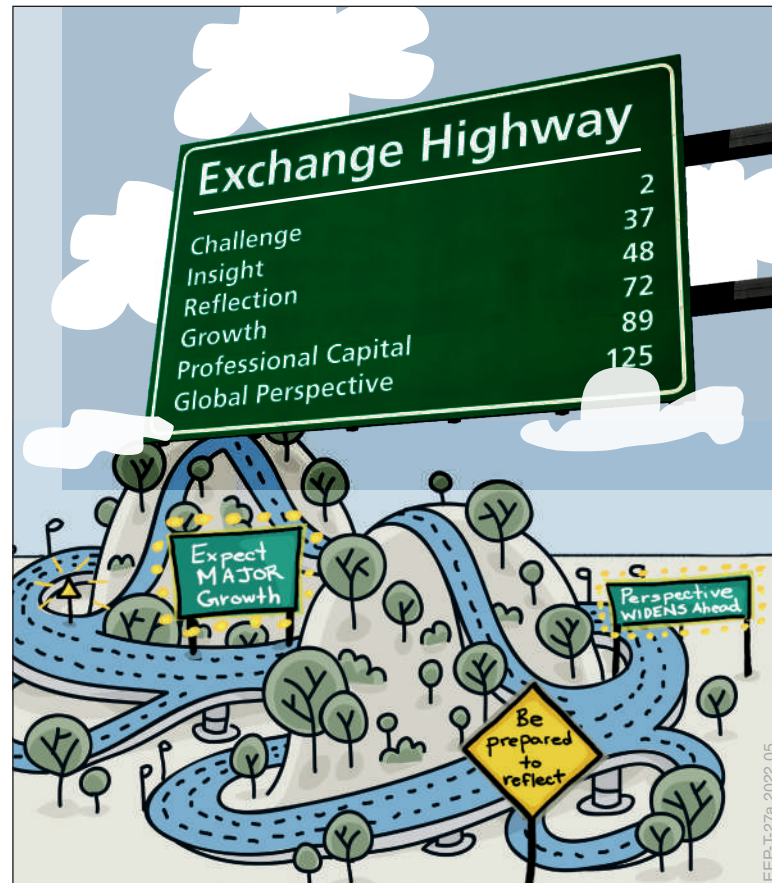
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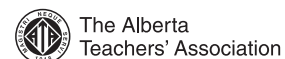


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Lorne Schmidt, TIS Head of School



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Ryan Connolly, TIS High School Vice-Principal

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ZEEES 'n ZUPPA

Teachers offer suggestions for seasonal comfort

Given that cold and flu season is now upon us, what is your trusted remedy or comfort when sniffles and chills strike?

I am Italian: pastina al brodo ... my nonna's soup.

– Rosa Bianca

Bee propolis is my go to for the first hint of a sore throat. I drink plenty of warm liquids and use oil of oregano when it gets bad. There's no substitute for lots of sleep and rest.

– Christine Gonkowicz

Salt 'n vinegar chips for a sore throat!!

– Amy Lyn MacDonald

Elderberry syrup!

– Meaghan Storey

In my house we chop up lemons and boil them. Then mix the liquid with some honey and drink up!

Whenever my husband and I are feeling ill, we keep a pot of "mojo water" on the stove for sipping throughout the day and evening.

– Jennifer Eileen

Ginger extract with honey.

– Fezza Ahmad

Essential oils and many cups of hot tea.

– Shelley Comfort

When I'm tired I don't worry about what time it is — I hit the hay. I also have a stash of tea and honey.

– Laurie Jean

Sleep ... haha ... it's the only thing that truly helps.

– Jen Wrobel

Allowing the dogs up on my bed to snuggle.

– Rishma Khakoo