

Important Information for School Representatives

Alberta's class sizes are too big and lack the support required for successful inclusion.



MLAs need to hear about the learning conditions in your classes!

The Association has organized a coordinated MLA engagement activity that advocates for class size reductions and improved supports for inclusion and classroom complexity.



Please arrange to have your teachers take a few minutes to write a quick letter to their MLAs.

DIRECTIONS—Teachers should return their completed letters to you. Please collect those letters and bring them to your next

local council or CSR meeting. From there, your local president or other local official will arrange to have them sent to Barnett House in Edmonton, and we will mail them to their MLAs' offices.

If teachers know the name of their MLA, they should put it on the back of the letter. Teachers should write to the MLA for the area where they live, not the location of the school at which they teach. Alternatively, they can provide their postal code, and we will look up the MLA name. MLA names can be looked up at streetkey.elections.ab.ca.

Your activity will help ensure that public education remains a priority for our elected officials. Thank you for your support.

Helpful tips for teachers:

- Keep it factual and short.
- Tell your story. What are the barriers faced by you and your students?
- Try to be constructive: advocate for what you need, preferably without aggressive criticism.
- **Be mindful of professional code responsibilities—do not criticize colleagues or your employer.**
- Respect student privacy—keep complexity information general and avoid any information that could identify individual students.
- You do not need to identify the school or board where you work.

Principals and school board officials may have reservations about this activity.

Please share this information with them:

- This activity is intended to advocate for better funding and improved learning conditions for students in your school(s).
- The challenges you face in your school(s) are not unique. They are shared by schools and boards across the province.
- Teachers are being encouraged not to criticize their colleagues or their employer, but to advocate for improved conditions for students.



Crowded and complex classrooms

Alberta has a world-renowned public education system. Our teachers and other school staff work hard to provide outstanding educational opportunities.

Unfortunately, students and teachers are not provided with the best supports and, as a result, too many children are falling through the cracks.

OPTIMAL LEARNING HAPPENS when students and teachers have reasonable class sizes and when supports are available to assist students with special learning needs.

Class sizes are larger *now* than 14 years ago, when the government first agreed to tackle the problem.¹

Class Size



80% of K-3 classes are larger than the approved target.¹



65% of Albertans believe that class sizes are **too big**.²

82% of Albertans would support increased **funding to reduce class sizes**.²

Class Composition



When compared to classrooms elsewhere in the world, Alberta's classes are

- twice as likely to include a significant numbers of **students with special needs** and/or learning in a language that is not their mother tongue (ESL).



In rural areas, class sizes may be smaller, but classes often include students from multiple grades or courses learning **different programs of study in the same room at the same time**.

Support for Special Needs

50 school boards \$\$\$

incurred costs related to supporting special needs that **exceeded** the amount of funding they received—a **total \$119 million shortfall**. \$\$\$

Even so, teachers say that **many students are not receiving the support they need**. \$\$\$

6 in 10 Albertans

continue to express some level of concern about the amount of **in-class support for students with special needs or English language learners**.²



77% of Albertans would **support increased funding** to better address these learning needs.²

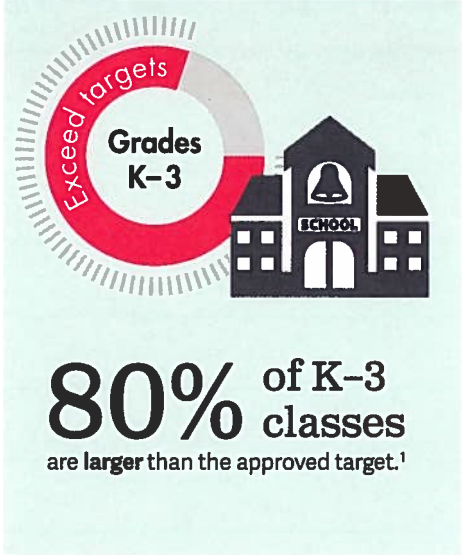
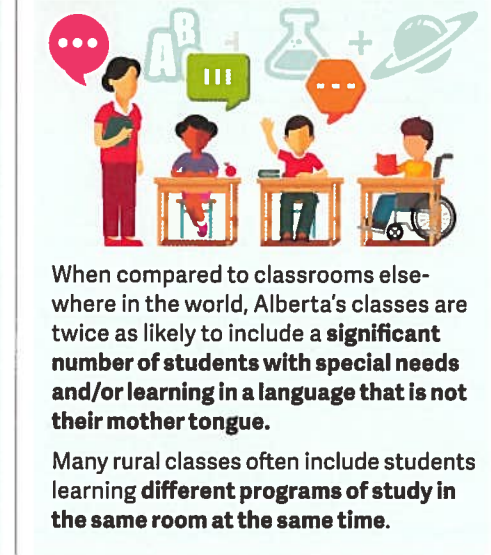

¹ <https://open.alberta.ca/opendata/class-size-by-school-year-jurisdiction-and-grade-alberta>

² Internal ATA public opinion polling conducted by Environics Research, February 2019.





Express your concerns on crowded and complex classrooms

Alberta has a world-renowned public education system. Our teachers and other school staff work hard to provide outstanding educational opportunities.

Unfortunately, students and teachers are not provided with the best supports and, as a result, too many children are falling through the cracks.

Class Size	Class Composition	Support for Special Needs
 <p>80% of K-3 classes are larger than the approved target.¹</p>	 <p>When compared to classrooms elsewhere in the world, Alberta's classes are twice as likely to include a significant number of students with special needs and/or learning in a language that is not their mother tongue.</p> <p>Many rural classes often include students learning different programs of study in the same room at the same time.</p>	<p>50 school boards </p> <p>incurred costs related to supporting special needs that exceeded the amount of funding they received—a total \$119 million shortfall.</p> <p>Even so, teachers say that many students are not receiving the support they need.</p>

¹<https://open.alberta.ca/opendata/class-size-by-school-year-jurisdiction-and-grade-alberta>

Directions	Tips
<ul style="list-style-type: none">  Compose a short note to your MLA telling them about the learning conditions in your classroom.  Take a photo of your letter and share it on social media, using the hashtag #MyClassSizes and #AbEd (optional).  Return the letter to your ATA school representative or other ATA local official.  We will send it to your MLA on your behalf. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keep it factual and short. Tell your story. What are the barriers faced by you and your students? Try to be constructive: advocate for what you need, preferably without aggressive criticism. <i>Be mindful of professional code responsibilities—do not criticize colleagues or your employer.</i> Respect student privacy—keep complexity information general and avoid any information that could identify individual students. You do not need to identify the school or board where you work.

Please fill in the following:

Name _____ Phone _____

Home Address _____ Postal Code _____

My MLA is _____ (Search for your MLA at streetkey.elections.ab.ca.)

Dear MLA,

My classroom concerns are ...

Handwriting lines for the first section of the letter.

Handwriting lines for the main body of the letter.

Sincerely, _____

My class size is ...

It should* be ...

17 GRADES K-3	23 GRADES 4-6	25 GRADES 7-9	27 GRADES 10-12
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*Recommended class size averages from Alberta's Commission on Learning (2003).

#MyClassSizeIs #AbEd

