

FALL 2023

THE ALBERTA TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION

# ATA Magazine

## *The look of leadership*

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# Feature



## THE LOOK OF LEADERSHIP

Women reflect on uplifting each other to carve new pathways forward.

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ILLUSTRATION BY YUJET CHAN

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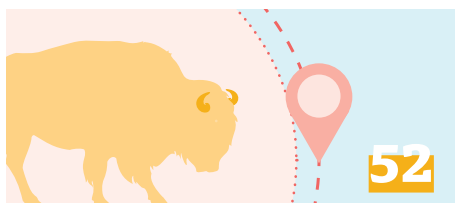
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# ATA Magazine

FALL 2023

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# Contributors



## JAMES LEE CHIAHAN | p. 10



James Lee Chiahan is a Taiwanese-Canadian artist based in Montreal. He is interested in expressing different moments and memories in time. Currently, he is exploring the ideas of impermanence, loss, fear, and the mercurial nature of memory and experience. Some of his clients include the *Washington Post*, *Emergence Magazine* and *The Walrus*.



## BAUNI MACKAY | p. 25



Bauni Mackay served as ATA president during the first six years of the Ralph Klein era (1993–1999). After a rewarding and varied career as a high school English teacher, she retired in 2000. Since then, she has enriched her life with family—including eight grandchildren and two great grandsons—friends and volunteer activities.



## SHARON VOGRINETZ | p. 27



Sharon Vogrinetz retired from the Alberta Teachers' Association after 35 years in the teaching profession—13 years teaching music and 22 years serving teachers in negotiations. While she still comes into the Association office to assist with phone calls and other projects, the rest of her time is spent either travelling or planning travel (Antarctica in 2024!) and on more local adventures with her two grandsons.



## JONI TURVILLE | pp. 14 and 28



Joni Turville recently retired as associate executive secretary of the Alberta Teachers' Association. She is currently pursuing her second act, which includes travelling, consulting writing, research and studying for her professional coaching certification.



## CHRISTINA WHITE PROSSER | p. 34



Dr. Christina White Prosser is an experienced educator and adult learning researcher who is passionate about student learning and participation at all stages of life. She is an adjunct assistant professor in the Werklund School of Education at the University of Calgary and a post doc on a three-year Mitacs research grant. She is currently focused on the continued growth and pivoting professional and personal challenges facing today's adult learners.



## KATHERINE ABBASS | p. 48



Katherine Abbass (she/her) is a writer and English teacher of Phoenician descent. Her work has been published in numerous literary magazines, including *Room*, *Riddle Fence* and *The Antigoneish Review*. She currently resides with her dog, Angelou, on Treaty 6 territory.

The Alberta Teachers' Association respectfully acknowledges that we are located on Treaty 4, 6, 7, 8 and 10 territories—the travelling route, gathering place and meeting grounds for Indigenous Peoples, whose histories, languages, cultures and traditions continue to influence our vibrant community. We are grateful for the traditional Knowledge Keepers and Elders who are still with us today and those who have gone before us. We recognize the land as an act of reconciliation and gratitude to those whose territory we reside on or are visiting.



PHOTO BY RYAN PARKER

**Elissa Corsi**

Editor-in-Chief, *ATA Magazine*  
Rédactrice en chef de l'*ATA Magazine*

## And so the adventure begins

**WHEN I STARTED MY TEACHING CAREER,** never did I imagine that I would have the honour of being editor of the *ATA Magazine*.


But with the retirement of Joni Turville, I have been entrusted with the role of ATA associate executive secretary as well as the role of editor-in-chief of the *ATA Magazine*.

I am absolutely thrilled to embark on a new adventure with all of you, and I am truly looking forward to working with the *ATA Magazine's* amazing team as we explore the boundless horizons of public education across this province.

Being a teacher is a remarkable journey, one that requires passion, dedication and a commitment to lifelong learning. Within the pages of this magazine, we aim to celebrate Alberta teachers' invaluable contributions while igniting a sense of curiosity and discovery in our readership. Further, these pages serve as a platform to connect, collaborate and cultivate a community of educational leaders who are passionate about making a difference. Together, we will delve into the ever-evolving world of teaching, sharing insights, ideas and inspirations that will shape the future of education in Alberta.

**As editor-in-chief, my vision is to foster a space where your voices are heard, where your experiences are valued and where your expertise is celebrated.** Let us learn from one another, growing together as a collective force that drives positive change in our educational landscape.

Thank you for being a part of this vibrant educational community. Your contributions and engagement are vital to our magazine's success. I look forward to reading alongside you and to sharing this incredible journey with you.

So, let the adventure begin! Open your minds, embrace new perspectives and embark on a journey that will inspire, inform and transform. 

## Ainsi débute l'aventure

**JAMAIS JE N'AURAIS IMAGINÉ, AU DÉBUT DE** ma carrière en enseignement, avoir un jour l'honneur d'être rédactrice en chef de l'*ATA Magazine*.


Mais voilà qu'avec le départ à la retraite de Joni Turville, les rôles de secrétaire exécutive associée de l'ATA et de rédactrice en chef de l'*ATA Magazine* m'ont été confiés.

Je suis absolument ravie de me lancer dans une nouvelle aventure avec vous et j'ai réellement hâte de collaborer avec la formidable équipe du *Magazine* afin d'explorer les horizons infinis de l'éducation publique à travers cette province.

Les enseignants suivent un parcours remarquable qui exige de la passion, du dévouement et un engagement à l'égard du perfectionnement continu. Nous visons, dans les pages de ce magazine, à célébrer la contribution inestimable des enseignants de l'Alberta tout en suscitant un sentiment de curiosité et le goût de la découverte chez nos lecteurs. En plus de servir d'espace d'échange et de collaboration, ces pages fournissent un tremplin pour l'émergence d'une communauté de leaders en éducation ayant à cœur de changer le cours des choses. Ensemble, nous examinerons de près le monde en constante évolution de l'enseignement et échangerons des observations, des idées et des inspirations qui façonneront l'avenir de l'éducation en Alberta.

**Ma vision à titre de rédactrice en chef est de créer un espace où vos voix sont entendues, où la valeur de vos expériences est reconnue et où votre expertise est célébrée.** Apprenons les uns des autres et grandissons ensemble en tant que force collective porteuse de changements positifs dans notre paysage éducatif.

Merci de faire partie de cette communauté éducative dynamique. Vos contributions et votre implication sont essentielles au succès de notre magazine. J'ai hâte de le lire à vos côtés et de vivre avec vous cet incroyable périple.

Alors, que l'aventure commence! Ouvrez l'esprit, adoptez de nouvelles perspectives et partez pour un voyage qui saura vous inspirer, vous informer et vous transformer. 

# Letters

## Send us your feedback

We'd like to hear from you! One of the ways we'd like to engage with teachers is by hearing from you regularly. In several locations throughout this magazine are sections calling for ideas and submissions from teachers. Please watch for these and send us your ideas.

## Also please send us ...

- general feedback
- your thoughts on items that you particularly liked (or didn't)
- suggestions for future content
- letters to the editor for possible publication

We really do want to hear from you. After all, this is your magazine.

Email your feedback to Elissa Corsi, editor-in-chief, [elissa.corsi@ata.ab.ca](mailto:elissa.corsi@ata.ab.ca) or Cory Hare, managing editor, [cory.hare@ata.ab.ca](mailto:cory.hare@ata.ab.ca).

### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR — GUIDELINES

#### Word limit: 300

Please include

- your first and last name,
- basic information about your teaching assignment (i.e. school, grade, subject).

All letters are subject to editing for length, clarity, punctuation, spelling and grammar.



PHOTO BY ERIN SOLANO

## Mental health stories resonate

### Readers share their reactions to the Spring 2023 issue

“What a powerful story! Thank you to the writer Celeste for sharing so openly and courageously. Her story of struggle reminds the rest of us that we don't have to be alone when we're struggling. Her story of overcoming encourages us to reach out and to persevere when times are dark. We can't do this important work alone. We need our colleagues — and they need us too.”

— Lauren Guenther, Tschetter Colony School

“I really enjoyed this article and this issue of the magazine. I'd love to read more stories from teachers on their mental health.”

— Laurie Dirsa, Breaking Point Colony School, Manning



## ATA Magazine lands silver award

The ATA Magazine took home a silver award for best illustration at the annual Alberta Magazine Awards hosted by the Alberta Magazine Publishers Association (AMPA) in May.

ATA graphic designer Gela Cabrera Loa earned the second-place finish for an

illustration that appeared in the Unsung Hero section of the magazine's fall 2022 issue. Cabrera Loa's illustration depicts Michelle Ranger, a principal credited with advancing Indigenous education within the Calgary Board of Education.

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PHOTO BY RYAN PARKER

## FROM THE PRESIDENT MOT DU PRÉSIDENT

### Jason Schilling

President, ATA  
Président de l'ATA

## We have work to do to remove barriers

**I HAVE BEEN FORTUNATE IN MY CAREER TO** have worked with and been influenced by many women leaders, starting with my mentor when I was a student teacher. Not only did Arlene Purcell support me as I was learning to become a teacher, but also as I learned to become a leader in my school and in my association. In fact, many of my colleagues can trace their involvement in leadership roles back to Arlene.

For me, Arlene instilled the importance of finding my voice, advocating for what I believe in, and helping guide others in finding their voice. Guiding others is exactly what we must continue to do. As colleagues and as an association, we must create space for women to share their stories, concerns and success.

For many years, the Association has been addressing this by developing women in leadership committees in our locals. While it has been rewarding to see these committees grow and find ways to develop opportunities for women in our profession to connect with one another, we still have much more work to do.

This became pertinently clear to me when I attended a session about allyship at the Association's Women in Leadership Summit in March. Sitting at a table with several female colleagues, I heard how the "old boy's club" still affects our female colleagues' chances of pursuing leadership opportunities and how the next generation of women need to not feel guilty about parenting while pursuing leadership.

Teachers are lifelong learners, but our learning must go beyond books or the latest technology. **We must learn to create a truly inclusive space so women in education and leadership no longer have to fight to be seen.** Allies need to listen, learn, engage in removing barriers and get out of the way. <sup>ATA</sup>

## Nous avons du travail à faire pour éliminer les obstacles

**DANS MA CARRIÈRE, J'AI EU LA CHANCE DE** travailler avec beaucoup de leaders femmes qui m'ont influencé à commencer par mon mentor lorsque j'étais enseignant stagiaire. Non seulement Arlene Purcell m'a soutenu quand j'apprenais à devenir enseignant, mais aussi quand j'apprenais à m'affirmer en tant que leader dans mon école et mon association. En fait, bon nombre de mes collègues lui attribuent l'origine de leurs premiers engagements en tant que leader.

Pour ma part, Arlene m'a inculqué l'importance de me faire entendre, de défendre mes convictions et d'aider les autres à se faire entendre. Guider les autres, c'est exactement ce que nous devons continuer à faire. En tant que collègues et en tant qu'association, nous n'avons d'autre choix que de créer un espace pour que les femmes puissent partager leurs histoires, préoccupations et succès.

Depuis de nombreuses années, l'ATA se penche sur la question et forme des comités de leadership féminin dans ses sections locales. Et même s'il est gratifiant de voir ces comités prendre de l'expansion, et constater que les femmes de notre profession ont de plus en plus d'occasions de se rencontrer pour établir des liens, il nous reste encore beaucoup de travail à faire.

Cela m'a paru évident lorsque j'ai assisté en mars à une séance sur le thème de l'alliance au sommet Women in Leadership organisé par l'ATA. Assis à une table avec plusieurs collègues femmes, j'ai entendu dire que le « club des anciens » a toujours une grande influence sur les possibilités qui leur sont offertes pour accéder à un rôle de leadership et que la prochaine génération de femmes ne devrait surtout pas se sentir coupable d'aspirer à un rôle de leadership alors qu'elles assument déjà des responsabilités parentales.

Les enseignants apprennent tout au long de leur vie certes, mais notre apprentissage doit aller au-delà des livres ou des dernières technologies. **Nous devons apprendre à créer un espace véritablement inclusif afin que les femmes dans l'éducation et dans leurs rôles de leadership n'aient plus à se battre pour être vues.** Il faut que nos alliés écoutent, apprennent, s'engagent à éliminer les obstacles et se tiennent à l'écart. <sup>ATA</sup>

# A Look at Food Insecurity

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## It's on the rise:

In 2011, **12.3%** of Albertans were experiencing food insecurity. In 2022 that number jumped to **20.3%**.

## Some experience it more than others:

**21.7%** of children (people under the age of 18) lived in food insecure households in Alberta. (2021)

**28.9%** of Black households living with food insecurity compared to **11.1%** of white households. (2017-2018)

**30.7%** of Indigenous households in Canada were experiencing food insecurity, twice the amount of white households. (2022)

Between 2000 and 2020, the **average grocery bill** has **increased by 70%**.

**Food security** is when everyone has physical, social and economic access to safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for a healthy lifestyle.

**Food insecurity** is when a household has inadequate or insecure access to food due to financial constraints.

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Archival issues of the **ATA Magazine** can be just as relevant now as they were when originally published, or they can remind us how far we've come. You decide.

Check out these items from the September/October 1973 issue of the **ATA Magazine**, which focused on curriculum.



