



ALBERTA TEACHERS  
OF ENGLISH AS  
A SECOND LANGUAGE

**Alberta Teachers of English as a Second Language  
Annual General Meeting  
Friday, October 18, 2024  
Online - River Valley Room  
4:00 – 5:00 PM**

**Minutes - Unapproved**

- 1. Call to order: 4:04**
- 2. Establishment of quorum: 73** (require 59 members -10% of October 4 Membership-591)
- 3. Approval of 2024 AGM Agenda**

Motion to approve the 2024 ATESL AGM Agenda as distributed.

Moved: Bonnie Nicholas

2<sup>nd</sup>: Wendy Illott

In favour: 53

Opposed:0

Abstain:4

- 4. Approval of 2023 AGM minutes**

Motion to approve the 2023 ATESL AGM Minutes as distributed.

Moved: Donna Seitz

2<sup>nd</sup>: Peter Myhre

In favour: 44

Opposed: 0

Abstain:9

Carried

- 5. Reports of Officers**  
President's Report  
Treasurer's Report
- 6. Reports of Committees**  
Calgary Local  
Central Alberta Local

Edmonton Local  
Bursary Committee  
Advocacy Committee  
TESL Canada  
Alberta Routes  
Communications Committee

**MOTION: TO APPROVE THE 2024 ATESL ANNUAL REPORTS AS Distributed for the AGM**

**MOVED: Peter Myhre**

**2ND: Wendy Ilott**

**In favour: 49**

**Opposed: 0**

**Abstain: 4**

**Carried**

**7. Presentation of Awards**

**Carolyn Dieleman Award - Literacy Centre of Expertise**

**Motions before the membership**

**8. Approval of the 2023 Audited Financial Statement**

MOTION TO ACCEPT THE 2023 AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENT AS PRESENTED TO THE MEMBERSHIP.

MOVED: Alana Johnson

2ND: Doug Vantour

IN FAVOUR: 51

Opposed: 0

Abstain:4

Carried

**9. Approval of Auditor**

MOTION: Move that ATESL contract MNP Chartered Accountants to audit the financial statements of the Association of Alberta Teachers of English as a Second Language for the year ending December 31, 2024.

Moved: Dora DiLullo Patten

2<sup>nd</sup>: Peggy Jubien

In favour: 51

Opposed:0

Abstain:0

Carried

**10. Membership fee increase**

Motion to approve a 2% membership fee increase beginning on January 1, 2025.

Moved: Bonnie Nicholas

2<sup>nd</sup>: Sara Gnida

In favour: 49

Opposed: 0

Abstain: 5

Carried

**11. Appointment of Local Co-chairs and Board Members at Large**

The Following ATESL Members have been approved by acclamation to their Local Chapters as Co-Chairs, or as Board members at large:

Edmonton Local- Pamela Ndumbi

Calgary Local - Jeffrey Robinson

Advocacy Chair - Hyeyung Park

**12. Ratification of President Elect**

Motion to ratify the 2023-2024 President-Elect, May Yeung who was appointed by the Board in July 2024 following Alisa Zavialova's resignation in May 2024.

Moved: Melinda Johnston

2<sup>nd</sup>: Michelle Barin

In favour: 52

Opposed: 0

Abstain:0

Carried

**13. Election of Officers for 2024-2025**

**Nominations closed on Monday, October 14, and we will not be taking any nominations from the floor.**

**ACTION:** There were no nominations for President Elect received by October 14. The ATESL Board will put out a call for 2024-2025 President Elect to our membership.

**Secretary**

**Motion to approve the nomination of JJ Pulleyblank as ATESL Secretary.**

Moved: Michelle Barin

2<sup>nd</sup>: Peter Myhre

In favour: 52

Opposed:0

Abstain:0

**Carried**

**Treasurer**

**Motion to approve the nomination of Doug Vantour as ATESL Treasurer.**

Moved: Wendy Ilott

2<sup>nd</sup>: Anne Marie Nesbitt

In favour: 52

Opposed:0

Abstain:0

**Carried**

**14. Acknowledgements of Retiring Board Members**

Edmonton Local Co-chair: Jasnoor Grewal - Kulaar

Calgary Local Co-chair: Jenifer Soto

Advocacy Chair: Justine Light

Communications Chair: Sarah Kopichanski

Treasurer: Wendy Ilott

Secretary : Tingyi Sun

Past President: Doug Vantour

**15. Passing of the gavel to May Yeung – ATESL President 2024-2025**

**16. Motion to adjourn: 4:56 PM**

**Draw Prizes:**

- ☐ \$25 Gift Card – Sandra Frostad
- ☐ \$25 Gift Card – Carolyn Dieleman
- ☐ \$25 Gift Card - Bonnie Dawson
- ☐ \$25 Gift Card - Shona Nichols
- ☐ \$50 Gift Card – Joycelyn Cheung
- ☐ \$50 Gift set – Thomas Jiry
- ☐ \$100 Gift Card – Beth Correia
- ☐ 2025 Conference Registration – Sheri Rhodes

## **Reports of Officers:**

### **ATESL President's Annual Report 2023-2024**

#### **1. Introduction**

This year the theme of our conference is "Building Bridges, Evolve, Adapt, and Thrive". In 2024 ATESL continued its commitment to supporting ESL educators and learners across Alberta. The theme shows our ongoing efforts to bridge language and cultural gaps, helping students navigate their new environments and form meaningful connections within their communities. It also reflects how we evolve as educators, especially in the face of challenges brought by the pandemic, adapting to online teaching and embracing new technologies like artificial intelligence to enhance learning experiences. As we move forward, ATESL's focus remains on thriving—both as educators and as a community—by continually evolving our practices and fostering growth, innovation, and connection.

