

Spring 2021 Volume 3, Number 2

# CSL

## Magazine



The Alberta Teachers' Association



Council for  
School Leadership

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# CSL Magazine

The Journal of the Council for School Leadership  
of the Alberta Teachers' Association

Welcome to the spring 2021 issue  
of the *CSL Magazine*.



As we approach the end of the school year, it is time to reflect on the year that was, evaluate the positives and negatives, and plan for the future. We have lived a year unlike any other—for multiple reasons. I have attended many of the professional learning sessions offered by CSL that we talk about in this issue. This learning has helped me to navigate these times as a school leader with a better perspective and with new strategies to support learning. As I look back, I see the positive impact that continued professional learning has had during the pandemic. We hope that the information presented in the following pages help you serve the students, staff and communities that you work with as well.

**Corey Haley, Editor**



The Alberta  
Teachers' Association



Council for  
School Leadership

## Council for School Leadership

**As an Alberta school principal,** assistant principal or central office teacher, you are encouraged to select the Council for School Leadership as your automatically renewing specialist council. If you are not already a member of the Council for School Leadership please take a moment—today—to follow this link: [www.surveymonkey.com/r/joincsl](http://www.surveymonkey.com/r/joincsl). *If you have colleagues who are school leaders or aspiring school leaders and who have not yet become members of the Council for School Leadership, please share this information with them and have them follow the steps to join this school leadership specialist council.* It is custom made for school leaders and aspiring school leaders and for all those to whom the new Leadership Quality Standard applies (principals; assistant, associate and vice-principals; and school jurisdiction leaders including central office teachers such as assistant superintendents, consultants and other certificated teachers).



*Five things that leaders can do to make a difference for students:*

- 1. Leading teacher learning and development*
- 2. Establishing goals and expectations*
- 3. Ensuring quality teaching through monitoring and feedback*
- 4. Resourcing strategically*
- 5. Ensuring a safe and orderly environment*

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*—Steve Munby*

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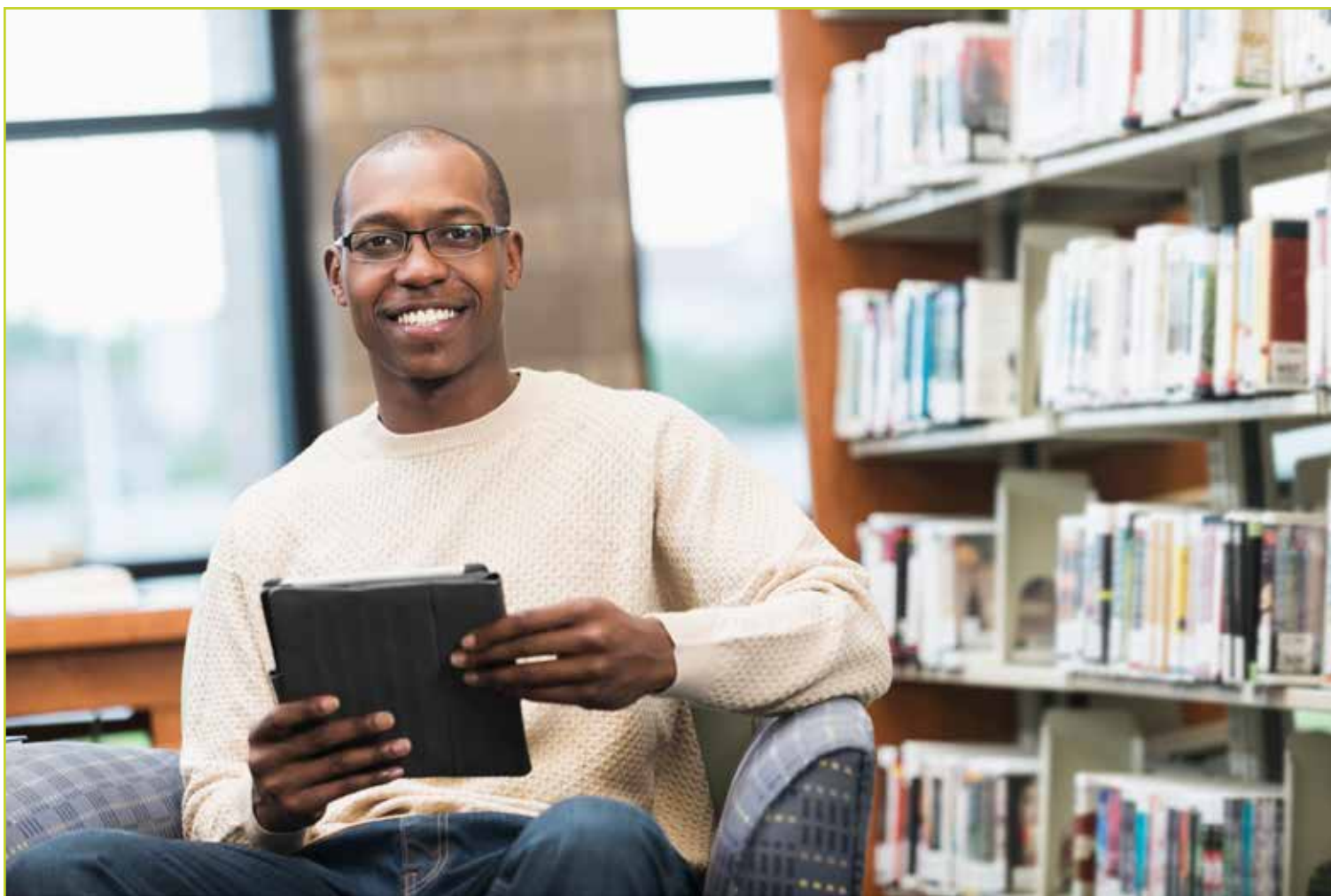
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# Professional Learning Opportunities and News

To obtain information about upcoming professional learning events and programs for school leaders and central office teachers and leaders, you need only remember [www.uLead.ca](http://www.uLead.ca) to access up-to-date news about school leadership in Alberta, provincial and regional professional learning events, and the uLead conference that takes place every year.

