



CASS

2025 Retirement Ceremony



Fantasyland Hotel Edmonton
Thursday, March 20, 2025

President's Message

On behalf of the College of Alberta School Superintendents, it is my distinct honour to extend heartfelt congratulations to this year's retirees. We gather not only to celebrate your remarkable careers but also to recognize the profound impact you have had as system leaders in education across Alberta.

Throughout your years of service, you have been more than administrators and educators; you have been agents of hope and change. Your work has shaped the futures of countless students, inspired staff, and strengthened communities. You have led with vision and compassion, always placing the well-being and success of learners at the center of your efforts.

As members of CASS, you have exemplified the highest standards of leadership and professionalism. Through your dedication to collaboration and your commitment to excellence, you have advanced the goals of education in our province and embodied the values of lifelong learning and servant leadership.

Your legacy is one of resilience, creativity, and hope – a legacy that will inspire those who follow in your footsteps.

As you turn the page to a new chapter, know that your contributions will continue to resonate in Alberta's classrooms, hallways, and communities for years to come. We thank you for your staunch commitment to the students and families of this province and for the lasting difference you have made in their lives and futures.

Congratulations once again, and may your retirement be filled with joy, fulfilment, and well-deserved rest.

With gratitude and best wishes,

Dr. Clint Moroziuk
CASS President 2024–2025

Retirees 2024–2025

Teresa Di Ninno	Superintendent, Centre for Academic and Personal Excellence (CAPE)
Julia Drefs	Supervisor of Curriculum, High Prairie School Division
Bill Driedger	Deputy Superintendent, Northern Lights School Division
Dave Driscoll	Superintendent, Palliser School Division
Jamal ElRafih	Superintendent, Almadina Language Charter Academy
Scott Johnston	Associate Superintendent, Parkland School Division
Helmut Kaiser	Director, Learning Services, Calgary Catholic School District
Bridgette Kropielnicki	Superintendent, Conseil scolaire du Nord-Ouest
Alda Lovell	Director of People Services, Wolf Creek Public Schools
Alexander McDonald (Sandy)	Superintendent, Grande Prairie Public School Division
Sharon McLean	Supervisor for Learning Services, Fort Vermillion School Division
Merri-Rae Mitsopoulos	Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources and Administration, Fort McMurray Public School Division
Cora Ostermeier	Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources and Learning, Holy Family Catholic Regional Division
Ann Parker	Managing Director, Instructional Supports, Edmonton Public Schools
Heather Putio	Assistant Superintendent, Peace Wapiti Public School Division
Terri Reid	Curriculum Manager, Black Gold School Division
Shawn Russell	Associate Superintendent Corporate Services, Chinook's Edge School Division
Kurt Sacher	Superintendent Chinook's Edge School Division
Robert Stewart (Bob)	Superintendent, Peace Wapiti Public School Division
Elizabeth Turpin (Betty)	Superintendent, Holy Family Catholic School Division
Dr. Wilco Tymensen	Superintendent, Horizon School Division
Josee Verreault	Assistant Superintdente of Education Services, Conseil scolaire Centre-Est
Brad Volkman	Superintendent, Wild Rose School Division

*Retirees on this booklet are the retirees that gave
CASS explicit permission to be acknowledged.

Teresa Di Ninno



The first 11 years of my life in Canada were spent in Montreal completing high school and getting a B.A. degree from McGill University. Toronto was my home for the next 4 years, during which I acquired an M.A. and a B.Ed. from the University of Toronto.

During the summer of 1979, my family and I moved to Southeastern Alberta, and I was fortunate to find employment within Prairie Rose School Division at Jenner school. As a new teacher, I could not have asked for a better introduction to teaching within a K-12 public system.

A transfer to Ralston school in 1982 was a turning point in my career. I was afforded opportunities that made it possible to explore and experiment with the teaching of mathematics, science and health, to get involved with student leadership, and begin a 40-year involvement with science fairs.

In 1994, I made the significant decision to start an endeavor that changed my life in more ways than I had anticipated. I opened a private school with a unique philosophy and pedagogy. The very next year, CAPE became one of the first three charter schools in Alberta where I served as principal/teacher and then Superintendent. The last 30 years have afforded me the opportunity to work with talented and generous colleagues within the charter school community and many jurisdictions across Alberta.

Additionally, I participated in CASS, got involved in Action Research, published articles, mentored colleagues, designed programs, and engaged in professional development.

Thank you to the brilliant and dedicated leaders with whom I have had the privilege to work with, to the staff members at various schools, to my students that inspired me, and to my family who supported my endeavors without question. These 44 years have gone by in the blink of an eye. I am not sure in what direction my life will move, but I look forward to finding out.

