



PUBLIC SCHOOL BOARDS'
ASSOCIATION OF ALBERTA™

THE ADVOCATE



Welcome to the April 17, 2023 issue of *The Advocate*!

In this edition, you'll find a message from the PSBAA President Dennis MacNeil, updated information about the PSBAA upcoming events such as the Spring General Assembly, the August PSBC which is being hosted by Medicine Hat Public School Division, grant opportunities, the Word Search contest and more!



The next edition of *The Advocate* will be published on May 1, 2023.

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BACKPACK FULL OF CASH



Narrated by Matt Damon

Over the last few decades, we have seen Charter School numbers creep up and support for these alternative schools has gained traction and popularity. Funding cuts and privatization of education is a slippery slope, and the movie Backpack Full of Cash explores the effects of privatization in schools in America. Not only does the movie explore privatization of schools, but it also offers a model for improving schools.

Education writer David Kirp, former New York Assistant Secretary of Education Diane Ravitch and policy expert Linda Darling Hammond are among the national thought leaders who provide analysis in the film. The movie builds a case for public education as a basic civil right and we will be offering this content as part of a watch party for our members.

Join us via zoom for **FREE** on Thursday April 20 at 7pm or Friday April 21 at 2pm as we live stream the movie. Dennis MacNeil will be in attendance and will be available for Q&A after the movie.

Register Now!

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Mental Health and Public School Education

As we are all very aware, mental health issues are on the rise across Alberta and it is the mental health of our students, faculty and staff that is at the forefront of my mind. The last decade in Alberta has added to the complexity of the mental health struggles Albertans were already experiencing. We frequently discuss how the pandemic has affected the Education system, but Alberta has also dealt with some additional major natural disasters such as the Calgary floods in 2013 and the Fort McMurray fires in 2016 that have affected mental health. When we look at these three major events alone, we see the disruption to student learning and the increased stress on staff has only amplified shortcomings in the system regarding mental health.

According to the *Mental Health Commission of Canada*, 20% of people in Canada now live with mental illness each year. This number is quite drastic and is on the rise.

As Public Schools serve most of the Alberta population, we are uniquely positioned within each community to recognize and identify the mental health issues of students. But for us to identify and connect students to the necessary support, we require open collaboration and the appropriate government funding for mental health support. We need to ensure there are enough professionals trained in the mental health field who are easily accessible to our students and staff. For example, in rural areas it is hard to attract and attain mental health professionals who are readily available in small towns and these towns must often share services with nearby neighbouring areas.

Our Public School teachers and staff find themselves serving larger classroom sizes without the appropriate support staff. When our teachers are under such pressure it not only affects their mental health, but it is hard for them to identify and support our students in overcoming their mental health issues and achieving positive learning outcomes. In fact, there is a direct correlation between mental health and learning outcomes and so it is imperative that we support our teachers and staff so they can appropriately teach and support students to lead them to become the professionals of the future we need for a thriving economy.

So, what are some things we can do in our day-to-day lives to help reduce the pressures of life? Well appropriate funding and cross ministry supports is definitely something we are working towards collaborating with the government on; and to be fair the Alberta 2023 Budget has provided funding for support staff, classroom complexity and student well-being, but there are still shortfalls to what is becoming a compounding problem and more must be done to stop the incline of mental health illness.

In the meantime, here are a few tips you can incorporate into your daily lives to focus on maintaining positive mental health. Prioritizing high quality sleep, try cutting out that late afternoon coffee or turning off the TV a bit earlier. Focus on quality hydration and nutrition, switch out that can of pop and juicy burger for a glass of water and a turkey BLT. Incorporate movement into your daily routine such as walking, stretching or an exercise class. Spend time outside in nature, this is a simple and yet powerful way to reset. Practice meditation, mindfulness and breathing, the power of slowing down and breathing is proven to lower stress levels. Ask for help when you need it, if you see a student or staff member struggling reach out to them, talk to a friend, colleague or professional who can provide staff and students with specific coping mechanisms.

These are all great tools that can be incorporated into your personal lives as well as the classroom. So, take a break when you need to and if you are struggling make some positive changes in your life starting today. Mental health awareness and coping techniques is something we should all spend a little bit more time focusing on as the impending stress of work, life and budget constraints rise.

Dennis MacNeil, President



UPCOMING EVENTS

PSBAA's Spring General Assembly

- **Thursday June 1 to Saturday June 3, 2023**

We are looking forward to welcoming you all to the Westin Downtown Calgary on June 1-3 for the Spring General Assembly (SGA).

