

LEADERSHIP UPDATE

Volume 18

A publication for Alberta's school leaders

Number 1

For the Leadership Team

Jason Schilling, President

Leadership is not easy. One is pulled in many directions throughout the course of the day, with demands and challenges that often seem overwhelming. So why do it? This is a complex question with many possible responses, but I like to think that with overcoming challenge comes great reward. Throughout my career, I have simply tried to make a difference in the lives of my students, my colleagues and public education. Some days I am more successful than others, but a less successful day does not mean that I stop trying.

I want you to know that as a school leader, you are a respected member of your school and a valued member of the Alberta Teachers' Association.

As teachers and school leaders, we fight for what we value: our students, our profession, our school communities and public education. We have that vision in common, no matter our role within our school community. Throughout the pandemic, school leaders have been charged with a seemingly impossible task: balancing the safety of staff and students with the continuity of learning. As you work



tirelessly with your colleagues to keep schools open and afloat during this pandemic, remember that you have the support of your professional organization. The ATA is here to assist you and journey with you. If ever you are feeling adrift, not knowing where to turn, do not hesitate to reach out to your association. We are one unified profession: what affects one of us affects us all.

I thank you for your dedication and passion for your students, your staff and your profession.

Jason



**You don't
lead by
pointing
and telling
people
some
place to
go. You
lead by
going
to that
place and
making a
case.**

—Ken Kesey

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

Feedback is welcome. Please contact Chris Gonsalvez, executive staff officer, Professional Development, at chris.gonsalvez@ata.ab.ca.



Council for
School Leadership

From the CSL President

A huge thank-you to all the leaders and aspiring leaders across Alberta as you take on more to your roles working with your school communities during COVID-19.

We hope you've been able to participate in some of our winter offerings:

- On January 26, we had our final webinar conversation with Armand Doucet and Rebecca Winthrop.
- On February 2 and 16, we dived in deep with Steve Munby as he shared his expertise with us related to

“Imperfect Leadership and Leading on the Edge” (part of the uLead preconference webinar series). Our final webinar in this series will happen on February 26.

Please make sure you take a look at the <http://ulead.ca/Welcome.html> website for registration information on this world-class conference in Banff, on April 10–12, 2022.

Thank you again for all that you do for student learning and promoting leadership in Alberta.

Mark Sylvestre

School Leader PD

As a reminder, Alberta leaders and aspiring school leaders are invited to visit this site via <http://tiny.cc/ATALeadersPD> or <https://abschoolleaderspd.sched.com>.



Leadership and learning are indispensable to each other.

—John F Kennedy

The Alberta Teachers' Association

VIRTUAL EVENTS

SCHOOL LEADERS SPEAKER SERIES

SAVE THESE DATES 2022—JANUARY 13, MARCH 16 AND MAY 2

Register for free here:
<https://zoom.us/join/zoom/register/tJclcO-rqT4qGN3fzA7z8awO-wpapO3POVnS>

Questions School Leaders Ask Teacher Employment Services

School-based leaders deal with a wide range of concerns and make decisions requiring a high level of responsibility and accountability. You are not in this alone. We receive calls from school leaders daily, with a wide range of issues or concerns. Seeking advice and guidance by calling Teacher Employment Services when you have a question or are looking at options for next steps enables you to develop better solutions to problems. The conversation with a staff officer will add nuance and context to your thinking, shaping important decisions while empowering you to act.

This article contains a few examples of the types of call we have received. Please remember that situations are nuanced, and this article does not remove the onus to call and discuss your specific situation with a staff officer in Teacher Employment Services.

Is a vaccination mandate legal, and what do I do if some staff are opposed to vaccinations or to receiving the COVID-19 vaccine? Who should be responsible for checking proof of vaccination and/or negative test results in the school division? What about privacy?

The courts have consistently confirmed that any rule or policy unilaterally imposed by an employer and not subsequently agreed to by the union must be consistent with the collective agreement and be reasonable, a standard known as the *KVP test* after a precedent-setting court case. The Association has set out in its public policy statement the conditions required for a policy to meet the test of



reasonableness; please check our website. No one can be forced to be vaccinated. There can be consequences, though, for individuals who refuse to be vaccinated or refuse to show proof of vaccination. These may include provisions requiring the individual to undergo periodic testing, potentially on their own time and at their own expense. Alternatively, the individual may be required to work in settings that limit their contact with students and/or other staff. In some cases, the employer may respond by requiring the unvaccinated individual to take a leave from work (potentially without pay).

