

# Mathematics Council NEWSLETTER

The Alberta Teachers' Association

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## President's Message

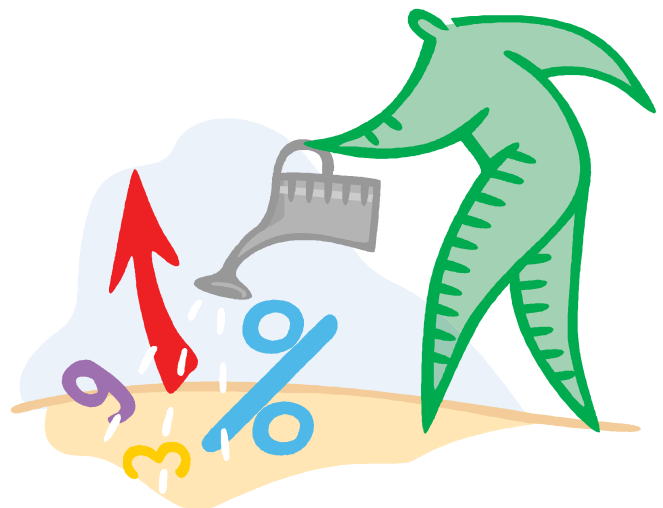
**F**or most people, January 1 signifies the beginning of a new year; but for those of us in education, September, or perhaps late August, marks a new year. We make our new year's resolutions in the form of professional growth plans, or sometimes personal goals that we don't share with anyone. We look forward to new students, new challenges, rewards and a chance to improve our practice. No matter how long we have taught, the excitement of the first day of school is always energizing and a little nerve-racking. Although it is sad to say goodbye to summer, school brings about our spring. We plant the seeds, tend and nourish our students, and watch them grow in so many different ways. As a gardener, there is nothing more satisfying than watching something grow from a seed to a gorgeous bloom. I feel the same way when a student who struggles in math finally gets a difficult concept or a student who hates math becomes excited over something mathematical.

As mathematics teachers, we are used to change and challenges. This year some of you are implementing the new Grade 2, 5 or 8 curriculum; others have taken a jump onto the optional implementation for Grade 3, 6 or 9; and still others are starting to plan for the new high school program. Embrace the new, find something that you are excited about and try to pass that excitement on to your students. Last year I had the pleasure of teaching the new Grade 7 curriculum and found that having the time to go deeper into topics was a great way to make connections for students. Although some of my students still struggled with certain concepts, there was less resistance to trying something new. I found that after teaching high school for so many years, I had to slow myself down

and, in doing so, discovered many new ways to approach the basics. This year I am excited to be teaching the new Grade 9 curriculum. Like many of you, I am eager to try some new projects that will inspire my students.

I look forward to seeing you at the math conference in October. In times of change, it is so important that we share new methodology, discuss our challenges and celebrate our successes. Collaborating with colleagues, sharing ideas and attending professional development opportunities will help us to nourish our students with the love of mathematics. Together we can grow a new garden where no one thinks of mathematics as the unwanted weed!

