



# PD E-News

Volume 12, Number 1

Fall 2011

## Highlights in This Issue

- Editorial  
—The Importance of Articulation (Or How I Learned to Love Policy).....1
- Links of Interest to PD Leaders.....2
- Feature Workshop  
—New ATA Workshop Offers Support for Building Emotional Intelligence.....3
- In Your Neighbourhood  
—Timberline PD Committee Uses Local Teacher Talent.....4
- Upcoming ATA Events....5
- Specialist Council Profile  
—50 Years of Council on School Administration—What Does the Future Hold?.....6
- PD Partners  
—Professional Learning Priority in Environmental Education.....7
- Invitational Curriculum Symposium and Professional Development Area Conference.....9
- The Critical Role of Professional Development in Promoting Diversity, Equity and Human Rights.....10
- Reminder.....10

## Guest Editorial



### The Importance of Articulation (Or How I Learned to Love Policy)

By *Gaylene R Schreiber*

I responded to a call this week that caused me to reflect on the importance of policy, in the truest sense of policy: the articulated beliefs of a collective.

The caller was planning a master's thesis and had questions about the Alberta Teachers' Association's professional development (PD) policy. Since the Association had recently engaged in a decennial review of its PD policy, I was pleased to be able to recount in detail the democratic processes by which we evergreen all ATA policy statements. I explained that the initial drafts were based in research and vetted through our PD leaders, who serve the profession through their volunteerism, and through staff and elected representatives. Policy statements are then distributed to ATA locals for discussion and voting in advance of the Annual Representative Assembly (ARA). At ARA, each policy statement is presented for debate, and amendment if necessary, before it is finally accepted by local delegates or rejected should it not wholly represent the beliefs of the profession.

Association policy is designed to serve teachers as a ready tool to assist in clear and consistent articulation of the profession's collective perspective. Yet, on reflection, I realize that it also serves further purposes that I hadn't consciously considered in the past. Policy statements reflect not only the beliefs of the profession, but its hopes and dreams for the future. It guides the actions of subgroups who seek direction in the implementation of initiatives that support teachers' professional growth. It becomes fodder for debate with other engaged groups who may seek to understand our perspectives. Policy also articulates the concerns of the profession and suggests potential solutions. For individual teachers, policy statements can affirm that their beliefs are embraced by their peers.

This was the case for my caller. He was concerned on a personal level about the implementation of professional development he was experiencing and observed that once the professional development goals that supported the jurisdictional mandate were served, there weren't many resources left to support his independent learning goals. "Have I

got something for you to read!" I replied, and sent him a copy of our most recent PD research report, newly revised PD policy and PD position paper. I hope that these tools will help him think about his own professional development and inform his future research, too.

During the policy review process this past year, I had noticed but was unsurprised that some aspects of our long-range policy seemed out of date. However, this also gave cause to celebrate. Over the last ten years, the world of education has turned much of its attention toward enhancing professional learning to maximize the social benefits of a robust education system. In the best instances, we have gone from isolated local PD committees to collaborative joint PD councils who strategically plan and coordinate a coherent program of professional development. We have seen teacher research take on momentum, notably through AISI projects, and the evolution of virtual communities of practice. The seeds of these current realities were first planted in our previous PD policy; their growth is a result of the persistence of teachers who expressed their hopes and ideals in 2001 and before.

We have a long way to go to maximize the full potential of professional development, but we have come such a long way during the course of my two decades in the profession that it is important to celebrate these successes. How are the professional development beliefs of teachers reflected in your practice? I invite you to read the new PD policy and position paper in the *Member's Handbook* and on the Association's website (see below for URL access) and send me your thoughts at [gayleneschreiber@ata.ab.ca](mailto:gayleneschreiber@ata.ab.ca).

