

# ARBOS AWARD

## DR. KRISTA KEELEY'S STORY

### 2023 ARBOS FOR CONTRIBUTIONS TO EDUCATION AND THE TEACHING PROFESSION



Dr. Krista Keeley is a remarkable educator who has been a member of the Saskatchewan teaching community for over a decade. Her unwavering passion and commitment to teaching have earned her a well-deserved reputation as a leading figure in the education community and beyond.

Dr. Keeley's academic achievements are notable, having received her bachelor of education in arts education from the University of Regina in 2011, followed by her master of education from Queen's University in 2018 and her doctor of education in educational leadership from Western University in 2022.

Krista's professional journey began as an educational assistant in Prairie Valley School Division, where she worked for a short time before receiving her teaching certification. Over the course of her career, Krista has instructed in many different learning environments, such as elementary, high school, lecturing university students and delivering professional development workshops across the country. Krista's versatility and expertise have made her a respected voice in the education community.

When it comes to teaching, among Krista's favourite subjects are the arts and humanities; she firmly believes that these areas of study offer unique opportunities for

self-expression and exploration, while also fostering critical thinking and problem-solving skills among students. Her dedication to teaching and learning is also reflected in her work with the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation, where she serves as a professional learning facilitator, creating and facilitating professional development opportunities for teachers and other professionals, continuing to contribute to the development of the education community.

Krista is a published author, having founded here we inspire Creative Publishing and successfully publishing a number of children's books. Her children's book, "and away they went", was even highlighted in a local library for Saskatchewan Libraries Week 2021.

Through her tireless efforts and dedication, Krista has made a significant impact on the lives of countless students and colleagues, helping them to discover their passions and reach their full potential. Her commitment to advancing leading, teaching and learning practices into the 21st century is truly admirable, and she is sure to continue shaping the education field for years to come.

Dr. Krista Keeley's contribution to the education community is exceptional and she is a true inspiration serving as a shining example of the positive impact that dedicated and passionate teachers can have on their students, peers and their communities.

## A CONVERSATION WITH DR. KRISTA KEELEY

### What has been the biggest career challenge you have faced?

The biggest challenge in my career, I would say, is being an innovative boat rocker. As someone who is always questioning the status quo and trying new things, it is difficult to butt up against the system and the bureaucracy of the system. I often face resistance when trying to push for change, and that can get really difficult. It does get challenging to keep researching, writing and advocating for educational change in Saskatchewan with the proverbial doors often being closed. Through these challenges, I have learned there are so many incredible educators and leaders who are fighting the good fight and when I keep pushing, I know I am not alone.

### If you could give a new teacher advice, what would it be?

My advice to new teachers would be to take care of yourself, do everything intentionally and never stop learning. As teachers we are notorious for putting ourselves last. Teacher burnout is real. Find a doctor and therapist, do things outside of school that bring you joy and try not to take things so seriously.

Being a teacher comes with immense responsibility. You have the power to be someone's reason to get out of bed in the morning or to be the reason they can't – and everything in between. Plan your relationships, lessons and instruction with intention. And embrace truth and reconciliation and Indigenization – it is not option. The health of your students, school and community depend on it.

Finally, never stop learning, reading and striving to be a better educator. Stay engaged in the real world outside of the classroom, so you know what skills students really need. Do your research, take part in professional learning and take risks.

### What is one valuable lesson being a teacher has taught you?

Teaching has afforded me more learning opportunities than I thought possible. Among several others, I have learned how to be a patient, compassionate and innovative human. Teenagers are not always the most complimentary or agreeable group, but every day they teach me more about myself than almost any other force in my life.

### Are there any other important topics you would like to talk about that are relevant to education today?

We are at an interesting time regarding Saskatchewan's education path. I believe we have to keep fighting for public education with adequate funding and begin, and for many, continue, to move educational practices into the 21st century for the benefit of every person in the education system. Teachers are burning out, students are disengaged, and our Indigenous and other minority populations are not getting the support and educational experiences they deserve and have a right to.

### Are there any goals you wish to achieve related to the field of education?

My goal is to have a meaningful impact on the education sector in Saskatchewan and Canada. I am a researcher in addition to an educator, so I hope to expand educational research through research studies, community projects and book chapter submissions. I also hope to find a leadership position that will have a meaningful impact on the lives of educators, students and our community.



### CONNECT WITH US

   @SaskTeachersFed [www.stf.sk.ca](http://www.stf.sk.ca)