The call for proposals for uLead 2022 is open and the next round of presenters will be selected in February. Hundreds of delegates from around the world have already registered for this made-in-Alberta event. Please visit [uLead.ca](http://uLead.ca) on a regular basis—the events and news will change frequently.



# Inspiration for Leadership



Mark Sylvestre, President  
Council for School Leadership

Wow. In recent months, I participated, as have so many of you, in a virtual teachers' convention for the first time and also in the online webinars that were part of the CSL's Communities of Practice series. I want to take this moment to thank all the folks who found these great speakers, homegrown and from outside of the area, and made it possible for them to reach into our homes and make connections with the work we do, the support we need and the knowledge to inspire and amaze us to improve our craft. The executive team at the Council for School Leadership, including our two ATA staff officers and our volunteer school leaders, plays a pivotal role in seeking great presenters and contributors and sharing potential speakers with our members.

So, I wanted to run down that rabbit hole a bit. As educational leaders, where do you find your inspiration? I've been very fortunate to have attended uLead—The Summit of Educational Leadership for many years and have had the opportunity to hear some great speakers. I love following them on Twitter or other social media and checking out who *they* follow and admire. It adds up to quite a list, but it makes for excellent research and interesting views. I love the idea of opening vistas of new learning, seeing through someone else's eyes and viewpoints. Innovation is something that I see often among my principal colleagues across the province. From leaders sharing through a community of practice, to someone sharing their e-mail with others to talk about something they are doing that is working well at their school, there is definitely a feeling of collaboration and willingness to share with others that seems to be ingrained in the leadership mindset. I often find

myself sharing that at the heart of the work we do as leaders is encouraging others to take on this role. We see them in our schools and each of our classrooms: teachers, learning coaches, educational assistants, custodians who step up to make a difference in a child's life, the administrative assistant who takes a special moment with a child who has been hurt or who came in late and who just needs a little TLC to get his or her day back on track. Leaders!

I had a leader who tapped me on the shoulder relatively early in my teaching career and asked me if I ever thought of getting into school leadership. He saw something that I didn't at the time, but I later came to realize that school leadership was something I was thinking of pursuing. Don't forget to share with your colleagues when you see them showing their leadership colours. You never know what you might be encouraging and supporting in someone who can make a big difference in the grand scheme of things. Sitting down and chatting with the people in your schools and having a conversation about where they see themselves in the leadership journey is a great way to seed the garden and maybe give someone a little push to pursue something they might not be thinking about at that moment.

I think the future is really looking quite bright as we see Alberta's Council for School Leadership members reaching out to hone their craft, look for new voices and ideas, and dream of what their students and staff can envision as they share their talents and gifts. Thank you to each and every leader who takes a moment to encourage a future leader in the making. You make a big difference!



# Empowering Women for the School Leadership Journey—A CSL Community of Practice

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Kimberlee Carson

As part of its ongoing Empowering Women for the School Leadership Journey Community of Practice, the Council for School Leadership was delighted to offer a webinar series with Barbara Watterston, coauthor, with Jane Kise, of *Step In, Step Up: Empowering Women for the School Leadership Journey*.<sup>1</sup> Through the series, Watterston shared her passion and research related to how we might best support women as they engage in the journey to school leadership.

The two sessions introduced participants to the tenets of the book and inspired them to consider their own professional experiences. Grounded in the

power of women supporting and encouraging women on the leadership journey, Watterston captured the importance of reflection and thoughtful discourse. The virtual format made the sessions accessible to all, and the wisdom in the room contributed to the webinar's success. Discussion opportunities were embedded in the presentation and provided insights for novice and veteran educational leaders alike. Sharing personal narratives, unravelling similarities and differences across contexts, engaging in authentic dialogue and gathering women across the province made it a rich experience.



Watterston believes that understanding our *why* deepens leadership and creates a vision to influence and positively influence student learning. Understanding why we choose to be in leadership roles is vital to our focus and effectiveness. There are times, however, when barriers prevent us from achieving our vision.

The authors noted that women in leadership encounter barriers of gender expectations, barriers created by women themselves and barriers from a lack of self-care and sustainability. Gender expectations such as unconscious bias in recruitment, promotions, staff treatment and performance appraisals were verified in their research. Personal barriers to career advancement were linked to traditional roles. Women customarily take the lead for raising children, caring for aging parents and managing the details of running a household. Putting the needs of others before career aspirations creates a significant and societally acceptable barrier. When leadership opportunities are presented, women often hesitate to apply if they feel they do not possess all of the skills outlined in the employment posting. Conversely, men apply for roles even when they do not check off all the boxes. To address these barriers, Watterston reinforced the message that leadership development is a collective responsibility. It is imperative that all levels of educational systems provide conditions for growth and development across gender lines.

Participants were encouraged to explore ways to reflect on Watterston's messages and apply them to their personal and professional contexts. In their book, the authors suggest three different reflective practices to apply while engaging in the learning:

- Participants who purchased the book could commit to a twelve-week journey by reading each chapter and personally responding to the corresponding questions.
- Building a community of practice was encouraged for participants who wanted to invite other leaders or aspiring leaders to discuss guiding questions and share their reflections and personal experiences related to the topics presented.

