

Special Edition

A Newsletter for Specialist Council Executive Members

Volume 3:3 April 2014

Curriculum Redesign and Specialist Councils: Finding a Natural Fit



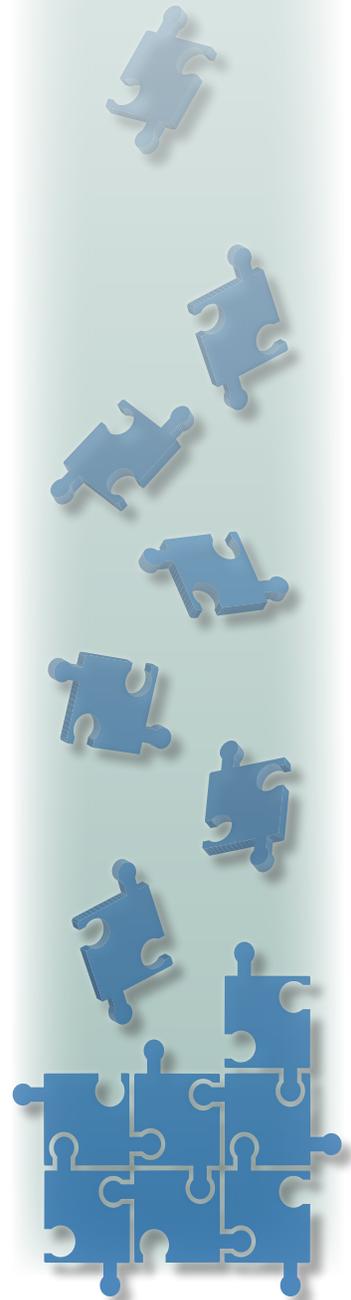
Gaylene Schreiber

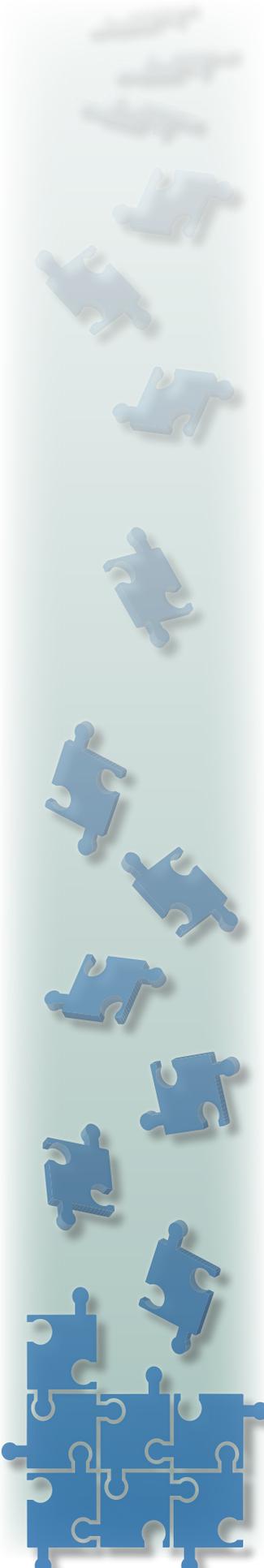
Executive Staff Officer,
Professional Development

A specialist council is by its very nature organized by and for teachers who have common curricular interests, so it is natural that ATA specialist councils and their members have long filled key roles in curriculum change and renewal. Alberta Education's recent curriculum redesign processes and approaches have diverged from past curriculum renewal practice, so it is imperative that specialist councils prepare to influence the curriculum redesign process as it unfolds. In this way, specialist councils, the authoritative voice of the profession on subject/discipline-specific matters, will be poised to participate in new and creative ways as well as in familiar ways.

Start by ensuring that members see their council as a source of timely information on matters of curriculum. Send web links to curriculum redesign updates as they are posted by Alberta Education to your council membership. Alternatively, you could post links to resources on your website. A good rule of thumb is to directly (but sparingly!) e-mail items that are time specific. Post to your website the communications and resources that are enduring. Curriculum redesign update newsletters and other information are available at www.education.alberta.ca/departement/ipr/curriculum.aspx.

