

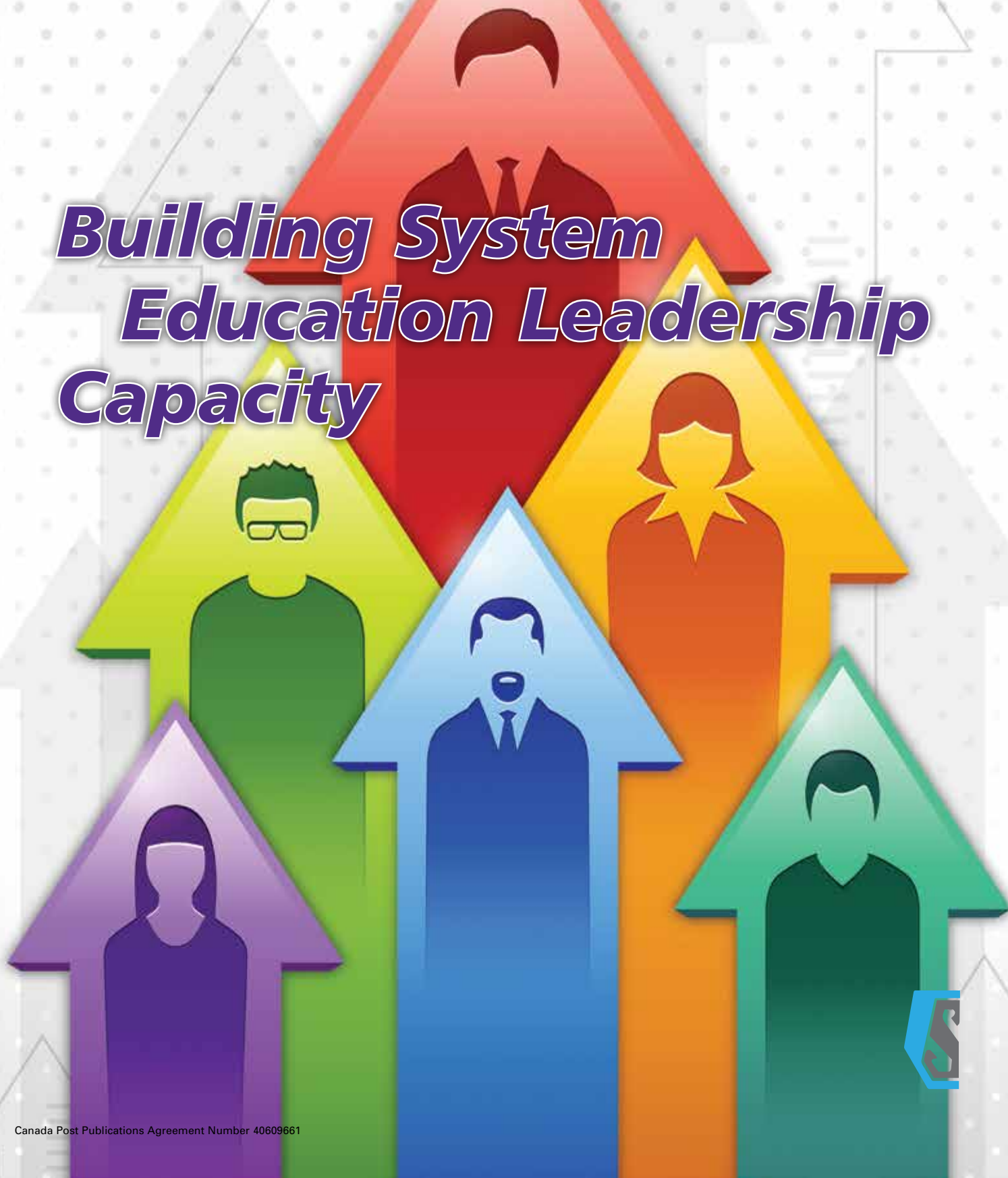
Volume 10, Issue 1

the CASS CONNECTION

Spring 2014

The official magazine for the College of Alberta School Superintendents

Building System Education Leadership Capacity



EXPLORE
INSPIRATION
IN ACTION.



inspiringeducation.ca



Find answers to your questions,
share ideas that put students first and
participate in lively discussion with
other education partners.



WE ARE
inspiring
education

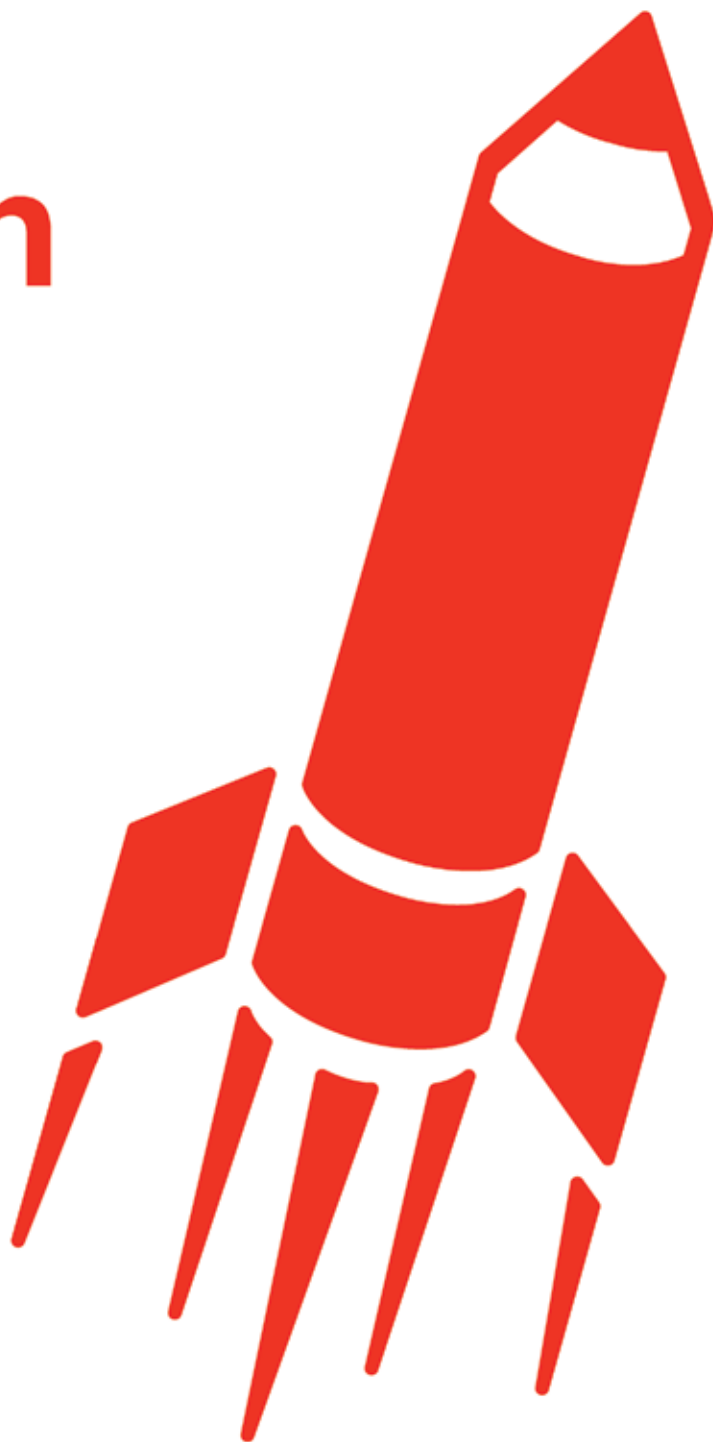
Alberta
Government

The
Building
Alberta
Plan

Launch young minds.

IGNITION PACK is a comprehensive teaching resource from MindFuel, the team that brought you Science-in-a-Crate. **IGNITION PACK** brings the spark to science class and helps educators ignite a passion for science in students of all ages.

FOR MORE INFORMATION on this and our other award-winning science programs, visit **MINDFUEL.CA**



UNIVERSITY OF NEW BRUNSWICK

Behavioural Intervention & Autism Training Programs



Teaching evidence-based practices for effective support for people with behavioural challenges.

Find out about:

- ABA Credit Programming
- Autism Support Training Professional Certificate
Based on the award-winning program developed for the Province of New Brunswick.
- Behavioural Intervention Workshops
- Customized Needs Analysis & Contract Training
- Parent Tools

go.unb.ca/celinterventionAB
1-866-599-4646



College of
EXTENDED
LEARNING

The CASS Connection
The official magazine for the College of
Alberta School Superintendents
Spring 2014

Published for:

**The College of Alberta School
Superintendents**

#1200, 9925 – 109 Street
Edmonton AB T5K 2J8
Phone: (780) 451-7106
Fax: (780) 482-5659
Email: Barry.Litun@cass.ab.ca
www.cass.ab.ca

Published by:

**Matrix Group Publishing Inc.
Publications Agreement
Number 40609661**

Return Undeliverable Addresses to:

**309 Youville Street
Winnipeg, MB R2H 2S9**
Toll free Phone: (866) 999-1299
Toll free Fax: (866) 244-2544
www.matrixgroupinc.net

President & CEO

Jack Andress

Chief Operating Officer

Jessica Potter
jpotter@matrixgroupinc.net

Publishers

Peter Schulz, Joe Strazzullo

Editor-in-Chief

Shannon Savory
ssavory@matrixgroupinc.net

Editor

Alexandra Walld
awalld@matrixgroupinc.net

Finance/Accounting & Administration

Shoshana Weinberg, Nathan Redekop,
Pat Andress
accounting@matrixgroupinc.net

Director of Marketing & Circulation

Shoshana Weinberg

Sales Manager

Neil Gottfred

Matrix Group Publishing Inc.