- The third suggestion was to journal experiences and connect to the topics presented to seek clarity and meaning for individual contexts. Every leadership journey is as unique as the individual and their experiences.

As with all recent uLead conferences, there will be a full-day preconference workshop on "Empowering Women for the School Leadership Journey," and we are very fortunate to have Barbara Watterston as a keynote at uLead 2022. As we plan for uLead 2022 —The Summit of Educational Leadership, the Council for School Leadership has sent out a call for presentation proposals. If you are willing to share your experiences related to this community of practice, you are encouraged to forward your presentation proposals to [tinyurl.com/PRESENT-AT-ULEAD22](https://tinyurl.com/PRESENT-AT-ULEAD22). Sharing our personal narratives reinforces the power of the profession and the value of supporting and engaging women in leadership. As educators, we need to continue to support and encourage women to embrace leadership opportunities. "Women are underrepresented in educational leadership positions, and the negative connotations sometimes associated with women holding power roles can discourage them from becoming leaders" (Kise and Watterston, 2019).

Take the next brave and vulnerable step and share your community of practice experiences at uLead2022, April 10–13, 2022 at the Banff Springs Hotel, Banff, Alberta.

Please consider joining the CSL's Empowering Women for the School Leadership Journey community of practice and contributing to a provincewide leadership conversation to share how you are working to positively influence your school and community.

Please visit [uLead.ca](https://ulead.ca) to connect with and join the Empowering Women for the School Leadership Journey community of practice—we plan to host a range of activities in the new school year leading up to our preconference at uLead 2022—The Summit of Educational Leadership.

*Kimberlee Carson is treasurer of the Council for School Leadership.*

#### Note

i. Kise, J A G, and B K Watterston. 2019. *Step In, Step Up: Empowering Women for the School Leadership Journey*. Bloomington, Ind: *Solution Tree*.



# How Can We Support Overloaded Teachers to Enhance Their Expertise?

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Simon Breakspear and Jeff Johnson

Since 2013, the Council for School Leadership (CSL) of the Alberta Teachers' Association has been working with Simon Breakspear to provide thousands of Alberta teachers, in both classroom teaching roles and roles of school leadership, with high-quality professional learning opportunities centred on agile leadership and an understanding of how practices like teaching sprints can support student learning through enhancing teacher expertise.

During this pandemic year, the CSL has engaged 526 members in a year-long community of practice focused on teaching sprints as a way for school leadership teams to support overloaded teachers to enhance their expertise. The participants in the CSL Teaching Sprints community of practice have enjoyed two three-hour webinars with Simon Breakspear and have as their focus a year-long experience of working with their school leadership teams to build

the practice of teaching sprints into the routines of their schools.

Rigorous, sustained and job-embedded professional learning for teachers is critical; the research is clear that a rise in student outcomes is not possible without an investment in our teachers. But on the ground, enhancing teacher practice is hard. School terms move at a frenetic pace, life at the chalkface can be unpredictable, and teachers often report feeling overloaded. In this context, it's difficult for teachers to prioritize getting better at the job when they're so busy just trying to *do* the job. This has been especially true during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Over years of working with thousands of teachers and leaders, a few recurring questions began to consume our thinking: How can we support teachers to improve practice in a way that is both robust and rewarding over the long term? Rigorous and manageable? Meaningful for actual classroom practice and informed by the best educational research?

Designed hand in hand with teachers from across Alberta and New South Wales, Australia, Teaching Sprints is our collective answer to these questions. It's an improvement process all educators can use to get better at what they do best. At the core, sprints are about developing evidence-informed teaching strategies that can support effective student learning.

## The Power of a Sprint

The concept of a *sprint* originated in the technology sector and is used in a broad range of organizations around the world. Thankfully, running a sprint in this context involves no physical exercise. Rather, we use the term to describe engagement in highly focused improvement work within a tightly framed period of time. While the idea of a sprint might be new in the context of teacher professional learning, we think it provides a helpful shared language for describing short, sharp bursts of practice improvement work.

## The Collective Impact of Incremental Gains

Teaching Sprints embraces the notion of *massive incremental gains*, whereby seemingly modest improvement goals become the focus for growth. Applied to teacher learning, this way of working supports teachers to work on truly modest shifts to practice; when sequenced thoughtfully, small evidence-informed changes can add up to significant improvement over time.

## Drawing on the Best Evidence

Because time for professional learning in schools is so limited, Teaching Sprints promotes a laser-like focus on only those practices that are supported by the best available evidence from the field. Over short stretches of intense improvement work (called sprints), evidence-based practices—the best bets for enhancing student learning—are prioritized.