## Curriculum quandaries 50 YEARS AGO

“

**The tail should not wag the dog;** the examination should not determine the curriculum. Yet, as most teachers know, it is difficult not “to teach to the test.” Often enough, therefore, where examinations have been dispensed with or much modified, the work of schools has undergone rapid and far-reaching change.”

— R. D. Bramwell, *“See What Happens When You Take the Lid Off!”*

“

**Ten years ago Alice Miel published a paper** “Reassessment of the Curriculum – Why?, which developed the thesis that curriculum trends exhibit a cyclical pattern. She described and documented with historical references a spiral pattern in which curriculum theory returns periodically to a previous orientation, retaining the best elements of the previous stage and reformulating the new position to take into account any weaknesses which had been apparent when that general orientation had last been “new.” Using this hypothesis she made predictions about future development in curriculum trends. The paper was convincing in 1963. It is even more convincing in 1973 because the predictions have proved accurate.”

— Priscilla J Eccles, *“In Curriculum, too, History Repeats Itself”*



ILLUSTRATION BY GELA CABRERA | ISTOCK PHOTO ADAPTED



ILLUSTRATION BY MATEUSZ NAPIERALSKI

# From glass ceiling to glass escalator

Transcending gendered expectations in the workplace

**Lisa Everitt**

Executive Staff Officer, ATA

“Women belong in all places where decisions are being made. ... It shouldn’t be that women are the exception.”

— Ruth Bader Ginsburg

**CHARLES FOURIER MAY HAVE** coined the term *féminisme* as long ago as 1837 (*The Feminism Book* 2019), but the gender gap persists, especially for women in leadership positions. Globally and here in Canada, women have a long way to go to achieve gender parity and equity. Using conceptual structures developed by scholars, this article will explain why women are not experiencing parity in the workforce.

The COVID-19 pandemic set back the progress for women on several indicators of equity according to the Global Gender

Gap Index. The World Economic Forum developed the index in 2006 “to benchmark progress towards gender parity and compare countries’ gender gaps across four dimensions: economic opportunities, education, health and political leadership” (2023, p. 9). In 2021, the pandemic increased the gender gap by a generation from 99.5 years to 135.6 years” (Lacey and Bricker 2021). While this measure improved in 2023, the World Economic Forum found that “at the current rate of progress, it will take 131 years to reach full parity” (p. 5). Currently, Canada’s gender gap sits at 77 per cent, down 0.2 percentage points from 2022, and the country ranks “30th of 146 countries surveyed in terms of gender parity” (World Economic Forum 2023, p. 11).

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and its 2023 Gender Social Norms Index, covering 85 per cent of the global population, found that “close to 9 out of 10 men and women hold biases against women” (p. 3). The UNDP also notes that “gender inequality is stark in positions of leadership” (p. 10) at a global level.

Since the 1970s, scholars have examined gender parity in leadership roles to explain the barriers women experience (Diehl et al. 2020). Early studies considered gender stereotypes and role expectations for men and women, using terms such as the *glass ceiling* – “... a situation in which women cannot, in spite of aspiring to, attain leadership positions in their careers” (Everitt 2020, p. 1). The

glass ceiling is an invisible barrier for women in the workplace, but it is not at the same height for every woman because of the multiplier effect of combining gender with other identities such as race and disability. Scholars such as Crenshaw (1989) have called for closer examination of the “intersectional experience [because it] is greater than the sum of racism and sexism” (p. 140) as well as other identities. Although the glass ceiling is useful to understand the barriers women face ascending to leadership roles, it alone cannot explain what the barriers are, what their impact is and what can be done to remove them.

In 2002, Eagly and Karau formulated a helpful conceptual framework for understanding discrimination against women in the workplace. Their framework, called *role congruity theory*, “reaches beyond social role theory to consider the congruity between gender roles and other roles, particularly leadership roles” (p. 575). They proposed two forms of prejudice that female leaders face: 1) women are not favourably evaluated as potential leaders “because leadership is more stereotypical of men than women” (p. 576); and 2) a “less favorable evaluation of the actual leadership behavior of women than men because such behavior is perceived as less desirable in women than men” (p. 575). Women are expected to demonstrate communal characteristics such as affection, helpfulness, sympathy and nurturing, while men are expected to show agentic characteristics such as confidence, ambition, independence and competition. These gendered stereotypes become prejudicial to women who wish to lead because “social perceivers typically construe leadership roles in agentic terms, whereas they expect and prefer that women exhibit communal characteristics” (Eagly and Karau 2002, p. 578).

The durability of gendered expectations as explained by role congruity theory in the workplace can be found in a recent, large-scale study. Benson, Li and Shue (2022) studied promotions for nearly 30,000 workers who were on a management track at a North American retail chain and found that “women receive lower potential ratings and higher performance ratings than men. The gender gap in potential ratings accounts


for up to half of the overall gender gap in promotions” (p. 2). In other words, even if women outperform men, women are rated lower as potential leaders. The authors of this study point to a biased evaluation system and call for a re-examination of this system.

Role congruity theory can also be used to help understand leadership in the teaching profession. Bush (2021) noted that “teaching is a feminised profession in most parts of the world, but the proportion of [female] principals is almost always lower than that of classroom practitioners” (p. 861). The pathway to leadership for men within feminized professions was explored by Williams in 1992. She found that men, “despite their intentions ... face invisible pressure to move up in their professions. As if on a moving escalator, they must work to stay in place” (p. 256). Williams, playing with the idea of glass as a transparent material, called the lifting of men into leadership roles the “glass escalator.”

A more diverse leadership core allows for multiple perspectives, and this builds resilience for organizations to expand what is possible.

The implication of the glass escalator in feminized professions like education, where the basic qualifications are the same, is that men are provided with pathways to leadership and encouraged to be leaders. Those women who reach leadership positions must “engage in behaviors that put men at ease, such as showing meekness and refraining from competitive behavior, to navigate the institutionalized gender dynamics of their workplaces” (United Nations Development Programme 2023, p. 14). Women who do not conform or fit in are not provided with access to leadership opportunities because of normative gatekeeping by those — usually men — in power.

Finally, it is important to understand that the “exclusion [of women] is consequential. At a time of heightened uncertainty, worsening climate challenges and

rising polarization, excluding women from decision making inhibits collective action and closes doors to possible pathways towards addressing shared challenges” (United Nations Development Programme 2023, p. 12). We live in a complex world, and it is vital to expand our leadership talent pool to include women, particularly those who live at the intersections of gender. More diverse leadership allows for multiple perspectives, which builds resilience in organizations and expands what is possible. Understanding our own biases and actively engaging as individuals and organizations are critical to dismantling barriers to leadership opportunities. 

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# Kenny Yeung: Evening the playing field

**Lindsay Yakimyshyn**

Associate Editor, ATA Magazine

**SYSTEM PRINCIPAL** Kenny Yeung embraces his lived experience as he advocates for equitable access to supports and extracurriculars for students.

Yeung grew up in a low socioeconomic area of Calgary. His parents were immigrants who worked multiple jobs to ensure his needs were met. They had no time to ask about his hopes and dreams, no thought of extracurriculars. But this was okay. There was school.

“School became my place where the adults, the teachers became my coaches, my people,” Yeung says, “These were the people who really molded and shaped who I was.”

Yeung became involved in sports at school, and encouraged by his teacher coaches, soon knew he wanted to be a physical education teacher. He was passionate about sports, of course, but as he grew up, he became increasingly focused on ensuring everyone had an opportunity to play — just like he did.

After spending his first years teaching in more affluent areas, Yeung made an intentional move back to his old neighbourhood. He took on a school leadership role at a school that had limited extracurricular sports, no trips and no band program. Yeung changed this. Through relentless grant-writing, creative partnerships and systemwide supports, he was able to provide his students access to rich extracurricular experiences, regardless of their socioeconomic status.

He fondly recalls bringing a group of students to their first soccer tournament.

“They wore shin pads with no socks and mismatched t-shirts, but the kids loved every minute of it. This was like the World Cup to us.”

For subsequent years, Yeung ensured funding was in place for proper soccer socks and matching jerseys, which students wore with great pride.

Moments like this — a student’s first sports tournament, first camping trip, first time holding a violin — keep Yeung pushing forward in his advocacy for equitable supports for schools and students in low socioeconomic contexts.

Yeung has recently shifted gears from school leadership to system principalship, and he revels in being able to champion equity for even more students.

“I’m now in a position where I am having a voice and being an advocate for equity for not only one community and one school, but for 38 schools now,” he says. “Start small, the voice grows, the impact gets bigger.” <sup>ATA</sup>

► **Got an idea?** *Unsung Hero* is a space dedicated to honouring ATA members past and present who have had notable achievements, either in the ATA or in their private lives.

If you know of a member whom you feel should be recognized, please contact section editor Lindsay Yakimyshyn at [lindsay.yakimyshyn@ata.ab.ca](mailto:lindsay.yakimyshyn@ata.ab.ca).

## Kenny Yeung

Committee member,  
CBE CARES (Collaboration  
for Anti-Racism and  
Equity Supports)

Committee member,  
ATA Status of Racialized  
Teachers Working Group

Executive chair,  
Calgary Middle and Junior  
High Athletic Association

Volunteer, Calgary Drop In  
and Rehab Centre Society

ILLUSTRATION BY JAMES LEE CHIAHAN



# Dry eyes, digital eye strain

It's all connected

Alberta Association of Optometrists

**IT CAN BEGIN WITH** a stinging, gritty, scratchy feeling when you blink your eyes. Or maybe the tears just keep coming. Either way it's likely you're dealing with dry eye, and it's something to take seriously.

Everyone has a thin layer of tears that coats the front surface of their eyes. These tears keep our eyes healthy and comfortable and are needed for both overall eye health and clear vision. So, if your eyes don't produce enough tears or produce tears that don't have the proper chemical composition, the result is dry eye.

## What causes dry eye?

Dry-eye symptoms can result from an array of factors: the normal aging process, hormonal changes, arthritis, exposure to

certain environmental conditions, UV exposure, problems with normal blinking or medications such as antihistamines, oral contraceptives or antidepressants. If you're spending a lot of time staring at a screen, that could also be the culprit.

A 2021 survey conducted by the Alberta Association of Optometrists found that adult screen time is well over 10 hours per day and children/teens are not far off.

Teachers, in particular, frequently rely on digital devices to prepare lessons, grade assignments, and communicate with students and parents. Between this type of work and free time that has become screen time, our global digital-dependent society leaves our eyes begging for a break. The reduced blink rate when on devices is one cause of dry eye. In fact,

we tend to blink 66 percent less when on a device. We can also tax our eyes by not correctly positioning our screens.


## How can eye health be supported?

Some simple measures can be taken to support your eye health:

- 1 **Position your screen** about an arm's length from your eyes and 20 degrees below eye level.
- 2 **Keep your room lighting** at the same brightness as your computer screen. Don't stare at the monitor in a dark room.
- 3 **Minimize reflected glare** on your screen by using dimmer switches on lights and protective anti-reflection coatings on glasses.
- 4 **Give your eyes** a 20-20-20 mini break. Every 20 minutes take a 20-second break and focus your eyes on something at least 20 feet away.

If you can, get some outside time — even a few minutes can make a difference.

- 5 **Blink fully.** People not only tend to blink less, but some don't completely close their eyes when blinking.
- 6 **Use appropriate eye drops** prescribed by your optometrist when drops are needed. Using the incorrect eye drops for your specific dry-eye condition can make the issue worse.
- 7 **Ask your optometrist** if anti-fatigue lenses or multifocal contact lenses with anti-fatigue will help. For some people, computer glasses are a solution in reducing eye fatigue.

Teachers can take proactive steps to care for their own eyes. There is Alberta Health coverage for dry-eye appointments with your optometrist, so be sure to tell the clinic the reason for your visit. There is no need to suffer through the effects of dry eye and your eyes deserve the best possible care. For more information, visit [optometrists.ab.ca](http://optometrists.ab.ca). 

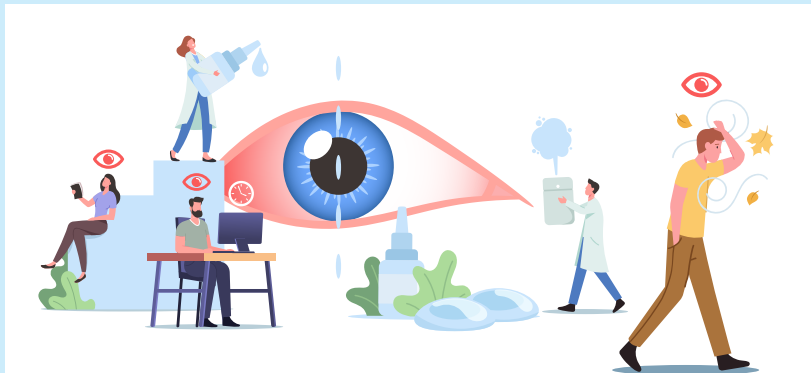
## FAST FACTS

Albertans spend on average of **10.5 hours** using digital devices daily.