Account Executives

Albert Brydges, Andrew DeSivo,
Bonnie Petrovsky, Brian Davey, Brian
MacIntyre, Chris Smith, Christopher
Morrill, Colleen Bell, Frank Kenyeres,
Frank McLean, Jeff Cash, Jim Hamilton,
John Price, Lindsay Melson, Mark
McClain, Miles Meagher, Rick Kuzie,
Rob Allan, Rob Choi, Steve Gaebel

Layout & Design

Cody Chomiak

Advertising Design

James Robinson

©2014 Matrix Group Publishing Inc. All
rights reserved. Contents may not be
reproduced by any means, in whole or in
part, without the prior written permission
of the publisher. The opinions expressed
in this publication are not necessarily
those of Matrix Group Publishing Inc.

contents



Messages:

- 7** Message from the Minister of Education
- 9** Message from the President of CASS
- 11** Message from the Executive Director

FOCUS ON...BUILDING SYSTEM EDUCATION LEADERSHIP CAPACITY

Features:

- 12** Behavioural Based, Competency Interviews for Leaders
- 15** Collaboration Creates Better Leaders, Better Education
- 18** Understanding System Leadership Links to Student Success
- 24** Student Information System Supports Educational Leadership

Department:

- 28** ASEBP's Healthy People, Healthy Workplace News: ASEBP 101

30 Buyer's Guide



Calgary Arts Academy

A Truly Unique and Innovative Public Charter School

- ★ Calgary Arts Academy transforms children into young people who are curious and kind, empathetic and engaged.
- ★ Through a focus on creativity and collaboration, Calgary Arts Academy prepares students to contribute and lead in their communities.
- ★ Calgary Arts Academy is the key education partner in the development of the Calgary Stampede's Youth Campus. (www.calgarystampede.com)

Calgary Arts Academy ★ 2030 Education, Today!



Superintendent Dale Erickson - derickson@calgaryartsacademy.com
4931 Grove Hill Road SW Calgary, Alberta T3E 4G4 403.532.3020



View and Adjust Routes, Anywhere, Anytime with Transfinder's Infofinder mobile
In Infofinder mobile, you can instantly view a route on the map with students assigned to each stop. You can then adjust the route as needed to add a stop or move a student to a new stop.

800.373.3609 | sales@transfinder.com | transfinder.com

transfinder



Message from the Minister of Education

The Honourable Jeff Johnson | Minister of Education

Guided by the vision of *Inspiring Education*, we continue our work together building on one of the best education systems in the world and ensuring today's students are prepared for tomorrow's challenges.

Preparing our kids for their future is incredibly important, and they need the space to learn and grow. We reached an important milestone earlier this year, fulfilling Premier Redford's commitment to build 50 new schools and to complete 70 modernization projects. All of these projects have now been announced and are presently underway.

Ensuring kids have a place where they can discover and reach their full potential is critical—and so is enabling students to become engaged thinkers and ethical citizens with an entrepreneurial spirit. This is a goal we all need to share for every student, and it will take all of us working together to make this a reality.

On February 19, Alberta Education hosted the *Inspiring Education* Symposium—an event bringing together more than 1,100 stakeholders, including several CASS members, from across the province to discuss the transformation of education in Alberta and the tangible steps we are taking together to bring *Inspiring Education* to life.

From technology and innovation to Student Learning Assessments, online diplomas and much more, delegates had a range of topics to explore throughout the Symposium. One of the many highlights included an update on curriculum redesign.

One of the underlying themes of *Inspiring Education* is to provide every student with relevant, personalized and engaging learning opportunities. The extent to which

we can fulfill such a commitment will depend largely on establishing a new provincial curriculum. Building on the excellent educational practices already underway—and on a solid foundation of literacy and numeracy—we will create new curriculum that allows students to develop 21st century competencies, such as innovation, creativity, ingenuity and collaboration.

That is why we have embarked on a Curriculum Redesign initiative that involves, as its centerpiece, a collaborative approach to Curriculum Development Prototyping.

Alberta Education issued a request for proposals last summer and invited all publicly funded school authorities to submit proposals to work with the ministry on developing various aspects of new curriculum across subjects and at all grade levels. Those school authorities have been selected, and each of them has created a network of dynamic and innovative partnerships that will contribute to the prototyping.

Together, these partnerships include more than 30 school authorities across Alberta, including public, separate, private, charter, and Francophone regional authorities and First Nations schools. Post-secondary institutions, business and industry, and First Nations, Métis and Inuit partners will also participate in this project—an example of the collaborative approach we all need to take in order to ensure we accomplish the goals and ideals of *Inspiring Education*. During the Symposium, we also heard an update from the Task Force for Teaching Excellence, the group established to make recommendations for the future of the teaching profession in Alberta. This blue-ribbon panel of experts is studying how best

to support Alberta's educators, assure quality and promote excellence.

In order to achieve the vision of *Inspiring Education*, we need to ensure that students continue to benefit from well-supported, well-trained and motivated teachers who demonstrate excellence throughout their careers. We know that teachers are the single most important contributor to students' success and that is why we are committed to working with educators, administrators and parents across the province to ensure all students continue to benefit from the talent and expertise we have in our classrooms.

The first step saw the Task Force for Teaching Excellence consulting with thousands of Albertans. Between October 1 and December 31, 2013, the Task Force heard from a wide range of perspectives through an online survey and discussion boards, 18 public meetings across the province, and stakeholder discussions with representatives of the Alberta Teachers' Association, CASS and others. Written submissions from stakeholder groups were also accepted.

The Task Force reviewed and considered all of this input as they created their report and recommendations. The Task Force report will be shared directly with our education stakeholders—including CASS—to ensure we have considered all of your valuable feedback before proceeding with any of the Task Force's recommendations.

This collaborative approach is the foundation of all that we do at Alberta Education. Working together is critical to achieving success for students through *Inspiring Education*. With your ongoing support, we will continue to put the best interests of kids first and to strengthen Alberta's world-class education system. ■

Healthy Choices



You choose what your students snack on rather than what they pick up at the corner store. The school receives a portion of the revenue stream.

Attractive financing available.

For more details

Contact your local vending operator

or

Can - west
Vending Distributors Ltd.

4320 – 97 Street, Edmonton, AB T6E 5R9
(800) 463-8363, (780) 433-4477, Fax (780) 433-4488
www.canwestvending.com

The New Age of LED

design21 LED Lighting Systems

**T8
LED**

- No Ballast Needed
- 65% Less Energy
- Healthy Light

www.design21.ca

780-421-1940



POLY-MOR 
Canada Inc.

HARNESSING THE POWER OF POLYMERS

- We lift, align, under-pin & stabilize settled slab-on-grade structures
- We densify and stabilize weak base soils to increase bearing capacity
- We fill voided areas such as sink-holes, wash-outs, etc.
- Infrastructure repair

Team **Poly-Mor**



Serving the Residential, Industrial, Institutional & Municipal Markets

MINIMAL DISRUPTION! COST EFFECTIVE!

1-866-887-3835 | www.poly-mor.ca



ALBERTA ROOFING CONTRACTORS ASSOCIATION

INDUSTRY SOURCE

- Standards built for Alberta
- 50+ years of warranty satisfaction
- Journeymen qualified crews
- Accepted third party inspectors
- Continuous training programs
- Support for safe work practices



www.arcaonline.ca



President's Message

Larry W. Jacobs, PhD.

President | College of Alberta School Superintendents

"The winds of change are moving across the Alberta education landscape!"

Many would claim that education, as an institution, has not changed dramatically in the last century. That assertion is sometimes based on the perception that our great-grandparents would still recognize the structure of the modern classroom, along with all of the staff roles that are foundational to the learning environments. While this may be a bit of an overstatement, it does point out that it may be time for society to reconsider how our students learn, what they learn, where they learn, what tools they have at their disposal and how we assess that learning as a society.

In Alberta, all of those components to the educational system are being re-evaluated and redesigned based on a widely supported document called *Inspiring Education*. This document lays the foundation for what our educational system should look like by the year 2030, but it also opens the door for all partners to participate in the design of the process.

At the heart of the *Inspiring Education* framework is a renewed focus on literacy and numeracy. Not unlike other educational

jurisdictions in the world, we are contemplating a deeper commitment to ensuring that all of our students are successful in every learning environment they encounter in their educational journey. And that can mean a recognition that basic and advanced skills in these two areas are fundamental to every subject area our students encounter.

Coupled with this renewed focus is recognition that all curricula have to be aligned with the evolving needs of our 21st century societies. The problems we encounter, the solutions needed, the strategies for building the "best solutions" do not flow from a "knowledge based" curriculum that has been prevalent in most educational jurisdictions for the last half of the 20th century. While that curriculum structure played a role in its day, our students and our society recognize that we must now give our learners opportunities to experiment with the knowledge they are assimilating; attempting to solve real world problems, using a powerful technology system to assist them in their journey; and learning to work in collaborative

teams to bring together the best and most divergent thinking possible.

Extending from these new curricula is a deeper level of understanding around competencies; those skill sets that benefit learning regardless of the subject are being considered. Not directly a component of the programs of study, they do augment the concepts being considered by providing foundational structures that allow for students to become critical thinkers, acquire digital literacy and become creative and innovative in problem solving situations.

The next phase to all of these sub initiatives will be the implementation process that will be utilized throughout the province. As always, this phase will pose the most challenges and will require the greatest amount of sharing of promising practices. Therein lays our challenge, not only as CASS members, but for all of the partners in the world of education. We have come a long way in just building the foundation, but working together to change the face of education will be our great gift to the next generation of learners. I believe all of us are ready for the challenge. ■

CASS Board Members

President

Dr. Larry Jacobs
Chief Superintendent of Schools
Wolf Creek School Division

Past President

Craig Foley
Superintendent, Human
Resources
Calgary RCSSD No. 1

1st Vice President

Karl Germann
Superintendent of Schools
Grande Prairie Catholic Schools
No. 28

2nd Vice President

John Waterhouse
Deputy Superintendent
Westwind School Division No. 74

Zone 1 Director

Betty Turpin
Superintendent of Schools
Holy Family CRD No. 37

Zone 2/3 Director

Michelle Brennick
Deputy Superintendent
Northern Gateway Public
Schools

Zone 4 Director

Dr. Paul Mason
Superintendent of Schools
Red Deer Catholic Regional
Schools

Zone 5 Director

Mark Rawlek
Superintendent, Support Services
Calgary RCSSD No. 1

Zone 6 Director

Wilco Tymensen
Superintendent of Schools for
Horizon School Division No. 67

Metro Director

Joan Carr
Superintendent of Schools
Edmonton Catholic Schools
No. 7

Executive Director

Barry Litun
Executive Director
College of Alberta School
Superintendents

CASS Fall Conference

November 5 (evening), 6 and 7, 2014



Sheraton Cavalier • Calgary, Alberta
2620-32 Avenue T1Y 6B8

To book your accommodations at the Sheraton Cavalier, follow the link provided at www.cass.ab.ca. Group rates are available until October 17, 2014 (subject to availability). Or call (403) 291-0192.



The agenda will be posted at www.cass.ab.ca as soon as it is available. For more information, contact Kathy Seguin at the CASS office at (780) 451-7126.



Message from the Executive Director

Barry Litun | College of Alberta School Superintendents

In the past 12 months, there has been tremendous activity in education in Alberta. In 2013, the *Education Act* was passed and new regulations are currently being developed. It is anticipated the new Act will be proclaimed and be in effect at the beginning of the 2015/16 school year.

