

Government

1. **Summer conference:** we are at the Banff Centre until 2021. Regarding the future:
 - a. Near term - we are hoping to book a satellite site for this coming August (in Canmore, alas), with the possibility of a closer satellite site in the future.
 - b. Near term - a satellite site will be helpful in that a conference booking will allow an additional block booking of rooms at that site.
 - c. Near term - we are considering changing the summer conference structure so that certain programs are “cycled”; this would reduce numbers of participants in any given year.
 - d. Long term - research into alternate sites has been undertaken.
 - i. There aren't that many.
 - ii. Some are more expensive. The Edmonton Convention Centre (\$\$\$) and Calgary Hyatt (\$\$\$\$\$)
 - iii. Others are similarly priced to Banff but might be less attractive (the Sheraton Red Deer)
 - iv. Finally, using a University or College campus would be considerably cheaper but they can be very difficult to book and would likely mean sharing the campus with other groups.
 - e. Some locals are considering taking a close look at how they choose whom to send to summer conference with an eye minimizing costs and maximizing benefit to the local. They are asking about repeat attendees (do they need to go the same program twice?), experienced people attending the program course (for what purpose?), etc.
 - f. **Final note:** locals might want to book now for Banff next August.
2. The ATA's “Research Briefs” are now available online, along with some other useful things (such as a link to political talking points):
<https://www.teachers.ab.ca/Public%20Education/EducationResearch/Pages/Research-Briefs.aspx>
3. **The School Representative Toolkit will be going out in November.**
4. The **revised ATA policies** will have a very different look. Locals are encouraged to scrutinize them closely to make sure near and dear policies have survived the revision and formatting process intact.
5. **The UCP leadership continues to avoid any engagement with the Association.** This is alarming. In the past the ATA has been able to connect with every party at least to some extent. Locals with positive connections to the

UCP are encouraged to whisper kind words about education and encourage engagement with the Association.

6. **The Pledge for Public Education campaign is now online.** Please encourage your teachers to take part: sign it, get their friends and family to sign it, then move on to friends of friends, cats, dogs, etc. To bring something like this in front of MLAs and potential MLA candidates is, apparently, a no-no under Alberta campaign law, but you can certainly do that with other public figures like corporate CEOs, mayors, etc. <https://www.ibelieveinpubliced.ca/>
 - a. If you have questions about what is allowed in terms of advocacy in relation to campaign law, contact Jonathan.Teghtmeyer@ata.ab.ca
7. **In the upcoming election the ATA will register as a third party advertiser and will spend to the maximum allowed.** This will not be done in a partisan manner; the intent is to advocate for education and for teaching and learning conditions.
8. Our **advocacy for education prior to the upcoming election** has a few facets:
 - a. “Teachers want what students need” (class size improvements, inclusion support, full day kindergarten and early childhood programs, mental health supports)
 - b. The “Face of Education” is a public relations campaign
 - c. Three asks of teachers
 - i. Take the Pledge (which is advocacy)
 - ii. Share your support for the Pledge on social media; social media optimized materials are going out to schools
 - iii. Go out and encourage others to sign it
 1. first your members
 2. secondly your friends and family
 3. then get out to the community - Reeves, mayors, councilors, etc.
 4. If you can, famous people
 - iv. ***Let’s try to make proper funding for education a “third rail” in the election to come.***
9. **The Pension Cap issue is, at long last, set to be resolved during this session of the legislature.** The change will come into effect 1 January 2019.

Professional Development

1. The **Committee on Convention Review** reported to PEC at the October meeting. You can expect to hear more about their findings and recommendations in the months to come. Please participate in opinion gathering

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and validation activities regarding this review and their findings. You may find the contents of the report attractive, exciting, alarming, or repugnant depending on your disposition. In any case be sure to make your voice heard.

2. The approval of the **new K to 4 program of studies is expected in December**. The concerns about a “politicized” curriculum seem to have evaporated with the release of the curriculum documents. Teachers, we know from surveys, are eager for a new (hopefully streamlined) and more contemporary set of outcomes to teach.
 - a. There are some serious concerns about the potential pace of curriculum implementation. The department has targeted a 2020 implementation date, hopefully staggered over several years (K in 2020, 1 in 2012, etc).
 - b. The Association is lobbying about proper implementation, but teachers are asked to make their feelings about the pace of implementation crystal clear in any surveys or conversations related to the Department of Education.
 - c. Weird fun fact: the further you are from the classroom within the school system the more ready you are to implement a new program of studies right away, according to the survey data. Why would that be, do you suppose?
3. The **new Principal Practice Standards** will be administered by post-secondary institutions and will (it seems) be ready for rollout by the spring of 2020. We don’t know much more, although we’ve been told that current principals will be “passed through.”
 - a. Will **VPs and APs** be included in this? I didn’t get a clear answer ...
 - b. 79 local principals are registered for the upcoming “Leadership Symposia: Support for the Implementation of the Professional Practice Standards” on **November 6th in Grande Prairie**. Edmonton follows on November 21st.

Member Services

1. Occupational Health and Safety

- a. This has become a hot issue, with the Labour ministry being contacted the the ATA, CASS, and several school boards. Any members of local executive approached to endorse or sign off on their district’s application for an “approval” (an alternative to the mandated Work Site Health and Safety Committees) are strongly urged to contact Member Services prior to taking any action. Konni deGoeij has been working on this file for MS and there are potentially serious implications both from a OHS and from a Code perspective if the alternative process is not designed carefully.

