



The Alberta Teachers' Association

ATA CENTRAL EAST DISTRICT REPORT

*by Murray Lalonde
District Representative*

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Saskatchewan Government's Use of Notwithstanding Clause - Is Alberta Next?

We have recently seen Premier Scott Moe use the Notwithstanding Clause and allow the Government of Saskatchewan to uphold its policy of requiring schools to obtain parental consent for students under the age of 16 to change their pronouns. The ATA is taking a proactive approach and has developed interim policies to oppose any use of the Notwithstanding Clause to diminish the rights of anyone, especially our students.

Protest at Barnett House: A protest was held on September 20th, across 142 Street from ATA HQ Barnett House. The protesters were concerned about parental rights and the teaching of pride and “gender ideology” in schools. The ATA replied with a statement supporting safe and caring environments for all students. Some protesters entered ATA property to destroy a large Pride Flag, an action that is being treated as a crime by the Edmonton Police Service.

Teacher Discipline: The Alberta Teaching Profession Commission (ATPC) is the Alberta Government's department for teacher discipline. They are on track to receive 500 complaints by the end of 2023. The ATA is currently representing 132 teachers in 148 cases.

We have your back! If you are the subject of a discipline complaint, PLEASE IMMEDIATELY INFORM Regulatory Affairs - Member Services (RAMS) by emailing professional.discipline@ata.ab.ca or call them directly at 780-447-9460. **You ALWAYS have the right to representation. WARNING!!! School reps: you CANNOT represent your colleague at a meeting in disciplinary nature with school or district administration. The teacher must be represented by ATA Staff.**

Concerns? Questions?
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www.teachers.ab.ca
www.ibelieveinpubliced.ca

standforeducation.ca
[#ISStandWithAbTeachers](https://twitter.com/ISStandWithAbTeachers)

Local Table Bargaining Continues...: 41 locals have either completed this round of local bargaining or are awaiting a Bargaining Unit General Meeting (BUGM). As each local signs the new agreement, the assigned Representative of the Bargaining Agent (RBA) is replaced by an Executive Staff Officer (ESO) so the RBA can concentrate on bargaining for their remaining locals.

Edmonton Public Teachers held their BUGM on Sunday, October 22. They decided in overwhelming support to reject the mediator's recommendations and consequently voted 97% in favour of authorising a supervised strike vote.

Teacher Employment Services: Call trends appear to be reflective of members continuing to seek clarity around rights and obligations in employment and in their collective agreements. This may be reflective of the number of new members who are seeking advice. Attrition and a more competitive market may also explain the number of calls related to employment, collective agreements and leaves.

Public Opinion on Public Education: The Association followed its public opinion polling with focus groups that provided additional insight into the public's top priorities for the public education system and what each of these priorities means to people. The top priorities for the public education system among research participants were (1) preparing students for a successful life, (2) having high quality teachers, (3) providing a supportive environment, and (4) providing diverse programs.

The geographic segmentation revealed differences in people's orientation to education. Generally speaking, those in large cities felt more positively about the potential of a good education. In mid-sized cities, there was a mix in terms of attitudes toward education. In smaller centres, participants felt less positively about education, talking about finding it hard to learn, being "pushed through", and being bullied. In contrast, those from larger cities reflected more positively on their own educational experiences, and the importance of the role the education system plays in supporting a thriving society and setting children up for success.

Pre-Retirement Workshops: Are you planning to retire in the next 10 years? You may find it helpful to ensure a smooth transition by attending one of the following sessions: 1. Saturday, November 25, 2023;
2. Saturday, February 3, 2024;
3. Saturday, March 9, 2024.

Watch for a link to register at <https://teachers.ab.ca/events>. Registration will be available approximately one month before each session.

Member Organising Strategy: We are hoping to increase member engagement through meetings at the members' workplace. The strategy would require a broad effort from locals including participation from local executives, teacher welfare committees and school representatives. Local political engagement officers would play a key role. The Association will provide the lesson plan for the meeting and any resources needed. All School Representatives are asked to attend an online meeting on November 6. You will receive a registration link from your Local President.

CTV Weather in the Classroom: Watch for an opportunity to highlight what is happening in classrooms across Alberta. Please contact your Local Communication Officer for more information.