- ATA PD policy can be found online at [www.teachers.ab.ca/About%20the%20ATA/Governance/PolicyandPositionPapers/Policy/Educational%20Policy/Pages/Professional%20Development.aspx](http://www.teachers.ab.ca/About%20the%20ATA/Governance/PolicyandPositionPapers/Policy/Educational%20Policy/Pages/Professional%20Development.aspx).
- The ATA PD position paper can be found online at [www.teachers.ab.ca/About%20the%20ATA/Governance/PolicyandPositionPapers/Position%20Papers/Pages/Professional%20Development.aspx](http://www.teachers.ab.ca/About%20the%20ATA/Governance/PolicyandPositionPapers/Position%20Papers/Pages/Professional%20Development.aspx).
- The ATA PD Survey 2010 report can be found online at [www.teachers.ab.ca/SiteCollectionDocuments/ATA/Publications/Research-Updates/PD-86\\_18%20Professional%20Learning%20for%20Informed%20Transformation.pdf](http://www.teachers.ab.ca/SiteCollectionDocuments/ATA/Publications/Research-Updates/PD-86_18%20Professional%20Learning%20for%20Informed%20Transformation.pdf).

## Links of Interest to PD Leaders

Proceedings of Alberta Education's Brain Research Seminar  
<http://education.alberta.ca/admin/aisi/researchers/conferences-and-events/research-seminar-2011.aspx>

Alberta Education's Brain Research page  
<http://education.alberta.ca/admin/aisi/themes/brain-research.aspx>

Alberta Education's Early Learning page  
<http://education.alberta.ca/admin/aisi/themes/early-learning.aspx>

ARPCD Inclusive Education Resources  
[www.inclusiveeducationpdresources.ca/index.php](http://www.inclusiveeducationpdresources.ca/index.php)

An Article on Differentiating Learning for Teachers  
[www.connectedprincipals.com/archives/4305](http://www.connectedprincipals.com/archives/4305)





# New ATA Workshop Offers Support for Building Emotional Intelligence

*By Joni Turville*

In this hurried world, teachers, students and school communities feel the importance of relationships with self and others. Emotional and social intelligences are deeply embedded in the foundation of 21st-century skills learning and are critical underpinnings of digital age literacy, inventive thinking and effective communication.

A new workshop offered by the Association will help teachers think about this important topic and learn about practical strategies they can implement in their classroom to support the development of emotional intelligence. The workshop gives teachers skills to help students discover strengths and areas for development in their personal and metacognitive toolbox. It also gives teachers an opportunity to think about their own skills and strategies in this area.

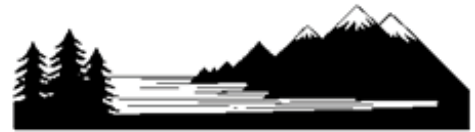
As with all Association workshops, this workshop emphasizes interactivity, practical strategies and resources for further study. ATA workshops are provided to members at the low cost of \$100 plus GST per group and can support a comprehensive professional development plan at the school or district level. To book this or any other PD workshop, please contact Debra Augustyn in Professional Development at Barnett House by phone (780-447-9485 in Edmonton; 1-800-232-7208, extension 485 elsewhere in Alberta) or by e-mail at [pdworkshops@ata.ab.ca](mailto:pdworkshops@ata.ab.ca).



## Timberline PD Committee Uses Local Teacher Talent

*Christa Nicholson*

Timberline's Professional Development (PD) Committee, together with Wild Rose School Division, created two PD initiatives that help provide and facilitate professional development throughout the division. The Wild Rose staff development plan and list Highlighting Local Professional Expertise, illustrate what is happening in the Wild Rose School Division.



The Wild Rose staff development plan was modelled after the Battle River School Division's professional development plan. The Timberline PD Committee created the plan to increase communication about professional development activities throughout the division. Wild Rose School Division has eight school-based PD days for the 2011/12 school year. The plan allows school PD representatives to talk about the PD activities at their schools during those school-based PD days. It also brings awareness of PD opportunities available to other schools on those days. PD committees at the school level use the information in the development plan to organize their

school's PD activities for the school year. Using [Google](#) Docs enables the Timberline PD chair and cochairs to upload all new PD events or activities to the development plan throughout the year.

Check out Timberline's staff development plan at [https://docs.google.com/a/wrsd.ca/document/d/1eAdVqTnEvJYN6dad9E29\\_ONgwzMbz4e-7I0liWvEetg/edit?hl=en\\_US](https://docs.google.com/a/wrsd.ca/document/d/1eAdVqTnEvJYN6dad9E29_ONgwzMbz4e-7I0liWvEetg/edit?hl=en_US).

