

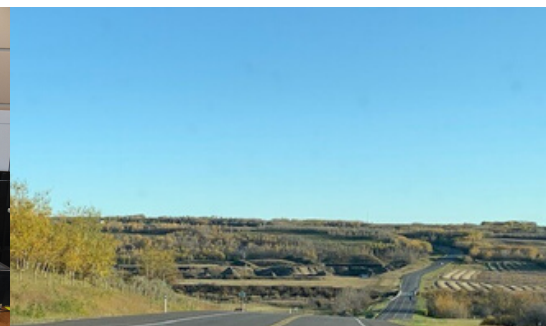
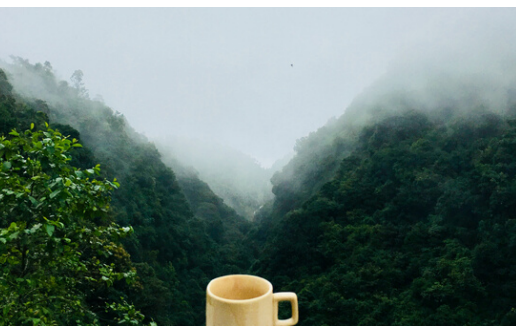
OCTOBER -
NOVEMBER
2019

ATA CENTRAL EAST DISTRICT REPORT

Vol 1 Issue 2

*By Murray Lalonde
District Representative*

Inside the Issue



NEWS FROM THE LEGISLATURE

It's been a busy time at "The Leg",
with budget and legislation and
transfer of assets, oh my
- pages 2-3

HIGHLIGHTS FROM PEC

Items of general interest from
the October 24 and 25 session
of ATA Provincial Executive
Council
- page 4

NEWS FROM CENTRAL EAST

Items of interest for teachers
from Central East Alberta and
Endless Skies Teachers'
Convention Association
- page 5

My DR Calendar

Here are the meeting dates and times where I
will be if you would like to meet in person.
- page 6



Concerns? Questions?
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News from the Legislature



So, I thought that I would save a bit of time and start on my DR report before October's PEC meetings. Silly me, this was also before the Alberta UCP government announced their budget. I decided to leave the title page alone to remember how innocent the times were before the budget.

Struggle to Describe the Budget

Keith Gerein of the Edmonton Journal described the budget as "an experimental drug" in that "this is a therapy that Alberta has not had in a long time", with side effects including:

- hits to university students and municipalities
- de-indexing AISH and personal income tax
- no new funding for enrollment growth in schools
- forcing ATRF to surrender its assets to AIMCo

Political Scientist John Santos said that "This budget is a political budget" that "helps their [UCP] friends and hurts their enemies ... It's going to let the burden be shouldered by the people who don't vote for them."

Shaky Labour Relations

There were provisions regarding the Essential Services Agreement that the NDP would not use replacement workers while labour action was happening. The UCP government is now saying that they will give themselves the option to use replacement workers.

As teachers currently working under a collective agreement, we cannot act collectively and withdraw services, work to rule, or wildcat strike. We can, however, talk to our MLAs to let them know we are "doing more with less money" and are struggling to find ways to teach effectively. We need special needs and enrollment growth funding. The ATA's Letter Writing Campaign is a great way to communicate our needs with the government.

Two New Bills: 20 & 21

Bill 20 - Fiscal Measures and Taxation Act and Bill 21 - Ensuring Fiscal Sustainability Act include 35 changes that impact how physicians and union workers are paid and rolls back the NDP government's banning replacement workers in strike situations involving public sector workers. If you feel like you do not understand the budget and new bills, do not fret; the media had to have a technical briefing for these bills. Removal of the tax credits, dissolution of various funds (ATRF, WCB, Lottery, Cancer Prevention, Environmental Protection, etc), and de-indexation of AISH and taxes all have to exist for this budget to work.

From Deep Within the Budget... The Future of the ATRF

There has been a lot of talk amongst teachers about the fear of the unknown in what is happening to the Alberta Teachers' Retirement Fund (ATRF). Finance Minister Travis Toews announced in the budget that the ATRF will surrender its \$18 BILLION in assets to the Alberta Investment Management Corporation (AIMCo). Even though we are equal partners in the investment, THE ATA AND ATRF WERE NEVER CONSULTED ABOUT THIS CHANGE OF MANAGEMENT. We have no idea why the government would think that this is in our best interest.