Thursday, June 1, 2023

The SGA will kick off on Thursday evening with registration starting at 3pm and the Presidents Reception and dinner to follow. Our keynote dinner speaker will be Jessica Janzen, who will discuss *The Hard Work of Joy!* Jessica will also be selling a copy of her book *'Bring the Joy'*, for \$22.50 + GST and she will be available for autographs after her speech.

Friday, June 2, 2023

Our Professional Learning session will start with Wilson Bearhead and Seneca Crowe on *Hope, Optimism and the Future* from an Indigenous Perspective. Jennifer Turner will then speak on *Mental Health in K-12 Education* followed by Heather Burke on the *Kids Help Phone: Building Scalable Solutions to Help Young People Thrive in Their World*.

We will commence the afternoon with Drumheller Valley Secondary School's string class who will provide student musical entertainment to be enjoyed by our attendees. Following the student entertainment, Anthea Boras who will discuss *Timeless Principles to Thrive in a Changing World* and we will finish the day with Carolyn Lewis, Jennifer Albrecht & Adam Fragomani from Grande Yellowhead Public School Division, who will talk about their successful program, *Speaking Truth to Power: Youth Participation Action Research Project*.

Saturday, June 3, 2023

On Saturday June 3, we will jump-start the day with a PSBAA members only meeting and our Professional Learning will continue at 10:30am. Grace Oben, best seller of *Don't Give Up Yet, You Can Still Get It Right! How to Handle the Speed Bumps & Stop Signs in Your Life*, will discuss the *10 Step Process of Becoming*. Details on how you can win your own copy of Grace's book will be revealed at our event!

Our afternoon begins with Melissa Jones who will discuss *Bridging Communities for Alberta's Children and Youth in Care*, followed by Joni Avram who will speak about the *Role of Positive Psychology in Learning*. We will start our Special Recognition Awards night with sought after keynote dinner speaker Steve Brown and finish the evening off by announcing our special recognition award winners.

[CLICK HERE for more information or to Register!](#)

August 2023 PSBC Meeting in Medicine Hat!

- **August 9-11, 2023**

We will be heading to Medicine Hat August 9, 10 and 11 for our summer PSBC. Medicine Hat will kick off the event Wednesday evening at 5pm at the Medalta with a casual BBQ dinner and a tour of the historic museum. Event registration will start the next day at 8.30 am at Medicine Hat High, transportation from the hotel will be provided at 8am. The professional learning day will include a discussion on trauma informed practice with Claire Peterson, followed by a tour of their state-of-the-art facilities with Boris Grisonich and a blanket exercise in the afternoon.

[CLICK HERE for more information or to Register!](#)

SPRING GENERAL ASSEMBLY GUEST SPEAKERS FEATURE



Steve Brown (Saturday Dinner June 3)

Steve Brown has made his mark in Canada and Internationally by leading organizations through digital transformation. His career spans a diverse mix of industry and technology experience from multi-media entertainment, logistics services, automotive, and now to learning solutions.

Since joining Nelson in September 2016, Steve has transformed the vision for this 104-year-old company by reimagining the role and purpose of a publisher in 2017 and beyond. Introducing a matrix-driven view to the management culture, and unifying a K20 student-centric business division is at the core of this shift to a cohesive customer-focused structure. He has reframed the organization's digital competency by instituting a technology department comprised of some of the world's best and brightest talent based in Silicon Beach California. Additionally, over the past 12 months, the company has engaged in various merger and acquisition activities, including the acquisition of one of its largest competitors, as well as signing numerous agency and partnership deals to ensure Nelson offers a world-class portfolio of learning solutions for all its markets.

Steve's passion and commitment to transforming education, and the student learning experience, continues to fuel the innovation pipeline at Nelson.



Jennifer Turner (Friday, June 2)

Jennifer Turner, Ed.D currently serves as the Director of the Centre for Wellbeing in Education, Werklund School of Education at the University of Calgary. She received her Doctor of Education in 2022 in the Specialization of K-12 Leadership. Her dissertation was titled: Finding the Strength: District Leadership of Mental Health Promotion in One BC School District. Jennifer also has formal education in; Business Intelligence Analytics (2022), Advanced Clinical Supervision in Psychology (2009), Master of Science, Psychology specializing in Education Psychology (2001), and a Bachelor of Education in secondary social studies and special education (1995). As a former Superintendent of Schools and experienced K-12 senior leader, she has worked as a classroom teacher, inclusive education teacher, registered psychologist, school-based Principal, and district-based leader. Jennifer holds expertise in meeting the needs of diverse learners, school-based child and youth mental health promotion and intervention, and system leadership.



