

# Teacher's **PET**



Weary teachers benefit from furry support  
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## FESTIVE FILM FINALE



Contest answers revealed  
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# ATA NEWS

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# WINTER ARRIVES

Teacher Mark Knoch crosses the frozen field outside Edmonton's Eastglen High School during a recent blast of winter weather. The photo was captured by one of Knoch's Grade 12 photography students.

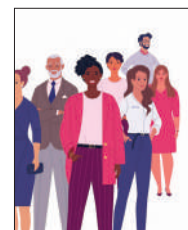
CYNDEE NEUFELD



## Don't buy into PISA snake oil

A look beyond the surface of standardized tests.

[See Editorial on page 2.](#)



## Bargaining Basics

New video series guides you through the negotiation process.

[See page 4.](#)



## Edmonton Public teachers avoid strike

Members approve contract offer by significant majority.

[See story on page 4.](#)



## Questions and stress

New discipline system is improving but still arduous for teachers.

[See story on page 5.](#)



## ATA mourns loss of staff officer

Long-term illness claims the life of "teacher's teacher" Cory Schoffer.

[See story on page 4.](#)



## Success Stories

Unique program has students earning pilot's license along with diploma.

[See story on page 13.](#)

## Don't buy into PISA snake oil



### EDITORIAL

Jonathan Teghtmeyer  
ATA News Editor-in-Chief

Once again, another set of international benchmark tests have shown that Alberta is on top of the world.

The Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) 2022 results showed that Alberta is second in the world in reading and science and seventh in the world in mathematics. Alberta was alone, or tied, as the top province in the country on all three domains.

Shockingly, despite this significant achievement, a few people, including perennial education commentator and *Edmonton Journal* columnist David Staples, are using this as yet another opportunity to undermine confidence in public education.

Staples's argument, which he has trotted out every three years on cue for the past three rounds of PISA, is to cite the rising proportion of students who fall into the bottom level of mathematics achievement and blame this on so-called discovery math. Inevitably, he will quote one of a small

handful of academics who will support his argument. What started out as the quintessential definition of cherry-picking data is now simply repetitive, lazy, agenda-driven journalism.

Math scores in Alberta have been declining since the tests began in 2000, but so have the scores elsewhere in Canada and on average across the OECD.

"In the 35 countries and economies that participated in both PISA 2003 and PISA 2022 with valid results, mathematic performance improved on a statistically significant basis in three countries, while it decreased in 22 countries, with the other countries maintaining their scores," says the report on PISA from the Council of Ministers of Education in Canada. "At the provincial level, mathematics scores decreased in all provinces between 2003 and 2022."

We should also note that while Alberta's scores took a drop in 2012, they have largely plateaued since. The report explicitly states that, "mathematics scores declined in Canada and in all provinces *except Prince Edward Island and Alberta* between 2012 and 2022."

"The same decline was apparent across the OECD."

While Staples chooses to then extract these results in an unscientific way to beat his hobby horse, he ignores other important key information from the report. Staples believes the difference

between high and low achieving students has something to do with discovery learning; the report does not mention anything about that. However, the report does refer at length to equity.

Alberta has the highest level of achievement gap in the country. In Alberta, the difference in math scores between the top and bottom 10 per cent of students is 257 points. The Canadian average gap is 244 points and every other province is below that. In other words, Alberta's equity gap is so large it pulls the Canadian average past every other province.

Let's be clear, teachers are not to blame for this problem, which should be concerning. Let's look at some of the other data.

Alberta is also far ahead of the country for the gap between richer and poorer students. In Alberta, the average difference in scores between socioeconomically advantaged (top 25 per cent) and disadvantaged (bottom 25 per cent) students is 92 points, compared to a Canadian average difference of 76 points. Socioeconomic factors can explain 12.8 per cent of the variance in scores in Alberta.

Coincidentally, Statistics Canada reports that Alberta also has the second highest rates of income inequality in the country. Know what else is linked to income inequality? The damaging

effects of large class sizes. Research on class size reductions consistently shows that the payoff is greatest for children from low-income, minority and vulnerable populations. And, of course, we already know that Alberta has the highest student-to-educator ratio in the country.

Let's put this all together.

Large class sizes disadvantage poorer students. Alberta has the largest class sizes in the country and the second highest levels of income disparity. Our achievement results show that our gap between rich and poor students is the highest in the country. So it's no surprise, then, that we have the highest level of disparity between our top-achieving and bottom-achieving students.

Let's not be distracted by a lazy ideological trope that says our problems are caused by an instructional issue when the data doesn't support this. The data does point to a serious issue with class size and the impacts that has on economically disadvantaged students.

Given the state of things, it is actually pretty surprising that our average overall results continue to be as strong as they are, but I know who deserves the credit for that. Take a bow, teachers. ■

I welcome your comments. Contact me at [jonathan.teghtmeyer@ata.ab.ca](mailto:jonathan.teghtmeyer@ata.ab.ca)

## Some tips for using AI in school



### Q & A

Dennis Theobald  
ATA Executive Secretary

**Question:** I'm hearing a lot about artificial intelligence (AI), and something called Chat GPT. Can I use it in my classroom? What questions should I be asking about AI in education, and does the ATA have any policies relating to AI?

**Answer:** These are timely and important questions and it's great to hear that you're exploring the potential of artificial intelligence (AI) and tools like Chat GPT for your classroom. This is a technology that is rapidly evolving and has the potential to have a dramatic impact on our economy, society and classrooms.

Whenever a new information technology arrives, though, there is a tendency to predict revolutionary implications for student instruction and the expectation that the "wunder-tech" of the day will finally replace those pesky and expensive teachers. This was a concern in the early 16th century when Venetian printer Aldus Manutius started producing large numbers of cheap

books on paper rather than parchment. With books suddenly becoming so readily available and affordable, who would need universities? The learned doctors at the University of Paris were so concerned that they convened a symposium to consider how to respond to this existential threat. Good news—the Sorbonne is now 767 years old and its professors are doing just fine.

This story has been repeated with the introduction of the phonograph, telephone, motion picture film, television, computer and the internet, so I'm naturally skeptical about some of the more extreme claims being made about AI and its potential impact on teachers, students and education. We have yet to have a technology that can replace the human relationship that is so fundamental to learning. That said, there is something different about AI, and the Association is carefully monitoring its development and implications for education.

Fortunately, the Association is well ahead of this curve. Staff in Professional Development have developed workshops focused on the technology for members, and Dr. Phil McRae, associate co-ordinator of research, has been recognized internationally as an expert in the field. I asked Phil to weigh in on the topic, and he shared the following insights.

### Can I use AI in my classroom?

For the moment, we are encouraging teachers to explore these tools for their own pedagogical and educational purposes, and not to involve students directly in using them. It is prudent to wait until your school jurisdiction has established some student policy and practice guidelines around the use of AI before you start engaging your students in the use of these new tools.

“While AI tools are relatively advanced, they're certainly not perfect.”

Powerful new AI tools in education are being used to understand and generate human-like text, in real time. They are also being used to generate ultrarealistic images, instantly translate languages and, with new multimodal voice capabilities, answer questions, analyze images, provide advice or engage in conversations on virtually any topic.

Yet, while AI tools are relatively advanced, they're certainly not perfect.

They "hallucinate" and can make up facts, so always double-check or audit their work for accuracy. They may also be contributing to a loss of human judgment or a diminishing of the importance of original thought, and thus contributing to plagiarism. Now is a perfect opportunity to think about digital literacies and the responsible use of technology.

### Does the ATA have any policies around AI?

As a profession, Alberta teachers have been leading the way with both emerging research and proactive policy resolutions on artificial intelligence. Below are the three important resolutions passed by teachers at the Annual Representative Assembly in May 2023.

**3-34/23 BE IT RESOLVED** that student safety and data privacy should be primary considerations in the use of artificial intelligence tools in the classroom.

**3-35/23 BE IT RESOLVED** that artificial intelligence tools used in schools should be evaluated before implementation for ownership of data, bias, discrimination, accuracy and potential for harm.

