

Support Local Initiatives

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Hello - It's me

Well, actually, it is your Local calling, reaching out to you- We have been fortunate that both Districts have granted us permission to use their email systems to communicate with you. In other Locals throughout our province, Locals must send emails to members' home email addresses.

There are occasions when the details of our communication are topic sensitive - such as updates with negotiations. As we are gearing up for bargaining with our two Districts, it is imperative that we have a means of contacting you, other than District emails.

Your CSR rep will be collecting home email addresses so that we can keep in touch with all members. Please note that the lists will NOT be shared with groups or businesses.

Please support the upcoming events we are sponsoring/organizing -

Charity Jam on April 29th

Trade Fair on April 29- May 1st

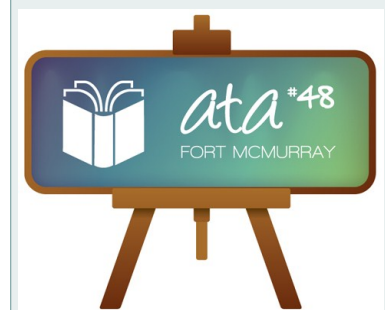
Mullets & Music with Dan Tulk on May 5th

Details can be found in this newsletter or by checking our Local's website.

Nancy Ball



The Alberta Teachers' Association



SHELDON DAHL—CANDIDATE FOR ATA LOCAL PRESIDENT



Sheldon has a passion for publicly funded education as the most effective mechanism for lifting children out of poverty. It is the backbone upon which democracy depends. Quality education for all children is something he will advocate for throughout his career.

Sheldon did all of his Student Teaching in Catholic Schools and greatly enjoyed his experiences there. He studied religion as his minor in University and took Catholic Catechism Classes as part of that process. While not Catholic himself, he values the choice that Catholic School Boards provide to parents under the umbrella of publicly funded education.

Sheldon has been teaching in the Fort McMurray Public School District for the last 12 years. He has served on the Council of School Representatives (2013-2014) and on the Executive of the Local (2011-2013 and 2014-the Present). As a member of the Executive he has filled the role of Local Political Engagement Officer (LPEO) from 2011 to 2013 and acting LPEO during the

spring 2015 Election. He is currently serving as Vice President - Public.

Sheldon's political engagement work has twice been recognized by the provincial association. In both 2012 and 2015 (provincial election years) our Local was honoured with the Local Political Engagement Award at Summer Conference.

Sheldon has developed the ability to talk to people in positions of power with no fear. He has discussed education issues face to face with Jim Prentice, Rachel Notley, David Eggen, local MLAs, and Superintendents. He will stand up for the interests of Fort McMurray teachers.

Sheldon can speak (or sing!) confidently in front of large audiences and has been told he has a voice for radio. He is creative, intelligent, and has a great sense of humour. He works collaboratively with his colleagues and will help lead this Local to continued success.

DEHR NEWS

-Did you know that more than one in five (21%) LGBTQ students reported being physically harassed or assaulted due to their sexual orientation. 20% of LGBTQ students and almost 10% of non-LGBTQ students reported being physically harassed or assaulted about their perceived sexual orientation or gender identity?

-Did you know that 37% of trans students, 21% of sexual minority students, and 10% of non-LGBTQ students reported being physically harassed or assaulted because of their gender expression?



Deborah Nicholson

DEBORAH NICHOLSON—CANDIDATE FOR ATA LOCAL PRESIDENT

My 27 years in the classroom and my work on the Professional Development Committee, the C2 Committee, and the Local 48 Council and Executive have, I believe, given me a solid understanding of the needs and concerns of teachers in Fort McMurray.

Providing for and supporting teachers is an essential component of student success, our ultimate goal. Teachers who are supported and valued are the best teachers for our children. This means advocating to be at the decision-making table when it comes to education decisions, whether we are discussing teacher education, curriculum design, or professional development.

Representing a combined local is challenging. It is about building relationships and capacity within our two districts. As President, it is important to constantly place yourself in a position to hear all teacher's concerns. It is also important to establish a healthy working relationship with the administration of both Fort McMurray school districts. This means attending events that cover the entire population of teachers from FMCS D and FMPS D, including liaison meetings and committee meetings, and board meetings. Besides lots of face to face listening, I also intend to use social media to maintain open communication lines between myself, the executive, and all teachers in our local.

