

Highlights: 2025 CASS Fall Learning Conference

Overview

The 2025 CASS Fall Learning Conference, held November 5–7 at the Deerfoot Inn and Conference Centre in Calgary, welcomed more than 400 delegates, representing 93% of Alberta’s school authorities. Participants engaged in a range of professional learning experiences aligned with the *Leadership Quality Standard* (LQS) and the *Superintendent Leadership Quality Standard* (SLQS).

The pre-conference offered three CEP courses: *Leading and Managing School Authority Operations and Resources* facilitated by Danica Martin and Corrine Thorsteinson, *Leading Learning* facilitated by Shan Jorgenson-Adam and Dr. Rita Marler, and *Leading to Support Effective Governance* facilitated by Dr. Edgar Schmidt and Dr. Dwayne Zarichny.

The conference opened Wednesday evening with remarks from CASS President Michael McMann, followed by an opening blessing from Elder Noreen McAteer. Dr. Alec Couros then delivered a keynote address on *Leading in the Age of Generative AI – Promises and Pitfalls*. On

Thursday morning, delegates participated in their Communities of Practice, designed to foster professional competence, reflective leadership, and networking among system education leaders.

Throughout the conference, delegates selected from 24 diverse sessions. As reflected in the feedback highlighted in the following pages, the conference was widely praised for its strong organization, relevant and timely content, and high-quality learning design. Respondents emphasized the value of connecting with colleagues from across the province, engaging in meaningful dialogue, and applying new strategies directly to their leadership practice. CASS extends sincere appreciation to all presenters for their contributions. For additional details about this and previous conferences, please visit the [CASS Conference Program Archives](#).

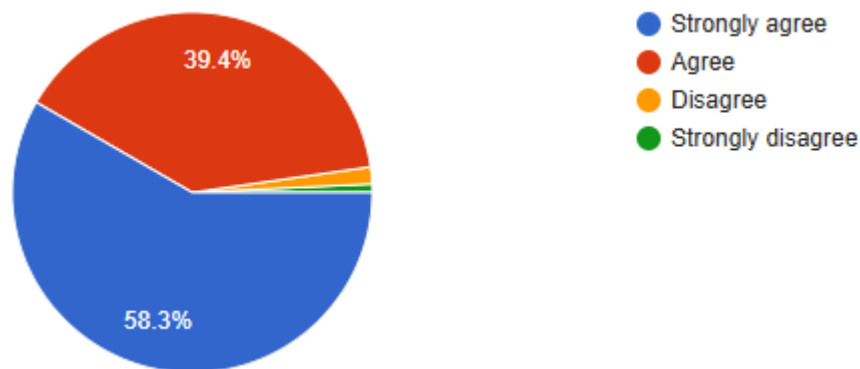


Feedback: 2025 CASS Fall Learning Conference

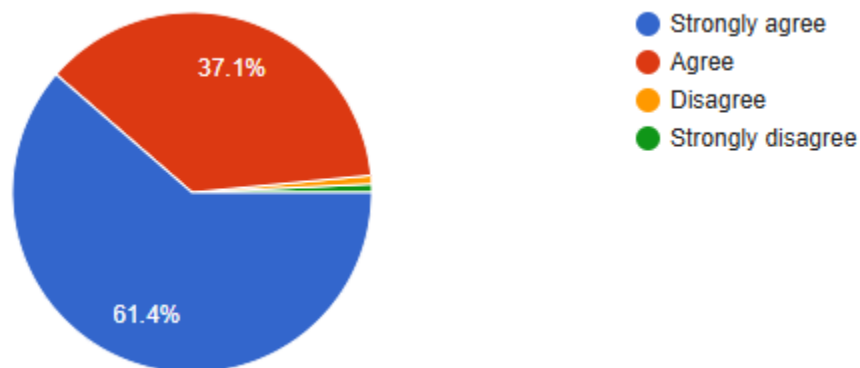
Nearly half of the conference delegates (41%) responded to the 2025 Learning Survey for the Fall Learning Conference.

Reflections on My Professional Learning

1. *This professional learning opportunity contributed to my growth and understanding of system education leader professional practice.*



2. *I plan to apply my learning in my school authority.*



3. *An aspect of this learning opportunity that made it meaningful is:*

- **Collaboration, Networking, and Connections:** Respondents found the learning most meaningful when they were able to connect, collaborate, and exchange ideas with colleagues across the province such as in Community of Practice conversations.

- **Artificial Intelligence (AI) Learning and Application:** AI-focused sessions were highly valued for providing practical insights, frameworks, and inspiration for integrating AI into leadership and instructional practices. Respondents appreciated insights into applying AI for system education leadership, instruction, and operations. Sessions prompted deep dialogue about the role of AI in K-12.
- **Relevant, Timely, and Practical Content:** Respondents appreciated that the sessions directly addressed current challenges and offered practical tools and strategies they could immediately apply in their roles.
- **High-Quality HR / People Services Sessions:** HR-specific sessions, particularly those led by legal and workplace experts, were praised for their depth, clarity, and direct relevance to pressing HR/People Services issues.
- **Value of the Community of Practice (CoP) Structure:** The dedicated and well-facilitated CoP time enhanced learning by enabling system education leaders to reflect, problem-solve, and share strategies in a supportive environment.
- **Session Variety and Choice:** Respondents valued the wide range of session options, which allowed them to tailor their learning to their roles, interests, and immediate needs.
- **High-Quality Presenters:** The expertise and engaging facilitation of presenters significantly enriched the learning experience and deepened respondents' understanding of key topics.