**7 in 10 Albertans** experience eye health symptoms as a result of using digital devices.

**3 in 5 Albertans** are concerned about digital eye strain.

**2 in 5 Albertans** experience shoulder, back or neck pain as a result of computer/laptop use at work.

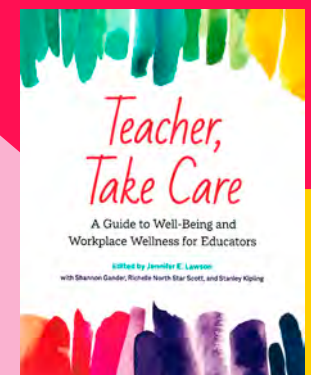


## Symptoms of dry eye and digital eye strain

The time we spend on computers, tablets and phones and on watching television is growing as our day-to-day life becomes increasingly digitized. Digital eye strain is caused by a number of factors, including staring at close-up objects for extended periods of time. Some of the symptoms include the following:

- Headaches
- Eye strain
- Blurred vision
- Eye irritation
- Double vision
- Excessive tearing or dry eyes
- Stinging or burning eyes
- Excessive blinking

## RECOMMENDED RESOURCE



### Teacher, Take Care: A Guide to Well-Being and Workplace Wellness for Educators

Edited by Jennifer E. Lawson

Available through the ATA library.



AI IMAGE GENERATED WITH ADOBE FIREFLY

# Email wisely, connect deeply

Email communication in  
today's classrooms

**Joni Turville**

Former Editor-in-Chief, *ATA Magazine*

**WE'VE ALL BEEN THERE.** An email arrives from a parent or colleague, leaving a pit in our stomach. It could be about an incident with a student, a conflict with a parent or staff member, or any number of issues that produce a sense of dread. In that moment, it can feel tempting to fire off a quick reply, but this can create a flurry of messages that leaves both people feeling angry, hurt or anxious.

Though email may be considered ancient compared to other digital tools such as text messaging, social media and apps, it remains a primary source of communication in most schools.

When dealing with a sensitive or difficult situation, however, emailing is not the best choice of communication tools. Heightened emotions create a high risk that messages could be misinterpreted. Since relationships are key in such situations, a phone call, online meeting or in-person meeting are much better choices to clarify a situation and build understanding.



# Email for teachers

## SOME DOS AND DON'TS

### EMAIL DOS


- Use email to exchange information that is straightforward.
- Let parents and students know when you plan on checking messages. Consider keeping an out-of-office message as a reminder that you are working with students during the day and will not be able to reply immediately.
- Use email to provide information that is direct and factual, such as events and reminders.
- If you receive an angry or confrontational email, get advice from your principal or a colleague about how best to handle it.
- Respond in a timely fashion.
- Write in a professional, courteous manner.
- If you must email outside regular hours, consider using a delayed delivery message on evenings and weekends to avoid constant or needless email checking.
- Be aware that your employer may monitor your email account.
- Follow your school district's acceptable use policy.

### EMAIL DON'TS

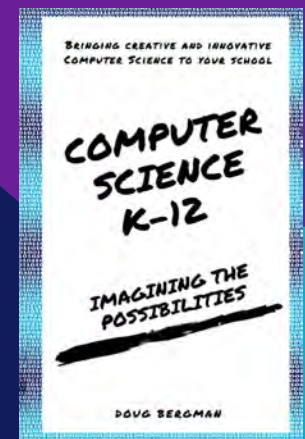
- Don't rely on email alone to communicate. Establish relationships.
- Don't use email to discuss a complex issue or one that has the potential to be misunderstood.
- Don't spend all of your down time including breaks or preps at school responding to email. Our bodies and brains need down time to rest and recover to be at our professional best.
- Don't write anything in an email that you wouldn't want posted on your school's bulletin board.
- Don't cc anyone who does not need to be included and avoid "reply all" whenever possible.

## REASONABLE LIMITS

Schools and school districts can create more optimal conditions through thoughtful email policies. For example, one Alberta school has a policy that states that a reply can be expected within 24 hours on school days (excluding weekends and holidays) and to call instead if the situation requires immediate attention. This ensures that the sender receives a timely response while also allowing teachers to rest and recharge.

Teachers' use of email is complicated by their concern for their students, families and coworkers. As a result, setting limits on when and how we read and respond to communications may be tough. One size does not fit all, but it starts with being mindful about how we use email and other digital communications tools. 

## RECOMMENDED RESOURCE



### Computer Science K–12: Imagining the Possibilities

Doug Bergman

Available through the ATA library.

## Let's get magazine-eee

Follow these steps in Google Slides to create an engaging magazine cover:

- Set page size to 8.5 x 11.
- Choose a cover photo from Pixabay.
- Use the shape tool to add a frame.
- Change the frame colour to complement the photo.
- Insert word art for the magazine title and summary.
- Add article text boxes.

These steps are explained in detail in a video created by Darren Maltais, a teacher with Black Gold School Division and a member of the ATA's Education Technology specialist council. Maltais's video also includes templates for inside pages, and his approach can be adapted to create projects such as infographics and social media templates.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-aHqVPjg8IE&t=31s>

## Sharing the lead

Diversity leads work with students to celebrate diverse cultures

**Lindsay Yakimishyn**

Associate Editor, *ATA Magazine*



**TEACHERS AND CULTURAL LEADS** Gaganpreet Lucky and Brett Ludwig celebrate diversity by creating space for students to share their own cultures.

Lucky and Ludwig have been working together as the cultural leads at Alex Janvier School since 2017. Their partnership works well because of their shared principle that “celebrating cultural events at school brings the students closer to each other’s cultural beliefs and traditions to develop respect and understanding for each other’s customs and traditions.”

What does it mean to be the cultural leads? Lucky and Ludwig are responsible for holding meetings, facilitating conversations and supporting students to stage cultural events throughout the school year.

When it comes to choosing which cultural days to recognize and how to mark each occasion, Lucky and Ludwig let the students take the lead. “Student leaders are critical to these celebrations. Their voice is what drives this work,” Lucky says.

With the support of Lucky and Ludwig, students volunteer their time to serve on committees and make each cultural day at the school special. The cultural days give students the chance to share their culture with others and to learn about and gain appreciation for different cultures in a fun way — getting to experience

the decorations, dancing and food even as they deepen their understanding of each others’ values and world views.

With students representing nationalities from all over the world, there are many opportunities to recognize the different cultures within the school. In the past, the school has celebrated Diwali, Arab Cultural Day, Eid, Nowruz, Lunar New Year, Black History Month, Indigenous Peoples’ Day and Bonifacio Day.

Lucky and Ludwig have seen an overwhelmingly positive response from students, parents and staff, as aside from being enjoyable and engaging, these cultural days can have a lasting impact on the school community.

“Celebrating different cultures at school will bring to light new thinking and understanding,” Ludwig says. “Students need to understand there is never a right or wrong way — we are all different and we learn and grow together.”



**We are less when we don't include everyone.**

— *Stuart Milk, 2SLGBTQQA+ human rights activist*



ILLUSTRATION BY GELA CABRERA LOA

## TAKE NOTE

### NATIONAL RIBBON SKIRT DAY


**January 4** is National Ribbon Skirt Day in Canada, first marked in 2023. The day is an opportunity to reflect on the continued discrimination and racism faced by Indigenous people and to honour the traditions — including traditional clothing such as the ribbon skirt — of Indigenous communities.

### KWANZAA

Kwanzaa, held annually from **December 26 to January 1**, celebrates African heritage. A cultural rather than religious holiday, the seven days of Kwanzaa reflect seven principles: umoja (unity), kujichagulia (self-determination), ujima (collective work and responsibility), ujamaa (cooperative economics), nia (purpose), kuumba (creativity) and imani (faith).

## TOP TIPS

### Organizing inclusive cultural celebrations at your school?

1. **Build relationships** with your students and, as appropriate, gather information about cultural diversity through student surveys.
2. **Gather and share** information (relevant books, music, videos, etc.) about the culture being celebrated in advance of an event.
3. **Connect with community** groups, parents and staff who can bring authenticity to this work.
4. **Check out** the ATA library's seasonal web guide for inspiration and ideas. 



## RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

### LEADING FOR EQUITY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

*Systemic Transformation in Canadian Education*

Edited by Andréanne Gélinas-Proulx and Carolyn M. Shields

### Leading for Equity and Social Justice: Systemic Transformation in Canadian Education

Andréanne Gélinas-Proulx and Carolyn M. Shields

Available through the ATA library.

- ▶ [Learn more](#) about building cultural competence in yourself and your school community (ATA workshops are a great first step!).



# Built to Lead

**Lindsay Yakimyshyn**

Associate Editor, *ATA Magazine*

**W**hat does it take to be a leader in education? Superintendent Krimsen Summers proves the value of compassion and brave vulnerability, as she forges relationships across and beyond school communities to best support students.

\* \* \* \* \*

It was the 1990s.

Summers had been teaching at a First Nations reserve school near Lac La Biche before moving to Sir George Simpson School in St. Albert just a few days into the new school year.

“Even as a very young teacher, her manner with her students was a joy to observe,” recalls colleague Lois Gluck. “She genuinely loved them, respected them, listened to them, worried about them and brought out the best in them.”

An elementary specialist with a focus on inclusive education, Summers was a champion for all students, but particularly for those with diverse needs. Her passion for inclusive education served her well as she transitioned into leadership roles, first as an assistant principal and then as director of student services.

“She brought an extremely balanced approach to leadership, effectively melding her deep compassion for students and staff with her commitment to doing what’s right,” says Barry Wowk, who was superintendent at that time. “I always felt her background in special education has provided her with a real advantage in her approach to leadership. She understands that individuals come with their own personal story and experiences.”

In her director role, Summers shone by capitalizing on her teaching experiences and showing how she could turn ideas into actions with sustainable outcomes for the division and its students.

Due to her experience with inclusive education, she recognized a need for a preschool program and knew where to access government funding. Summers found space and money to start a preschool program that is still operating, to better meet the needs of the children in the community.

While Summers might have been content to stay in the director role, where she was already making meaningful change, she was pushed to take another step, and another.

She says that without the encouragement of Gluck, Wowk and other senior leaders, she most likely would never have left the director of student services position: “Each of these mentors in their own way nudged me forward, and encouraged me to continue learning and growing.”

Summers took on the role of associate superintendent of programming and planning, deputy superintendent and then superintendent. Now in her sixth year as superintendent of St. Albert School Division, Summers is one of 20 women superintendents in Alberta (representing less than one-third of Alberta’s superintendents).

## Trust to your toes

Women in leadership must navigate societal gender expectations — Stanford scholar Marianne Cooper describes how they are expected to be nurturing and helpful rather than ruthless and detached. While this can be a complicated norm to traverse, kindness and compassion are an asset for Summers.

Summers’s right-hand woman, deputy superintendent Marianne Barrett, says one of Summers’s greatest strengths as a leader has been her ability to build relationships.

“Everybody says that relationships are key and that’s their priority, but I see her living that every day,” Barrett says.

Barrett lauds the way in which Summers makes time for everyone, from her team to teachers to parents, and values each staff member’s contribution to the school community.

Working with Summers in division office, Barrett has seen how Summers establishes and leverages relationships to address matters of importance to staff, students and parents, with simultaneous directness and kindness.

“She is deeply empathetic but is not afraid to make tough decisions,” Barrett says.

From tackling school boundary issues to racism, Summers pushes forward to create positive change, but does so with

## SUPERINTENDENT KRIMSEN SUMNERS SAYS

**What makes a good leader in education?**  
“Gut instinct. Honesty and integrity.  
Lead from the heart, not from the head.”

**What is your advice for women considering leadership roles?**  
“You don’t have to have all the answers.  
Part of being a leader is being willing to learn alongside your staff, understand what their needs are and then take it to the next step.”



humility. Her respect for her team, which includes Barrett, as well as two associate superintendents, is unmistakable. Summers describes the synergy and equitable perspectives within the team, emphasizing the importance of creating a space where everyone can find the best way forward, together.

“Trust and relationships are key. I believe that to my toes.” Summers says, “If you don’t have the trust, it doesn’t matter what magical idea you come up with, it’s not going to work. People need to know from a leadership perspective that you’re invested in them.”

### **Brave vulnerability**

Another key to Summers’s successful leadership is her vulnerability — her willingness to put herself and her ideas out there.

“She was never afraid to provide an idea or divergent thought to ensure that our team thought of all the angles of a difficult decision,” Wowk says.

Being vulnerable can be difficult, though, especially given systemic barriers to women moving into leadership.

Individual choices about pursuing leadership or not vary, with each woman having their own unique set of circumstances. At the same time, researchers Raina Brands and Isabel Fernandez-Mateo have identified patterns that suggest women have higher expectations placed on them and are less inclined to pursue leadership once rejected.

Speaking to the courage required to take the leap into leadership, Summers says, “Vulnerability doesn’t mean weakness; actually it’s the exact opposite,”

While Summers never felt that her gender posed any barriers on her path to leadership, she recognizes that her experience is not universal and that intentional supports are necessary to encourage women leaders.

“I have been surrounded by really strong women leaders and really strong women role models who were constantly encouraging,” she recalls, “My mom and dad always believed that there are no holds barred. If you want it, you go get it. It wasn’t an *if*, it was *when*.”

In her division, promoting this type of mindset in potential leaders takes the form of professional learning opportunities, formal mentorship or informal mentorship. Summers is particularly pleased to see gender parity in the division’s leadership and administration.

“I am proud to say that we are starting to get more women leaders who want to be in administration. That hasn’t always been the case.”

Summers knows that access to learning opportunities and mentorship is vital. But what truly matters is fostering the confidence — the brave vulnerability — in women to take the next step.

