



ATA CENTRAL EAST DISTRICT REPORT

*By Murray Lalonde
District Representative*

**December 2020
Vol. 2 Issue 4**

St. Joseph's College, my beloved residence (1990-1993), place of refuge (1993-2002), and residence of my oldest child. It is arguably the most beautiful building at the UofA. #StJoersRangers

I love the quote from a recent ATA Beginning Teachers' Conference planning meeting, "We need to ensure that first-year teachers become second-year teachers." In the same light, we need to ensure that our young teachers become old teachers. I strive to provide a strong voice to help Provincial Executive Council advocate for all teachers.

The Government of Alberta (GoA) has told people to work from home in their latest messaging (seemingly except for teachers). The idea of having all students stay home for an extra week after the Christmas holiday is to get an even better handle on the spread of the COVID virus. With this extra week at home, why can't teachers do the same; stay away from each other to help stop the spread? Teachers are professionals and should be trusted as such to deliver quality education from the safety of their own homes. Minister LaGrange has passed the buck, leaving school boards to make that decision.

Minister Adriana LaGrange and Deputy Minister André Corbould conduct regular meetings with the Education Stakeholders Group, which includes representatives from the Associations of School Boards, Superintendents, Business Officers, Parent Councils, Private/Charter Schools, etc, and the ATA. ATA President, Jason Schilling, is a fierce advocate for us at these meetings, including the allowance of teachers to teach from home. The Minister keeps sloughing this decision off to the Boards (it honestly gets quite frustrating; she can easily mandate that teachers can work from home).

Regarding our teachers as parents, I believe that providing love and safety from harm is, above all, the most important role of a parent. Allowing teachers to choose to provide their professional service from home (especially for parents of young children) is what a responsible, caring, loving school board should do. Having teachers gather in a school is having them gather with people not in their cohorts.

These messages are being conveyed to decision makers. We advocate for our teachers as loud and powerful as we can, but unfortunately we cannot force them to make the decisions that we would like to see. However, we will keep pressing, and would like to see the decision made this week to allow all teachers to work from home for the January 4th - 8th school week.

Concerns? Questions?
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https://www.ibelieveinpubliced.ca/call_your_mla
#repealbill22 #handsoffmypension
#WeAreATA

Teachers' Convention: ESTCA is looking forward to providing an amazing convention! Special thanks go to the planning committee for the amazing amount of work that has gone into planning an unprecedented online convention. Since these are ATA days, not employer days, the ATA is advising teachers to participate from home. If you find that your internet connection at home is not reliable, you will be able to download sessions ahead of time when you have internet access. A HUGE thank you goes to Morgex Insurance for sponsoring all convention associations with Zoom licensing (approximately \$30 000)! You can visit estca.teachers.ab.ca as your main website for convention, and www.ataconventions.ca for more information (ex. your professional duties of attending).

Tired Teachers: The research study of "Compassion Fatigue, Emotional Labour and Educator Burnout" is now available: <https://tinyurl.com/compfatiguesurvey>
Teachers are June 2022 tired. Administrators are now assigned to contact trace for COVID. Parents as teachers are worried about bringing COVID home to their families. We really need to take care of ourselves. If you or your family are having a hard time coping, please remember to use your Homewood e-app to find round-the-clock help.

Alberta School Councils' Association (ASCA), arguably our closest ally in advocating for properly funded Public Education, have received a **75%** cut to their funding, retroactive to July 2020! We need to support and advocate for our local School Councils in the important work they do. This would be a great topic of conversation with your MLA.

Women In Leadership: we are hoping for locals to form their own Women In Leadership Committees. If you are interested, please visit wil.teachers.ab.ca. Also, please ask your ATA School Representative to help you talk to your Local President about joining or forming your local WILC.

Elections: Every 2 years, the ATA holds elections for the elected positions in Provincial Executive Council. In the past, teachers were able to meet the candidates at Teachers' Convention and local forums. However, due to COVID shutting down in person meetings, we will need to rely on recorded speeches found on the ATA website, articles in the ATA News, and online candidate forums. If individual locals would like to hold a candidate forum, you will need to contact Robert Mazzotta, Coordinator of Teacher Employment Services and Chief Election Returning Officer, in order to book your forum on his calendar. This will ensure that forums don't coincide with each other and allows all candidates ability to appear at the forums. I have again registered as a candidate to be your District Rep.

Central Table Bargaining: As previously reported, we are in the middle of bargaining the List of All Matters (LAM). We had dates set last week to resume list bargaining, but due to increased severity of the pandemic and new health guidelines, we needed to postpone bargaining to when it is safer to meet in person.