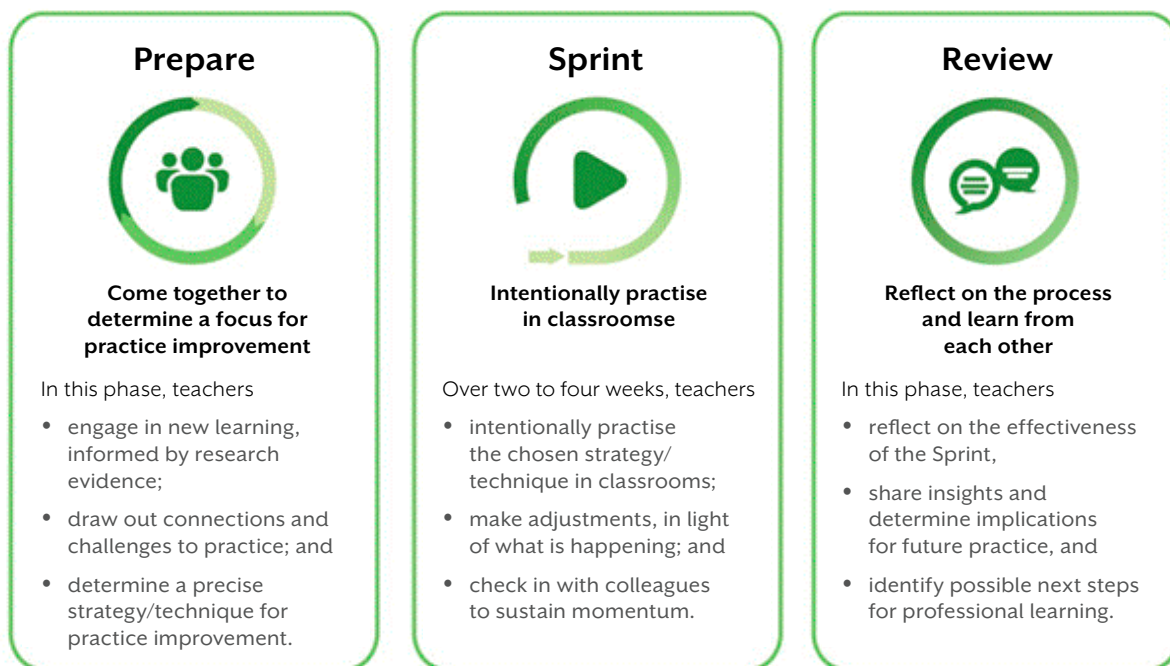
## Teaching Sprints at a Glance

The teaching Sprints process is easy to remember and simple to use. It involves teachers working in small teams, and comprises three discrete phases.

### Phase 1: Prepare

In the Prepare phase, your team determines which area of practice you want to improve. This involves engaging with the “best bets” from the evidence base and agreeing on intended practice improvements. The Prepare phase ends when all members of the team commit to practising a specific evidence-based strategy in the Sprint phase.

Figure 1. The Teaching Sprints Process



## Phase 2: Sprint

The Sprint phase is all about bridging theory to practice. Over two to four weeks, team members apply new learning in classrooms through intentional practice. Throughout the sprint, the team monitors the impact of new approaches, and teachers adapt the strategies based on impact. Supported by a simple protocol, the group meets for a quick, focused check-in to monitor progress and sustain momentum.

## Phase 3: Review

After two to four weeks in the Sprint phase, your team gathers again to close out the teaching sprint. During the Review phase, you reflect on learning as practitioners. The team discusses changes to practice, considers the impact evidence and decides how new learning will be transferred into future practice.

## A Focus on Practice for the Benefit of Students

Teaching Sprints is first and foremost about teachers and their learning—the deepening of their pedagogical knowledge, the expansion of their instructional repertoires and the enhancement of their expertise. While the focus of the process is enhancing the quality of teaching, the ultimate aim is to sustainably lift student learning. As teams of teachers routinely engage in short cycles of practice improvement, they build capacity to tackle more complex instructional challenges and meet the needs of diverse learners.

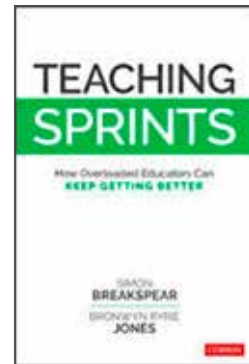
## Adapting the Process to your Context

Educators all over Alberta, in diverse educational settings, have used teaching sprints to drive practice

improvements as part of their involvement in the ATA agile learning community. Every term, teachers come together to learn from the research evidence and apply their learning intentionally in classrooms. Because Alberta schools are all different, there is no required way to implement sprints. Rather, educators should feel free to tweak, stretch, shrink and mould teaching sprints to fit their team, school or system.

Teaching Sprints has been designed with enough built-in wiggle room for you to make it your own, and we encourage you to do just that.

For more information, resources and tools, check out [teachingsprints.com](https://teachingsprints.com) or find the book, *Teaching Sprints: How Overloaded Educators Can Keep Getting Better*, at Corwin Press (<https://ca.corwin.com/en-gb/nam/teaching-sprints/book250338?page=1>).







# Teaching Sprints Case Study: St Peter the Apostle Catholic High School

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Terri Lynn Guimond and Jen Waring

Without a doubt, teachers are feeling the weight of the pandemic in their classrooms. The switch to a quarter system was a significant change for staff and students at St Peter the Apostle. Students felt stress about three-hour classes being too long with

so much content being thrown at them. Teachers experienced the exhaustion of the planning, marking and pace of a quarter system. We needed to be responsive to the reality in front of us. Exploring the Teaching Sprints process was a way for us to do so.

Since the beginning of the school year, teachers have worked in collaborative teams, engaged in research and developed expertise in two main areas: cognitive load and formative assessment. Every four weeks, small groups of teachers come together for professional learning about a specific strategy and create a manageable, bite-sized plan for implementation in the classroom. The quality of the conversations and the level of commitment by teachers are impressive. As we continue to engage more deeply in and make more observable the Teaching Sprints process, we know that disciplined, research-driven, collaborative, practice improvement-based dialogue will be the engine for responsive

teaching and improved student learning at St Peter the Apostle.

Please consider joining the CSL Teaching Sprints community of practice and contributing to a province-wide leadership conversation to share how you are using teaching sprints to positively influence your school and community. This community has more than 600 active members thus far. Visit [uLead.ca](http://uLead.ca) to connect with and join the CSL Teaching Sprints Community of Practice—we plan to hit the ground running in September.

*Terri Lynn Guimond and Jen Waring teach at St Peter the Apostle Catholic High School, in Spruce Grove, Alberta.*



# Let the Children Play

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Pasi Sahlberg

If you have children or grandchildren, I have a question for you: Do children today spend less time playing compared to when you were their age?