The Ministerial Order on Student Learning was signed by Minister Johnson. The fifth paragraph of the Ministerial Order states: “Education in Alberta will be shaped by a greater emphasis on education than on the school; on the learner than on the system; on competencies than on content; on inquiry, discovery and the application of knowledge than on the dissemination of information; and on technology to support the creation and sharing of knowledge than on technology to support teaching.”

The Provincial Dual Credit Strategy was adopted and, to date, 27 partnerships between school jurisdictions, post secondary institutions and business and industry are in place, with additional projects to be approved later this spring.

The High School Flexibility Pilot was tremendously successful and has seen the initial group of 15 high schools grow to more than 100 as part of Redesigning High Schools in Alberta. It is anticipated that the number of high schools involved will double within the next year or two, meaning that a significant majority of high schools in Alberta are embarking on redesign.

The Learning and Technology Policy Framework was formally adopted and outlines the shift from technology being primarily used as a tool by teachers to present information and communicate with students to the “need to move towards classrooms in which students, themselves, are using technology to support their learning.”

The fact that *Inspiring Education* was the result of unprecedented public consultation ensures that System Education Leaders, working with educational partners, have the mandate to move forward to ensure that every student in the province has the opportunity to reach his or her full potential.

Student Learning Assessments (SLAs), which will replace Provincial Achievement Tests in Grades 3, 6 and 9 over the next three years, were developed this past year and will be piloted for Grade 3 students in September 2014. It has been pointed out that it is somewhat unusual to call this a “pilot,” considering every school jurisdiction in the province has chosen to have their students participate. This speaks to the value seen in the diagnostic format of the SLAs.

This past February, Alberta Education announced that approximately half of all jurisdictions in the province will participate in Curriculum Prototyping, one aspect of Curriculum Redesign being undertaken in Alberta. “New programs of study, assessments and learning and teaching resources are being developed that will focus on developing student competencies, such as innovation, communication and collaboration. There will also be a strong focus on literacy and numeracy as the foundation to every subject, at every grade level.”

The activity in education in Alberta demonstrates that the vision of *Inspiring Education* is being implemented. The fact that *Inspiring Education* was the result of

unprecedented public consultation ensures that System Education Leaders, working with educational partners, have the mandate to move forward to ensure that every student in the province has the opportunity to reach his or her full potential. To do so, however, requires that leadership capacity must be built and supported. With all that is occurring in education in Alberta, it is very clear why building and supporting leadership capacity is one of the three goals in the CASS 2013/16 Strategic Plan.

The Leadership Learning initiatives in CASS all serve to support this goal. They include mentorship training workshops, an induction program for new superintendents and second level system leaders, the new members’ academy, the leadership learning network, the CASS network of 21st century school systems, the team leadership academy, work on module development and a research academy.

This edition of *The CASS Connection* is an additional opportunity for System Education Leaders to build their leadership capacity. Thank you to each of the contributors of this edition for sharing their stories, each of which provides professional learning for the readers of this publication. ■

Behavioural Based, Competency Interviews for Leaders

By Dr. Karla Satchwell

Building leadership capacity is a process that identifies those with the most potential and develops them into leaders who invest their time and talents on school improvement. Some contend, “When you fill an organization with good fits, those who believe what you believe, success just happens,” (Sinek, 2009). Yet, filling and organization with “good fits,” while certainly key to long-term success, is tremendously difficult.

Captain Ernest Shackleton did just that. When searching for crew for the *Endurance*, he placed a classified ad in the *London Times* in 1914 which read, “Men wanted for hazardous journey. Small wages, bitter cold, long months of complete darkness, constant danger, safe return doubtful. Honour and recognition in case of success,” (Sinek, 2009).

Shackleton’s crew set out to explore the Antarctic by the southernmost route. During the journey, the *Endurance* became stuck in ice. The ship was stranded for 10 months as it drifted slowly, trapped in thick ice until the pressure of that ice crushed the ship. The stranded 27 member crew used lifeboats to reach a remote island. From there, Shackleton took five men and traveled more than 800 miles in a lifeboat for help.

What is truly amazing about Shackleton’s expedition was that all 27 crew members survived. Sinek (2009) makes the case that such success could be attributed to who Shackleton hired. Shackleton hired survivors, because they were the only ones who applied to that advertisement. Survivors believed what Shackleton believed. If great



leaders hire and develop those who fit well with their organizations, then one of the most important things a leader can do is hire right.

I was reminded of Shackleton this year, 100 years after the *Endurance* expedition, when the Russian ship *Akademik Shokalskiy* with 74 people aboard, also became trapped in ice while exploring the Antarctic. The *Akademik* was trapped for 10 days; the *Endurance* for 10 months. The *Akademik* used satellite radios to call for help and that help came quickly. Three ice breakers were sent to assist.

One of the rescue ships, the Chinese *Snow Dragon* also became stuck. The American *Polar Star* and the Australian *Aurora Australis* were also dispatched yet severe weather suspended their efforts. Helicopters were eventually able to evacuate the 54 passengers from the *Akademik* safely, and days later, also the crew.

The similarities between the two expeditions are notable and make Shackleton’s journey all the more remarkable. In 1914, the *Endurance* was not equipped with satellite radios nor could the crew be air-lifted to safety. Lifeboats in brutally cold

and dangerous seas were their only hope of rescue. As the world watched the rescue of the Akademik unfold, the tenacity of Shackleton and his crew took on even more significance.

While Shackleton's ad drew a crew prepared for a difficult journey, hiring today requires more. Elk Island Public Schools is situated on the eastern edge of Edmonton, in a geographic region that has been experiencing significant economic growth. With 42 schools, approximately 950 teaching staff members and our close proximity to Edmonton, we receive hundreds of applicants for positions.

Each spring, more than 600 applicants apply for about 40 teaching positions. While this is a good problem to have, we needed to find a manageable way to screen for applicants with the greatest potential for success. We initially screen candidates using the Gallup® TeacherInsight or PrincipalInsight tool. This web based screening assessment has enabled us to short list applicants quite reliably. Once short listed, candidates are invited to accelerated interviews.

Elk Island Public Schools has developed a process that set us on a new course. The process began with a simple question, "Have you ever changed a flat tire on your car? If so, tell us about that." This question set the direction for our Human Resources Committee, a committee of school principals working on designing interview questions to identify the best candidates for school leadership positions.


The flat tire question, according to consultant Dave Redekopp, President at Life-Role Development Group Limited in Edmonton, was designed to identify a candidate's behavioral pattern or competency. The ability to change a tire was not the desired competency, it was "safety." The company used this question to screen for candidates who spoke about safety first. No matter the task at hand, safety was so essential to the company's mission and vision that only those applicants who demonstrated safety in their answers were deemed to be good fits with their corporate culture.

If the candidate being interviewed had not changed a tire, most any other process could be substituted such as changing oil,

baking a cake, or mowing grass. Interviewers would listen for behavioural examples of how the candidate demonstrated and applied principles of safety as they answered the question. If the applicant described the process of changing a tire without mentioning safety basics, that applicant was not hired. Whether the duties of position the applicant was being intervening for involved changing a tire or not, this company only wanted employees who always thought about safety, no matter the situation.

Using this example, our Human Resources committee's first charge was to identify those competencies necessary for success in our school division. We then designed interview questions to assess an applicant's measure of the competency. We wanted to ensure that our leaders defaulted to competencies our division had identified

as essential or mission critical for success. We began by identifying the competencies held by our division's leaders using the Leadership Architect® Competency Modeling process. Using card decks of 67 possible competencies, we asked principals and assistant principals to serve as "expert panels," identifying those competencies that were mission critical for their positions, competencies that are missing or not mastered, would make it impossible to perform well in the position. More than 100 principals and assistant principals participated in the competency card sort exercise and these top competencies for each leadership position were used to design behavioral based interview questions to identify whether candidates possessed each competency. The committee developed an interview process called accelerated interviewing.



Two convenient locations:

Mayfair Clinic
#203, 6707 Elbow Dr SW
403-777-0085
Evening Hours Available

North Clinic
#606, 1701 Centre St NW
403-277-9476

Our doctors specialize in foot care. We treat Ingrown & fungus nails, hammertoes, warts, heel pain, bunions, orthotics, diabetic feet, and pediatrics foot issues.

Referral is not necessary, so call us today!

*** Custom Orthotics * Surgery * Shockwave * Laser ***

www.AchillesFootClinic.com



USE PROMO CODE "CASS10" TO SAVE 10% ON YOUR ONLINE OR PHONE ORDER*

- Canadian, Provincial and International Flags-
- Flag Poles-
- Custom Flags and Banners-
- Retractable Banners and Display Solutions-

1.800.903.8372 - info@auroraflags.com - www.auroraflags.com

*Applies only to stock flags and certain hardware



Somewhat analogous to speed dating, accelerated interviewing allows our current leaders to interview a number of candidates in a short period of time. Individual candidates are interviewed by a panel of principals seated at tables in a large room. Each table is numbered and has its own two unique questions assigned to it. A total of 12 questions are asked of each candidate during the accelerated interview round and each table's interview panel asks the same two of the 12 questions to all candidates.

Candidates are assigned a number and that is the table number where they begin the interview rotation. If the candidate is assigned the number "one," the candidate starts at table one. The principal panel at table one asks the same two questions of every candidate. A facilitator times the interviews and when the timer sounds, the candidates are asked to stand, move to the next table and the process begins again.

We have found that six minutes for two behavioural based questions is about right. The interview panel scores each

question on a rubric to determine the level to which the candidate possesses the identified competency. Those mission critical competencies in Elk Island Public Schools include motivating others, ethics and values, integrity and trust, listening, composure, perseverance, building effective teams, negotiating, action oriented, peer relationships, patience, positivity, approachability, and problem solving.

The Human Resources Committee has found that by using the competency based interview questions, we are more accurately able to identify candidates who possess the competencies necessary for the role. We have based the foundations for this process on research on competencies necessary for school leaders and the science supporting accuracy of first impressions.

Accelerated interviewing has allowed our school division to more objectively identify the best candidates for leadership positions. Candidates have commented that the experience is both energizing and reaffirming as they interview with all of our division's

school leaders. This process has uncovered the tremendous potential of future leaders for our division. We are already seeing the difference in the quality of our new hires and have been humbled and honoured by those next in line to join the profession. We have been assured that the future of education is indeed very bright. ■

Karla Satchwell is Associate Superintendent of Human Resources for Elk Island Public Schools. She holds a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Educational Administration from the University of Alberta, Edmonton, a Master of Arts (Education) from Bowling Green State University in Bowling Green, Ohio, and a Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education from Montana State University. Dr. Satchwell has served as a school principal, district-level director and school counsellor. She has also served as director at post-secondary institutions, including the University of Alberta, Weber State University (Utah), University of Wyoming, and the Montana College of Mineral Science and Technology.