*Sharon Gach*



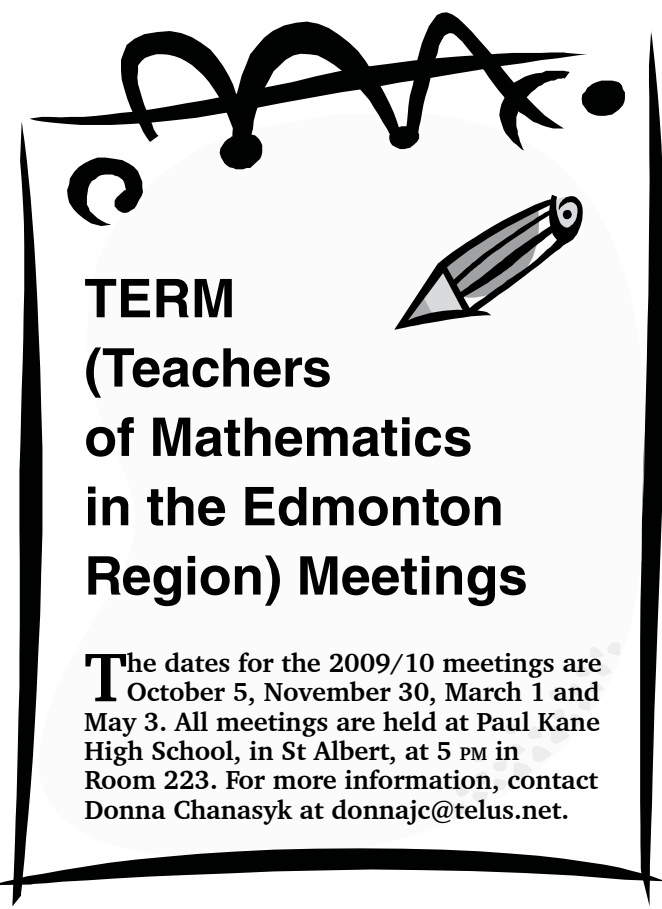
# From the Editor's Laptop

**W**ow! Where did the summer go? It is hard to believe a new year is just around the corner. Each year I experience a sense of anticipation as summer comes to an end and I head back into the classroom. It is a chance to try new things, especially if you are implementing the new curriculum. It is an opportunity to determine where you want to go with your teaching practice and what resources you will need to do so. It is the time when you lay out your professional growth plan and decide what professional development will help you meet your goals. I encourage you to seek out professional development opportunities; there are many opportunities to meet with colleagues and talk about mathematics education.

Last year I had a chance to participate in a professional development opportunity called the Canadian Mathematics Educators Forum (CMEF), held in May in Vancouver. It was a chance to meet with other people who have a stake in mathematics education, including teachers, administrators, university faculty, and people from ministries of education and the corporate sector, to discuss current issues in mathematics education. There were keynote speakers, forums and working groups. I took a lot away from one of the working groups, Rethinking Assessment. This working group asked tough questions and had deep conversation about assessment in the classroom. It amazed me that so many of my colleagues felt the same pressures and had the same concerns and questions as I did. While we may not have answered many of the questions we posed, it was a time of camaraderie and validation of what we do in the classroom each day. So, again, I encourage you to seek out the many professional development opportunities that are available to you, such as the MCATA conference in October, where you can confer with colleagues and discuss the issues of mathematics education today.

I wish you all a smooth start-up and a happy new year!

*Tancy Lazar*



## **TERM (Teachers of Mathematics in the Edmonton Region) Meetings**

**T**he dates for the 2009/10 meetings are October 5, November 30, March 1 and May 3. All meetings are held at Paul Kane High School, in St Albert, at 5 PM in Room 223. For more information, contact Donna Chanasyk at [donnajc@telus.net](mailto:donnajc@telus.net).

## **Teaching Mathematics for Real Learning**

### **MCATA Fall Conference**

**October 23–24, 2009**

**River Cree Resort, Enoch  
(near West Edmonton Mall)**

**J**oin your mathematics teaching colleagues at this year's annual conference. Highlights of the conference include our keynote speakers: Catherine Fosnot, director of "Mathematics in the City" at the City College of New York, will talk about *Opening Possibilities: Developing Powerful Representations*; Rina Zazkis, professor of mathematics education at Simon Fraser University, in Burnaby, BC, will talk about *Reconsidering Basic Mathematical Assumptions in Teacher Education*. You might also look forward to sessions that focus on the new programs of study in elementary and secondary school. Finally, we will have sessions that concentrate on teaching for real learning in our contemporary classrooms. For more information on this year's conference, please go to [www.mathteachers.ab.ca](http://www.mathteachers.ab.ca).

# MCATA Executive Meeting Summary

This one-day meeting was held on May 9, at the Coast Plaza Hotel and Conference Centre in Calgary, because this will be the site for the 2010 conference. The agenda focused on plans for the 2009 fall symposium and conference as well as sites for future conferences. The changes that are required for the MCATA bank account were discussed. Two members who attended the Canadian Mathematical Society Conference gave reports. Executive members were encouraged to attend the Summer Mathematics Institute, in Edmonton, and the ATA Summer Conference, in Banff. The content on the MCATA website was reviewed. Five executive members volunteered to present at the Beginning Teachers' Conferences in Edmonton and Calgary in the fall. The executive also decided to send a needs assessment for elementary and junior high teachers to the membership in June.

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## MCATA Grants



MCATA grants are available to teachers and coordinators as part of professional development, for research into math education, or for other math initiatives that promote and enhance mathematics education throughout the province. These grants help to fund projects that further the education of students and educators in the math field.

