



THE ADVOCATE

March 28, 2024



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In this edition of *The Advocate*, you'll find the President's message, two Board Chair messages, upcoming events for 2024 with a lineup of the SGA guest speakers, a good news story, our consultant spotlight, along with our regular features. Enjoy!

Next issue: April 30, 2024

ONLY PUBLIC SCHOOLS PROVIDE PUBLIC EDUCATION®



Funding is Fundamental in Alberta Education

Dennis MacNeil
PSBAA President

With the Alberta government releasing its budget for 2024, I am compelled to emphasize the indispensable role that government funding plays in ensuring the success of our schools and the well-being of our students. Public education has always been and will continue to be, for everyone. This fact alone is the reason funding, and resources should be allocated in a way that allows public schools to keep up with the continued growing demands on its system. I believe it is imperative that we continue to advocate for adequate financial support from the government to sustain and enhance our educational endeavours. Without the proper support, we risk having students fall through the cracks and not receive the support that they need to flourish.

As we know, adequate funding enables us to provide our students with the tools and opportunities they need to excel academically, socially, and emotionally. From facility upgrades to well-equipped classrooms, from innovative educational programs to dedicated teachers and support staff, every aspect of our educational system relies on sufficient financial backing to thrive. As I spoke about in my previous blog, the mental health of our students and staff has become more and more imperative. With that, funding for those resources must be highlighted as a top priority.

Moreover, government funding is pivotal in fostering equity and inclusivity within our schools. It allows us to address disparities in resources and access, ensuring that every student, regardless of their background or circumstances, receives a quality education that nurtures their potential. By investing in special education programs, language support services, and extracurricular activities, we uphold the principle of equal opportunity for everyone.

The first step is to advocate for effective utilization, of government funding, but the second and just as important



step, is to prioritize transparency, accountability, and efficiency in the allocation of resources. Making decisions that maximize the impact on student learning outcomes is key. By fostering a culture of fiscal responsibility and strategic planning, we can safeguard the integrity of our educational mission while optimizing the use of taxpayer dollars.

Looking ahead, PSBAA remains unwavering in its commitment to promoting and protecting public education in Alberta. We will continue to engage in conversations with government officials, community stakeholders, and educational partners to advocate for policies that prioritize the needs of our students and schools. Through proactive collaboration and advocacy efforts, we will strive to secure the necessary resources and support to sustain the excellence of our public education system.

In closing, let us reaffirm our dedication to the ideals of public education and our collective responsibility to ensure its accessibility for all. Together, we can empower our students to reach their fullest potential and build a brighter future for our communities and our province.



Honouring Outstanding Contributions to Our Division

Julie Kusiek, Board Chair
Edmonton Public School Board

Each year, [Edmonton Public Schools](#) hosts a Division Recognition Awards evening. What a celebration! What makes me especially proud of this event is the profound appreciation for everyone who contributes to making Edmonton Public Schools a great place to learn and work. From individual volunteers to custodians, to whole parent councils and department teams, it really shows that public education takes a village and that our school division values every single person in it.

Edmonton Public Schools is able to provide the high-quality public education it does because of our community. It's a community that includes outstanding staff and volunteers; a community that is dedicated to the true spirit of public education. The passion, talent and unwavering commitment of these individuals and groups have a lasting impact on students, families and colleagues.

The stories of these nominees—both those in the spotlight and the quiet, behind-the-scenes narratives—showcase the incredible collective strength of Edmonton Public Schools. May these stories continue to motivate, inspire and energize others in their everyday work, volunteering and life. I extend my sincere thanks to everyone who works and volunteers to support the promise of public education: an education that inspires each and every student to believe in themselves, and to live a life of dignity, fulfillment, empathy and possibility.





Student Learning, Equity, and Wellness

Lori Grant, Board Chair
Peace Wapiti Public School Division

At [Peace Wapiti Public School Division](#) (PWPSD) our top three priorities are student learning, equity, and wellness. Over the past several years, our division has allocated a lot of resources toward the wellness of our schools, and we are extremely proud of the work Administration has done to ensure our students, staff and families are coming to a safe and welcoming environment every day.