DAVIS LLP

LEGAL ADVISORS SINCE 1892

With You Every Step of the Way

The Davis LLP Education Law Practice Group is dedicated to meeting the unique requirements and challenges that educational institutions and their leaders face on a day-to-day basis.

We have a proud history and tremendous experience providing legal services to public and private institutions at all levels of the education system, as well as various professional organizations and associations involved in education.

We know education. We know Alberta. We know your needs.

For more information, please contact:

Laura Safran, Q.C.
lsafran@davis.ca
403.698.8778

Andrew Lloyd
alloyd@davis.ca
403.698.8786

www.davis.ca | Vancouver | Toronto | Montréal | Calgary | Edmonton | Whitehorse | Yellowknife | Tokyo



Collaboration Creates Better Leaders, Better Education

By Jayson Lovell, Shawn Russell, Greg Wedman, and Paul Stewart

Building leadership capacity and facilitating school improvement is essential to help school jurisdictions meet the increasingly complex needs of their students, parents and communities. Four jurisdictions in Central Alberta—Chinook's Edge School Division No. 73, Red Deer Catholic Regional Schools, Wild Rose Public Schools and Wolf Creek Public Schools—have partnered to put together a school leadership development program. These schools are working together and sharing a wide range of expertise to develop school based leaders who work in different settings while education in Alberta evolves to reflect 21st century learning environments.

While there is a great diversity and unique cultures among the school jurisdictions, a shared understanding of leadership development is seen as a key component in student success. Following the leadership of the College of Alberta School Superintendents, the four jurisdictions feel a strong approach to developing leadership capacity involves working together and sharing knowledge and experiences from the diverse environments and cultures.

The complex and varied characteristics of the school jurisdictions brings a wide variety of leadership opportunities, which require multiple approaches to developing the leadership qualities required to enhance student learning. As research supports, school leadership plays an important role in student learning. School jurisdictions need to develop leaders from their teachers to help principals do their job and share effective teaching practices. To maximize student learning, schools need to improve teaching and leadership practices to assist principals as learning leaders.

Zone 4 senior administration leaders meet regularly and share ideas for developing stronger jurisdictions. At one meeting, the sub-group responsible for developing future administrators and instructional leaders came together and discussed the idea of working together and sharing resources for developing future administrators. Some jurisdictions had leadership programs while other jurisdictions did not, which they found was reflected in a shallow pool that did not always produce acceptable leadership candidates. As well, it appeared that having an open pool to anyone who wanted

to be an administrator did not always attract or produce strong applicants.

It was felt that a formal leadership program would help identify and develop future leaders. As Fullan (2014) expressed at a College of Alberta School Superintendents (CASS) learning symposium, the principal's new role in maximizing impact on student achievement is the principal as "lead learner" through an intense instructional focus with emphasis on continuous learning at the core.

Out of the discussions came a pilot project for a multi-jurisdictional Aspiring Leaders program. The benefit would be current leaders and future school-based leaders from central Alberta could share relevant knowledge and build strong relationships that would benefit meeting the needs of teachers and students through capacity building and creative problem solving. Relying on research and leadership experiences in central Alberta, the Aspiring Leaders concept became a two year, ten session program that included aspiring leaders from four jurisdictions.

Over two years, five jurisdictions worked together with the Central Alberta Regional

Consortium (CARC), and included other expertise, including CASS, to develop the Aspiring Leaders Program. Research and other guiding materials, including documents published by Alberta Education and the Alberta Teachers Association (ATA), were used to supplement materials developed by the committee.

The program is a two year plan to prepare future educational leaders. Each year has five sessions, three of which are combined sessions that focus on educational leadership in Alberta. Two sessions are local sessions that allow the individual jurisdictions to address competencies and characteristics unique to each learning community. After two years, aspiring leaders will continue growing through personal and jurisdiction professional development opportunities.

In the first year, the program started by developing a vision for leaders. Future educators in Alberta will be required to be leaders who can develop students who are engaged thinkers and ethical citizens with an entrepreneurial spirit as Alberta

Education envisions. By using documents from different philosophies, a wider program that would fit future leaders in vastly different school communities was drafted.

Documents, such as the ATA's *Alberta Voices: Teachers' Aspirations for the Future of Teaching* and *Evaluating the School Principal*, gave a perspective from a jurisdictional leaders understanding of being a school leader. Alberta Education documents included *Inspiring Education*, the proposed *Principal Quality Practice Competencies for School Leaders* (PPCSL), *Alberta School Leadership Framework* and the current draft of the *Education Act*. Using these documents and current research, the group developed a document, *Sample Questions to Guide Reflective Conversations: Zone 4 Aspiring Leaders Program*. The questions were based on the seven competencies from the PPCSL document. Conversations were held with people from CASS, ATA and Alberta Education, as well as contacts from universities in Alberta as

the professional development sessions were being developed.

During the second year of planning, the *Sample Questions* document helped open the conversation to specific components that each jurisdiction would like to see addressed in the Aspiring Leaders Program. As well, the document helped jurisdictions plan specifics of district based sessions. Red Deer Catholic added an eighth competency based on Catholic education dimensions. From the conversations, an outline began that included instructional leadership, visionary leadership and individual jurisdiction issues.

Critical components individualized to each school jurisdiction leadership program includes: instructional leadership, school management (hiring practices, budgeting, timetabling, student discipline, school council, etc.), legislation and regulations, personal management, relationship building, life-long learning, technology skills, using data to inform decisions, ethical leadership, leadership styles/inventories, building effective



We Can Help



**We Can Help
First Aid & Safety
Awareness Program**

Your students will learn about First Aid through a variety of exercises in their workbook and have a poster to colour for each lesson. At the completion of the program, your students receive a We Can Help certificate.

As the teacher, you receive a 53-page Instructor Guide.

Also available in French.

A FREE First Aid program for all Grade 3 Students in Alberta

Teachers,

This 10-lesson program is a perfect way to introduce your students to the concept of Safety and First Aid. Topics include:

- We Can Help Too
- Not Breathing
- Choking
- Unconscious
- Bleeding
- Poisoning
- Sprains and fractures
- Head, neck or back injury
- Frostbite
- Burns

This program may be used to assist student learning in the Health & Life Skills Program of Studies (Safety & Responsibility Wellness) outlined by Alberta Education.

Generously sponsored by the Masons and Concordant Bodies.

To order your FREE set, or for more info, please go to: www.sja.ca/ab and click on the We Can Help link



teams, dealing with difficult people, and knowing the difference in different school environments.

A framework for 10 sessions over two years was developed and refined. In the first year, the Aspiring Leaders Program began with individual sessions in each jurisdiction setting up the program and explaining to participants how the program will work. The formal part of the session was Fostering Effective Leadership presented by district leaders. The second session was a full day combined session on Instructional Leadership presented by CASS. The third session has all program members participating in the two day ATA workshop on Teacher Professional Growth, Supervision and Evaluation. This will be followed by an individualized session specifically related to the jurisdiction.

Red Deer Catholic will hold a session on Leading a Catholic Learning Community while Chinook's Edge, Wild Rose and Wolf Creek will be holding sessions on Instructional Leadership. The final combined session of the first year is a two day session on

Crucial Confrontations presented by two of the program developers.

Currently, the second year of the program includes two individual sessions developed from the PPCSL and from the Critical Components that relate to the specific jurisdictions. The three combined sessions will be Managing School Operations, Five Dysfunctions of a Team, and Embodying Visionary Leadership. At the end of each year, the program will be critically reviewed with adaptations or changes possible. It is expected that the leadership program will grow and change as educational leadership changes.

The program also includes a job embedded experience, which could involve being a relief principal, being involved in the leadership team or being involved in activities such as job interviewing, timetabling and budget development. Providing a mentor for the future administrators is being considered for the second year of the program. Reading a book or current research and sharing with the individual cohorts is an expectation in all jurisdictions. A list

of potential questions to include in the interview for Aspiring Leaders was also developed. A brochure for use by each jurisdiction and honouring the commitment by each jurisdiction was produced to promote the Aspiring Leaders program.

The Aspiring Leaders program is an exciting new venture for the four participating jurisdictions. It is hoped that the development of new leaders will allow Zone 4 school districts to continue to be leaders in education and provide a high quality education for students that often move between the jurisdictions. ■

We would like to give special thanks to Greg Friend from Battle River School Division for his participation in developing the program.

Jayson Lovell is Assistant Superintendent with Wolf Creek Public Schools. Shawn Russell is Associate Superintendent with Chinook's Edge School Division. Greg Wedman is Associate Superintendent with Wild Rose Public Schools. Paul Stewart is Associate Superintendent with Red Deer Catholic Regional Schools.

A photograph of a modern school building with large windows and a brick facade, set against a blue sky with light clouds. The building is surrounded by green landscaping and a paved walkway. The advertisement text is overlaid on the image.

Designing the ultimate student experience.

When it comes to creating the ultimate learning experience, our designs make the grade. Inspired by the energy and passion of students, faculty, and researchers, we design beyond traditional standards to help build creative and warm spaces, one school at a time.

Stantec

Design with community in mind
stantec.com



Understanding System Leadership Links to Student Success

By Dr. Jim Brandon, Dr. Garry McKinnon, and Dr. Dale Bischoff

The Association of Alberta Public Charter Schools (TAAPCS) is fostering system and school leadership practices that support students to be engaged thinkers and ethical citizens with an entrepreneurial spirit. This article shares insights from research into the three-year School Leadership Learning (SLL) initiative undertaken by the province's public charter school superintendents and school leaders.

Through reflection, co-learning and inquiry, participants report a deeper understanding of leadership links to student success in keeping with the ideals of *Inspiring Education*. Three emerging findings about leadership learning within the draft *Professional Practice Competencies for School Leadership in Alberta* (PPCSLA) will be of interest to jurisdiction and school leaders.

TAAPCS School Leadership Learning: Origins and Evolution

In May 2011, school principals and assistant principals from the 13 charter

schools in Alberta began a journey of learning to develop a deeper understanding of school leadership and to grow in their ability to positively impact learner engagement. Dr. Garry McKinnon facilitated this highly successful series of interactive dialogue sessions and follow-up learning activities through the following school year. With the support of Alberta Education funding since the fall of 2012, TAAPCS has continued this important work in its School Leadership Learning initiative.