ATESL made significant strides in 2024, particularly in the areas of advocacy, resource development, and professional collaboration. The Board's continued dedication to ethical governance, the successful completion of major projects, and the strengthening of interprovincial relationships have all contributed to ATESL's success this year. Moving forward, ATESL remains committed to supporting ESL educators and promoting excellence in English language teaching in Alberta.

#### **Acknowledgements**

We'd like to extend our heartfelt thanks to our amazing conference team led by Conference Managers; Indira Cevallos Novillo and Doug Vantour, our keynotes, our Elder who opened the conference with a prayer, featured speakers, exhibitors, presenters, planners, and volunteers who have taken part in the conference planning, and of course our ATESL Business Manager, Irene Wood, whose hard work and dedication help us to have a successful organization.

ATESL would like to recognize the following individuals for their leadership and contributions to making the conference such a success:

- Indira Cevallos Novillo and Doug Vantour – Conference Managers
- Maryna Siek – Scheduling and Program Chair and her team of program reviewers
- Haimei Wang – Publishers and Exhibitors Chair
- Elina Stop – Donations & Hospitality Chair
- Sarah Kopichanski – Publicity and Social Media Chair
- Maryna Siek - IT Manager
- Irene Wood – Registration Chair
- Joycelyn Cheung - Lead Moderator and her team of moderators and facilitators

## **Sponsorships**

ATESL would also like to thank the generous sponsors of our 2024 Conference for their support and financial contributions:

### **Platinum Level:**

- CCIS (Calgary Catholic Immigration Society)
- NorQuest College
- SAIT (Southern Alberta Institute of Technology)

### **Gold Level:**

- Cambridge University Press & Assessment
- Centre for Newcomers
- Columbia College
- University of Alberta - English Language School
- University of Calgary - Continuing Education

### **Bronze Level:**

- Assist Community Services Centre
- ScoreGuides
- The Immigrant Education Society (TIES)

## **2. Conference and Events**

### **Conference Format and Rates**

In an effort to remain fiscally responsible and considering some of our members may experience financial hardship, the ATESL Board made the decision to hold the conference online this year, with the hope that we may be able to alternate between online and in-person events in the future. The online format allows us to keep registration rates low and saves many members the travel and accommodation expenses they would have to incur, were this an in-person event. Another great advantage of hosting the conference online is that all presentations will be recorded and made available to all attendees for six months following the conference.

### **Let's Talk About Series**

These are incredible PD and communities of practice sessions that have been coordinated by Donna Clarke and Jeremy Wilson from The Immigrant Education Society (TIES) Literacy Centre of Expertise. They hosted 7 sessions since last year's AGM - November, February, April, May, June, September, and October. A very special thank you to Donna and Jeremy for all of their hard work and coordination of these events. All of our members are invited to attend.

## **Local Chapter Summaries**

The locals resiliently continue to provide an outstanding number of Professional Development (PD) opportunities to members through virtual sessions and in-person workshops. A heartfelt thank you to the local chairs for their hard work and commitment. I encourage you to read their reports so you can learn more about the professional opportunities they provided and also encourage you to attend the sessions. Several chapters coordinated and offered online sessions this year, which allowed members from across the province to participate.

In 2024, Calgary Local had a successful year with four PD sessions delivered via Zoom, alongside a Spring Social event

The Central chapter hosted three unique workshops that were met with enthusiasm and high attendance.

The Edmonton chapter met 8 times this past year. They had 7 PDs and one social gathering. The PDs were offered in different formats: online, others hybrid and in-person.

## **3. Financial Overview**

### **Proposed Annual Membership Fee Increase**

As we continue to grow as an organization, there is an ongoing need to be transparent and have scheduled fee increases for membership. The cost of doing business continues to increase, and it is unfair to have significant fee increases once every 4 or 5 years. The purpose of this initiative is to have a steady increase in membership fees on an annual basis, as opposed to increasing membership fees at unknown intervals.

The Board consulted with the membership and has developed a long term plan for an annual membership fee increase, to be ratified on a yearly basis. The Board is proposing a 2% fee increase on January 1st 2025. The Board has also recommended that there be a standing motion at every future AGM regarding membership fee review for approval every year. Our treasurer will present and explain this plan and we will bring it to a vote.