**Q&A**  
continued on page 3



# Exciting times ahead this year



## VIEWPOINTS

Demetrios Nicolaidis  
Education Minister

As we continue through the academic 2023/24 school year, I think it is important that we share thoughts, reflections and hopes for the new year. I'm beyond excited about what this new year will bring us.

I want to start by thanking Alberta's amazing teachers and other educational staff. I've got two daughters, one in Grade 1 and another in Grade 4. I've always been impressed by the quality of instruction, care and attention they receive on a daily basis. The work you do is a vital part of the success of Alberta's education system and our students.

As the 2023 school year began, it was clear that school boards across the province were seeing record enrolment levels. From April 1, 2022 to April 1, 2023, our population grew by 200,000. We are seeing the largest population boom since 1914. As a second generation Canadian, I'm glad that people are

once again looking to Canada and Alberta as beacons of hope. To help address these extreme enrolment pressures, I announced an in-year funding boost of \$30 million to help our school boards.

The 2023 year ended on a high note, with the 2022 Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) results. Alberta students scored first in Canada in reading, first in Canada in science and second in Canada in math. In addition, our students scored exceptionally well against international competitors. Globally we ranked second in reading, second in science and seventh in math. This is a testament to the work you do every day and your dedication to Alberta's students.

In early 2024, I plan to provide all Albertans with an update on the new social studies draft curriculum, more engagement with education partners, teachers and other groups, and piloting

planned to commence in the 2024/2025 school year. As this process continues, I'm encouraged to see all the collaboration and engagement going into the developmental process. I look forward to continuing engaging openly throughout this process. If you are curious about more details or next steps, please check out <https://www.alberta.ca/curriculum-how-we-got-here>.

During the next year, I am looking forward to sharing more details on our plans to improve career education programming in our schools, significantly expand the number of schools in our growing communities, explore incentives to support the recruitment and retention of teachers, and strengthen life skills and financial literacy in our curriculum.

As we look ahead to the new year, I am excited to continue to work alongside you and our school boards to ensure that our students continue to receive the highest quality of education so they can succeed now and into the future. Once again, thank you for your work every day to ensure that Alberta students receive exemplary quality of care and attention in the classroom. ■

## Q&A

continued from page 2

**3-36/23 BE IT RESOLVED** that understanding of artificial intelligence benefits and concerns, including algorithms and data collection/use, should be part of technology use in schools.

### What questions should I be asking about AI in education?

The Association is continuously developing new policies, guidelines and resources for educators and school leaders, based on the findings of an extensive research project on AI. This multi-year project, a collaborative effort with the University of Alberta's Faculty of Education and the Kule Institute

for Advanced Studies, has led to the formulation of four key questions. These questions are helping to guide the profession's ongoing exploration and understanding of AI in education.

#### Pedagogy

As a teacher or school leader, how might artificial narrow intelligence (ANI) be best used in the classroom or school to enhance learning outcomes without diminishing the importance of human interaction and the highly relational nature of learning?

#### Equity

With a concern for equity, how might we ensure that all students and teachers, regardless of socio-economic background(s), have equal access to ANI-based educational tools, and that these tools don't widen the educational divide?

#### Privacy

How will your school (or school jurisdiction) safeguard students' and staff's personal and academic data when using ANI tools, and what protocols need to be in place to ensure third-party providers respect and protect student/staff data?

#### Ethics

How will governments and civil society ensure that artificial intelligence systems are aligned with human ethics, maintain personal and public safety, and harmonize with human values?

Remember, technology like AI is still just a tool, and it is most powerful when used thoughtfully and creatively to enhance relationships and the learning experience. Keep exploring, and feel free to reach out if you have more questions. ■

## YOUR VIEWS

### FACEBOOK FEEDBACK

#### On research about mental health and social media use

@TravisJohn

School boards should ban cellphones in schools. I don't want to wait for big tech to create a safe building for student learning. Students need time to unplug. Ask any adult and ask if students are addicted. Most would say yes. Therefore, it is inappropriate for educators to call it just another tool in the tool bag. How many other tools do we use that students are addicted to?

#### On the defeat of Bill 202, which called for a return of class size reporting

@JanetHansenWilkinson

I guess I wonder why MLAs felt the need to defeat this bill. The information gathered would inform their constituents as to what the current conditions are in schools. Ignorance is not bliss.

#### On the ATA News story: "Workload issues prompting teachers to quit"

@MichelleFatica

It is also the class composition/makeup that is causing concern and burnout.

@NedraDreyer

That is why I retired early.

@LynannKroetsch

I am so glad to be done.

### INSTAGRAM FEEDBACK

@Renee\_juliette

As a former teacher from Alberta, now living and not teaching in BC, the countless tasks put onto teachers causes burnout. They have education degrees, not social work or counselling degrees; allow them to teach. Allow them preps, the time to mark, plan, report cards, plus manage their own mental health, physical health and work-life balance. Teach new teachers balance so there are less new teachers leaving the profession after three to five years. I lasted 5.5 before I moved on.

@ms.t.reads

I left public school teaching in Alberta because of the increased workload, no pay increase, incompetent leadership, lack of student accountability and abuse of contracts by school divisions. Our school system is failing students and teachers for all these reasons. I would love to see action (not another survey or social media post) that actually changes education for the better in this province.

### FOR THE RECORD

“The hardest time for teachers is January through March, so we're only going to head into a more difficult time.”

– CTF president Heidi Yetman speaking to *CTV News* about the challenges Canadian teachers face as they return to classes after winter break.

See [page 5](#) for coverage of nationwide education issues.



# New video series explains basics of teacher bargaining

Mark Milne  
ATA News Staff

When teachers in Alberta bargain their collective agreements, it's done through two separate but connected stages. It's a unique and complicated process that can cause a great deal of confusion for many members.

For that reason, the Alberta Teachers' Association is creating a series of videos that explains the bargaining process in a clear, concise manner.

## Bargaining Basics



Video 1:  
Why collective bargaining?

## How to view

To view the videos, go to the ATA's YouTube channel at [youtube.com/@albertateachers](https://youtube.com/@albertateachers) and look for the Bargaining Basics playlist.

Scan this QR code to go directly to the Bargaining Basics playlist.



"Unfortunately, confusion about the negotiation process often leads to disinterest and disengagement," said Sean Brown, the ATA's associate co-ordinator for Collective Bargaining. "These videos will help teachers follow the process and get involved."

Titled *Bargaining Basics*, the video series is being produced in 10 instalments.

1. Why do we collective bargain?
2. What's my role?
3. Process overview
4. Who represents me?
5. Central vs local bargaining
6. Preparations and opening
7. Negotiations and mediation
8. Impasse
9. Dispute
10. Resolution, ratification and agreement

Each video is between 1.5 to 2.5 minutes long. The series can be viewed in order or at the member's discretion. Brown said he wanted to ensure the videos were brief and free of the jargon that often creates confusion.

As the videos are completed, they will be added to a playlist on the Association's YouTube channel, which already includes the first two video instalments. The ATA's January school mailing will include a brochure further detailing each of the videos and their content.

"These collective agreements impact our members on a daily basis," Brown said. "Many of the benefits we enjoy today were hard-fought gains from previous negotiations. We need the involvement of the entire membership to make sure those gains don't start to slide."

Brown says one of the most valuable assets negotiators can bring to the bargaining table is the support of the full membership.

"We need engaged members who know what they want and, more importantly, how to get it. Hopefully this video series will help us achieve that."

The Bargaining Basics video series is being produced in both English and French. ■

# Edmonton teachers approve contract offer

Cory Hare  
ATA News Managing Editor

Teachers employed by the Edmonton School Division have averted potential strike action by voting 96 per cent in favour of accepting the employer's latest offer of settlement.

On Dec. 12, Edmonton Public teachers had voted in favour of requesting a government-supervised strike vote. However, on Dec. 22 the board came forward with a revised offer, so the local proceeded instead with a ratification vote on Jan. 14.

"While teachers are frustrated that they had to escalate to this point, I think teachers feel good about the agreement," said Heather Quinn, president of Edmonton Public Local No. 37.