Ensure that your council has current information about prototyping and the draft "anchor" documents that support prototyping, such as literacy and numeracy benchmarks, competency indicators, and subject essence statements. These documents are currently in draft form and subject to change before becoming finalized documents. Make sure your members understand changes to provincial assessments and the move toward digitization of curriculum, assessments and resources. It is essential that your members turn to their specialist council for thoughtful exploration of





these professional matters, particularly in a milieu where popular media is active on educational topics. Teachers need to develop a thoughtful stand that is well informed beyond the vagaries of provocative headline news. To access the Association's Declaration of Key Principles on Curriculum, go to www.teachers.ab.ca/News%20Room/WebExtras/Pages/ATA-Declaration.aspx.

When your membership has a good general understanding of aspects of curriculum redesign, consider how you will collect their input to council stances on a topic. Host online conversations on curriculum topics and ensure that each topic flourishes by assigning an executive member or member at large to add to and reply to posts. Sponsor regional events focused on topics related to curriculum redesign. For example, it would be fascinating for the Early Childhood Education Council to hold a discussion titled "Infusing Competencies with Developmental Appropriateness in Mind." Council members may want to explore the competency indicators to determine how competencies might be assessed within a subject area (see *Curriculum Development Prototyping Guide* appendices for more information, at www.education.alberta.ca/departments/ipr/curriculum/curriculum-development-prototyping.aspx). The English Language Arts and Math councils may want to provide a response to the draft literacy and numeracy benchmarks. As literacy and numeracy skills are to be taught across curricula, there are new opportunities for councils to partner in these topics. There are practical questions of awareness that specific councils are well positioned to consider. For example, how will outreach

educators assess competencies, especially in programs that do not have a mandatory requirement component for students? What can Fine Arts Council members contribute to the broader conversation about assessing creativity? What can the FMNI Education Council contribute about culturally sensitive exploration of competencies with Aboriginal students? What can the Educational Technology Council and Alberta School Library Council contribute to our broad understanding of digital citizenship and trends in youth reading and information engagement? The time has never been better for cross-council dialogue and collaboration.

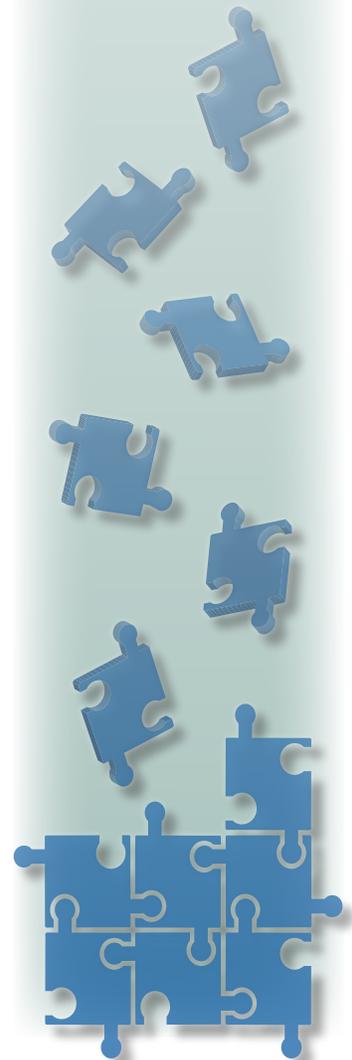
Accessing timely information and sponsoring professional dialogue are necessary antecedents to advocacy. It is not possible for a council to effectively advocate for a position unless the executive has created venues for positions to be explored and articulated by the membership. If your council is considering engaging in the writing of a letter or paper that takes a position, you may wish to access assistance in determining the "sweet spot" in your timing. Sometimes advocacy is best done upon receipt of the first information, so as to effectively shape discourse from the onset. Sometimes it is more effective to wait until later stages. You don't want to respond early only to have your voice and momentum lost as the debate continues ad infinitum. Discuss any advocacy plans with your staff advisor early, and consult with Barnett House staff active on the curriculum file to get advice on how to hit that advocacy "sweet spot."

Encourage curriculum leadership. Annually, encourage your members to apply to the ATA Curriculum

and Student Evaluation Name Bank (the application form is available online at www.teachers.ab.ca)—appointments to provincial-level curriculum committees are made from this name bank. Encourage leadership in your executive: ensure that your council is represented at Summer Conference leadership seminars; Fall and Spring PDAC; the Presidents, Editors, Webmasters and Treasurers seminars; the Annual Representative Assembly; and other leadership events sponsored by the Alberta Teachers’

Association. These are opportunities for you to gather information and influence the direction of education in Alberta.

