

LEADERSHIP UPDATE

Volume 14

A publication for Alberta's school administrators

Number 4



Spring Greetings, Everyone!

This issue of the *Leadership Update* contains valuable information to support you in the work that you do and to inform you of some ways you can access very high-quality professional learning activities for school leaders in Alberta throughout the year.

Professional Learning Opportunities and News

To obtain information about upcoming professional learning events and programs for school leaders and central office teachers and leaders, you need only remember www.uLead.ca to access up-to-date news about school leadership in Alberta, provincial and regional professional learning events, and the uLead conference that takes place every year. The next uLead conference will take place May 12–14 in Banff. The call for proposals for uLead 2019 has already opened and registrations will open at the end of May 2018. Please visit uLead.ca on a regular basis as the events and news will change frequently.

Supporting Your Professional Learning and Preparing You to Serve in Roles Within the Leadership Quality Standard

At every level within the teaching profession, teachers, school leaders and superintendents need foundational and ongoing programs that support their professional learning needs and prepare them to serve in the various roles within the profession addressed by the new Professional Practice Standards for the Teaching Profession. Several critical elements are needed for these programs to be successful. It is essential that such programs prioritize the capacity of school leaders to lead teacher learning, for example. It is also essential that such programs arise from a deep and meaningful partnership with the profession, if they are to be successful. A recent groundbreaking study that is recommended

The focus of leadership policies should be to equip leaders with the practices and priorities to develop teacher capabilities, so that teachers can promote student learning more effectively. A commitment to partnering with the profession supports a sustainable approach, where standards or certifications are not merely enforced as a matter of compliance, but owned, led and upheld by members of the profession themselves.

Simon Breakspear

To find archived issues of *Leadership Update*, go to www.teachers.ab.ca and click on News and Info > Publications > School Administrators.

Feedback is welcome. Please contact Jeff Johnson, executive staff officer, Professional Development, at jeff.johnson@ata.ab.ca.



Council for
School Leadership

reading for all central office teachers and leaders, school leaders and aspiring school leaders in Alberta addresses many interesting questions around how education systems might best develop the next generation of school leaders and support the work that they do. It underscores five key elements of leadership preparation programs in order to ensure their success:

Element 1: Pursue a coherent, systemwide approach.

Element 2: Look beyond principal preparation and focus on developing leadership capabilities and practices throughout each school.

Element 3: Prioritize the capacity of the school and system leaders to lead teacher learning.

Element 4: Value embedded leadership experiences. This element supports a shift from thinking in terms of one-off leadership preparation programs toward designing

approaches to leadership development that are ongoing and job embedded.

Element 5: Partner with the profession.

This element underscores that leadership development is not something that can be “done to” the profession but needs to involve deep partnership and co-creation with educators, as they are the ones who must own and drive ongoing leadership development.

The study, “Developing Agile Leaders of Learning: School Leadership Policy for Dynamic Times,” has been recognized and acclaimed around the world. It is well worth reading and is freely available at www.wise-qatar.org/sites/default/files/rr.7.2017_wise-learnlabs.pdf.

Educational Leadership Academy

Each year in August, the Alberta Teachers’ Association hosts the Educational Leadership Academy (ELA) with a group of 30 to 100 school leaders. Group size will vary based on the number of people who register for the event.

This year, the academy will take place in Edmonton from the evening of Monday, August 6, to midday Friday, August 10.

This year’s ELA will be a pedagogy- and technology-focused, EdCamp-style event. The event will be held in an innovative school in Edmonton, and will feature Rebecca Hare leading conversations on classroom and learning space design, as well as offering clinics to school leaders who want to be actively coached on specific spaces. A wide range of workshops and conversations will also be offered, as well as a

variety of state-of-the-art technology tools for the delegates to work with throughout the event. Those interested in getting involved in the ATA Agile Schools Network will also be able to enjoy several Foundations of Learning Sprints workshops. The design will be something along the lines of EduCon 2018 (<http://2018.educon.org/>) and will also include sessions to support school leaders in the new standards.