This can be a hard question to answer accurately. According to my experience, most people have a very clear response: Children today play less than their parents did in their childhood. Often much less.

Surveys carried out around the world support this notion. In Australia, we recently asked nearly 2,000 parents about their perceptions of children's play.

Almost 86 per cent of them agreed that children today spend less time playing compared to when they were young. Eighty per cent of adults thought that today, as a consequence, children are under pressure to grow up too quickly. Data from North America have led to similar conclusions.

Should this be a matter of great concern? you may wonder. The world has changed, the story goes, and children change with it. Many parents work longer hours than before, and children are expected to study harder as well. That's what is

needed if we want to succeed in life. Should we really be worried about the declining playtime?

If you ask a pediatrician, they are likely to say that we should be very much worried about our kids' shrinking playtime. As children's daily playtime has declined, their well-being and health overall have suffered. Already before the COVID-19 pandemic there were worrying signs of growing mental health issues among children. Lockdowns and social distancing have made things even worse for many children. Although we should not rush to announce that there is direct association between less play and mental health issues among children, any teacher would say that more play won't do any harm; indeed, it may prevent kids' well-being from declining.

Children's doctors in Canada and around the world are now campaigning for the new renaissance of play. For example, the American Academy of Pediatrics, which represents 70,000 children's medical doctors, says that play is integral to a child's education. "The importance of playtime for children cannot be overemphasized to parents, schools, and community organizations."<sup>1</sup> An hour of free outdoor play daily is doctor's order in raising healthy and happy children, they say.

Our own research suggests that parents also see absence of play as a potential risk factor for their children's development and learning. When asked about the value of play to children's well-being and development, an overwhelming 93 per cent acknowledged the benefits that regular, adequately organized play has on all children to grow up happy and learn well at school. Three-quarters of parents responded that teaching and learning in early years of primary school should be based more on learning through play than what schools do now.

Still, there are many who think that play is something that we do when the real work is completed. Play is often seen as leisure activity separate from productive learning at school. Our survey showed that more than half of parents reject the idea that children should have more play breaks at school every day. Play is OK but not necessarily at school, many of them seem to think. If this is true in Alberta as well, it means that teachers need to

work smarter with parents to educate them about the benefits of learning through play at school—not just for the sake of play being fun, but that play is a form of learning important life skills.

Emphasis on play most often exists in early childhood education and early years of primary school. However, many governments around the globe are now considering play-based learning as a more effective way to address students' well-being and active engagement at school. More time is being allocated for physical activity, outdoor learning and unstructured play, these being perhaps the most practical ways to fulfil these new priorities.

The new K–6 curriculum redesign underway in Alberta offers an excellent opportunity to strengthen the central role of play in children's lives and learning. It is paramount that in this new curriculum, play is seen as an important way to help all children to learn better but is also protected as a basic right of children. While the new draft curriculum stresses that children in kindergarten to Grade 6 will have the essential knowledge, civic virtues and outcomes to succeed in school and throughout life, it seems to be less specific on how play in and out of school could benefit learning and well-being in Alberta schools.

Other countries have been more specific on that issue. In Scotland, the National Position Statement on Outdoor Play and Learning states that "Playing and learning outdoors is essential for our children and young people to understand, value, enjoy and protect our natural world. It connects them to their environment, enhancing their appreciation and understanding of its physical properties and diversity."

The Finnish Parents' League, which is the national builder of cooperation between the home and the schools and preschools, advises parents about the important role of play in children's life: "Play inspires children and provides joy. At the same time, children also learn new skills. They process matters that are important to them through play." All primary and junior high school students in Finland have a 15-minute play break after each 45-minute class, which they spend in the schoolyard—rain or shine! If the Finns can do this, so should the Canadians!

It seems now that learning through play is becoming a new normal in postpandemic educational recovery. It is indeed the easiest and most economic way to help all children learn those all-important “21st-century skills” that all schools are required to focus on now. Communication, creativity, collaboration, empathy and complex problem-solving are just some of those competences that children develop when they actively engage in play with one another.

What we have learned about the ongoing pandemic is that social isolation and loneliness have decreased well-being, and increased depression and anxiety among children and youth. The Alberta Teachers’ Association has been actively mapping the impact of the COVID pandemic on schools and children during 2020. Not surprisingly, the pandemic has had a wide range of negative consequences on teachers and children. Most alarming are those findings that indicate the harm done by lockdowns and social isolation to children’s mental health.

Good news is that there are excellent pockets of good play practices in different parts of Alberta. Regular free outdoor play, new models of play-based

learning and turning entire schools into more playful places to teach and learn do already exist. ATA’s “Let the Children Play” webinar series has brought dozens of play activists this year to share their experiences and to learn more about the opportunities play can bring to be an effective relief for stress in building back better in normal social life.

Hard work is often considered a virtue in Canadian society. Now, we should adopt the principle “work hard, play harder” in and out of schools. Lessons from previous pandemics show that we need smart and well-coordinated solutions to potentially long-term emotional challenges in children. There is no better and fun response to that than children’s play.

*Pasi Sahlberg is a world-renowned educator and is currently professor of education policy at the University of New South Wales in Sydney, Australia. He will be a keynote speaker at the CSL’s 2021 Educational Leadership Academy.*

#### **Note**

I. Yogman, M. A. Garner, J. Hutchinson, K. Hirsh-Pasek and R. Michnick Golinkoff. 2018. “The Power of Play: A Pediatric Role in Enhancing Development in Young Children.” *Pediatrics* 142, no 3: e20182058.