The draft PPCSLA has served as the guiding framework for our evolving leadership capacity building efforts over the past three years. In year one the focus was on engaging school principals and assistant principals toward a deeper understanding of the seven professional practice competencies and making the PPCSLA a living document. The program focused interactive dialogue on each competency, provided opportunities to problem solve around related scenarios and helped participants to

make connections to their real-life experiences in their specific leadership contexts.

From the beginning, participants were encouraged to make the learning session experiences meaningful by maintaining a reflective journal based on their day-to-day experiences as school leaders and to access the expertise of the network of co-learners. Dr. McKinnon prepared a series of blogs based on the seven competencies to further ongoing dialogue, personal reflection and the development of professional learning plans and action strategies. The inquiry-based leadership blogs are posted on the Connect Charter School website (<http://goo.gl/SmFts>). Each blog offers questions to ponder and school leadership suggestions for further consideration.

Over 40 participants representing each of the 13 charter schools in the province have been involved in the SLL initiative. Focus on the seven leadership competencies has continued and several school administrators and superintendents have taken on an active role in

facilitating our learning sessions. Dr. Jim Brandon, Director of Professional Programs at the University of Calgary's Werklund School of Education, is serving as an *outside expert* who coordinates the learning sessions, supports the multiple program elements and conducts the participatory research component. Learning sessions have focused on fostering engaged leadership development through differentiated and job-embedded professional learning experiences designed to address the realities of varying school contexts.

As well, TAAPCS Executive Director Dr. Garry Andrews and a steering committee are providing collaborative oversight to the initiative, including the participatory research component on SLL's impact. In addition to ongoing data gathering following each learning session, a total of 22 educators were involved in individual or focus group interviews in May, June and July of 2013.

The interviews took place in 11 schools in six Alberta communities: Valhalla, in the Peace River region; on the banks of the North Saskatchewan River south and west of Stony Plain; Ardrossan; Edmonton, Medicine Hat; and Calgary. Eleven school principals, six assistant or associate principals, and six superintendents participated in this portion of the data collection process. Data collection for year three will be undertaken in May 2014.

Multiple Forms of Leadership Learning

Charter school community expertise is being utilized to deepen understanding and application of the PPCSLAs through a series of professional learning sessions within an open community of leaders concept. These were well facilitated by 16 experienced practitioners in year two. Eight members of the group have facilitated in the first three sessions in the current year. Session participants have consistently indicated that they appreciate the community building aspects of these sessions, which have engendered openness and relational trust. They have created a space to learn about the diversity of cultures and approaches within the larger charter school community.

This professional learning approach has been loosely based on Timperley's (2011) notion of iterative cycles of inquiry. Participants reported that it worked best when

As superintendents, experienced principals and those newer to school leadership have reflected on leadership practice and talked about the complexities of their daily work through the filters of the seven leadership competencies, it has been impressive to observe the evolution of openness, trust and willingness to engage in dialogue and knowledge-building.

they were stimulated by evidence informed leadership practices and were given sufficient time for reflection, deep dialogue and action-oriented inquiry. The opportunities to co-learn with colleagues from various organizational levels and to take professional learning into each other's school contexts were highly valued by participants.

Over the past three years, learning experiences have been carefully designed to promote the active engagement of the school administrator participants in developing professional leadership growth plans; utilizing survey feedback from staff members; reflecting on the *Charter School Leadership Rubric* (derived from the *Red Deer Catholic Regional Schools Catholic Administration Practice Model*, 2011), maintaining reflective journals; responding to the series of blogs on school leadership; and enhancing the learning experience through interacting with co-learning partners and visiting their partner's schools. In the current year, Viviane Robinson's (2011) research informed and highly readable book, *Student-centred leadership*, is being used to foster reflection, dialogue and evidence informed leadership action.

Participants continue to provide feedback on each session. Comments and suggestions are summarized and distributed to all TAAPCS leaders and Alberta Education representatives. Adjustments to programming are made in response to the suggestions and feedback.

School leaders are developing peer learning partnerships and engaging in co-learning visits to partner schools between sessions in

relation to their professional leadership learning and inquiry- plans and in keeping with system expectations. In addition, interactions among experienced and those newer to school and system leadership in all aspects of SLL build on our open community of leaders concept and inquiry orientation.

Research Findings: Alberta's Professional Practice Competencies

Research generated insights presented in this section may be helpful to the Ministry in moving the adoption and implementation of the *School Leadership Framework* forward. First, the *Professional Practice Competencies for School Leaders* document is appreciated by TAAPCS school and system leaders and is seen as a useful framework for shaping and supporting school leadership practice.

Second, we have found that sustained engagement with and knowledge-building around individual competencies is most helpful when it leads to thoughtful application, further reflection and supportive dialogue in the company of leadership colleagues. Iterative cycles of learning, acting, reflecting and sharing hold even greater promise.

Third, understanding the complexities of school leadership practice and the inter-relational nature of the competencies can be deepened through evidence informed dialogue about problems of practice, scenarios, cases and stories.

All participants reported that the SLL initiative helped them to move to a deeper

understanding of the competencies. New principals found that the PPCSLA was a useful framework for their first year evaluations by their superintendents. Almost all participants indicated that the work in the SLL initiative heightened awareness of the complexity of school leadership and underlined the importance of ongoing growth and development through reflection, dialogue and inquiry. Although the competencies can be understood well in isolation, skillful application requires a more holistic approach.

TAAPCS leaders appreciate the *Professional Practice Competencies for School Leaders* document and its usefulness as a framework to guide for school leadership practice. The need for ongoing research and evidence gathering to strengthen and adapt the PPCSLA over time is felt to be an important component in document's continuing relevance.

Research Findings: Leadership Learning in Alberta

Initiative participants embrace *Inspiring Education's* transformative agenda and are

using the sessions, blogs and conversations to deepen leadership practice and to grapple further with the challenges of helping teachers and students to move further in these directions. This section presents three key findings or leadership learning lessons that have surfaced through our research. We believe they may be helpful to jurisdiction and school leaders in the province.

Leadership Learning Lesson One: Focus on Student Success. The SLL is clearly focused on student success—the “Essential Purpose of Educational Leadership,” as described in the PPCSLA (Alberta Education, 2012). This first research generated theme, *focus on student success*, has been evident in every aspect of the initiative; in every learning session, in every research interview, in every growth plan, in every blog; and in every co-learning school visit.

In the current year, we are working to deepen understanding of the PPCSLAs by focusing on leadership learning inquiry related to Alberta's new student outcomes, other Ministry initiatives within the umbrella of *Inspiring Education*, problems of practice

and important educational issues. In and between the most recent two SLL sessions this approach is being formalized into what Helen Timperley describes as *Leader Inquiry and Knowledge-Building Cycles*. Such professional learning cycles include:

1. Identifying competencies your teachers need to meet important student learning goals (the Ministerial Order on Student Learning in our case);
2. Identifying competencies your leadership team requires to support teacher and student learning;
3. Identifying actions to deepen professional knowledge;
4. Engaging teachers in reflection and new learning; and
5. Gauging impact, bringing evidence to illustrate leadership, teacher and student growth (2011, p. 22).

Leadership Learning Lesson Two: Co-Learning in a Community of Leaders.

Collaboration within an open community of leaders (Barth, 1990) emerged as one of the most powerful themes from our work together. As superintendents, experienced

WALLWORKS ACOUSTIC ARCHITECTURAL PRODUCTS Inc.

Manufacturer of Sound Control Systems used in: Classrooms, Music & Band Rooms, Athletic Facilities etc.



We offer the following Acoustic and Decorative Solutions:

FABRI-LOK® - Stretch Fabric Systems, Panels, Baffles **Acoustiblok®** - Sound Blocking & Absorbing Technology
Tavapan® - Acoustic Wood Panels **BARRISOL®** - Stretched Vinyl Ceilings **Window Treatment:** Solar Shades and Blinds

Phone: 403.255.3550 Fax: 403.686.2592 Toll free: 1.877.829.2550
 Email: info@wallworks.com Website: www.wallworks.com

principals and those newer to school leadership have reflected on leadership practice and talked about the complexities of their daily work through the filters of the seven leadership competencies, it has been impressive to observe the evolution of openness, trust and willingness to engage in dialogue and knowledge-building. Responsiveness to participant feedback and the use of participant facilitators importantly indicates that leadership is being *developed with* participants rather than being *developed for* them.

This second key finding from the SLL initiative indicates that leadership learning is enhanced within open, trusting and diverse communities of leaders. The construct of *co-learning*—wherein superintendents, experienced principals and those new to formal school leadership positions actively engage in facilitating, sharing, learning and inquiry—has considerable potential. Learning with and from colleagues at other levels and from other settings is viewed as a powerful leadership development approach. For the participants who took this concept further and engaged in reciprocal school visits, the depth of co-learning was even greater.

A related co-learning element might be described as *using the wisdom in the room*. Of the 24 members of this learning community who have facilitated sessions to date, five have served in the superintendency in other public school systems, six hold doctoral degrees, and all have worked as school leaders during their careers. Four committee members have had extensive involvement in the development of the PPCSLA in varying roles since the spring of 2005. Their credibility, expertise and openness to learning from others has been a vital component of the SLL.

Leadership Learning Lesson Three: Multiple Forms of Leadership Learning. There are multiple ways for leaders to develop and learn. It was evident in the variety of approaches to supporting student engagement, learning and well-being that were demonstrated, discussed and digested by the diverse array of leadership learners who participated in the SLL.

The best evidence on professional learning is instructive. No activity or

process, whether facilitated by others (e.g. coaching, modeling and engaging with professional readings) or self-directed (e.g., discussing mutually identified problems, reflection and inquiry) was consistently associated with improved student success. What was important? The knowledge and skills learned as a result of engagement with the activity or process (Timperley, 2011, p. 6).

The variety of leadership learning tools utilized in this initiative support multiple forms of leadership learning. There is no one best way to become a more competent school leader. No standardized template dictates a one size fits all mandate for leadership development. Rather, our initiative suggests that the PPCSLAs enable multiple forms of leadership learning (Barber, Whelan, & Clark, 2010; Timperley, 2011).

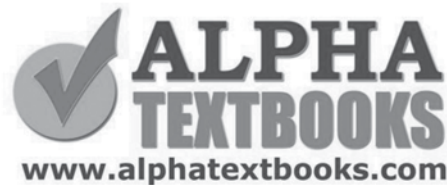
Conclusion

An important aim of our ongoing work on school leadership development is that it would not only benefit public charter

school leaders, but would also serve to inform engaged leadership learning throughout the province. Based on evidence from our research so far, exemplary school leadership practice can emerge from multiple forms of iterative inquiry cycles that are clearly focused on student learning within a supportive community of leadership learning. In the longer term, these approaches hold promise for sustained leadership learning in a wide array of Alberta leadership contexts. ■

A full list of references is available upon request. Please contact Shannon Savory at ssavory@matrixgroupinc.net.

