

Calgary District Report
October 2014
 Diane Sellars-Myshchysyn
diane.sellars@gmail.com

<p>DR Meeting Dates:</p> <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr><td style="width: 15%;">Sept. 23-24</td><td>Prov. Exec. Council</td></tr> <tr><td>Sept. 25</td><td>Presidents Meeting</td></tr> <tr><td>Sept. 28</td><td>Foothills and ATA Induction</td></tr> <tr><td>Sept. 30</td><td>Rocky View – 4 year plan</td></tr> <tr><td>Nov. 1</td><td>ESL Mtg</td></tr> <tr><td>Nov. 3</td><td>Rocky View ARA mtg</td></tr> <tr><td>Nov. 6</td><td>Rocky View EPC mtg</td></tr> <tr><td>Nov. 8</td><td>Chinook Mtg</td></tr> <tr><td>Nov. 13</td><td>Rocky View Exec. Mtg</td></tr> <tr><td>Nov. 14-15</td><td>Teacher Welfare Area Conf ESL Conf.</td></tr> <tr><td>Nov. 17</td><td>Canadian Rockies</td></tr> <tr><td>Nov. 20</td><td>Rocky View CSR mgt</td></tr> <tr><td>Nov. 25</td><td>Foothills Exec. mtg</td></tr> <tr><td>Nov. 26</td><td>Invitational Symposium</td></tr> <tr><td>Nov. 26-27</td><td>Professional Dev. Area Conf.</td></tr> <tr><td>Dec. 3</td><td>Canadian Teachers Fed. Mtg</td></tr> <tr><td>Dec. 4-5</td><td>Prov. Exec. Council</td></tr> </table> <p style="text-align: center;">Specialist Council Conference Dates</p> 	Sept. 23-24	Prov. Exec. Council	Sept. 25	Presidents Meeting	Sept. 28	Foothills and ATA Induction	Sept. 30	Rocky View – 4 year plan	Nov. 1	ESL Mtg	Nov. 3	Rocky View ARA mtg	Nov. 6	Rocky View EPC mtg	Nov. 8	Chinook Mtg	Nov. 13	Rocky View Exec. Mtg	Nov. 14-15	Teacher Welfare Area Conf ESL Conf.	Nov. 17	Canadian Rockies	Nov. 20	Rocky View CSR mgt	Nov. 25	Foothills Exec. mtg	Nov. 26	Invitational Symposium	Nov. 26-27	Professional Dev. Area Conf.	Dec. 3	Canadian Teachers Fed. Mtg	Dec. 4-5	Prov. Exec. Council	<p>Important Dates:</p> <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr><td style="width: 15%;">TWAC</td><td>Nov. 14-15</td></tr> <tr><td>PDAC</td><td>Nov. 28-29</td></tr> </table>  <p style="text-align: center;">Follow me on Facebook or Twitter – Diane Sellars Myshchysyn</p>	TWAC	Nov. 14-15	PDAC	Nov. 28-29	 <p style="text-align: center;">Better Education Together</p> <p style="text-align: center;">What should the Prentice Gov't do: (tap on First 100 Days)</p> 
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Government:

1. We will hold **electronic elections** in 2015 on March 23. To exercise your right and responsibility to vote, every teacher needs to create an account. It is easy to do all you need is a user name and password which is created with your name and teaching certificate number. If you don't know your certificate number you can call Barnett House (membership clerk 1-800-232-7208) or Alberta Education department, or your district central office. Then you can register to vote. Beginning teachers: will have an automatic certificate number added if their certificate or TQS is pending.
2. **Fall multimedia campaign** – can be viewed on our website under campaign or at www.bettereducationtogether.com

The campaign which started airing earlier this month via TV, radio, transit shelters, digital posters, newspapers and online, focusses on the positive relationships teachers build and the positive influence they have in their communities and in the lives of their students. We want to raise hope and concern among the general public as a springboard for the general public to raise issues with their MLAs. The microsite allows people to send a message to their MLA regarding the need for properly funded public education in Alberta. Entering your postal code will access your MLA and their address. Our objective is to increase education funding in the next budget and reduce class size and complexity. There will be a heavy presence online including youtube for 32 weeks.

Would you please post a story about a great teacher? We want our media campaign to be a positive sharing of teacher greatness! The microsite to share positive stories about teachers is: <http://www.bettereducationtogether.com/i-have-great-teacher-story>

3. **Action on Framework Agreement summary** – includes C2 update. Find it here → attached at end of my report.

4. **BCTF** loan was accepted with gratitude but these teachers have not needed to use this yet.
5. We conducted a **review** of ARA 2014 and of Summer Conference 2014.
6. Upcoming **research publications** from our association:
 - Teaching and Learning Conditions in Alberta: A Global Perspective. (This addresses the ongoing refusal of key jurisdictions and government officials to address workload issues.)
 - Teachers Leading Curriculum Change: A Whole-System Approach for Creating a Great School for All.
 - **DYK**: Alberta teachers work, on average, 10 hours more than the international average and with larger class sizes that have more complex student populations than many of their global counterparts.
7. The lobbying efforts of CTF (Canadian Teachers' Federation) and EI (Education International) against the corporate interests of Pearson has resulted in PISA **reconsidering awarding a contract** to Pearson!
8. Nova Scotia teachers will experience the roll out of an "Excellence in Teaching Review" next week. Sound familiar??
9. We established the "Committee on Superintendents in the Teaching Profession" to study the role of the superintendent.

