

# LEADERSHIP UPDATE

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## ARA Meets

The 89th Annual Representative Assembly (ARA) of the ATA met during the May long weekend. Approximately 425 representatives, accredited by their locals, approved the budget for the upcoming year, decided on revisions to a number of current policies and considered new resolutions brought forth from locals. Over 170 resolutions on issues such as curriculum, finance, working conditions for professional service, school administration and technology were debated.

Of particular interest to administrators was this year's decennial review of long-range policies on administration. A number of the policies that had been "on the books" were deleted, as they were considered redundant because of the adoption in 1998 of the Association's role definition for school administrators. Other resolutions were amended to reflect current beliefs on the relationship of administrators and other professional staff.

Delegates also approved a resolution brought forward by Provincial Executive Council (PEC) that states:

"BE IT RESOLVED, that the Alberta Teachers' Association continue to study and monitor matters affecting school administrators and the administration of schools and report to the 2007 Annual Representative Assembly."

A comprehensive review of and report on the ARA, including discussion of the resolutions passed, can be found in the May 30 issue of *The ATA News*.

## DeGoeij Appointed Associate Coordinator

Konni DeGoeij, a staff officer in the Member Services program area of the ATA, has been appointed to the role of Associate Coordinator, Administrator Assistance. DeGoeij succeeds Susan Fraser, who is retiring. She will commence her duties this summer.

DeGoeij, a veteran school principal, will act as the Association expert on issues and concerns affecting administrators. She will have direct contact with administrator groups throughout the province, leading the continuing education program for administrators and helping administrators and school staffs resolve disputes. She will also provide individual advice to school administrators, make presentations and workshops for Association groups, and edit the *Leadership Update*.

DeGoeij began working for the ATA in December 2004, bringing with her more than 20 years' experience as a teacher and administrator with several school districts. She was actively involved in the Council on School Administration (CSA), the Western Canadian Educational Administrators Conference and the Banff Leadership Seminar. As well, she is currently the director of the ATA/CSA Banff Leadership Seminar.

You can contact her at Barnett House at 1-800-232-7208.

**ARA directs the Association to continue to study and monitor matters affecting school administrators.**



## Planning for Next Year?

June is a funny time of year in schools. Teachers are winding down for the year, and principals are winding up for the next school year. As you think about next year, here are some professional development resources that might be helpful.

## First Nations, Métis and Inuit Education

The Association recently published *Education Is Our Buffalo: A Teachers' Resource for First Nations, Métis and Inuit Education in Alberta*. This resource provides an overview of the history, world view, culture and current issues of First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples in Alberta. A professional development workshop has been developed to complement this resource. First Nations, Métis and Inuit Education—Taking Root, Branching Out was designed to help teachers integrate Aboriginal learning outcomes in their classroom and to explore learning strategies that are effective with Aboriginal students. Local elders and spiritual leaders will be available to teach and model local protocols and offer insights into spiritual teachings.

## Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

Many principals in secondary schools have encountered situations related to sexual orientation and gender identity. The Association has developed a professional development workshop series that critically examines the attitudes, dispositions and beliefs that teachers, students and school communities hold about lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans-identified (LGBT) people. The first workshop helps educators become more aware of the everyday lived experience of LGBT students with respect to such issues as safety, inclusion, health and wellness. The second workshop helps educators understand their professional, ethical and legal responsibilities with respect to ensuring that LGBT students are treated equitably and safely. Teachers are challenged to examine the effects of stereotyping and heterosexism on attitudes, beliefs and actions. The third workshop in the series examines case studies and explores specific strategies and resources teachers can use to create safe, caring and inclusive spaces for LGBT students.

In addition to these professional development workshops, the Association has published *Gay–Straight Student Alliances in Alberta Schools: A Guide for Teachers*. Drawing upon current legislation, educational policy and research, this guide describes how best to create and sustain gay–straight student alliances in Alberta schools.

## Mentorship for Leadership Development

Another professional development activity that principals should consider for next year is mentoring your vice-principal. This mentorship activity can serve as your professional growth plan and offers an opportunity to focus on developing leadership capacity for the district.

For more information on mentoring or any of the resources described above, please call ATA Professional Development staff at 447-9400 (in Edmonton) or 1-800-232-7208 (elsewhere in Alberta). One copy of each publication was mailed to schools during the current school year. Individuals can order a personal copy, at no charge, by phoning the ATA distribution desk (ext 321). These resources are also available on the ATA website ([www.teachers.ab.ca](http://www.teachers.ab.ca)). Click on Publications, then Other Publications, then Human Rights Issues. To book an ATA workshop, please call Janey Kemp at least six weeks in advance (ext 485).

*For further information, visit [www.teachers.ab.ca](http://www.teachers.ab.ca) or contact Member Services at the Alberta Teachers' Association, 447-9400 (in Edmonton) or 1-800-232-7208 (from elsewhere in Alberta).*

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## Standing Committee Meets

The School Administrator Issues and Concerns Committee (SAICC) held its last meeting of this school year on 2005 05 15. The committee reviewed the work initiated during the year, including the following:

- A survey of administrator participation in the local has been sent to all school administrators. Results of the survey will be analyzed over the summer for action (if necessary) during the 2006/07 school year.
- The committee has provided extensive advice and feedback through its representatives to the development of the Alberta Education Principal Quality Practice Standards. At its last meeting, the committee again reviewed the standards and provided advice and recommendations to PEC concerning the Association's response to the field review.
- During its development stages, the new CSA/ATA monograph *A Guide to the Classroom Walk-Through* was brought to the committee for review. Advice and recommendations were provided. It should be noted that the SAICC proposed three resolutions for PEC to take forward to ARA on the issue of classroom walk-throughs. All were adopted.
- The committee reviewed and made recommendations on a newly developed online module to appear on the ATA's website this fall. This will be an interactive module for use by teachers and administrators in the development of teacher professional growth plans.

Throughout the year the SAICC has conducted an extensive review of current Association services for school administrators and identified needs for further or alternative services. Their overriding concern is how to enable the success of principals in their complex and demanding role. In doing their review, they relied on a number of instruments, including the last CSA/ATA survey of administrators and the Survey of School Administrator Professional Development in Alberta (May 2005) prepared by Drs da Costa and Wanzare of the University of Alberta.

On the basis of their work to date, the committee has identified two major focuses for 2006/07:

- Work with the Association and other professional development providers, such as the universities, to ensure a comprehensive and coordinated approach to professional development for educational administrators in light of the new Principal Quality Practice Standards
- Work with the Teacher Welfare program area to articulate and address the working conditions needs of administrators that are best negotiated into collective agreements

For further information on this committee and its work, please contact Susan Fraser, secretary of the SAICC, at 1-800-232-7208.

