

# at our best

FOR STUDENTS



The Alberta Teachers' Association

# As teachers,

we want to be able to do our best work for kids every day. Having the best conditions in place for teaching and learning will ensure that we maintain peak effectiveness in our important work; promoting these conditions in all schools means supporting teachers in supporting kids.



The Alberta Teachers' Association



## The following must be in place for teachers to do their best work...

### TEACHING QUALITY

- ★ 87 per cent of Albertans believe that dealing with the conditions that limit teacher effectiveness would improve public education in Alberta.\*
- ★ There are barriers beyond teachers' control that limit their ability to do their best work.
- ★ Ensuring that teachers can perform at their peak means a top-quality education for all students.



Appropriate class sizes



Accessible resources and learning supports



Freedom to teach



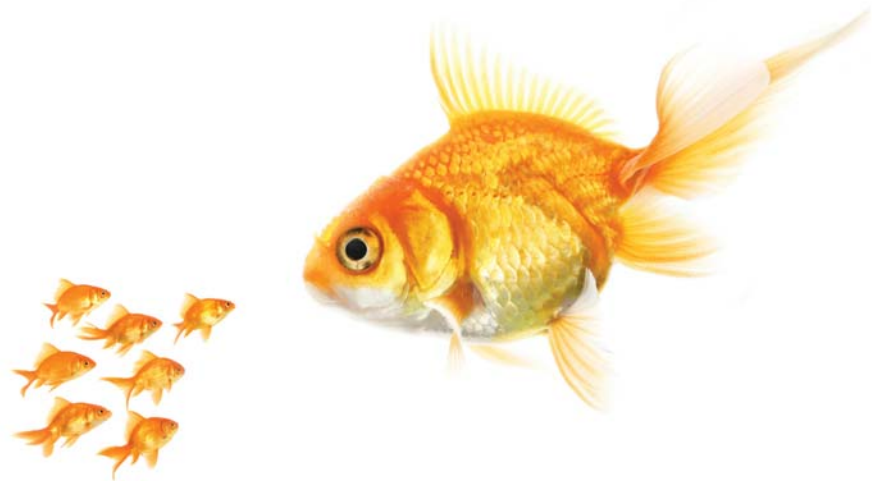
Adequate time to prepare for instruction



Effective professional development opportunities



# APPROPRIATE CLASS SIZES



- ★ Smaller classes create more opportunities for one-on-one interaction between teachers and students, greater individualization and enhanced student engagement.
- ★ The most important role of teachers is building strong, meaningful, professional relationships with students.
- ★ The 2003 Alberta Commission on Learning recommended the following targets for average class size:

Grades	K-3	4-6	7-9	10-12
Target averages	17	23	25	27

- ★ Only 14 of 62 school boards are currently meeting the target average in K-3.
- ★ Averages across school boards hide too many significantly large individual classes.
- ★ Firm class size limits would ensure effective learning environments for all students. 87 per cent of Albertans support provincewide standards for maximum class sizes.\*
- ★ Nearly three-quarters of Albertans support a limit of 20 students in K-3 and 25 in higher grades. And 60 per cent of Albertans believe the limit should be lower in classes with greater student diversity.\*





## ACCESSIBLE RESOURCES AND LEARNING SUPPORTS



- ★ For teachers to give individualized attention to students, they need appropriate resources (learning aids, instructional tools, information technology) and supports (learning coaches, educational assistants, psychologists and other professionals).
- ★ Teachers need time to search for resources, analyze them for appropriateness and plan to implement them.
- ★ Students need access to appropriate professional services, wraparound supports and community services.
- ★ Teachers and school administrators need time to meet with students, parents, service providers and colleagues to ensure effective program implementation.
- ★ 76 per cent of Albertans believe that the availability of resources and learning supports is important to the quality of education.\*





## F R E E D O M T O T E A C H

- ★ Alberta teachers are top-notch, hard-working and committed professionals.
- ★ They want to excel at what they do so that their students succeed.
- ★ Teachers require the appropriate conditions that allow for maximum success.
- ★ Teachers need the professional autonomy to decide what is in the best interests of their students. Treating teachers as professionals enhances job satisfaction.
- ★ Teachers want to optimize the time focused on the classroom, including time for tending to professional duties that support learning (planning, assessment, preparation and collaboration).
- ★ School administrators want to optimize the time focused on their support of instruction.





## ADEQUATE TIME TO PREPARE FOR INSTRUCTION



- ★ Teachers provide sophisticated diagnoses of student learning needs and plan innovative and engaging learning opportunities based on those needs.
- ★ Rich lesson development engages kids in meaningful learning activities.
- ★ Teachers need self-directed time outside of classes to perform professional obligations, conduct research and prepare for instruction.
- ★ Outside of the classroom, teachers support instruction by
  - researching new resources,
  - planning for instruction,
  - preparing class materials,
  - designing student assessment activities,
  - assessing student learning,
  - communicating with parents,
  - collaborating with colleagues and
  - reflecting on their practice.
- ★ 87 per cent of Albertans believe it is reasonable to have provincewide guidelines for teachers' work hours.\*



## EFFECTIVE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES



- ★ Ongoing professional development ensures that teachers remain current with educational research and informs improvements to teaching practice.
- ★ Effective PD includes activities designed to enhance student learning.
- ★ The most effective PD meets the learning needs of individual teachers as expressed in their own professional growth plan.
- ★ The knowledge, skills and attitudes for professional service are outlined in the Teaching Quality Standard (TQS).
- ★ Teachers are required to reflect on their practice as it relates to the TQS and need to be able to undertake PD related to their own individual professional needs.
- ★ School administrators need specialized PD that is focused on their important leadership role.





## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- ★ *Teaching the Way We Aspire to Teach: Now and in the Future*, a joint research report from the Canadian Education Association and the Canadian Teachers' Federation – <http://bit.ly/NI5plg>

## ALBERTA TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION RESOURCES

The following are all publications of the Association. They are freely downloadable from the URL provided. Alternatively, you can obtain a free copy of any of these documents by contacting Distribution at 1-800-232-7208.

- ★ *Teaching in the Early Years of Practice: Fourth-Year Report* – <http://bit.ly/NuBYDG>
- ★ *The New Work of Teaching: A Case Study of the Worklife of Calgary Public Teachers* – <http://bit.ly/lcxEqI>
- ★ *The Future of Teaching in Alberta* – <http://bit.ly/gbhigl>

[www.teachers.ab.ca](http://www.teachers.ab.ca)

\*Source: ATA May 2012 Tracking Survey - telephone survey of 800 Albertans conducted by Environics Research







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