Member Services:

The following is a list of observations after listening to the member services report:

- Teachers could receive alternative assignments if not successful at one particular assignment – a teacher should not be "written off" simply because one assignment was unsuccessful.
- Teachers should have issues dealt with after return from medical leave not during medical leave.
- Might see some change in practice review because of JJ.
- When dealing with money, be as transparent as possible. Have a paper trail wherever possible.
- If you have a probationary contract, contact member services.
- When in doubt, contact member services.
- "Piling on" which is when evaluation flaws are identified but when the situation goes to remediation, then a district adds further flaws.
- Do not make critical comments of an employer or a colleague outside of appropriate channels and especially not on SOCIAL MEDIA.
- Catholic boards across the province are often inconsistent in their actions.
- **Just contact member services!!**

National Child Poverty "Keep the Promise" campaign – see article in upcoming ATA News.

Teacher Welfare

1. The clause "use best efforts to reduce unnecessary tasks" from the framework agreement is proving difficult to interpret. We will use this in future bargaining.
2. Boards have seen a virtual zero increase this year.
3. SBEBAs constitution and bylaws – still have not seen them. This is before the courts.
4. **Alberta Health** sent a communication regarding **immunizations** including the protocol to follow should a staff member/student who has measles been to school while infectious. It prescribes that other staff and children need to show proof of immunity or else they will not be able to return to school until three weeks after last case of measles. Further, boards have a duty to accommodate teachers who cannot prove they have immunity to contagious diseases covered in the protocol.

Call volume to TW has increased significantly: more calls, more cases, more complex situations.

Professional Development

1. **Beginning Teachers Conference:** 338 + 575 teachers for a total of **913** (878 last year). Met capacity in Edmonton and Calgary and some teachers had to be turned away due to capacity of rooms/speakers. Some beginning teachers were unable to attend because of lack of subs or district requirements.
2. **Tell THEM from ME survey tool** There will be a milestone announcement by government on November 30 regarding the **new accountability requirements** for system reporting. Has been no formal consultation on this requirement with education partners.
3. **Symposium** on Exploring the Development of Teacher Efficacy Through Professional Learning Experiences:

4. An evening with **Sam Sellar** (a discussion of PISA): November 13. Tickets here → https://event-wizard.com/Demystifying_Pisa/0/welcome/

5. **Webinars:** registration on association website and access to recorded events both available at: <http://tinurl.com/teacherwebinars>

6. **Student Learner Assessments:** So, here is a run down:

- Too many jurisdictions decided to join the pilot because it was seen as an alternative to PATs. However, teachers were not consulted.
- Design flaws with the performance assessment, especially in numeracy.
- Scoring discrepancies in guide.
- IT availability, function, and support were inconsistent. The digital exam parts excluded IT use for other students within schools
- Workload creep – the minister handed off this pilot to school boards without giving direction.
- Schools left under siege and the two week extension just prolonged the misery. Enormous stress and frustration experienced by many teachers.

So, what are WE doing:

- ✓ We gave a “How To: to the ministry a year ago on implementation which they chose not to follow.
- ✓ We recommended EITHER numeracy or literacy be piloted and that ONLY the performance task portion be piloted.
- ✓ We are pushing with the ministry the fact that teachers inherently know what the SLA is assessing.
- ✓ We will be pushing back on any data being used as an accountability piece.
- ✓ We have staff officers who are working diligently with the Alberta Education ministry to fix the problems they have created in their pilot.

Remember that our association policy is to abandon PATs and implement a diagnostic instrument at the beginning of Grade Four.

SLA Update presented at Local President’s Meeting: find it here → attached at end of my report

Student Learning Assessments (SLA) Update

Local Presidents’ Meeting 2014 10 24

J-C Couture

What?

The new Student Learning Assessments (SLAs) are intended to offer significant improvements over the government’s previous provincial achievement testing program. However, the October pilot of the grade three SLAs has raised significant concerns. Both Council and staff have gathered feedback from the field to determine the impacts of the pilot on teaching and learning.

So What?

While the broad intents of the SLA program are consistent with Association policy, there have been considerable issues raised in the following key areas:

- the suitability and desirability of relying on a digital platform to assess numeracy and literacy for grade three students;
- the time required for students to complete the assessments;
- the inordinate time required to administer the SLAs, including inputting student information, accessing the Teacher Dashboard, evaluating the assessments and uploading student data; and
- the overall cost-benefit of SLAs in terms of contributing to student learning and supporting teacher efficacy

In many respects these challenges could have been anticipated. For example, as directed by Council, President Ramsankar raised the issue of workload with the Honourable Gordon Dirks, minister of education, and provided a letter outlining the concerns of teachers. As a result of Association efforts, the minister sent a letter to school boards dated September 24 announcing the two-week extension, adjusting the deadline for administration of the SLAs to October 24. Other recommendations, including giving school authorities the option of withdrawing from their initial commitment to participate, were not taken up by the Minister.