### **Financial Statement**

Our yearly audit was successful once again, and we are grateful for our auditors at Halpert Monsma for all their advice and feedback. ATESL ran a deficit of \$14,146 in 2023 even though the Board budgeted carefully, and the conference brought in some revenue. As mentioned at last year's AGM, ATESL needs to increase its membership fees marginally but consistently as one way to help us remain financially viable.

ATESL continues to explore alternate avenues for funding and the Board is committed to increasing annual revenue in order to keep the organization financially viable.

## **Bursary Committee**

The bursary committee consists of three individuals; Wendy Illott (Treasurer), Tingyi Sun (Secretary) and Doug Vantour (Past President). Bursaries are some of the benefits offered to ATESL members. The Board approved applications totalling \$1809.75 this year for four recipients.

Additionally there were bursaries provided to 7 speakers at the 2024 conference for the First Time Conference Presenter bursary at \$100 each (\$700).

## **4. Advocacy and Policy**

### **Wage Equity**

Last year, we drafted a letter to the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship. The purpose of this letter was to advocate for the employment practices throughout Alberta, specifically in the disparity in wages, work conditions and health benefits. This year, the letter was shared and co-signed by TESL Ontario, TESL Manitoba, TESL Saskatchewan and TESL Canada. The letter was sent to the IRCC Minister in March 2024 and we received a response in July. Our Advocacy Committee drafted a response which has been approved by the Board and shared at our interprovincial organizations' meeting. The draft was well received and will be shared with other organizations' Boards. We will wait to have the support of other organizations before we submit our response.

### **ATESL Advocacy Committee**

The Advocacy Committee is made up of a group of dedicated and devoted professionals, inspired to action from their dedication to quality education and commitment to further causes that support the well-being of ESL learners and teachers.

The Advocacy Committee focused on encouraging the membership to access and use the Indigenous section of the Best Practices document, which was being underutilized. The Advocacy Committee organized PD sessions, a social media campaign and email blasts. It also supported the drafting of the Board Code of Conduct and drafted the IRCC response letter. The ATESL Board would like to formally thank Justine Light for her leadership, guidance and hard work for the Advocacy Committee over this past year. We'd also like to thank committee members, Alisa Zavialova, Herly Cervera, Yuji Abe, Eman Ghanem, Melinda Johnston, and Livia Fajkusz for their participation this past year.

While we are saddened to see Justine move from this position, we are equally grateful to welcome Hyeyung Park to the position of Advocacy Chair. We are excited to see how this committee will continue to grow over the next year. A great way to support the Advocacy Committee is to consider volunteering for it. Contact [advocacy@atesl.ca](mailto:advocacy@atesl.ca) for more information.

## 5. Governance and Ethics

### Board Code of Conduct

ATESL developed a Code of Conduct for its Board members, drawing on documents from TESL Ontario, TESL Canada, and the CCLB. The draft was finalized, reviewed, and approved by the Board in April 2024, ensuring ethical leadership and accountability in the ATESL Board. You can find the Code of Conduct here: <https://www.atesl.ca/about/association-policies/>

### Strategic Plan

As we are entering the third year of the three-year plan for our strategic directions, we would like to communicate that we are remaining focused on the strategic plan and we did so by:

- continuing to provide professional development activities with topics requested by the membership.
- creating open access resources for teaching EDI and AR in CLB 3-4 (and beyond) for all EAL teachers to use
- delivering the Wage Equity Letter signed by other provincial organizations to IRCC and drafting a response.
- maintaining a broad and active social media presence
- continuing to engage our existing partners to continue the strategic agreements, such as with TESL Canada and Alberta Routes, as well as other provincial organizations

Should you wish to view the strategic plan in its entirety, please visit the ATESL website to view, <https://www.atesl.ca/about/atesl-documents/>.

## 6. Resource Development

### Multiculturalism and Anti-Racism Grant (MARG)

We completed the development of our Multicultural and Anti-Racism resources for CLB 3 and 4 levels. We would like to extend a warm thank you to our Project Coordinator Haimei Wang, Resource Developer Jeremy Wilson, and their amazing team of experts.

ATESL's "Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Anti-Racism" module was created for use in the CLB 3/4 classroom to complete real-world tasks around the three key areas of Indigenization, Anti-Racism, and 2SLGBTQIA+. The module features a printable PDF resource which includes skill-building activities, skill-using tasks, assessment tasks, and goal-setting and learning reflection activities. The content is further supported by interactive digital activities and audio / video recordings.