The Highlighting Local Professional Expertise list was created to highlight those staff with expertise in particular areas. All names were submitted voluntarily and compiled in a list that was distributed to all school-based PD committees and administrators in the division. School PD representatives submit names of interested participants throughout the year to their respective PD cochairs. Using the information in the expertise list allows PD committees at the school level to use in-house expertise. Schools contact teachers on the list and ask them to facilitate professional development in their expertise area. Members of the list present in a manner that is comfortable for them—to use their expertise to help another school, they may present a



workshop, participate in a book study, model a classroom lesson, or belong to a cohort. This expertise list has provided a cost-effective method of professional development—using teachers within the division who have the professional training already and are willing to share it eliminates the need to bring in expensive speakers.

Check out Timberline’s Highlighting Local Professional Expertise list at [https://docs.google.com/document/d/11kOFeKRXIKSwHBu6RxwmRtsDILhR76bPv-2yaDYfii0/edit?hl=en\\_GB](https://docs.google.com/document/d/11kOFeKRXIKSwHBu6RxwmRtsDILhR76bPv-2yaDYfii0/edit?hl=en_GB).

If you would like to learn more about either initiative, please contact, Christa Nicholson, PD Chair, Timberline Local No 9 ([christa.nicholson@wrsd.ca](mailto:christa.nicholson@wrsd.ca)), for more information.

## Upcoming ATA Events

### October

- 14–16 Joint Alberta School Library Council, Educational Technology Council and Social Studies Conference
- 19–21 Council on School Administration Conference
- 20–22 Science Council Conference
- 21–22 Math Council Conference
- 21–22 Religious and Moral Education Council Conference
- 24–25 Specialist Council Presidents, Editors, Webmasters and Treasurers Seminar
- 28–29 Association Administrator Instructors, Association Instructors and PD Facilitators Training
- 28–29 Fine Arts Council Conference
- 28–29 Second Languages and Intercultural Council Conference

### November

- 3 Convention Association Meeting
- 3–5 Early Childhood Education Council
- 3(eve)–5 English as a Second Language Council
- 4–5 Combined Professional Development Area Conference and Invitational Curriculum Symposium
- 11 Remembrance Day
- 14–15 Leadership Essentials for Administrators Conference
- 17–19 Guidance Council Conference
- 18 Convention Treasurers’ Seminar

### December

- 2–4 Le Conseil Français Conference
- 24–27 Christmas Break—ATA Offices Closed  
and 31  
to January 2



## 50 Years of Council on School Administration— What Does the Future Hold?

By Holly Godson and Garnet Goertzen, CSA



Over the past fifty years, the Council on School Administration (CSA) has been actively involved in research, providing professional development, acting as a sounding board for issues and concerns arising from the field, and advocating for school leaders at the local, provincial and national level. CSA continues to evolve. Over the course of the next year or so, CSA will take on a new look, expand its vision and continue to build on what it has been doing successfully for fifty years—representing school leaders.

When we talk about educational leadership, we talk about the heart of learning and learning communities. Whatever the configuration of a learning community—from an elementary school to a school division to the specialist council within the Alberta Teacher's Association—every member of that team has the potential and should have the opportunity to take on a leadership role within that learning community, no matter how large or small. As a team, as educators, as leaders and learners—we can make a difference, but it can no longer be left to a select few. We definitely live in an interesting age where change is really no longer a choice and life-long learning is no longer a cliché. It is a place where we are more connected and have more opportunity to be open to new ideas and ways of looking through the eyes of learners as learners ourselves.

What does the future hold for our organization? This question was addressed through our strategic planning activity held in the spring of 2011. As we move forward, we will take full advantage of the increased ease of communication through

technology while still striving to maintain the face-to-face conversations we value. The dynamic we are striving to create will strengthen networking capacity within our organization.

To increase the power of networking, the organization will build a database for members with optional fields to describe specific characteristics of each member's school; we expect this to facilitate collegial connections that will, in turn, facilitate professional growth. Provincial networks have the potential to create a culture of peer support outside one's regular scope of district administrative councils to enable links between colleagues that can lead to interschool visitations. We also are working toward building the connections between school administrators on a national and international level. Short-term exchanges, in which administrators from high performing schools can share experiences and knowledge, will prove to be enlightening and enriching.