If you are interested in hosting a workshop or conversation at the 2018 Educational Leadership Academy, please respond by June 20 to the call for proposals at tinyurl.com/ELA-2018-CALL.

To register for the Educational Leadership Academy, please visit <https://event-wizard.com/events/ELA2018/>.

Distinguished Leadership Awards

The Council for School Leadership is pleased to invite nominations from throughout Alberta for the CSL Alberta Distinguished Leadership Awards, with recipients being honoured in May 2019.

The CSL Distinguished Leadership Awards creates a learning community of outstanding principals throughout Alberta who can share professionally, interact collegially and act as mentors to new colleagues to provide avenues for research and the sharing of best practices. The team of distinguished Alberta school leaders are people who are looking to challenge the status quo, improve learning in their contexts and be equipped for higher levels of leadership. These individuals will become role models in a vibrant network of educational leaders with the confidence and capabilities to lead innovative change for 21st-century learning—the Council for School Leadership.

Please consider nominating a deserving school leader for consideration for this honour by clicking on the following link and completing your nomination online: <http://tinyurl.com/CSL-Leadership>. The deadline for nominations is midnight, March 31, 2019. All nominees must be active members of the Council for School Leadership to be eligible to receive the award. The information in the sidebar will help you to complete the nomination form.

What will I need to do?

You will be asked to make a short comment related to your nominee's leadership in each of Alberta's Principal Quality Practice Leadership dimensions.

You will be asked to provide an indication that your nominee has consented to being nominated (required) and provide the nominee's school name, school telephone number and e-mail address. Your nominee must be a member of the Council for School Leadership to be eligible to receive the award. Nominees can join the CSL at any time at tinyurl.com/JOIN-CSL.

You will then be asked to enter your supporting evidence (several sentences) for your nominee's leadership for each of Alberta's Principal Quality Practice Competencies:

- Fostering effective leadership
- Embodying visionary leadership
- Leading a learning community
- Providing instructional leadership
- Developing and facilitating leadership
- Managing school operations and resources
- Understanding and responding to the larger societal context

Detailed information about the Principal Quality Practice Competencies can be found at tinyurl.com/PQPCOMPETENCY.

You will also be asked to describe a promising practice in leadership that your nominee, if selected to receive the award, would be prepared to share at a Council for School Leadership professional learning event in the following year.

Prior to submitting the survey you will also have an opportunity to enter additional comments regarding the nominee, should you wish to do so. Please consider nominating a worthy candidate today.

There's More Than One Path to the Final Grade

Sherry Bennett
Executive Director, Alberta
Assessment Consortium (AAC)

Do you ever wonder just how much evidence of student learning is needed in order to make an accurate judgment of student performance?

Do our grade books sometimes contain more evidence of what students have not learned than what they have learned?

The quest for greater accuracy may not lie in collecting more marks, or in applying the “right” arithmetic calculations, but rather through exercising professional judgment with the marks teachers *have* already collected.

Gordon Thomas (2014), recently retired as the executive secretary of the Alberta Teachers' Association, shared an experience he had in an undergraduate English course. The mark awarded on the first assignment indicated that improvement was needed. Through Thomas's conversations with his professor, Bill Latta, and intentional work on his part, his improvement over the term was steady and strong. In spite of lower marks at the beginning of the term, he was surprised to learn that he had received an A as the final mark. Thomas wrote the following as he reflected on a final conversation he had with his professor.

I started with a C- and ended with a solid A. Dr Latta said he chose the latter because it most fairly represented my skills at the end of the course. I had learned so very much and that's what counted—each student was there to learn. ... In my

days as a classroom teacher, I proudly applied Dr Latta's approach and exercised professional judgment in my assessment of student learning. A final mark wasn't an arithmetic endeavour—it was an exercise in professional judgment. Like Dr Latta, I tried not to hold students' learning against them. It's very much at the centre of professional judgment.

Professional judgment impacts all aspects of the planning, teaching, learning and assessment process. As you head into preparations for the final reporting period, have some conversations with your colleagues about the role of professional judgment. Consider the following questions as you review the body of evidence of student learning that you have collected for each of your students.