“Women have to be courageous sometimes, not sit back and wait,” Summers reflects, “If you’ve got a dream to be something, then get out there and start forging to get where you want to be.” <sup>ATA</sup>

# Understanding the

WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP

# Barriers

**Lisa Everitt**

Executive Staff Officer, ATA

While the ATA has been inquiring into questions of gender equity in the profession for decades, in 2018 the ATA renewed its focus on women in leadership through the establishment of a subcommittee of the Diversity, Equity and Human Rights Committee.

The subcommittee — which later became the Women in Leadership (WIL) Committee — created a needs assessment survey, conducted in 2019, to assess the perception of gender-based discrimination in the teaching profession, barriers to women in leadership for both school divisions and the Association, and possible supports for women in the teaching profession.

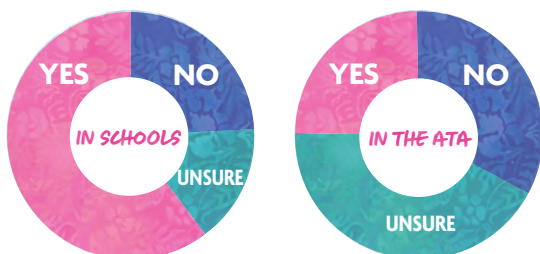
The survey revealed evidence of gender-based discrimination in schools and the ATA.

Participant feedback revealed three main sources of discrimination: normative gatekeeping, gender-based stereotyping and the impact of family responsibilities on career progression.

In addition to perceiving gender-based discrimination in school jurisdictions and the Association, participants identified other barriers to leadership for women in the profession, including a lack of time, resources and encouragement to develop as leaders.

As for supports experienced, participants identified encouragement from colleagues, family and friends for involvement in the Association or school leadership as the top support.

## DISCRIMINATION BASED ON GENDER 2019



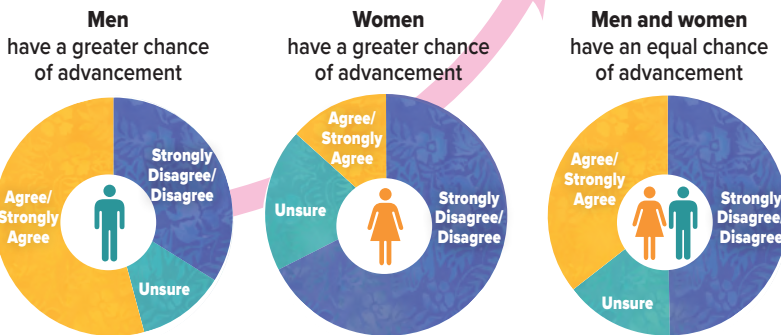
BARRIERS TO LEADERSHIP FOR WOMEN IN THE PROFESSION INCLUDE A LACK OF TIME, RESOURCES AND ENCOURAGEMENT TO DEVELOP AS LEADERS.

When asked about formal supports the ATA could offer for growing women’s leadership capacity in Alberta, two-thirds of participants identified the development of networks of support and mentorship across the province for women leaders.

With this data in mind, the WIL Committee provides policy recommendations that support the development of women’s leadership capacity, plans and organizes an annual summit, provides support to local WIL committees and disseminates women in educational leadership research.

Having awareness of and insight into the gender-based discrimination faced, the barriers experienced and the supports desired can lead to positive steps forward. Through network-building across the province, important conversations are emerging about the gendered nature of leadership and what can be done to support women in the profession to reach their leadership potential. <sup>ATA</sup>

## DO YOU BELIEVE



## SUPPORTS

	Association Involvement	School Leadership
I received encouragement from family and friends	44.4%	85.5%
I received encouragement from colleagues	71.0%	76.5%
I had access to cohort groups and training for leadership	12.7%	42.5%
I had access to mentorship opportunities	18.3%	32.5%

## KEY TERMS

**NORMATIVE GATEKEEPING** is a concept arising from the literature that explains how individuals and organizations conceptualize who best represents a leader and the practices that reinforce the selection of types of leaders.

**GENDER-BASED STEREOTYPING** refers to social expectations of how men and women ought to operate in society.

**Gender is not binary.** For the purposes of the needs assessment study, however, *woman* denotes those in the profession who identify as female.



Sarah Adomako-Ansah

**My current role is...** Since recently completing my secondment as the educator-in-residence at the Canadian Museum for Human Rights, I have returned to the Edmonton Catholic School Division, now as its equity, diversity, inclusion and antiracism consultant.

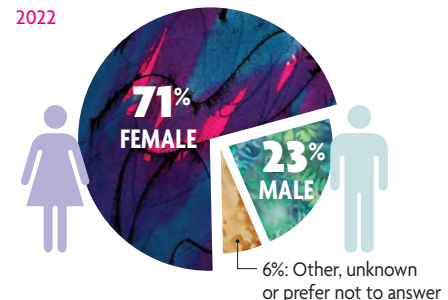
**Being a woman in leadership in the profession means...** Serving as a role model and supporting other women and girls to help them achieve the goals they set out to achieve.

**It was important for me as a woman to take on leadership roles in the profession because...** There are not many people who look like me in educational leadership in this province, and it is time to see a change in who we look up to.

**I was uplifted by and/or I uplift other women in the profession by...** Finding opportunities for others. It is important to me that other racialized educators are recognized for all the good they do for their students every day. <sup>ATA</sup>

## ATA MEMBERSHIP

2022





# Breaking glass: Alberta women in educational leadership



**1909**

*Kate Chegwin*

First woman in school administration — vice-principal (Edmonton)



**1918**

*Rachel J Coult's*

First woman elected to Provincial Executive Council



**1949**

*Marian Gimby*

First woman ATA vice-president



**1951**

*Marian Gimby*

First woman ATA president



**1990**

*Karen Ingalls*

First woman ATA coordinator (Operations)



**1985**

*ATA Magazine*

Women in Education Special Edition



**1969**

*Mary Jo Williams*

First woman ATA staff officer



**1956**

*Mary Crawford*

First woman awarded honorary membership



**1991**

ATA strikes Women in Education Committee



**1993**

Breaking the Barriers Women in Administration Conference



**1994**

ATA strikes Task Force on Women in Administration



**1998**

ATA strikes Gender Equity in Education Committee (former Women in Education Committee)



**2020**

ATA publishes Women in Educational Leadership Needs Assessment Survey Report



**2019**

*Joni Turville*

First woman associate executive secretary

ATA Women in Leadership inaugural summit

ATA establishes Women in Leadership Committee



**2018**

ATA strikes Women's Leadership Subcommittee of Diversity, Equity and Human Rights Committee



**2008**

*Jacquie Skjott*

First woman assistant executive secretary

Information provided by Maggie Shane, archivist.

# the same tribe:

honouring relationships uplifts us all

**Gail-Ann Wilson Mitchell**

Executive Staff Officer, ATA



**BY MIDDAY, THE INVITING AROMA** of dinner wafted through the house. Within the tiny kitchen, my Caribbean aunties reached across and dashed behind each other with grace and precision — their beautiful choreography of cooking. Their recipes were intended to be my inheritance. I was grateful, but the repetition of onion slicing and pot stirring ran counter to my sense of adventure. I leaned

against the doorway, contemplating escape.

A hand settled on my shoulder and steered me back to a nearby chair. It was Mom's dearest friend, Auntie Dee. She was family, even though we had no blood connection. She slipped a piece of gum into my hand, carefully concealed to avoid my mother's watchful eyes.

"Do you know how I'm related to you?" she asked. Leaning in on the wooden chair, I drew closer. She whispered, "We belong to the same tribe."


Her ashy hands circled over my head as she continued.

"All of these women raised you from a child. It is our belief that I am only good if all my sisters are good."

This moment shaped the fundamental convictions that I hold as a woman of colour in leadership; each member of the tribe has a role in the success of another.

My tribe has taught me that the most vital qualities of leadership stem from honouring relationships.

The real inheritance, I now know, is the recipe for women uplifting women:

- **Create a network of empowered women who form your trusted tribe.** Appreciate that your own success is indebted to women who have uplifted and assisted you. Move beyond a mindset of doing everything yourself. Use the wisdom and experience of your tribe, ensuring that the rise of one member leads to the uplifting of all.
- **Normalize excellence, especially for women of colour.** Resist the urge to downplay achievements and camouflage talents to fit in. Overcome self-doubt; it is the ultimate betrayal of a woman's abilities. Balancing family, housekeeping and a career amplifies the adage that "a woman holds a knife at the sharp end." Embrace this as strength and grit. It will inspire others to experience their own greatness.
- **Widen the door to bring others along with you.** Break the cycle of only helping those whom you resemble. Be an advocate and mentor, particularly for women of colour, helping others recognize and reach their leadership potential. 

*"I AM ONLY GOOD  
IF ALL MY SISTERS  
ARE GOOD."*



*Lynn Leslie*


**My current role is...** Learning services supervisor, new curriculum implementation. ATA Council for School Leadership president.

**Being a woman in leadership in the profession means...** Having the courage to lean into new opportunities, discomfort and uncertainty, even when you think you are not good enough.

**It was important for me as a woman to take on leadership roles in the profession because...**

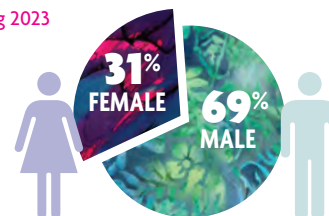
I want to make a difference for students and teachers. As a school board trustee, I saw the amazing work happening in schools and I wanted to be part of that work; I went back to school to become a teacher. Now, as an education leader, it is important to me to support others who are balancing home and career while pursuing their dreams.

**I was uplifted by and/or I uplift other women in the profession by...**

Others helped give me a voice, walked alongside me, and encouraged me to take risks and believe that I am good enough. It is easy to fall back into self-doubt, so having friends and colleagues who listen, support, encourage, challenge and mentor me has been essential for my continued personal and professional growth. 

## ALBERTA SUPERINTENDENTS

as of spring 2023



# the importance of making your mark

**Bauni Mackay**

Former ATA President

**ABOUT A YEAR AFTER I RETIRED**, I attended the speech from the throne at the Alberta legislature. After this event, Lieutenant Governor Lois Hole, Premier Ralph Klein and Mrs. Colleen Klein formed a receiving line to greet people. As I shook hands with Premier Klein, he asked what I had been doing since my years as ATA president and then said, "Well, we wish you were still the president."

I was stunned.

This was the man whose government I had vilified publicly and passionately almost daily for six years. When I responded that he wished this because my (highly competent, highly regarded) male successor was tougher than I had been,

the premier said, "Oh no, you were much tougher."


\* \* \* \* \*

When I retired from teaching in 2000, I naively thought that we were well on our way to resolving the issue of gender equity in education leadership. The trajectory was positive, with more women superintendents and principals being appointed. Although in my 30-year high school teaching career in Alberta and the United States, women sometimes occupied the assistant superintendent, assistant principal or department head position, seldom did they rise above that. I had only one female superintendent and one female principal during my career, but there appeared to be a cause for optimism for future generations of teachers. And yet here we are in 2023, still grappling with the issue.

While I would love to say that the ATA provides a model of leadership reflecting the demographics of membership, it does not. Although there are several women staff officers, several women on Provincial Executive Council and several women presidents of ATA locals, men continue to dominate both elected and staff leadership. There has never been a woman executive secretary of the ATA, and this continues to be the case. I was the seventh

woman president, and two of my three immediate predecessors were women so, again, there appeared to be cause for optimism. However, since my term there has been only one woman president.

At this time, when public education continues to be threatened by regressive and narrow-minded governments, and when extremist voices are getting louder and more ridiculous, women must be at the table in sufficient numbers to influence the future of public education and of the teaching profession. Women must speak to the issues attacking and diminishing public education; their perspective is not only critical to maintaining and enhancing their own working conditions and remuneration but also to strengthening the role of public education in preparing young people to take their place in a changing society and a sometimes shaky democracy.

I felt compelled to lead loudly, passionately and publicly during the Klein years, even when it meant embarrassing, or even angering, some of my colleagues. Even when it meant being insulted or threatened; even when I was told I was too emotional, too strident or too obstreperous, I considered it a privilege to be in that position at that time. I had a contribution to make and I made it. 



Julia McDougall


**My current role is...** An Indigenous Student Services cultural teacher with the Fort McMurray Public School Division, supporting students, families and staff in three high schools.

**Being a woman in leadership in the profession means...** Sharing authentic life stories, showing how fostering relationships leads to understanding the main message in oral storytelling and in the creation stories. Raising cultural awareness is a vital part of successful leadership.

**It was important for me as a woman to take on leadership roles in the profession because...** My leadership speaks volumes when it comes to sharing and learning through the lens of Indigenous women. I remain committed to furthering the reach of Indigenous

"RAISING CULTURAL AWARENESS IS A VITAL PART OF SUCCESSFUL LEADERSHIP."

education and spreading the knowledge of positive Indigenous influences.

**I was uplifted by and/or I uplift other women in the profession by...** I was influenced and uplifted by mother's hard work and determination in whatever she set her mind to learn. She loved to learn and raised me to believe that I can achieve anything I set my mind to. I was blessed to have her share her life with me until she reached the age of 93. 



Joelle Tymchuk

**My current role is...** Grade 9 English Language Arts (ELA) teacher, ELA department head and mentor.

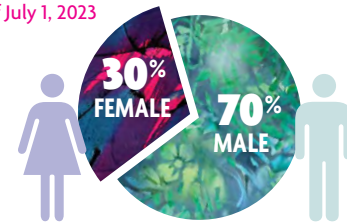
**Being a woman in leadership in the profession means...** Getting to work with women who are wiser than me, from so many backgrounds, with so many talents, and learn from them as we all row through the same waters. I then share those learnings with women just beginning their teaching careers.