Agreement highlights include

- a fall break of at least four days connected to a weekend
- a committee to explore workload issues for teachers at Argyll Centre, which focuses on remote learning
- three lieu days for school administrators for work completed during the summer break
- paid professional development time for supply (substitute) teachers
- a provision stating that participation in extracurricular activities on weekends, holidays and evenings is voluntary
- elimination of parking fees at schools.

More than 1,600 teachers attended the in-person meeting. The agreement affects approximately 7,000 teachers. The school board is expected to vote on the agreement on Jan. 23. ■



Heather Quinn,  
President,  
Edmonton Public  
Local No. 37

# ATA staff officer succumbs to illness

*Staff remember Cory Schoffer as a teacher's teacher*

Lindsay Yakimyshyn  
ATA News Staff

ATA staff remember their colleague Cory Schoffer as a master of his work who was generous with his wisdom — and wry with his humour.

After battling a rare illness for more than a decade, Schoffer died peacefully in the early hours of Dec. 3. He had spent his last few weeks in intensive care in the hospital, with friends by his side.

Schoffer joined the ATA as a staff officer in 2004 and, for nearly two decades, served the profession through various assignments in the Member Services, Teacher Welfare, Teacher Employment Services (TES) and Government program areas. During his tenure, he served as the lead investigator in professional conduct investigations, as staff advisor to the Outreach Education Council, and as the parliamentarian at annual representative assemblies.

Prior to joining the ATA, Schoffer worked in Golden Hills School Division and in Peace River School Division, rising to the position of principal. He also became involved in the ATA local, serving as teacher welfare committee chair and negotiating subcommittee chair, as well as at the provincial level as a teacher welfare liaison.

"I was witness to Cory's steadfast dedication, passion and unrelenting support for teachers and the public education system," said friend and ATA colleague Genevieve Blais. "He represented the best of what we can aspire to be in our profession — he refused to give up on teachers and would fight for the profession in defense of what he believed was right."

Schoffer's commitment to the profession extended beyond Alberta. He served on the board of the Canadian Association for the Practical Study of Law in Education (CAPSLE), including as president. Keith Hadden, coordinator of TES, recalls Schoffer — with no speaking notes in hand — convincing an audience of about 400 that a prairie boy would serve CAPSLE well.

"His oratorical skills were of great benefit to teachers as he represented them as a board member of CAPSLE," Hadden says. "It was also very helpful to have an Alberta delegate serve on the CAPSLE board, as he could represent our teachers' interests on a national level."

In each role he took on, Schoffer balanced defending teachers' rights with defending the profession. He did so in his own style — an analytical, no-nonsense approach that focused on fairness for members.

"He was not afraid to say what needed to be said," Hadden says, "I think that's what endeared him to a lot of people. He was a teacher's teacher."

Schoffer's colleagues, friends and family gathered for a memorial at Barnett House on Dec. 9. Many in attendance wore team jerseys to honour Schoffer, whose love of his hometown sports teams, the Winnipeg Jets and Blue Bombers, matched his passion for the teaching profession.

Speaking at the memorial, ATA president Jason Schilling recalled Schoffer's work to uphold the profession and support Alberta teachers.

"People become teachers because they want to make a difference, and Cory Schoffer made a difference," Schilling said. "He made a difference in the lives of thousands of students and colleagues across the province. And for that we are grateful." ■



Staff officer Cory Schoffer is being remembered as a teacher who was dedicated to fairness and professionalism.

# Workload an issue for teachers nationwide

Cory Hare  
ATA News Managing Editor

Teachers across Canada are feeling the strain caused by teacher shortages and a lack of resources.

In November, the Canadian Teachers' Federation compiled the results of a survey of the issues faced by its member teacher organizations across the country. The top issues affecting teacher welfare identified by member organizations were teacher workload, retention, and recruitment and education funding.

Every organization reported that their jurisdiction is experiencing teacher shortages, and 100 per cent also reported that teaching positions were being held by non-certified individuals.

Nearly 70 per cent of member organizations (11 respondents) reported that the negotiation climate in their jurisdiction was "contentious or difficult." Two organizations reported a "satisfactory" negotiating climate, and another three reported that they had not bargained recently. The "positive and productive" option garnered zero responses.

Respondents also reported that teacher mental health was a growing concern.

## CROSS-CANADA SNAPSHOT

Here are additional summaries of some of the pressing issues teachers are experiencing across the country, compiled from news reports and teacher organization websites.

### British Columbia

In November, B.C. teachers hosted a round of sessions that enabled provincial politicians to experience the realities of working in public schools, where the number one issue is teacher workload due to a shortage of certified teachers.

The British Columbia Teachers Federation (BCTF) is calling for a fully funded, co-ordinated workforce strategy that addresses recruitment, retention and increased training opportunities.

"The problem of the teacher shortage is complex, but the solution isn't. Put simply, we need money, people and time," said BCTF president Clint Johnston.

### Saskatchewan

In Saskatchewan, teachers and the province have been involved in contract negotiations since the fall. Teachers have been without a contract since August, and in October they voted overwhelmingly in favour of possible sanctions.

Five days of conciliation took place between Dec. 5 and 12. The conciliation board, a neutral third party, has since concluded that negotiations remain at an impasse.

Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation president Samantha Becotte said the government has refused to move from their opening positions or entertain negotiating about issues like class size and classroom violence.

In response, the government stated in a released statement that it remains committed to working on issues like classroom composition outside of the bargaining process.

### Manitoba

Teacher discipline in Manitoba is undergoing an overhaul as an online teacher registry and independent commissioner are in the works and scheduled for implementation in 12 months.

The new disciplinary measures are the result of legislation that passed last spring. The initiative is proceeding despite a fall election that saw the NDP take over government from the Progressive Conservatives, who initiated the legislation.

The registry will provide public access to information about a teacher's teaching certificate, including the current status and date of issue, as well as the teacher's educational background.

### Ontario

In December, elementary teachers in Ontario voted 90 per cent in favour of a new contract that will run until Aug. 31, 2026. The deal includes funding for 401 new specialist teaching positions, measures to address violence in schools and a decision about potential compensation increases referred to arbitration.

In November, Ontario's top court upheld the validity of a mandatory math test for new teachers. Introduced in 2021 by the government of premier Doug Ford, the test is an initiative aimed at improving student scores on standardized math tests.

### Quebec

On Jan. 9, students returned to school following the end of a five-week strike that shut down about 800 schools in November and December. On that same date, the education minister announced a \$300 million plan to help students catch up. The plan will involve hiring retired and student teachers to provide tutoring outside of school hours. Provincial exams will be delayed but not cancelled, and the school year will end when originally scheduled.

### New Brunswick

The New Brunswick Teachers' Association is implementing an information campaign called "Refocus on the classroom." Aimed at informing politicians of the realities being experienced in schools, the plan is focused on the recruitment and retention of certified teachers and reducing distractions like student

abuse of teachers, inadequate prep time and poor student mental health.

### Prince Edward Island

Based on a survey of its members conducted in the fall, the Prince Edward Island Teachers' Federation declared that island teachers are in crisis due to increased class size and complexity, excessive administrative tasks, lack of resources and supports for students, and negativity and misinformation being spread via social media.

The survey found that 78 per cent of teachers report experiencing burnout in their career, and 64 per cent of teachers report contemplating leaving the profession during their first five years.

The federation is implementing an information campaign called Course Correction, which aims to increase the public's understanding of the realities of teaching, and create channels for healthy parent involvement and respectful communication.

### Newfoundland and Labrador

In early December, teachers in Newfoundland and Labrador accepted a new collective agreement that includes a two per cent wage increase each year for four years, along with a one-time \$2,000 bonus.

The Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association (NLTA) says it pushed during contract negotiations to include class size and composition as part of their agreement, but this did not transpire.

As teacher workload continues to be an issue in the province, the NLTA and education minister announced in December that they would hold a "teachers think tank" in the new year to address retention and recruitment challenges in the K-12 public education system. ■

# New discipline process creates questions and stress

Mark Milne  
ATA News Staff

If you're a teacher and you're notified that you're being investigated for unprofessional conduct, contact the Alberta Teachers' Association immediately.