Julia Drefs



Through a lifetime of teaching, whether playing school with my siblings and cousins, teaching second languages for Royal Military College and St. Lawrence College, or spending 32 years with High Prairie School Division, my “why” has always been the same: to see the light in the eyes of a student who is excited about learning. The curiosity of others, their moments of understanding something new, and their journey from struggle to growing confidence as learners, are what have made education such a joyful and meaningful career for me. These moments are the foundation for my passion in education.

The phrase 'life-long learning' truly defines my purpose, both personally and professionally. Whether in a classroom or planning and team-teaching, it has been an incredible privilege encouraging, inspiring, and supporting others. I feel fortunate to have found my place in High Prairie with a school division that has continually supported my growth through diverse leadership opportunities and talented mentors!

I was not planning on following in the footsteps of my father and grandfather by joining the military, nor becoming a teacher like my mother and grandmother, but ironically, I did both! I joined the Canadian Armed Forces Reserve as a Logistics Officer while working towards my BA in Administrative and Commercial Studies combined with French at the University of Western Ontario. After graduating, I taught ESL and FSL at local colleges in Kingston and loved it. This led to a year of learning to teach French as a Second Language at McGill University as well as perfecting my parallel parking skills in Montreal.

I then headed west in search of adventure and found it with High Prairie School Division, where I've had the privilege of teaching grades 5-9, serving as a Vice Principal and Principal, mentoring teachers as the jurisdictional Mentor Coach, and returning again to the junior high classroom while working towards my Master of Education in 21st Century Teaching and Learning with the University of PEI. When my dream job came available, supporting teachers in the area of curriculum, I embraced the position of Supervisor of Curriculum. This role allowed me to collaborate with school administrators, teachers, Literacy and Numeracy Coordinators, the divisional teams of Indigenous Education, Careers, and Technology, as well as the amazing provincial Curriculum leaders, all united by the common goal of fostering student learning and success.

As I transition to retirement, I am excited to continue my educational endeavours while having more time to travel, spend time with my parents, and support [harass] my daughters as they embark on their own careers and adventures.

Bill Driedger



I needed a change. With a hard-earned Bachelor of Arts degree in my pocket, I found myself working in the back of a lumberyard, helping customers load their recently purchased supplies. Realizing my true calling lay elsewhere, I returned to university to complete my education degree. Upon graduation, I returned to my northern home community and began teaching in a small country school. It didn't take long to realize that this wasn't just a job - it was a passion. How fortunate I was to work with students!

As I reflect on more than 30 years in education, I do so with immense gratitude. I have been privileged to serve in two incredible school divisions - Fort Vermilion School Division and Northern Lights Public Schools. My journey has taken me through various roles: teacher, assistant principal, principal, director, associate superintendent, and deputy superintendent. Each position came with its challenges, yet all were deeply rewarding and fulfilling.

The true highlight of my career has been the people - the colleagues, mentors, and friends who have shaped and inspired me along the way. Their guidance and collaboration enriched my journey and reinforced the collective impact we have in shaping students' lives across the province.

I am especially appreciative of CASS as an organization and the many leaders I have met through its events and meetings. Their influence has left a lasting impression on me, both professionally and personally. I hope our paths will cross again.

While retirement marks the end of one chapter, it also signals the beginning of a new adventure. I step forward with a full heart, endless gratitude, and deep appreciation for all who have been part of this rewarding journey. I look forward to spending time with family and friends, working in the woodshop, and exploring hiking trails.

Dave Driscoll



After 35 years in education, Dave feels incredibly fortunate to have worked with such a rich diversity of communities and cultures in Southern Alberta. His career began with the Horizon School Division, where he gained experience in rural schools, Low German Mennonite schools, and outreach programs. Over time, he transitioned from teaching to administration and eventually into senior leadership, learning and growing at every step.

Dave's journey continued as Superintendent of Livingstone Range School Division, serving his hometown of Fort Macleod. Since 2017, he has been honoured to serve as Superintendent of Palliser School Division, working alongside dedicated colleagues to support a diverse range of school communities—from rural schools to alternative programs in Calgary, including Islamic schools, Christian schools, and a sports academy.

Dave has been deeply committed to inclusion, striving to ensure every student feels valued and supported. His focus has always been on creating opportunities for all students to achieve their fullest potential. Dave considers himself incredibly fortunate to have been surrounded by exceptional leaders and colleagues throughout his career. The mentorship and guidance he received set him on the path to leadership and solidified his belief that every decision should be grounded in what is best for students.

