



**Q & A**  
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Executive Secretary

## Teachers' Convention

**Q:** I have had a few requests from teachers regarding their attendance at teachers' convention. Some of these questions are, What do they do if they are sick? Who approves alternate professional development activities? What do they do if they are part-time? Can I bring my teacher assistant to convention? I have a sporting event scheduled during convention; can I leave early? What if I want to take a personal day?

**A:** The *School Act* designates two days of teachers' conventions authorized by the ATA as teaching days for the purposes of salary and benefits. ATA Bylaws under the *Teaching Profession Act* specify that "unless otherwise approved by a convention association, all active members shall attend" their assigned convention.

Here are some helpful points:

- Attendance at convention is required teacher work.
- Administrators cannot direct or give permission for a teacher to work at the school or at home during convention.
- Collective agreements can contain clauses that provide leave from work such as sick leave provisions, compassionate leave or other leaves of absence. Administrators cannot change the procedures normally used under the collective agreement. The collective agreement must be followed.
- Administrators cannot direct or approve an alternate professional development activity during convention. Only the convention attendance committee of your assigned convention association has that authority. Have the teacher check the website to find out who to contact, what the deadlines are and the criteria for alternate PD.
- The requirement for part-time teachers is that they attend work the same as they normally would during convention. If a 0.5 FTE teacher's schedule is all day Monday, all day Tuesday and Wednesday afternoon, that teacher would not be obligated to attend convention on Thursday or Friday. Conversely, if the teacher's 0.5 FTE schedule was every morning, the teacher would be expected to attend both mornings at convention. There is nothing that would preclude the teacher from rearranging his or her time (eg, attending a full day) to facilitate attendance at sessions of particular interest to that teacher. If the teacher's 0.5 schedule was Wednesday morning and all day Thursday and Friday, the teacher would be expected to attend all of convention.
- Administrators cannot give permission for or require teaching assistants or educational assistants to attend teachers' convention because they are not certificated teachers who are members of the ATA and have paid their ATA dues including their convention fee.
- Student teachers can attend convention only if they are from a program recognized by the Association; they are members of their student local or, in the absence of a student local, student members of the Association; and they are in their senior practicum at time of convention. The distribution of lanyards, which include information that would identify someone as a student teacher, is coordinated at a provincial level through the institutions and their student locals.
- Administrators cannot schedule or approve any school trips that would occur during convention time because convention attendance committees will not give permission for such trips as they do not qualify as professional development. The exception to this is Alberta School Athletic Association provincial finals. Have your teachers check the website for the form for teacher coaches to be absent from convention to travel with their team to provincials on the Friday afternoon of their convention.

For more information, check the ATA website under Professional Development/ Teachers' Conventions/ Frequently Asked Questions.

For specific questions about the collective agreement, call Teacher Welfare staff at 1-800-232-7208.