PWPSD's wellness team consists of Community School Liaison Counsellors, Family and Community Support Services, the PWPSD Capacity Building Team, the Mental Health Professional Team, the Outreach Team, and Indigenous Education Services. Each team providing unique support tailored to our students and their families.

By providing Tier I – IV, universal and individualized, support to students, while also sharing strategies with staff and families, the PWPSD wellness team has been instrumental in the success of our schools. With the innovative programming, understanding, and teaching of culture, and constant care that each member of the wellness team offers, PWPSD has become a leader in wellness. We as a Board understand and appreciate the essential work that each wellness team member brings into our schools every day, and we will continue to advocate for permanent funding from the provincial government, so that our staff can continue to guide our students toward success.

Facing the Vaping Epidemic Head-On

Vaping has become an epidemic across young Albertans, and schools have been left to handle it on their own. As mental and physical health go together, we are working hard to educate and protect our vulnerable youth. The PWPSD Board is advocating for the return of funding for public health nurses in our schools, so we can face this epidemic head-on, together.



PEACE WAPITI
PUBLIC SCHOOL DIVISION

Educating Today for Success Tomorrow





2024 April PSBC

We look forward to seeing you at the upcoming April PSBC on Thursday, April 11 - 12, 2024.

Once again, Registration starts at 8 a.m. on the Professional Development day.

[CLICK HERE](#) for more information!

Mark Your Calendars for the 2024 Spring General Assembly

- May 30 - June 1, 2024
- May 15 - Earlybird Registration Deadline
- May 9 - Hotel Room Block Deadline

We are looking forward to welcoming you all to the Westin Downtown Calgary on May 30th to June 1st. Our theme this year is: ***'Navigating our Future: Transformative Governance and Leadership.'***

The SGA will kick off on Thursday evening with the Presidents reception and dinner to follow. Our Keynote dinner speaker will be Jennifer Turner, Director of the Centre for Wellbeing in Education.

Our Professional Development session will be kicked off by speaker, Olympian, and Amazing Race contestant Sarah Wells. Her motivational topics will include overcoming obstacles and striving for excellence in leadership. We will hear from the Minister of Education Demetrios Nicolaides just before lunch, which will bring us to our afternoon half day session with Brian Woodland who as a retired Director of Communications and Community Relations for the Peel District School Board, has 32 years of experience in public education.

Starting on Saturday morning, we will hear from Tom Thompson, past President of Olds College for a half-day session and then from Medicine Hat Public School Division and Golden Hills Public Schools in the afternoon.

More information on speakers and topics, as well as student performances to be announced shortly.

[CLICK HERE!](#) for more information!

2024 August PSBC GRANDE PRAIRIE



Join PSBAA in Grande Prairie! This year the August PSBC meeting will have you at multiple different locations in and around the Grande Prairie area. On Wednesday August 7th you will get the chance to take part in a paleo presentation along with a self guided tour at the Currie Museum with a BBQ on the museum grounds to follow. Thursday is a full tour day! Starting in Grimshaw then off to Dunvegan and finishing up back in Grande Prairie with a tour of the hospital and Northwestern Polytechnic. Friday morning all members will be driven to a local school where the PSBC meeting will take place, once the meeting is adjourned, members will have the opportunity to tour local schools, venues and various sights. More details to come! Registration is now open. Make sure to book your spot now and we will see you in August.

We would like to acknowledge and thank Grande Prairie, Peace River and Peace Wapiti School Division's for their sponsorship and support!

[CLICK HERE](#) to Register!

WESTIN ROOM BOOKING NOTICE:

PSBAA Spring General Assembly (SGA) is right around the corner! If you haven't booked your room at the Westin Downtown Calgary PSBAA asks you to please do so **ASAP** as spots are filling up! Please note that when you book your room you need to use the PSBAA room block link to correctly book a room for our event. The room block for PSBAA goes from **May 30 check-in to June 2 check-out**.

[CLICK HERE](#) for the PSBAA Room Block!