As he prepares to step into the next chapter of life, Dave feels a mix of gratitude and excitement. He looks forward to spending more time with his growing family, including his new granddaughter and celebrating his youngest daughter's upcoming wedding. He also plans to travel and enjoy new adventures with his wife, Tracey, whose passion for advocating for children has always been an inspiration.

Jamal ElRafih



Early Years and Education - Jamal ElRafih began as an (EAL) student at CHHS. Following his graduation from CHHS, he attended the University of Calgary. Here, he earned a degree in Applied Mathematics.

Mastering Educational Leadership - Jamal continued his academic journey at the University of Calgary, where he earned a master's in educational leadership. This pivotal moment gave him the knowledge and skills needed to effect meaningful change in the education sector.

Professional Roles and Achievements - A series of progressively responsible roles have marked Jamal's career in education. He started as a dedicated teacher, inspiring students and imparting knowledge. Over the years, his leadership qualities shone brightly, leading to his appointment as Vice Principal and later Principal of ALCA school in Alberta. During his tenure as principal, the CD How Report recognized his school as one of the top 13 schools in Alberta. This achievement highlighted Jamal's commitment to academic excellence and his ability to foster an environment conducive to students' growth and success.

In 2019, Jamal became the Superintendent of Schools in Alberta. In this role, he has overseen the developing and implementing of innovative educational practices and policies to enhance the quality of education across the region. Jamal is a leader and a regulated member of the College of Alberta School Superintendents, demonstrating his commitment to the highest standards in educational leadership. His involvement as an executive on the CASS Zone 5 board underscores his dedication to improving education on a broader scale.

As Superintendent, Jamal introduced Visible Learning principles into his schools, embracing a research-based approach to improve teaching and learning outcomes. Furthermore, Jamal collaborated with his fellow principals to publish an article in Connect magazine. Jamal's journey from an EAL student to a respected Superintendent has not only transformed his life but has also left a mark on the education landscape in Alberta.

Scott Johnston



I have always been fascinated by the study of lived experiences. From an outside perspective, I have been very curious, for some time, about the process that a person goes through in consideration of retirement. It does not feel overly long ago that I remember hearing about a retirement information session and thinking, "I have a long time to go before thinking about that..." More recently, I have observed colleagues go through the internal dialogue of "What will the future hold? Will I be sustainable? Is this the right time?" Truthfully, I have no answers to any of these questions. It just feels like the right time to find something new.

In this day and age, I feel very fortunate to have experienced the full breadth of a career. I did not begin teaching until later than many, and I am certainly leaving this work earlier than most, but I have had a fantastic quarter-century in education. Like my other colleagues in this booklet, I have truly enjoyed those colleagues who have taught me much and laughed with me often.

I cut my teeth with the Calgary Board of Education, and I had my pedagogy thoroughly set in stone during my brief time with Rocky View (thanks Galileo), but it is the Parkland School Division that will forever have my heart. Seriously, I have been able to learn and grow with the best colleagues in the profession, most notably Shauna, Mark, Meg and Scott, who each demonstrate an enviable degree of leadership, integrity and dedication to the staff, students and families we serve.

For my close colleagues in the College of Alberta School Superintendents, take care of yourselves first and foremost. Put your own oxygen masks on first. I have so much respect for what you do. I have appreciated your collegiality, and I will miss you. Please promise to make fun of me, accordingly, if my exit trajectory, post-retirement, happens to return me to education in some consulting capacity.

Respectfully - Scott

Helmut Kaiser



My teaching career began in 1994 as an Instructor of French Language at East Kootenay Community College in Cranbrook, BC. In 1996, I joined the Calgary Catholic School District as a

high school French immersion teacher. This marked the beginning of a fulfilling journey in education, where I was blessed to contribute to a faith-filled, student-centered environment.

Eager to take on new challenges, I transitioned to leadership roles, first as an assistant principal and then as a vice principal. In April 2003, I proudly accepted my first principalship, a role I held for nine incredible years in various schools. These years were marked by growth, learning, and collaboration with exceptional teams, all working toward a shared mission of student success.

In 2012, I moved to central office as Supervisor of Language Programs, where I had the opportunity to make a broader impact by supporting and enriching language education and programs.

In 2019, I was honoured to step into the position of Director, Learning Services. This role has allowed me to focus on curriculum, assessment, pedagogy, and reporting, while applying my passion for data analysis to guide decisions that enhance student learning outcomes.