# Let the Children Play: A Community of Practice and Professional Opportunity for Alberta Leaders

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Kristen Hodgins

This past fall, a menu of offerings provided professional learning activities for CSL members for the 2020/21 academic year. This included three exciting communities of practice, with opportunities to engage in webinars from thought leaders from around the globe, as well as conversations with colleagues across the province. Specifically, communities of practice were created around Simon Breakspear's work with Teaching Sprints; Barbara Watterston's ideas presented in the book *Step In, Step Up: Empowering Women for the School Leadership Journey*;<sup>1</sup> and Pasi Sahlberg's ideas from his book *Let the Children Play: How More Play Will Save Our Schools and Help Children Thrive*.<sup>2</sup> Sahlberg's book was the launching point for a conversation with Alberta school leaders about the significance of increased play in our schools.

In Sahlberg's first webinar, he stressed that play is not only beneficial, but it is also essential for improved physical health and learning. In addition, he outlined that executive functioning skills are developed through the risk taking, curiosity, imagination, collaboration, problem solving and creativity that come in the joy of play. And while there are many beneficial forms of play, free, unstructured play throughout the day has proven to be successful across the globe. Sahlberg encouraged his audience to make time for play, talk about the power of play and encourage learning through play. That is

what we are challenging Alberta school leaders to do as success stories are shared and a provincial community of practice begins.

As part of the webinar, several Alberta leaders shared vignettes of their successes in making play more prominent within their school settings. The motivation may have differed; however, the end result was common—to provide students and youth with a better opportunity to be successful in their learning. We heard stories about a teacher-leader using play in a schoolwide approach, starting the day in a more positive frame across the grades. We also heard about a division leader initiating play throughout the school day to ease trauma in a community where children had been adversely affected. In both cases, the purpose of play was intentional and a necessary tool for student success—both academically and emotionally.

Provincial initiatives were also discussed, providing a springboard for initiating play in our communities; Loose Parts play and Forest School initiatives were examples of highly engaging ways to promote outdoor, risky play with long-term positive results.

Sahlberg's second webinar in the series took place on April 14, 2021. He concluded his first session with the challenge: What are you doing to bring more play into children's lives? In formation of an Alberta school leader community of practice, we challenged participants to join our discussion and share their

experiences with the community of practice as we considered the following questions:

- How can we support one another? What areas of play interest you most? Loose parts? Anji play? Risky play? Forest school?
- What is working for you now? What intentional practices do you use to have children playing each day?
- What challenges/obstacles you are facing?
- Comments/considerations from Sahlberg's book *Let the Children Play: How More Play Will Save Our Schools and Help Children Thrive*. What does this mean for you in your community?

The research in Sahlberg's book is clear: play experiences are not only beneficial, but the right of every child. How are we as Alberta school leaders ensuring that we are providing an environment that is supportive of this solid research and proposed practice? How can we work together to improve our

leadership practices, influence our school culture in a positive way academically and emotionally, and ensure that we are supporting our children and youth by using play as a catalyst for success? What are we doing to make our children and youth successful in every way we can?

Please consider joining this CSL community of practice and contributing to a provincewide leadership conversation to share how you are using play to positively influence your school and community.

Please visit [uLead.ca](http://uLead.ca) to connect with and join the Let the Children Play community of practice—we plan to hit the ground running in September. [a]

*Kristen Hodgins is president-elect of the Council for School Leadership.*

#### Note

1. Kise, JAG, and BK Watterston. 2019. Step In, Step Up: Empowering Women for the School Leadership Journey. Bloomington, Ind: Solution Tree.

2. Sahlberg, P, and W Doyle. 2019. Let the Children Play: How More Play Will Save Our Schools and Help Children Thrive. New York: Oxford University Press.



# ATA Educational Leadership Academy 2021—“Leadership for Learning: Leading for Curriculum, Assessment, and What Matters for Alberta Students in a Post-COVID World”

An Invitation to Participate in the 2021 Educational Leadership Academy

In August of 2020, the Educational Leadership Academy brought together a broad array of thought leaders in education to engage in a discussion of “Building Back Better” once the COVID-19 pandemic ended. Little did we know that a year later, we would still be dealing with the effects of a global pandemic.

This year, from August 11–13, 2021, we will continue looking at things we have learned about school leadership as glimpses of light appear for the 2021/22 academic year. The event will bring together many exciting perspectives, from Alberta and around the world, to help delegates to prepare to lead organizational learning and renewal as we enter the 2021/22 academic year.

The Educational Leadership Academy will take place over three days: Wednesday, August 11 through Friday, August 13. Delegates will have the option of registering for just one of six different three-hour sessions or registering for all six sessions that will take place over the three days of the conference. Delegates will enjoy a variety of keynote presentations on everything from “New Imperatives for Success in School—The Leadership of Recovery” to presentations and discussion on how school leaders might best work together with teachers to bring curriculum and assessment to life for their students and colleagues. Participants will also have the opportunity to participate in presentations that will have as their focus a three-day conversation on best practices for curriculum and assessment around the world and how we might bring those practices into our work as school leaders here in Alberta.

A host of amazing keynote speakers have already been confirmed for the academy, including Sam Sellar, Manchester Metropolitan University; David Rutkowski, Indiana University; Anne Looney, DCU Institute of Education, Ireland; Rose Hipkins, New Zealand Research Council; Dennis Shirley, Boston College; Pasi Sahlberg, University of New South Wales; Armand Doucet, New Brunswick; and Beatriz Pont, OECD, Paris. Other world leaders will be added to the list in the weeks to come.

“Leadership for Learning” will be a conversation about how school leaders and their teams in Alberta might lead their school communities back into learning in September. Delegates will enjoy keynote presentations, panel discussions, and short talks featuring Alberta school division leaders, teachers from a range of school divisions and world renowned thinkers in education.

