



Mighty Peace Teachers' Convention Association

March 4 & 5, 2021

Virtual—but still together!

A message from the MPTCA President

"The most valuable resource that all teachers have is each other. Without collaboration we are limited to our own perspective. ~ Robert John Meehan.

This quote speaks volumes to me this year. We have had many new challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic and more than ever we need to rely on each other. Whether it is with getting a grasp of how to teach online or teaching new subjects; there are other teachers out there who are experts, so instead of feeling like we have to do this alone let's come together and collaborate.

Mighty Peace Teachers' Convention 2021 is going virtual this year! This brings about a completely new way of collaborating than what has been in previous years. Many have already jumped into online professional development and others are still learning to deal with technology daily. Our goal is to bridge these differences and still offer the best Convention.

Our program chair, along with her committee, is working hard to find amazing speakers/presenters who will give us that needed spark and excitement during this pandemic.

As a board, we are trying to work our way through the unknown. There are still so many questions that don't have answers. For example, what about internet for people with poor connection, or none at all, where do teachers have to be during the two days, how can we still give our teachers some sense of socializing or wellness? Everyone on the board is coming up with new ideas and possible solutions. If you have any questions or suggestions, please feel free to contact us and let us know what we can do.

Through all of this, remember the reason why you became a teacher. There are hard days and sometimes it feels like little reward. But you are making a difference to what could be one student or hundreds each day you show up. Continue to be safe and watch your health and believe we are doing our best to make MPTC 2021 memorable.

Jodie Dell
MPTC President

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Connect with MPTCA

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Facebook Group: [Mighty Peace Teachers' Convention](#)
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MEETING THE CHALLENGES OF A VIRTUAL CONVENTION

As you are aware, teachers' convention for 2021 is going to be completely online.

The ATA recommends that teachers participate from their homes to ensure they retain the same level of autonomy for their professional development decisions that they have at in-person teachers' conventions.

We know that this recommendation is going to cause some challenges for some of our members who do not have a reliable Internet connection from their home.

The MPTCA Board believes that individual locals are in the best position to receive feedback about these challenges from their members and to help their teachers find possible solutions.

To minimize some of these challenges the MPTCA is creating a program using Sched as the scheduling platform, that will be suited to a virtual environment.

There will be some changes and features, such as

- 45 minute sessions,
- longer breaks,
- a mix of pre-recorded and live sessions,
- pre-recorded sessions that can be downloaded ahead of time and viewed offline,
- opportunities for online networking and collaboration opportunities.

In addition to providing teachers with information about how to access the online sessions, the MPTCA will also be hosting some practice sessions in February so that teachers can test their technology and receive assistance from the ATA.

Some teachers have asked if they may go to their schools during Convention. We would suggest that teachers receive permission from their school boards to do this first.

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PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS: 2021 KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

As we prepare for a completely virtual Convention, we are faced with many challenges when it comes to creating an online program for our teachers. We will be offering a mix of live Zoom sessions and pre-recorded sessions. In the past, with Convention being held in two schools, seating in the most popular sessions has always been an issue. One of the great things about a virtual convention is we have no seating restrictions! Now you will be able to enjoy the sessions you want without the worry of having to arrive early to get a seat or having to rush from one building to another.

Some other features of an online Convention that we are working on: being able to offer access to some sessions for the two weeks after Convention, downloadable session materials and shorter sessions with more movement and wellness breaks so we don't spend two solid days in front of the computer.



Even though we are having a completely virtual convention this year, we still have some great keynote speakers. Thursday will be a full day of sessions by Dr. James Makokis and Anthony Johnson. They are the two-spirit couple who won the Amazing Race Canada last year. Dr. Makokis and Anthony Johnson will be speaking about a number of topics including the importance of culture, spirituality, health and wellness, suicide prevention and self-confidence, as they apply to Indigenous peoples.

On Friday, we start the day with Dr. Phil McRae ([@philmcrae](#)), from the ATA, who will share what his research has discovered about the current use of technology in education and how this will affect our students now and in the future.

We finish the 2021 Convention with an outstanding returning speaker, [Dr. Jody Carrington](#). By March, Dr. Carrington will have finished writing and publishing her second book - *Teachers These Days*. Dr. Carrington will get us pumped up to finish the school year the best way we can - by taking care of ourselves, as well as our students.

This has been a tough year for all of us and we are hoping with the program lineup this year, you will not only get some great ideas to bring back to the classroom but also learn some new ways to take care of yourself. We all know we cannot be effective for our students if we are not healthy.

Stay healthy and safe. See you all virtually at the Convention!



Melissa Putman
Program Chair

PROTOCOL FOR CONVENTION ATTENDANCE

1. All active members of the Alberta Teachers' Association under contract to public, separate, and Francophone school divisions have legal as well as professional obligations to attend the annual teachers' convention to which they are assigned.
2. Members are expected to consider their convention dates as a professional priority when planning for the school year and as an essential component of their ongoing professional development.
3. School divisions, Association subgroups, school staff and individual teachers shall not organize any activities on convention dates that conflict with members' obligations to attend their assigned convention. Any activities so scheduled may be contrary to the *Education Act*.
4. No person at the school or division level has the authority to direct a member to not attend their assigned convention. Requests from members regarding the use of negotiated leave provisions may be approved only by those personnel specified in the member's collective agreement. All other requests concerning convention attendance must be made to the Association.
5. Although worthy enterprises, the following are not sufficient reasons for requesting to be absent from convention:
 - School, division, or government meetings/events
 - Travel for school, division, or government meetings or events
 - Supervision of school field trips, activities or exchanges
 - Volunteering or other employment
 - Personal meetings, events, travel or recreation
 - Self-directed study, university classes, course work or research
 - Individual or group planning, marking, or administrative work
 - Diploma exam marking or provincial curriculum writing
6. In exceptional circumstances, members may contact the Association to request release from their convention attendance obligations or to seek permission to attend a convention other than the one to which they are assigned or to attend alternate PD during the dates of their assigned Convention. Requests will only be considered from those members who meet all eligibility criteria and application deadlines. Members must complete and submit an online application through the Association's website at least six weeks before the dates of their assigned convention (January 20th, 2021). Late requests may be considered in some cases. Applications will be reviewed and either approved or denied by the Association's convention lead, whose decision is final. The online application form can be accessed at <https://ATA.smapply.ca>.
7. Unless released from their convention attendance obligations, a charge of unprofessional conduct under the *Teaching Profession Act* and/or Association discipline bylaws may be lodged against any active member who fails to attend their assigned convention. School divisions have the right to deduct pay from any teacher who is absent from their assigned convention without proper authorization.
8. For the purposes of defining convention attendance in relation to negotiated assignable time limits, *Joint Interpretation Bulletin No. 1-2017* (August 25, 2017) between the Association and the Teacher's Employer Bargaining Association (TEBA) states, "Six (6) hours are allotted to each day of Teachers' Convention".
9. The ATA Code of Professional Conduct, Items 18 and 19, state:
 18. *The teacher acts in a manner which maintains the honour and dignity of the profession.*
 19. *The teacher does not engage in activities which adversely affect the quality of the teacher's professional service.*

The teachers' choice of convention attendance location must be considered with respect to maintaining the honour and dignity of the profession, and with respect to the effect on their professional service.