More detailed information on the resources developed and development stages below:

#### Resource development

Developed [EDI/Anti-racism resources for CLB 3/4](#) (including a resource package, learner worksheets, and assessment tasks)

The resources include:

- 3 foci--Indigenization, Anti-Racism, and 2SLGBTQIA+,
- 124 pages, 1 module plan, 23 skill building activities, 4 skill using tasks, 4 assessment tasks,
- 3 interactive activities, 5 videos and 2 audio recordings created, including an audio glossary of 55 words/expressions

### **1. Resource piloted, reviewed; focus groups held**

Conducted a pilot study with mostly positive feedback:

- 16 pilot participants and 7 reviewers
- 2 focus groups (total 9 participants)
- 15 post-surveys collected

### **2. Knowledge mobilization**

- 1 in-person presentation at 2023 ATESL Conference (30 participants),
- 2 online presentations conducted through ATESL Calgary and Edmonton Chapters (24 participants)
- An email campaign reached 600+ ATESL members, as well as affiliated provincial and national ESL/EAL associations

## **7. Grants and Proposals**

### **Anti-Racism Grant proposal**

In February 2024, ATESL submitted a proposal for an Anti-Racism Symposium under the Anti-Racism Grant of the Provincial government. Unfortunately, the grant application was not approved, but ATESL remains committed to addressing anti-racism in the ESL sector and will continue seeking funding for future initiatives.

## **8. Communications and Social Media**

### **Communications and Social Media Committee**

ATESL has continued to thrive on social media in 2024. We have maintained an active and engaging presence on platforms including Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn. Regular membership updates, event promotions, and job/volunteer opportunities were posted and shared on stories. This includes posts on PD sessions for all Alberta local chapters, ATESL updates/reminders, and ATESL project and bursary opportunities. All posts included thorough explanations and details under each visual promotion.

ATESL continues to create posts for various holidays and special dates. These posts have been a great success since launching in 2023.

A special thank you to Sarah Kopichanski for her amazing work as Communications Chair and to Zuzana Buchanan for her beautiful posts on holidays and special dates. Additionally, we want to extend a warm thank you to Sarah for handling the social media posts for the 2024 ATESL Conference.

## **9. Partnerships**

### **Alberta Routes**

ATESL's relationship with Alberta Routes continues to grow and we are devoted to continuing our extremely valuable partnership with NorQuest College to reach our members and learners in more remote areas of the province.

ATESL takes this opportunity to thank all members of the Alberta Routes program with NorQuest College, especially our Board member Rosalia dela Cruz who has done an amazing job keeping the Board informed of the activities and PD Alberta Routes has offered over the last year.

### **Inter-Provincial Partnerships**

ATESL continues to meet with provincial associations sharing issues such as upcoming initiatives, association updates, ideas, and information, as well as discussing joint efforts to advocate for wage equity. These interprovincial meetings provide a great opportunity for collaboration across provincial boundaries. Most recently, we have agreed on drafting a collective Memorandum of Understanding to capture the ways in which we collaborate and offer support to each other. A draft we composed for an MOU with BC TEAL is being used as a model. We look forward to continuing these efforts with all of the provincial organizations.

### **TESL Canada**

ATESL and TESL Canada's partnership continued very strong during the 2023-2024 year. ATESL membership automatically includes membership with TESL Canada, which offers a range of benefits such as access to bursaries, group benefit plans, professional development opportunities, and scholarships. You can find more details on membership benefits here: [Membership Benefits \(tesl.ca\)](https://www.tesl.ca/membership-benefits)

TESL Canada's AGM date has not been set yet, but members of the Board will attend when it is scheduled. TESL Canada sends an invite to all members and we encourage all ATESL members to attend as well, as your input is appreciated to help direct TESL Canada in the coming year.

A special thank you to Mehdi Soleimani for his amazing job representing ATESL and our members' interests at the TESL Canada Board. We are very grateful to have him represent our organization and continue to support our collaboration with TESL Canada for another year.

## **10. New Board Members**

We are thrilled to be welcoming the following new Board members whose appointment will happen during the AGM. We are also actively looking for members to take on the co-chair roles

in southern Alberta, an additional member in central Alberta to join Melinda Johnston, and a Communications Chair.

- Calgary: Jeffrey Robinson
- Edmonton: Pamela Ndumbi
- Advocacy: Hyeyung Park

## **11. Outgoing ATESL Board Members**

ATESL and I would like to express our most sincere gratitude to our outgoing ATESL Board members for their contributions throughout the last year. I personally would like to thank every one of you as my time as President wouldn't have been the same without you. I thank you all for your leadership, mentorship and commitment to our great field.

- Edmonton Local Co-chair- Jasnoor Grewal-Kulaar
- Calgary Local Co-chair - Jenifer Soto
- Advocacy Chair - Justine Light
- Communications - Sarah Kopichanski
- Treasurer - Wendy Ilott
- Secretary - Tingyi Sun
- Past President- Doug Vantour
- President Elect - Alisa Zavialova who had to step down in May because her work schedule and demands prevented her from staying on as President Elect. Her contributions and the perspective she brought to the Board are appreciated.

## **12. Conclusion**

I would like to close with a heartfelt expression of gratitude to all the members of the ATESL Executive Board. Your dedication and tireless efforts to continually improve the quality of our services and advocate for our members' interests are truly remarkable and deeply appreciated.