We live in the proverbial “interesting times” referenced by Robert Kennedy at Cape Town in June of 1966. As he stated, “They are times of danger and uncertainty; but they are also the most creative of any time ...” I am optimistic that there is tremendous potential for teachers who wish to contribute to the building and shaping of new curricula.



Collaboration and File Sharing on the Internet



Gregory J Romaniuk
Information and
Technology Services

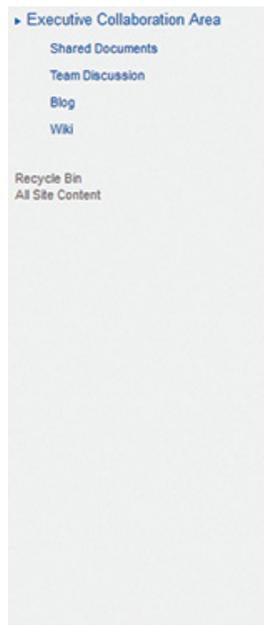
The Association provides a variety of online services for specialist councils and its other subgroups. Many councils already use Association-hosted online services to publish websites; however, are you aware that the Association also provides a cloud service within our collaboration sites? A council can store many types of files within a collaboration site, including Word documents, Excel spreadsheets, PowerPoint presentations and PDFs.

Access to the collaboration site files is configured and managed by your council's web manager. The council may choose to make files available to its entire membership or restrict access to specific members. As well, the council may determine whether a member has access to both edit and read a file, or simply to read it. There is no need to learn a new account ID

and password, as collaboration sites are a component of ATA Online Services—members use their existing ATA account to gain access.

Collaboration sites are available to all Association subgroups, even those that do not use ATA-hosted services to publish a public website. If you are interested in learning more about the collaboration services available to your council, or if you would like to discuss new ways to leverage your existing collaboration space, please contact Gregory Romaniuk of ATA Information and Technology Services.

Questions? Please feel free to contact Gregory Romaniuk, by e-mail to greg.romaniuk@ata.ab.ca or by telephone at 780-447-9415 (Edmonton and area) or 1-800-232-7208, ext 415 (toll free in Alberta).



Welcome to your collaboration site!

Use this collaboration space to share documents and discuss events. Get the discussion started by going to the [Team Discussion!](#)

Shared Documents

<input type="checkbox"/>	Type	Name	Modified	Modified By
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There are no items to show in this view of the "Shared Documents" document library. To add a new item, click "New" or "Upload".

[Add document](#)

Team Discussion

<input type="checkbox"/>	Subject	Created By	Replies	Last Updated
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There are no items to show in this view of the "Team Discussion" discussion board. To add a new item, click "New".

[Add new discussion](#)



ATA Tweets

Alberta Teachers Asn Grants available to help develop skills & inclusive behaviour among students, staff & the community. Apply by April 30 <http://t.co/ZspoSjYSuF>
Posted at 4/10/2014 8:44:05 PM
[Reply](#) [Retweet](#) [Favorite](#)

Alberta Teachers Asn @HicSuntDraconis @630CHED - it was an error. Retweet has been removed.
Posted at 4/10/2014 8:40:49 PM
[Reply](#) [Retweet](#) [Favorite](#)

Alberta Teachers Asn @CarcelMousineau - that was an error. Thanks for picking up on it.
Posted at 4/10/2014 8:40:19 PM
[Reply](#) [Retweet](#) [Favorite](#)

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Budget Schmudget, Year-End Schmearend



Didi Heer

Accountant, Subgroup Services

Here are some timely reminders and advice to help you prepare for fiscal year-end reporting and getting started with the new fiscal year. We want to make sure that your year-end reporting and new year go smoothly, free of money worries and filled with exciting treasurer adventures.

