

# LEADERSHIP UPDATE

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Number 2



## Step Taken to Reduce Teacher Workload C2 Committees Under Way

*Sharon Vogrinetz,*  
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Over the past few years, teachers have expressed concerns about conditions of professional practice and how these conditions affect their ability to enhance student learning.

One approach mandated by the provincial framework agreement to address teacher workload is the C2 Committee (C2 stands for section C2 of the agreement). The committees will provide a forum to discuss these concerns. The 2013–16 provincial framework agreement states:

Within each school jurisdiction a joint committee will be established and maintained for at least the duration of this Framework Agreement to design, direct and conduct internal reviews to determine what jurisdiction-initiated tasks or policies can be eliminated or modified to reduce teacher workload and improve teacher efficacy. The committee shall be comprised of representatives of the School Jurisdiction named by the School Jurisdiction, teachers named by the Association Bargaining Unit and a facilitator provided by Alberta Education. The School Jurisdiction and Association Bargaining Unit shall jointly determine the size and composition of the committee such that it reflects the diversity of teaching circumstances across the jurisdiction.

C2 committees should be the stewards of collaborative and positive changes within each school jurisdiction; education stakeholders should use this unique opportunity to improve teachers' conditions of professional

practice and, by doing so, improve learning conditions for students in Alberta.

Each local has identified a C2 Committee key leader for each bargaining unit. Key leaders met with their corresponding board leaders, superintendents and local presidents at a provincial meeting in June. Alberta Education has named a facilitator for each jurisdiction. C2 key leaders attended the ATA's Summer Conference to review what needs to be done prior to the initial report, due October 31, 2013.

Over the next two months, committees will collect data to determine what steps should be taken to improve teachers' ability to meet students' needs. The commitment to undertake such an initiative starts from the top: "[Alberta Education] wants to ensure teachers have the time to focus on that transformation and on their students," and "is committed to ongoing analysis in order to further reduce or eliminate unnecessary tasks" and "to find ways of freeing up time for teachers to implement the vision of *Inspiring Education*" (Alberta Education Internal Review, June 28, 2013). School jurisdictions are expected to make the same assessment of district-initiated tasks.

### In the Meantime, What Can You Do?

Your local may seek your input on various issues. Please take time to respond thoughtfully. While this is yet more work at a busy time of the year, it is important to ensure the best possible outcome, which may have a major effect on your future work.

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**When  
obstacles  
arise, you  
change your  
direction  
to reach  
your goal;  
you do not  
change your  
decision to  
get there.**

**—Zig Ziglar**



Council for  
School Leadership

# Pension Rates Go Up

Sandra Marcellus

## Increases Will Appear on September Pay Statements

Teachers and the provincial government share the cost of teachers' pensions, which are funded as teachers earn service (current service cost). They also share the cost associated with any deficiency in the plan. As of September 1, 2013, both of these costs increased.

The current service cost increased because the Alberta Teachers' Retirement Fund (ATRF) board improved the funding margin for potential future adverse plan experience by decreasing the liability discount rate to 6.25 per cent per year. This rate is called the discount rate because the amount of money needed in the teachers' pension plan today—to pay future pension benefits—is discounted by the rate of return the plan expects to earn on those contributions. A lower expected rate of return means more contributions are required to fund future benefits.

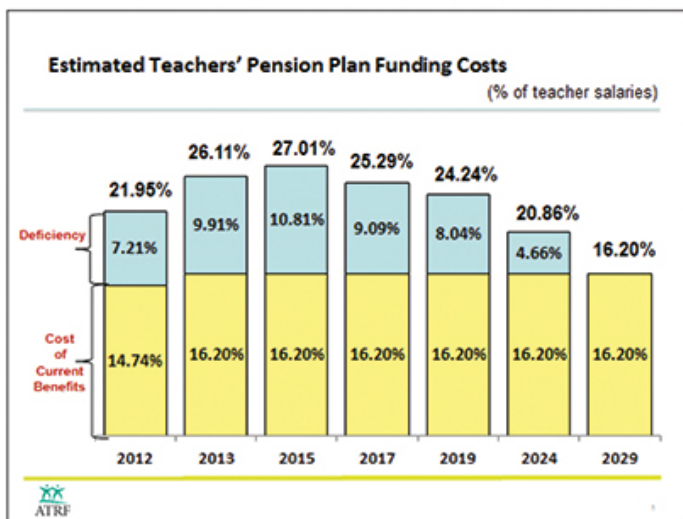
Most pension plans have had to reduce their discount rates because of historically low interest rates that make a 6.75 per cent expected rate of return unrealistic. Reducing the discount rate means that pension benefits are secure and the likelihood of future deficiencies is reduced.

Further, like all pension plans, the teachers' pension plan was hit hard by market losses over the last 12 years. Poor market returns caused a deficiency in the fund, which the plan is required by law to make up over 15 years.

