



## DR Report for Calgary District – FEB 2023

Barnett House: 1-800-232-7208 SARO: 1-800-332-1280

[Karen.Nakaska@ata.ab.ca](mailto:Karen.Nakaska@ata.ab.ca)



[@nakaskak](https://twitter.com/nakaskak)



[@nakaskak.dr](https://www.facebook.com/nakaskak.dr)

<b>Guidelines for attendance of meetings for District Representatives as approved by ARA</b> "28.6 The following shall be observed as the appropriate order of priority among Council member assignments: 1. Council Meetings 2. Provincial Committee Meetings 3. Assigned Representation Functions 4. Organized meetings with members of the Association at any level involving government political leaders or Alberta Education officials at the Assistant Deputy Minister level or higher 5. Local Association Meetings 6. Specialist Council Liaison Assignments 7. Teacher Convention Association Meetings 8. Area Conferences 9. Consultants Meetings (1981 12, 2006 04)"	<b>FEB District Representative Activities</b>	
	<b>JAN 25</b>	<b>Canadian Rockies CSR (Zoom)</b>
	<b>JAN 26</b>	<b>Rocky View CSR (Zoom)</b>
	<b>JAN 31</b>	<b>Foothills Exec</b>
	<b>FEB 02</b>	<b>Rocky View Exec (Calgary)</b>
	<b>FEB 07</b>	<b>Foothills CSR (Zoom)</b>
	<b>FEB 08</b>	<b>Resolutions (Edmonton)</b>
	<b>FEB 08</b>	<b>Christ the Redeemer Exec (Zoom)</b>
	<b>FEB 08</b>	<b>Rocky View TW (Zoom)</b>
	<b>FEB 09</b>	<b>Calgary District DR Forum (Zoom)</b>
	<b>FEB 10/11</b>	<b>Local Presidents (Edmonton)</b>
	<b>FEB 15</b>	<b>Canadian Rockies CSR (Zoom)</b>
	<b>FEB 15</b>	<b>Canadian Rockies Round Table (Canmore)</b>
	<b>FEB 16</b>	<b>Rocky View CSR (Zoom)</b>
<b>FEB 22-24</b>	<b>Pallister District Teachers' Convention</b>	
<b>FEB 27/28</b>	<b>PEC (Zoom)</b>	
<b>FEB 28</b>	<b>Rocky View TW (Zoom)</b>	

### 1. Executive Secretary –

Webinar on the New Code of Profession Conduct and what it means for teachers:

<https://legacy.teachers.ab.ca/membersonly/Pages/Webinar-on-new-code-of-conduct.aspx>

**The ATA is here to support our members. If you've received notice of a complaint from the government's Alberta Teaching Profession Commission, contact us FIRST!**

**Call us: 780-447-9460**

**Email us: [professionaldiscipline@ata.ab.ca](mailto:professionaldiscipline@ata.ab.ca)**

- The combination of recent staff retirements, continuing leaves of absence and sustained volume of work associated with representation has created circumstances that require the hiring of staff a position in Teacher Employment Services, housed in SARO. Posting: 2023 03 15 —Advertising in the ATA News: 2023 03 14 —Deadline for applications: 2023 03 29 —Shortlisting: 2023 04 06 —Interviews: 2023 04 13

- The education minister has proposed that the Association explore with the ministry opportunities for collaboration on topics, including class complexity, career education teacher qualifications, and student assessment. There does appear to be a genuine desire on the part of government to re-engage with the Association on a wide range of matters of policy.

**2. Government** –While the Association's new website launched in summer 2022, the legacy website still holds much of the content and both sites remain difficult to search, leading to user frustration. Once the transition to the new vendors and hosting environment is complete and the search engine is in place, staff's focus will return to migrating current content from the legacy site to the new site for the remainder of the 2022/23 fiscal year and making as many improvements to the new site as possible to ensure access to content improves. It is hoped that migration will be concluded, with a few exceptions, by the end of the school year. Staff acknowledge that this situation is far from ideal and that there are many frustrations from members. Patience and understanding are requested as staff work as quickly as possible to bring this to completion.