Throughout my career, I have been surrounded by extraordinary colleagues and staff whose dedication, caring and professionalism have inspired me daily. I am profoundly grateful to the Calgary Catholic School District for providing me with opportunities to serve, lead, and grow in a community that values faith and learning. Thank you all for helping make my career meaningful and rewarding.

God Bless!

Brigitte Kropielnicki



My journey began in 1992 when I left my hometown of Clair, New Brunswick, with a bachelor's degree in education and a certificate in special needs education from Université de Moncton.

I moved to Alberta to take on a teaching position at École Héritage in Jean Côté, the first francophone school in rural Alberta. I immediately felt at home in the vibrant francophone community of Northwest Alberta, and it was truly wonderful to find such a welcoming environment.

In 2000, I became the first principal at the newly established École des Quatre-Vents in Peace River. It was a quite the learning curve, as I also taught kindergarten and English Language Arts alongside my principal duties.

In 2008, I returned to École Héritage as principal. However, my passion for supporting children with diverse needs led me to a new role as Executive Director of the Réseau in 2010. This organization, based in Edmonton was both a Regional Education Consulting Services (RECS) and School Health Programs (SHP) for Alberta's francophone schools.

In 2011, I obtained my master's degree at Campus Saint-Jean. I returned to the Peace Country in 2012 as Deputy Superintendent of the Conseil scolaire du Nord-Ouest (CSNO) and then became Superintendent in 2015.

I have had the privilege of a rewarding career in education that spans over 30 years, contributing to the development of the CSNO and francophone education. Looking back, I am deeply grateful for the incredible people I have had the privilege of meeting along the way —students, parents, colleagues, trustees, and community members — each of whom has helped shape the educator I am today.

While my original plan after my B.Ed was to become a lawyer, I am thankful for the path I chose. Now, as I prepare to retire in 2025, I'm excited to join my husband, who has been patiently waiting for this new chapter!



Alda Lovell

Although moving into retirement wasn't an easy decision, I am a firm believer that you always leave the party while you're still having fun. I was still having a lot of fun, so this past June was the perfect time to sign off. I have been honoured and humbled to serve the students and staff of Wolf Creek Public Schools for the past 32 years. I would like to thank my school division teammates and my fellow People Services CASS colleagues for their support and camaraderie.

I am a proud graduate of Burman University where I received my undergraduate degree in 1992 and the University of Oregon where I received my master's degree in 1997. My career began the month after university graduation when I was hired in Blackfalds to teach grade six homeroom with some junior high social and French courses to complete the assignment. In 1998, I was hired as the school's assistant principal and a few years later, I moved into the principal role. I proudly served my school community and school jurisdiction, relishing the challenges of being a school administrator and enjoying the many opportunities to grow leadership capacity with staff and spend time with students, especially coaching basketball. Whenever I'm asked about the best part of my career, these are the days I always remember the most fondly.

It was a tough decision to leave a great school team of staff and students to come to Central Office, but I never looked back. Since moving to Central Office in 2015, I have truly valued working with my fellow People Services team members in my role as Director. No matter how many irons we had in the fire, not a day went by that we didn't laugh together.

I have been thankful for the opportunity to transition into retirement by keeping my foot in the door as an educational consultant with Wolf Creek Public Schools. I am thoroughly enjoying my consulting work supervising and mentoring new administrators and leading the district's Aspiring Leaders program.

I look forward to continuing these educational consulting opportunities as well as spending more time with my husband, Jayson and our daughter, Vivian, my parents, and our extended family. I'm looking forward to doing more of all the things I love: exercising, cooking, decorating and camping. It's been quite a ride!

Congratulations to my fellow CASS retirees.

Alexander (Sandy) McDonald



I am honoured to be part of the CASS Retirement Class of 2025. Since graduating from the U of A in 1991, I have been inspired by Alberta's dedicated, skilled educational professionals and I am privileged to be on this list with such esteemed colleagues.

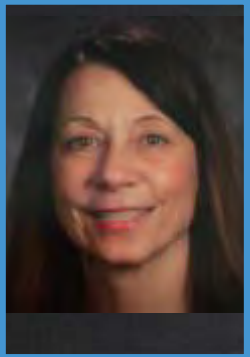
I feel fortunate to have eventually found my way into a career that fit me so well. I absolutely loved working as a teacher and school/system administrator! Our work has a significant purpose, and it gave me the opportunity to work with amazing students and staff. I especially enjoyed the many opportunities to work with others to plan and solve complex challenges. The things I am most proud of in my career, and my fondest memories, all involve working with students or colleagues to make success happen. You can't beat memories like those!