4. An aspect of this learning opportunity that might be improved is:

- **No Improvements Needed:** A significant number of respondents stated they had no suggestions for improvement, noting that the conference was well organized, relevant, valuable, and ran smoothly. This reflects overall satisfaction with the quality of learning, logistics, and experience.
- **Community of Practice (CoP) Structure** - While the CoP structure was appreciated by many, some respondents felt the group composition needed to be balanced, focus areas clarified, and requested more opportunities for deeper dialogue within the CoP model.

- **Artificial Intelligence (AI) Learning** – Respondents noted that AI was highly relevant but some expressed a desire for collaborative planning and leadership frameworks or practical district-level applications integrating more strategic, system-level perspectives.
- **Increased Opportunities for Dialogue and Collaboration** - Multiple respondents highlighted the value of collegial discussion and requested additional structured time for table conversations, and collaborative problem-solving.
- **Session Depth, Focus, and System Education Leadership Relevance** - Some respondents expressed interest in sessions that offer deeper exploration of topics and more explicit relevance to system education leadership. Suggestions included more examples from system-level practice, and targeted sessions for superintendents.
- **Venue Capacity and Comfort** - Some respondents noted that the current venue may be reaching its capacity, with some challenges related to room access, seating, and overall space.

5. One thing I require to further support my professional learning is:

- **Networking and Ongoing Connection With Colleagues** - Many respondents indicated that continued opportunities to connect, network, and engage in meaningful dialogue with colleagues across the province are essential to their ongoing professional growth.
- **High-Quality Learning Opportunities** - Respondents expressed appreciation for the range of topics offered and the diverse learning experiences that span multiple portfolios.
- **Deeper, More System-Focused Leadership Learning** - Some respondents requested sessions that go deeper into system-level leadership, governance, school authority budgeting, and superintendent-specific challenges.
- **More Legal, HR, and Policy-Related Professional Learning** – Some respondents requested ongoing sessions with experts about employment law, privacy, and collective bargaining.
- **Enhanced Opportunities for Collaborative, Discussion-Based Learning** - Respondents noted the importance of more interactive, case-based, and discussion-

oriented sessions that allow system education leaders to apply concepts, share experiences, and deepen understanding through collective problem-solving. This includes structured time within sessions for reflection and dialogue.

- **Continued Time and Support for Communities of Practice (CoPs)** - Respondents indicated they benefit from ongoing CoP engagement and would appreciate continued or expanded opportunities to work with their groups. This includes maintaining connections between conferences and fostering deeper collaboration.
- **Additional Learning Related to AI and Technology Integration** - Respondents noted a desire for additional, more advanced, or more applied AI learning to build confidence in leveraging AI for system education leadership and instructional improvement. Many expressed the need for deeper training beyond introductory or tool-focused sessions.

6. *Which SLQS competencies do you feel are your areas of greatest strength? (Click all that apply.)*

Respondents most frequently identified their top strengths in the *Superintendent Leadership Quality Standard (SLQS)* as **Building Effective Relationships**, **Modeling Commitment to Professional Learning**, and **Leading Learning**, which is very similar to last year's data.

7. *On which SLQS competencies are you focusing your professional growth? (Click all that apply.)*

Respondents are prioritizing professional growth in **Supporting Effective Governance**, **School Authority Operations and Resources**, and **Ensuring First Nations, Métis, and Inuit (FNMI) Education for All Students** in the *Superintendent Leadership Quality Standard (SLQS)*, which is very similar to last year's data.

8. *Which LQS competencies do you feel are your areas of greatest strength? (Click all that apply.)*

The most frequently identified LQS strengths were **Building Effective Relationships**, **Modeling Commitment to Professional Learning**, **Embodying Visionary Leadership**, and **Leading a Learning Community**. Many respondents also selected **Providing Instructional Leadership** and **Developing Leadership Capacity**.

9. *On which LQS competencies are you focusing your professional growth? (Click all that apply.)*

Similar to last year, respondents are primarily focusing their professional growth on **Supporting the Application of Foundational Knowledge about First Nations, Métis and Inuit (FNMI)**, **Managing School Operations and Resources**, and **Understanding and Responding to the Larger Societal Context**

10. Comments/suggestions regarding the structure of this learning opportunity (e.g. facility, registration process, communication).

- **Overall Satisfaction With Structure, Organization, and Communication** - Respondents indicated that the conference was exceptionally well organized, with smooth registration, timely communication, and strong logistical coordination. Numerous respondents stated explicitly that they had no suggestions for improvement, reflecting a high level of satisfaction with the structure.
- **Venue Capacity, Layout, and Comfort** - Respondents commented that the current facility is becoming tight for the size of the conference, noting crowded rooms, limited seating, temperature considerations, limited food options for those with dietary needs, and constrained dining areas.
- **Appreciation for Staff Support and Conference Team** – Respondents expressed gratitude for the professionalism, responsiveness, and skill of the conference organizing team.