That's the message from ATA president Jason Schilling following a difficult year that's seen professional discipline transition from the ATA to the provincial government.

"We're here to help teachers and guide them if they find themselves caught up in this new process," Schilling said. "We'll work with our teachers to make sure that their rights are protected and that they're treated fairly."

A year ago, on Jan. 1, 2023, the government officially took over the function of teacher discipline through the newly formed Alberta Teaching Profession Commission. As mandated by new legislation and regulations, the ATA wrapped up its ongoing discipline investigations and provided the commission with the last of its reports on Dec. 29, 2023.

Before the government takeover, the ATA handled discipline of its members

for decades and did not provide legal advice or support to teachers who were under investigation. However, following the takeover, the Association launched its new Regulatory Affairs and Membership Support (RAMS) unit. Staff in the RAMS unit represent teachers who have found themselves the subject of complaints relating to alleged unprofessional conduct and/or professional incompetence. The unit officially began operation on July 1 and has been working steadily as teachers have come forward to the Association for support.

To date, 209 teachers have requested RAMS assistance. Of those, 45 investigations have had outcomes and 164 are still in progress. Some complaints have been withdrawn and in one case, the commissioner ordered a hearing that will take place in the coming months, said Tim Jeffares, the ATA's associate co-ordinator who heads up the RAMS unit.

### Tough times

The new professional discipline process has been marked by a variety of problems, including long timelines,



Tim Jeffares, ATA Regulatory Affairs and Membership Support (RAMS)

inconsistent practices on the part of the commission, and investigators who are unfamiliar with the school system and teachers' roles within it, Jeffares said. After the commission first took over the investigation process, it would inform teachers by email that they were being investigated, but these notices did not provide any detailed information about the nature of the complaint or who had filed it. Combined with long timelines and lack of answers to questions, this left teachers "struggling greatly with the mental strain and anguish of being under investigation," Jeffares said.

He and his staff have spent a lot of time writing objection letters and communicating with the commission in an effort to help create a process that is more consistent and fairer for teachers under investigation. This has led to improvements. For example, notice of complaint letters that are sent to teachers now include information

about the allegations, a reference to the fact that the teacher can call the ATA for assistance and the name of the complainant.

"There's still an awful lot that needs to be ironed out," Jeffares said.

Thinking back to the government's justification for taking over teacher discipline, that the ATA was incapable of overseeing the process in a timely manner, Schilling suggested that it may have been more productive for the government to take up the Association's offer to work together to adjust the legislation and improve the processes that were already in place.

"They've not put anything in place that seems to be better," he said, "And frankly, what we've seen so far is a lot worse for complainants, teachers and the public." ■

## Call immediately!

The Association encourages all members who have had a complaint filed against them to immediately call 780-447-9400, explain their situation and ask to speak with an intake officer with RAMS.



Teacher Growth, Supervision and Evaluation Workshop

## TGSE WORKSHOP FOR SYSTEM AND SCHOOL LEADERS

In accordance with the Teacher Growth, Supervision and Evaluation (TGSE) Policy

A two-day virtual workshop focusing on principals' roles and duties as outlined in the Education Act, the TGSE Policy and the Leadership Quality Standard.

January 25 and 26, 2024

9:30 AM–3:30 PM

### REGISTER NOW!

Active members—Free

Nonmembers—\$300 plus GST

Registration deadline—January 18, 2024

<https://surveys.teachers.ab.ca/s3/2024-January-TGSE-virtual>

For more information, contact **Sudeep Dua** in Teacher Employment Services at **780-447-9400** (in Edmonton), **1-800-232-7208** (toll free) or [sudeep.dua@ata.ab.ca](mailto:sudeep.dua@ata.ab.ca).



The Alberta Teachers' Association

TES-MS-85-6/2023.11

# Grow your potential

Learn the skills to be a principal or superintendent

University of Calgary Continuing Education offers two online programs for Alberta certified teachers or education professionals who want to work in the Alberta education system:

- School Leadership Quality Standard Program, for aspiring school principals
- Superintendent Leadership Quality Standard Program, for aspiring superintendents

Earn your Leadership Quality Standard Certification with us today. Register for these online courses at [conted.ucalgary.ca/abed](https://conted.ucalgary.ca/abed)



[conted.ucalgary.ca/abed](https://conted.ucalgary.ca/abed)



UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY  
CONTINUING EDUCATION

# New resource helps support Ukrainian newcomers

Karen Gill  
ATA News Staff

If you're a Ukrainian school teacher or non-bilingual teacher who has Ukrainian students in their classroom and you're looking for a way to support them, the Alberta Teachers' Association (ATA) has a new resource with strategies to help you.

*Supporting Ukrainian Newcomer Students and Their Families in Alberta Schools* is a resource with useful ready-to-use and practical strategies for teachers to help Ukrainian newcomer students overcome barriers and cultural changes in Alberta.

"I know how hard it is to adapt to a new environment in a new country, but there is a difference between immigration and fleeing a war. It was

important for me to help other teachers and provide them with supports so their students will be successful in Alberta schools," said project lead Solomiya Cherkavska.

Cherkavska is a teacher at Edmonton's St. Martin School and president of the Ukrainian Special Interest Group with the ATA's Additional Languages and Intercultural Council (ALIC). The resource was made in collaboration with the Diversity, Equity and Human Rights Committee (DEHR) at the ATA.

The resource is specifically tailored to meet the needs of Alberta teachers who welcome Ukrainian newcomers into their classrooms. The content was created by teachers who represent various grade levels and areas, in bilingual and non-bilingual settings. Content includes information about education in Ukraine, common

challenges and stressors, trauma and trauma-informed practice and an appendix for parents and students to use.

Cherkavska pointed out that the resource was created based on conversations and focus groups with education stakeholders who participate in student learning, but also parents and students who shared their challenges as newcomers. ■

## Get your copy

The resource can be downloaded directly from the ATA website at [www.teachers.ab.ca](http://www.teachers.ab.ca) > Advocacy > Diversity, Equity and Human Rights.



A new resource is available to meet the needs of Alberta teachers who welcome Ukrainian newcomers into their classrooms.

# Highlights from the legislature

## Government and opposition debate education issues

Kim Clement  
ATA News Staff

Alberta's 31st legislature began on Oct. 30 with a speech from the throne and ran until Dec. 7. Here is a summary of the education-related discussions that took place in question period from Nov. 24. to Dec. 7.

### Education funding

Nov. 27 – **Heather Sweet** (NDP–Edmonton-Manning) raised concerns about school overcrowding in north Edmonton, emphasizing the strain on students' access to education in their communities. The minister of education acknowledged the challenges, highlighted preplanning funding for a new school in the region, and committed to working with the school division. Sweet challenged the factual accuracy of the minister's response, criticized the insufficient funding increase and highlighted the community's efforts to fundraise for a playground. The minister defended the government's commitment to supporting school divisions, provided information on available funding, and emphasized the expansion of schools in growing communities.

Dec. 5 – **Jacqueline Lovely** (UCP–Camrose) asked the minister of education how the government is supporting increasing enrolment growth. The education minister stated that the government has provided an in-year investment of an additional \$30 million to help school divisions address enrolment pressures.

Dec. 5 – **Kathleen Ganley** (NDP–Calgary-Mountain View) stated that Alberta is the richest province in the country, yet the UCP government provides the lowest per-student funding in the country and asked the education minister whether he thinks our kids deserve better.

The minister responded that the government is concerned about enrolment growth and pressures, and wants to ensure students receive a world-class education. He stated that he'd recently announced \$30 million



FILE

in additional funding to help school divisions hire additional teachers, educational assistants and other staff. He added that, starting this school year, 1,200 new teachers have joined Alberta school divisions along with more than 450 educational assistants.

Dec. 6 – **Rakhi Pancholi** (NDP–Edmonton-Whitemud) stated that Alberta's classrooms are bursting at the seams, and enrolment growth shows no sign of slowing down, and asked the education minister when he will prioritize long-term, stable investment in public education instead of relying on temporary and inefficient stopgaps.