I am especially grateful for the impact of CASS and the CASS membership on my personal growth and my career. System leadership is complex and challenging work, and I would not have been successful without the formal and informal mentorship I've received by being part of CASS. Serving on the Zone 1 executive, representing our Zone as Director on the provincial CASS Board, and attending CASS conferences and events helped me to grow, to manage the complexity of our work, and to evolve as a leader and as a person.

Over and above our work, however, my good fortune is best illustrated by the 29 years I've spent married to my wife and best friend, Luana. Truthfully, I would not be where I am today without her support. As much as I have loved my work, our time together raising our family always mattered most and I look forward to the new adventures we're going to experience.

In summary, there is not enough space to acknowledge everyone individually, so I close with a thank you to the school boards I've worked with, to my colleagues, to students, families, and to our community in Grande Prairie. You've made the last 34 years of my life very rewarding and a heck of a lot of fun! That was time well spent.

Sharon McLean



Sharon McLean began her career in education after earning a Bachelor of Education from the University of Alberta. She started teaching on the Tallcree Reserve, where she

discovered a love for teaching and loved the north. She later joined the Fort Vermilion School Division, teaching English, special education, kindergarten and junior high before becoming an Assistant Principal.

During this time, she married, raised three wonderful children, and was involved with her husband in a logging and construction company and family farm. She also enjoyed community projects, securing grants to build three playgrounds, a daycare, and a playschool.

Committed to lifelong learning, she returned to the University of Alberta to complete a Masters in Educational Psychology in School Counselling. She then served as a Principal with Elk Island Public Schools for ten years, with a particular passion for high school leadership. Her dedication to education was recognized through nominations for the Bruce Beliveau Leadership Award and an Excellence in Teaching Award.

Later, she returned to northern Alberta as the Supervisor of Learning Services for Literacy with the Fort Vermilion School Division, where she continued to work with Principals and teachers, and advance literacy initiatives. She has always been passionate about teaching reading.

Now retired, she enjoys travelling, spending time with her grandchildren, and staying involved in farming and the family business. She also loves being at the lake and spending time at the cabin.

Education has been a lifelong passion, and she believes that teaching is one of the most honourable professions, bringing immeasurable rewards and lasting impact.

Merri-Rae Mitsopoulos



I began my career in education after completing my Bachelor of Education at the University of Alberta. My first teaching position was with Aspen View School Division in Athabasca.

During my time there, I pursued a Master's in Educational Leadership from San Diego State University and started on my path into school leadership.

After serving 14 years with Aspen View, I stepped away from my career for a few years to focus on raising my two sons. When our family moved to Fort McMurray, I returned to education and took a position with Fort McMurray Public Schools (FMPSD). I had the opportunity to serve in various roles, including Coordinator, Principal, Director, and most recently, Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources and Administration.

My time with FMPSD has been both rewarding and challenging. Over the past nine years, we have had to navigate through events such as the Fort McMurray wildfire, a major flood in our community, the global pandemic, and recent labour action. These have provided many opportunities to learn and adapt while remaining focussed on our commitment to students. I am grateful to have worked alongside a strong and dedicated team of educational leaders.

I leave my role with gratitude for the experiences, relationships, and lessons that have shaped my career. I am especially thankful for my supportive family and the remarkable colleagues who have made this journey so rewarding. As my family and I prepare for our next chapter in Calgary, I look forward to new opportunities to contribute to my new community, stay connected to education, and explore new ways to make an impact.

Cora Ostermeier



Cora Ostermeier has 30 years of experience working in education including work in the K-12 school system, adult, and alternative education programs. She's held several roles including Education Coordinator/Facilitator, Teacher, Vice-Principal, and Principal, and 12 years in senior leadership as Assistant Superintendent.

Her work has been in the areas of school improvement, human resources, instructional leadership, curriculum, data and assessment, and professional and faith development.

Cora holds a BA in Sociology, a BEd, and a Masters of Education. She is originally from Northern Alberta where she was raised and has spent most of her career. Cora has worked 24 years with Holy Family Catholic Regional Division in the Peace River area where she currently resides and plans to continue consulting work in the areas of assessment and instructional leadership.



Ann Parker



After graduating from the University of Alberta with a degree in elementary education and a minor in special education, I began my teaching career with Morinville Roman Catholic Public School Division followed by my career with Edmonton Public Schools for over 30 years.

Over the years, I have been fortunate to have had the opportunity to support education through a variety of roles and experiences as a teacher, administrator, consultant, supervisor, director and managing director. I have cherished the opportunities I have had to learn, grow, and support public education through these roles. My experiences at a range of schools and in central areas such as Infrastructure, Research and Innovation for Student Learning and Instructional Supports have helped shape my beliefs and values as a systemic leader. I am grateful for the amazing colleagues and leaders that have mentored and supported me along the way.