**What:** Six three-hour modules will be available for individual registration (note: registration opens in early August)

**When:** August 11–13 (Modules each day will be from 9 AM to 12 PM and from 1 PM to 4 PM)

**Who should attend:** Registration is open to all ATA members. The 2021 Educational Leadership Academy is a must-attend for anyone who has an interest in formal or informal school leadership. Teachers who aspire to a school leadership role, current learning leaders, assistant principals, principals and central office leaders will all find content that will be of interest.

**How** can I ensure I have an opportunity to register for one or more modules of the 2021 Educational Leadership Academy? To ensure that you receive information directly via e-mail with links for registration for the six modules of the 2021 Educational Leadership Academy, please go to [www.surveymonkey.com/r/ATA-ELA21](http://www.surveymonkey.com/r/ATA-ELA21) and share your expression of interest. You will then receive a message with links for each ELA module (or all of them) when registrations open.

We are pleased to advise that the University of Alberta is creating a companion course related to this year’s Educational Leadership Academy, and university credit

will be available for those who attend the Academy and register for the course. If you want more information about the course, please indicate your preference within this site: [www.surveymonkey.com/r/ATA-ELA21](http://www.surveymonkey.com/r/ATA-ELA21).

For more information, please contact [jeff.johnson@ata.ab.ca](mailto:jeff.johnson@ata.ab.ca).

## E-Exchange Opportunity

Educator Exchange Programs (EEP) provides a suite of international professional development opportunities for school leaders and teachers. Collaborating with another education system is an effective and enjoyable way to promote cultural understanding and to reflect upon and enhance practice. The exchange offers a unique opportunity for teachers to learn and to compare and contrast various aspects of education between systems.

### How do e-exchanges work?

- This is a one-on-one virtual exchange—you are paired with another teacher or school leader with similar educational interests.
- Matches can be within the province, within Canada or with our international partners in Spain, and may also be available in Germany, Iceland and Australia.
- Matches are made based on common educational interests.
- Projects/online exchange activities are for an approximate four to six weeks.
- Examples of possible projects: student wellness, global citizenship, technology and innovation in the classroom, instructional leadership, women in leadership, rural and remote schools, immigration, second language learning, STEM, inclusion.

### When does the e-exchange happen?

- The e-exchange happens throughout the school year, with the exact timing to be determined based on school calendars.

### How much does it cost?

- There is no cost; EEP will provide program support throughout the exchange process.

### Who is eligible?

- Fluency in the destination country language is not required, because the overseas teacher will be fluent in English.



- Teachers (K–12) must be Canadian citizens, have a permanent teaching certificate, have district approval and possess a minimum of five years of teaching experience.
- Applicants should demonstrate flexibility, adaptability, intercultural skills and a strong capacity to act as an ambassador for their school authority and the exchange program.
- Proficiency with web-based learning management systems is an asset.
- Proven communication skills, resourcefulness, initiative and community involvement are all desirable attributes.

For more information, contact Carolyn Freed, exchange liaison, Educator Exchange Programs, at [carolyn.freed@ata.ab.ca](mailto:carolyn.freed@ata.ab.ca) or [exchanges@ata.ab.ca](mailto:exchanges@ata.ab.ca).

# Podcasts for School Leaders

There are some great podcasts out there for Alberta's school leaders and aspiring school leaders, or anyone who wants to learn more about school leadership with a few minutes here and there for a listen. Most of them are available on Apple Podcasts, Spotify or wherever you find podcasts. Today we recommend several of them including the following:

## *uLead Podcast*

The Council for School Leadership of the Alberta Teachers' Association (CSL) is proud to present the *uLead Podcast*. This new way of getting information and professional learning is now available from iTunes, Spotify or wherever you get your podcasts.

We know that school leaders lead hectic lives and that accessing high-quality professional learning can often be difficult. Whether because of a lack of time or because of proximity issues to great sessions, we hope that this new podcast will help you access professional learning on your terms. In the podcast, we bring you sessions and interviews with professionals speaking on topics that are relevant to Alberta schools and might help you to build your expertise as a school leader.

Just released is a podcast featuring Pasi Sahlberg on the importance of play in education: *The Importance of Play with Dr. Pasi Sahlberg* (<https://podcasts.apple.com/ca/podcast/ulead-podcast/id1493862765?i=1000495536736>).

## *Scottish Educators Connect*

Continuing with the theme over several episodes of leadership development, the hosts are joined by Gillian Hamilton, strategic director of Education Scotland in developing leadership and professional learning. Here the three talk about values, leadership

journeys and Scottish education during the COVID-19 lockdown of 2020. To find out more, visit [www.scottisheducatorsconnect.com](http://www.scottisheducatorsconnect.com), or search @ScotEdConnect on Twitter.

To explore Education Scotland's professional learning online materials, visit <https://professionallearning.education.gov.scot>.

<https://podcasts.apple.com/ca/podcast/scottish-educators-connect/id1532751588?i=1000493188116>

## *Bastow Educational Leadership Podcast*

What are the big questions in education today, and what does leadership have to do with it? Subscribe to this podcast for conversations from Australia and around the world as education leaders discuss the work that drives and inspires them. This podcast explores a diverse range of views and perspectives through the lens of educational leadership and its impact on learners and communities.

<https://podcasts.apple.com/ca/podcast/bastow-educational-leadership-podcast/id1451212671>

## *Intersection Education Podcast*

The Intersection Education podcast speaks about teaching and learning to insiders and outsiders in the education field who are seeking to help improve schools in Alberta. It is hosted by Alberta principal Corey Haley. Search for *Intersection Education* wherever you access your podcast. The most recent episode features a conversation with Armand Doucet, who speaks about the importance of teachers during a pandemic and navigating change in education.