Under the *Alberta Human Rights Act*, an employer would be required to accommodate genuine religiously based or bona fide medically based refusals to receive a vaccination. The accommodation may be similar, whether religious or medically based.

Generally, a singular belief or personal preference against vaccinations is not likely protected under the act.

Individuals who request accommodation on religious grounds may be required by the employer to provide supporting documentation from a recognized religious leader outlining the basis for the objection within the context of the faith as well as the employee's involvement and membership in the faith group.

School leaders are already burdened with additional responsibilities relating to the continued safe operation of schools during the pandemic, and employers should ensure that every effort is made to minimize the additional administrative duties required to support the vaccination policy. Generally, recording proof of completed vaccination should be a one-time requirement for each affected staff

member. Board policies providing for the presentation of negative COVID test results on an ongoing basis as an alternative to proof of vaccination will be more difficult to administer; boards should identify alternative approaches to requiring school leaders to receive test results (perhaps requiring that results be scanned and submitted to the attention of a designated individual in central or regional office). In any event, the person who records information related to the policy must be appropriately briefed on procedures to ensure the privacy of the information received.

In order to meet privacy law requirements, the collection of vaccination status must be reasonable. Only the minimum amount of information necessary to implement and enforce the policy should be collected, and whatever information is collected needs to be carefully safeguarded. An appropriate process would entail the employee showing proof of vaccination (or a negative COVID-19 test result) to an agent of the employer, but the employer would not actually retain the vaccination records or test results themselves. Refusing to disclose vaccination status would likely be viewed as a breach of the vaccination policy, resulting in nondisciplinary consequences.

There is a new teacher attendance tracker mandated by our school division. Am I required to approach teachers about absences as flagged by the software?

Principals have a very limited role to play in monitoring the collective agreement. Teachers are entitled to take sick leave as required and other leaves as approved. It is recommended that the human resources department deal with the matter. If you are directed to deal with the matter by senior administration, give the teacher the summary of absences, the division attendance policy for staff (if there is one) and the collective agreement. Do not comment or discipline based on this matter.

In my supervision process at the school, I am seeing some instructional practices in a classroom that concern me. What are my options for response?

Talk to Teacher Employment Services first. We will advise and focus on how you can provide support and guidance after adequate inquiry is completed. Offer support, if appropriate, and let the teacher know your concerns and the evidence for your concerns. Their response will inform your next steps of support. Remember that the first goal of teacher growth, supervision and evaluation (TGSE) is to help the teacher be successful. New school leaders may want to attend our full workshop on

teacher growth, supervision and evaluation.

How much information should I release to staff when I am made aware of a sensitive personal issue about an individual student at the school?

It is important that you confer with the parent as to the content of the information and the process for distributing the information. Students and parents may even be part of the presentation on meeting the student's needs. Similar to the counselling guidelines, a student has the right to some privacy. It is also protected in the Code of Professional Conduct article 4. There is always the discussion point of "in the best interest of the student," as it provides the school leader with some leeway in the situation. Consider sharing information on a need-to-know basis. If it is a peanut allergy, for example, everyone may need to know. Recognize that teachers are professionals and are entitled to know relevant information that is consequential to their interactions with and/or instruction of students.

I have a staff member returning from a medical leave. What is the appropriate process to follow for a successful return to work (RTW)?

You do not need specifics of the diagnosis, treatment, medication and so



forth. Accommodations for the returning staff member need to be based on recommendations from a medical practitioner. We provide accommodation to students all the time. If there are changes to the operation of the school, such as the supervision schedule, colleagues should understand without further explanation. Talk to the teacher regarding the kinds of support they will need in order to be successful upon return. If it has been a long-term or extended disability leave, an RTW meeting will clarify a lot of questions about the teacher's capabilities and need for medical accommodation. If it is possible to meet these needs—do it. If there are questions or concerns, refer to human resources at the school division because they have the duty to accommodate up to the point of undue hardship.