**3. Teacher Employment Services** – Call volume has been higher than normal lately, with some days up to 100 members calling for advice. Many of these calls deal with conflict. This number does not include the four large urban locals, as they each have their own staff officer.

Worth Talking About documents containing information for teachers continue to be published on the Association website: <https://www.teachers.ab.ca/membersonly/CollectiveBargainingUpdates/WorthTalkingAbout/Pages/index.aspx>

**4. Professional Development** – The ATA is once again hosting the annual Educational Leadership Academy (ELA). Taking place at Barnett House and locations around Edmonton, from 2023 07 03–07, the experience will consist of a combination of classroom based professional development and experiential learning across different locations in Central Alberta. The theme for this year’s conference is Facilitating Truth and Reconciliation for School Leaders. In this immersive five-day academy, Alberta leaders will connect with colleagues and Indigenous Elders and Knowledge Keepers through meaningful conversations; partake in theoretical and practical professional development; engage in critical self-reflection; experience land-based learnings; and renew or reimagine a pathway forward for school communities. School leaders and central office leaders who are interested in attending the Educational Leadership Academy 2023 can express their interest by completing the form at: <https://surveys.teachers.ab.ca/s3/ELA2023>

**5. Table Officers** – The Association’s guiding document concerning local induction ceremonies has been updated to reflect the transfer of discipline functions from the Association to the Alberta Teaching Profession Commission and the replacement of the Association’s Code of Professional Conduct with the new Code of Professional Conduct for Teachers and School Leaders.

The joint meeting of Local Communications Officers and Local Political Engagement Officers, scheduled for 2023 05 05, will take place in Calgary. Currently, the plan is to host an all-party forum on public education (as contemplated in the Election Readiness Strategy) as part of this event.

**7. President** – Schilling continues a full schedule of meetings and interviews, advocating on a wide range of issues affecting teachers and the Association, including classroom numbers and complexity, curriculum, and the discipline process. Recently, he has met with Ms LaGrange, as well as provincial politicians from several parties.

**8. Substitute Teachers** – Memorandums from the Substitute Teachers Committee to locals, superintendents and school representatives encouraging involvement and providing suggestions for initiatives during Substitute Teachers’ Appreciation Week, March 13-17 have been distributed, as well as a copy of the poster mailed to each school. Advertisements will be published in the *ATA News* in editions 8 or 9, as well as on Facebook and Twitter and in the Events section of the ATA website.

- On 2023 01 07 a webinar was offered to substitute teachers entitled, “ATRF Your Pension Matters for Substitute Teachers”. Additional PD sessions are in the development stage to take place before the end of the school year.

**10. Teacher Education and Certification** – In some cases, preservice teachers are being utilized as substitute teachers. In some community-based programs some preservice teachers are being offered letters of authority while on practicum as a stop-gap measure to the teacher shortage. Postsecondary institutions reported they are not being given information on this from the school boards but rather are hearing about this from the preservice teachers in their programs. The Association would like to be made aware of these situations so that the Association could advocate for the preservice teachers and ensure that they are being compensated and treated appropriately. Universities are not being provided information about these situations and they have

made it clear they do not support these arrangements. Brown is working with PD, TES, and Field Law to ensure preservice teachers are protected while in these precarious situations. Cooperating teachers should encourage preservice teachers to contact TES. This practice leads to the further de-professionalization of education.

**9. Resolutions** – 147 Resolutions Arising from the Six-Year Review of Policy, 70 Local Resolutions, and 33 PEC Resolutions will be distributed to locals for the pre-vote. The resolutions bulletin will be published March 15, with the pre-vote due April 14.

**10. Strategic Planning** – Five key themes have emerged from the roundtables held as part of Phase Two of the Election Readiness Plan, which were attended by over 500 participants: implement a plan to reduce class sizes and complexity; develop a modern, inclusive curriculum; give student the learning supports to develop their full potential; create a more equitable education system; and increase investments in public education. These themes will be further explored during Phase Three of the Election Readiness Campaign.

**2023 Member Opinion Survey – Do you have 15 minutes to help the ATA plan its strategy for the next year?** The Member Opinion survey is ready for member feedback. It closes at midnight on March 13, 2023.

