

TEACHERS
SUPPORTING
TEACHERS

Bugler

January 2020

Sticking Together in Tough Times

By Deneen Zielke

Things Are Getting Worse.... But We Must Stick Together!

It started last year with budget uncertainty, school boards erred on the side of caution, and staffing numbers decreased. Then came the fall budget that saw even more staff losing positions, class size increases, and support decreases across the province. We thought that maybe, without the government's direct control, that the arbitration portion of our collective agreement would at least see us gain a small wage increase.....but no, we were shut out there too.

Frustration, despair, and fear are but a few emotions we are all feeling. It is understandable that we want to take action. This can mean different things and include engaging with friends and family in healthy discussion, writing or meeting with your MLA, engaging in social media, etc. For most individuals this means healthy discourse and sharing of information. It is very important that we are informed and aware, we however have to remember that this discourse does not contravene the Code of Professional Conduct. It is difficult to sometimes reign in our feelings when we feel attacked. That is not to say that we can't respond emotionally, but we have to do so while wearing our professional hat.

When we feel attacked, we also understandably look for someone to help us and question why that help isn't swift and thorough, and for teachers that is usually the provincial ATA. We have heard that the association has a plan, and this is a marathon, not a race, but what does that mean? It means that now the arbitration ruling has come down the association can focus on public relations campaigns and engaging a wider sector of supporters.

One of the things the association is doing is asking locals to bring parents to our political engagement seminars. I attend our Council of School Advisory Committees meetings each month and provide a report to the members. I have members from this committee eager to join us at this event and support public education in Alberta. There are more plans in place that will roll out in a thoughtful manner that will increase in momentum as get closer to next spring when we will likely have a bargaining decision to make.

Is it frustrating to have to wait and go through what is being thrown at us? Absolutely! Can we afford to act without a plan and potentially in a way that adversely affects the support we do have from parents and the public? Can we afford to act in a manner that breaks our current collective agreement and cost our association hundreds of thousand of dollars in fines that could be used to move our message forward? These are questions we must reflect on. Although we don't like the situation we are in, we must act as the intelligent professionals that we are and make our actions work in our favor.

Please support one another, stand together, be professional...even when it's really hard, and we will deal with this challenge one step at a time.

Easy PD ACCOUNT SIGN UP

Need help? Check out the Local's [YouTube](#) channel. This is the BEST way to learn how to sign up for a Local account which will allow you to receive Local information direct to your email.



Answer these five quick questions to be entered!

1. Who is our local PD Chair?
2. When does the GSA meet?
3. What do you need with you to get into convention this year?
4. What is a great app for communicating with parents?
5. Who might we want to bring with us to political engagement seminars?

Email [Maxine Holm](#) with your answers!

MOVIE PASSES

are available for \$8.50 per ticket.

WEM PASSES

are available for \$35.00 per pass.

Contact [Karen Topma](#)

COMMUNICATION

Please remember that your staff reps, Committee Members, and Executive are volunteers and also your colleagues. When communicating with them at meetings, by email or by phone, please remember to correspond with respect and professionalism.

Bargaining Unit General Meeting

Thursday Jan 30th
4:30pm

SAL Auditorium

This is an important time in Education!

ALL teachers should attend to have their voices heard.

Considering Teacher Workload By Stephen Anderson

Happy New Year colleagues! I wanted to thank each and every one of you for all the hard work you do every day for your students. I wanted to start by thanking you because I feel we as teachers often don't get the recognition we deserve, especially during these trying times. Please know you are not alone.

As your local ATA executive, we have discussed, at great lengths, what we can do to help improve teacher mental health and wellness. Over the past few years TBAC (Teacher Board Advisory Committee) has been strongly advocating to the board our desire to ease workloads for teachers. During our last TBCC (Teacher Board Consultation Committee) meeting with the board, we had advocated for the idea of elementary schools going to 2 report cards from the current 3, as other school boards have done.

The reasoning behind our request is that never in the history of education have teachers been so accessible whether it be email, social media, google classroom, interviews, apps, etc. The board reminded us that the division consulted parents previously regarding progress reporting and parents felt strongly about 3 reporting periods. A change would require another consultation with stakeholders, which may occur before the new curriculum is enacted. The board also reminded us that teachers may be focusing on the amount of reporting periods instead of the larger issue of increased communication demands from parents.