Local Table Bargaining: Congratulations to CS Centre-Nord Local teachers on the official signing of their **2016-2018** collective agreement, 1.5 years after its ratification! The joy of this is short-lived, as they now have to bargain the expired 2018-2020 local agreement.

Four ATA locals (Wetaskiwin, Northern Gateway, Sturgeon, and CS Centre-Nord) have each authorized to take a government supervised strike vote after their mediators "wrote out" of the process, stating that the two sides are too far apart. CS Franco-Sud is still negotiating, High Prairie just started the local bargaining process, and Grande Prairie Roman Catholic teachers are looking at mediation.

Curriculum Working Groups: I don't know what it is about our provincial government, but they don't seem to want to ask us for help. There "appeared to be a deliberate omission of the Association in [the] nomination process" for teachers assigned to Curriculum Working Groups. The ATA has, in the past, been a role player in these nominations by being able to recruit teachers from Specialist Councils. Association staff quickly tried to contact teachers from the 2015/16 CWGs to let them know about the call for nominations through superintendents. "The Terms of Reference for the new CWGs appear very similar to the previous CWGs, except the new group will be tasked with 'reviewing' rather than 'writing' curriculum."

We are currently in Step 5 (Drafting), Stage 3: CWG Input (Nov-Dec 2020) and Stage 4: Connecting with education partners (Nov 2020 - early 2021). Step 5, Stage 5 is public input (2021). Step 6: Piloting in classrooms, and Step 7: Implementation follow different timelines:

- Kindergarten - Grade 6 - Piloting (2021-22) and Implementation (Sept 2022)
- Grades 7-10 - Step 5 - Drafting (early 2021-22), pilot (2022-23), implement (2023)
- Grades 10-12 - Step 5 (early 2022-23), pilot (2023-24), implement (2024)

FNMI in Curriculum: The Executive Committee of the First Nations, Metis and Inuit Education Council wrote a letter to Education Minister LaGrange to call for the removal of Chris Champion and William French from the Curriculum Advisory Panel, to take a strong stance against any of their recommendations, and that anti-racism training be implemented for all curriculum review panelists.

New Website!!! There has been a restructuring in Information Technology Services (ITS), and with it a redesigned web property! I know that a lot of members have been asking for an update to a user-friendly website for a long time, and it looks like it will roll out for August 2021. I would like to see each local receive space for their websites and Microsoft Teams accounts for each of their local councils. It is **HIGHLY ADVISED** that locals do not use Google to store information, as we cannot be guaranteed the safety of the information.

My DR Calendar

December

Tue 1 - Aspen View TWC
Thu/Fri 3 - 4 - Provincial Executive Council
Thu 3 - Lakeland Catholic Local Council
Mon 7 - Aspen View Local Council
Mon 7 - Middle Years' Council
Mon 7 - Battle River Executive
Tue 8 - Greater St. Paul Local Council
Wed 9 - ESTCA meeting
Thu 10 - Park Plains East Local Council
Thu 17 - Local Presidents Informal Meeting
Fri 18 - Resolutions Committee
Sat 19 - Start Christmas Holidays
Fri 25 - Merry Christmas

January

Mon 4 - Back to School
Mon 4 - Battle River Executive
Tues 5 - ESTCA Planning Meeting
Thur 7 - Lakeland Catholic Local Council
Sat 9 - Beginning Teachers' Conference
Mon 11 - Northern Lights Executive
Tue 12 - Greater St. Paul Local Council
Wed 13 - Battle River TWC
Sat 16 - Beginning Teachers' Conference
Mon 18 - Northern Lights Local Council
Thu/Fri 21-22 - Provincial Executive Council
Sat 23 - Specialist Councils Carousel
Mon 25 - Park Plains East Executive
Tue 26 - Battle River Local Council
Wed 27 - Park Plains East Local Council

Please visit the ATA website (teachers.ab.ca) for:

- updates in bargaining (follow the Bargainers' Blog),
- information on PD webinars (time is your only cost),
- Speaker Series (Women In Leadership, Leadership, DEHR, PD, etc),
- News releases,
- Association Calendar, and more.

"Anyone who's ever had a heart wouldn't turn around and break it, and anyone who's ever played a part wouldn't turn around and hate it."

- *Sweet Jane*, Lou Reed

On behalf of your Provincial Executive Council and staff at Barnett House, I would like to wish you a happy holiday, filled with love, peace, laughter, and relaxation. Merry Christmas, Joyeux Noel, Buon Natale, Happy Hanukkah, Joyous Kwanzaa, a beautiful holiday in any way you celebrate.