

Government

1. Research on **Substitute teachers**: substitute teachers report that they are often not provided with information about how to manage complexities in the classroom. Substitute teachers also expressed concern about the lack of mentorship opportunities and the difficulty in moving from substitute teachers to contract teacher.
2. The next **Political Engagement Seminar will repurposed as a parent organizing event**.
 - a. A multi-faceted advocacy plan has been developed with several elements in addition to the above: member focus groups, peer engagement among teachers, targeted advertising, and potential rallies/marches.
3. **Make a video about loving reading and win!** <https://code.ngo/contest/>
4. **“Gaslighting” is the practice of doing something while claiming not to be doing it, or (more generally) attempting to make a person doubt what they know to be true.** There is some gaslighting going on at the moment regarding education, along with other parts of the public sector:
 - a. Yes, school budgets actually were cut:
<https://www.teachers.ab.ca/News%20Room/Issues/2019-20-School-Board-Budget-Tracker/Pages/2019-20-School-Board-Budget-Tracker.aspx>
 - b. Other gaslighting topics are covered extensively here (login required):
<https://www.teachers.ab.ca/membersonly/CollectiveBargainingUpdates/Pages/Worth-Talking-About.aspx>
5. **Teachers are under a LOT of pressure right now:**
 - a. Minister LaGrange tweeting about “anti-oil” Social 10 test items, despite the fact that the Social 10-1 program of studies MANDATES multiple perspectives on several issues, including resource development:
<https://twitter.com/adrianalagrange/status/1200176719761510401?lang=en>
 - b. The “Canadian Energy Centre” (aka “the war room”) has scrutinized teachers and their lessons in the same way. <https://www.canadianenergycentre.ca/>
 - c. There are even reports that MLAs have contacted superintendents asking about the social media posts of teachers within their divisions.
 - d. It’s tough out there, especially on social media. Teachers need to be prudent (Member Services has an eLiability presentation) but they can’t allow themselves to be silenced.
6. **New “research briefs” on Privatization and Vouchers have come available.** Find them here: <https://www.teachers.ab.ca/Public%20Education/EducationResearch/Pages/Research-Briefs.aspx>
7. The **Disconnect Challenge** (<http://disconnectchallenge.ca/>) will be running 10-21 February of 2020. This will involve two weeks: one of documenting tech use, one “fasting” from tech use. This might be of significant benefit for some, especially if you think screen time is an issue. SIGN UP BY 20 DECEMBER 2019!
8. There will be a **Women in Leadership Summit** 8/9 March at Barnett House (yes, this is a Sunday/Monday, which is weird). Details will be forthcoming. Grant in Aid will be provided for 2 attendees per local.

- a. The CTF has a site (www.femleadfem.ca) to promote and encourage women in leadership roles.
 - b. The Canadian Women's Foundation (<https://www.canadianwomen.org/>) also has some great resources in support of gender equality:
 - i. <https://www.canadianwomen.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/Facts-About-Women-and-Leadership.pdf>
9. The **ATA's proposed budget will involve some interesting changes**. ARA will have a lot to talk about. Stay tuned and attentive.
- a. The ATA is taking some steps to "get our financial house in order" ... much like many teachers. Really stay tuned for that ...
10. **PISA results came out on 3 December 2019**. "Students in the province rank third globally in reading and science, and eighth in math." Bravo!
<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/calgary/alberta-pisa-2018-survey-1.5383111>
- a. Not everyone (Minister LaGrange, The Fraser Institute) is impressed. Faint praise from the Minister was noted:
<https://twitter.com/adrianalagrange/status/1201940676255965186>

Professional Development

1. The University of Alberta apparently had almost 4000 more applicants than their **education program** was able to accommodate. As you might expect, this has driven the entry average for the program very high. It seems the days of education as a "safety degree" are over.
2. **Good resources for indigenous education continue become available:**
 - a. This is a great resource on the Indian Act: audio, powerpoint, lesson plans ... great stuff.
 - i. https://www.cbc.ca/radio/secretlifeofcanada/teaching-guide-the-indian-act-1.5290134?fbclid=IwAR0zfDzHAPen67IWp9P8_n25AVe8Hsnc95P4ywdcN98_FL5z7qro2Z3vAKE
 - b. "Original Voices" highlights Indigenous languages in Canada:
 - i. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/indigenous/original-voices-indigenous-languages-1.5359984>
3. Contact the folks at PD if you want to book a session with an **Association PD instructor**.

Member Services

1. **The Alberta Government just gutted the Joint Worksite Health and Safety Committee requirements! Schools no longer need a committee at each site! Outrageous!**
 - a. Oh wait ... this requirement was **NEVER FREAKIN' ENFORCED BY OHS ANYWAY** so school boards just didn't do it. This represents ZERO change for most teachers. Yawn. *(and quiet anger at the previous government ... among others)*
2. The **School Leaders Issues and Concerns Committee** will be looking in detail at **OHS matters** in December. In the meantime, teachers are advised to faithfully report incidents via their division's OHS reporting system.