In anticipation of the formalization of the Principal Quality Standard, the CSA will take a lead in developing meaningful professional development to assist our members to be highly skilled and prepared for the expectations placed on school-based leaders. We will strive to make our conferences richer by designing opportunities for collaboration and dialogue between administrators in similar work circumstances.

With this in mind, the CSA is looking forward to an exciting few years with some outstanding professional development for all education leaders. The Western Canadian Educational Conference is also going through a transformation and will take on a new look and format called Leadership '11

(held in October), followed by Leadership '12, Leadership '13 (you get the pattern)—each building on the previous conference. The Educational Leadership Academy will continue to be offered in July in a retreat format. Talk about a great way for education leaders to develop a professional network! In addition, we are excited to be hosting the 2013 national conference of the Canadian Association of Principals, from April 21–24, at the Banff Springs Hotel, in Banff, Alberta. But we are going further than national—we will be inviting delegates from around the world to interact and grow with our Alberta school leaders. CSA recognizes the importance of understanding the promising practices of Asian and European education systems and feel it is important that Albertans and Canadians have this opportunity to draw on wider experiences than our own. In April 2013 we will welcome the world to Banff to share school leadership and education strategies that are changing how schools function in the 21st century. We hope you will join us.

To ensure that you maintain ongoing communication from your CSA, login to TNET on the ATA website and ensure that your CSA membership is active.

Editor's note: This article was adapted from an article recently published in *Leadership Update* vol 8 no 1, a publication of the Council on School Administration.

## PD Partners

### Professional Learning Priority in Environmental Education

*Michelle Kulmatycky, Alberta Council for Environmental Education*

*Environmental education helps children and adults develop knowledge, values, skills and behaviours that help them meet present-day needs without compromising the well-being of future generations.*

—Environmental Education: Creating a Sustainable Future for Albertans

Looking for ways to sustain enthusiasm in professional learning? Why not work on integrating environmental education into your yearly professional development ventures?

Developing lesson, unit and yearlong plans while trying to make sure that all of the curricular outcomes have been met can often be a difficult task in itself, let alone ensuring that students are motivated and engaged by the tasks set out for them. My colleagues have often spoken about the value of workshops, PLCs and initiatives that didn't add more to do, but instead provided ideas and resources to help do our jobs better. My goal is to assist teachers to do just that.



Did you know? Effective IMMEDIATELY, your annual no-cost specialist council membership will no longer expire in August. Your no-cost council membership will continue year after year until you decide to change to a different council. To register or to change your council membership, log in at [www.teachers.ab.ca](http://www.teachers.ab.ca) with your TNET username and password.



## Top 10 Reasons to Teach Curriculum Through the Environmental Context

1. Environmental education provides great hands-on, engaging education that students care about.
2. Teachers learn how to deliver existing curriculum using the environment as a context for learning, instead of adding more to the plate.
3. Twenty-first-century learning competencies can be delivered through environmental education.
4. Environmental education can be included as a professional growth plan goal.
5. It helps realize the proposed transformation of the K–12 curriculum vision of creating the three Es: engaged learners who are ethical citizens with an entrepreneurial spirit.
6. Environmental education provides a solution to current natural resource issues.
7. Environmental education fosters engaged citizens who know about and act on environmental issues. This is a key element of sustainable development.
8. Seventy-five per cent of Albertans believe that “schools in Alberta should give top priority to providing students with opportunities to do environmental action projects” (ACEE’s polling of 801 Albertan families by Ipsos Reid).
9. Environmental education gets kids outdoors, supports healthy lifestyle choices, and helps combat nature-deficit disorder.
10. [Research shows](#) that environmental education improves academic performance and reduces classroom management problems.

The Alberta Council for Environmental Education (ACEE) has listened to what teachers have to say, and is pleased to present the 2011 [ConocoPhillips Canada Professional Development in Environmental Education](#) initiative. It is our goal to connect teachers to environmental education organizations across Alberta who provide workshops and other professional learning opportunities to teachers. These opportunities include curriculum connections from art to social studies. View our current [menu](#) for just a taste of these appetizing opportunities.