**It was important for me as a woman to take on leadership roles in the profession because...** The upper echelons of education are still very male-centered. There are women coming up in the profession with such incredible ideas, drive and potential, and women in positions of leadership can help lift them to the next level.

**I was uplifted by and/or I uplift other women in the profession by...** I have always worked alongside great women who led with heart and conviction: from my first English

### ATA PROVINCIAL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL MEMBERS

as of July 1, 2023



department head who showed me how to love ELA, to the assistant principal who made us all feel like a family, to my current administrative team and my sisters at my school where we look out for each other.

I uplift other queer women who may be facing intersectional roadblocks by mentoring them and steering them to great resources and spaces. I want them to feel that there is community for them and know they have the support of other queer women who have walked the same paths. <sup>ATA</sup>

"IT'S IMPORTANT TO RECOGNIZE THAT **WOMEN HAVE VALUABLE CONTRIBUTIONS TO MAKE, WITH DIFFERENT WOMEN BRINGING DIFFERENT KNOWLEDGE TO THE TABLE.**"

—Sharon Vogrinetz



Kathy Jones-Husch

**My current role is...** Principal of a K–6 Catholic fine arts-focused elementary school.

**Being a woman in leadership in the profession means...** Stepping into a natural place of nurturing and challenging others in ways that have the most impact. Teacher leadership should reflect our profession, so when women are in leadership, *everyone* benefits.

**It was important for me as a woman to take on leadership roles in the profession because...** Leadership roles allow me to bring my own voice, and the voices of others, to the table. By engaging with people at all levels and in all roles in education, witnessing alongside them and then taking action through my

leadership, I am able to positively impact the quality of teaching and learning. By entering formal leadership, I also knew I would be a visible role model for my students and my daughter. That means a lot to me.

**I was uplifted by and/or I uplift other women in the profession by...** Many women have seen my strengths and invited me to step into leadership roles, ATA greats and my teaching colleagues alike. Many female colleagues continue to support and encourage me, making this hard work doable! I consciously strive to recognize the leadership qualities in others to pay forward what has been given to me. <sup>ATA</sup>



Maryse Simon

**Mon rôle actuel est celui...** d'enseignante en première année dans une école francophone.

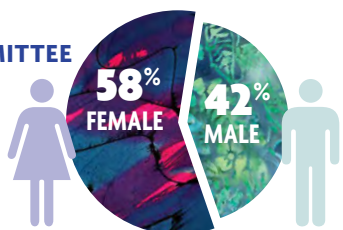
**Le fait d'être une femme dans un rôle de leadership au sein de la profession signifie...** de contribuer à l'égalité des chances pour les femmes, de devenir un modèle pour elles et de faire face à des défis tels que les stéréotypes de genre et les attentes sociales traditionnelles liées aux rôles de genre. À mes yeux, le leadership, c'est l'implication et l'engagement.

**Il était important pour moi, en tant que femme, d'assumer des rôles de leadership au sein de la profession parce que...** j'ai besoin d'en faire plus, de m'impliquer, d'avoir des projets, mais surtout d'essayer de faire une différence, pour les élèves, mais aussi dans mon milieu scolaire et dans ma profession. Je crois que les femmes doivent assumer des rôles de leadership dans le milieu scolaire pour promouvoir l'égalité des chances et l'inclusion, pour servir de modèles pour les autres femmes et pour apporter des perspectives et des expériences différentes qui peuvent enrichir la prise de décision et améliorer les résultats dans le système éducatif.

**Comment ai-je été encouragée et inspirée par d'autres femmes au sein de la profession, ou comment les ai-je encouragées et inspirées?** J'ai toujours été encouragée par ma famille, mes leaders scolaires et certaines collègues à aller plus loin et à poursuivre ce qui me passionne. J'aime être entourée de personnes inspirantes, motivantes, stimulantes. J'aime collaborer et réaliser de nouveaux projets! J'aime le rayonnement, valoriser ce que nous avons accompli, mais j'aime particulièrement faire briller mes collègues. J'espère les inspirer autant qu'elles m'inspirent. <sup>ATA</sup>

**ATA PROVINCIAL  
STANDING COMMITTEE  
FIELD MEMBERS**

as of July 1, 2023



# at the Table

## Sharon Vogrinetz

Former Assistant Executive Secretary, ATA



**BACK IN 1983**, my second year of teaching, I became involved in the Alberta Teachers' Association (ATA). In the early 1990s, I started local collective bargaining and became an economic consultant. With this experience under my belt, I began working at the ATA in 1995 as the first woman staff officer hired in the Teacher

Welfare program area, which was home to the ATA's bargaining function. Many times, I was the only woman in the bargaining room.

Over the years, women have had to carve out space in male-dominated venues and cope with misogyny (not even thinly disguised), persistently showing up to ensure our voices are heard and our issues respected. What needed and has started to be recognized in the bargaining context is that women bring a valuable perspective that can improve the working lives of all teachers.

Because women often still bear the primary responsibility for managing households and children, many bring valuable insight to the bargaining table on issues such as

- maternity and parental leave,
- family medical leave,
- child care and elder care,
- part-time and flexible working arrangements (without losing contract status), and
- assignable time and reasonable workload expectations.

Such insights and perspectives may align with the work-life balance needs of anyone with a family, regardless of their gender identity, enabling all teachers to have long and satisfying careers. It's important to recognize that women have valuable contributions to make, with different women bringing different knowledge to the table. So, how can we bolster women's place at the bargaining table?

Groups engaged in bargaining activities need to foster a climate where women (and all teachers) are welcomed and valued. With this in mind, groups and committees might consider

- covering child care (or elder care) costs,
- ensuring meetings are held at reasonable times and
- providing release time so meetings do not extend an already busy day.

Most of all, all meetings must be safe spaces where everyone is encouraged to speak and knows their voice will be respected. <sup>ATA</sup>

# from School Rep to Senior Leadership

**Joni Turville**

Former Associate Executive Secretary, ATA

**VOLUNTEERING WITH THE** Alberta Teachers' Association changed my career and life.

This may sound like an overstatement, but it isn't at all.

Picture this: I was a fresh-faced teacher, new to the profession. I was shy and nervous about speaking in front of colleagues (though I could sing and do cartwheels in front of a classroom of students). Leadership was not on my radar screen at all. Then, a colleague volun-told me to be the ATA school representative and I relented, not knowing at all what that role entailed. And that's where it started.

Over the course of my career, I got progressively more involved in ATA activities, serving on my convention association and becoming an Association instructor (and later joining the ATA as staff). While I anticipated that my work would benefit my profession and my colleagues, I did not anticipate how my volunteering in ATA roles would help me develop the skills and experience necessary to move from classroom teacher to coordinator of several districtwide projects to associate executive secretary of the Association.

Here are just a few of the skills I gained from my ATA service:

- Project management
- Writing
- Event planning
- Public speaking
- Facilitating adult learning
- Budgeting and annual reporting

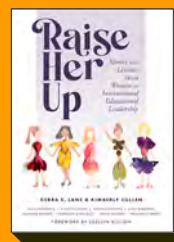
If you're looking to make a difference and grow as a leader, I encourage you to get involved with your ATA. Whatever your interests and skills, there are many ways to contribute to this vibrant professional organization — and it may benefit you, too, more than you expect. <sup>ATA</sup>

## How can you get involved and hone your professional skills?

- Run for positions in your ATA local (e.g., local executive, teacher welfare committee, negotiations subcommittee, professional development committee, local communications officer or political engagement officer positions).
- Apply to sit as a representative on a provincial ATA committee.
- Join a specialist council.
- Apply to join one of the ATA's corps (instructor corps, administrator instructor corps, professional development facilitators, Indigenous education professional development facilitators).
- Submit articles to the *ATA News* or *ATA Magazine*.

## RESOURCES

### BOOKS



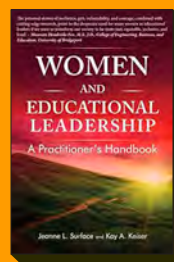
*Raise Her Up: Stories and Lessons From Women in International Educational Leadership*

Debra E. Lane,  
Kimberly Cullen



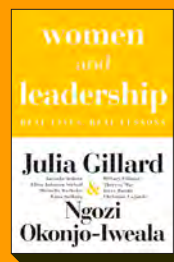
*Sivumut — Towards the Future Together: Inuit Women Educational Leaders in Nunavut and Nunavik*

Fiona Walton,  
Darlene O'Leary



*Women and Educational Leadership: A Practitioner's Handbook*

Jeanne L. Surface



*Women and Leadership: Real Lives, Real Lessons*

Julia Gillard,  
Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala

### PODCAST



*Rising Tide Radio: The Podcast For Women In Educational Leadership*

[www.thecompellededucator.com/p/rising-tide-radio-podcast.html](http://www.thecompellededucator.com/p/rising-tide-radio-podcast.html)

### WEB RESOURCE



ATA library guide on Women's History Month (Oct) and Person's Day (Oct 18)

<https://teachers-ab.libguides.com/c.php?g=713310&p=5083185>

Resources available through the ATA library: [library@ata.ab.ca](mailto:library@ata.ab.ca)

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# Doctor's Note:

*"It's a fact: 25% of kids begin Grade 1 with an undiagnosed eye problem."*

**Dr. Michelle Duke, Optometrist**



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# Looking forward

Creating a hopeful vision for the future of public education in Alberta

## Phil McRae

Associate Coordinator, Research, ATA

“Everything that is done in the world is done by hope.”

— Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

**IN THE FALL OF 2022** and winter of 2023, more than 800 Albertans, from Medicine Hat to Grande Prairie, participated in the Stand for Public Education round-table engagement process, both in person and online.

Attendees included parents/guardians, community members, business leaders, teachers, elected school board and municipal leaders, and representatives of Indigenous and francophone communities. The collective insights of these citizens are of great value, in the service of a more hopeful future for all Albertans.

Participants identified five key issues and priority solutions they believed would strengthen Alberta’s public education system now and in the future. Their voices and solutions helped the Association form a core vision for the future of public education in Alberta.

### WHAT WE HEARD FROM ALBERTANS: SOLUTIONS TO STRENGTHEN PUBLIC EDUCATION

**Key issue #1:** Growing class sizes; increased complexity

**Solution:** Reduce class sizes and support complexity. Classroom complexity refers to students with multiple needs in one class, including learning, behavioural, physical, social and emotional complexities.

- Hire more teachers. Build more schools.
- Support inclusion by reducing class sizes even further when students require more individualized supports.

**Key issue #2:** Curriculum creation without teacher input

**Solution:** Modernize curriculum and include teachers.

- Pause the expansion of new curriculum development.
- Include teachers, education leaders and curriculum experts in every part of the curriculum creation process, from development to implementation.
- Put more emphasis on critical thinking and practical learning.
- Reduce the emphasis on provincial standardized testing.



Albertans understand the importance of a strong education system and the critical role it plays in strengthening our society, democracy and economy.

**Key issue #3:** Students not receiving required learning supports

**Solution:** Increase access to key learning supports.

- Hire more support staff, including educational assistants.
- Restore program unit funding for early learning supports.
- Develop and expand readily available mental health supports for students and families.
- Expand access to speech therapists, occupational therapists and mental health experts.
- Ensure every student has access to a school counsellor.

**Key issue #4:** Inequity in education

**Solution:** Ensure all students have access to high-quality public education.


- Prioritize public dollars for public schools.
- Implement strategies to better support Indigenous, francophone, immigrant, and rural students and families living in poverty.
- Create a plan to recruit and retain teachers in rural Alberta.

**Key issue #5:** Deteriorating conditions due to lack of investment

**Solution:** Invest in public education.

- Provide a high-quality education system that benefits from sustainable operational funding.
- Restore per-student public education funding to above the national average.
- Protect and stabilize funding, regardless of which government is in power.
- Recruit and retain more teachers while ensuring better working conditions.

Albertans understand the importance of a strong education system and the critical role it plays in strengthening our society, democracy and economy. This understanding has deep roots in the history of our communities.

Through our public forums and deep conversations, hundreds of Albertans clearly identified five integrated solutions that they hope will keep our education system strong into the future. We must now use the solutions to form a framework of actions, each one serving as a step along a path to a stronger, brighter future for Alberta’s children and youth. 

# Stand for Education Public Forums

What we heard from Albertans:  
solutions to strengthen public education



## REDUCE CLASS SIZES AND SUPPORT COMPLEXITY

“A cap on class sizes and more funding for support in our diverse classrooms are of the utmost importance.”  
— Alberta teacher



## MODERNIZE CURRICULUM

“Put more emphasis on critical thinking and practical learning instead of rote memorization.”  
— Alberta community member



## PROVIDE LEARNING SUPPORTS

“Readily available mental health supports for students and families, including positions in each school dedicated to connection and re-engagement.”  
— Alberta parent



## FOCUS ON EQUITY

“A strong public system is imperative if we are to remain a strong democracy. Every child should have the opportunity to develop their potential in a caring, inclusive school.”  
— Alberta grandparent



## INVEST IN PUBLIC EDUCATION

“I would like to see funding that is stable and not dependent on which government is in power. We should not have to be debating funding and fighting for every dollar.”  
— Alberta business owner



▶ The full research report can be found on the Association’s website: [www.teachers.ab.ca/professional-development/education-research](http://www.teachers.ab.ca/professional-development/education-research)



# Gaining insights, opening doors, creating connection

## Exploring the benefits of educational exchanges

### Christina White Prosser

Adjunct Assistant Professor,  
Werklund School of Education,  
University of Calgary

#### INTRODUCTION

Educational exchanges are not only about acquiring language skills or teaching experiences but also about connecting deeply with people, places, cultures and systems. We examined 44 studies on student and teacher exchanges and uncovered how participants were transformed by these experiences and contributed to building diverse global communities and how systems that support education exchanges demonstrated responsiveness and innovation. The voices of the participants articulate the “why” and the “how” of offering and participating in these exchanges. The deepening of cultural understanding and the widening of perspectives increased the participants’ appreciation of diverse perspectives.