*****if you are continuing your stay at the Westin for the ASBA event following the SGA, please book your stay through the ASBA room block separately. *****



2024 Spring General Assembly

Jennifer Turner



Jennifer Turner
Director of the Centre for Well-being in Education
Dinner Guest Speaker - May 30

Professional Development Guest Speaker - May 31
'Cultivating Inspirational Leadership: Empowering Others Through Success and Setback, Mastered with the Art of Storytelling'



Sarah Wells

Brian Woodland



Professional Development Guest Speaker - May 31
'Trust Is Like Air: How to Build and Maintain Relationships as a Foundation for Effective Communication'

Professional Development Guest Speaker - May 31
'How to Govern Through Complexity and Change'



Tom Thompson

Rick Massini

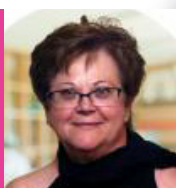


Professional Development Guest Speaker - June 1
Medicine Hat Public School Division



Mark Davidson

Laurie Huntley



Professional Development Guest Speaker - June 1
Golden Hills School Division
'Comprehensive Mental Health Supports in Schools'



Jeff Grimsdale

Curtis Riep



Special Recognition Awards Dinner
Guest Speaker - June 1

[CLICK HERE](#) for more Information!



2024 Fall Conference and AGM - Celebrating 35 Years! October 16 - 18, 2024



PSBAA is 35 years old!

We are proud to say our organization has been advocating and safeguarding public education in Alberta for 35 years. We couldn't be where we are today without our members and their dedication to education. Join us in the celebration at the 2024 AGM! Details to come. We can't thank our members enough for all your hard work to get PSBAA to where it is today.

Registration is OPEN now:
For our Events Page [CLICK HERE!](#)

PSBAA CONSULTANT SPOTLIGHT



Brian Callaghan

During his long tenure with CRPS, Brian was instrumental in leading a seven-year process of community engagement and generative governance that transformed the division's teaching and learning into a true 21st Century learning model known as Inspiring Hearts and Minds. This process was adopted by the provincial government as it developed its foundational Inspiring Education document. Brian also sowed and grew an International Student Program that today has seen more than 1,000 students from more than 20 countries live and learn in the Canadian Rockies for five-month or one-year stays, providing the division with significant

non-government dollars with which to expand and grow other programming.

Brian has been a part of PSBAA for many years and his passion and expertise in Public education is far reaching. He is the respected resource for board members and his skills are sought after. He is available to provide consulting and education services to PSBAA member boards on the following:

- Board / CEO Relationship / Superintendent Relationship
- Leadership Recruitment
- Leadership Evaluation
- Policy / Procedure Review and Re-writes
- Enrolment Projections
- Boundary Reviews
- Human Resources
- Strategic planning



2024 SPECIAL RECOGNITION AWARDS NOMINATIONS

Time is running out!! If you have been thinking about nominating the hardworking public education advocates in your community who deserves to be recognized for their efforts, **DO IT NOW.** The nomination deadline is March 31st. You don't want to miss out on being able to acknowledge you colleagues. Do you know someone who has made a special contribution to public education this year? Advanced business initiatives in your association? Or has just been an all around great mentor and supporter? Please check your email for the special recognition awards package that has been distributed! This package includes the nomination forms and the qualifications for each award. The nomination forms are also available on the member resources section of the PSBAA website. **You still have time!** (Nominations forms are located in the Member Portal of the PSBAA Website.)



Nomination deadline is March 31

[CLICK HERE](#) TO LOG IN

PSBAA PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT MODULE COMPLETION CERTIFICATES

Congratulations to those who have completed the PSBAA professional development modules. Your dedication to continuous learning and improvement is commendable! We recognize the significant effort and time these modules require and with busy schedules it can sometimes be difficult to make the space for them to be completed. That being said, this is a reminder that those who have the modules completed by our Spring General Assembly, will receive a completion certificate presented to them. If you are close to finishing the modules we suggest you do so before SGA so we can recognize you for your efforts!



RDPSD SEEING POSITIVE DIFFERENCE WITH ADDITION OF STUDENT SUPPORT ROOMS



Student Support Rooms are making a significant difference in Red Deer Public Schools in ensuring all students have the best opportunities to learn.

"Red Deer Public began implementing 18 Student Support Rooms in our elementary and middle schools in fall of 2023," said Nicola Golby, Associate Superintendent of Student Services. "These rooms are a place for students to go when they need to regulate their emotions, display big behaviours, or to connect with an adult while maintaining dignity in a more private space."