I have been blessed with an amazing career and wouldn't change a thing. Teaching was a highlight - supporting students to grow and empowering them to be confident learners while fostering their talents and gifts will always be cherished. This was followed by the opportunity to influence and enhance learning through systemic leadership. I appreciated the opportunities to collaborate with colleagues across school divisions, to share and learn from one another.

I am looking forward to continuing to support public education in my retirement. I plan to enjoy many new adventures, dabble in some musical ventures, do some travelling, and spend time with friends and family.

Heather Putio



Heather Putio entered the exciting world of Public Education in 1987 after graduating from the University of Calgary. Her teaching career started in the County of Lethbridge at Picture Butte High School and moved North after one short year and continued to serve rural students while farming and raising a family.

Heather's career included years in the classroom, as well as various roles including the Coordinator of Special Education, Director of Inclusion and the Assistant Superintendent of Student Services For Peace Wapiti Public School Division. This role included time dedicated to Inclusive Education, Wellness and Indigenous Education services. Highlights of this 30-year career include growing leadership in Peace Wapiti, participating in CASS and collaborating with many colleagues, service providers and community partners to serve and support students.

While she is retiring from public education, she is proud and grateful for the many opportunities this career provided, including the many friendships and initiatives she was able to participate in.

"Peace Wapiti Public School Division was like my family, and I appreciated all the support this school community provided. I look forward to more time with family, especially my grandchildren, more time outdoors and a future full of adventures."

Terri Reid



From my first day in school, I always knew that I would be a teacher. Teachers fuelled my passion and drive to learn more, to constantly improve, and support those around me. I started teaching in 1982 in Sturgeon School Division and moved to Black Gold School Division in 1992. I am forever grateful for the opportunities I have had in my career and the leaders who supported me on this wonderful journey. I have been privileged to support students and teachers in many roles, from a classroom teacher to school leadership, and for the last 20 years, as a Curriculum Manager.

I have always embraced new learning possibilities and as a result, I led a number of initiatives in Black Gold and beyond: Curriculum Prototyping Project for grades 7-9, Dual Credit, Calmar Collegiate School, Multi-jurisdiction Curriculum Conversation group, and CASS Zone 2/3 executive.

I was seconded to Alberta Education as the Director of the Distributed Learning Resources Branch and Intellectual Property Management, and to ERLC to work on technology and leadership development. In volunteer roles, I've served on ATA specialist councils, Teach AnyWare, CANeLearn, Alberta's Blended Learning Society (blendED), and various roles in non-for-profit societies that promote women in leadership.

I was so lucky to be mentored by the best of the best and I believe that if we don't place others on our shoulders, we are holding them back. I have been honoured to be called a mentor by many colleagues through the years and am thrilled to see them giving back.

I will miss the challenges and the daily routine. But most of all, I will miss the people. I extend a heartfelt thank you to the many colleagues I have collaborated with through the years. Our shared commitment to make things better for students has been my north star.

Shawn Russell



After graduating from Acadia University, I embarked on a fulfilling 33-year journey in education, beginning as a teacher in Yellowknife, Northwest Territories.

After leaving Yellowknife, I spent five years with Red Deer Public as a teacher and a science and math specialist at the division level. I also spent one year as a school administrator in Nova Scotia before settling in Chinook's Edge.

The past 25 years have been dedicated to serving Chinook's Edge School Division, of which the last 19 years have been spent in Associate Superintendent roles including People Services and, most recently, Corporate Services. I have been a member of CASS since 2006.

Reflecting on my rewarding career, I am immensely grateful for the opportunity to collaborate with countless talented educators within the division and across the province. These interactions fostered invaluable professional growth and forged lasting connections that I deeply cherish.

What I will cherish most about my career is the privilege of witnessing the transformative power of education firsthand. Seeing students grow, learn, and achieve their full potential has been an incredibly rewarding experience.

I am excited to embrace retirement and spend quality time with my wife and two grown children. I look forward to pursuing personal interests, such as hunting, fishing, golfing, and exploring new destinations through travel.

This career has been a true blessing, and I am grateful for the opportunities, challenges, and the incredible individuals who have made it so fulfilling.

Kurt Sacher



I was born in Drumheller, AB. I went to high school and University in Calgary. I have a BEd and a Master's Degree from the University of Calgary.

I recently completed the Executive Coaching program from Royal Roads University in Victoria, BC.