#### GAINING INSIGHTS: TRANSFORMATIONAL PARTICIPANT OUTCOMES

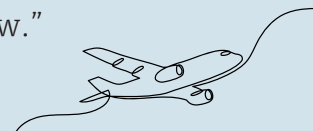
*What do I need to do now when I go back to my schools? I need to connect more with my students and help the new language learners connect with the native speakers in order to build up relationships, which is indeed what drives the motivation to learn anything, to realize their dreams.*

(Baecher and Chung 2020, p. 46)

When students and teachers participate in educational exchanges, they gain meaningful insights from their participation in these transformational experiences. For teachers, meeting other education professionals influenced

“I’ve always wanted to travel abroad, but I never knew that it’s almost like, it’s fundamental, it’s something that every person deserves a chance to do, because it gives you a chance to evolve and look at yourself. You can evolve in other ways, but this is one of the best, purest ways because you’re outside of your comfort zones and that’s really where we grow.”

— Grade 8 student (Engel et al. 2017, p. 517)



their own teaching and learning, which subsequently benefited student learning outcomes. The exposure to new countries and cultures caused teachers to reflect on and consider issues of social inequality, to challenge enduring patterns of privilege and to implement equity-oriented teaching strategies. The enhancement of these intercultural competencies allowed teachers to better translate cross-cultural knowledge into teaching and learning practice, which in turn cultivated a flexible and innovative environment for students.

Students participating in exchanges reported outcomes that also included developing intercultural competencies, often through in-class learning activities and social interactions with their host families. Through cross-cultural learning opportunities, students grew personally by developing their curiosity, openness and respect for others. This transformational growth was displayed in self-reported aspects of self-confidence, sense of responsibility and self-esteem. Interacting with people from different cultural backgrounds taught students about cultural diversity and social

differences, reduced intercultural bias, fostered positive local relationships and enhanced the ability to re-examine their initial thoughts and observe phenomena from multiple perspectives. For example, students from China who participated in an educational exchange in the United States shared that they developed increased global consciousness and experienced acculturation as a mechanism for growth (Cheng and Yang 2019). Outcomes from other studies included positive improvements in student attendance, and engagement in class during the exchanges improved academic results and performance, typically in language learning and intercultural competence. Overall, teacher and student exchanges provided multifaceted learning experiences, which transformed their outlook and behaviours upon return home.

#### OPENING DOORS: BUILDING DIVERSE GLOBAL COMMUNITIES

*I want to branch out more and learn their language, learn their culture . . . try to*

continued on page 36

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# Meaning of Home

continued from page 34

*become a part of them and see if I can actually be able to go to a place and not be considered [a] visitor, but simply another human being. (Student in the Netherlands) (Newstreet and Rackard 2018, p. 69)*

Educational exchanges enabled teachers and students to contribute to local society as part of a global community of practice, nurturing their awareness of social responsibility and commitment to the larger community. They were motivated to participate in or lead the development of projects, curriculum or other practice. Teachers emphasized that their participation in exchanges fostered understanding of the importance of social justice in community building, resulting in an integrated learning community for all global citizens. In one study, 22 secondary teachers from Colombia, El Salvador, Ghana, India, Kazakhstan, Morocco, Poland, Romania, Russia, Rwanda, Thailand and Ukraine who completed an exchange in the United States shared that the learning experience enhanced their intercultural sensitivity and awareness, knowledge of other countries and cultures, and teaching skills and professional development in a structured, cross-cultural setting (Paik et al. 2015). Through reflexive practice, teachers reflected on their own cultural views and leadership philosophy, in turn, guiding them in building a more engaging school community.

Community-based practices in student exchanges focused on preparing students to participate in the international community through interacting academically, reflecting on moral perspectives and encouraging social participation. Students experienced multiple ways of learning, thinking and living, which enabled their comprehension and capacity to better understand the globalized world. Through this new understanding, including the development of linguistic, social and transnational identities, students reported an expanded intercultural and international world view and felt more aware of the benefits of promoting global citizenship and building an inclusive learning community.

### CREATING CONNECTION: RESPONSIVE, INNOVATIVE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEMS


*International exchange and training programs [serve] as a magnifying glass that enables observers to see success and failures in such aspects of education as international education, intercultural communication, educational reform, to name a few. (Rapoport 2013, p. 73)*

The benefits of attending educational exchanges included learning about other school curriculum and systems and seeing how they function, resulting in teachers and students bringing that knowledge and experience back to their home schools. Purposeful interaction of different study-abroad curricula designs allowed for the gathering of ideas for improvement of local student exchange programs. This was evident in the experience of teachers from New York City to Costa Rica, where teachers questioned their curriculum regarding equity and diversity as they saw the connections and disconnections between policy and teaching practice (Baecher and Chung 2020).

Students can be included in the process of reflection and finding solutions. A reoccurring theme through many exchange experiences was the considerations for access to student exchange, including finding a solution to the financial challenge of study abroad, so all would have opportunities to participate in exchange programs.

### CONCLUSIONS

The benefits of teacher and student exchanges include the development of personal intercultural competencies, language learning, understanding of diversity and the development of skills for navigating new environments. Through international exchange, teachers and students also experience personal development, including developed cross-cultural or transnational identity, increased confidence and motivation, and expanded open-mindedness. As well, teacher and student exchanges have an impact on pedagogy and learning in classrooms upon return through comprehensive perspectives and the inclusion of social justice goals. Our creation of a review of the literature on teacher and student

exchanges revealed not only the benefits of exchanges but also calls to action to improved exchange design (Dressler et al. 2021). The design of exchanges to include more feedback from participants in areas of preparation, reflection and critical thinking would benefit school communities and K–12 education systems. 

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## 1. *Sticky Teaching and Learning: How to Make Your Students Remember What You Teach Them*

The goal of every lesson is to get students to remember what they have learned but, of course, it's trickier than it seems. Author Caroline Bentley-Davies points out potential stumbling blocks and gives teachers simple strategies for overcoming them.

## 2. *Comment se faire des amis et influencer les autres*

L'auteur vous dévoile trois techniques fondamentales pour influencer les autres, six recettes infaillibles pour gagner leur sympathie, douze façons de les rallier à votre point de vue, neuf moyens pour modifier leur attitude sans les irriter, ni les offenser, et une méthode efficace pour devenir un bon leader.

## 3. *Visible Maths: Using Representations and Structure to Enhance Mathematics Teaching in Schools*

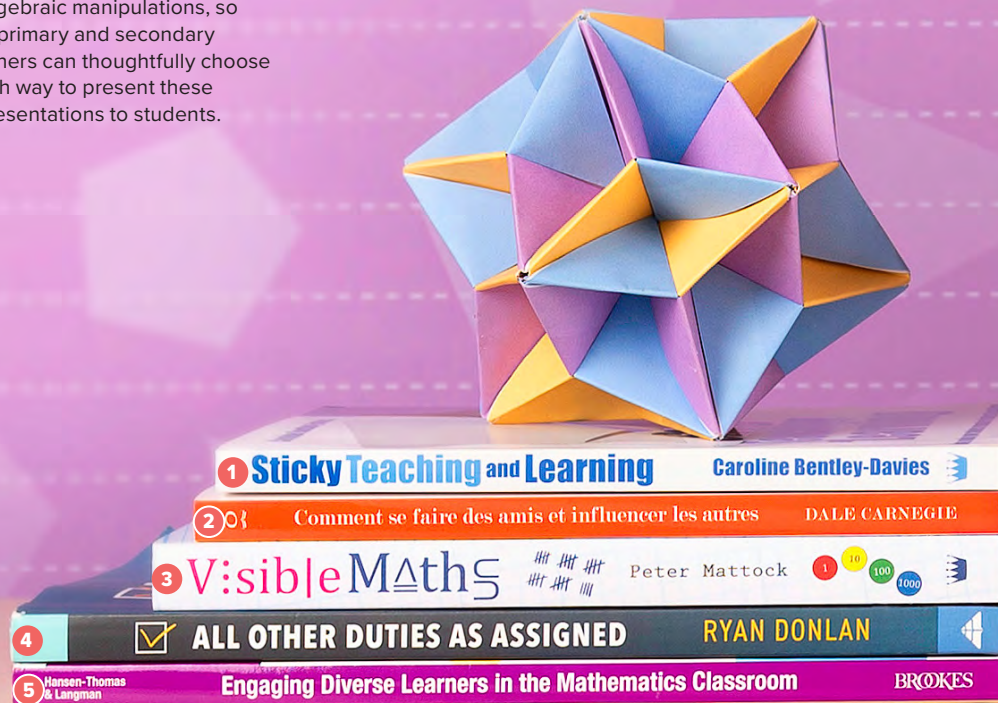
This book explores the strengths and weaknesses of math lessons ranging from whole numbers to algebraic manipulations, so that primary and secondary teachers can thoughtfully choose which way to present these representations to students.

## 4. *All Other Duties as Assigned: The Assistant Principal's Critical Role in Supporting Schools Inside and Out*

Taking on a role in school leadership can be daunting! This book, written by an assistant principal, looks at current research and practice that those new to the role can use to become a stellar vice principal.

## 5. *Engaging Diverse Learners in the Mathematics Classroom: A Functional Language Awareness Approach for Middle and High School Educators*

Using a functional-language awareness approach, the authors show teachers how small adjustments to language used in math class can have a big effect on student achievement.



Information provided by ATA librarian Sandra Anderson.

## Your colleagues recommend

### Will Langille

*They Said This Would Be Fun: Race, Campus Life, and Growing Up* by Eternity Martis. It's a great memoir by a woman of colour about her experience in a London, Ontario university. A great read for teachers about the covert (and overt) racism that can find its ways into our schools.

### Heather Snethun

*There's No Such Thing As Bad Weather: A Scandinavian Mom's Secrets for Raising Healthy, Resilient, and Confident Kids* by Linda Åkeson McGurk. It focuses on the value of spending time outdoors. It's an enjoyable read that uses anecdotes backed by science.



**6. *Math Games with Bad Drawings: 75 ¼ Simple, Challenging, Go-Anywhere Games — and Why They Matter***

A brilliant collection of math games that require nothing more than paper, pens and a handful of coins. Author Ben Orlin provides “tasting notes” for each game as well as an explanation for why this game matters. A great way to get students to see the fun in math!

**7. *Words Their Way: Word Study for Phonics, Vocabulary, and Spelling Instruction***

This is one of the newest entries in the “Words Their Way” series. Readers will discover a teacher-directed, child-centered plan for vocabulary growth and spelling development.

**8. *Stencil graffiti : tout savoir sur le pochoir urbain***

Tout, vous saurez tout sur le graffiti! Ce livre aborde l'art urbain d'une manière originale, à l'image de cet art totalement libre.