- b. ***If boards do not create these committees and OHS issues arise then teachers have the option to contact the OHS office and file a complaint of non-compliance.*** Complaints to OHS can be made anonymously (or not). Teachers (or, indeed, any employees) can call 1-866-415-8690 to lodge any complaints. They can also lodge complaints online (anonymously or otherwise) here:
<http://work.alberta.ca/occupational-health-safety/ohs-file-a-complaint.html>
2. **Marijuana related administrative procedures and policies** are beginning to appear in various districts. Some are relatively benign. Some are not. If your district has moved forward with a policy or procedure Locals would be well advised to send a copy to MS for advice.
3. **Isolation rooms** have been much in the news of late. Teachers are advised to seek MS advice about the use of such facilities. The preferred term for these rooms, by the way, is “seclusion rooms.” The term “learnatorium” should be avoided at all costs.

Teacher Welfare

1. **Teachers should have noticed ATRF (Alberta Teachers Retirement Fund) reductions in their pay stubs in September.** If no reduction occurred, teachers should contact TW right away.
2. **Remembrance Day** this year should be honored with a Monday statutory holiday. In some districts this was already in place. In others this will necessitate a conversation with central office over the calendar. TW sent out a memo on this matter.
3. **Substitute teacher shortages continue to plague schools across the Northwest.** In at least one district there is some reason to believe that subs are not being called by the “Atrieve” system in a timely fashion. I.e. an absence booked on September 1st for an absence on October 10th doesn’t trigger a sub call until October 9th. As you might expect, this increases the chance that no sub will be available. This would greatly inconvenience the teachers and administrators in the school. Coincidentally, this would also represent found money for the school district. Stay tuned.
 - a. If a district experiencing shortages chooses to use “classroom supervisors” (understandable if insufficient numbers of subs are available) those folks a) shouldn’t be called until the certified sub list has been exhausted, and b) can’t teach. A certified sub who was “passed over” for a supervisor, and could prove it, *might* have a grievance claim; worth keeping in mind.

4. **At least one school district is attempting to recategorize some instructional minutes as assignable time only.** I.e. they are fencing off an “announcements” block of 3 to 4 minutes and designating it as assignable time. Similarly, they are designating a 2 minute “transition time” (assignable only) between class periods where there is no bell and no change of location or change of teacher. This seems like assignable/instructional time sophistry (i.e. it’s crap). There are a couple of potential responses:
 - a. Remind the district that they cannot report these “assignable” minutes as instructional time to Alberta Education. This may have a calming effect!
 - b. Should that fail, contact Teacher Welfare and let them know about the situation. In addition, you’ll need to document the practice (emails, schedules, notes of verbal directives, etc.).
5. **Regarding assignable time, some teachers continue to hear that certain duties are “professional responsibilities.”** Leaving aside the fact that school jurisdictions do not define the professional responsibilities of teachers (they are defined by the Teaching Profession Act, the School Act, the Code of Professional Conduct, and the Teaching Quality Standard), teachers should be mindful of the following language from the last Central Table memorandum of agreement: *“Teachers have discretion, to be exercised reasonably, as to when they carry out their professional responsibilities that extend beyond their assigned time.”* Per that text, “professional responsibilities” are less subject to board-mandated timelines (especially very tight timelines) than assigned time.
6. **Teacher Welfare Area Conference (TWAC)** was held on Nov 16/17 in Edmonton; many things were learned! Locals are reminded that there will be two TWACs to tackle this year, the second being in Calgary 12/13 April 2019 at the Westin Calgary downtown.
7. **Funding Profiles** for this school year are now available and they can be interesting: <https://education.alberta.ca/projected-funding/operational-funding/>
8. **14 Locals are still engaged in local bargaining.** Many of these locals either got a late start (for various reasons) or will be making requests for mediation.
9. Some locals for whom local bargaining is completed are receiving understandable complaints about the pace of providing a **single, unified copy of the collective agreement.** The process for providing such a document is as follows:
 - a. Board drafts a unified agreement based on the agreed-upon TEBA template
 - b. Board sends the draft to the ATA’s TW folks for review and (if need be) revision

- c. After some back and forth, a new unified collective agreement document is born into this cold world
 - i. Unless something dumb happens, and then the dispute goes to the TEBA transition committee
 - d. A list of unified collective agreements in progress is available. If your local is not on the list then they haven't finished a draft and sent it to TW.
10. **Central table bargaining is proceeding.** The ATA's opening proposal is online behind the "firewall."

Other Stuff

1. **Locals having trouble with the ATA and the updating of information** should contact Sudeep Dua (sudeep.dua@ata.ab.ca) or Robert Mazzotta (robert.mazzotta@ata.ab.ca) with the data and a request to ensure that the ATA's database is updated.
2. The ATA Website has undergone some revisions:
 - a. The Members Only section is useful (<https://www.teachers.ab.ca/membersonly/Pages/default.aspx>)
 - b. The Local Exec section is also useful (<https://collaboration.teachers.ab.ca/localexecutives/Pages/default.aspx>)
 - c. **The search feature, lamentably, remains less than useful.** We got some clarity regarding why that is: apparently it does not curate results based on relevance. It just lists results in the order in which they are found. This makes the ATA's search window a potential medium for proposition betting (what will be first this time?) but not really functional for finding information. Work continues.
3. Peter MacKay's Northwest District Representative Calendar:
 - a. <https://calendar.google.com/calendar?cid=bWZvNWdkODdwc21wczFhMw05cjFjN2I0YWNAZ3JvdXAuY2FsZW5kYXluZ29vZ2xlLmNvbQ>
4. Upcoming Dates of interest:
 - a. Local Communications/Political Engagement Officer meeting 23 November
 - b. Fall Professional Development Area Conference 23/24 November
 - c. Provincial Executive Council 6/7 November 2018
5. Check the ATA Events Calendar for more dates:
 - a. <https://www.teachers.ab.ca/For%20Members/Events%20Calendar/Pages/default.aspx>