Heather Burke (Friday, June 2)

Heather Burke is the Community Programs Manager for Kids Help Phone which is Canada's only free, 24/7, confidential, bilingual e-mental health support service for young people. Heather manages 3 of its service programs: Resources Around Me, Good2Talk, and Counsellor in the Classroom. Heather has a Bachelor of Arts, a diploma in Social Service Work, and a certificate in Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in the Workplace (2022). Heather sits on the Board of Directors for Passages Centre for Self-Directed Learning, a flexible and inclusive in-person learning centre for young people 11-18 years of age.



Anthea Boras (Friday, June 2)

Anthea Boras has been an educator and administrator in Alberta for over 25 years. She received her Bachelor of Education from the University of Lethbridge and her Masters in Leadership and Administration from Gonzaga University. Anthea is passionate about educating the whole person (body, mind, heart and spirit) and building authentic relationships. She believes that the key to sustainable wellness is to be clear on your purpose and to have the skills and mindset needed to achieve your goals. Anthea is currently working as a Client Partner and Consultant for FranklinCovey Education.

[CLICK HERE for more information on the SGA Guest Speakers!](#)

PSBAA's Fall Conference and AGM

- **October 18-20, 2023**

The Fall Conference and Annual General Meeting will be held at the DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel in west Edmonton starting on Wednesday this year and ending on Friday. During the evening, the Terry Jorden and Friends band will be playing instrumental jazz standards and popular tunes from the 1940s to the 1980s for your entertainment.

Thursday's Professional Learning Day will be hosted by Glenn Tecker and we are happy to announce we will once again be heading to the Mayfield Dinner Theatre Thursday evening for a rendition of Musicians Gone Wild: Rock The Canyon. The performance will include hit songs by artists such as The Beatles, The Beach Boys, Joni Mitchell, The Eagles and more!

On Friday, we will hold our Annual General Meeting for our members to vote on important decisions.

[CLICK HERE for more information or to Register!](#)

November PSBC Meeting

- **November 17-18, 2023**

Our November PSBC will be held on Friday and Saturday this year to accommodate for necessary changes in the schedule. More details will be coming shortly on who will be in attendance for our Professional Learning sessions.

[CLICK HERE for more information or to Register!](#)

Retirement Notice, Tim Stensland, EdD. Deputy Superintendent, Northland School Division



Northland School Division (NSD) announces the upcoming retirement of Deputy Superintendent Tim Stensland, EdD.

Tim who has dedicated 35-years to the field of education is a beloved member of staff and Nancy Spencer-Poitras, EdD., Superintendent of Schools/CEO recently expressed the impact he has left at NSD:

“Dr. Stensland has done outstanding work during his time with Northland School Division... It has been a pleasure to work with someone so dedicated to helping Northland students succeed”.

Tim has an extensive educational history behind him, earning a Bachelor of Education, a Master of Education, a Master of Business Administration, an Education Doctorate and more!

Tim first started his career teaching at Kateri School in Trout Lake (formerly with NSD). His career then took him to Dawson Creek, British Columbia and Calgary. While in Calgary, he earned his way to Vice-Principal and then Principal. He later progressed into a Recruitment and Staffing Consultant role with the Calgary Board of Education. Following this, he joined Alberta Education, holding a Senior Manager position while supporting NSD through many programs.

When he returned to NSD as an Associate Superintendent and Deputy Superintendent, he played an important role supporting the Vision for Technology, Teaching, Learning and Leading in NSD. The vision continues to help NSD leverage the benefits of technology to support the student learning experience and the creation of Northland’s Online School.

“The Board of Trustees of NSD thank Dr. Stensland for his dedication and commitment to helping Northland students achieve success,” - Cathy Wanyandie, Board Chair.

Tim Stensland will continue in his role as Deputy Superintendent until August 31, 2023.



Elections Campaign Information

As many of you have seen, we are in full force with our Public Schools Elections Campaign. We have been busy creating email campaign content, posting on social media and writing opinion-editorial pieces for our members to distribute in their local areas.

Campaign Schedule

- **Social Media Posts:** Tuesdays and Thursdays at 1pm. - Share ours or create your own with our exclusive campaign messages in the [members section](#) of our website.
- **Email Campaign:** Members will receive information every other Wednesday.
- **Opinion Editorials:** Members will receive content on the other alternating Wednesday. - If you are a member and are not receiving campaign emails or opinion editorials and would like to please contact communications@public-school.ab.ca.