The minister responded that the government does engage in long-term planning, and has increased education funding from \$8.2 billion to \$8.8 billion in the last four years. He added that the in-year injection of \$30 million will help school boards.

Pancholi followed up by stating that the \$30 million is too little, too late and mentioned that the ATA has been seeking data-driven accountability

and decision-making since 2019, but the UCP government has yet to engage with the ATA in good faith and continues to rely on a funding model that does not fund every student in rapidly growing communities.

The minister responded that the funding model is working and that, after being named education minister, his first meeting was with the ATA. He said he had further meetings scheduled with the ATA and that his ministry meets with all of their partners to hear their priorities.

### Health, education and social supports

Dec. 4 – **Janis Irwin** (NDP–Edmonton-Highlands-Norwood) suggested that the government's surplus could be truly transformational in the lives of Albertans and urged additional spending on health, education and social supports. With respect to education, Irwin accused the UCP government of imposing deep cuts on the education system, resulting in ballooning class sizes, and suggested

that the government could be using the budget surplus to build much-needed schools and hire staff. Irwin urged the minister to fully fund the education system in the next budget.

The education minister responded that the government recognizes that many school divisions are facing challenges. He attributed many of the challenges to surging population growth. He said the government will do the work that's necessary to ensure Alberta continues to deliver a world-class education system.

### School class sizes

Nov. 27 – **Amanda Chapman** (NDP–Calgary-Beddington) raised concerns about widespread school overcrowding and introduced Bill 202 for education class composition reporting. The minister of education emphasized the government's commitment to expanding schools, addressing complex classrooms and providing resources

**HIGHLIGHTS**  
continued on page 11

# Animals provide love and support to weary teachers



# Teacher's PET

*We asked teachers to send in pictures of their pets along with an explanation of how the animal helps them in their profession.*

## Harvey



Harvey has a quirky personality, a unique mug and is often the topic of conversation with my students and colleagues. Harvey encourages me to take some downtime by going for lots of walks, visiting friends, eating good food and snuggling with those I love!

*Crystal Quaschnick  
Inclusive Education Coordinator Grade 4 P.E.  
J.C. Charyk School, Hanna*



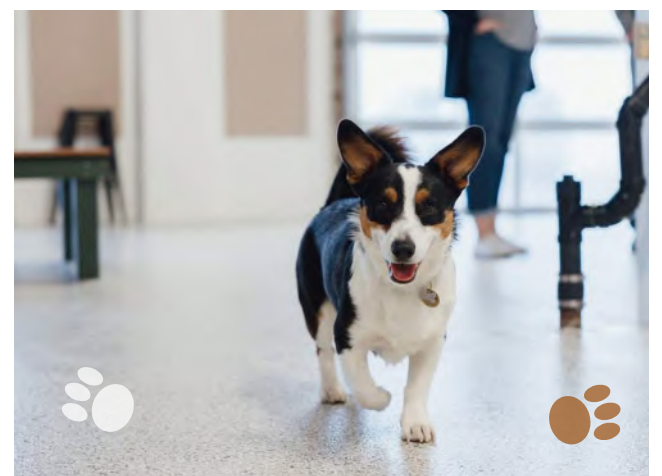
## Luna



Luna is a wellness dog and comes into my school once a week. She loves coming to school and meeting students. Having Luna in my space is wonderful when I meet one on one with students, as she is a great conversation opener and allows me to meet with students who may not have come into my space before.

Luna puts students at ease with her gentle nature and empathetic eyes. She is also a wonderful help to our neurodiverse students who will read her stories and take her for walks.

*Susannah Killey  
Fashion studies teacher/grad coach  
St. Oscar Romero High School, Edmonton*



## Kevin



Kevin has the best personality, and everyone who meets him falls in love instantly. He's incredibly smart and we love to do all sorts of different classes together. Kevin helps me decompress after a long day, and he's great for my physical and mental health. He's brought a lot of joy into my life and he's so special to me.

*Ashley Netik  
Grade 6 English language arts, math, science, French  
and fine arts  
Tofield School, Tofield*







## Oliver

Oliver shows love to everyone and to everything. He is such a funny pup! I always have an Oliver story that the kids love to listen to. I have used these as story prompts for the students to write about, or we predict what might happen next with this pup of mine!

I also remind my students the importance of starting each new day as a new beginning and how Oliver starts my day off right because no matter how I feel in the morning, I have a happy puppy who greets the day with enthusiasm.

*Carole Bossert  
Grade 5, South Pointe School, Fort Saskatchewan*



## Ruby & Dudes

My pups keep us entertained every day. Ruby steals shoes, drags around her heavy food bowl and hangs off Dudes when she's bored. My cats were a Covid Christmas gift to our kids and they have been the best mental health boost we could have given to our kids.

My pups help in my profession by spreading happiness. I bring them to work every once in a while and they bring so many smiles to everyone they meet. Students love to pet them and always walk away with a smile on their face. My cats are just nice to come home to at the end of a long school day. They greet us at the door and just want love. It lowers everyone's heart rate to just hang out with them and relax.

*Nicole Duigou-Jones  
Assistant principal, St. Joseph High School, Edmonton*

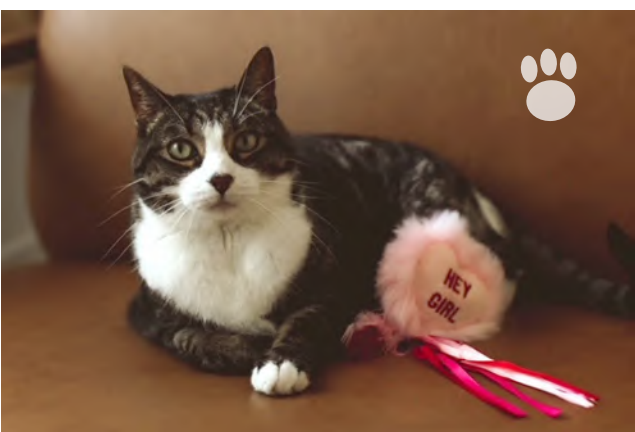


## Hank

Hank touches hearts and connects instantly with all humans and other dogs. He is the most popular dog in our neighbourhood and is known by people his owners don't even know.

My job can be very heavy at times, but when I get home and Hank jumps on my lap for cuddles, all the worries of the day melt away.

*Naomi Herriman  
Inclusive education co-ordinator/instructional coach  
Holy Spirit School, Devon*



## Mickey

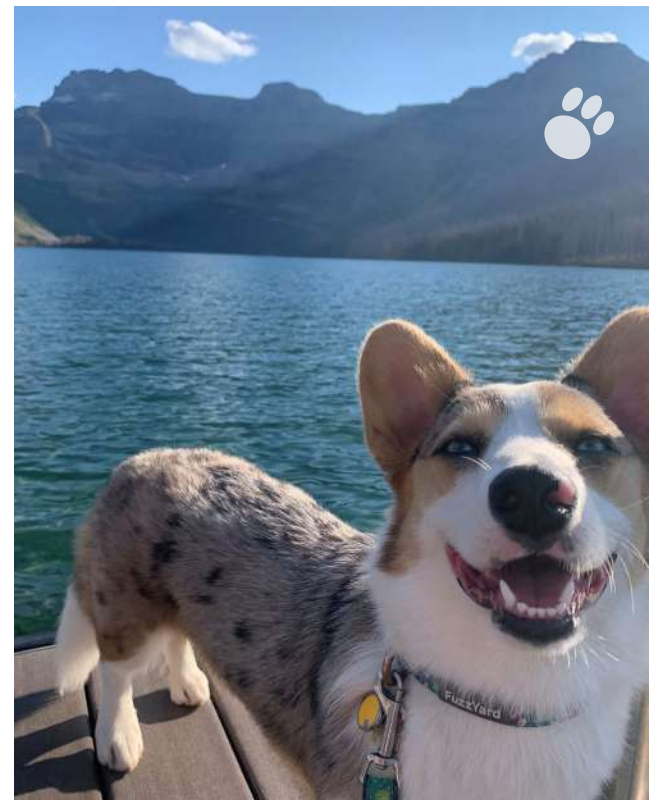
Mickey has been with me for my whole teaching career. He was given to me one week before I started my first year of teaching and has been by my side through every transfer, every move, every meltdown and every victory.