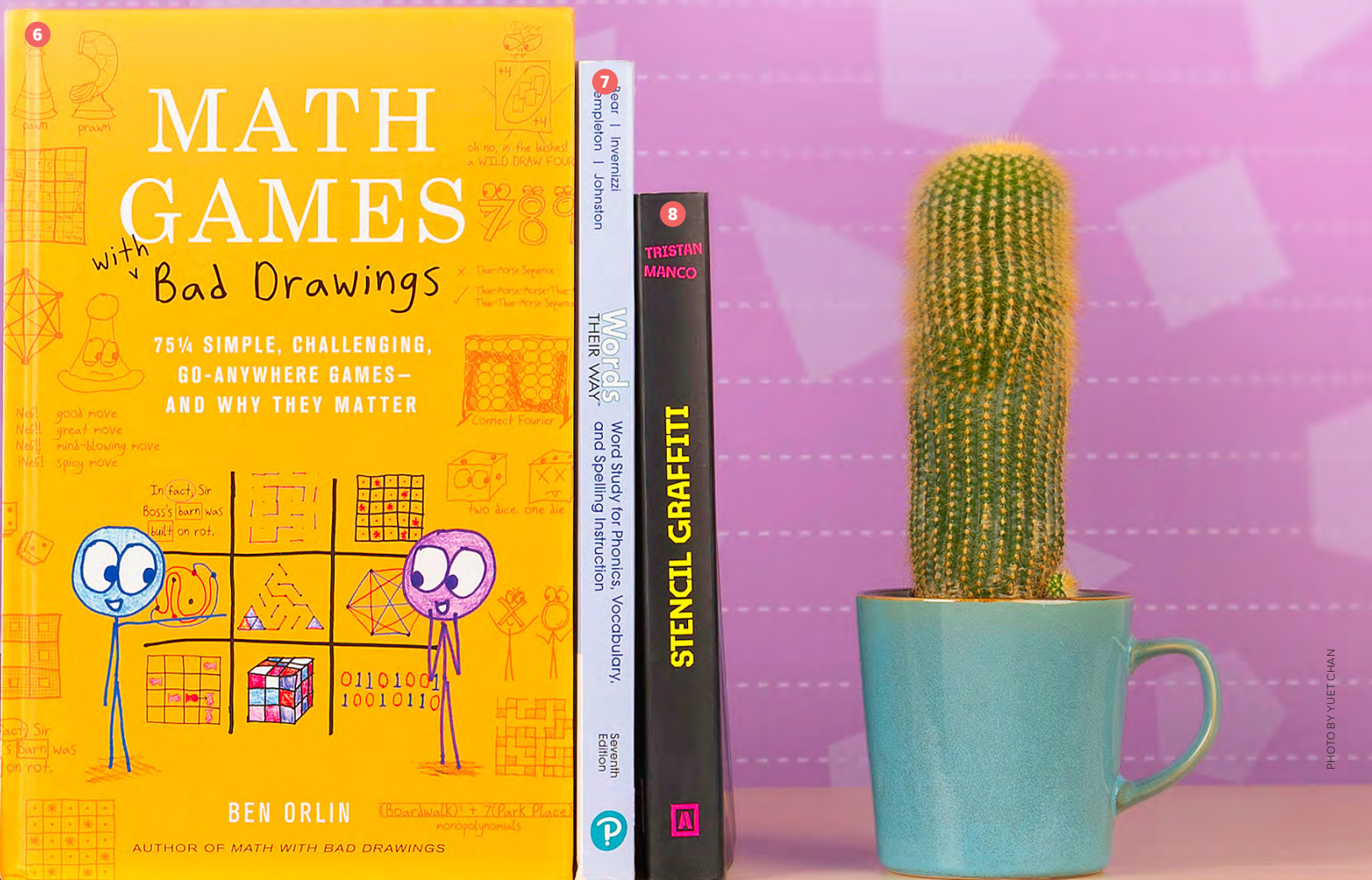


PHOTO BY YUET CHAN

**Shelley Ferris Knott**

I just read a Canadian novel called *Lost on Brier Island* by Jo Ann Yhard. Great read. Otherwise, still rereading the classics such as *Pride and Prejudice* by Jane Austen and *Jane Eyre* by Charlotte Brontë.

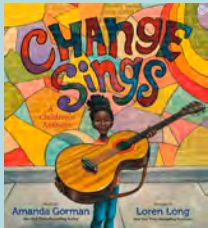
**Amrit Rai Nannan**

*Potlatch for Pedagogy: Learning Through Ceremony* by Sara Florence Davidson and Robert Davidson. It explores the nine principles of learning through ceremony from the Haida people.

**Spencer Wenzel**

*The Self-Driven Child: The Science and Sense of Giving Your Kids More Control Over Their Lives* by William Stixrud and Ned Johnson. I found this book very useful, to help support my students and promote a sense of responsibility for their learning. The main idea is that kids need to learn how to make choices and fail sometimes, and how parents and teachers can support their children and students through this.

# What's your favourite book to use with students in grades 1 to 3? What's great about it?



## **Change Sings: A Children's Anthem**

I love this book — with words by Amanda Gorman and pictures by Loren Long — because it offers self-learnings and can be a great basis for music lessons. I have built a whole Grade 1–6 spring concert around Change Sings.

*Janel Winslow-Sherwin*



## **Hair Love**

I met the book's illustrator, Vashti Harrison, and I loved how she talked about how she wanted to depict a positive black male role model who had dreadlocks and tattoos. It is written by Matthew A Cherry.

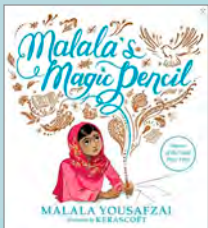
*Jessica Sliva*



## **Scaredy Squirrel**

By Melanie Watt, this is a great book to share with students because it emphasizes the importance of taking a risk.

*Sinead Dullaghan*

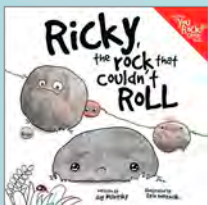


## **Malala's Magic Pencil**

Authored by Malala Yousafzai and illustrated by Kerascoët, this is a favourite book of mine, especially around International Women's

Day. This is an example of a diverse piece of literature that helps children understand difficult topics. In my class it has led to some incredible discussions about gender equality, speaking for others when they don't have a voice and standing up for what you believe.

*Adrienne Peoples-Sprecker*



## **Ricky the Rock that Couldn't Roll**

Written by Mr. Jay (Miletsky) and illustrated by Erin Wozniak, this book teaches the power

of community support to overcome challenges. It can be great for STEM.

*Ashley Floyd*



PHOTO BY YUET CHAN

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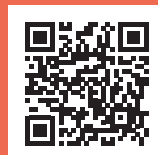
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### Resources

Gain access to retirement planning, economic, and mental health resources.

[arta.net](https://arta.net)



## Providing members guidance and representation

### Regulatory Affairs and Membership Services

#### **ON JAN. 1, 2023, A NEW CODE OF**

professional conduct, the *Code of Professional Conduct for Teachers and Teacher Leaders*, took effect and the office of the Alberta teaching profession commissioner assumed responsibility for teacher and teacher leader conduct and competency complaints.

In response to these changes, the ATA established a new unit — Regulatory Affairs and Membership Services (RAMS) — that offers support to members who have had a complaint brought against them under the new regulatory process. Associate Coordinator Tim Jeffares heads up this unit.

#### **FAQs**

##### **How would I know if a complaint has been brought against me?**

You will receive a notice of complaint via the email address you have listed in Alberta Education's Teacher Workforce Information System (TWINS) or through registered mail sent to your home address. To ensure that you receive information in a timely manner, keep your contact information in TWINS up to date.

##### **What kinds of complaints could be brought against me?**

A complainant could allege that you have failed to meet professional practice standards (competence complaint) or that you have contravened the code of professional conduct (conduct complaint).


##### **If I want to submit a complaint, how long do I have?**

You can file a complaint related to competence up to two years after the alleged professional incompetence occurred. You can file a complaint related to alleged unprofessional conduct at any time — there is no time limit.

##### **I have received notice from the government of a complaint brought against me. What should I do?**

Know that the ATA is here for you! If you are the subject of a professional conduct or competence complaint, contact the ATA for advice and guidance. Strict timelines are in place, so contact the ATA as soon as you receive the notice.

##### **What other supports can I access?**

Remember that you are not alone! Contact the ATA at any time. In addition, the Alberta School Employee Benefit Plan (ASEBP) provides you with access to various services that can support your well-being during times of stress. 

#### **TEACHERS AND THE LAW**

##### **Want to learn more about your professional obligations?**

Contact Teacher Employment Services ([tes@ata.ab.ca](mailto:tes@ata.ab.ca)) to book a presentation for your school, local or other group on such topics as

- contracts, teachers and the law: Teacher Liability Inside and outside the classroom (available in English or French)
- transfers, suspensions and termination

► **How can you learn more?** Contact a member of the RAMS team at 1-800-232-7208 or [professionaldiscipline@ata.ab.ca](mailto:professionaldiscipline@ata.ab.ca). You can also check out the ATA's website (Advocacy > Conduct and competence) for more FAQs about the new code and the new discipline process.



## Fournir aux membres conseils et représentation

### Affaires règlementaires et services aux membres

**LE 1<sup>ER</sup> JANVIER 2023, UN NOUVEAU** code de conduite professionnelle, le *Code de conduite professionnelle des enseignants et des leaders scolaires*, est entré en vigueur. Dès lors, le traitement des plaintes liées à la conduite et à la compétence des enseignants et des leaders scolaires est devenu l'entière responsabilité du bureau du commissaire à la profession enseignante de l'Alberta.

En réponse à ces changements, l'ATA a créé un nouveau service appelé Affaires règlementaires et services aux membres (ARSM) qui offre un soutien aux membres ayant fait l'objet d'une plainte qui relève du nouveau processus règlementaire. Tim Jeffares, coordonnateur associé des ARSM, est à la tête de ce service.

#### FAQ

##### **Comment savoir si une plainte a été déposée contre moi?**

Vous recevrez un avis de plainte à l'adresse électronique que vous avez indiquée dans le *Teacher Workforce Information Network System (TWINS)* du ministère de l'Éducation de l'Alberta, ou à votre domicile par courrier recommandé. Veuillez tenir à jour vos coordonnées dans le TWINS afin de recevoir toute information en temps utile.

##### **Quel genre de plaintes pourraient être déposées contre moi?**

Un plaignant pourrait prétendre que vous n'avez pas respecté les normes de pratique professionnelle (plainte liée aux compétences) ou que vous avez enfreint le code de conduite professionnelle (plainte liée à la conduite).

##### **Si je souhaite déposer une plainte, de combien de temps est-ce que je dispose?**


Vous pouvez déposer une plainte liée à une compétence dans les deux ans qui suivent l'incompétence professionnelle présumée. En revanche, il n'y a aucune limite de temps pour déposer une plainte liée à une conduite non professionnelle présumée.

##### **Le gouvernement m'a informé qu'une plainte a été déposée contre moi. Que dois-je faire?**

Sachez que l'ATA est là pour vous aider! Si vous faites l'objet d'une plainte liée à la conduite professionnelle ou à une compétence professionnelle, contactez l'ATA pour obtenir des recommandations

et conseils. Un calendrier strict est en place, aussi contactez l'ATA dès la réception de l'avis.

##### **Quelles sont les autres mesures de soutien auxquelles je peux avoir accès?**

Rappelez-vous que vous n'êtes pas seul! Vous pouvez contacter l'ATA à tout moment. L'*Alberta School Employee Benefit Plan (ASEBP)* vous donne aussi accès à divers services qui favorisent le bien-être des personnes en période de stress. 

#### LES ENSEIGNANTS ET LA LOI

##### **Vous souhaitez en savoir plus sur vos obligations professionnelles?**

Contactez le secteur Emploi et bien-être ([tes@ata.ab.ca](mailto:tes@ata.ab.ca)) et réservez une présentation qui se fera à votre école, à votre section locale ou devant tout autre groupe sur des sujets tels :

- Les enseignants et la loi : responsabilités légales de l'enseignant à l'école et en dehors de l'école
- Les enseignants et la loi : mutation, suspension et résiliation de contrat

► **Comment pouvez-vous en apprendre davantage?** Pour plus de FAQ sur le nouveau code et le nouveau processus disciplinaire, vous pouvez contacter un membre de l'équipe des ARSM au 1-800-232-7208 ou à [professionaldiscipline@ata.ab.ca](mailto:professionaldiscipline@ata.ab.ca), ou consulter le site Web de l'ATA ([Advocacy > Conduct and competence](#)).



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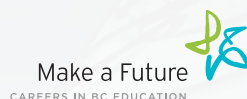


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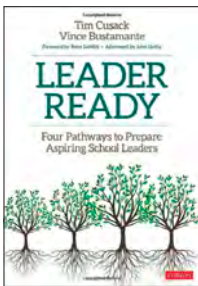




## Creative colleagues

Teachers have their own extracurricular activities. Some volunteer. Some write books. Others produce podcasts, create art or make music. Here are some endeavours undertaken by your colleagues “out there.”

### BOOKS



#### **Leader Ready: Four Pathways to Prepare Aspiring Leaders**

Dr. Tim Cusack and Vince Bustamante recently published *Leader Ready: Four Pathways to Prepare Aspiring Leaders*. Examining leadership standards, a culture of implementation, guided leadership experiences and attainment of mastery experiences, *Leader Ready* provides a rich array of theory, practical examples and stories from the field to assist school

and system leaders in preparing aspiring leaders to reach greater levels of self-efficacy and success.

**TIMOTHY CUSACK**

*Associate Professor and Dean of Education,  
Concordia University*

**VINCE BUSTAMANTE**

*Consultant: Leadership & Assessment,  
Edmonton Catholic School Division  
Corwin, 2023*

### BUSINESS



The Backroad Farmhouse Coffee Roastery is a creative outlet and fun side gig for teacher/principal Breana Malcolmson. Malcolmson and her husband started the family business in 2021 after receiving a small coffee roaster as a gift. They expanded to a 5kg roaster and the rest

is history! The roastery offers whole bean coffee, both flavoured and unflavoured, to local businesses and community members. Malcolmson takes on the design and marketing, and her husband and their kids make up the rest of the company team.

**BREANA MALCOLMSON**

*St. Paul Alternate Education Centre, St Paul  
Instagram @backroad\_farmhouse*

### TELEVISION



Teacher Tiff Pino was featured on an episode of Netflix Canada's *Cook at All Costs*, which is now streaming worldwide. Pino is a talented home cook who went

through rigorous auditions for the show. For the competition, which filmed at CBC studios in Toronto, she prepared two mouth-watering dishes, butternut squash and sage ravioli and an open-faced crawfish sandwich with buttered grits and collard greens. Though she did not win the competition, Pino cherished the unforgettable adventure.

**TIFF PINO**

*Cardinal Collins Catholic Academic Centre, Edmonton  
Instagram @tiffpino*

### YOUTUBE



#### **Teacher's Tech**

Teacher Jamie Keet runs a YouTube channel, *Teacher's Tech*, through which he shares tips, tricks and hacks on technology programs and applications. In each video,

Keet takes a hands-on approach to teaching and provides clear, concise and easy-to-follow instructions. If you are a teacher looking to incorporate technology into your lessons, but maybe do not have a background in technology, check out this channel!