I would also like to extend my thanks to Doug Vantour, our Past President, for being a guiding force during my transition from President-Elect to President. You led the organization with a calm, steady hand and I truly admire your leadership and clear vision. Doug, your support and advice, have been instrumental in this journey and your great sense of humour is invaluable. I am thrilled that you are staying on the Board as Treasurer and hope to continue to learn from you.

A special heartfelt thank you to Irene Wood, our Business Manager, whose knowledge seems endless and whose support for everyone on the Board is invaluable. Irene, you support ATESL with your knowledge, commitment and your genuine care. We all owe you a great deal of thanks for everything you do. On a personal note, I want to express my sincere gratitude for being there for me every step of the way, for answering my thousand questions and clarifying things you had already explained with the most patient and caring attitude. ATESL has gifted me with amazing experiences, improved my knowledge of different areas of English teaching and learning and allowed me to meet many talented and inspiring people. However, what I

treasure the most with my involvement with the organization is having built a friendship with you. THANK YOU!

Finally, I want to acknowledge May Yeung, our incoming President. It was a great relief to know that May would be stepping into the role of President-Elect. Her intelligence, hard work, and dedication are undeniable, and I truly believe the organization will thrive under her leadership. I look forward to supporting May and finding out more about her initiatives, which she has already started, and her vision as she leads us into an exciting year ahead.

**Respectfully submitted by Sofia Elgueta, ATESL President**

## **2024 Treasurer Annual Report**

### **Our Financial Position**

ATESL's financial year (2023) was similar to years past. During the pandemic, ATESL held online conferences, and we were able to regain some ground from our deficit position. We were so glad to finally come together for an in-person conference in 2023. The reality of in-person conferences is that though they earn revenue, overall expenses are higher. Similar to years' past when we had in-person conferences, last year ATESL had a deficit of \$14,146. The fact that our conference is online this year should help our financial position, but we need to stay cautious.

### **Membership Fees**

Inflation is a difficult reality that has impacted so many of us. Over the years, ATESL has avoided increases in membership fees out of respect for our members' finances. This has resulted in sudden and more dramatic increases every few years when we fell too far behind. In June, we surveyed our membership to find out the optimal increase to balance our books while supporting our members. Eighty percent of members who participated in the survey were open to an increase. When adding their recommended amounts with the 20% of members who requested a zero increase, we found the average amount of increase recommended was 2%. Consequently, we have made a motion to increase our fees by 2% starting January 1, 2025. The Board also passed a motion to have a standing item on the agenda each year to review membership fees. In the future, we should be able to keep fee increases small because they will be reviewed annually.

| <b>Year</b> | <b>Fee Increase Rate</b> | <b>Membership Fee</b> |
|-------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|
| 2024        |                          | \$62.42               |
| 2025        | 2%                       | \$63.67               |

## Accounting Firm

In May, the accounting firm that has been auditing our books, Halpert Monsma, informed our Board that they will be merging with a larger firm, MNP. Despite this, the costs and the team performing the audit will not change. The Board took the opportunity to review other firms' fees and we could not see an advantage to switching firms at this time. Halpert Monsma completed the 2023 audit. In the future, MNP will review the books.

Finally, it has been an honour to serve as Treasurer of ATESL. We are in excellent hands with Irene as our Business Manager. She made the work easy! Thank you to the Board and membership for your community, warmth, and professionalism.

**Respectfully submitted by Wendy Ilott – ATESL Treasurer**

## Reports of Committees:

### **2024 ATESL Calgary Local Chapter Annual Report**

In 2024, Calgary Local had a successful year with four professional development (PD) sessions delivered via Zoom, alongside a Spring Social event. These online PD sessions covered a wide range of topics relevant to our teaching practices such as AI usage in lessons, incorporating Indigenous resources and Anti-Racism for LINC/EAL classrooms. We extend our sincere thanks to all the presenters for sharing their time and expertise with us. We also hosted an in-person Spring Social event in March, where members came together and networked.

|                  |                                                                                                                                      |
|------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>November</b>  | <b><i>Using AI to generate LINC resources Presented By Jonny Kalambay from Roshi</i></b>                                             |
| <b>March</b>     | <b>Spring Social Gathering at Pulcinella Restaurant</b>                                                                              |
| <b>April</b>     | <b><i>Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Anti-Racism: Resources for the LINC/EAL Classroom - By Jermey Wilson and Haimei Wang</i></b> |
| <b>May</b>       | <b><i>Cultural Connection: Incorporating Indigenous Resources in ESL/EAL Instruction - By Herly Cervera</i></b>                      |
| <b>September</b> | <b><i>Crafting Effective Prompts: Enhancing AI Communication in Higher Education By Dr. Nazari</i></b>                               |

We would also like to thank the local committee members for their time and commitment this past year:

Nura Mohamed and Jenifer Soto, Co-Chairs. A special thanks to Jenifer Soto, who has stepped down as Co-Chair, and a warm welcome to Jeffrey Robinson, who will be stepping into the role of Co-Chair in the new year.

As we move into 2025, our goal is to offer even more professional development (PD) sessions online to accommodate all members across the province.

