

PEC has not met since my report dated February 25, 2021. What follows are updates to Association information and news of interest to Alberta's teachers over the last month.

1. Pension – "Alberta teachers' battle over government changes to their pensions is headed for the courts. The Alberta Teachers' Association and an Edmonton school principal have filed a lawsuit against the provincial government about an order they say wrests more control of pension funds away from teachers." <http://bit.ly/3blhX21>

Bill 208 - A bill that would have added representatives from four major Alberta pensions plans to the board of AIMCo is essentially dead after a government-dominated committee voted against it being debated in the legislature. Bill 208, the Alberta Investment and Management Corporation Amendment Act, would have bumped the size of AIMCo's board from 11 to 15 by adding representatives from the Alberta Teachers Retirement Fund, Special Forces Pension Plan, Local Authorities Pension Plan and Public Sector Pension Plan. Greg Meeker made a compelling argument on our behalf that impressed MLAs, but the bill did not make it out of committee.

Teachers' Retirement Fund Management, March 16 Christian Gray (NDP) MLA for Edmonton-Millwoods asked Minister of Finance Travis **Toews** when teachers will be shown the respect that they deserve and if he will grant control back over teachers' pensions. Toews answered that ATRF continues to manage the ATRF pension and the changes made by amalgamating the investment function under AIMCo will serve teachers and Alberta taxpayers well. Gray asked why the minister went back on his word with the December 23 ministerial order that imposed an investment management agreement. Toews stated "In December I implemented a temporary investment management agreement between the two parties so that ATRF and AIMCo can continue to move forward to pull assets over and get on with the business of investing those assets in the best interest of Alberta teachers and Alberta taxpayers. He added that he is "hopeful" that ATRF and AIMCo will form a new agreement which will then supersede the one that was implemented. He concluded by stating that this decision will "result in lower costs in administering the investment strategies. That will result in better returns for teachers, and better returns for Alberta taxpayers."

ATA information regarding AIMCo taking over ATRF investment management: (login required) <https://bit.ly/3sGb1c9>

2. CASS - "Alberta's government will strengthen the kindergarten to Grade 12 education system by creating a professional organization for school superintendents. If passed, Bill 55, the College of Alberta School Superintendents Act, would make the college a legislated organization responsible for upholding the superintendent profession. This includes superintendents and deputy superintendents employed in public, separate or francophone school authorities."

3. Curriculum – The Northwest Territories is studying whether it should continue using Alberta's curriculum in its schools. The N.W.T has used portions of Alberta's K-12 curriculum and

provincial exams since the 1970s, particularly in the high school grades. The territory's review comes as Alberta prepares to make substantial changes to its K-12 curriculum in all subjects, in English and French, some of them controversial. Will the International Schools, which use AB curriculum and standardized exams, be next?

Education Budget 2021-2022 and Curriculum Redesign, March 17 Sarah Hoffman (NDP) MLA for Edmonton-Glenora asked Minister of Education Adriana **LaGrange** why she did not budget any new money to help teachers and students with the new curriculum. LaGrange answered that: "We intend to make this rollout of the new curriculum very successful with the proper professional development, with the proper resources. I've indicated it is not coming out of the classroom. It is actually coming out of my budget. It has been allocated in my budget, and I look forward to more information when I'm able to roll out the curriculum." Hoffman noted that the minister's own budget shows that the line item where curriculum is supposed to be funded from is cut from this year's spending. LaGrange said that in estimates she was able to show very clearly from budget to budget that there was an increase in the Education department's spending.

4. Worth Knowing – check for updates on FB and ATA website: budget, representation, retirement, etc.: (login required)

<https://www.teachers.ab.ca/membersonly/CollectiveBargainingUpdates/Worth-Talking-About/Pages/index.aspx>

5. Alberta Opening of Phase Two/ Phase Three – Did politics play a role in the opening of Phase Two? COVID variants on the rise, but so, too were the calls from constituency presidents for a leadership review. Phase Three has been delayed, due to increasing COVID numbers. Government laying blame on Ottawa due to slow vaccination rollout.

6. Financial Wellness Sessions – Extra Financial Wellness session have been added to the schedule. There are two sessions planned for Saturday, April 10 <https://bit.ly/3sumrQ8> & Saturday, May 8, 2021, <https://bit.ly/3dbbo7V> both beginning at 10am.

7. CTF – Shedemic, COVID-19 has disproportionately affected women

What does CTF do for me?

- Advocacy and government relations: The CTF was instrumental in advocating for the \$2 billion in support for provinces and territories through [the Safe Return to Class Fund](#). Following advocacy with the Prime Minister's Office, the fund was announced and Alberta received over \$260 million to help support a safe school re-entry.
- Teacher Welfare: The CTF has successfully advanced with the federal government the need to reduce the number of hours required to access employment insurance. (120hrs) This change to access EI is particularly beneficial for substitute teachers who have struggled because of the pandemic to obtain enough insurable hours.
- Vaccine Priority – The CTF has been advocating since 2020 that teachers should be prioritized to receive the COVID-19 vaccine.
- Tax Credits – Educator School Supply Tax Credit of up to \$1000, the \$400 tax credit for working at home, and continuing to advocate for making Wellness Benefits tax-free

8. \$268M for new schools and education upgrades – Check to see if your jurisdiction is on the list: <https://bit.ly/3dfXyRy>

9. Rapid Testing Pilot – CBE & Calgary Catholic, one school in each: <https://bit.ly/3qE60yW>

10. Manitoba eliminating multiple school divisions under new education bill - and recommending removing principals and vice-principals from Manitoba Teachers' Society (Report of the Commission on K-12 Education, March 2020 - co-chaired by Clayton Manness and Dr. Janice MacKinnon <https://bit.ly/3w0sw8Y>) <http://bit.ly/2Q2SNmp>

11. Application deadlines to serve on ATA provincial committees and CTF advisory committees for the 2021/22 school year are on the horizon!
ATA (April 15) and CTF (March 31) <https://www.teachers.ab.ca/.../Pages/CurrentVacancies.aspx>

12. UCP Government Introduces Recall Legislation – easy to recall municipal officials, almost impossible to recall MLAs. "Bill 52, the Recall Act, would allow Albertans to initiate a process that could lead to removing and replacing elected officials including members of the legislative assembly (MLAs), municipal officials and school trustees during their term."
<http://bit.ly/3rR7mI3>

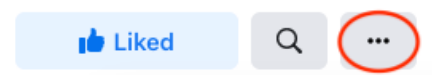
13. National Film Board of Canada (NFB) offers free online resources for teachers
The rich collection of free mini-lessons, playlists, interactive productions and apps, and blog posts is available at <https://www.nfb.ca/education/>

14. PEC Election results: Greg Carabine and Jenny Regal were elected into the two vice-president positions. President Schilling was acclaimed, as was your DR for Calgary District.

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