This got us thinking that while report cards are a part of our job expectation, there are many things we do that we have more control over. We had stated to the board that teachers never get to swipe out and be done their work for the day like many other occupations. They heard our complaints and were empathetic and pointed us to the Communication Protocol for Schools found on staff connect:

"Every effort should be made to respond in a timely manner, whether the response is required from the home to the school, school to the home, or among schools and/or departments. While there is no guarantee on the specific time frame for a response, generally families can expect a response within two (2) business days."

I cannot help but feel we as teachers have trouble setting communication boundaries, myself included. I will never forget the time I received a non critical parent email that had been sent at 6:30 AM on a Saturday and I responded within a half hour. For the following 3 years the child was in my class. The emails continued arriving at all hours. The problem, I recognize now, was that by trying to be helpful, I sent the message that I was available day & night. I recognized that not only did I fail to set boundaries for myself, I also did a disservice to all my colleagues by setting expectations for them too. I eventually learned from this and took my work email off my phone and set business hours for myself. Imagine if you sent an email on a Saturday morning to your tax accountant, lawyer, or elected official. Do you expect them to respond immediately? Would they? We need to stop creating this expectation.

By no means am I suggesting we ignore or deliberately not communicate to parents or colleagues in a timely manner. I strongly support open and transparent communication with all stakeholders. However, in this day and age we need to have time to turn off, unwind, and relax. In these challenging times it will be more important than ever for our mental health to have time for ourselves and our families. I implore you to set boundaries. Our jobs are tough enough without being made available 24/7.

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Last but not least, please continue to join me every Friday and wear **RED** for **ED**. See your school rep. for a \$10 t-shirt. It truly puts a smile on my face and reminds me that we are not alone in our continued efforts to advocate for public education! It helps my mental health and other's too.

All the best in 2020,
Stephen Anderson
TBAC Chair
tbacchair@elkislandlocal28.ca



Curling Funspiel!

Our annual local ATA Funspiel is quickly approaching. It will be held on February 29 at Ottewell Curling Club. The cost is \$45/curler and includes a meal. Only one player from each team needs to be an ATA member. If there is anyone that would like to play but does not have a team we can make that happen! The club also supplies equipment to those that need it. We hit the ice at 1:00 and dinner will be around 5:30.

Please contact Chantel Werner @ wernersx4@gmail.com to enter a team, yourself, or for any questions you may have. Cheques can be made payable to Chantel or you can contact her to arrange payment by etransfer.



Spotlight On Teachers

Nominated by Debbie Bessett:

Suzanne Stevens spearheaded the community garden at the Moravian church in Sherwood Park and has been in charge of it until this year. She helped make sure the garden boxes were made and delivered and organized all the communication with the gardeners. We wouldn't have the community garden if it wasn't for Suzanne. I know she's worked with an Aboriginal Elder on one of the plots to help teach everyone about plants important to the indigenous community. At Common Ground Community Cafe she volunteered as a barista and also helped with the building of the original location-painting, drywall taping, mudding and cleaning. She also was the original soup lady at the cafe and she's the one who found our dill pickle soup recipe that is now our signature soup. She also did tutoring sessions at the coffee shop and has had grade 6 leadership students from Pine Street create cards and bookmarks to leave at the cafe as encouragement to customers.

WEBSITE

LOCAL OFFICE

Call: 587-988-3663

Email: [Karen Topma](mailto:Karen.Topma)

847-33 Blackfoot Road,
Sherwood Park, T8A 5W6

Office Hours:

Tuesday: 8:30-15:00

Wednesday: 10:30-17:00

Thursday: 8:30-15:00

[President, Deneen Zielke](#)

[Vice President- Political
Engagement & ARA- Darryl
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[Teacher Board Advisory
Committee \(TBAC\),
Stephen Anderson](#)

[Teacher Welfare, Jennifer
Fredeen](#)

[District Reperesentative,
Paul Froese](#)

BARNETT HOUSE

For professional conduct issues, contract concerns and employment issues contact the

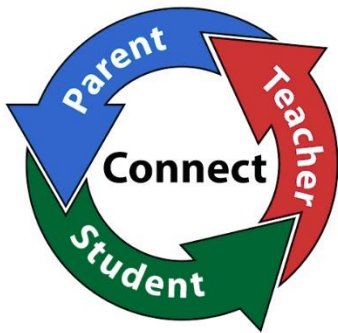
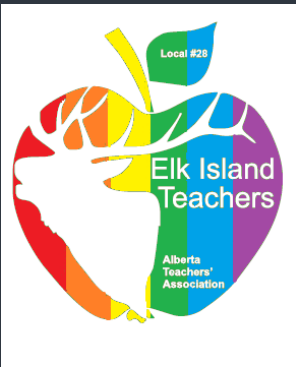
[The Alberta Teachers'
Association](#)

780-447-9400 OR
1-800-232-7208

Why Open Communication is More Important Than Ever!