3. As the ATA continues to investigate **aggression in schools** the issue continues to be a hot topic across the province and the nation. Sometimes these stories hit the media:
 - a. <https://www.whsc.on.ca/What-s-new/News-Archive/Violence-harassment-in-elementary-schools-at-crisis-levels-report>
 - b. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/autism-child-education-violence-1.5386143?fbclid=IwAR1H8xJrhIIIDAH-COTRnWezOgJ6rXMFkj5P79Wp4T9K1XoGAaHSrYRLVfEo>
4. Under the Education Act, **temporary contracts are used to replace a teacher who will be away from his or her duties for 20 or more days**. This is crucial: temporary contracts should be offered to teachers who are replacing another teachers. We need to keep an eye on that. If this becomes an issue, contact Member Services (although the remedy may become a grievance since the Act is included as part of the preamble to all Collective Agreements).

Teacher Welfare

1. **The “AIMco” act contains this text: “Directives - 19 The Treasury Board may issue directives that must be followed by the Corporation, the board, or both, in carrying out their powers and duties under this Act and the regulations.**
 - i. So what does that mean? It’s worrisome, but teachers should remember that a) the government has no interest in putting the investment returns of our pension at risk, and b) there is Federal legislation regarding how pensions are managed that AIMco must honour.
 - ii. There is a “the government via AIMco can do whatever they want with 10% of our pension dollars” rumour out there that just won’t die. This actually relates to ATRF and the ATRF board. It’s just a red herring.
2. **Salary Arbitration for the 2018-20 round of Central bargaining occurred in mid-November.** We hope to hear the arbitration panel’s decision before Christmas but there are no guarantees. We wait. It’s looking like it’ll be in the new year at this point.
 - a. Remember that the arbitrator will only decide on 2 things: the amount of increase (if any) and the date or dates that the increase will come into effect.
3. **Staying informed and up to date is important right now.** Updates are made regularly to the TW bargaining page. Please check in from time to time:
 - a. <https://www.teachers.ab.ca/membersonly/CollectiveBargainingUpdates/Pages/CollectiveBargainingUpdates.aspx>
4. **Substitute teachers will be affected by the changes to General Holiday Pay.** Losing GHP but keeping Vacation Pay will mean a tiny, tiny total benefit for subs. Boo
5. If you are interested in labour market trends in the province you can find current **“Bargaining Updates”** here: <https://open.alberta.ca/publications/1192-9146>
6. There will be some changes in this new round of bargaining:
 - a. The **Bargaining Advisory Committee** is essentially made up of all the TWC Chairs in the province; they will become an important resource to guide central and local bargaining.
 - b. Expect to see a survey come out early in the new year.

7. So far **16 agreements have been reached in the 2018-20 bargaining round**. We have yet to see a post-budget agreement. Stay tuned.
 - a. What has been achieved? Lots of Wellness Spending Accounts/HSA splits; some 60% for a half day of subbing
 - b. Locals who can't get the above should seek something else that would be of value to their members (that's how the whipsaw works)
 - c. Boards seem to be looking to bargain productively; they are probably aware that they'll need some good will in the fairly near future.
 - d. As you move forward with local bargaining, your TWC and NSC should be mindful that some useful information may be available to you (from the Central Table Mediator's recommendation):
 - i. 2.8. Provision of Information 2.8.1 As the Association is the bargaining agent for the teachers employed by the School Jurisdiction. The School Jurisdiction shall provide to the Association at least twice each year, no later than October 31 and March 31, a list of its employees who are members of the Association including the name, certificate number, home address, personal phone number, contract type, and the name of their school or other location where employed. Where reasonably possible, the school jurisdiction will identify teachers on leaves of absence greater than five months. Nothing in this clause prevents the School Jurisdiction from providing the information on a more frequent basis.
 - ii. 2.8.2 The school jurisdiction shall provide the following information to the Association and to TEBA annually as soon as possible after September 30th but no later than the last operational day in December: a) Teacher distribution by salary grid category and step as of September 30; b) HSA/WSA/RRSP utilization rates; c) Most recent School Jurisdiction financial statement; d) Total benefit premium cost; e) Total substitute teacher cost; and, f) Total allowances cost.
8. **Teacher Welfare has worked with Capital Estate Planning and MNP to offer sessions on Financial Wellness in these uncertain times (there is talk of a recession, rollbacks, layoffs, Alberta just lost 18K jobs in November):**
 - a. Financial Wellness: Preparing for Uncertainty, including Saving 101, building a savings plan, best practices in investing, and saving for an emergency fund
 - b. Debt solutions: Freedom in Uncertain Times, including an introduction to debt management and debt reduction strategies
 - c. The Grande Prairie Session, 9 AM to noon on 11 January 2020 at the Coca Cola Centre, is pretty well subscribed: 51 attendees.

Other Stuff: Peter MacKay's [Northwest DR Calendar](#) and the [ATA Calendar](#)