<https://www.teachers.ab.ca/events/2023-member-opinion-survey>

**11. School Leadership Issue and Concerns** – A discussion was held regarding creating a Continuing Education Program. A question was asked of the Alberta Education representative regarding if credentialling and certification is still done through Alberta Education, and if this continuing education program was then going to be specific to the CASS Act or encompass other aspects of professional development. A point was made that not all CASS members are Superintendent Leadership Quality Standard (SLQS) certified, some are only LQS certified. The Association would like to discuss with the CASS representative and CASS about how we can collaborate with them on this journey and as they continue to build professional development opportunities for their members. An additional question was asked regarding the statement “Meeting Alberta’s Leadership Quality Standard or Superintendent Leadership Quality Standard” and how or if this relates to currency of process and maintaining this continuity of certification. The Alberta Education representative confirmed that the Registrar’s Office is the only entity that would issue certification.

**12. Women in Leadership** – WIL Summit at Barnett House 2023 03 10/11

**13. Political Engagement** – Political Engagement Seminar was held 2023 03/04. The keynote address was given by Althia Raj, who is a correspondent for the Toronto Star and host of the podcast, “It’s Political.” Speakers on Saturday included Graham Thomson, Janet Brown, Jonathan Teghtmeyer, Jason Schilling, and Dennis Theobald. Phase Three of the Election Readiness Campaign was discussed.

- The committee is planning to hold an all-party forum in conjunction with the LPEO meeting on 2023 05 05. The forum will be held in person, in Calgary, and live-streamed and recorded. In the past, invitations were sent based on party standing in the legislature.

[standforeducation.ca](http://standforeducation.ca) website has been updated to reflect Phase Three of the Election Readiness Campaign

**14. Benefits, Insurance, Pension** – Alberta Teachers’ Retirement Fund (ATRF) Annual Report: Rod Matheson (Chief Executive Officer), Julie Joyal (Vice-President, Pension Services) and Sandra Johnston (Board Chair) presented the 2022 Annual Report Highlights which focussed on positive outcomes. The policy asset mix maintained active positioning and held a modest overweight position which both added value to the mix. Investment returns were down slightly given the volatile market fluctuations; however, projections are favourable for future returns. Funding status continues toward being fully funded. As of 2022 08 31, the plan had a funding status of 99%, up 7% since 2018. Within the context of the current volatile environment,

assumptions were reviewed and approved by the ATRF Board to reflect the plans' experience and ensure they are appropriate for the plans' funding and sustainability. The board continues to take prudent measures to reinforce the plans' long-term sustainability, including building up margin and recognizing the current higher inflation environment. Current contribution rates will continue through to at least 2024 08 31. At the request of the committee and to alleviate member concerns with regard to the estimated commuted value amount that appears on member statements, the presentation included an explanation of commuted value. With the steady increase in interest rates from the Bank of Canada in 2022, plan members saw a decrease in the commuted value (CV) and were worried that this decrease was an indicator of the plans' financial health. A CV is the lump sum that would need to be set aside today, at current market interest rates, to provide a member's future pension payments. CVs are valued using actuarial assumptions and move opposite interest rates. When interest rates are low, CVs are higher because it is assumed the CV will earn less interest between when the member withdraws from the plan and when they draw a retirement income. When interest rates rise, CVs decrease because it is assumed the CV will earn more interest between when it is withdrawn from the plan and when funds are used to provide a retirement income. Interest rates steadily rose in 2022, so CVs decreased steadily throughout the year. CV changes do not affect pension benefits, nor are changes in CVs indicative of the health of the plan. They merely reflect current interest rates. Plan sustainability is maintained with appropriate funding, using long-term interest assumptions and prudent risk management.