The bottom line? I feel I have the qualifications that allow me to serve Fort McMurray teachers effectively. I have an extensive teaching background. I have experience in a variety of ATA roles. I have a strong desire and the time to commit to serve Fort McMurray teachers. I understand that it is necessary for our local to maintain an impartial stance politically in order to be able to work with all levels of government, whatever their political stripe. Finally, I love this work, both serving teachers locally and representing Fort McMurray teachers provincially.

LOCAL WEBSITE

UPDATE

Check out our front page for links to the ATA News Photo Contest, Mullets and Music, Creating a Compassionate Classroom, and Registering for your ATA Account. Registering for your ATA account is the only way to get access to important Member's Only information on both the provincial and local websites. The Member's Only section of the website has information about bargaining for the Public Board and will have information for the Catholic Board soon.

<http://local48.teachers.ab.ca/pages/home.aspx>

SUBMITTED BY YOUR LOCAL POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT

OFFICER—AN ONLINE ATA ARTICLE

As low oil prices persist, Albertans don't need an economist to tell them what they already know: our provincial economy is in recession for the second straight year. But it may surprise many Albertans to learn that our provincial government is still in a stronger financial position than its counterparts in other provinces. In the 2016 fiscal year, Alberta will move into a net debt position for the first time in 15 years, but will still have substantially less debt and more financial assets than other provinces.

While Alberta's projected deficit of \$10 billion for 2016/17 sounds very large, relative to the size of our provincial economy, it is not. The deficit is not insignificant, of course, but at about 2.8 per cent of our gross domestic product (GDP), it is smaller in relative terms than the 3.5 per cent of GDP deficit that then prime minister Stephen Harper ran after the 2008/09 global financial crisis.

Alberta's projected deficit for 2016/17 is not the result of "out of control" government spending. Alberta actually has the leanest public sector in the country relative to the size of its economy, and this has been the case since 1993/94.

In per capita terms, Alberta's program expenses for 2015/16 are forecasted to rank third among the provinces, behind Newfoundland and Labrador and Saskatchewan and slightly ahead of Manitoba. Alberta's 2015/16 program expenses are projected to be only \$34 per capita above 2014/15, whereas the program expenses for both British Columbia and Saskatchewan are forecasted to increase by more than \$300 per capita over the same period.

Instead of being the product of excessive spending, Alberta's deficits in the NDP's 2015 and 2016 budgets are the result of the dramatic decline of resource royalties and its status as the lowest taxed province by at least \$8.5 billion even after the NDP raised income taxes for large corporations and high-income earners last year.

In short, Alberta has a revenue problem. The province's revenue change for 2015/16 is projected to be -12.8 per cent, the worst decline since 2001/02. Even before the recent revenue decline, Alberta already collected a lot less revenue than any other province relative to the size of its economy.

Alberta's inability to generate enough revenue stems from then premier Ralph Klein's shortsighted decisions to dramatically cut income taxes for high-income earners and large corporations about 15 years ago. These tax cuts made our province overly reliant on resource royalties, so

much so that, even with high oil prices, the Progressive Conservatives ran a deficit in six of their last seven years in power. All six of these deficits would have been much larger had the Tories not decided to reduce assets in excess of liabilities by 67 per cent, from \$39.4 billion in 2007/08 to \$13 billion in 2014/15.

Even after the PC's mismanagement of public finances and the NDP's first year of stimulus budgeting, Alberta is projected to have \$4 billion in assets in excess of debts come budget day (April 14). But Alberta's no-net-debt status is about to change because the NDP has sensibly chosen to maintain public services and jobs during the oil price downturn while continuing their plan to stimulate the economy with infrastructure investments. The government's high credit rating will ensure low interest rates on newly incurred debt, and its Fiscal Planning and Transparency Act, which accompanied the October 2015 budget, limits its debt to 15 per cent of GDP (about \$55 billion) or less than half of the average debt-to-GDP ratio of the other provinces.