- Has student skill development improved over the course of the term? If so, could some of the earlier marks be eliminated so that the marks reflect the most recent and/or consistent level of student performance?
- Are students struggling with a particular test format? If so, could they be given an opportunity to demonstrate their learning through a different format? If the applicable learning outcomes do not specify a particular response format, it may be totally appropriate to differentiate for students in this way.
- When students do not perform as well as expected, might a conversation with the

student help determine the reason for the inconsistency?

- Are there opportunities for year-end review that could be done through student collaboration rather than by collecting even more marks? Does an assignment need to be marked in order for it to have value?
- Are there multiple pieces of evidence that confirm a pattern of student performance? If not, might additional evidence be required in order to make the final judgment?

An indicator within the new Teaching Quality Standard states that teachers apply “student assessment and evaluation practices that ... support the use of reasoned judgment about the evidence used to determine and report the level of student learning.” Professional judgment doesn't mean teachers are “inflating” the marks. Professional judgment is about seeking to make the most accurate judgment possible based on the evidence of learning available and, when evidence is lacking, determining what further evidence is required in order to make a professional judgment.

So this June, don't let your electronic grade book have the last word—or the

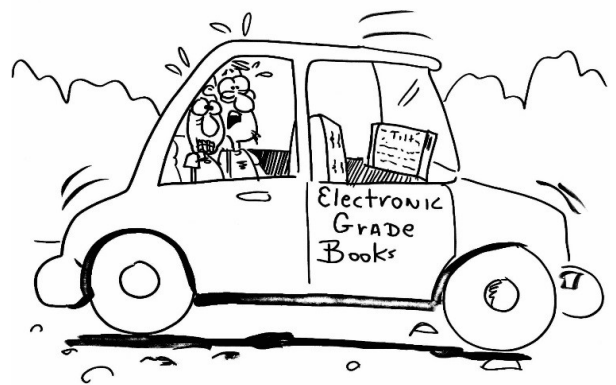


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last number! And also, consider asking for advice from a trusted colleague when you are wondering about how to report student performance on that all-important final report card.

Bibliography

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Bennett, S, and A Mulgrew. 2018. *Assessment Conversations: Engaging with Colleagues to Support Student Learning*. Edmonton, Alta: Alberta Assessment Consortium.

O'Connor, K. 2012. *Fifteen Fixes for Broken Grades: A Repair Kit*. Don Mills, Ont: Pearson Canada.

Thomas, G. 2014. "The Secretary Reports: Remember Professional Judgment?" *ATA Magazine* 94, no 3(March 27).

Please note: the Alberta Assessment Consortium (www.aac.ab.ca) has a growing number of resources on the topic of professional judgment. Search for Burning Questions under the Learn tab.

uLead Conference, May 11–15, 2019

A unique opportunity awaits. Join educational leaders from around the world in the beautiful world heritage location of Banff, Alberta, at one of the world's foremost professional learning events for school-based leaders, district-level leaders, and provincial and state education leaders. uLead 2019 is sponsored by the Council for School Leadership, a specialist council of the Alberta Teachers' Association. We expect 1,000 delegates, including principals, assistant principals, district leaders, education ministry representatives and national ministers of education from around the world, to attend.

Join us in May 2019 at the Banff Springs Hotel for an exchange of ideas

with the world's leaders in education in a setting that has been called the jewel of the Rockies. A wide array of world-class keynote speakers will animate the dialogue of those attending, and there will be myriad opportunities for spouses and family members to explore one of the most pristine wilderness areas in the world during the conference.