Some students are demonstrating a higher level of aggression toward staff and students. Where is the line that must be followed to protect members of the school community?

First, call Teacher Employment Services to discuss your specific situation, because there is no one standard answer; each situation is unique. The best approach is to look for solutions. This may need to involve student services, the *Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act* or other agencies. Do not stop until everyone is safe. There may be liability issues for the teacher, principal and school division that need to be considered. It may be necessary for the teacher to write a letter to administration that demonstrates the need for the safety of others. If you, as the school leader, receive a letter outlining safety concerns, be sure to address these concerns and if necessary, include your central office to provide further

supports. It would also be useful to refer to Article 8 of the Code of Professional Conduct: "A teacher protests the assignment of duties for which the teacher is not qualified or conditions which make it difficult to render professional service."

Applicable sections of the *Education Act* to consider:

- Section 31, Student responsibilities: A student, as a partner in education, has the responsibility to ...
 - (c) ensure that the student's conduct contributes to a welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning environment that respects diversity and fosters a sense of belonging,
 - (d) respect the rights of others in the school,
 - (e) refrain from, report and not tolerate bullying or bullying behaviour directed toward others in the school, whether or not it occurs within the school building, during the school day or by electronic means,
 - (f) comply with the rules of the school and the policies of the board,
 - (g) co-operate with everyone authorized by the board to provide education programs and other services,
 - (h) be accountable to the student's teachers and other school staff for the student's conduct, and
 - (i) positively contribute to the student's school and community.
- Section 257(1), Liability for damage to property by student: If property of a board is destroyed, damaged, or lost or converted by intentional or negligent act (a) of one student, the student and the student's parent are jointly or severally liable to the board in respect to the act of the student
- Section 32, Parent responsibilities: A parent has the prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be provided to the parent's child, and as

a partner in education, has the responsibility to ... (b) take an active role in the child's educational success, including assisting the child in complying with section 31, ...

(d) ensure that the parent's conduct contributes to a welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning environment, ... (f) encourage, foster and advance collaborative, positive and respectful relationships with teachers, principals, other school staff and professionals providing supports and services in the school, and (g) engage in the child's school community.

- Section 197: A principal of a school must ... (a.1) provide a welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning environment that respects diversity and fosters a sense of belonging, ... (e) direct the management of the school, (f) maintain order and discipline in the school and on the school grounds and during activities sponsored or approved by the board ...
- Section 33.1, Board responsibilities: A board, as a partner in education, has the responsibility to ...
 - (d) ensure that each student enrolled in a school operated by the board and each staff member employed by the board is provided with a welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning environment that respects diversity and fosters a sense of belonging ...
- Section 11, Responsibility to students: (3) In respect of a student referred to in subsection (2), if a student's behavioural, intellectual, learning, communication or physical characteristics, or a combination of any of them, impair the student's ability and opportunity to learn, a board may determine that the

student is in need of specialized supports and services.

- Section 11, Responsibility to students: (4) Subject to section 40, a student who is determined by a board to be in need of specialized supports and services is entitled to have access to those supports and services in an education program provided in accordance with this Act that will give the student the opportunity to meet the standards of education set by the Minister.
- Section 11, Responsibility to students: (5) Before providing specialized supports and services to a student, a board shall (a) consult with the parent of the student, and (b) where appropriate, consult with the student.
- Section 40, Complex Education Needs Tribunal: This can be used by the board but it is rare and a very last resort.
- Section 256, Prohibited activities: No person shall (a) disturb or interrupt the proceedings of a school, (b) disturb or interrupt the proceedings of a school meeting or board meeting, (c) loiter or trespass in a school building or on property owned by a board, or (d) conduct themselves in a manner detrimental to the safe operations of a school.