Mickey has helped me numerous times in my profession. He is a reliable alarm clock that makes sure his morning meows and face-prodding paws wake me up in time for work (and of course, prepare his breakfast on time). His purring and cuddles are also a great way to wind down after a particularly stressful day. I love my Mickey!

*Lynley Mainprize  
Middle school social studies and language arts  
Caroline School, Caroline*



## Jurgan & Lily



## Gilbert

This little dog brings more happiness to my life than he could ever understand. He is confident, sassy, silly and makes me laugh every day.

What makes him so special to me as a human and teacher is how his presence simply fills my bucket (as we say in elementary). He's a 10-month-old puppy going through the awkward "let's test boundaries" stage. He has literally toilet papered our house. The bottom half of our Christmas tree is naked. He runs away with my socks in the morning and thinks it is hilarious.

But he also forces me out of my head, which is often swirling with anxious, nervous thoughts. Mental health is a struggle for me. It isn't fun, but you know what is? Hanging out with this guy every day — mischief and all. I love him so much.

*Jacqueline McNeill  
Grade 2/3  
Fleetwood-Bawden Elementary School, Lethbridge*



## Jelly Bean

Jelly Bean is a box turtle. She is unique, cute and fun to watch. Students are intrigued by her. She can completely hide in her shell if she is scared and she is faster than people think. She is an omnivore; she eats live worms as well as fruits and vegetables.

Jelly Bean comes to the classroom a couple of times per week. She increases interest and engagement. The students love becoming turtle experts and helping with her care.

*Chantal Landry  
Grade 4, Svend Hansen School, Edmonton*



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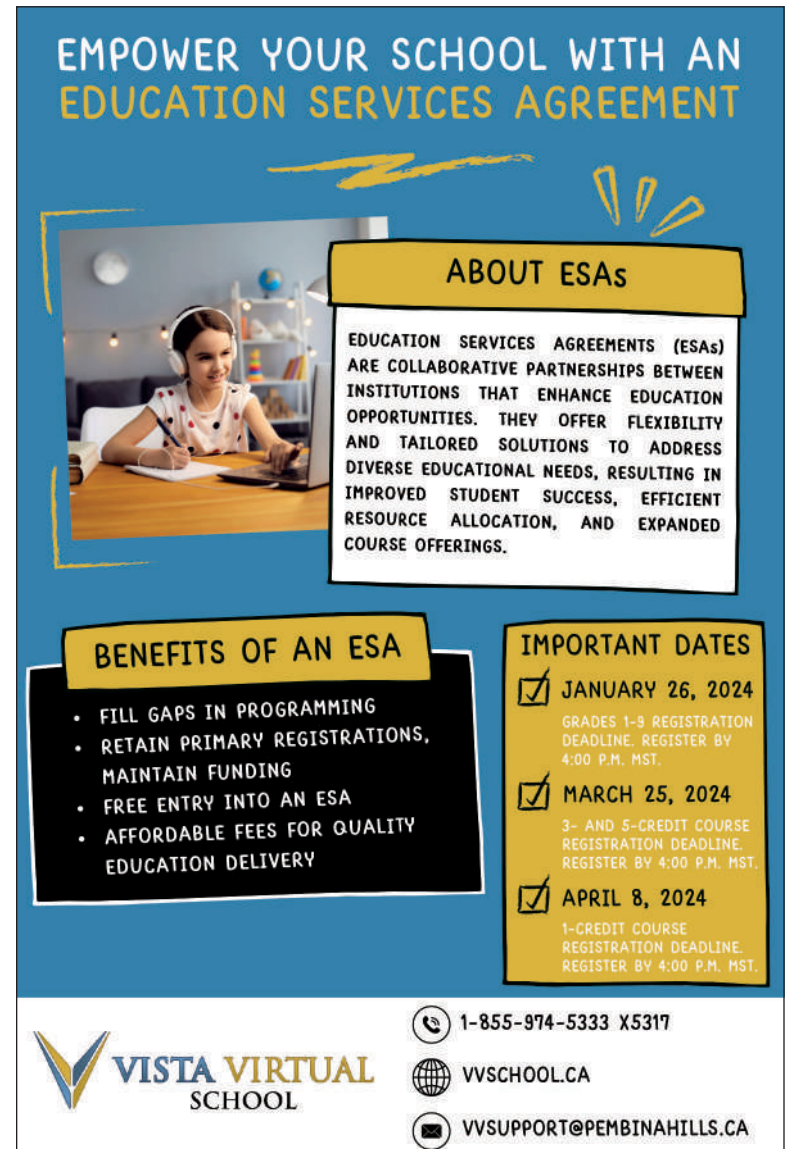
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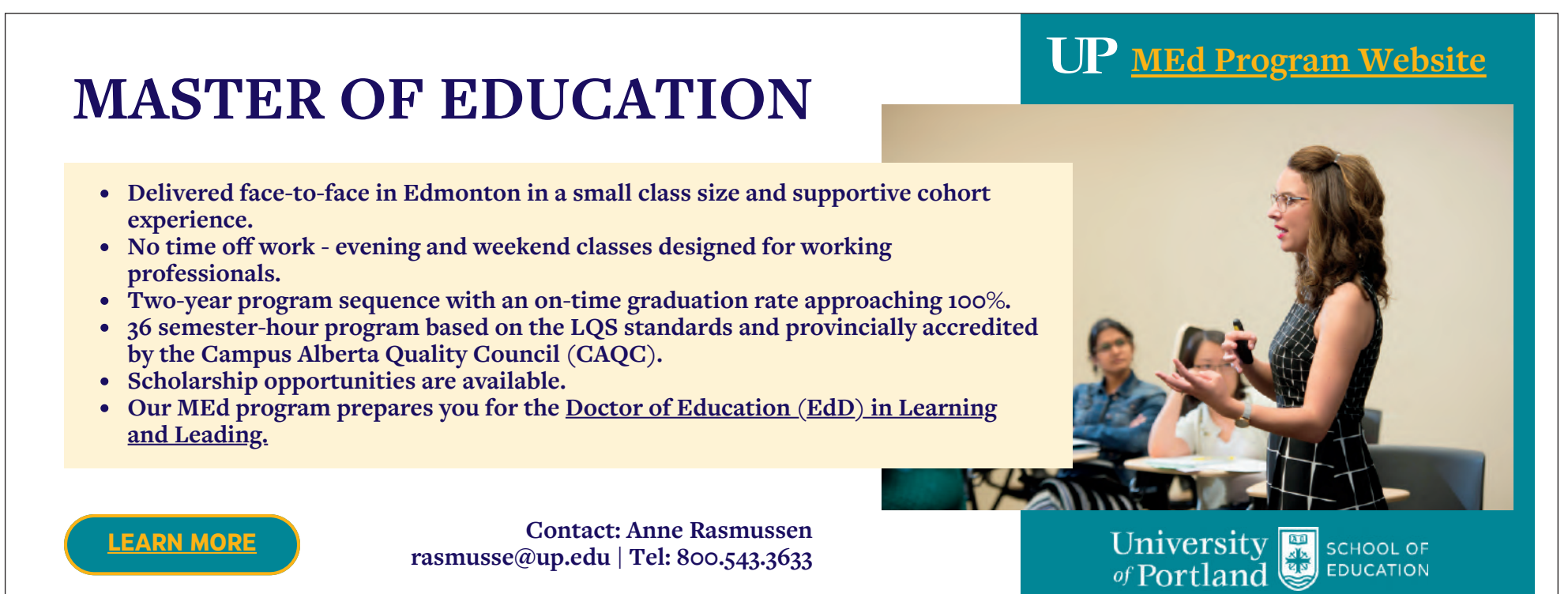
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# Council sets stage for list bargaining

## PEC POINTS

Audrey Dutka  
ATA News Staff

### Highlights of the emergent Provincial Executive Council meeting held Nov. 17, 2023, Fantasyland Hotel, Edmonton.

1. Authorized up to three members of Council and one member of staff to attend the 2024 Alberta Federation of Labour/Canadian Labour Congress Winter Labour School, taking place Jan. 7 to 12 in Jasper.