**JAMIE KEET**

*Instructional coach, Golden Hills School Division  
YouTube @TeachersTech and Instagram @jamiেকেet*

- **What's new with you?** If you'd like to make a submission for publication in *Who's Out There?*, email a summary (50–75 words) to section editor Lindsay Yakimyshyn at [lindsay.yakimyshyn@ata.ab.ca](mailto:lindsay.yakimyshyn@ata.ab.ca).





# Finding her soul in the saddle

Dedication to learning leads to unexpected  
discovery for teacher Abi Henneberry

**Katherine Abbass**

Freelance Contributor

**ABI HENNEBERRY WILL NEVER FORGET**

her first horseback ride. It was the weekend of her 40th birthday on a trip to Jasper: a short trail ride through the golden forests of mid-October. Henneberry and a friend shifted in their saddles as their horses sidestepped thick roots along the dusty path.

Halfway through the ride, a rodent darted out from the brush and scurried across the trail, prompting a chain reaction. The rodent's effect on one horse — a brief flurry of shuffle-steps — carried through to the next, until each horse and rider had felt its presence on the path.

It was a lesson about the relationship between environment and energy, a lesson Henneberry reinforces daily with her kindergarteners at Lois E. Hole Elementary School in St. Albert. There, Henneberry's students begin each morning with a nature walk, learning to connect with their environment and be aware of themselves in it.

\*\*\*

Soon, Henneberry will bring these same lessons to a new set of students, riders at Little Bits Therapeutic Riding Association for Persons with Disabilities. As she nears retirement from school teaching, Henneberry is working to become a certified therapeutic riding instructor.

Despite growing up in Lexington, Kentucky — a city dubbed the horse capital of the world — Henneberry didn't ride horses at all as a child.

"We had cats, frogs, birds, turtles, everything else, but we weren't ever going to touch [horses], financially," she says.

But Henneberry always knew she wanted to be a teacher. As a kid, she spent hours in her bedroom delivering lessons to imaginary students, foreshadowing her choice to open her own dance studio in Virginia decades later. This passion followed Henneberry when she married and relocated to Canada.

Settling in Edmonton, she successfully auditioned for the folk dance company Vinok, with whom she toured extensively for just over two years. When she began to feel that dance was encroaching on family time, Henneberry enrolled at the University of Alberta as a 39-year-old student, ready to begin her bachelor of education after degree.

It was during this period that Henneberry went on her first horseback ride in Jasper. Returning from that experience, she felt pulled toward a new path, toward a hobby she could share with her young daughters while allowing her military husband the time and space he needed to work through the effects of PTSD that could sideline him with little warning.

"I was looking for purpose, connection, recreation and enjoyment," Henneberry recalls.

And she found it. Working with horses satisfied her passion for the outdoors, as well as her desire to connect with her daughters; it also repositioned her as a learner.

\*\*\*

In 2017, after riding recreationally for many years, Henneberry began volunteering at Little Bits Therapeutic Riding Association, a nonprofit organization that provides recreational horseback riding with therapeutic benefits for children and adults



with disabilities. Approximately 200 riders participate in their programs each year, and Henneberry has clocked approximately 200 hours as a volunteer.

At the Little Bits stable in Edmonton's river valley, the pungent stable smell of hay and horses is overwhelming. As Henneberry strolls past, horses peek out from their stalls, reaching toward her for a pat. In the tack room, the walls are lined with modified stirrups, reins and saddles to accommodate each rider's individual needs. Henneberry draws a parallel between these modifications and those used in an elementary classroom — pedal desks, wiggle seats, noise-cancelling headphones. The learning tools are different, but the results are similar.

Jo Billington, Henneberry's mentor at Little Bits, asserts that Henneberry's willingness to embrace her role as a beginner will contribute to her success as an instructor.

"She sees the parallels between classroom and arena teaching. She goes in with a plan, but she's able to adapt."

Fortunately, Henneberry is adept at embracing change. To stay fresh, she believes, everyone should try something new at least once a year.

"As teachers, when we put ourselves in positions to function as beginners, we can better appreciate what our students are trying to accomplish." <sup>ATA</sup>

- ▶ **Got an idea?** In Profile features an interesting teacher in each issue of the *ATA Magazine*. If you know of a teacher who would be a good profile subject, please contact managing editor Cory Hare at [cory.hare@ata.ab.ca](mailto:cory.hare@ata.ab.ca).

## RIDING ALONG WITH

### **Abi Henneberry**

**What is one significant difference and one significant similarity between Alberta's capital region and Lexington, Kentucky, where you grew up?**

Believe it or not, one similarity is the terrain — rolling hills and beautiful areas for horse farms! One tremendous difference is the extremity of the winter weather. In Kentucky, we only had pictures of horse-drawn sleighs in the snow, while in Edmonton they exist and can be used frequently!

**As an advocate of trying new things, what have you tried that was the most disastrous for you?**

Trying to learn to ride a motorcycle! I signed up for lessons and had an accident while on the course. They offered me a private session to get beyond the fearful experience. I took the extra lesson, and that was enough for me. While the instructors were fantastic, let's just say that I relate much better to animals and living things than machines!

**If you could create a reality show that fits your current interests, what would it be about?**

Endurance riding. I began riding with people who did that, and my goal was to do the Tevis Cup Ride, known formally as the Western States Trail Ride, by the time I was 50. My children became interested in other equine activities, so I put that aside. Now I am able to put that in my sights again and am aligning myself with people to help make that happen!

**What do you love most about dance?**

The fact that it combines so many factors: music, emotion, movement, expression, intellect, physicality, creativity, memory and joy! The process is the best part!

**What dance craze is most cringeworthy for you?**

The Dab and the Floss. Enough said!

**What do you find most rewarding about volunteering for Little Bits?**

The fact that the horse activities bring joy and inspiration to its participants, including the families. I can witness people release their challenges and experience simple pleasures taken for granted by so many of us. It is grounding, humbling and joyful! It also reminds me to stay present in the moment and be grateful for what I can do.



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## 'Tis the Season of Giving

**What do you get for that person in your life who already seems to have it all?**

Why not make a charitable donation in their name? The Alberta Retired Teachers Charitable Foundation (ARTCF) works to support Alberta's seniors.

By donating this holiday season, you'll be making a difference in the lives of seniors across the province.

**See how your generosity makes a difference!**  
Visit [arta.net/about-artcf](https://arta.net/about-artcf) to learn more.



To make a donation, visit

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# Adventures await

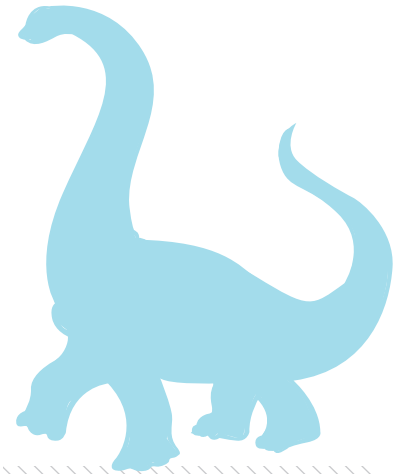
What is an awesome field trip that you'd recommend to colleagues?

**Patricia Gagnon**

St. Albert Place has many clay programs that relate to curricular content. You can also do a guided nature walk/scavenger hunt along the river and picnic in Lions Park for primary students.

**Teresa Cardinal**

Near the Grande Prairie area, check out the Philip J. Currie Dinosaur Museum.



**Kyle McIntosh**

Take high school kids to your nearest college/university/trade school for any program. But always give students time to soak in campus life.

**Cammie Kannekens**

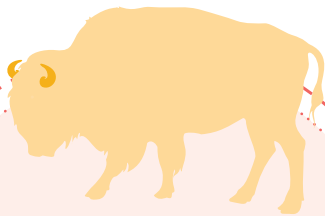
Medalta Potteries in Medicine Hat offers classroom-for-a-day programs.

**Chelsey McDonald**

My favourite in-school field trip is Puppet Treehouse. The experience is fun, engaging and inclusive for every single kid.

**Stacey Van Rompaey-Kanarek**

I did a trip to Hornby Island, BC, and we went to the Tribune Bay Outdoor Education Centre. What an experience for all junior highs for outdoor education!



**Christine Archer**

Bison Bootcamp at Elk Island National Park. Also Jurassic Forest, north of Gibbons.

**Beth Polushin**

Atlas Coal Mine Museum and East Coulee School Museum in the Drumheller area — great trips!

**Heather Marie Vowles**

Blackfoot Crossing Historical Park, a Siksika Nation-owned interpretive centre.

**Shannon Persicke**

For southern Alberta, check out Head-Smashed-In Buffalo Jump and Frank Slide Interpretive Centre.

▶ See more at [facebook.com/ABteachers](https://facebook.com/ABteachers).

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LEFT TO RIGHT: ISTOCK ADAPTED, ISTOCK

# Bubble whammy

Soapy learning delivers good clean fun

## Dan Grassick

Executive Staff Officer, ATA


**I SPENT THE BETTER PART OF A** decade teaching middle school science in Calgary. Whenever I could, I tried to engage students through active (and often messy) hands-on learning. One of my favourite activities was to break out the bubble juice.

There are many different recipes for bubble solution, but I kept it simple with warm water, dish soap and glycerine. The glycerine prevents the bubbles from drying out — which is why they pop.

There are so many ways to use bubbles to enhance learning and make it hands on. I used bubbles when teaching weather to measure wind speed and direction. I also designed a lab activity in which students experiment with different volumes and liquids to find the best bubble recipe. For other lessons, I premixed the bubble

mixture, provided the students with drinking straws, elastics and string, and issued the following challenges:

- Make me the biggest bubble you can fit in your hand.
- Make me the biggest bubble you can on your desk.
- Make me the longest chain of bubbles between two people.
- Who can make the best bubble moustache or beard?
- Who can stretch their bubble the most before it pops?
- Who can make a bubble that is as tall as they are?
- Who can make the longest lasting bubble?

Not only does the ensuing soapy fun result in awesome pictures for the school website and yearbook, but all the bubble activity cleans the desks in your room. 

“Who can stretch their bubble the most before it pops?”

► **Got an Idea?** Teacher Hacks is a place for colleagues to share their awesome ideas. If you have a hack that you'd like to share with your colleagues, please email a summary and photos to managing editor Cory Hare at [cory.hare@ata.ab.ca](mailto:cory.hare@ata.ab.ca).

# Accept no substitute

Healthy classroom relationships are made to endure

**Tanya Thiessen**

Executive Staff Officer, ATA



ILLUSTRATION BY GELA CABRERA LOA

**THE CHALLENGE**  
Addressing difficult classroom behaviour while maintaining a special bond with students.

**MANY OF MY FRENCH 20** students were my very first students. The day we met was their first of high school and my first as a new teacher. Our combined newness and nervousness likely helped us forge the special bond we created.

This class was great — they were kind and mutually respectful, they participated in their lessons and we shared a lot of laughter. This is why I was so shocked when I learned how they'd behaved during my first day away at a PD workshop.

The substitute teacher left me pages and pages of notes. My students had completely forgotten how to be good classroom citizens, switching names with one another for attendance, entering and exiting the classroom as they pleased and devoting not a single minute to on-task behaviour.

This was my first classroom discipline concern, and I felt that the students' actions reflected who I was as their teacher. I didn't know how I was ever going to find another substitute for this class or what

“As the day progressed, the knot in my stomach grew tighter and tighter.”

I was going to say to my students. As the day progressed, the knot in my stomach grew tighter and tighter.

In the afternoon, as the students arrived for French 20, I did not offer a single hello or bonjour. Once the students were seated, I held up the sheets of looseleaf from the substitute teacher. I explained how sad I was to receive such a report, how I could not believe she was describing this class, and I provided very detailed instructions on how they should behave in the future.

On and on I lectured, for well over 15 minutes. I then informed the class that because their behaviour had broken my teacher heart and I was now going to have to beg the sub for forgiveness, French 20 was

going to be a silent study period — no talking, no moving.

The next day I was still carrying doubts. Had I been too harsh? Would a different approach have been more effective? What if they hated being in my classroom now? But when I arrived, waiting for me on my desk were a box of chocolates, a dozen roses and a card. I felt warm inside as my teacher heart healed. I kept that card in a special place for many years. <sup>ATA</sup>

► **Got an idea?** Maybe you created a lesson that totally flopped or was truly inspiring. Whatever your story, please sum it up in 300 words or less and email it to managing editor Cory Hare at [cory.hare@ata.ab.ca](mailto:cory.hare@ata.ab.ca).



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## Morgex Insurance will rebrand as belairdirect to support Alberta teachers for generations to come

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Later this year, Morgex Insurance will move forward as belairdirect, while keeping all the ingredients and history that make this brand so well-respected. Building on our own seven decades of innovative work across Canada and as one of the top insurers in the country, this next chapter together will be strengthened by our shared commitment to the people we serve and the communities we call home.

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We'd like to take this opportunity to **express our gratitude** and say **thank you** to our loyal partners and customers for your steadfast trust and support as we embark on this new chapter together. We look forward to serving you even better as belairdirect for generations to come.

Together, we can help better. Together, we are belairdirect.

**John Thompson**  
Deputy Senior Vice President  
**belairdirect**