For a teacher at four years of education and maximum experience on the salary grid, the increase will equate to \$170 per month in pension contributions.

Contributions for 2013/14 Compared to 2012/13

	September 1, 2012		September 1, 2013	
	Teachers	Government	Teachers	Government
Current service cost—50/50 split	7.15	7.15	7.85	7.85
Additional 10% COLA (Cost of Living Allowance)—teachers only	0.44		0.50	
Post-1992 deficiency—50/50 split	3.49	3.49	4.80	4.80
Post-1992 additional COLA—teachers	0.23		0.31	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>11.31</b>	<b>10.64</b>	<b>13.46</b>	<b>12.65</b>
Below the YMPE (Year's Maximum Pensionable Earnings)	9.60		11.44	
Above the YMPE	13.72		16.34	



The chart (Estimated Teachers' Pension Plan Funding Costs) shows the expected deficiency payments and current service costs in the future. Please note: These are total amounts from both teachers and the government. Teacher contribution rates will be slightly more than half of this total contribution.

The good news is that pension contributions are not expected to continue to rise and will, in fact, decrease as previous deficiencies are made up. Given the legislated settlement and three years of 0 per cent salary increases, the plan is expecting a reduction in liabilities, which may make the 0.9 per cent increase in 2015 unnecessary.

For more information, contact Sandra Marcellus at Barnett House at 780-447-9403 (in Edmonton) or 1-800-232-7208 (toll free in Alberta).

*This article is reprinted from Volume 48, Number 2 of the ATA News.*



**Q & A**  
**GORDON THOMAS**  
 Executive Secretary

**Q:** I've heard that Facebook plans to introduce a new search tool that will make all posted items retrievable by anyone. What can I do to ensure content that I want to keep private stays that way?

**A:** Facebook recently announced the imminent launch of its new Graph Search tool that, for the first time, makes all posts searchable across Facebook pages. For more information, see the Graph announcement on the landing page of

[www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com). This new tool will enable anyone to easily search everyone else's personal information and posts.

The good news is that Facebook claims Graph will respect users' current privacy settings and not return hits that are so protected. The bad news is that too many Facebook users have not deliberately reviewed or adequately set their privacy settings. Teachers are encouraged to review their Facebook privacy settings over the coming weeks and to learn more about the Graph Search tool.

The following tips are based on ABC's *Good Morning America* contributor Joanna Stern's practical tips for enhancing privacy settings in advance of Graph's launch ("Facebook Graph Search: Now Is the Time to Go Over Your Privacy Settings," January 16, 2013).

**1. Share with "friends" and only friends**

When you right click on any status update or photo, you can select the default access setting to "friends." Also, open your privacy settings menu available under the "lock" icon at the top-right corner of your homepage. Review all settings to ensure that your choices of who sees what content are reflected in those settings including posts and photos.

**2. Review your likes**

Graph will also search likes, and the results might reveal likes that have become outdated. Now is the time to review your likes.

**3. Review your photos**

Graph will search photos. Manage your tagged photos and untag the ones which you would not want included in someone's search results. Select the lock icon in the upper right-hand corner. Review the settings under "Who can see my stuff?" and then "Where can I review all my posts and things I'm tagged in?" Review the Activity Log, select the photos tab and choose which photos should be public or private.

**4. Make permissions lists**

You can create lists of people and assign different levels of access to members of the list. You may want only family (not colleagues) to see your photos. Access the friends list from the timeline. This will let you see which friends are on each list. Last, you can view your timeline as that person by going back to the lock icon in the top-right corner, selecting "Who can see my stuff?" and then "What do other people see on my timeline?" Put in the friend's name and you can see what he or she sees on your timeline.

**5. Be diligent**

Review your Facebook page and its settings regularly. Graph will make everything so much easier to find and retrieve. That's its function. Make sure your settings reflect your choices about what you want found out about you.

For more information, go to Facebook's rationale for creating Graph at [www.youtube.com/watch?v=U94DTriAvuA](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U94DTriAvuA) or Facebook's own promotional video at [www.facebook.com/index.php?stype=lo&lh=Ac9FgYvUfAHpm4u](http://www.facebook.com/index.php?stype=lo&lh=Ac9FgYvUfAHpm4u).



# uLead 2013

October 21–22

Fantasyland Hotel, Edmonton



**uL**ead is one of Canada's premier professional learning experiences for school leaders (principals and assistant principals), central office personnel with an interest in leadership, superintendents and teacher leaders. Keynote presenters this year include Simon Breakspear, Robyn Jackson and Melissa Schlinger.

**Simon Breakspear** is a leading thinker on the future of learning and educational innovation. He has worked to incubate a dynamic community of emerging education thinkers and doers who are working together to radically improve student learning across Asia Pacific. He is an avid voice for EDUpreneurship—an action-oriented and solution-focused philosophy of educational leadership that seeks to break free from school as usual.