GSA Meetings

Beginning February 27th, our local GSA meetings are starting again. They will be held at our local office, starting at 4:00pm, and will happen every last Thursday of the month. Everyone is welcome!



By Janet Vader

It's the year 2020. It's a new year and a new decade. Times are changing when it comes to communication, and we, as educators, must be willing to make sure that we are current with how we communicate with parents and students.

If you are an elementary teacher, like I am, you are more likely to focus the majority of your communication towards the parents. Secondary teachers are more likely to focus much of their communication towards their students. Here are a few tips that might seem obvious to you, but are important for ensuring that you are fully equipped for the best communication possible.

(Credit to alleahmarie.com for some of these great ideas).

1. **Make sure you have the correct contact information.** Email and phone number are usually sufficient.
2. **Send group emails/Remind messages with updates and quick information.** Some parents find an entire newsletter overwhelming and will either scan it quickly, missing pertinent details, or will set it aside to read later ... and later never seems to come.
3. **Only respond when you're calm ... or better yet, phone them!** Never try to solve a problem or issue over email. Emails are easily misunderstood, and tone can be misinterpreted. If you are trying to deal with an issue, it's always smarter to take the time to make a phone call and diffuse the issue with a conversation.
4. **Give parents all of the information that you have.** Though we may feel like we're over communicating, we have to remember that many of these parents have never been through this grade before. What may seem obvious to us, because we are so familiar with school routines etc, may be unknown to the parents in our class.
5. **Pick a great app.** I personally love using Remind. It will text a message to all of the parents in my class (who have signed up) with one message sent. I can keep my personal phone number private and can quickly and easily communicate important information. Another great app is Seesaw.
6. **Send information a variety of ways.** Just like our students all have various learning styles, so our parents also have different methods of communication that will resonate more with them than others. Paper copies might work for some, email might work for some and the app might work for others. Vary the forms of communication that you use throughout the year.

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#RedforEdAB

Every Friday, wear red to show your support for public education. T Shirts are available through our local for only \$10. Contact your staff rep!

Congratulations to **Kendall Warwa**, who has won a \$100 gift card for entering our December contest by showing her support for public education in Alberta by wearing #RedforEdAB!



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7. **Take the time to validate your students and parents.** Try to find a couple of minutes to either call or write a quick note to a parent to let them know when their child has a “victory” in your class. This will build relationship with the parents, it will let them know that you care about their child and it will make the child feel important, valued and cared for.
8. **Set some clear boundaries with parents about when you will respond to emails.** Some parents might expect immediate response to their email. Make it clear to parents that it might take you a designated amount of time to respond. If you respond on a Saturday evening, they might expect that you will always be available on weekends. I’m a grade one teacher, and I’ve made it clear to the parents in my class that I rarely have time to read email during the school day. They know that I will do my best to respond in a timely fashion when it is possible. If it is urgent, I encourage them to phone and leave a message with the office.
9. **Be proactive.** If one of your students has had a rough day, call the parents before the student gets home from school so that you can manage the “incident” before it becomes a much bigger deal than it has to. Often, especially with younger students, the story that goes home is much different than what actually happened. Taking a few minutes to handle the incident early on can save you a great deal of time in the long run.
10. **Build relationships.** The relationship that you have with the parents in your class is a very important relationship. Take the time to invest in that relationship whenever you can. If a parent walks their child in because they are late, take a moment to say hello. If they are a hot lunch helper, stop and ask them how their day is going. The amount of time that it takes to nurture a relationship with a parent can be very little, but the payback can be huge!

Happy communicating!!!

Janet Vader
PD Chair

“A relationship is like building a house; Build it well, or it will collapse.”

fb.com/lq.official

CONVENTION TIDBITS

Still haven't looked at the convention schedule yet?

Here are some keynotes that you might want to consider!