Now What?

Since the inception of the SLA program last year, Association staff have offered numerous recommendations to help insure the success of the SLA initiative. These included piloting only one of the literacy or numeracy components, developing comprehensive professional development supports in advance of the pilot and focusing on the performance assessments rather than the digital responses. These recommendations were made in the context of the Association's long-standing view that the government should develop a phased-in multi-year implementation program that would focus on building teacher capacity—through performance assessments developed by the Alberta Assessment Consortium—to provide quality information to students and parents related to student progress in mathematics and English language arts.

At its most recent meeting, Council reviewed the status of the SLA program and the recent pilot. Based on these deliberations, it was determined that immediate representation to government would be made to ensure the profession's concerns are addressed. These consultations will consider not only the obvious immediate short-term issues, but will also address longer-term challenges through the following principles:

- That, consistent with the initial goals of the SLA program agreed to by the education partners' working group, future administrations of the SLA be only considered as formative assessment evidence strictly for the use of teachers in making instructional decisions for students.
- That student results from the SLA pilot administration of the digital literacy and numeracy items be limited to teacher reports of individual student responses, which can be shared with parents or guardians in a parent–teacher conference setting. This is in contrast to the government's initial intent to provide parents with detailed profiles of student performance data.
- That evidence of student performance from the SLA pilot administration of the performance assessment tasks be limited to actual samples of individual student work which can be shared with parents or guardians in a parent–teacher conference setting, where teachers can highlight areas of strength and areas for growth for the student. This would mitigate potential difficulties encountered by focusing on the government's SLA data as a substitute for the teachers' professional judgement.
- That any effort to roll up SLA data to school or system-level reporting or to the Accountability Pillar is unacceptable. Rather, government could consider consulting with education partners to develop a provincial sampling program in grades 4, 7 and 10 in order to develop a new public assurance model.

As it continues to address other government efforts to reform curriculum, assessment and reporting policies and processes, the Association will represent the teachers' views related to the SLA program. This will also include efforts to ensure that the reporting of SLA data to schools— scheduled for the end of November—is handled properly. Local presidents are encouraged to continue to gather input from members and to provide staff and Council with their perspectives so that we can make the transition from the previous provincial testing programs to assessments that more genuinely support the teaching and learning process.

Action on Framework Agreement

Section	What is supposed to happen	What has happened	What is the ATA doing
C1 Alberta Education Directives	Alberta Education is to identify initiatives that should be reduced or ended.	A report was issued 2013 06 30, but no concrete action has occurred.	Lobbying government officials for action.
C2 Joint Committee in each district	Each district committee should review current practices and consider action that reduces workload and improves teacher efficacy.	While action is occurring in many areas, other districts are focused on process and some others are stalled.	Working with teacher representatives to try to influence action and meeting with partner groups (ASBA, CASS, AB ED) to find ways to support action.
C3 Provincial Workload Study	A third party study should take place to collect data on teacher workload over the course of a full school year.	Teachers were randomly selected in June 2014 and the study started in September 2014. Selected teachers are to complete a one-week diary in each of ten months.	Encouraging teachers to continue with the study, even though it adds to the workload, emphasizing that understanding teacher work is key to moving forward.
C4 TDPAC	A committee of teachers and public members is to make recommendations to the Minister on matters to support or define the role of teachers and the profession.	The committee was established in spring 2014; its first task was to provide advice to the Minister on the recommendations of the Task Force for Teaching Excellence.	Continuing to support the teacher members of the committee.
C5 Personal PD	Without adding to the schedule, teachers should be provided with some time during the year to engage in personal professional development activities.	Action varies between the districts.	Following up with the districts (contact staff in Professional Development if you have concerns).
C6 TBLC	Create a TBLC if none exists.	Some districts already have committees and some are trying to establish them	Assist where necessary (contact S Vogrinetz)
C7 Principals' Personal Days	School-based principals should have access to at least two days' paid		Assisting where necessary (contact staff in Teacher Welfare if you have

	personal leave.		concerns).
C8 Pilot Projects	The ATA and the board should work towards agreeing on variations on hours of work clauses on a pilot basis.	Edmonton Public pilot to convert minutes/week to hours/year plus negotiated calendar and PD funding	Currently being evaluation by project committee
C9 Existing Hours of Work	Thirteen agreements with hours of work clauses in 2012 will retain those clauses until at least Aug 2016.	Clauses have been included in those agreements on the same basis as pre-2012.	
C10 907 hours of instructional time and Exceptions Committee	Teachers in districts without hours of work clauses may only be assigned a maximum of 907 hours of instruction.	Most schools are operating within 907 hours, while 31 schools have received exceptions to the limit.	Assisting teachers in calculations and responding to those districts that request exceptions (contact staff in Teacher Welfare if you have concerns).