We are doing this work in partnership with the Global, Environmental & Outdoor Education Council (GEOEC) of the Alberta Teachers’ Association. Be sure to look for their upcoming events at <http://www.geoec.org>.

**Environmental education promotes action projects and action helps build 21st-century competencies.** Professional learning can include books, research, workshops and more. To help you find these resources, ACEE has created the [Encana Environmental Education Resources Centre](#) for all of your professional learning needs on environmental education.

In August 2011, ACEE reviewed the literature and consulted with experts in the field regarding the current trends and imperatives in teacher professional learning. Click [here](#) and download the *Current Trends in Professional Development* document to read more about what we heard and the implications for environmental education agencies and educators.



# Invitational Curriculum Symposium and Professional Development Area Conference

**November 4–5, 2011**

The fall Professional Development Area Conference (PDAC) will be held in conjunction with the Invitational Curriculum Symposium all day Friday and Saturday, November 4–5, at the Sutton Place Hotel, 10235 101 Street, Edmonton. The Alberta Teachers' Association and Alberta Education are cohosting *Curriculum Design for Informed Transformation: Creating a Great School for Every Student* to advance discussions on shaping the foundations for the future design of provincial curriculum. To register, please go to the website indicated in the memo of invitation.

The Excellence in Teaching Awards Program opens in October and nominations close in early February. For specific details on opening and closing dates and to obtain nomination packages, visit [www.education.alberta/teachers/excellence.aspx](http://www.education.alberta/teachers/excellence.aspx) or call 780-422-0203 (1-866-590-1660 toll free).



# The Critical Role of Professional Development in Promoting Diversity, Equity and Human Rights

by Andrea Berg



Alberta's rapidly changing demographics are creating an exciting cultural diversity that is reflected in the province's urban and rural classrooms. The new landscape of the school provides an ideal context in which

to teach students that strength lies in diversity. The challenge that teachers face is to capitalize on the energy of today's intercultural classroom mix to lay the groundwork for all students to succeed. To support teachers in their critical roles as leaders in inclusive education, the Alberta Teachers' Association established the Diversity, Equity and Human Rights (DEHR) Standing Committee in 2000.

DEHR aims to assist educators in their legal, professional and ethical responsibilities to protect all students and to maintain safe, caring and inclusive learning environments. Topics of focus for DEHR include intercultural education, inclusive learning communities, gender equity, UNESCO Associated Schools Project Network, sexual orientation and gender variance.

## Activities of the DEHR Committee include

- studying, advising and making recommendations on policies that reflect respect for diversity, equity and human rights;
- offering Inclusive Learning Communities Grants (up to \$2,000) to support activities that support inclusion;
- producing *Just in Time*, an electronic newsletter that can be found at [www.teachers.ab.ca/Publications/Other%20Publications/Pages/Just%20in%20Time%20Newsletter.aspx](http://www.teachers.ab.ca/Publications/Other%20Publications/Pages/Just%20in%20Time%20Newsletter.aspx);
- providing and creating print and web-based teacher resources;
- creating a list of presenters on DEHR topics; and
- supporting the Association Instructor workshops on diversity.

Professional development leaders are uniquely situated to learn about diversity issues from teachers directly in the field and to see how diversity issues play out in different contexts. PD leaders are encouraged to discuss the challenges they face in terms of diversity in their own schools and to incorporate these discussions into future professional development activities in the local. Diversity, equity and human rights affect the work of all members. What are you doing to make a difference?

Further information about the work of DEHR can be found on the Association's website at [www.teachers.ab.ca](http://www.teachers.ab.ca) under Teaching in Alberta/Diversity, Equity and Human Rights. Alternatively, please contact Andrea Berg, executive staff officer, Professional Development, at [andrea.berg@ata.ab.ca](mailto:andrea.berg@ata.ab.ca).

## Reminder:

If you are a new PD chair, please send your name, local and preferred contact information to [linda.kulak@ata.ab.ca](mailto:linda.kulak@ata.ab.ca).

