TEACHER GUIDE

Teachers’ Conventions: Obligations

PAMPHLETS IN THIS SERIES

TG28M Administration of Medication/Medical Services: Rights and Risks
TG28K Beyond the Norm: Dealing with Parental Harassment
TG28B Employee Assistance Programs
TG28C Leaves of Absence
TG28A Maintaining Standards: Professional Discipline
TG28O Part-Time Teaching — Frequently Asked Questions
TG28N Sick Leave
TG28P Substitute Teachers
TG28Q Teachers and Educational Assistants: Roles and Responsibilities
TG28F Teachers’ Conventions: Obligations
TG28L Teachers with Children in School
TG28G Tenure, Termination and Transfer
TG28H What to Do in a Crisis
TG28I Why Is There an ATA?

Barnett House
11010 142 Street NW
Edmonton, Alberta T5N 2R1
Local calls 780-447-9400
Toll free in Alberta 1-800-232-7208
Fax 780-455-6481

Southern Alberta Regional Office (SARO)
100, 3016 5 Avenue NE
Calgary, Alberta T2A 6K4
Local calls 403-265-2672
Toll free in Alberta 1-800-332-1280
Fax 403-266-6190
Website www.teachers.ab.ca

ISSN 1198-1547
ISBN 1-894552-37-7
MS-24 TG28F 2019 02
**Teachers’ Conventions: Obligations**

**A Professional Obligation**

Teachers accept responsibility to be informed and knowledgeable about educational issues and changes. The Teaching Profession Act, the legislation that established the Alberta Teachers’ Association (ATA), states that one of the objectives of the ATA is “to improve the teaching profession . . . by organizing and supporting groups which tend to improve the knowledge and skill of teachers, by meetings, publications, research and other activities designed to maintain and improve the competence of teachers.”

**Purpose of Teachers’ Conventions**

The annual convention is an important component of the overall professional development program for teachers. Convention planners work with organizers of school-based and local-level professional development activities as well as with ATA specialist councils to ensure that the professional development opportunities available to teachers are coordinated, comprehensive and relevant. Through convention speakers, workshops, exhibits and social activities, teachers can keep up with educational developments, identify and propose solutions for common problems, expand their educational knowledge and skills, and exchange ideas with colleagues. Conventions are intended to motivate teachers to further explore and study topics of interest, areas of need and new developments in education. The ATA endeavors to make these events, which are an integral part of teachers’ continuing professional development, interesting, challenging and stimulating.

**A Legal Obligation**

Alberta teachers have a professional and legal obligation to attend conventions. Section 97(1)(d) of the School Act includes in its definition of “teaching day” the two days per year on which teachers attend the convention “authorized by the Alberta Teachers’ Association.” Teachers receive pay for their attendance at teachers’ convention if they normally work on those days and/or if their employer requires them to attend for a period that exceeds their normal work obligations.

School boards have the right to deduct pay from teachers absent from convention without legitimate reason and, in fact, have done so. A charge of unprofessional conduct under the Teaching Profession Act and ATA discipline bylaws may be lodged against a teacher who fails to attend the teachers’ convention and who has not obtained permission under ATA bylaws to attend an alternate professional development activity. The ATA’s Professional Conduct Committee has returned verdicts of guilty in several such cases. Regular school board administration of collective agreement leave provisions, such as sick leave, applies.

**Request for Alternate PD Activities**

Convention boards are in charge of the convention, and all teachers are expected to attend. Only the attendance committee of the convention board may grant permission to teachers to attend alternate professional development activities, and such decisions are based upon standardized guidelines approved by the ATA. Permission should be requested well in advance of the convention dates. No person at the school or district level can authorize or direct non-attendance, except as provided in the collective agreement.

Questions about conventions should be directed to the president of the convention association in your area or to the ATA.