PSBAA will be sending campaign emails to the three main party leaders, as well as contacting major local newspapers on our opinion editorial pieces, but we need your help to get the word out on Public Schools at the local level! If members have not already, then please join our [Private Facebook Group](#) for any updates and internal discussions required during the elections campaign period between members.

Members, did you know you can access all PSBAA ongoing campaign documentation directly in the members resource section of our website? Login and go to **Member Resources** and then Election Readiness where all our election related information will be stored for easy access. [Click Here to login now.](#)

For our non-members please stay tuned to our [public elections page](#) for more information.

We thank you all for your continued efforts to spread the word on Public School advocacy efforts!



Indigenous Peoples Atlas of Canada Education Kit and Floor Map

Royal Canadian Geographical Society has worked collaboratively with several Indigenous and ally educators and organizations from across Canada to create the Indigenous Peoples Atlas of Canada Education Kit and Floor Map.

Rather than political borders, this map shows the locations of Indigenous communities, residential schools, reserves and more. The map shows Canada as being broken up into Indigenous language groups rather than provinces to represent the precolonial movements of indigenous peoples and provide imperative education to all. This resource will assist students and teachers alike in understanding the past, present, and future of Indigenous Peoples in Canada.

PSBAA has received a copy of this kit and floor map, which is 10.7m (35.1') x 7.9m (25.92'), to be utilized by our members for free. The kit contains a floor map, teacher's guide and hard copies of the learning activities.

To request to utilize this map at your school for FREE please contact the [PSBAA Office!](#)

For more information on the Indigenous Peoples Atlas of Canada, please visit:

<https://cangeoeducation.ca/en/maps/indigenous-peoples-atlas-of-canada>



School at the Legislature

Hold your next class on the steps of the Legislature! The Alberta Legislature invites you to apply for School at the Legislature, a free teacher-driven program that allows teachers to move their classrooms to the Alberta Legislature for a week to bring their lessons to life. The program is available for all students in grade 6 and grade 9, runs from September to June and can adapt to all student and teacher needs.

Applications for the school year of 2023/2024 are now open.

[CLICK HERE for more information or to register!](#)



Brighter Days

Kids Help Phone's offers virtual councillor health services which are available 24/7 across Canada. This means that they are there for kids, teens and young adults from coast to coast when they need help or someone to talk to.

One of the Kids Help Phone services is the Brighter Days Program, which gently introduces Indigenous youth (ages 6 – 29) to their services and provides them with an opportunity to engage virtually with a Kids Help Phone Indigenous Wellness Specialist in a culturally safe and fun conversation. After the introductory session, participating groups have the option of hosting additional sessions focused on wellness topics such as managing anxiety, self-care and more.

You can help by connecting Indigenous youth to well-being supports today through the link below and we look forward to having the Kids Help Phone speak at our Spring General Assembly this June.

[CLICK HERE for more information or to Register!](#)



STRATEGIC PLAN 2023-2028

We have now added our 2023-2028 Strategic Plan to the Members Resource section of the website under Strategic Documents. Our Strategic Priorities are to Innovate and Collaborate, Educate to Activate and Cultivate to Elevate.

[For more details log in now.](#)

RETIREMENT NOTICE

Do you know anyone who will be retiring from your School Division? PSBAA would be happy to make an announcement and send our well wishes to the retirees. Please email: communications@public-schools.ab.ca with more information.



The Public School Boards' Association of Alberta is committed to Truth and Reconciliation, has prioritized increasing awareness of Canada's history with Indigenous people and is working towards reconciliation for the future.

At the February PSBC we provided members with complementary copies of the Calls to Action mini booklet as a quick reference tool on the issues at hand. If interested, we can provide additional copies to both members and non-members at \$8 per booklet. Copies can be ordered for principals and teachers as quick reference guides; several school boards have already done so!

To order your copies Please contact communications@public-schools.ab.ca

CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

PSBAA will post career opportunity ads on the website and in The Advocate for members free of charge. Check out the current career opportunities on the PSBAA website.

Email a PDF copy of your career ad to Troy Tait at: executivedirector@public-schools.ab.ca

Collaborative Response: Every Child Deserves a Team

May 02 - 9 a.m. - 3 p.m.

Feeling overwhelmed with the expectations being placed on teachers, leaders and educational systems to respond to the diverse needs of learners? Ensuring success for all students is a moral necessity for all schools, but takes a highly coordinated framework of structures and processes within a school to maximize the collective capacity of the team. Learn about the Collaborative Response, an organizational mindset that involves some fundamental shifts for schools and districts, such as layering collaborative team structures, transforming how we talk about student needs, focusing on students close to meeting expectations through thoughtful organization of data and evidence and ensuring tiering of supports rather than students.