Partners in Education Luncheon with Candy Palmater: Buy tickets [here](#) by Feb 5th, password is "North"

Joe "Mr. D" Dombroski
Be the Best Educator You Can Be
Thurs., Feb. 6 9:15
Shaw Hall D

Dr. James Makokis
Diversity and Inclusion,
Thurs., Feb. 6 2:00
Shaw Hall D

Hon. Mike Lake
An Autism Adventure,
Fri., Feb. 7 12:30
Shaw Hall D

Dr. Jody Carrington
If Our Teacher's Aren't OK, our Kids Don't Stand a Chance
Fri., Feb. 7 2:00pm
Shaw Hall D



Upcoming Events

Convention 2020



Getting ready for Convention 2020

It's hard to believe that Christmas is over and we're already approaching another Teacher's Convention season! Below you will find a few tips and tricks to help you get the most out of your NCTCA 2020.

1. Visit the website: www.mynctca.com and plan out which sessions interest you.
2. Remember that even if you add a session to your "Sched", it doesn't reserve a seat for you in that session. If you think a session is going to be popular, show up early to guarantee yourself a seat.
3. If you see a session at the Chateau Lacombe, don't write it off because it's too far to go. A shuttle will be available to transport you to the Chateau Lacombe and back to the Edmonton Convention Centre (formerly known as the Shaw Convention Centre).
4. You don't need a ticket or pass to get into the convention. Have your ATA ID handy in case you need to prove that you're a "legit" delegate.
5. On Wednesday evening, join in on the fun at the President's Social at Craft Beer Market from 7:00-11:00.
6. If you have some shopping to do, plan some time to visit the Exhibits in Hall A. This is always more fun with friends!
7. Remember to visit the wellness area in Hall C on Friday. There will be short sessions on nutrition, activity and overall wellness.

Elk Island Teachers Speaking at Convention

Check out these sessions being offered by our colleagues:

- Alexandra Candler, [Number Talks - A Teaching Game Changer](#)
Thursday, February 6 • 1:45pm - 2:45pm
- Joelle Tymchuk, [Spelling 'HUMAN' with Alphabet Soup in the Humanities](#)
Thursday, February 6 • 9:00am - 10:30am
- David Hay, [Guided Math in Division II](#)
Thursday, February 6 • 9:00am - 10:00am
- [Tech Ninjas - Student Helpers and Problem-Solvers](#)
Thursday, February 6 • 12:00pm - 1:00pm
- [OneNote Class Notebook \(and Google Classroom\)](#)
Thursday, February 6 1:15pm - 2:15pm
- [Data Science in Elementary Science](#)
Friday, February 7 9:00am – 10:00am
- [Running a Broadcast Club or Course](#)
Friday, February 7 • 10:15am - 11:15am
- [Social Studies and Data Analysis](#)
Friday, February 7 12:45 pm – 1:45pm
- Jeremy Cooper, Shaun Smith, Shane Lawrence, Jon Thomas
[Creating Community with Podcasts](#)
Thursday, February 6 • 10:45am - 12:15pm
- Kristian Basaraba, [Activism Through Art: 3 Projects to Engage Students in Social Change](#)
Thursday, February 6 • 2:30pm - 3:30pm
- Steve Woodard, ["Nooooo!!! I cut it twice and it's still too short" Solid Wood Joinery for High Schools](#) **must purchase ticket**
Thursday, February 6 • 9:00am - 3:00pm

BE IN
balance



An Evening of Yoga for Food

By Kim Headrick

A group of Elk Island Public Schools Local 28 employees gathered to enjoy a free yoga class simply by donating to a good cause. Maxine Holm, EIPS kindergarten teacher and certified yoga instructor had the idea to share her yoga knowledge in exchange for a food bank donation. Her studio, Yoga for Today, has been collecting Strathcona Food bank donations for numerous years.

A small but passionate group braved the frigid cold and snow and helped alleviate their stresses of the day. Participants were led through a relaxation activity, various yoga poses such as warrior, triangle, cat and cow and ended the evening with a guided meditation.

EIPS employees were excited to be involved in an activity to help give back to their community. And both activities blended very well together. Yoga encourages the development of positive ethical qualities and teachers are in the business of building positive relationships! Thank you to Maxine Holm for hosting and teaching the class and thank you to all the attendees for their participation and generous donations. The teacher in me honours the teacher in you. Namaste.

For a full list of yoga classes available at the studio, please visit yogafortoday.ca.

The Strathcona Food bank is always happy to receive donations. Please visit strathconafoodbank.ca for donation information.

Yoga for Food collected 50 pounds of food and \$30! Awesome!

