



Memorandum

The Alberta Teachers' Association

INFORMATION AND ACTION MEMO

Date 2020 12 14

To Convention Association Secretaries

From Daniel W Maas, Executive Staff Officer, Professional Development

Re Online Convention Attendance Expectations

Teachers' conventions are two days per year, coordinated by the Association as per the Education Act (2020), where teachers use their professional autonomy in making decisions about their professional development. With conventions going online for 2021, several questions have been raised regarding convention attendance. While the answers to these questions can be very complex and nuanced, the Association has created principles for participating in online conventions. These principles will be shared in a news article in the upcoming ATA News, and are also posted to the Convention Attendance Expectations for Online Conventions page on the Association website <http://ataconventions.ca>. Convention boards who may wish to reference the contents of this page on their own convention websites are welcome to do so.

Online Conventions 2021

Teachers' conventions will be online in 2021. Convention boards around the province are working extremely hard to plan the outstanding professional development experiences you have come to expect, and while your convention experience will no doubt be different this school year, the principles underlying teachers' conventions remain the same.

- **Safety**—As we deal with the COVID-19 worldwide pandemic, your health and safety continue to be of paramount importance to your Association. As you make decisions about your convention participation, we urge you to heed the advice and practices of health officials to protect yourselves. We look forward to returning to in-person teachers' conventions when it is safe to do so, however, take care not to put your health at risk as you participate this year.
- **Participation**—Your two days of self-directed professional development at teachers' convention remain the same, and your professional and contractual obligations to attend for these two days continue unaffected. Convention boards are planning outstanding programs with top-notch keynote presenters and relevant concurrent breakout sessions. Most sessions will either be offered live using Zoom conferencing software or as pre-recorded on-demand sessions. You will have opportunities leading up to your convention to ensure that you can connect to these sessions. As always, if you wish permission to attend an alternate professional development experience taking place at the same time as your convention, or if you wish permission to attend an alternate convention, please apply at <http://ata.smapply.ca>.

. . . continued

- Learning—Your convention boards are excited to offer you numerous online keynote and concurrent breakout sessions that align with the Teaching Quality Standard and Leadership Quality Standard. This programming along with networking opportunities and online exhibitors is intended to help you meet the goals of your professional growth plans and develop required competencies. The Association advises members to participate from home to retain professional autonomy in making professional development choices for your convention experience. With many live sessions being recorded for viewing throughout the convention and large capacity Zoom sessions, you will have greater flexibility to access the sessions you need when you need them.

Online Convention FAQ

Q: With Teachers' Conventions being virtual for 2021, am I required to go into school on those days?

A: No. The two days for teachers' convention are listed in the Education Act under s205(1) as "2 days on which a teachers' convention authorized by the Alberta Teachers' Association is held". These are days that are under the control of the Association. Teachers are encouraged to attend convention from home or from a location where stable internet connections exist. Teachers are also encouraged to download any convention material in advance to minimize bandwidth requirements during convention. While some employers may allow you to use the school for convention, that is up to you to decide. (2020 12 09)

We advise members with specific questions pertaining to collective agreement clauses related to teachers' conventions or convention attendance recommendations to please contact a duty officer in Teacher Employment Services by calling Barnett House toll free at 1-800-232-7208.

For further questions related to online teachers' conventions in 2021, please contact Danny Maas at Daniel.Maas@ata.ab.ca.

DWM/jcg/clg

cc Convention Association Presidents
Provincial Executive Council Liaisons
Executive Staff Officers, Professional Development