Alberta's *Occupational Health and Safety Act* contains provisions about things that can be put in place as systemic safety items:

- Section 2: The purposes of this Act are the promotion and maintenance of the highest degree of physical, psychological and social well-being of workers.
- Definitions in the act include the following:
(n) "harassment" means any single incident or repeated incidents of objectionable or unwelcome conduct, comment, bullying or action by a

person that the person knows or ought reasonably to know will or would cause offence or humiliation to a worker, or adversely affects the worker's health and safety, and includes

- (i) conduct, comment, bullying or action because of race, religious beliefs, colour, physical disability, mental disability, age, ancestry, place of origin, marital status, source of income, family status, gender, gender identity, gender expression and sexual orientation, and
- (ii) a sexual solicitation or advance, but excludes any reasonable conduct of an employer or supervisor in respect of the management of workers or a work site;
- (p) "hazard" means a situation, condition or thing that may be dangerous to health and safety;
- (rr) "violence", whether at a work site or work-related, means the threatened, attempted or actual conduct of a person that causes or is likely to cause physical or psychological injury or harm, and includes domestic or sexual violence;
- Section 5, Obligations of workers:
(1) Every worker shall, while engaged in an occupation, ... (e) report to the employer or supervisor a concern about an unsafe or harmful work site act that occurs or has occurred or an unsafe or harmful work site condition that exists or has existed.

A hazard assessment is often undertaken, which involves a detailed look at the situation and the division's overall operations. The process can involve many people and requires time to complete. The formal process is meant to identify and eliminate hazards. Where it's not possible to eliminate the hazard, it is necessary to develop, implement and monitor

related controls. The end goal is to prevent work-related injuries and illnesses. In addition, provisions of the *Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act* could be engaged.

Schools are a complex blend of relationships that reflect varying roles, responsibilities and individuals. Principals want to have positive relationships with all staff members. Collegiality is especially important in principals' relationship with teachers because of their shared accountability for the educational program, student discipline, school–community relationships and many other responsibilities. This is why the education system in Alberta is one of the world's best—we are a unified profession. The same level of shared accountability does not exist with other groups of staff such as custodians, aides and administration support. Principals act as a fulcrum, balancing two-way communication and information between teachers and boards. If principals were not part of the same professional organization, the balance of power would shift, thereby weakening the school leader's role in the profession, rendering them more as foot soldiers that carry out bureaucratic mandates. The teaching profession in Alberta has a long history of being unified and collegial.

If you would like to book a presentation on questions that school leaders ask Teacher Employment Services, or any other presentations specifically created for school leaders, please contact Nikki Cloutier at Nikki.Cloutier@ata.ab.ca. Upon request, the presentation can be tailored to meet the particular needs of participants. This presentation requires a minimum time allocation of 1.5 hours.

FACILITATING Truth & Reconciliation for School Leaders

ELA2022
Educational Leadership Academy

Continuing the Journey Within a Transformative Learning Experience

In this immersive five-day academy, Alberta leaders will connect with colleagues, Indigenous Elders and Knowledge Keepers through meaningful conversations, take part in theoretical and practical professional development, engage in critical self-reflection, experience land-based learnings, and renew or reimagine a pathway forward for school communities.

\$400 REGISTRATION FEE INCLUDES

- ◆ all course materials
- ◆ lunch and snacks each day
- ◆ transportation to and from offsite locations

Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5
Registration	Classroom Session	Classroom Session	Off-Site Learning	Classroom Session
Welcome & Classroom Session	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Traditional Celebration Feast
	Off-Site Learning	Off-Site Learning	Off-Site Learning	

Available spaces are limited, and delegates will be drawn randomly from registrants who submit an expression of interest. [SURVEYS.TEACHERS.AB.CA/S3/ELA2022](https://surveys.teachers.ab.ca/S3/ELA2022)



FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT

chris.gonsalvez@ata.ab.ca or melissa.purcell@ata.ab.ca



Walking Together EDUCATION FOR RECONCILIATION



The Alberta Teachers' Association

EXPRESSION OF
INTEREST OPENS
MARCH 1, 2022

Registrations for uLead 2022: The Summit of Education Leadership Conference, April 10–12, 2022

A unique opportunity awaits. Join educational leaders from around the world in the beautiful world heritage location of Banff, Alberta, at Canada's premier conference for school-based leaders, district-level leaders, and provincial and state education leaders. Join us in April 2022 for a rare and historic dialogue 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. uLead 2022 is cosponsored by the Canadian Association of Principals and the Council for School Leadership, a specialist council of the Alberta Teachers' Association. Hundreds of principals, assistant principals, central office teachers, district leaders, education ministry representatives from around the world and national ministers of education will attend. This conference will be memorable and ground-breaking. Find out more at <http://ulead.ca/Welcome.html>. The event is a celebration of the roles teachers play in school leadership at every level in education systems worldwide.