1. Finalizing 2013/14 conference books. Accounting for fall conferences should have been wrapped up—or close to it—by the conference treasurers. Provincial council executives should already have received an update about financial results for the conference. As you know, the Association provides year-end audit for council and conference books. The conference books should be forwarded to my office as soon as possible to help us get started with

the year-end audit. The conference information is consolidated in the council financial statements. The conference is a material event for the purpose of year-end reporting, so we cannot close the council books and sign off on the financial reports if this information is missing. I will send out personal reminders to council treasurers soon to provide details on the year-end information we require. In the meantime, it would really be helpful if you could remind the conference folks to forward the conference books to my office.

For councils with a 2014 spring conference, the financial information must be included in the 2013/14 year-end report. We require the books by August 31. Again, it would be helpful if you remind the conference committee of the requirements.

2. 2014/15 budget. As the current year draws to a close, you should be thinking about preparing the budget for the coming fiscal year so that the council executive has time to formulate a meaningful budget before the summer break. By the time September rolls around, everyone is so busy with the new school year and planning for the fall conference that the budget is sometimes rushed through just before the AGM. For councils with surplus greater than the required amount pursuant to the 2010 ARA resolution, there is even more incentive to ensure that due consideration is given to financial planning. You are in year four (fiscal life cycle, not dog years!) of council's financial strategy to make that surplus work for you and to comply with the resolution. Not sure what I am talking about? Please call me—I will give you my special attention. The surplus projection, also known as financial target and use of cash, is an



integral part of the budget and should be disclosed in the budget document. If you need help with calculation of accumulated surplus, please call me.

Want some magical tools for a quick and easy way to prepare a budget template? We have an app for that. Well, it's actually QuickBooks and *you* have it! Do you know that you can mine your QuickBooks for historical data to prepare budget assumptions based on prior year actuals? What is even more fun is that it takes only nanominutes to call up the information and transfer it to a budget spreadsheet. You can slice, dice, analyze and make it all look

pretty to boot without spending hours on your computer on a beautiful Sunday afternoon. Didn't I say stress and worry free?

Finally, for those looking for conference information for budgeting purposes, we have the historical data for each council as well. Last year at the summer conference, we compiled these in a table format by comparative years so that the conference directors have information available to draw from and do not have to reinvent the wheel. Generally, the council executive must approve the conference budget before any seed money is advanced for the conference.



Teachers' Convention Membership Initiative



Cheryl O'Brien
Administrative Officer,
Professional Development

For the third consecutive year, in an effort to increase the profile of specialist council programs and services at teachers' conventions, one table per convention was provided at no cost for specialist council use. As a result of this initiative, specialist councils registered a total of 157 new members.

Combined with the 2011 evergreening initiative in which annual no-cost memberships no longer expire, this collaboration has been advantageous to all specialist councils. In addition, the specialist council booths at teachers' conventions provide an invaluable opportunity to make new contacts with teachers and publicize the support and services provided by specialist councils. This process will be reviewed with

specialist council presidents at Summer Conference to identify the strengths of the process and solicit input for potential solutions to any identified areas of concern.

Specialist Council Membership Initiative—2014 Teachers' Conventions							
Total Processed 157	ASLC -	CTSC 9	LCF 5	CSL 7	ECEC 35	ETC 4	ESLC 5
	ELAC 13	FAC 13	FNMI 4	GEOEC 3	GC 4	HPEC 7	MC 10
	MYC 3	OEC 1	RMEC 1	SC 8	SLIC 5	SSC 8	SEC 12



Your Conferences and Corporate Social Responsibility



Leanne Calderwood
Director,
Global Accounts,
HelmsBriscoe

According to an economic impact study performed on behalf of Meeting Professionals International Foundation Canada, the meetings and events industry generates approximately \$35 billion annually in gross domestic product. This is the consumption of goods and services typically outside our own homes and outside our control when it comes to social responsibility.

There's been a lot of buzz about green meetings and creating a more environmentally friendly setting when we meet in groups. Here are some ways that we can be more responsible with our meeting choices:

- **Local destination**—Choose a location that is closer to the bulk of your delegates, reducing auto and airline emissions.
- **Clean the World**—this brilliant program takes the partially used

soaps from hotels and sends them to countries that need them. For information, visit www.cleanttheworld.org.