Dr. Jim Brandon is Director of Professional Programs at the University of Calgary's Werklund School of Education; Dr. Garry McKinnon was Superintendent of Schools for 25 years in the County of Wheatland and the Golden Hills School Division, and he is now Superintendent of Connect Charter School in Calgary; Dr. Dale Bischoff is Superintendent of Aurora Charter School in Edmonton.



Explore. Empower. Achieve.

- + Serving all grades, K -12.
- + Workbooks. Novels. Teacher resources.
- + Wholesale savings on new & used books.
- + Comprehensive buyback program.
- + Expert advice & online ordering.
- + Subsidized shipping.

Your exclusive Canadian distributor of Sadlier K-12 and Sadlier Religion products.
Twitter @alphatextbooks | Facebook | Pinterest
Phone: (416) 461-3542

The 2014 CASSA Annual Conference

July 3-6, 2014

Coast Plaza Hotel • Calgary, Alberta

Engaging Students - Making A Difference

Keynote Speaker: Dr. J. Douglas Willms

Dr. Willms is a respected international scholar with over 30 years in the field of educational research and assessment. He has over 200 published research articles and monographs pertaining to youth literacy, children's health, the accountability of schooling systems, and the assessment of national reforms. **Dr. Willms will be discussing Learning and Mental Health in Canadian Schools.**

Topics being discussed are:

- Successful Transitions: Possibilities for Prevention, Intervention and Inclusion;
- School Leadership in a Transformed Education System;
- Community Learning Centres: It Takes a Village;
- Empowering Students to Make a Difference: One School's Journey to Build an Inclusive Community Through Anti-Bullying Awareness;
- Garden Court: Making High School Flexibility Work in Other Grades; and
- Whitehorn/Pineridge — Youth Outreach and Transitions: Engaging and Re-engaging Students Across the System.



TOP: A stunning Banff view. Photo courtesy of Karl Strieby.

BOTTOM: Displays at the Royal Tyrell Museum. Photo courtesy of the Royal Tyrell Museum.

Pre-Conference Activities include a tour to the Columbia Ice Fields and Banff, or a tour to the Tyrell Museum, the Badlands, and the Atlas Coal Mine.

Go to www.cassa-acgcs.ca to download a registration form, a full conference program, and sponsorship details.



Mathletics helps teachers determine knowledge gaps

With Mathletics, you can:

- ✓ Keep students **motivated** with rewards & certificates.
- ✓ **Easily assess** student gaps in learning.
- ✓ Individualize learning seamlessly.
- ✓ **Save time.** Quickly benchmark student knowledge.
- ✓ **Track student success.**
- ✓ No marking. Get **real-time results.**



Visit 3plearning.com/Mathletics today to learn more
Call 1.877.467.6851 ext 100 | Email customerservice@3plearning.ca



CENTAUR
PRODUCTS INC.

SPORT CONTRACTING

Canada's Proud Supplier of Gymnasium and Athletic Equipment

Sports Flooring, Daktronics Scoreboards,
Spectator Seating, Artificial Turf & Track,
Gymnastic Equipment, Basketball Backstops

Toll Free: 1-888-430-3300
Email: alberta@centaurproducts.com
www.centaurproducts.com

STEEPED TEA
Fundraising

Building communities,
one cuppa' tea
at a time!™

Fundraising is fun and delicious
with Steeped Tea. Enjoy fabulous
products all while supporting the
communities you love most!

**EACH
item IS
ONLY**

\$12

40%
of the sale goes to
the **organization!**
(that's \$4.80 donated
for each item sold!)

Price includes shipping & handling.
Taxes may apply.

Let me show you how I
can help you raise funds
for your community!

Erin Stabber
Steeped Tea
Independent Consultant

403-813-7196
teamom19@gmail.com

www.mysteepedtea.com/teamom



ACOUSTIC SOLUTIONS LTD

11602 - 119 St., Edmonton, AB T5G 2X7

T 780.423.2119
F 780.426.0325
E info@acousticsolutions.com

WNC
WESTERN NOISE CONTROL

CMR
COUNCIL OF MUNICIPALITIES OF RECONSTRUCTION

INSTALLATION • MANUFACTURING • DESIGN CONSULTING

**Heat Up Your Job Prospects
with a Diploma!**

- Accounting
- Business
- Healthcare
- Information Technology
- Insurance
- Office Administration
- Web Design

Academy of Learning College

Airdrie Campus
201-2002 Luxstone Blvd.
Airdrie, AB T4B 3K8
(403) 912-3430

www.academyoflearning.com

All Children Can Soar

Renfrew offers a broad range of specialized programs and
is an acknowledged leader in education for **children with
special needs and their typically developing peers.**

Assessment & Therapy Services
for children, adolescents and adults

- Psychological Services, Speech-Language Pathology, Occupational Therapy & Physical Therapy

Easy to access - we can help you right now!
Available year-round.

"Helping Kids Soar"
Workshops for educators & parents
Visit our website for details

RENFREW
EDUCATIONAL SERVICES
HELPING KIDS SOAR

2050 - 21 St. NE, Calgary, AB T2E 6S5
T 403.291.5038 F 403.291.2499
www.renfreweducation.org

Student Information System Supports Educational Leadership

By John Burger, Ira Stroh, and Murray Besenski

System leadership is heavily dependent on transforming data to relevant information for decision-making on a range of topics, from programs to finance. This article describes work underway in Rocky View Schools on the design and implementation of a state of the art, balanced and holistic Student Information System (SIS) as a crucial strategic support for system leadership.

In a recent issue of *Educational Researcher*, Ellen Mandinach and Edith Gummer (2013, p. 30) observe that, “The scope and nature of data available to educators is growing at an increasing rate.” They go on to note that all educators need to understand how to use evidence to inform their decisions rather than to rely only on intuition, anecdotes or personal preferences. They call for more effort in building staff capacity to use data wisely, and in ways that empowers teachers and administrators.

Similarly, the recently released Alberta School Boards Association report, *Reimagining school board governance: A call to action* (p.4), recommends that boards assess all initiatives through the lens of whether or not it will contribute to continuous student improvement and to **use data and research to inform decisions**.

Within the Alberta context education change is systemically defined in *Inspiring education: a dialogue with Albertans* (2010). Given the holistic change agenda envisioned by *Inspiring Education*, it seems clear that, as Fullan, Hill & Crevola (2006) describe, educational excellence will require transparent and open education systems that use



data and evidence to build partnerships with students, parents and communities in moving schools to higher performance.

As well, the emerging emphasis on early childhood development, as defined in the Alberta-based, *Together We Raise Tomorrow* initiative <http://earlychildhood.alberta.ca>, reinforces Allington's (2011) observations that timely, strategic and effective use of student data on who

is at risk of struggling in school is readily available, but the structures and processes are inadequate for acting more effectively on this information.

These observations reinforce the argument that schools need rich data to make well informed decisions, not only about what is working or not working, but also to identify specific strategies premised on a full and balanced picture of students, including

their learning needs, aspirations, abilities, attitudes and interests.

As Couture (2011, p. 38) has observed, “to foster school cultures of creativity and ingenuity in Alberta we must build on the strength of an already strong teacher force by supporting ongoing school-based research and innovation, and continually pushing the limits of sound teaching practice, curriculum design and school development.” In this context, pushing the limits requires a strong empirical base on which to build.

Rocky View Schools is working on these challenges by incorporating in its Education Plan, Strategy 4.2.2, i.e. to “develop a system-wide, balanced, and integrated student information system that supports instant diagnostics of individual student achievement, as well as aggregated data at the classroom, school and jurisdictional levels.” In this brief article we will highlight key premises and insights from the August 2012 RVS Research Conference on SIS design and from the RVS SIS Working Committee’s input as we proceed with the work of developing the SIS.

SIS Design Themes

Four key themes emerged from the Research Conference, which hosted researchers from eight states and provinces (see www.rockyview.ab.ca/assets/whats-new/ResearchConference2012.pdf/view). The key themes were:

Context

- 1) Knowledge and technology are changing, so research on teaching and learning must evolve.
- 2) Measurement should be dynamic and support student centric pedagogy and action research.
- 3) Political influences on the use of data are complex and present challenges.
- 4) Through technology, SIS design is pushing the boundaries and approaching promising territory.

Design and Function

- 1) Literacy data should be nuanced and able to identify operative learning dysfunctions longitudinally and trend-wise.
- 2) Student engagement is crucial and holds implications for measuring student

growth and motivation as correlates of achievement.

- 3) High praise was voiced for SIS’s that make learning analytics accessible to classroom teachers and school-based administrators.
- 4) Data from classroom assessments provides useful information and adds value to triangulated data.
- 5) Data should not sort students but help to understand them from multiple and trend perspectives.
- 6) Choose and use measures carefully so the data empowers rather than threatens staff, parents and students.

Capacity Building

- 1) Develop capacity building first with school administrators as instructional leaders and then incorporate teachers.
- 2) Premise data literacy on triangulated data and with strategies for being a learning organization.
- 3) Reinforce research by building on the AISI tradition of action research and school specific, job embedded data applications.
- 4) Control perceptions of “too much data” by building capacity aligned with

supporting highly desired outcomes for students and teachers.

Implementation Strategies

- 1) Balance costs with realistic time lines; this is multi-year work.
- 2) Adopt “simplicity” in design, i.e. ensure a user friendly data interface.
- 3) Build trust and relationships by positioning data as an aide to the work of teaching and learning.
- 4) Ensure teacher input to SIS design and use through school-focused implementation strategies.
- 5) Personalize data by linking quantitative with qualitative data and emphasizing formative with summative assessment to inform student learning profiles and build parent support.
- 6) Ensure research ethics/FOIP standards are always met.
- 7) Education leaders demonstrate data applications through action research and value-added evaluation models that enhance organizational transparency and growth.
- 8) Network to build awareness and support.

Art by Kendra Dixon, at Mountain Galleries

Jasper Fitness & Aquatic Centre • Jasper Activity Centre

**Youth Accommodation Packages • Onsite Catering
Conference & Banquet Spaces • Recreation Facilities**

Jasper Fitness & Aquatic Centre
780-852-3663
305 Bonhomme St

Jasper Activity Centre
780-852-3381
303 Bonhomme St

www.jasper-alberta.com

Municipal
JASPER
Wild & Beautiful

As this work proceeds in 2014, we look forward to demonstrating, at a preliminary level, SIS functionality in service of timely diagnosis of student learning needs, enhanced decision-making for improved student learning, and a solid data/information base for contextually relevant action research.