We would also like to take a moment to sincerely thank our local members for their ongoing support, active participation, and thoughtful suggestions throughout the year.

We're excited to announce that we will be hosting an in-person December Social, and we look forward to seeing you all there!

**Respectfully submitted by Nura Mohamed, Calgary Local Co-chair**

## **2024 Central Alberta Local Chapter Annual Report**

This year, we embraced an invigorating theme for the Central Alberta ATESL Chapter:

"Reviving Our Chapter Together!" Our mission was clear: prevent the chapter from closing and breathe new life into our community through dynamic and engaging workshops.

In the past, attendance at our professional development events has been a concern, but it's time to shake things up with fresh ideas and exciting opportunities!

### **Reaching Out and Connecting**

We've made significant strides in connecting with both new and established organizations to show everyone that the Central Alberta ATESL Chapter is alive and kicking! I've reached out to a diverse group of volunteer teachers, schoolteachers, EAL tutors, and many of my global EAL connections to join us in our workshops. Together, we can create a vibrant community that supports one another.

### **A Strong Partnership with Alberta Routes**

Our learning partner, Alberta Routes, continues to be a beacon of support for our chapter. Their efforts in reaching smaller rural centers are invaluable, helping to sustain lifelong learning programs that keep adult literacy thriving in our region.

### **Addressing ESL Needs for Newcomers**

During my year in this role, I discovered a pressing need for ESL classes among newcomers, with many facing a wait of over six months for classes. I met three inspiring women who dedicate their time to teaching English literacy from the basement of a local business. These remarkable

ladies welcome around 70 eager learners daily into a warm, colorful classroom, providing not just education, but a sense of community.

I've encouraged these volunteers to take advantage of free training from Alberta Routes and the Canadian Language Benchmark's website. They are also warmly invited to participate in our professional development workshops and apply for membership, regardless of their teaching background.

### **Successful Workshops and Collaboration**

This year, we proudly hosted three unique workshops that were met with enthusiasm and high attendance. A heartfelt thank you to Sofia Elgueta, Lia dela Cruz, Mehdi Soleimani, Jasnoor Grewal-Kulaar, Indira Cevallos Novillo, Nura Mohamed, and Irene Wood! Your collaboration across Edmonton, Red Deer, and Calgary made these workshops a resounding success.

With such excellent participation from ATESL members and EAL professionals from other provinces, we've shown that when cities come together, we can achieve great things for our community!

### **Workshop Highlights**

1. Building Critical Thinking in English Language Learners  
Presented by Rosalia dela Cruz from Alberta Routes (March)
2. TESL Canada Certification Process  
Led by Dmitri Priven from Algonquin College (June) – A fantastic collaboration between ATESL Edmonton, ATESL Central Alberta, and TESL Canada, thanks to Mehdi Soleimani!
3. CHATGPT Professional Development Workshop  
Presented by Professor Mustafa Nasar from Vancouver (September) – A huge thank you to ATESL Edmonton, ATESL Central Alberta, ATESL Calgary, and our ATESL President, Sofia Elgueta, for making this session a success!

### **Looking Ahead**

I'm just getting started! The success of these workshops has energized us, and we're excited to announce that even more engaging events are on the horizon. The Central Alberta Chapter is back in action, ready to shine alongside our sister chapters and showcase the incredible offerings of ATESL.

Thank you for your support, and let's continue to grow and thrive together!

**Respectfully submitted by Melinda Johnston, Central Alberta Local Co-Chair**

## **2024 Edmonton Local Chapter Annual Report**

The Edmonton chapter met 8 times this past year.

| <b>Month</b>    | <b>Presenter</b>                           | <b>Session</b>                                                         | <b>Location</b>  |
|-----------------|--------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|
| <b>December</b> | <b>Edmonton Social</b>                     | <b>Social gathering</b>                                                | <b>In-person</b> |
| <b>January</b>  | <b>Dr. Leila Ranta</b>                     | <b>What Do ESL Teacher Need to Know About Teaching Grammar?</b>        | <b>Hybrid</b>    |
| <b>February</b> | <b>Rosalia Dela Cruz<br/>Alana Johnson</b> | <b>Integrating Anti-Racism Principles in EAL Teaching Practices</b>    | <b>Online</b>    |
| <b>March</b>    | <b>William Acton</b>                       | <b>All You Need is (Embodies) Rhythm: Pronunciation and Beyond!</b>    | <b>Online</b>    |
| <b>April</b>    | <b>Haimei Wang<br/>Jeremy Wilson</b>       | <b>ATESL's Resource: Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Anti-Racism</b> | <b>Online</b>    |
| <b>May</b>      | <b>Sara Gnida</b>                          | <b>Best Practices on Indigenization Workshop</b>                       | <b>In-person</b> |
| <b>June</b>     | <b>Dmitri Priven</b>                       | <b>TESL CANADA: Teacher Certification, Process &amp; Options</b>       | <b>Online</b>    |

|                  |                           |                                                                                           |               |
|------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|
| <b>September</b> | <b>Dr. Mostafa Nazaro</b> | <b>Crafting Effective Prompts:<br/>Enhancing AI Communication in<br/>Higher Education</b> | <b>Online</b> |
|------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|