- **New hotel and convention centre builds to LEED certification**—Some new builds are taking CSR very seriously and building green strategies right into the construction of the building. Heating and air conditioning systems are the biggest culprits of energy consumers.
- **Water pitchers**—Request pitchers of water with glasses or water stations, as opposed to pre-pouring glasses of water for each place setting.
- **Cutlery**—Using stainless steel cutlery and washing it is actually more responsible than using plastic cutlery and throwing it away! Same with using linen napkins versus throwing away paper ones. However, some cutlery is now made of bamboo and other recyclable materials.
- **Food program**—Some hotels are sending their leftovers to local homeless shelters.
- **Food recycling**—Some facilities are preparing foods in a way that make them compostable versus throwing it in the garbage. When serving salad, have dressing on the side or in separate jugs, making uneaten green salad easier to compost.
- **Paperless event**—Try your hand at a social media marketing campaign, and do away with handouts at the conference by using electronic documents and thumb drives. Creating mobile apps for conferences is becoming easier and less expensive; you can disseminate most of your information through an app!

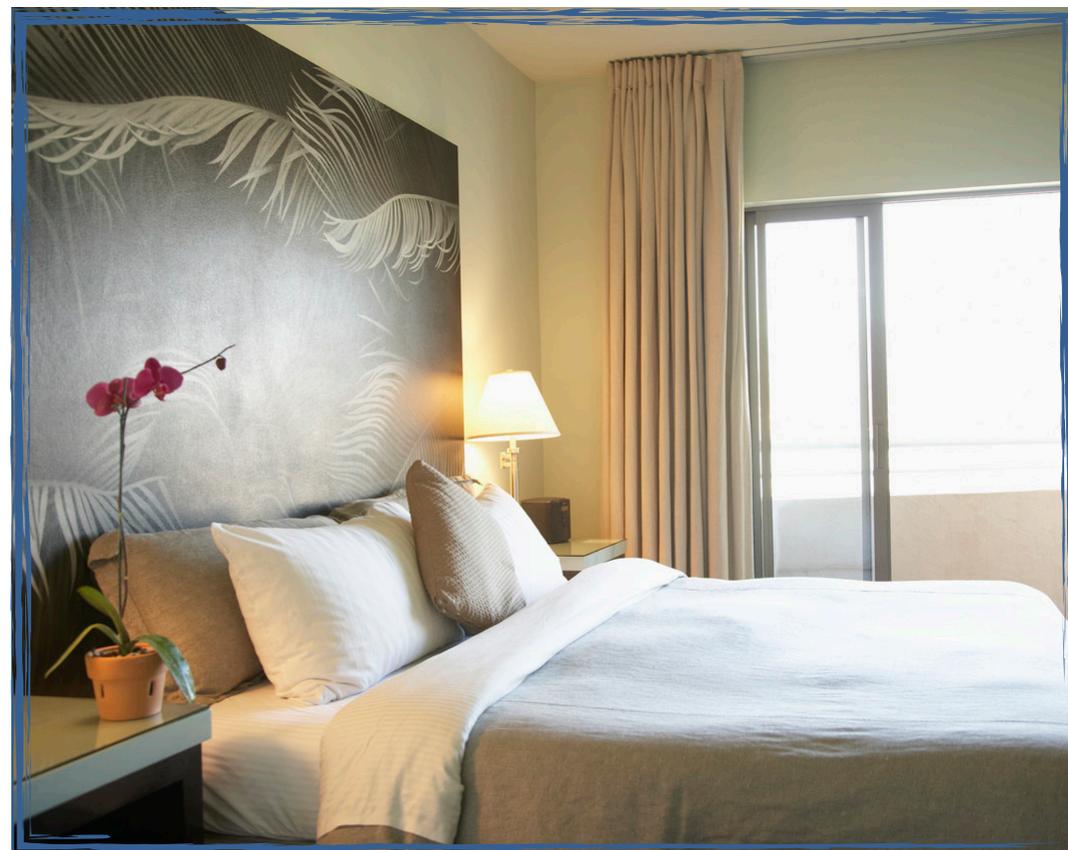


There are lots of resources out there to assist with your green meetings goals. Helping councils with your green objectives is a big part of our role at HelmsBriscoe. If you have any questions at all about this critical part of the meeting planning process, I'm here to help.

All the best to you and your team on your 2014 meetings!

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HelmsBriscoe helps specialist councils find and contract with hotels that will suit their needs for their conferences and meetings.



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