- Alberta School Employee Benefit Plan: The Employee and Family Assistance Program (EFAP) provider was changed to Inkblot effective 2022 12 01. The previous provider, Homewood Health, was not living up to the expectations of covered members nor the ASEBP. Although one less free session for counselling is offered by Inkblot than Homewood Health, the covered member can remain with that counsellor for the duration and does not need to go looking again after that last session. They would access their benefit coverage next. Psychology sessions on the extended health care portion of coverage are now at \$1,200 per year (or \$180 per treatment) and any further sessions can then be reimbursed through the covered member's health spending account. The system is said to be more streamlined. *Covered members experiencing any issues with Inkblot should contact ASEBP benefits for assistance.* The Sick Leave Support pilot program has been extended another year. There are currently 12 employers participating in the program. Drug coverages experienced a shift effective 2023 01 01 which covered members may only experience at the pharmacy when they refill existing prescriptions. The change was that ASEBP will only reimburse up to the generic equivalent cost for all drugs unless clinically proven not effective for a particular ailment. The majority of covered members are already using the generic alternative if one is available. Therefore, this shift in coverage may only be experienced by a minority of members. *Members should contact ASEBP directly if they experience any issues.* Physicians have vastly increased the cost to patients to complete disability forms. It is unclear why this is occurring; however, it was thought to have some connection to Alberta Health Services. ASEBP is monitoring this issue and somewhat committed to making contact with the College of Physicians and Surgeons. They did, however, note that covered members applying for extended disability benefit should raise this issue with their claims facilitator. There are often discretionary funds available to help with such costs.

It was noted that ASEBP needs to do more by way of communicating with covered members when issues such as the shift to "generics only" was being introduced. It was suggested that ASEBP could have sent direct communication to those members that are not using generic versions of a drug about the change. This information is readily available by ASEBP and possibly could have alleviated much stress and confusion by covered members before they went to refill their prescriptions. The changes that are made by Trustees are often a cost-saving measure to ensure the financial health and wellness of the plan. But those vocal members who experienced issues with ASEBP are voicing their anger on social media. This "unrest" makes it difficult to push for ASEBP as the only provider of teacher benefits in the province at the bargaining table. ASEBP needs to be better, communicate better and satisfy members better.

**15. Curriculum** –The curriculum pilot for K–6 Science, French Immersion Language Arts and Literature, and French First Language and Literature will end in February. No decisions have been announced regarding curriculum piloting or implementation plans beyond that timeline. Teachers who are piloting the curriculum are completing surveys which are collected monthly. Piloting teachers have the opportunity to share feedback in focus groups which discuss the learning, teaching, and assessment implications of the new curriculum. Teachers who are teaching the current curriculum should use the Contact Us button at LearnAlberta.ca. The information is being triaged, forwarded, and captured on a regular basis. This input will be used to make informed decisions in the future. Alberta Education staff are working on creating mechanisms that will allow for continuous improvement of curriculum.

- Impact Of High School Redesign on Instructional Time For Courses In Division IV: The changes to high school course instructional minutes has impacted teaching and learning in some jurisdictions. Concerns are that the more flexible structures are having detrimental impacts on student learning and increasing demands on teachers. This may be a place to advocate with parents, well as CASS and ASBA.

\*\*\*\*\*

Wellness4Teacher is a ResilienceNHope program funded by Alberta Mental Health Foundation and the Global Psychological eHealth Foundation with support from the Division of Community Psychiatry at the University of Alberta, Department of Psychiatry at Dalhousie University, the Nova Scotia Teachers Union, and the Alberta and Newfoundland & Labrador Teachers Associations. The goal of Wellness4Teachers is to provide psychological support for teachers in Canada. Members can text TEACHWELL to 1-844-618-1234 to subscribe. Subscribers will receive a free, daily supportive text message intervention based on Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT), designed to address stress, burnout, anxiety, and depression, as well as build resilience and improve professional satisfaction.

\*\*\*\*\*



**Voting March 13, 8am – March 16, 5pm**

To vote, you will need to log into your ATA account at <https://www.teachers.ab.ca/>

If you don't have an ATA account, this video explains how to get one: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ean1UPir8Vo>

**Vote online  
March 13–16**

**Six Reasons to get your Online ATA Account**

The Members Only area of the Association website is restricted and not accessible to the public. Given the Members Only area houses vital tools, services and information, there are many reasons for ATA members to get an

online ATA account, and to keep it updated. Here are six great ones:

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Get bargaining updates</li><li>2. Vote on provincial collective agreements</li><li>3. Vote in ATA elections</li></ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>4. Use ATA library online resources and databases</li><li>5. Get no-cost ATA specialist council memberships</li><li>6. Print your own ATA member card</li></ol> |
|--|---|