**Robyn Jackson** is the author of nine books, including *Never Work Harder Than Your Students* and the Mastering the Principles of Great Teaching series. Through her speaking and training, she inspires audiences worldwide to become master teachers, to implement more rigorous instruction, to support struggling students and to provide effective instructional leadership.

**Melissa Schlinger** will share ideas related to building resilience to improve academic engagement and performance. She is a gifted presenter in this area and will share critical resiliency skills that affect student behaviour and performance to help participants understand the needs of the whole child and plan targeted support using research-based, proven strategies to build resiliency skills in the classroom. To register go to [www.ulead.ca](http://www.ulead.ca).

## Postconference Workshops

Wednesday, October 23

### Melissa Schlinger—Resiliency

In any school community, there are students who take ownership over their education and work hard to achieve academic success, and there are others who struggle to see the point of school and often disengage. When investigating what differentiates these students, researchers have identified critical, interrelated resiliency skills that are highly correlated to and predictive of academic success. This session for teachers will offer a comprehensive overview of research on essential social and emotional skills and provide tools and experiences to help teachers create a classroom that fosters resiliency development. Discussions will include a tiered approach to social and emotional intervention and will include mock data analysis and specific intervention plans for targeted students. To register go to [www.ulead.ca](http://www.ulead.ca).

### Robyn Jackson—Building Master Teachers

Helping every teacher become a master teacher is no easy task. It takes persistence and strategic development of teachers' skill and will. In this interactive session, instructional leaders will learn how to start helping every teacher become a master teacher. Learn the four types of teachers and what each type needs to develop the motivation and skill to become a master teacher. Discover the secret to improving teacher motivation and learn the three characteristics every professional development program needs to significantly affect teacher skill. Finally, learn how to put all these elements together to develop a comprehensive approach to moving all your teachers forward. To register go to [www.ulead.ca](http://www.ulead.ca).



# Minister Johnson Announces Task Force for Teacher Excellence

Education Minister Jeff Johnson has announced the establishment of a Task Force for Teacher Excellence. The task force has a broad mandate to review provincial guidelines, conduct public consultations and report to the minister by January 31, 2014, on future directions for legislation related to teaching and other education professions. The task force will be chaired by NAIT President Glenn Feltham and will include a number of members from the Inspiring Education Steering Committee.

“The task force will make recommendations on how we can better support Alberta’s teachers to ensure every student has the best chance at success,” said Minister Johnson on the announcement.

Alberta Teachers’ Association President Mark Ramsankar is welcoming efforts to improve supports for teachers but is raising concerns on a number of issues.

“Alberta has one of the best education systems in the world, and international experts who study our system consistently point to our excellent teachers as one of the most important contributing factors,” said Ramsankar. “Unfortunately, that excellence is being hampered by inappropriate class sizes and inadequate supports.”

The Association and the teaching profession will be directly affected by the work of the task force, but the Association was not asked to name a representative to the task force, and the only active teacher member of the



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committee was selected unilaterally by the minister.

It is expected that the recommendations of the task force will be brought to the Teacher Development and Practice Advisory Committee (TDPAC), which was established by last spring’s legislated settlement. When teachers were asked to accept the government’s offer for a

provincial framework in the spring, a big selling point was the inclusion of this advisory committee, which would advise the minister on exactly the same issues that the task force is being told to investigate. More than half of the TDPAC members are certificated teachers recommended for appointment by the Association; the Association will name one of these members as chair of the TDPAC.

The TDPAC is also mentioned in the comfort letter from Premier Alison Redford, in which she states that, “The ATA will have strong representation on the Teacher Development and Practice Advisory Committee, and any major legislative, regulatory or policy shifts regarding the profession and teaching will be vetted at that committee prior to Government consideration.” The comfort letter also says that “government will commit not to proclaim any legislative changes that affect the core statutory protections afforded to teachers.” Based on these commitments it is expected that any changes recommended by the task force would not come into effect until September 2016.

The task force consultations will include a series of 11 regional public consultations, an online survey and an online bulletin board. The Association will keep members apprised of details on the consultation process as they become available. In the meantime, members can register their intent to participate by visiting <http://legerweb.com/TeachingExcellence/>.

# vote4kids.ca



## Trustee Candidates: ATA Vote4Kids Website

As part of the Association's School Board Elections Plan, the Vote4Kids.ca website is built to be the most comprehensive website in Alberta on school board elections. It contains information on why voting is important, the issues that need to be discussed and links to individual school jurisdictions. It will also include a space where users can learn about the candidates for trustee in their local area.

To find archived issues of *Leadership Update*, go to [www.teachers.ab.ca](http://www.teachers.ab.ca) and click on Other Publications (under Publications), then go to School Administrators.

Feedback is welcome. Please contact Konni deGoeij, associate coordinator, administrator assistance, Member Services, at [konni.degoeij@ata.ab.ca](mailto:konni.degoeij@ata.ab.ca).