The ATRF has held joint governance and occupy half of the board seats for 80 years. Teachers have been able to have a say in what we invest in. The ATRF has been able to achieve returns on investments that have exceeded AIMCo returns.

If there is something good to come from this, it's that our retirement funds are still safe, active and retired teachers' pension benefits should not be immediately affected, and that we will still be served by our ATRF staff.

And What About Education Funding?

The Minister of Finance announced that education spending will not change, and seems pretty proud to announce this as a "no cuts to education" budget. It is, however, seen to us as a cut because there is no additional funding for the province-wide addition of 15000 students who entered school this past September. No additional spending in education is really a \$200 per student cut to funding.

This page, of course, is a quick and simplified view of some very important issues for teachers. Please look at the ATA website, sign in to your ATA account, and read the onslaught of articles relating to the "hijacking" of the ATRF and the cuts to funding.

New Website and Letter Campaign

A new website was launched on Friday, November 1. Please visit **www.handsoffmypension.ca** to send an email to your MLA, Premier Kenner, and Ministers LaGrange and Toews. The process takes a couple of minutes, and you can use the pre-written letter or type your own.

It Is Important To Know ...

... that the ATA is a non-partisan organization. We have common interests as well as differences with any political party. Personally, I will always advocate for students and teachers, no matter which political party is in power. "The Association works within the political system to influence decisions affecting education." - ATA Policy - Fundamental Beliefs.

(on a lighter note) For the Love of Reading

The ATA will be holding a contest called "For the Love of Reading", in which teachers will submit a short video of themselves explaining what their favourite book is and the reasons why. There will be some amazing prizes for the contest winners. Please watch the website and ATA News for contest information.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM PEC

Update Your Personal Information

The ATA is giving away five \$500 prizes. All you have to do is update your ATA online account at www.teachers.ab.ca and you will be entered into the draw. If you don't have an account, request one and fill in the information to enter. Your ATA account allows you to vote in ATA elections, receive bargaining updates, library services, voting for Central Table Collective Agreement, and more.

It is very important that your local Teacher Welfare Committee and local Executive Committee know how to contact you. Please make sure that they have your personal email address and home phone and/or cell number. We are in the bargaining season, and cannot send ATA business to your employer-provided email address. Please do not use your school computer or wifi to access any ATA information.

Leadership Certificates

The *Education Act* requires that only principals hold school leader certification. If you plan a future as a principal, you may work under a letter of authority, but will be expected to obtain a leadership certificate within three years. The last few ATA sponsored courses are happening soon, after which you will have to take the certificate through a university, with a higher tuition cost.

Council of School Counsellors

The ATA Council of School Counsellors (CSC) is looking for members. Check out their webpage on the ATA website. The CSC has an upcoming conference on November 23 at W.P. Wagner School, Edmonton.

ASEBP - Flash Glucose Monitor Systems (ex. Freestyle Libre) has been added to our benefits. This system is covered for insulin-dependent patients; you may want to check with ASEBP before you purchase it.

Benefits - Life and AD&D Insurance remains at 2 times annual salary, but now up to age 70. Teachers can be added to the plan from age 65 to age 70, even if they were not covered prior to age 65.

Teacher Welfare/CTBC Update

The Central Table Bargaining Committee (CTBC) is well-prepared to go to the arbitration hearing, scheduled for mid-November through early December. This arbitration hearing is for the salary provision in all collective agreements. The UCP government has recently announced that it is looking to reduce public sector salaries by at least 2%. Are they allowed to do this? Well, in normal collective bargaining, it should be the arbitrator's decision, and the current agreement stated that we cannot take a negative change to salary. However, the government can legislate what the arbitrator is allowed to give. We have to wait and see what will transpire.

As for 2018-2020 Local Bargaining, six locals across Alberta signed an agreement, with a whole lot more very close to finishing this round soon.



Women in Leadership Conference

The "Women in Leadership Summit" is planned for March 8 and 9, 2020. For this first year, a smaller event is planned, setting the stage for a larger conference next school year. One delegate per local will be offered Grant In Aid, with extra delegates possible up to the seating capacity maximum.