Grants of up to \$500 are awarded twice each year. Applications should set out the nature of the project, the audience participating and benefiting, and an explanation of how the project incorporates diversity in regional development opportunities for teachers. The grants are intended to assist in covering the cost of facilitating professional development.

For more information or an application, please visit our webpage at [www.mathteachers.ab.ca/mcata\\_grants.htm](http://www.mathteachers.ab.ca/mcata_grants.htm), or contact the director of awards and grants, Carmen Wasylynuik, at 780-907-8990 or [carmenbt@telus.net](mailto:carmenbt@telus.net).

# Junior High Mathematics Contests

## Calgary and District 33rd Junior High School Mathematics Contest

April 22, 2009

### Congratulations to This Year's Calgary and District Junior High School Mathematics Contest Winners:

- 1st Place Bai Li (John Ware School)
- 2nd Place James Lin (Mount Royal School)
- 3rd-4th Place Kevin Chen (Queen Elizabeth Junior/Senior High School)  
Alexander Rodrigues (John Ware School)



More than 800 students from Edmonton public and Catholic schools participated in this year's contest. Although 80 per cent of the content is curriculum material, many students still find it difficult, because the

questions often require a bit of intuition, logic and organization of facts. The cut-off score for the top 50 students in the city was 58 out of a total possible of 90 marks. The winners and their parents were invited to the awards banquet, held on May 27, 2009. Sponsors such as MCATA, IBM Canada and APEGGA have contributed either funds or prizes for the event. This year's prizes included medallions, books, plaques, cups and cash. To see this year's contest paper, please visit [www.mathteachers.ab.ca](http://www.mathteachers.ab.ca).

*Robert Wong*

### Congratulations to This Year's Edmonton Junior High Math Contest Winners:

#### Top School Teams

- 1st Place Vernon Barford School  
(Han Hyung Lee, Darren Mah, Michael Ru)
- 2nd Place Grandview Heights School  
(Weilian Chu, Andrew Ni, Harris Wang)
- 3rd Place Parkview School  
(Sunny Fong, Adrian Loke, Liu Zelin)

#### Top Individual Winners

- 1st Place Weilian Chu (Grandview Heights School)
- 2nd Place Mariya Sardarli (McKernan School) and Lisa Short (École Avalon)
- 4th Place Han Hyung Lee and Darren Mah  
(both from Vernon Barford School)

# Alberta Education

## Implementation of Kindergarten to Grade 9 Mathematics Program of Studies

The revised K–9 mathematics program of studies for Grades 2, 5, and 8 was implemented provincially in September 2009; at the same time, Grades 3, 6 and 9 were available for optional implementation. Grades 3, 6 and 9 will be implemented across the province in September 2010. Provincial implementation of the revised program for kindergarten and Grades 1, 4 and 7 occurred in September 2008.

The new provincial achievement tests for Mathematics 3, 6 and 9, based on the revised K–9 mathematics program of study (2007), will be available in 2010/11, the year of provincial implementation. Schools that are doing optional implementation of Grades 3, 6 and 9 in 2009/10 will be required to request testing materials that are based on the revised program. Grade 9 mathematics students enrolled in the revised mathematics program in semester 1 will not have the opportunity to write the new Grade 9 mathematics test until June 2010. Grade 9 students enrolled in the current K–9 mathematics program of study (1996) will have the opportunity to write the Grade 9 mathematics achievement test in January and June 2010. Requests for these new testing materials must be made by using the online achievement test confirmation application, which is available on Alberta Education's extranet website. These testing materials will be made available in both English and French.

## The Revised High School Program of Studies

A high school information package can be found on the mathematics page of the Alberta Education website. This package provides information for teachers, administrators and parents to support the implementation of the revised program of studies, which begins with Grade 10 in September 2010.

## Diploma Examination Information Bulletin for the Revised Program of Studies

Teachers and postsecondary instructors met in March, May and August 2009 to start the development of the information bulletins for Mathematics 30-1 and Mathematics 30-2 and to discuss the technology directive. Work on these documents, as well as the first draft of the blueprints for the exams, will continue during 2009/10. The technology directive will be published in the spring of 2010 for students entering Grade 10 in the fall of 2010.

If you are interested in developing raw items, building and/or reviewing field tests, and developing standards and blueprints for the diploma exams for the revised program of studies, please ask your principal to forward your name to the superintendent, who will then forward it to Learner Assessment. The letter requesting nominations for these activities will be sent to superintendents in the fall.

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