



Continuing  
Education  
Program

# CASS PL Committee Meeting Highlights January 21, 2026

The purpose of the Professional Learning Committee is to provide informed advice, and recommendations on matters pertaining to professional learning within the context of the Continuing Education Program (CEP).

## Committee Membership 2025-2026

### Chair:

**Vincent Behm**, Christ the Redeemer Catholic Schools, CASS Board of Directors

### Committee Members:

**Terry Gibson**, Fort Vermilion School Division, Zone 1

**Lynnette Anderson**, Edmonton Catholic Schools Division, Zone 2/3

**Dr. Ryan Sawula**, Chinook's Edge School Division, Zone 4

**Dr. Andrea Holowka**, Christ the Redeemer Catholic Schools, Zone 5

**Robbie Charlebois**, Lethbridge School Division, Zone 6

**Ian Gray**, Aurora Academic Charter School, Charter School

**Dolorèse Nolette**, Conseil scolaire Centre-Est, Francophone School Authority

### CASS Representatives:

**David Keohane**, CASS CEO

**Gloria Antifaiff**, CASS Principal Leadership Consultant

For more information contact:

✉ [david.keohane@cass.ab.ca](mailto:david.keohane@cass.ab.ca)

✉ [gloria.antifaiff@cass.ab.ca](mailto:gloria.antifaiff@cass.ab.ca)

✉ [vbehm@redeemer.ab.ca](mailto:vbehm@redeemer.ab.ca)

### ☑ Review of PL Committee Terms of Reference

The committee chair reviewed the purpose and scope of the committee's terms of reference. The committee's primary role is to provide advice and recommendations on upcoming, CASS-sanctioned professional learning opportunities, ensuring offerings are responsive to the evolving needs of CASS members across the province. The chair clarified that matters related to CEP structures, course counts, or credit requirements fall outside the committee's mandate. Recommendations and insights generated by the committee will be forwarded to the CASS Board to support high-quality, relevant professional learning for system education leadership throughout Alberta.

### ☑ 2025-2026 Professional Learning: New Aspects and Data Insights

New aspects for the 2025-26 CASS professional learning were discussed, noting that these updates were directly informed by feedback from the previous year's CEP and conference planning committees, which have now been amalgamated into the PL committee. A significant focus was improving presenter support, resulting in a presenter orientation process with a presenters' guidebook and three structured touchpoints. To welcome new members, a new members table was introduced at conferences.

Based on member feedback, keynote speakers were reintroduced, supported by survey input. Targeted consultation with HR-regulated members led to the design of HR sequenced conference sessions. Additional changes included the introduction of CEP courses (including a Francophone governance course), development of CEP administrative procedures, an annual CEP survey, and expanded session and presenter descriptions in the conference program. The PL committee's role was identified as critical in shaping responsive, high-quality professional learning for CASS members.

Data informing CASS professional learning drew on four sources: membership demographics, conference feedback, CEP course feedback, and the CEP Fall survey.

Membership trends show continued growth and a high proportion of members with fewer than five years of experience, creating opportunities and challenges for differentiated learning. Conference feedback remains consistently positive, highlighting credibility, relevance to system leadership, practical application, and professional connections.

Identified areas for improvement included reducing content density, enabling deeper exploration, differentiating by experience, and increasing use of case studies. CEP courses show strong registration and completion rates, with recent refinements to balance content and application.

Despite a low CEP survey response rate in the Fall, themes aligned across data sources.

Committee members emphasized the need for foundational learning, timely topics, and effective feedback mechanisms to ensure responsive, high-quality professional learning for system education leaders.

### ☑ 2026-2027 Professional Learning: Forward Planning

The committee provided input based on four areas: system scan, design, learning experience, impact. See next page for a summary of the discussion.

### ☑ Next Meeting

May 2026



## CASS PL Committee

### Summary of Discussion for 2026–2027 Professional Learning Forward Planning

The purpose of the Professional Learning Committee is to provide informed advice, and recommendations on matters pertaining to professional learning within the context of the Continuing Education Program (CEP).

#### ***a. System Scan – Priority Needs and Pressures - From your perspective, what are the most pressing system-level leadership topics, challenges, or questions currently emerging across zones or school authorities?***

- Workforce and HR pressures (especially rural): teacher recruitment/retention, managing sick leaves (e.g., disability/benefits), discipline and investigations; continued value of legal/HR case studies and peer problem-solving.
- Classroom complexity and aggression: pervasive across HR, instruction, and inclusive education; need for creative responses; focus on supporting both students and staff.
- Narrative and public confidence: desire to regain a positive story about education and celebrate successes; interest in communication strategy support.
- AI as a persistent, multi-faceted challenge: beyond academic integrity; student/family/staff risks (companionship/counselling uses, vulnerability to harms), and the need for education parameters.

#### ***b. Design – Promising Practice and Innovation - What promising professional learning practices, structures, or initiatives are you seeing locally (within zones or school authorities) that we could learn from, amplify, or scale provincially?***

- Crisis and strategic communication learning
- System education leadership structures: strong interest in sessions on central office/portfolio structures (student services, HR, resourcing, role design) and leaders “putting thinking on display.”
- Scanning external conferences for speakers/ideas
- Scaling capacity: need mechanisms to identify presenters and translate into local practice into provincial learning.
- Micro-share formats: 10-minute “promising practice” shares
- AI protocol standardization: need to move from patchwork approaches toward shared, ethical expectations for student assessment and acceptable use.

#### ***c. Learning Experience – Quality and Value - When system education leaders commit time to CASS professional learning (e.g., conferences, CEP courses, webinars), what design features make the experience high-value and worth their investment?***

- Protected dialogue time: table talk/partner chat for contextual application is essential.
- Reflection supports: interest in optional reflection guides to capture insights and commitments across professional learning.
- Revisiting priority topics over time: value in returning to key issues (e.g., HR recruitment) to track change and share updated practice.

- Presenter calibration and tone: presenters must manage mixed-experience audiences (avoid “too basic” or “over heads”); tone/humility affects satisfaction.
- High bar for online/hybrid delivery: sessions must be tight, purposeful, and interactive (efficient facilitation, meaningful engagement).

#### ***d. Impact and Success – Measures of Effectiveness - At the end of the 2026–2027-year, what evidence, qualitative or quantitative, would signal that CASS professional learning is making a meaningful difference for system leadership practice?***

- Engagement indicators: earning more than the minimum CEP credits may signal relevance/quality (indirect measure).
- Application intent as a proxy: strong value in asking whether participants will apply learning and how; useful trend data even if not fully verifiable.
- Feedback systems are necessary but imperfect: surveys may be “flawed” yet provide important information.
- Rethinking feedback capture: low CEP survey participation in the Fall may suggest trying alternative channels—e.g., carve out time in zone meetings for quick completion
- Ongoing decision point: whether/when/how to run the CEP survey again (timing, approach) remains an open question for the next meeting.