NEWS FROM CENTRAL EAST

Letter Writing Campaign

Dear MLA,

My classroom concerns are ...

Please ask your ATA School Rep for a blank copy of the letter to MLAs. You can also download a copy from the ATA website. Send your completed letter to your School Rep, who will give it to your Local President or Local Political Engagement Officer. We are hoping that every teacher in Alberta will take 5 minutes to express their concerns for class size and/or composition. If you have no concerns and it is working well for you, please write the letter to explain why so they know what works well in a classroom.

- Keep it factual and short
- Respect student privacy
- Be mindful of the code of conduct
- Be a constructive advocate
- Tell your story
- You do not need to identify your school, but you should identify yourself

We need to protect funding for public education!

#MyClassSizeIs #AbEd

My class size is ...

It should be ...

12 13 14 15

ESTCA Preparations

The Endless Skies Teachers' Convention Association (ESTCA) Committee has been working hard at planning our 2020 Teachers' Convention. It will be a change for everyone in the Central East District, as it is a change of venue for NETCA teachers (Edmonton Convention Centre) and a change of date for CEATCA teachers (February 13 - 14). The Westin Hotel has a block of rooms set aside - please mention ESTCA when booking to get the special rate. Parking in the area may be a concern; you may want to consider taking the LRT to the venue. With a lot more teachers involved in this convention, it promises to be one for the books.

ATA Induction and Retirement Ceremonies

'Tis the season to celebrate Induction and Retirement Ceremonies. Northern Lights and Park Plains East Locals held their ceremonies on Wednesday, October 9. ATA President Jason Schilling enjoyed his first visit to La Corey, while Past President Greg Jeffrey and I enjoyed our evening in Wainright.

Aspen View Local teachers held their ceremony on October 10, welcoming Vice President Darrin Bauer to Boyle. I was honoured to be there to help my dear friend, Lorraine Ponich, celebrate her retirement.

Unfortunately, I was unable to attend Lakeland Catholic's Induction/Retirement ceremony on October 28, but would like to offer congratulations to all.

Greater St. Paul Local will be welcoming Vice President Jenny Regal to help welcome our new teachers and retirees on November 12.

Battle River Local will hold their ATA Induction on December 5 in Camrose.

I am truly honoured, as are the ATA Table Officers, to help our Central East District Locals celebrate the careers of our retirees and futures of our inductees. Thank you all for your wonderful hospitality and warm welcomes.

My DR Calendar

November 2019

- 1 - Local Political Engagement Officers @ Barnett House
- 4 - Battle River Executive Meeting, Camrose
- 7 - Parent Teacher Interviews, H. A. Kostash School, Smoky Lake
- 7 - Lakeland Catholic Local Council, Dr. Brosseau School, Bonnyville
- 12 - Greater St. Paul ATA Induction, St. Paul, with Vice President Jenny Regal
- 15-16 - Teacher Welfare Area Conference, Downtown Westin, Calgary
- 18 - Northern Lights Local Council, Duclos School, Bonnyville
- 20 - Aspen View Local Council, Edwin Parr School, Athabasca
- 25 - Park Plains East Executive, Wainright
- 26 - Political Engagement Committee, Barnett House, Edmonton
- 26 - Battle River Local Council, Camrose Norseman
- 27 - Northern Lights Executive Meeting with School Board, Cold Lake
- 27 - Park Plains East Local Council Meeting, Wainright
- 29 - Teacher Welfare Services Committee, Barnett House, Edmonton
- 29-30 - Professional Development Area Conference, Edmonton

December 2019

- 2 - Battle River Executive Meeting, Camrose
- 5-6 Provincial Executive Council, Barnett House, Edmonton
- 5 - Lakeland Catholic Local Meeting, Cold Lake
- 5 - Battle River Local ATA Induction, Camrose
- 6-7 MCATA meeting
- 9 - Greater St. Paul Local Council
- 18 - ATA Resolutions Committee Meeting, Barnett House, Edmonton

Thank you for your dedication to Alberta students, schools, and staff. Your hard work is greatly appreciated.