

TEACHERS!

THE **PROFESSIONAL** FACE OF EDUCATION



The Alberta Teachers' Association

WHAT IS **PROFESSIONALISM** ?

Professionalism is defined by the quality of a person's work, and includes conduct, demeanour and standards of practice.

Professionals are characterized by the extensive knowledge they possess—knowledge that is both abstract and practical, takes a significant time to acquire, and is difficult to master. They are able to make effective, informed decisions regarding their practice.

Teachers are educational professionals.



WHY IS **PROFESSIONALISM** IMPORTANT ?

Professionals are the recognized experts in their area of specialty. They have strong ethics, high standards of practice, exclusivity over their service, and high degrees of autonomy.

With professional recognition, teachers provide leadership in program choices, professional development, and instructional and assessment techniques. Through their demonstrated high standards of practice and conduct, teachers have earned trust, respect and autonomy.

WHAT DOES PROFESSIONALISM LOOK LIKE ?

PREPARATION

Strive to arrive early and ready for every class and every school day. Act with integrity by role-modelling the positive behaviours that you would like your students to exhibit.

COMMUNICATION

Speak with confidence and authority on educational issues. Avoid gossiping and complaining about students, parents and colleagues. Use appropriate language and demonstrate your knowledge with appropriate spelling, punctuation and grammar.

DRESS

Be aware of what you wear. Teachers' dress should reflect the professional nature of their work. It should project the values of the individual teacher while maintaining the honour and dignity of the profession. Keep a neat, clean and well-groomed appearance.



BODY LANGUAGE

Demonstrate confidence and approachability with an open and friendly demeanour. Make eye contact and use active listening techniques. A cheerful, energetic and courteous manner is highly effective, especially with children.

ATTITUDE

Be aware and concerned about education, not only within your classroom but also in the broader arenas of school, jurisdiction and province. Maintain a constructive approach to problem solving, while being open-minded and showing respect for those you are working with.

ATA's Code of Professional Conduct:

18) The teacher acts in a manner which maintains the honour and dignity of the profession.





OUTCOMES OF PROFESSIONALISM

By advancing and maintaining a professional image, teachers are ensuring continued trust, respect and credibility.

Teachers face important issues in policy making, professional development and accountability. The maintaining of autonomy and self-determination in areas of professional growth are important. Teachers' mandate also includes advocacy of policies that retain authority over student assessment practices, and address the requirement of accountability systems that are based on trust, respect and teacher expertise.



The Alberta Teachers' Association

The Alberta Teachers' Association (ATA) is the professional organization of teachers in Alberta's public, separate and francophone schools.

Teachers work in a cooperative atmosphere with other like-minded leaders. Teacher colleagues and the ATA provide solid support and a wide variety of services and professional development opportunities.

The ATA's objective is to build a strong teaching profession. Services to members include

- maintaining high standards of professional practice,
- providing strong representation for educational policy,
- ensuring that teachers attain the best economic and working conditions, and
- assisting teachers with professional problems.



www.teachers.ab.ca