2. Determined that the bargaining unit for the teachers at Rocky View School Division has met the objectives of bargaining in good faith, has demonstrated the support of its members, and is within the objects recommended by Association policy and guidelines.

### Highlights of the Provincial Executive Council meeting held Nov. 30 and Dec. 1, 2023, Barnett House, Edmonton.

1. Adopted the following interim policy on the potential Alberta Pension Plan, to be referred to the 2024 Annual Representative Assembly for confirmation:

- Pension assets are the property of and are to be managed exclusively for

the benefit of active plan contributors and beneficiaries.

- Contributors to the Canada Pension Plan who reside, are working or have worked in Alberta should be afforded the opportunity to determine individually whether to transfer their accrued entitlement to an Alberta Pension Plan or allow it to remain with the Canada Pension Plan.

- The Association supports the collective and individual right of Albertans to remain as full participants in and beneficiaries of the Canada Pension Plan.

2. Adopted the following interim policy on the censoring of learning materials in libraries and classrooms, to be referred to the 2024 Annual Representative Assembly for confirmation:

- The Association affirms teacher professional judgment and autonomy in the selection of learning resources and management of classroom and library collections in support of students' freedom to engage with media and material that depicts and respects the dignity and diverse lived experiences of all persons.

- The Association urges school authorities, in collaboration with teachers, to develop local policy to guide teachers and school leaders in responding to book and resource challenges in a manner that defends teacher professionalism and judgment and affirms students'

freedom to read and experience a variety of media that represents and respects the dignity and diverse lived experiences of all persons.

- The Association urges the Government of Alberta to amend the *Guide to Education* to include in its Controversial Issues statement an affirmation of the right of students to read and otherwise engage with diverse and potentially controversial material in an appropriate, safe and supportive learning environment.

3. Approved the name of the recipient to receive the Public Education Award at the 2024 Annual Representative Assembly.

4. Referred 21 recommendations developed by the Status of Racialized Teachers Subcommittee to the Table Officers Committee to create a strategy and provide direction to Provincial Executive Council by its April 2024 meeting.

5. Approved the proposed List of Central and Local Matters as the Association's initial proposal for list bargaining.

6. Approved a revised Member Organizing Communications Framework.

7. Authorized that, for the 2023/24 school year, the political engagement grant be repurposed to support the work of locals in hosting in-school organizing meetings.

8. Approved an overexpenditure of \$40,000 to the political engagement budget line for the purposes of offering member organizing grants to locals in the 2023/24 budget year.

9. Amended the Association's Gold Medals in Education program by replacing the solid gold medals with gold-plated medals, adding a \$2,000 award to each recipient, and expanding the program to include every degree-granting teacher education program in the province that has either a long-standing relationship or a signed memorandum of understanding with the Association.

10. Authorized staff to explore with degree-granting teacher education institutions opportunities to increase the profile of the Gold Medals in Education awards program and its recipients.

11. Confirmed the position of the Association that it supports the participation in the Alberta School Employee Benefit Plan of only those Alberta school authorities employing active members and associate members for whom the Association is recognized as the bargaining agent.

12. Received a Notice of Appeal in the matter of a decision made by a hearing committee of the Professional Conduct Committee.

13. Approved the names of field members to serve on Association committees. ■

## HIGHLIGHTS

continued from page 7

for growth. Chapman highlighted specific instances of overcrowding and urged support for the bill. The minister defended the government's focus on modernizing facilities and addressing classroom challenges, dismissing the need for additional reporting requirements.

### Public-private partnerships for school construction

Nov. 29 – **Jasvir Deol** (NDP–Edmonton-Meadows) expressed concerns about the use of public-private partnerships (P3s) for school construction, citing past failures in other provinces. The minister of infrastructure defended the use of P3s, emphasizing their proven success globally, increased efficiency, innovation and improved quality. Deol continued to criticize P3s, pointing to issues in Saskatchewan and Alberta's harsh climate, questioning the minister's commitment to student safety. The minister of infrastructure countered, highlighting Alberta's successful track record with P3s, ongoing projects, job creation and the obligation to seek the best value for taxpayers' money.

### School construction in Chestermere–Strathmore

Nov. 29 – **Chantelle De Jonge** (UCP–Chestermere–Strathmore) raised concerns about the lack of new schools in Chestermere despite its significant population growth. The minister of education assured her that projects, including a new K–9 school and a K–9 school with modular units, are in progress. The minister emphasized the importance of modulars for immediate

space needs and mentioned that requests for the '24–25 year have been submitted. De Jonge sought a timeline for new developments in Chestermere, and the minister encouraged residents to await budget updates in the spring for project advancements.

### School construction in northeast Calgary

Nov. 30 – **Gurinder Brar** (NDP–Calgary-North East) expressed concerns about the delayed construction of schools in Redstone, northeast Calgary, emphasizing the long wait for essential facilities. The education minister defended the government's commitment to building schools, mentioning the approval of 11 projects for Calgary in the last budget cycle. Brar continued to press for a timeline for actual school construction in Redstone. The minister reiterated the government's commitment to building schools in growing communities, highlighting the approval of 98 school projects over the past four years and inviting further dialogue with northeast Calgary residents.

### School construction capital plan

Dec. 6 – **Court Ellingson** (NDP–Calgary-Foothills) asked the education minister why Budget 2023 included a 2.5 per cent increase in capital spending while student enrolment rose by 3.3 per cent. He stated that this level of investment allowed for only 13 schools to be built across the entire province.

The education minister responded that building schools is a top priority for the government. He stated that, over the course of the past four years, the government has moved forward on 98 school projects across the province. ■



## Hope comes from working together

Happy new year colleagues! I hope you were able to take some time for yourself, your family and your friends over the holiday break.

During the latter part of the winter break, I gathered with some friends and we were ruminating about a myriad of issues. We come from different backgrounds and work in different fields, so our conversation was very diverse, yet there was one common thread – the desire for better days and a feeling of hope. I commented to my friends that we must work for hope and that we can wish for change all we want, but wishing is not a realistic strategy.

Over the next year, the ATA will have several opportunities to address some of the serious concerns we face in public education, such as funding, curriculum and increases in

class size, complexity and incidences of aggression. The 2024 provincial budget will bring details on whether the government will fund education appropriately, especially given the growth we have seen. The social studies curriculum redesign is supposed to be a more transparent process that includes input from teachers and the Association. We will also see the start of central table bargaining.

Your involvement and assistance will be key to the Association's ability to meet these challenges and opportunities over the next year. By seeking to understand, becoming engaged and informed, we can all play a role in bringing about positive change. Over the next year, the Association will provide you with a number of opportunities to contribute your input. Please watch for them. ■

I welcome your comments.  
Contact me at [jason.schilling@ata.ab.ca](mailto:jason.schilling@ata.ab.ca).



## Are you interested in facilitating workshops?

### BECOME AN ASSOCIATION INSTRUCTOR!

Association instructors facilitate a variety of workshops for school and district-based professional development events, teachers' conventions, and specialist council conferences - both in-person and online.

The Alberta Teachers' Association is seeking outstanding classroom teachers and school leaders from across the province for immediate appointments to begin April 2024.

#### The application process has three parts:

1. Download and complete the application form on the Alberta Teachers' Association website (see below for website information)
2. Provide a letter of interest, including the following information:
  - Areas of interest and expertise (referencing the competencies of the Teaching Quality Standard)
  - Experience leading professional development (online and in-person)
  - Reasons for applying
3. Provide a resume outlining education, work experience, leadership experience, publications, presentations, and volunteer experience.