Hundreds of school leaders from across Canada and around the world have already registered for uLead 2022. Expressions of interest for presentations at uLead have been pouring in, and the opportunity to share your voice at uLead will remain open until the end of February.

What does it mean to be a school leader, (a principal, a learning coach, a

consultant and so forth) within the teaching profession? The theme for uLead 2022 is "Reimagining School Leadership," and seeks to be a provocation to attending delegates to think about the role of the school leader in leading teacher learning. A particular emphasis will be placed on examining the role of the school leader in helping 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 to continually enhance their teaching practices, to how those leaders develop an understanding of how to design and lead professional learning approaches that can have a positive effect on student outcomes. We hope to inspire intentional thinking about transforming our education system to ensure a vibrant public education system as we go forward.

A host of keynote speakers will be announced in the coming weeks. Among the keynote speakers already confirmed are

- Beatriz Pont, Senior Education Policy Analyst, OECD;
- Barbara Watterston, coauthor of *Step In, Step Up: Empowering Women for the School Leadership Journey*;
- Steve Munby, author of *Imperfect Leadership* and the driving force behind the UK's national organization for school leadership;
- Armand Doucet, New Brunswick teacher and noted author;
- Pasi Sahlberg, professor of education policy, University of New South Wales;

- Andy Hargeaves, University of Ottawa; and
 - Dennis Shirley, Boston College.
- There will be two exciting full-day preconference workshops on Saturday, April 9, 2022—one focused on "Leading with Technology in the Service of Learning" and the other focused on "Empowering Women for the School Leadership Journey." Details about that session are available on page 9.

Things to consider about uLead 2022:

- As an ATA member, you will enjoy a significant discount on the cost of registering for the conference and either of the two full-day preconference workshops.
- The code for this 45 per cent discount—which you can only use at the time of registration—is ATA-MEMBER.



uLead Preconference Full-Day Workshops— Saturday, April 9, 2022

Leading with Technology in the Service of Learning

Details regarding this workshop will be available in the coming weeks. We are planning a full-day event that will include presentations from a variety of world leaders in leading in education using technology.

Empowering Women for the School Leadership Journey, with Barbara Watterston

Each year, as part of the many professional learning events connected with uLead, we host a full-day workshop of interest to all teachers who wish to take part in conversations regarding women in leadership in education. uLead 2022 will continue this tradition. We are very excited about this event, which will be led by Barbara Watterston, from Melbourne, Australia. She will talk about her recent book, *Step In, Step Up: Empowering Women for the School Leadership Journey*, as part of a full-day preconference workshop dedicated to this theme.

About Barbara Watterston

Barbara Watterston has extensive experience in education and has held a number of school and executive leadership positions across Australia in the education and not-for-profit community sectors. She specializes in facilitation and research focused on the design and delivery of professional learning programs to develop, enhance and promote the work of the education profession—in particular, school and system leadership to ensure learning for all, so that all can thrive.

Barbara's national and international research, consultancy, coaching and speaking engagements centre on leadership development that emphasizes the impact of high-quality leadership on student learning. In Australia, her national research report, *Insights: Environmental Scan Principal Preparation Programs*, contributed to five major national recommendations for preparing future school leaders.

Barbara's doctoral thesis focused on gender, leadership and learning, which informed her contribution as coeditor of the book *Women in School Leadership: Journeys to Success* (Centre for Strategic Education 2010). Barbara's advocacy for women in leadership was fuelled by the lack of representation of women in leadership roles. Together with the importance of enriching a more inclusive perspective of leadership, she saw this as missing out on the incredible potential of women to influence and have a positive impact on reforms and outcomes.