Currently, RVS is working with Intel-limedia to build a prototype SIS based on historic student data accessed from Alberta Education's Corporate Data Warehouse, including recent provincial achievement test data. The challenge will be to ensure the key themes, premises and insights mentioned earlier are built into the prototype design of the SIS and to demonstrate data usefulness at student, classroom, school and system levels. As this work proceeds in 2014, we look forward to demonstrating, at a preliminary level, SIS functionality in service of timely diagnosis of student learning needs,

enhanced decision-making for improved student learning, and a solid data/information base for contextually relevant action research.

Practical Data Applications - Schools

Schools have traditionally used data to track student achievement and gain insights from students, parents and staff based upon their feedback and levels of satisfaction on a variety of measures. Currently, schools are also utilizing data to

1. Engage students and personalize their learning opportunities based upon their aspirations, interests, learning styles and

learning needs as documented in their learning profiles.

2. Support student development in literacy and numeracy by measuring progress and guiding instruction.
3. Identify students at risk of disengaging from school supplemented through the use of tools such as the Student Orientation to School Questionnaire (SOS-Q).
4. Support positive, social emotional growth of students and timely intervention where appropriate.
5. Inform student instruction based upon analyses of classroom assessments and triangulated data.

Additionally, schools increasingly are using research and data to inform their decisions on many facets of operations, including supervision and bell schedules, class timetables, program effectiveness and even student discipline strategies that are being employed. Now, more than ever, the effective use of data is becoming a critical element of the decision-making process, impacting teaching and learning environments in schools (see <http://dataqualitycampaign.org/find-resources/how-data-help-teachers>).

Practical Data Applications: Central Office

Effective system educational leaders use data extensively to guide their decision making, setting and prioritizing goals, and monitoring progress. Several key strategies help to ensure a performance-driven school system, including:

1. *Building a Foundation for Data-Informed Decision Making:* Establishing specific, measurable and clearly articulated goals at the system and school levels.
2. *Establishing a Culture of Data Use and Continuous Improvement:* A data-informed culture fosters mutual accountability between schools and the central office focused on continuous improvement.
3. *Investing in an Information Management System:* School systems are data-rich, but the data must be organized in accessible and comprehensible formats.
4. *Selecting the Right Data:* Selecting the right data that best informs the work of teachers and administrators is imperative.



P: 403.245.0032 E: kem@keminc.net

TEAM BUILDING: Hoodies, t-shirts, pens, back packs.
We supply products with your logo.

Call **1.800.353.7864** for your **FREE 136 PAGE CATALOGUE** or to place an order

<p>NATIVE ARTS & CRAFT SUPPLIES leatherwork ♦ beads drum & powwow regalia (kits, equipment & supplies)</p>	<p>FOOD PROCESSING EQUIPMENT & SUPPLIES aprons ♦ mesh gloves ♦ knives kitchen supplies ♦ scales ♦ spices sausage, cheese & jerky making food packaging supplies</p>	<p>WILDLIFE CONTROL snowshoes lures ♦ attractants tanning supplies</p>
<p>ABORIGINAL STUDIES ♦</p>	<p>HOME ECONOMICS ♦</p>	<p>CONSERVATION EDUCATION</p>
<p>8629 -126th Avenue ♦ Edmonton, AB ♦ T5B - 1G8 ☎(fax) 780.477.3489</p>		

Using data wisely requires clarity of purpose and a desire to seek and understand improved educational achievement.

Practical Data Applications: Provincially

Fullan, et. al. (2006) writes about the importance of linking educational leadership across organizational boundaries; i.e. between schools, central offices and ministries of education. Such boundary spanning leadership is facilitated by shared data that conveys meaning and insight across classroom, school, system and provincial levels.

Driven by technology and data analytics that was hardly imaginable just 10 years ago, we may see such initiatives as the Provincial Approach to Student Information (PASI) grow to become a highly comprehensive, holistic student data compendium supportive of seamless and timely data transfers between the Ministry and school authorities to better meet student data needs. Ultimately, PASI should be linked with other provincially maintained databases supportive of powerful inter-disciplinary data analytics (see www.mtroial.ca/ProgramsCourses/FacultiesSchoolsCentres/CentreforChildWell-Being/dataManagement.htm#_UXG8yZfKI-E, email or www.humanservices.alberta.ca/departement/14802.html).

Conclusion

The evolution of education databases will be driven by both top down and bottom up innovation and novel data applications supporting cutting edge action research. Educators in schools and school jurisdictions have exciting opportunities to help lead the way as 21st century educators solidly grounded in 21st century data analytics. ■


A full list of references is available upon request. Please contact Shannon Savory at ssavory@matrixgroupinc.net.

John Burger is Director of Schools, Research and Data Analytics, Ira Stroh is Director of Schools and Murray Besen-ski is Associate Superintendent in the Schools Department of Rocky View Schools. They work extensively with Rocky View school principals and central office colleagues to support educational leadership.

PUPPETS ON THE GO
a crate rental outreach program

*"There were
endless ideas and
so simple you
could adapt to
any part of the
curriculum"*

- Grade 2/3 teacher



To book a crate of fun, learning and creativity, visit www.wppuppet.com



www.aac.ab.ca

The principles of sound assessment practice for which AAC advocates form a natural bridge towards achieving the vision of *Inspiring Education*. Browse our newly renovated website to rediscover the potential within AAC resources.

AAC Performance Assessments

- engage students in their learning
- assist teachers in gathering quality evidence of student learning
- help prepare students to become Engaged Thinkers and Ethical Citizens with an Entrepreneurial Spirit

AAC Professional Learning Materials and Opportunities

- showcase sound formative and summative assessment strategies
- facilitate collaborative professional inquiry
- support job-embedded professional learning

AAC Professional Resources

- bring research-based practices to life within the Alberta curricular context

AAC is an essential, cost effective professional resource for teachers and leaders.

www.aac.ab.ca



B R O W N L E E
L L P
Barristers & Solicitors

Our dedicated School Law Team offers specialized legal solutions to school boards across the province

Edmonton
(780) 497-4800

Calgary
(403) 232-8300

Toll Free
(800) 661-9069

www.brownleelaw.com

Healthy People, Healthy Workplace News



ASEBP 101

The Alberta School Employee Benefit Plan (ASEBP) is a health and welfare trust governed by ten Trustees—five from the Alberta Teachers' Association and five from the Alberta School Boards Association. ASEBP offers a wide variety of health benefits and promotes programs that sustain healthy lifestyles and workplaces for over 54,000 covered members in almost 60 school jurisdictions across the province. Working with the education sector has provided many insights and opportunities for growth that they are pleased to share in their regular column in The CASS Connection.

By Jennifer Carson, B.B.A.

"Leadership and learning are indispensable to each other." — John F. Kennedy

All too often we take it for granted that our work at ASEBP is understood by everyone. Indeed, in a world fraught with a plethora of acronyms (EDB, EHC, EAS, to list but a few), it takes a few years before learning what they all stand for.

How can we logically expect the leaders in the public education sector to support us when they may be unaware of what we do and why we do it? After all, it is only by being armed with relevant data and information that leaders are best equipped to make educated and responsive decisions.

Due to the high value we place on learning, my Chief Operating Officer and I have recently begun offering leadership sessions to senior school jurisdiction staff entitled "ASEBP Benefits and Health". The sessions support leadership in better understanding the ASEBP plan and our organization's overall philosophy. We hope that this partnership with jurisdiction leadership will help shape a better future for Alberta's students.

Mark Your Calendar!



"ASEBP Benefits and Health" contains five modules in total—outlined below—and the session takes approximately four hours to complete.

Governance and General Operations

As with anything else, it is important to begin with the basics. This module discusses our proactive approach to health and benefits—what we've chosen to do in order to thrive, rather than what we must do to simply survive.

Strategic Planning and Plan Design

We believe it is important that public education leaders understand the strategic

direction of our Trustees. Typically these directions have a long-term focus and help guide ASEBP administration in deciding where to place our efforts. The executive team and managers at ASEBP then develop three-year business plans to transform the directions into operational strategies that can be executed.

In addition to strategic planning, this module covers our plan design process: what is taken into consideration and how we apply various lenses—reviewing clinically-based evidence, anticipated plan cost, improved health outcomes and more—to assess what should be added or removed from the plan.

Financial Operations

This module outlines how we operate as a not for profit, self-insured benefits provider, and what distinguishes us from traditional insurers. We provide an overview of ASEBP's revenue sources, expenditures, investments and reserve setting, as well as the fundamentals of our Experience Adjustment System. An explanation of the premium rate setting process rounds out this module.

Linking Expectations and Results

From a financial focus, we move to how ASEBP operates. We outline who our customers are and why we are dedicated to having a strong customer focus. We also highlight how diligently we monitor our internal and external environment as we strive for organizational and strategic excellence.

An Introduction to Health Services

And last, but by no means least, we review the context to our work and why we choose to be health focused. Believing that health is a shared responsibility leads

us to regularly partner with other organizations as well as school jurisdictions in order to provide cutting edge programs and services in support of the pursuit of health.

One of our newest health initiatives is the Self-Directed Wellness Guide, which:

- Provides resources and coaching to leaders in schools so they can set the tone of health and wellness in their workplace.
- Builds the capacity within school jurisdictions and school sites to create and execute their own health programs.
- Offers an opportunity for us to work with divisional leaders in support of the health of employees and students.

Improving health within schools has a proven return on investment and is truly the only way to ensure sustainability of the plan and health of our members.

The feedback we've received from past attendees has been very positive, and has helped shape the design and content of each module so that it is as useful to leaders as possible. Benefits are complex and with so much at stake, such as your employees'

overall health, it is critical to understand what we do and why we do it. No matter what form our communication with you takes, having a firm grasp on understanding ASEBP will help you in your role as a great leader in our school jurisdictions.

In the coming months, we will be hosting two leadership sessions at the ASEBP office in Edmonton for senior school jurisdiction staff, including secretary treasurers, superintendents, directors and senior managers. If you are interested in attending the May 30, 2014, or October 23, 2014, session, please RSVP to Sandra Robertson-Buffett at sandrar@asebp.ab.ca by May 23 and October 17 for the respective sessions. I hope to see you there! ■

Jennifer Carson is the Chief Executive Officer of ASEBP and has worked in the health and benefits industry for over 25 years. During her eight years at ASEBP, she has championed the organizational transformation from purely a benefits provider to a health services and benefits provider of choice. ASEBP was named one of Alberta's Top 65 Employers for 2014.