My father was a teacher, a principal, and a superintendent in public education and was largely the inspiration for a 39-year career of my own.

To this day, I have a passion for children, youth, and people in general. I was very fortunate to work in five school divisions in Alberta and British Columbia.

Countless others influenced my career, and to each of them I am so grateful. I am so proud to have served my esteemed colleagues as CASS President in 2018-19 and to become a lifetime member of CASS. The relationships with all the amazing people I have come to know, will be what I miss the most.

In retirement, I hope to establish a coaching and consulting business to serve individuals, school divisions, post secondaries, and corporations. My intent will be to help individuals and organizations find solutions and achieve their aspirations and dreams.

I intend to travel more, ride my bicycle more, encourage my daughter to consider creating grandchildren and see if I can make friends with people who don't have to answer to me.

Robert (Bob) Stewart



Encouraged by my foreman at the sawmill where I worked on weekends while in High School, I enrolled in post secondary and became part of the U of A graduating class of 1991.

After spending 3 years with Fort Vermilion School Division, I joined the Peace Wapiti Public School Division where I remained for the next 31 years.

I was in the schools for 20 of these 34 years and even as an administrator, I taught every year except for one and I can say with absolute certainty that being in the classroom, as well as helping with hot lunch, coaching, being in the hallways, outside on supervision or doing anything else that included proactive engagement with the students, was always the part that made the job so enjoyable.

Having four children of my own, I often said they were my greatest resource for this career. My own children kept me updated on the latest trends, pop culture and even community gossip. I believe their presence helped others see me not just as the principal or the superintendent but as a dad, which allowed for greater opportunity to build relationships within the communities I served.

I am grateful for my past and present colleagues, the Board, my children, and my loving wife for their support over the years. As I transition into retirement, it is reassuring to know that students will continue to be well served as two of our children have chosen a career in education.

Looking forward, I am excited for the opportunities that lie ahead. Stepping away from this career will allow me to start giving my family more than just the leftovers and we hope to find out how much recovering we need from the fun we are having instead of the work we have been doing all these years.

Elizabeth (Betty) Turpin



After 35 years in education, I am retiring as Superintendent of The Holy Family Catholic Separate School Division, a role I've had the privilege to hold for the last 19 years. My journey has been incredibly fulfilling, driven by a commitment to student success, leadership, and community involvement. I began as a junior high math and science teacher, where I found my passion for student growth. I then took on roles as Vice Principal, Principal and Deputy Superintendent leading to my current position.

With a Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Special Education, and a Master of Administration in Education, my academic training provided the foundation for leadership. Throughout my career, mentoring colleagues has been a priority, whether they were teachers, principals, or fellow superintendents. I believe in teamwork and have always strived to foster an environment where no educator works in isolation.

As a leader, I've focused on student success, knowing that effective decision-making is rooted in this commitment. Leadership is about setting the right example, making informed decisions, and taking responsibility for both successes and challenges. My focus on faith, inclusion, literacy, numeracy, and Indigenous education has been central to my approach, always aiming to create a thriving educational environment for every student. I'm proud of the lasting impact we've made as a division.

Outside of my career, I enjoy golf, ice-fishing and reading. I've been happily married to my husband, Brian, for over 40 years, and together, we have two children and four grandchildren, and we are surrogate grandparents to my niece's two children. They all bring me immense joy.

As I step into this new chapter, I'm deeply grateful for the incredible people I've worked with. I hope my dedication, integrity, and work ethic have inspired others to continue this work.

Dr. Wilco Tymensen



Knowing that these retirement programs can get long, I thought I would simply provide a few bulleted highlights.

- Born in a 400-year-old farmhouse in the Netherlands in the 60s.
- Immigrated to Medicine Hat, Alberta, Canada in 1976 without anyone in my family being able to speak a word of English, because hey, Medicine Hat is the same as Calgary.
- Following graduation, I started a Bachelor of Science with a specialization in Microbiology (Medicine Hat College and University of Alberta).
- Bachelor studies were unexpectedly delayed due to a serious accident that resulted in a broken vertebrae and a prognosis that I would never walk again... Too stubborn to listen though!
- Following graduation, I started a Master of Engineering in Bioremediation but dropped out to follow my wife as she began her scientific research career with the federal government.
- This led me to a Bachelor of Education degree at the University of Lethbridge.
- I started my teaching career in Palliser School Division and Holy Spirit School division in 1994.
- Joined Horizon School Division in the late 90s.
- A Masters led to my first principalship and ultimately division office roles before becoming superintendent.
- As a lifelong learner, I thought I would end it off with a Doctorate.
- After 31 years, I felt it was time to transition to retirement.
- I look forward to moving to our retirement home in Fernie, BC, spending more time with my wife Lisa and walking the dogs, mountain biking, and/or skiing daily.