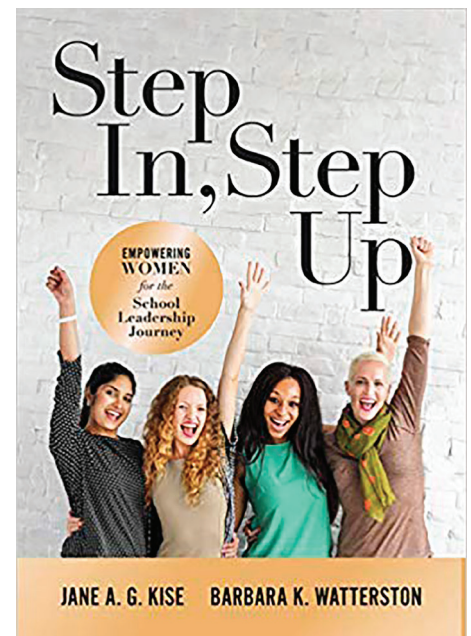
Barbara also found that a significant component of enabling greater diversity meant women letting go of some of their own self-imposed barriers. Her coauthored book *Step In, Step Up: Empowering Women for the School Leadership Journey* (2019) provides a practical guide for current and aspiring women leaders through a 12-week

leadership journey. A rich array of activities, reflection prompts and stories empowers readers to overcome gender barriers to leadership and engage in opportunities to learn, grow and lead within their school communities.

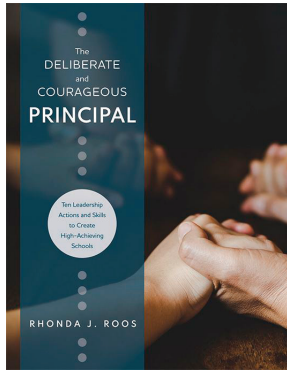
Barbara has been recognized for her contribution to leadership and professional learning. She was the inaugural recipient of the Women of Achievement Award (Western Australia, 2005), is an honorary fellow of the Melbourne Graduate School of Education and is a National Fellow of the Australian Council for Educational Leaders. Her expertise is regularly sought out to contribute in an advisory capacity as a member of numerous university, departmental, school and professional boards.

Her Australian and international projects include emerging, executive and system leadership programs. She has a special interest in the links between leadership sustainability, well-being and impact on performance. She is the executive director of the Australian Council for Education Leadership (ACEL).

Registration for uLead preconference workshops can be made at <http://ulead.ca/Welcome.html>.



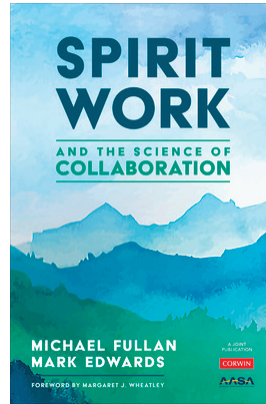
What's New in Leadership at Your ATA Library?



The Deliberate and Courageous Principal: Ten Leadership Actions and Skills to Create High-Achieving Schools

Roos, Rhonda J
(Bloomington, Ind:
Solution Tree, 2021)
371.2011 R781

Regardless of your experience level as a leader, you'll find useful ideas in this book that focuses on the essential actions and skills for school leaders to improve their schools.



Spirit Work and the Science of Collaboration

Fullan, Michael, and Mark Edwards (Thousand Oaks, Calif: Corwin, 2021) 370 F965 2021

Fullan and Edwards suggest an antidote for the bleak times we are living through—to focus on the care and love of students as learners, which they call “Spirit Work.” By examining case studies, the authors consider how spirit and the science of collaboration can change education in these chaotic times.

Contact your ATA library at library@ata.ab.ca to get these materials mailed to you today. Return postage is free—always has been, and always will be!


FREE VIRTUAL SESSION

WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP


AN ATA SPEAKER SERIES

Four-Part Series

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS



Caroline Gosling



Lenora LeMay


The Alberta Teachers' Association

NURTURING RESILIENCE WITH HOPEFUL CULTURES OF LEARNING

February 10, March 17, April 28 and May 30

4 PM

Register today
<https://surveys.teachers.ab.ca/s3/Hope-Speaker-Session-1>





PUBLIC EDUCATION IS

UNDER THREAT

Reckless changes are putting our children and their futures at risk.

- Cuts to Vital Supports and Resources
- Bigger Class Sizes During COVID-19
- A Disastrous New Curriculum

Parents and teachers are fighting back.
Join us.

StandForEducation.ca

STAND 
 **FOR**
EDUCATION