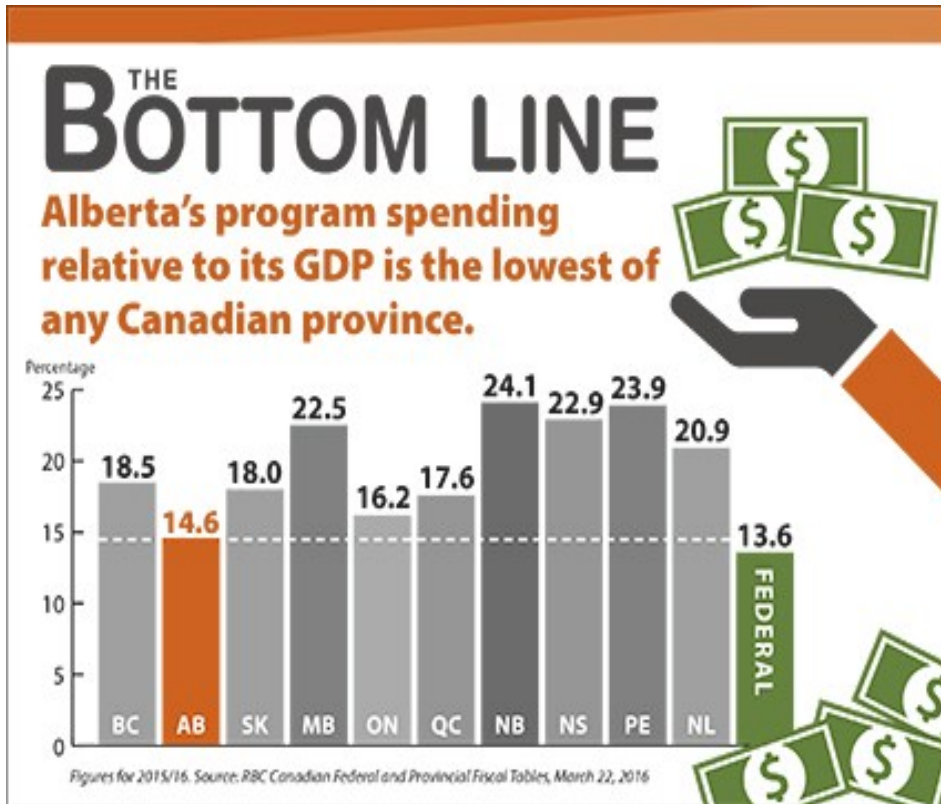
Last year the NDP began to stabilize the province's finances by raising taxes on high-income earners and large corporations, and by hiking the tobacco tax, the locomotive fuel tax, the liquor markup and the insurance premium tax by small amounts (the new carbon tax doesn't come into force until 2017). These measures are a reasonable start given the current weakness of the Alberta economy, but are insufficient to deal with the revenue problem that the NDP inherited. Unfortunately, the NDP's refusal to consider further tax increases in Budget 2016 leaves Alberta with an inadequate plan for paying down the debt it is about to incur.

Although Alberta doesn't have a deficit or a debt problem yet, it will before too long if the government doesn't deal with its revenue problem.

Ian Hussey is a research manager at the Parkland Institute, where his work focuses on political economy and labour studies. All numbers cited are from RBC's March 22, 2016, updated Canadian Federal and Provincial Fiscal Tables.

This opinion column represents the views of the writer and does not necessarily reflect the position of the Alberta Teachers' Association.

SUBMITTED BY YOUR LPEO



Come check out our Local 48 booth at this year's **Spring Trade Show April 29—May 1st!**

How will you celebrate Education Week in your school the first week of May?

How will you and your colleagues raise awareness for mental health on May 2—6?



Charity Jam!

On **April 29th, at 7pm** in the Miskanaw Ballroom (Mac Island), come out and support Canadian Mental Health by attending the annual Charity Jam hosted by CMHA. Your very own local 48 is the presenting sponsor! See attached poster for more details.

Mullets & Music With Dan Tulk

Coming up on **May 5th at 7pm at Paddy's, the 2nd annual McMurray Teachers for Mental Health: Mullets & Music with Dan Tulk!** Come on out and support your local CMHA and hear some amazing live music. Prizes and 50/50 available to win. See attached poster for more details.

April PD Report

There are still several \$500 PD grants available to all Fort McMurray teachers. All information and forms are available at the Provincial ATA website. Simply register on the provincial ATA website, if you have not done so already, and follow the links to Local 48 website - Members Only section. If you have any questions, please send an email to deborahnic1488@gmail.com.

A forum on GSAs is being sponsored by your Local 48 PD Committee. Blake Krause, a Father Mercredi teacher, will present information and take questions on this topic. The forum takes place on **Thursday, May 12**, location to be announced at a later date. Light refreshments will be provided.

Come take PD into your own hands. Garette Tebay and Sam Livingstone are working together to host **#edcampymm on May 7th at Westview School at 9 am**. Interested participants can register at the Facebook page, EdCamp YMM, as well as view a video about edcamps. There will be 2 sessions in the morning, a lunch break and 2 sessions in the afternoon. The schedule will be built the day of and will develop depending on the needs and interests of the people who are there.