It's been a privilege to be able to work with so many amazing leaders across this province and to see CASS grown into a professional body. I wish to thank CASS for its leadership and my Horizon team and CASSIX for all you have taught me.

Josée Verreault



Born in Saguenay, Quebec, I decided to pursue my university studies at Campus Saint-Jean in Edmonton in 1984, thus fulfilling my dream of becoming a teacher. Following the saying "who takes a husband takes a country," I moved to Bonnyville, my husband's hometown, where I began my career in 1988 with the Northern Lights School Division. For ten years, I taught in the immersion program, a period rich in learning and cultural exchange.

The birth of our son was a pivotal moment in my personal and professional life. Reflecting on the importance of preserving and passing on our Francophone heritage, I chose to transfer to École des Beaux-Lacs in 2000. In 2002, with the arrival of our twins, I had the honor of becoming the school's principal, a role I embraced with passion for six unforgettable years.

In 2008, I joined the central office team, where I continued to serve the mission of Francophone schools in Alberta. These 36 years in education have given me the immense privilege of working with inspiring, dedicated individuals wholeheartedly committed to the success of young people.

Today, as a proud grandmother, I turn toward new dreams while keeping a keen eye on the world of education. I am deeply grateful for this fulfilling career within a close-knit community, where I had the joy of contributing to building a future rooted in Francophone pride.

Née au Saguenay, Québec, j'ai décidé de poursuivre mes études universitaires au Campus Saint-Jean à Edmonton en 1984, réalisant ainsi mon grand rêve de devenir enseignante. En suivant l'adage « qui prend mari prend pays », j'ai déménagé à Bonnyville, village natal de mon époux où j'y ai amorcé ma carrière en 1988 pour le Conseil scolaire Northern Lights. Pendant dix ans, j'ai enseigné en immersion, une période riche en apprentissages et en partage culturel.

La naissance de notre fils a été un tournant marquant dans ma vie personnelle et professionnelle. Réfléchissant à l'importance de préserver et transmettre notre héritage francophone, j'ai choisi de transférer à l'école francophone des Beaux-Lacs en 2000. En 2002, avec l'arrivée de nos jumeaux, j'ai eu l'honneur de devenir directrice de l'école, un rôle que j'ai occupé avec passion pendant six années inoubliables.

En 2008, j'ai rejoint l'équipe du bureau central, où j'ai continué à servir la mission des écoles francophones en Alberta. Ces 36 années dans le domaine de l'éducation m'ont offert l'immense privilège de travailler avec des personnes inspirantes, engagées et entièrement dévouées à la réussite des jeunes. Aujourd'hui, grand-maman comblée, je me tourne vers de nouveaux rêves tout en gardant un œil attentif sur le monde de l'éducation. Je suis profondément reconnaissante pour cette carrière enrichissante au sein d'une communauté tissée serrée, où j'ai eu le bonheur de contribuer à bâtir un avenir empreint de fierté francophone.

Brad Volkman



I grew up on a dairy farm in the community of New Sarepta, Alberta where I experienced an abundance of faith, family and fitness; the latter

coming by way of lots of work and play on the farm with my very sports-minded and competitive siblings.

After graduating from the University of Lethbridge with a B. Ed., I worked as a teacher, principal and deputy superintendent in Prairie Rose School Division for 27 years, followed by 10 more years as the superintendent of Wild Rose School Division. I am grateful for the many amazing colleagues I have had the pleasure of working with and who built into my professional career during these 37 years.

Early in my administrative career, I posted the following Dr. James Dobson quote in my office to remind me of beginning with the end in mind:

I have concluded that the accumulation of wealth, even if I could achieve it, is an insufficient reason for living. When I reach the end of my days, a moment or two from now, I must look backward at something more meaningful than stocks and bonds. Nor is fame of any lasting benefit. I will consider my earthly existence to have been wasted, unless I can recall a loving family, a consistent investment in the lives of people, and an earnest attempt to serve the God who made me. Nothing else makes much sense!

I am not exactly sure what I will be doing in retirement, but I am looking forward to whatever God has in store. I am also looking forward to spending more time with my wonderful wife who has been my biggest supporter through the years. We look forward to spending lots of time together on the golf course, being engaged in our community and of course visiting our children and grandchildren as much as we can.



*Best wishes to
our retirees
for continued
good health
and happiness
for many years
to come.*

*Thank you
for everything.*



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