Since the implementation, the Division's Behaviour Support Team has been training the Student Support Room teachers, primarily using Bruce Perry's Neurosequential Model of Education, Gordon Neufeld emotional playgrounds, and Martin Brokenleg's Circle of Courage.

On average, upwards of 40 students use the Student Support Rooms in schools each day for various reasons including scheduled breaks that have been pre-arranged with teachers, students who are dysregulated for different reasons, and students who need a quiet place to work or to move their body to release excess energy.

"Teachers spend the majority of their time connecting with students in the Student Support Room, and looking to identify what they need," said Nicola. "That could be playing a game, it could be imaginative play, it could be reading a book with the ultimate goal of regulating and returning to the classroom to reconnect with their teacher and their peers so they can continue to have a successful day."

The positive impact Student Support Rooms are having is felt in both the classroom and school as a whole.

"We have a safe place for students to go for regulation, which translates to calmer classrooms, calmer hallways and calmer office spaces for all students to have a better opportunity to learn," said Nicola. "Schools are sharing wonderful things about the impact the Student Support Rooms are having on their buildings and how they have quickly become an integral part of their space. We are so glad there is a space where students can connect, where they can regulate and where they can move on with their day in a positive way."

Do you have a good news story from your school jurisdiction that you would like to share with PSBAA member boards? Please let us know by emailing communications@public-schools.ab.ca.



Youth Suicide Prevention Grant Program

Deadline: April 15, 2024

The Government of Alberta is committed to preventing youth suicide and improving the health and well-being of young people through the Youth Suicide Prevention Grant Program.

Targeted grant funding will be used to support evidence-informed initiatives that align with one or more of the Youth Suicide Prevention Grant Program Guidelines outcome areas, target priority youth populations at increased risk of suicide, and either:

- expand the capacity of existing initiatives to address identified suicide prevention gaps and community needs
- support the development and piloting of new, innovative initiatives to address identified suicide prevention gaps and community needs

The 3 outcome areas targeted by the Youth Suicide Prevention Grant Program are supports and services, training, and education and awareness. More information about these outcome areas and examples of eligible activities can be found in the Youth Suicide Prevention Grant Program Guidelines.

For the purposes of this grant program, 'youth' includes all individuals under the age of 25.

[CLICK HERE](#) for more Information!

Counsellor in the Classroom Program

Are you an educator? Check out Counsellor in the Classroom!

Kids Help Phone's Counsellor in the Classroom Program promotes the discussion of mental health and well-being among young people. It's available to students in Grades 4 through 12 across Canada. Classes that participate will learn about mental health, Kids Help Phone's services and how / where to seek support.

If you're an educator for students in Grades 4 through 12 in Canada, **[CLICK HERE](#)** to keep reading for more information about the program and register today!

Board Development Program - Board Roles and Responsibilities

• May 1, 2024 - 1:30 - 3 p.m.

What is governance? What are the board's roles? What are the board's responsibilities?

The truth is, there is no one answer to any of these questions. Join us as we help you understand governance from different perspectives. We will start with governance and what it means to the board. Then we will take you through how governance touches the entire organization, the structure of the organization, and the volunteers and staff that work in the organization. You will also have many opportunities to speak directly with others and share your experiences, test your knowledge, and ask your questions from the presenters.

[CLICK HERE](#) for more Information!

TRUSTEES!

Have you discussed ASCA's Proposed Advocacy Resolutions (PARs) with your School Councils? If not, why not?

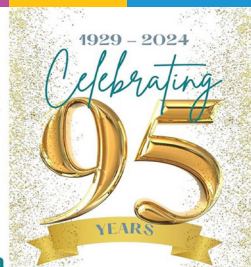
**2024 Conference
Annual General Meeting**

Delta Marriott
Edmonton South

26 27 28 APRIL



Alberta School Councils' Association
Promoting parent engagement in public education



Your extensive background knowledge and experience are instrumental in helping your ASCA Member School Councils understand the pros and cons of ***Advocacy Resolutions*** proposed for consideration at ASCA's AGM in April! School Councils and their Voting Delegates should understand how any Proposed Advocacy Resolution, if passed by ASCA Members and subsequently implemented by Alberta Education, will impact students and education at their School and Division levels. Who better to provide that perspective to them, than their locally elected School Board Trustee? If you haven't already, please ask for an opportunity at the next School Council Meetings(s) you attend, to discuss the ASCA PARs. We hope each of your School Councils will have representation at our AGM, but even if they don't, parents in your school communities will appreciate your efforts to keep them informed and knowledgeable.