Registration for uLead 2019 for Alberta delegates will open at the beginning of June 2018. Super-early-bird discounts are available for those registering prior to October 15, 2018. Early-bird discounts will continue to be available for those registering prior to the end of December 2018. Find out more at www.ulead.ca.



uLead 2019 Call for Proposals: Reimagining School Leadership

Do you have a school leadership story to share with colleagues from around the world? Planning for uLead 2019 has already begun, and we are now calling for proposals for both English- and French-language sessions. The theme for uLead 2019 is "Reimagining School Leadership" and it will seek to prompt attending delegates to think about the role of the school leader in leading teacher learning. Particular emphasis will be given to examining the role of the school leader in helping to improve teacher capacity, both individually and collectively, as the core capability of a leader of learning, whether as a school principal, a teacher leader or a central office leader. The resulting conversation will range from how leaders support

teachers in continually enhancing their teaching practices to how those leaders can design and lead professional learning approaches to have a positive effect on student outcomes and ensure a vibrant public education system in the future.

You are invited to submit a proposal to offer a presentation at uLead 2019.

We would love to have you share your Alberta leadership story with the world. Please visit tinyurl.com/PRESENT-AT-ULEAD19 to submit your proposal by the end of September 2018.



Leadership Symposia

Support for Implementation of the Professional Practice Standards for the Teaching Profession

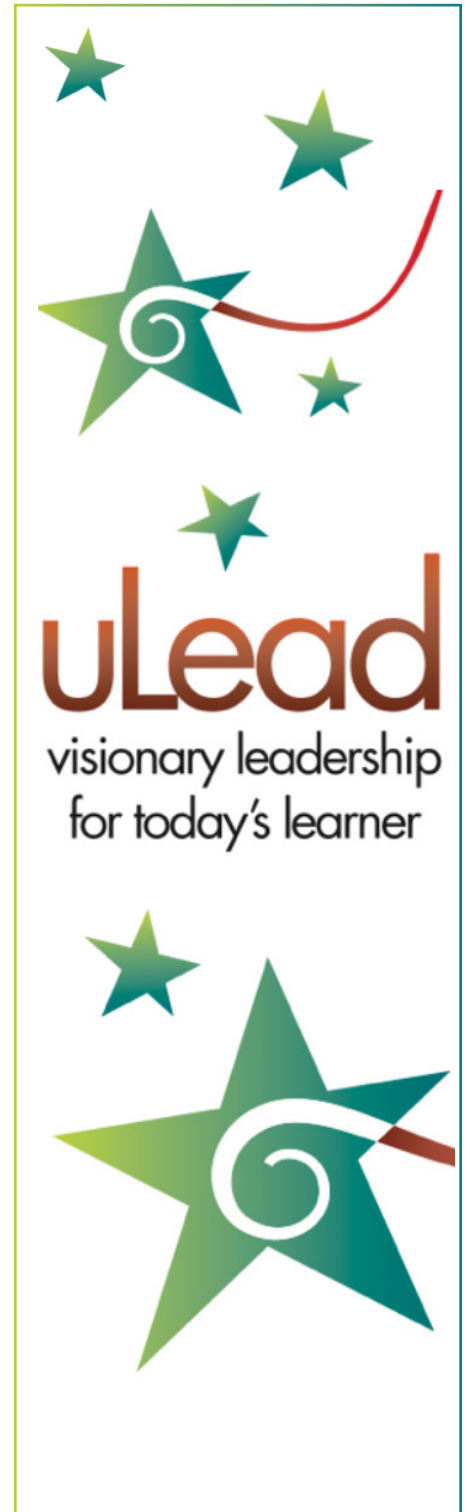
We are excited to share that this October and November a series of full-day symposia will be offered across the province related to the principal's role in supporting the implementation of the Teaching Quality Standard. Related sessions on inclusive education and assessment will also be offered, and all delegates will leave the day with a detailed and highly useful set of resources to support their leadership roles in their own school communities. As we move forward to prepare to adopt all three of the professional practice standards for the teaching profession in Alberta, you won't want to miss this opportunity. Dates for these events in October and November will be announced in June.

Leadership Essentials for Administrators: November 19–21

We are pleased to share that the annual LEA Conference (Leadership Essentials for Administrators) will take place in Edmonton at the Fantasyland Hotel November 19–21. This is an annual event for school leaders (principals or assistant principals) serving in their first five years in the role and for administrators who have recently moved to Alberta from outside of the province. The LEA Conference is a strong support to new school leaders in Alberta and will feature many concurrent sessions to assist those attending in their roles. Further information about this event will be available in early September.