[CLICK HERE for more information or to register!](#)

Integrating Trauma Responsive Practices into the Daily Practices of Schools

April 26 - 11 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

As you know, rarely do schools have enough counseling staff to meet the needs of all the students whose psychological and behavioral challenges rise to Tier 2. Additionally, research shows that Tier 2 interventions only result in a sustained change when they are coupled with reinforcement in the classroom and other school spaces. This is not about turning classroom teachers into counselors; it's about making sure they are equipped with a toolbox of strategies that meet the cognitive, emotional, and behavioral needs of students coping with trauma.

[CLICK HERE for more information or to register!](#)

Adaptive Schools Foundation

Part 1 - April 20-21 - 9 a.m. - 3 p.m.

Part 2 - June 8-9 - 9 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

The Adaptive Schools Foundations training explores what makes teams effective and how to develop skills as facilitators in both informal and formal settings, as well as in small and large groups. The training describes how to implement the training in specific ways to weave the collaborative fabric of a faculty, develop group member skills and acquire the principles and understandings to engage in a continuous cycle of team and individual improvement. Adaptive Schools is the "how" of professional learning communities: how to behave in groups, how to lead them, and how to facilitate them for improved leading, teaching, and learning.

[CLICK HERE for more information or to register!](#)

How to Build Relationships with Students, Share Control and Teach Positive Behaviors

April 18 and 25 - 9:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

Looking for new ways to connect with your students and build relationships that are mutually beneficial and respectful? Then check out former teacher, Scott Ervin's workshop where he will teach attendees how to build relationships, share control and teach positive behaviors in the classroom through explicit strategy instruction. The workshop is not a "why" exercise, but rather a "how" exercise.

[CLICK HERE for more information or to register!](#)



The Impact of Social Media on Student Well-Being

Looking to understand how and why your students are using social media more than ever before? Want a better understanding of the impact on well-being that can be seen in the classroom? Then we have a course that might interest you.

Sonderly is offering a one and a half hour course from Dr. Alexandra Makos who provides a detailed history of social media, explains how the design of social media effects student well-being and gives concrete solutions to not only manage the use of social media in the classroom but also to use it in ways that will improve the well-being of students.

The course will help you better understand the role of social media in the lives of students and provide strategies to improve the impact of social media on well-being.

[CLICK HERE for more information or to register!](#)

JobSafe, A Free Safety Program for Junior and Senior High Schools

Looking for more ways to educate and empower youth on safety prior to them entering the workforce?

SafeGen has a great program, JobSafe, that provides young workers with accredited safety education prior to entering the workforce. The job safety course has no cost and is available to all publicly funded junior and senior high schools throughout Alberta. The program is a great fit to be used as an effective Career and Technologies Studies (CTS) resource for both teachers and students.

[CLICK HERE for more information or to register!](#)

WORD SEARCH: Getting Things Done

ABILITY
 ACCOMPLISHING
 ACHIEVE
 ADEQUATE
 ADOPT
 ARGUED
 ASSIGNMENT
 CASE
 CATEGORY
 COMPARED
 EMPHASIS
 ENHANCE
 EXPECTED
 FACTOR
 FOCUS
 FRAMEWORK
 GOAL
 GROUP
 HAND
 CONCERNED
 DARNON
 IMPACT
 IMPAIR
 INADEQUATE
 INCREASE
 INTERESTED



LEAD
 LEARNING
 LINK
 MASTERY
 MEASURED
 PERFORMANCE
 POSITIVE
 PREDICTED

PROCESS
 PROGRESS
 PURSUE
 QUESTION
 STUDENT
 STUDY
 TASK
 UNCERTAINTY

PSBAA WORD SEARCH

The first person who completes the puzzle with all words accurately identified and emails to Troy Tait at (executivedirector@public-schools.ab.ca) will receive a PSBAA branded stainless steel water bottle, which is awarded exclusively to our puzzle prize winners! (Those who have won a prize in this contest during the past six months are not eligible.)

“DID YOU KNOW?”

Did you know that the PSBAA has created a new Strategic Plan for our organization? The 2023-2028 Strategic Plan is available to download now in the members section of our website.



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PUBLIC SCHOOL BOARDS'
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STORY IDEA? FEEDBACK?

We welcome your story ideas and suggestions!

CONTACT US

Please email communications@public-schools.ab.ca.

Address #105, 10470 176 Street, Edmonton, AB, T5S 1L3

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