### **Highlights and New Initiatives**

- On average, the online presentations had 14 attendees, while in-person sessions had an average of 7 attendees.
- Online professional development sessions tend to attract a larger and more diverse audience compared to face-to-face sessions. It is beneficial to offer these sessions in hybrid or fully online formats to maximize accessibility and engagement, rather than limiting them to in-person only.
- A couple of sessions have been successfully conducted in collaboration with other chapters, which worked very well. It is recommended to continue with this initiative, as it enhances the learning experience and broadens the audience reach.
- It is recommended to continue sending certificates online, as attendees often ask for them and appreciate receiving them.
- One member suggested planning lightning talks, allowing presenters who may not have a full 45-minute presentation to share their insight in a shorter format. This approach could involve selecting a topic and inviting multiple presenters to participate. Implementing this during this upcoming year would provide an opportunity to evaluate its effectiveness.

**Respectfully submitted by Indira Cevallos Novillo, Edmonton Local Co-Chair**

### **2024 Bursary Committee Annual Report**

The ATESL bursary for professional development is one of the many advantages of membership. The Bursary Committee consists of three ATESL board members: Doug Vantour (Past President), Wendy Illott (Treasurer), and Tingyi Sun (Secretary).

This year, four applications, all meeting the criteria, were received for the March and September deadlines. The Bursary Committee is pleased to have supported four members for their endeavours in TESL-related academic/professional conferences (i.e., American Association of Applied Linguistics Conference) and post-secondary degrees/coursework (i.e., Distance Education; Instructional Design and Technology; Understanding and Preventing Vicarious Trauma). A total of \$1809.75 was distributed upon committee recommendation and Board approval.

We are pleased to support ATESL members for their ongoing professional development. For bursary consideration, kindly refer to the eligibility criteria, note the bi-annual application dates, and complete the fillable application form at <https://www.atesl.ca/membership/bursaries/>.

**Respectfully submitted by Tingyi Sun, ATESL Secretary & Chair of the Bursary Committee**

## **2024 Advocacy Committee Annual Report**

The ATESL Advocacy Committee is comprised of dedicated professionals who champion causes supporting the well-being of ESL learners and teachers. Our commitment to quality education and professionalism drives our actions.

### **Committee Members:**

Chair: Justine Light

Members: Sofia Elgueta, Yuji Abe, Herly Cervera, Livia Fajkusz, Eman Ghanem, Melinda Johnston

### **Year in Review**

The Advocacy Committee convened multiple times throughout the year to discuss key priorities, outreach initiatives, and resource development aimed at enhancing member engagement and supporting educational practices within the EAL community.

### **Key Priorities and Actions**

1. Engagement with ATESL Best Practices Resources and Professional Development Workshops

#### **Objective:**

Increase utilization of underused resources related to Anti-racism, Indigenization, and 2SLGBTQIA+.

#### **Actions Taken:**

- Yuji Abe reached out to local chapter representatives to host workshops in May 2024, featuring presenters Herly Cervera and Sara Gnida. Herly conducted a virtual workshop hosted by Calgary (Nura), and Sara led an in-person workshop hosted by Edmonton (Indira).
- Social media outreach plans were developed alongside PBLA cycle materials.
- The Calgary session recording was published on Tutela.
- A draft proposal was created for members to submit Indigenous teaching materials for inclusion in Tutela, with a peer review process established. As of September 2024, no materials had been submitted.

## **2. Wage Equity Advocacy**

**Objective:** Address wage equity concerns among members.

**Actions Taken:**

- A letter advocating for wage equity was sent to IRCC and the Minister, incorporating feedback from TESL Canada.
- Continuous communication was maintained with members about the initiative's progress through email and social media.
- Following a reply received by Sofia Elgueta et al., the committee worked on a follow-up letter requesting further information from IRCC.

## **3. Membership Consultation and Outreach**

**Objective:** Ensure members have a voice and can easily connect with the Advocacy Committee.

**Actions Taken:**

- An advocacy contact form was developed on the ATESL website to facilitate communication regarding challenges faced by EAL professionals.
- As of September, one member had used the contact form.

## **4. Calls to Action for National Indigenous History Month**

**Objective:** Encourage ongoing commitment to Indigenization.

**Actions Taken:**

- A series of social media posts highlighting Best Practices related to Indigenization were shared in June 2024.

## **Acknowledgments**

Thank you to Sofia Elgueta for her leadership on the wage equity letter.

A special thank you to Herly Cervera and Sara Gnida for facilitating the professional development workshops, and to Indira Cevallos Novillo and Nura Mohamed for hosting them.

Thanks to committee members Justine Light, Yuji Abe, Herly Cervera, Livia Fajkusz, and Eman Ghanem for crafting the social media posts about Indigenization, and to Sarah Kopichanski for sharing them.