International Education Exchange Program

Short-term administrator exchanges are available as two-week job shadow experiences for Alberta school leaders. Participants are billeted by their exchange counterpart and work shadow in their exchange partner's school for one to two weeks. They then host their counterpart for one to two weeks so they can experience the Alberta education system. Administrators arrange cultural visits to correspond with the interests of both parties. Opportunities exist in Australia, Germany, Spain, Denmark and the United Kingdom. Exchanges overseas occur during the summer months, and counterparts are hosted in Alberta in September or October. Participants require an Alberta Permanent Professional Teaching Certificate and the approval of their superintendent. For a successful, engaging experience, participants should be flexible, adaptable, positive, open to other cultures and comfortable with ambiguity. They should also have demonstrated leadership qualities. Interested? Find out more at www.ieep.ca.



Great Sources of News for School Leaders

Are you searching for interesting articles and ideas about school leadership? You will find some very timely articles in a range of school leadership publications that are available online.

European School Heads Association (ESHA) Magazine is published regularly throughout the year and contains articles that highlight issues Alberta school leaders share with their European colleagues. The most recent issue contains interesting discussions about cyberbullying and school leadership including parents and children. Download it for free at www.esha.org/eshamagazine/.

Principal is an award-winning magazine written specifically for K–8 principals and published by the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP). This month's preview features great articles about mentorship and coaching. Find it at www.naesp.org/principal-mayjune-2018-plns-mentoring-connections/principal-mayjune-2018-plns-mentoring-connections.

You may also wish to check out their blog, The Principal's Office, which is full of great tips for school leaders, at www.naesp.org/front-page-blog-archive.

Principal Leadership is a publication of the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) that focuses on school leaders' real needs, offering them practical, hands-on strategies for improving their schools in a constantly evolving educational environment. The latest issue features articles about school leadership and technology: www.nassp.org/2018/05/09/principal-leadership-may-2018/.

The Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) has a massive, searchable and free collection of scholarly research materials on school leadership. Access AITSL's comprehensive archive at www.aitsl.edu.au/school-leadership-ecollection.

ATA Agile Schools Network: School leaders and classroom teachers involved over the past two years in the ATA Agile Schools Network have found the impact of the ideas and strategies they have learned through the network to be transformative. The tools and processes for engaging in the learning sprints that the network members have been working with are freely available online. Find out more at www.agileschools.com/learn/.

iTunes U—Alberta Teachers on iTunes U: Each month, new courses and materials are added to the Alberta Teachers on iTunes U site at tinyurl.com/ATAiTunes. Currently, a range of new courses on Alberta's School Leader Standards are being added to the site.

Alberta Teachers on iTunes U

This month we highlight several new courses to support leadership for inclusive education:

- Winning Strategies for Struggling Students
- Differentiated Instruction: Leveraging Learning Preferences
- Addressing Learning Disabilities in the Inclusive Classroom

These are well worth subscribing to and are full of good ideas that principals and assistant principals should consider regarding their leadership work in this area. They will also be of value to all Alberta classroom teachers. The courses provide an opportunity to look in depth at best practices for inclusive education within the Alberta context. Watch for a variety of new courses over the summer to support you in your leadership role. To access the site, please visit tinyurl.com/ATAiTunes or scan the QR code on this page.



Council for School Leadership

As an Alberta school principal, an assistant principal or a central office teacher, you are encouraged to select the Council for School Leadership as your automatically renewing specialist council. It is custom-made for school leaders and aspiring school leaders. Membership in this ATA specialist council will be increasingly valuable with the advent of new professional learning standards for the teaching profession in Alberta. The Leadership Quality Standard will apply to all principals and school jurisdiction leaders, including central office teachers. In short, it will apply to all leaders employed in a school authority. The Council for School Leadership will provide you with valuable professional learning opportunities related to your leadership needs, no matter what your specific role might be.

If you are not already a member of the Council for School Leadership, please take a moment today to follow this link, tinyurl.com/JOIN-CSL, and join this school leadership specialist council.

