



ALBERTA TEACHERS  
OF ENGLISH AS  
A SECOND LANGUAGE



Honorable Marc Miller - Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship  
House of Commons  
Ottawa ON K1A 0A6  
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February 2024

Dear Minister Miller,

We are writing on behalf of the Executives of ATESL, TESL Manitoba, TESL Ontario, TESL Saskatchewan, and TESL Canada. As organizations we advocate for professional employment practices across Alberta, Manitoba, Ontario, Saskatchewan and Canada to ensure teacher and learner success. A part of our advocacy work includes advancing rights and dignity of the profession of teaching English as an Additional Language (EAL). However, throughout Canada there are drastic disparities in the wages and working conditions even for instructors who teach within the same government funded programs.

[In the most recent ATESL Advocacy Survey](#)<sup>1</sup> more than 65% of respondents listed themselves as not permanent employees, and less than 60% had insurance, medical, or disability benefits available to them through their employer. In [TESL Ontario's 2021 Member Survey Report](#), of the 938 respondents, 18% reported receiving a salary, whereas 66% received an hourly rate of pay. Yearly, 28% of respondents made between \$20,000-\$39,000; 29% of respondents made between \$40,000-\$59,000; and 13% earned less than \$20,000. The majority of respondents consistently reported an absence of benefits and sick leave, little or no paid preparation time, and a lack of pay raises.

Based on the survey results and to advance EAL instruction as a respected and desirable profession which continues to attract excellent candidates, we must reevaluate the historical system of precarious employment and capricious income which those looking to enter the field typically face.

As a profession, we are focused on achieving the best possible outcomes for the learners we work with. As an extension of that, we cannot ignore that to maintain and advance the high standards we wish to uphold, inconsistent wages undermine the profession as a whole. A strong professional organization needs strong members, and it is unjust to ask someone hoping to join the ranks of EAL teachers in this country to have to “roll the dice” when it comes to their potential earnings and livelihood. As Sun (2010) observed, “ studies in adult education have shown that such precarious employment patterns undermine the professionalism of the field” (p. 142)<sup>3</sup>. Additionally, a survey by Naylor (2015a) found that close to 40% of survey EAL respondents were considering leaving the field before retirement. The main reasons were a sense of insecurity, fatigue, and the instability of the field (p. 6)<sup>4</sup>

One step we could take is advocating for a standardized wage based on qualifications as is standard in many other professional jobs. [Alberta ALIS Classifies Adult EAL instructors as “College and Other Vocational Instructors”](#).<sup>5</sup> Within the National Occupational Classification (NOC) system, those employed in this category have an average hourly wage of 43.55, and an average annual salary of \$77,676.00. However, while technically classified under this designation, few job opportunities for EAL instructor positions list these numbers within their pay scale, and many list significantly lower starting wages. As provincial Associations representing our members, advocating for a wage commensurate with other professions within our NOC classification should not be considered unreasonable, and would benefit not

only teachers but students as well by providing employment security to those currently teaching and making EAL instruction much more attractive for future professionals.

Best regards,

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ATESL President

Irina Volchok  
TESL Canada President  
TESL Manitoba Acting President

Allison Keown  
TESL Ontario Executive Director

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Cc: Ms. Catherine Scott, Assistant Deputy Minister, Settlement and Integration Sector IRCC,  
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<sup>1</sup> ATESL Advocacy 2021 survey. Retrieved from  
[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1SH6kIca5TIUtxN3Pl2Sk6T3\\_usl8\\_KKH/view?usp=share\\_link](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1SH6kIca5TIUtxN3Pl2Sk6T3_usl8_KKH/view?usp=share_link)

<sup>2</sup> TESL Ontario 2021 Member Survey Report.  
<http://contact.teslontario.org/tesl-ontario-2021-member-survey-report/>

<sup>3</sup> Sun, Y. (2010). Standards, equity, and advocacy: Employment conditions of ESOL teachers in adult basic education and literacy systems. TESOL Journal, 1(1), 142–158.  
<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.5054/tj.2010.215135>

<sup>4</sup> Naylor, C. (2015a). Chapter 5: Adult educators' views on working conditions and sources of stress. Adult Education in BC's public schools: Lost opportunities for students, employers, and society—A BCTF study of working and learning conditions. British Columbia Teachers' Federation. Retrieved from <https://bctf.ca/AdultEducationStudy/>

<sup>5</sup> Alberta ALIS Job classification guide for English as a Second Language Teacher - Adults retrieved from here: <https://alis.alberta.ca/occinfo/occupations-in-alberta/occupation-profiles/english-as-a-second-language-teacher-adults/#>