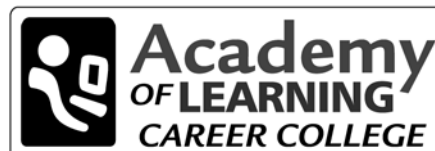
HEALTHCARE • BUSINESS • TECHNOLOGY • LEGAL • ACCOUNTING

WE CHANGE LIVES!

Success is **closer** than you think.

EDMONTON DOWNTOWN (780) 424-1144
EDMONTON SOUTH (780) 433-7284
WEST EDMONTON MALL (780) 496-9428
RED DEER (403) 347-6766

CALGARY NORTH (403) 569-8973
CALGARY SOUTH (403) 252-8973
MEDICINE HAT (403) 526-5833



www.academyoflearning.ab.ca

BE JOB READY IN 6 TO 12 MONTHS

Financial Assistance available to qualified applicants.



Portable Wheelchair Lift

The Mobilift CX from Adaptive Engineering Inc. is an economical, manually operated lift that facilitates disabled access to stages, platforms, bleachers and over stairs.

The lift weighs only 268 pounds, rolls easily from place to place, with a storage foot print of 72" x 38". The CX can be used indoors or outdoors and elevates to a height of 60" in less than 20 seconds.

1-403-243-9400 or 1-800-448-4652
www.adaptivelifts.com, info@adaptivelifts.com
419 - 34th Ave. S.E., Calgary, AB T2G 1V1

Adaptive Engineering Inc.



ABORIGINAL STUDIES Halford Hide & Leather.....	26	EDUCATION Alberta Education.....	IBC	LEARNING RESOURCES Mathletics (3P Learning).....	22
ACADEMY OF LEARNING EDMONTON CAMPUS Academy of Learning Edmonton.....	29	EDUCATIONAL PUBLISHING Solution Tree.....	IBC	LIBRARY EQUIPMENT & SUPPLIES Western Library Services.....	30
ACADEMY OF LEARNING, AIRDRIE CAMPUS Academy of Learning.....	23	EDUCATIONAL SERVICES Renfrew Education Services.....	23	LIGHTING Design 21 LED Lighting Systems.....	8
ACCESSABILITY OPTIONS Adaptive Engineering.....	29	FIRST AID TRAINING St. John Ambulance.....	16	NOISE CONTROL, SOUND PROOFING Acoustic Solutions.....	23
ACOUSTIC ARCHITECTURAL PRODUCTS Wallworks Acoustic Architectural Products Inc.	20	FLAGS, FLAG POLES AND BANNERS Aurora Flags & Banners.....	13	OUTDOOR EDUCATION Halford Hide and Leather.....	26
ARTS IMMERSION Calgary Arts Academy.....	6	FLOORS GYMNASIUM EQUIPMENT AND EQUIPMENT Centaur Products.....	23	ROOFING ASSOCIATION Alberta Roofing Contractors (Association)	8
ASSESSMENT TOOLS FOR TEACHERS Alberta Assessment.....	27	FOOT CLINIC Achilles Foot Clinic.....	13	SCHOOL TRANSPORTATION Southland Transportation.....	30
ATTORNEYS Brownlee LLP..... Davis LLP.....	27 14	FUNDRAISING Steepled Tea..... World's Finest Chocolate.....	23 OBC	SCIENCE CURRICULUM PROGRAMS Mind Fuel (Formerly Science Alberta Foundation).....	3
CASTERS AND WHEELS Caster Town Ltd.....	30	GYM FLOORING Crown Sports Floors.....	30	STUDENT TRANSPORTATION ROUTING SOFTWARE Transfinder Corporation.....	6
CONCRETE SLAB LIFTING Poly-Mor Canada.....	8	HEALTHY VENDING Can-West Vending Distributors Ltd.....	8	TEACHING RESOURCES WP Puppet Theatre.....	27
CONSULTING IN PLANNING, ENGINEERING AND ARCHITECTURE Stantec.....	17	HOME ECONOMICS Halford Hide & Leather.....	26	TEXTBOOKS Alpha Textbooks.....	21
DISTANCE LEARNING North American Montessori Center.....	30	JASPER ACTIVITY/FITNESS AND AQUATIC CENTRE Municipality of Jasper Culture & Recreation Department.....	25	UNIFORMS AND AD SPECIALISTS KEM Inc.....	26
				UNIVERSITY OF NEW BRUNSWICK University of New Brunswick.....	4

BECOME A PART OF A NEW FAMILY

Safely home

AND STILL HAVE TIME FOR YOUR OWN SCHOOL BUS DRIVERS

www.southland.ca/careers

S
SOUTHLAND

 **Crown Sports Floors**
Since 1996

- GYMNASIUMS
- DANCE FLOORS
- GAME LINES
- RE COATS

LEO VISSER
Phone : (403) 720-8338
Fax : (403) 236-2360
Toll Free : 1-877-720-6444
Web : www.crownsportsfloors.ca

"Western Canada's Caster Specialists"



CASTER TOWN

Edmonton 1-800-323-9886
Calgary 1-800-665-1348

www.castertown.com

Become a Montessori Teacher
...without missing work!



ACCESSIBLE AFFORDABLE FLEXIBLE VALUABLE

Montessori Diploma Programs and Curriculum with the convenience of distance education

 **NAMC**
North American Montessori Center

Toll-free: 1.877.531.6665
info@montessoritraining.net
www.montessoritraining.net

Western Library services

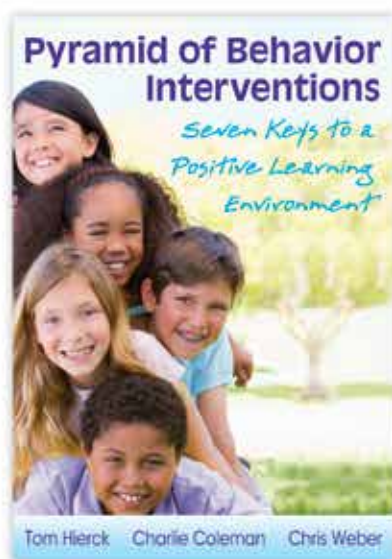
- ♦ Library Supplies ♦ Furniture ♦
- ♦ Shelving ♦ Audio Visual ♦
- ♦ Barcode Labels ♦ Computer Supplies ♦

Lorraine Stewart
Sales Manager

3370 Beaver Lake Rd.
Winfield, B.C.
V4V 1S7

Telephone (250) 766-2832
Toll Free Ph. 1-800-663-4393
Toll Free Fax 1-888-456-3555
www.westernlibrary.bc.ca

Maximize powerful intervention strategies

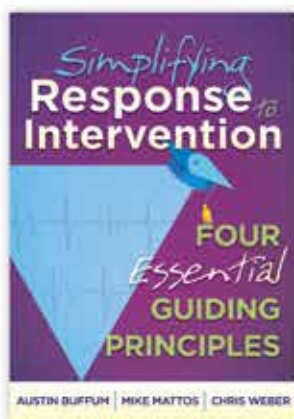


Pyramid of Behavior Interventions

Seven Keys to a Positive Learning Environment

By Tom Hierck, Charlie Coleman, and Chris Weber

Students thrive when educators commit to proactively meeting their behavioral as well as academic needs. This book will help teachers and school leaders transform the research on behavior, response to intervention, and professional learning communities into practical strategies they can use to create a school culture and classroom climates in which learning is primed to occur.



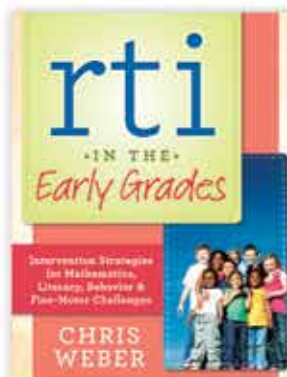
Bestseller!

Simplifying Response to Intervention

Four Essential Guiding Principles

By Austin Buffum, Mike Mattos, and Chris Weber

The sequel to *Pyramid Response to Intervention* advocates that effective RTI begins by asking the right questions to create a fundamentally effective learning environment for every student. Understand why paperwork-heavy, compliance-oriented, test-score-driven approaches fail. Then learn how to create an RTI model that works.



RTI in the Early Grades

Intervention Strategies for Mathematics, Literacy, Behavior & Fine-Motor Challenges

By Chris Weber

Explore why intervention and support for struggling students in the early grades are essential to student success. Teachers and support personnel will discover how to implement RTI-based supports in the early grades and learn what this prevention looks like.

EDUCATE don't Ban

Chocolate fundraisers support the spirit of school food and beverage policies. Here's why...

Education works, banning doesn't.

91% of adults agree that educating children about how treats fit into a healthy lifestyle is better than banning chocolate fundraising¹.

Common sense and behavioural science support that treats are part of a healthy active lifestyle.

92% of dietitians say that people are more likely to maintain a balanced lifestyle when they don't deprive themselves of treats².

In the world of treats, chocolate is one of the healthier options.

Eaten in moderation, chocolate has many benefits. It is rich in antioxidants, flavonoids, vitamins and minerals, and contains valuable calcium and iron.

Chocolate could lower your risk for heart disease!

British Medical Journal Research: The study, involving more than 114,000 people, showed that higher consumption levels of all types of chocolate, was significantly associated with a reduced risk of cardiometabolic disorders. This beneficial association was significant for cardiovascular disease (37% reduction), diabetes (31%) and stroke (29%)³. Chocolate might be a viable instrument in the prevention of cardiometabolic disorders if consumed in moderation.

The launch of a chocolate fundraiser is an opportunity to educate kids about healthy lifestyles and World's Finest® Chocolate can help:

INTRODUCING



Educational material to help parents & children understand the importance of portion control and physical activity. This is available with each fundraising campaign.

A chocolate fundraiser supports active lifestyles, not unhealthy eating.

This annual or semi-annual event helps pay for school activities and equipment like playground equipment, sports equipment, bussing and school trips that support healthy, active lifestyles.



For more information call 1.800.461.1957



¹ September 2010 Ipsos Reid poll of 1,300+ adults (including 500 parents of children aged 4-13).
² Survey of Nutritional Professionals. An online survey of 450 registered dietitians (RD) by the Hershey Center for Health & Nutrition.
³ "British Medical Journal", chocolate consumption and cardiometabolic disorders, 7 studies, involving 114,000 people, studies up to Oct. 2010.