Alberta Native Friendship Centres: The Bridging Classrooms to Community (BCC) Grant is a three-year grant by Alberta Education to build and strengthen programming for Indigenous students out-of-school to support Indigenous student success in school. The BCC grant provides funding for out-of-school programming that may include homework clubs, student drop-in programs, social clubs, nutrition programs, sports programs and culture and language programs. A total of three million dollars over three years is available for all BCC grants. Each eligible applicant will receive between \$50,000 to \$100,000 to support their project.

Important Local Committees: If your local does not have a Women In Leadership (WIL) Committee, please consider creating one. Assistance, if needed, in starting a local committee will be provided by the provincial WILC. These committees are not exclusive to women: all genders are welcome!

Also, please consider forming a Substitute Teacher Committee. We need to ensure that substitute teachers are represented at local council meetings to pass important information to the general membership of substitute teachers. Substitutes will need to be familiarised with the complaint process of the Alberta Teaching Profession Commission. The voices of substitute teachers in the collective bargaining process must be heard.

Diversity, Equity, and Human Rights: The provincial DEHR Committee has a grant program not limited to locals but can be provided to individual schools. The deadline for applications is 2024 04 30. A total of \$35,000 in grant aid will be available with individual grants receiving up to \$2000. A subcommittee of DEHR will be formed to review applications and make recommendations to the DEHR committee for approval.

ATAGSA: The ATAGSA continues to meet monthly, with nine locals taking turns hosting the meeting. Topics of the 2023/24 school year include:

- Document review: Breaking the Silence—A Guide for Sexual and Gender Minority Teachers in Alberta and Forming a Teacher GSA/QSA in Alberta—A Guide for Teachers
- Policy review: resolutions for ARA
- Catholicity and queerness: human rights lawyer
- Resource sharing
- Education of the greater membership/public.

Resource for Supporting Ukrainian Newcomers: DEHR viewed a presentation on the new resource for supporting Ukrainian newcomers which highlighted the research methodology and practical strategies to use in classrooms and schools. The resource will be distributed in the school mailing and will be available in hard copy within the coming months.

Violence in the Classroom: We have heard complaints of violence in the classroom. You are well within your rights to exercise your option of reporting violence against you to the police. Teachers have a fiduciary responsibility to report violence against their students; you need to take care of yourself as well.

Clean-up on Aisle Everywhere: Another topic of discussion at PEC was that teachers are finding that they are relied on to clean at school. We can all understand that keeping areas tidy can be expected, but cleaning (scrubbing desks, mopping, cleaning bathroom messes, etc) should not be expected of teachers. We are not trained in handling of chemicals and body fluids. Also, it is taking away another person's job. If the purseholders don't see the reality, education funding will be further eroded. Some schools report sharing one custodian with two or three other schools each day.

New Ways to Get My Reports

I have a new website: molalonde.my.canva.site

Currently, it is a work in progress, but soon you will find my District Representative reports, my calendar, useful links, information, all updated as soon as I receive important information to pass on to you. I will soon have a podcast version of the DR Report! Please tell your teacher colleagues about these ways to keep informed of what the ATA is doing for its members, advocacy for students and Public Education.

My DR Calendar

November

2 - Lakeland Catholic Local Council
6-10 - Aspen View Fall Break
8 - Battle River Executive
14 - Greater St Paul Local Council
16 - GSP Strategic Planning
17-18 - Collective Bargaining Conference
20 - CAPEC
20 - Lakeland Catholic BUGM
20 - Park Plains East Executive
21 - Aspen View Local Council
22 - Park Plains East Local Council
23 - Battle River Local Council
24 - 25 - Professional Development Conference
29 - Canadian Teachers' Federation
30 - Provincial Executive Council

December

1 - Provincial Executive Council
7 - Lakeland Catholic Local Council
7 - Battle River Executive
8-9 - ESTCA Planning
12 - NEARTA
12 - Greater St. Paul Local Council
14 - Battle River Induction Ceremony
15 - Deadline for 2024 Resolutions

“I see the sun ahead, I ain’t never looking back. All the dreams are coming true as I think of you; now there’s nothing in the way to stop me heading for the light.”

- The Traveling Wilburys, “Heading for the Light”

“Don’t get me wrong if I’m looking kind of dazzled. I see neon lights whenever you walk by. Don’t get me wrong if you say hello and I take a ride upon a sea where the mystic moon is playing havoc with the tide.”

- Chrissie Hynde, “Don’t Get Me Wrong