**Successful candidates** are expected to deliver 7–10 workshops per year and are required to attend two training sessions per year. The Association covers release time and associated expenses; as well, an honorarium is provided for workshops delivered. As a courtesy, please advise your superintendent and principal that you will be applying prior to doing so. All applicants must be active or associate members of the ATA, have a minimum of 5 years of teaching experience, and hold an Alberta teaching certificate.

#### APPLICATION DEADLINE IS FEBRUARY 2, 2024.

Send your letter of interest, resume, and completed application form to Terra Kaliszuk, Executive Staff Officer, Alberta Teachers' Association, [terra.kaliszuk@ata.ab.ca](mailto:terra.kaliszuk@ata.ab.ca)

For information or to download an application form, visit [www.teachers.ab.ca/Advocacy/Volunteer](http://www.teachers.ab.ca/Advocacy/Volunteer).



The Alberta Teachers' Association

PD-192 2023-12



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- One award of \$5,000
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- A research focus on teacher health issues and/or teachers' working conditions

### John Mazurek Memorial—Morgex Insurance Scholarship

- One award of \$2,500
- For members who pursue relevant professional development

**Deadline: February 28, 2024**

*To be considered, applications must be received at Barnett House by 5:00 PM on February 28, 2024.*

### Contact

**Tracee McFeeters**  
Administrative Officer  
Scholarship Subcommittee  
Alberta Teachers' Association

**Phone** 780-447-9470 or 1-800-232-7208  
**E-mail** [tracee.mcfeeters@ata.ab.ca](mailto:tracee.mcfeeters@ata.ab.ca)  
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Lead teacher Dana Marshall shows off the plane built by students of the DR South Alberta Flight Academy.

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# Flight school lets students earn their wings

*The DR South Alberta Flight Academy is the only school of its kind in Canada*

## SUCCESS STORIES

**Cory Hare**  
ATA News Managing Editor

So you're getting ready to enter high school and you want to get a pilot's license ... and build a plane ... and get your diploma ... what do you do?

You enrol at the DR South Alberta Flight Academy. One of a kind in Canada, the program enables students at Eagle Butte High School in Dunmore to learn about flying and earn their private pilot's license by the time they graduate, all while maintaining a regular course load and earning their diploma.

"It's something that is truly, truly unique and transformational that they are experiencing," said lead teacher Dana Marshall.

The program is a partnership between the high school, Prairie Rose Public Schools and Super T Aviation, which operates a flight school out of the nearby Medicine Hat Airport.

Just like any other aspiring pilot, students in the program begin learning the basics of aviation in classes that are referred to as ground school. The difference is the classes take place during regular school hours. Flight lessons, paid for by students and their families, are offered at a reduced rate and take place outside of school hours.

"Many of our Grade 11s just soloed their airplane for the first time," Marshall said.

In Alberta, individuals must be 14 years old to fly solo and 17 to earn a private pilot's license.

The program has experienced significant growth in recent years. Three years ago it had 17 students. This year: 38. The program accepts worldwide registrations and currently has a student from eastern Canada billeting with a local family.

In the last four years, the program has trained 10 private pilots — one has gone on to earn their commercial license and three others are following suit. With the airline industry facing a pilot shortage, the program is setting students up to be ready to apply to the major airlines by the time they're 21 or 22, Marshall said.

She added that the program's benefits go far beyond teaching students about aviation and flying.

"There's an inherent maturity that flight students have ... they walk through the halls proudly because of the things that they are accomplishing, I believe, in flight academy." ■

### CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

*Success Stories is an ongoing feature that enables teachers to share their successes with their colleagues. To submit an idea or an article about a new program or approach that you've instituted, please contact managing editor Cory Hare at [cory.hare@ata.ab.ca](mailto:cory.hare@ata.ab.ca).*



Students of the DR South Alberta Flight Academy are able to earn a private pilot's license during high school while also building an entire plane from a kit.

SUPPLIED

## Some assembly required

As well as learning to fly, flight academy students also spend a weekly session working on assembling a brand new airplane from a commercially manufactured kit.

After having completed the assembly of its first plane last year, the program is now working on a second build, a three-year process. Belonging to the school division, the completed plane is available for students and former students to use to increase their hours (there's no rental fee but students pay for the fuel). However, because the plane was not commercially built, it can't be used for flight lessons.

## The DR South Alberta Flight Academy

- The DR part of the program's name stands for Dave Rozdeba, an avid aviator and Eagle Butte teacher who died in 2017.
- The program is a participant in a program that Alberta Education announced early in the year that provides funding for high schools to increase the delivery of career education, collaborative partnerships and dual credit opportunities. This program is enabling the flight academy to add two new streams: aircraft maintenance engineer and air traffic control.



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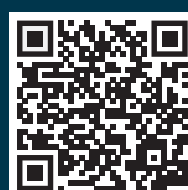
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# TALENT

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## FESTIVE FILM FINALE

### Contest winner revealed

In our December issue, we challenged you to correctly identify 15 images from various holiday movies and TV specials. Of the 358 entries received, 29 nailed the name of every festive flick.

Our congratulations go out to Heather Weber from the Elk Island Public School Division, who was randomly selected from the winning entries. She received a \$100 gift certificate of her choice and a \$100 donation to a charity of her choice.

For those of you who missed the mark on naming the movies, here are the correct answers.



#### National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation

Every family has a "Cousin Eddie" who usually shows up unannounced and frequently outstays their welcome. But they do make family get-togethers ... interesting.



#### Eight Crazy Nights

Adam Sandler's animated feature follows a party animal's road to redemption throughout the Chanukah season. Sandler voiced three of the main characters.



#### It's a Wonderful Life

This perennial favourite holds the eleventh spot in the American Film Industry's top movies of the century. Bedford Falls is the small hometown George Bailey hopes to escape but, in the end, its residents save his family from ruin.



#### The Polar Express

This bell from Santa's sled symbolizes the magic that exists when you "believe" in the Christmas spirit. Only true believers can hear it jingle!



#### White Christmas

*Playing Around* was the Broadway musical hit Wallace & Davis (Crosby and Kaye) relocated to their old general's snowless ski lodge. It's amazing how they fit that big Broadway set onto that tiny barn stage!



#### Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer

Even the newspapers were predicting the worst Christmas weather of the century! Good thing Rudolph doesn't hold grudges!



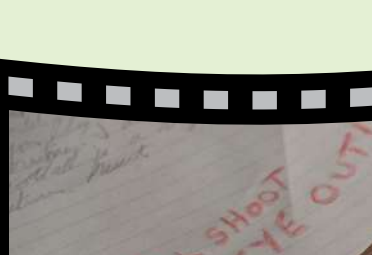
#### Home Alone

*Angels with Filthy Souls* was the gangster movie Kevin played to scare off the would-be thieves. Trivia: this was a fictitious movie created specifically for *Home Alone*.



#### Die Hard

Before tormenting Harry Potter, Alan Rickman became one of our favourite festive baddies, starring opposite Bruce Willis in *Die Hard*.



#### A Christmas Story

Everyone, including Ralphie's teacher, warned him about the dangers of wanting a Red Ryder Range 200 BB gun for Christmas.



#### Edward Scissorhands

Wynona Ryder dances among the snowflakes created by Edward's ice-sculpting skills.



#### Star Wars Holiday Special

Bea Arthur, along with Harvey Korman, Art Carney, Diahann Carroll and the original *Star Wars* cast, help Chewie celebrate Life Day. George Lucas hates this holiday TV special.



#### Elf

Leon the Snowman helped Buddy begin his journey through the candy cane forest to find his dad in the land of New York City. Leon is often confused with Rudolph's Sam the Snowman.



#### Scrooged

This updated version of *A Christmas Carol* has Bill Murray hitching a cab ride with the ghost of Christmas past.



#### Gremlins

When Grandfather gave the Mogwai to Billy's dad, he told him not to get them wet or feed them after midnight. Trivia: the set for Kingston Falls was also used for *Back to the Future*.



#### Bad Santa

Billy Bob Thornton embodies every sketchy mall Santa we visited as kids. But we wanted to believe, just as this kid does.