<https://podcasts.apple.com/ca/podcast/intersection-education-toward-better-teaching-learning/id1380397181?i=1000497106058>

## *The School Leadership Podcast*

The leaders of Britain's national principal organization interview the leading voices in education covering topics at the heart of leadership and learning. <https://podcasts.apple.com/gb/podcast/the-school-leadership-podcast/id1161467668>

## *Learning Edge*

Without a doubt, one of the most in-demand leaders in education in Alberta in recent years has been Simon Breakspear. His workshops as part of the ATA Agile Schools initiative have reached thousands of Alberta classroom teachers and school leaders. His keynote presentations at uLead have been praised throughout the world for their support for great school leadership as a foundation of the teaching profession,

enhancing teacher expertise by teachers and for teachers. The *Learning Edge* podcast allows you to tune in regularly as Simon engages thought leaders in school leadership worldwide in conversation about what matters most in building the next generation of school leaders. In a two-part recent episode, Simon speaks with Steve Munby (who will be a keynote presenter at uLead22 next April); the conversation is focused on Steve's past work as the creator and head of the world's first leadership institute, in England. The conversation also focuses on Steve's recent book, *Imperfect Leadership*, and on his work worldwide as a consultant to education systems on the key elements of school leadership. You will find *Learning Edge* at Apple Podcasts or wherever you find your podcasts.

<https://podcasts.apple.com/ca/podcast/conversations-with-simon/id1511465793>

## The Learning Exchange

Did the *Learning Edge* podcast pique your interest about Steve Munby? The following link is not a podcast, but it is a great resource on Steve Munby. Visit this website for a series of videos with Steve Munby on the subject of school leadership: <https://thelearningexchange.ca/projects/steve-munby-leading-in-a-complex-world/>. Steve Munby will be a keynote speaker at uLead 2021.

# A Great YouTube Presentation—Imperfect Leadership in Times of Crisis and Uncertainty

None of us were taught how to lead in a pandemic and it isn't on any leadership development program. We are in uncharted territory. There is no operating manual or set procedure. So how do we lead during unprecedented challenging times? How do we ensure that we take people with us when they may be feeling uncertain themselves? And, as the crisis gradually lessens, how do we help to create new, sustainable ways of working that are right for our new context? Building on his book, *Imperfect Leadership: A Book for Leaders Who Know They Don't Know It All* (Crown House Publications 2019), Steve Munby will argue that we need to celebrate and embrace the fact that we are imperfect leaders and that during challenging times this acknowledgment is even more crucial.

Steve Munby was the architect and leader of the world's first school leadership institute; he will keynote the upcoming uLead conference in April 2022.

*Imperfect Leadership in Times of Crisis and Uncertainty*, with Steve Munby: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=y5kW5-8YX\\_c&feature=youtu.be](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y5kW5-8YX_c&feature=youtu.be).

# uLead 2022—The Summit of Educational Leadership: Call for Proposals



Registrations for uLead 2022—The Summit of Educational Leadership are now open, with significant discounts for CSL members. You can also submit an expression of interest right now to present at uLead 2022, and share your story.

Do you have a school leadership story to share with colleagues from around the world? A unique opportunity awaits. Join educational leaders from around the world in the beautiful world heritage location of Banff, Alberta, at one of the world's foremost professional learning events for school-based leaders, district-level leaders, and provincial and state education leaders. Join us in April 2022, for a rare and historic dialogue with the world's leaders in

education in a setting that has been called the jewel of the Rockies. A wide array of world-class keynote speakers will animate the dialogue of those attending and there will be myriad opportunities during the conference for spouses and family members to explore one of the most pristine wilderness areas in the world. uLead 2022 is sponsored by the Council for School Leadership, a specialist council of the Alberta Teachers' Association. We are expecting over 1,000 principals, assistant principals, district leaders, education ministry representatives from around the world and national ministers of education to attend.

You are invited to submit an expression of interest to offer a presentation at uLead 2022, the Summit of Educational Leadership. Both the call for presenters and registrations for uLead are now open. We would love to have you share your Alberta leadership story with the world. If you would like to do so, visit [tinyurl.com/PRESENT-AT-ULEAD22](https://tinyurl.com/PRESENT-AT-ULEAD22) to submit your proposal.

uLead 2022 will also be the Canadian Association of Principals' national conference next year, so you are in for a truly pan-Canadian and global event.



## uLead Podcast

The Council for School Leadership of the Alberta Teachers' Association (CSL) is proud to release the uLead Podcast. This new way of getting information and professional learning is now available from iTunes, Spotify or wherever you get your podcasts.

We know that school leaders lead hectic lives and that accessing high-quality professional learning can often be difficult. Whether it be because of a lack of time or because of proximity issues to great sessions, we hope that this new podcast will help you access professional learning on your terms. In the podcast, we bring you sessions and interviews with professionals speaking on topics that are relevant to Alberta schools and might help you to build your expertise as a school leader.

**Subscribe today to the uLead Podcast (<https://tinyurl.com/CSL-LEARNING>) and let us know who you would like to hear from on the show. You can send suggestions and feedback to [corey.r.haley@gmail.com](mailto:corey.r.haley@gmail.com).**




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## Online professional development sessions

PD sessions are now live on our ATA  
PD Webinars 2020 Sched site!

To learn more in the areas of wellness, inclusion, Indigenous education, connecting with colleagues, parenting in a digital learning environment, and using technology in remote learning, sign up or login in today!

<https://atapdwebinars2020.sched.com>



# CSL Magazine

The Journal of the Council for School Leadership  
of the Alberta Teachers' Association

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