Finally, a big thank you to our committee chair, Justine Light. The committee has accomplished so much during this reporting period under her leadership.

**Respectfully Submitted by Yuji Abe, on behalf of the ATESL Advocacy Committee**

## **2024 TESL Canada Representative Annual Report**

ATESL membership automatically includes membership with TESL Canada, which offers a range of benefits such as access to bursaries, group benefit plans, professional development opportunities, and scholarships. You can find more details on membership benefits here:

[Membership Benefits \(tesl.ca\)](https://www.tesl.ca/membership-benefits)

TESL Canada also keeps members updated on the latest news within TESL communities across Canada through its newsletter. Another valuable resource is the TESL Canada Journal, which publishes peer-reviewed research articles on various topics in language teaching, learning, and assessment.

From April 2016 to April 2024, 123 ATESL members have become TESL Canada certified, with an average of 21 new certifications in the last two years. At ATESL's 2024 Conference, Building Bridges: Evolve, Adapt, and Thrive, TESL Canada representatives will be available to answer any questions about TESL Canada's services.

This year, as part of the partnership, TESL Canada hosted an exclusive webinar on June 12th for the Edmonton and Central Alberta Chapters to walk ATESL members through the certification process and its benefits. Additionally, TESL Canada co-signed and backed ATESL's Advocacy Wage Equity Letter, which was submitted to the IRCC to advocate for fair employment practices and professional standards for ESL/EAL and LINC instructors in Alberta.

**Respectfully submitted by Mehdi Soleimani, TESL Canada Representative**

## **2024 Alberta Routes Annual Report**

Alberta Routes continues to provide free professional development workshops to tutors and instructors, primarily to English as an Additional Language (EAL) providers within community-based adult learning programs, as well as some LINC and ESL programs in larger urban areas all across the province. EAL support for newcomers in many grassroots programs are facilitated by part-time staff or volunteer tutors and instructors who take advantage of a variety of training in the following general categories of topics:

- Teaching Strategies & Frameworks
- Tools and Resources
- Teaching Online
- Assessment
- Community Connections and Programming
- Inclusion and Diversity

Other services include online study groups, mentorship support for tutors, instructors, and program coordinators, classroom visits, and a library of online resources. A new resource, the *New EAL Practitioner Handbook*, was recently created to serve as a desktop reference for

general knowledge and procedures needed by EAL program coordinators who are new to the field.

In Spring of 2024, Alberta Routes also completed the creation of the following new workshops:

1. *Gender-Inclusive Learning Environments*
2. *Creating Accessible Learning Environments*
3. *Introduction to Teaching CLB 5 and CLB 6 Learners*
4. *Preparing Adult Learners for their Canadian Education Credential*

In 2024, in addition to presentations in the annual ATESL Conference (*Building Critical Thinking Skills, Integrating Anti-Racism in EAL Teaching Practice; Working with Trauma-Affected ELLs*) and the Literacy and Learning Symposium of the Community Learning Network - CLN (*Orientation to the CLB-Based Placement Tools*), Alberta Routes advisors also gave online presentations for the following:

- ATESL Edmonton Chapter (*Integrating Anti-Racism in EAL Teaching*)
- TIES Literacy Conference (*Using Realia with Literacy Learners*)

The current Team of Advisors are:

- Alana Johnson, Lead (Region 4, South)
- Rosalia dela Cruz (Region 3, Central)
- Amira Nanis (Regions 1 & 2, North-West-East)

A calendar of upcoming webinars and a map of the regions are available on the website [albertaroutes.norquest.ca](http://albertaroutes.norquest.ca).

**Respectfully submitted by Rosalia dela Cruz, Alberta Routes Representative**

## **2024 Communications Committee Annual Report**

ATESL has continued to thrive on social media in 2024. We have maintained an active and engaging presence on platforms including Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn. Regular membership updates, event promotions, and job/volunteer opportunities were posted and shared on stories. This includes posts on PD sessions for all Alberta local chapters, ATESL updates/reminders, and ATESL project and bursary opportunities. All posts included thorough explanations and details under each visual promotion.

ATESL continues to create posts for various holidays and special dates. These posts have been a great success since launching in 2023.

This June, the Communications Chair teamed up with the Advocacy Committee to run a social media campaign promoting National Indigenous History Month. A total of six posts were created. The aim of these posts were to promote ATESL's Best Practices, under the topic of Indigenization. The posts also raised awareness of various teaching resources and how to integrate these topics in the EAL classroom.

Canva continues to be utilized to create and schedule visually appealing promotional items. This year, the Communications Chair also served as the Social Media Chair for the ATESL 2024 Conference. This allowed consistent color pallets and styles to be used to create unison amongst posts.

We encourage our membership to connect with our social media platforms to stay informed with current events and opportunities. We also encourage members to connect with ATESL on LinkedIn and include any work or volunteer experience associated with ATESL.

ATESL looks forward to strengthening its social media presence by reaching a wider audience and fostering a sense of community among its current members.

**Respectfully submitted by Sarah Kopichanski, Communications Chair**