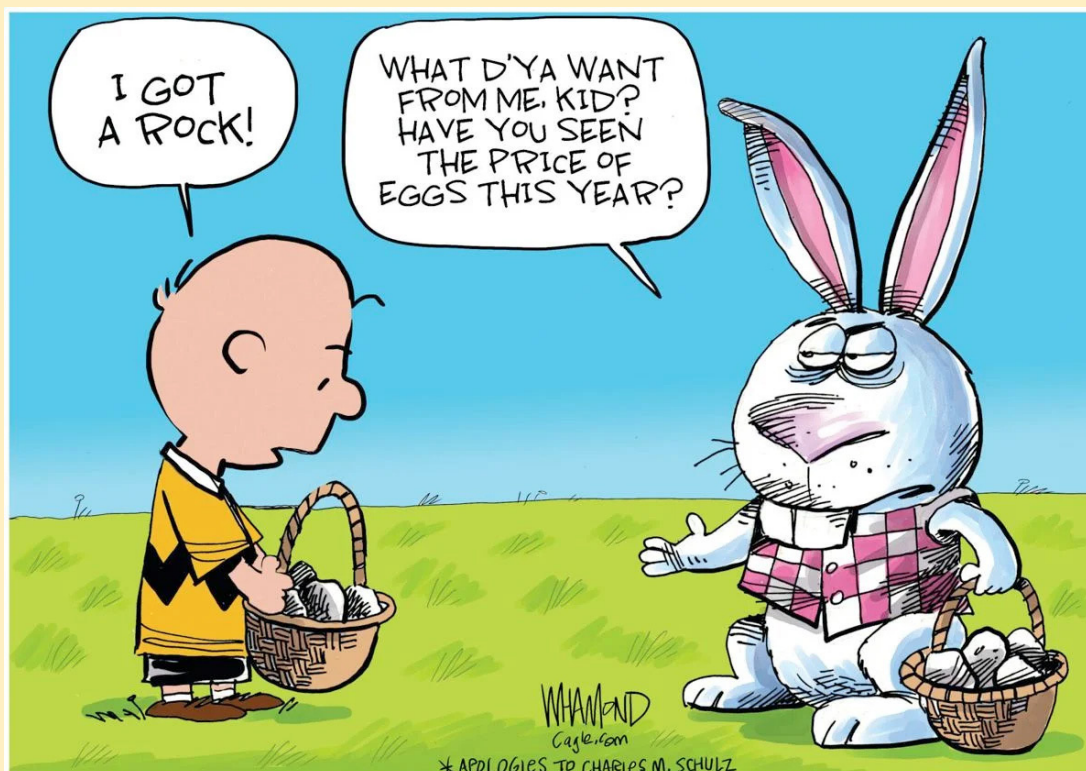
[CLICK HERE](#) to download the Proposed Advocacy Resolutions

[CLICK HERE](#) for all AGM documents and to register

ARTICLES OF POTENTIAL INTEREST

Click on the links below

- [Alberta plans to change rules for how public agencies own, sell assets](#)
- [Refugee students among the highest newcomers enrolled at Edmonton Public Schools](#)
- [Teacher shortage has staff across Canada working 'in survival mode'](#)
- [UCP details education budget as school officials lament overcrowding and high costs](#)
- [PWPSD welcomes temporary Indigenous Education Services Lead](#)
- [Enrolment growth at Edmonton Public Schools reaches levels not seen in 60 years](#)
- [Academics concerned over Alberta's K-6 social studies draft curriculum](#)



PSBAA RIDDLE

This month's Riddle: A cowboy rides into town on Friday. He stays three days, then rides out of town on Friday. How?

Every month PSBAA will add a new word puzzle to the Advocate. The first person who correctly answers the riddle and sends their answer to communications@public-schools.ab.ca will receive a PSBAA branded stainless steel water bottle (as shown), which is awarded exclusively to our prize winners! (Those who have won a prize in this contest during the past six months are not eligible.)

Answer to last month's riddle: An anchor! No one guessed correctly. Better luck next time!

